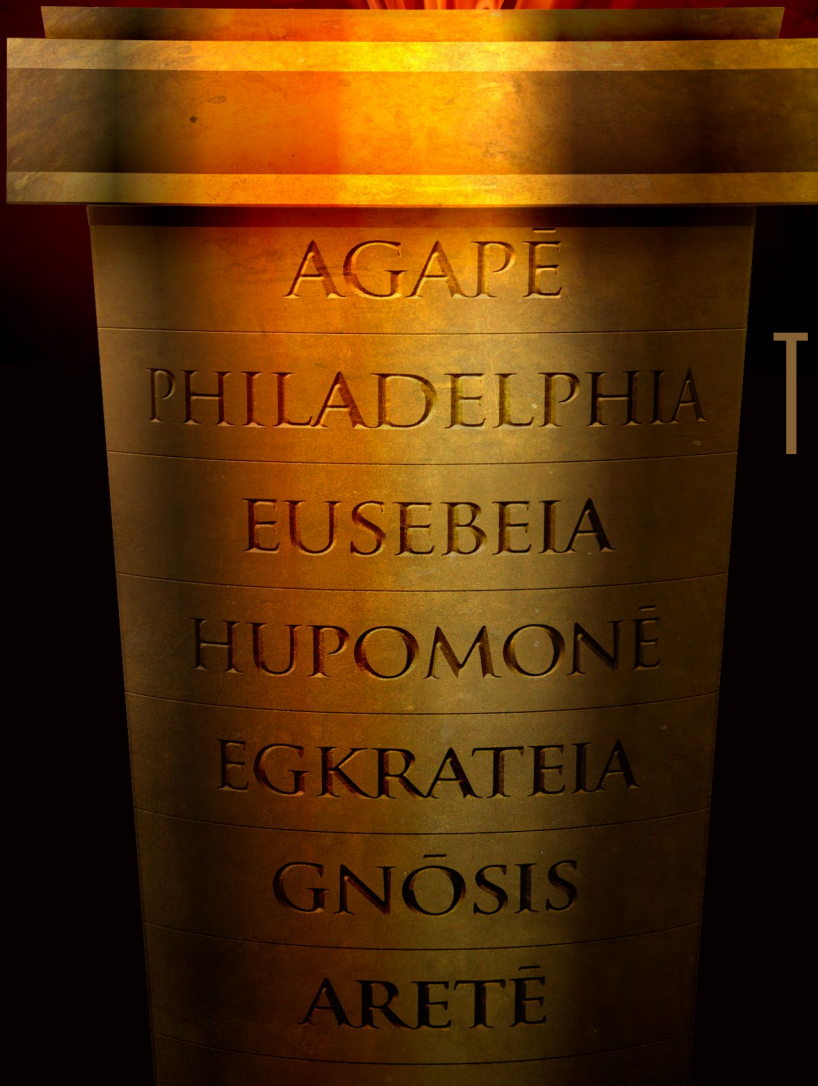


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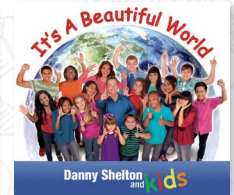
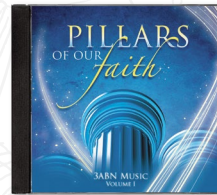
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“Sound creativity requires a constraining framework, which is provided practically in worship by ritual and liturgy.”

Pastoral encouragement

The interview with Jiri Moskala (“Truth, Love, and the Justice of God: An Interview with Jiří Moskala”—August 2016) was highly educative and serves as an encouragement to ministers on how to do ministry better. His life background is an impressive testimony of how God shapes and prepares people for service. His cognate experience of how God has led him in the journey of life serves as an example to us to say yes to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Truly “God’s truth, love, and justice will prevail and ultimately conquer all.”

—Yohanna Musa Dangana, Kaduna, Nigeria

The gift of prophecy and the church

Your October 2016 issue, “The Gift of Prophecy,” highlighted again the Spirit of Prophecy with well-documented articles. But it seems to me that your writers are missing the point why God gave us this important guiding light. The Spirit of Prophecy is not just a doctrine to be believed or defended with philosophical or biblical arguments, we have been doing just that from the beginning. Our problem is worse than that. It is not that we don’t believe in Ellen White, it is that

we don’t follow her counsels as a church institution. For example:

1. We don’t follow her counsels on diet and health living, and we have adapted conventional medicine/hospital base health practices which are totally in contradiction to her counsels.
2. Our educational system has become secular, and not grounded in her counsels.
3. Our organization system is not mission-minded as we used to be; instead we are using our tithes money to maintain the institution of the expense of reaching the lost. We look more like a *business enterprise* instead like the church of Christ. We should be spending our money in the mission not in maintenance of our religious structure. Million dollar buildings and facilities don’t save souls, it is the local church and pastors, and it is there where our money should be spent.

And then we come out and say: “we believe,” *believe in what?* Shame on us! Believing is doing. If we don’t follow her counsels, we should not be saying “we believe.” *Let’s stop the rhetoric, and let’s*

follow her wise counsels. If we continue as an institution disobeying the Spirit of Prophecy, we will be found guilty by the giver of this important Spiritual Gift, Christ.

—Manuel Fernandez, Florida

The balance of worship

The article by Jon Paulien (“The finale of the biblical symphony: A vision of worship”—August 2016), is intellectually stimulating, spiritually enriching, and practically helpful. My observations on this fine article are twofold: pertaining to the relationship between ritual and creativity, and the basis for worshipping God.

Firstly, although Dr. Paulien bemoans his upbringing in a German church with strict liturgy, this upbringing molded him into the disciplined scholar that he is, combining restraint with creativity. Ritual and liturgy need not be regarded as antithetical to creativity in worship, but as complementary. Ritual and liturgy may be compared to the endo-skeleton, upon which creativity supplies the flesh, nerves, veins, arteries and organs. As such, the concern should not be ritual and liturgy OR creativity but the proper balance of these elements, resulting in sound, creative worship. The book of Revelation, Dr. Paulien’s subject matter, throbs with created beings engaging in repetitive acts of worship, with set formulations of ritual and liturgy. Sound creativity requires a constraining framework, which is provided practically in worship by ritual and liturgy. Furthermore, ritual and liturgy assist memory, anticipation, build-up, and fulfilment in worship. The first element, memory, assists in recounting the mighty acts of God and also provides a foundation for prophecy,

Continued on page 9

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The privilege

Have you ever been prevented from speaking about Jesus, the gospel, or the Bible?

ACT 1:

Recently I was asked to conduct a wedding service for an attractive, young, highly successful, and secular couple. I was delighted as we've known each other for many years.

We had several premarital counseling sessions and I had given them some Christian books on marriage and love. Each book had been well received, eagerly read, and the principles had been implemented in their relationship. We prayed at the conclusion of each session. I had hopes that this lovely young pair was glancing in Jesus' direction.

So far so good . . . As we planned the wedding service, though, the couple politely and kindly told me they didn't want a Christian wedding service—not even a prayer of blessing in the service. They felt that because they weren't Christians, it would be hypocritical of them and unrepresentative of their values to have a Christian wedding. (Actually, in their past they had been “burnt by religion,” but that's another story.)

When they shared this news, I was both initially disappointed and inwardly respectful their integrity. On another level, however, I was silently panicking! My mind suddenly was bouncing with questions like: *How can I talk about love but not about Jesus? How can I speak on commitment, dedication, faithfulness, the beauty of an enduring, growing relationship without Jesus being in that conversation?*

In a few moments, this highly anticipated event suddenly became the most challenging wedding I've conducted

in 30 years of ministry! Was I to be censored and prevented from talking about Jesus at this unique opportunity?

But are there times when we silence or censor ourselves?

ACT 2:

On a recent Monday, an intelligent, young, and dedicated Seventh-day Adventist engaged me in a conversation. He studies at a major public university and lives in one of the great, progressive European cities. While the city is loaded with architectural beauty, a rich and inspiring Reformation history, and opportunities for all things secular; living a faithful Christian life isn't easy in that environment.

We began with catching up since we last met and quickly progressed to discussing a worship service we had both attended the previous weekend. He was troubled.

“Where was Jesus in the sermon?” he asked. “Where was the Bible in the sermon?” He was disappointed.

Knowing a little of his circumstances, I heard the words he didn't speak. “While I have a daily Biblical devotional and live every moment prayerfully with Jesus, I need a Jesus-focused Biblical message to sustain me through this week. I've contemplated the sermon for 48 hours and there's still a void. A week is a long time to wait. I need a Biblical Jesus gem, and I didn't get it in the sermon!”

For some reason, the experienced preacher had chosen to quote extensively from non-Biblical sources and on topics only tangentially connected to Jesus.

For this young adult, the pastor had effectively and needlessly censored himself.

ACT 3:

Recently, I stood on the South Korean side of the Demilitarized Zone and, using military-grade binoculars, looked through haze into North Korea—a country where Jesus, His lovely gospel, and its sharing are outlawed. There, the cruelest, hungriest prisons and/or a merciless death await the stewards of Jesus' grace. Meanwhile, 25 million people live in that very isolated, Christless regime, with seemingly perpetual famine and Kim Jong-un as their only “legal” worship option.

In all communities, even countries with so-called religious freedom in their constitutions, there can be forms of censorship that can be used to silence the preacher God has called. We can be silenced by many things: laws, politeness, our fears, political correctness, or societal expectations—even from people we admire and love. And we can even silence ourselves!

If I'm candid, there are times when I can feel discouraged. Every honest pastor knows that ministering can be a bruising vocation. At those times it can be easiest to default to silence.

In those difficult, awkward moments, I'm teaching myself to remember the wonderful privilege it is to proclaim Jesus and His eternal gospel—freely, fully, joyfully, fearlessly, and lovingly!

Oh, to be like the apostle Paul who couldn't be silenced by shame, ridicule, imprisonment, chains, shipwreck, beatings, stonings, or imperial decrees: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16, NIV).

In this issue's lead article Steven Thompson offers a masterful, well-paced exegesis of 2 Peter 2:1–8. Don't miss it! Pondering and applying the seven salient points will not only revitalize your communication of the gospel, your whole ministry may be transformed! 🙌

Tell us what you think about this article. Email MinistryMagazine@gc.adventist.org or visit www.facebook.com/MinistryMagazine.



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Christian faith and the Olympic games

Olympic Game years provide pastoral opportunities to highlight aspects of Christian living, which are illustrated in the lives and efforts of Olympic contestants. Canada's governor-general, the Right Honorable David Johnston, pointed the way when he declared that Canada's Olympic team members "personify excellence, fair play and sportsmanship . . . [and] remarkable determination."¹ What follows illustrates how Olympic Games, ancient and modern, can enrich pastoral explanations of what is, really, the most basic Christian question: "What do I have to *do* in order to be saved?"

This question first appeared on the lips of an alarmed jailer in the city of Philippi, who asked the apostles Paul and Silas, "What do I have to *do* in order to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).² Their answer, condensed in the briefest possible manner, sums up the Christian message: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (v. 31).

You will find in what follows a summary of how one early Christian leader, Peter, unpacked that terse directive. In his second New Testament epistle, he answered the "what must I *do*" question in practical terms that drew on his readers' common knowledge of the ancient Olympic Games.³

The Gift of Faith

"Simeon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those *receiving* a faith *as precious as ours* through the *righteousness* of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:1).

Here Peter noted that believers *receive* faith from God, the source of genuine faith. Peter then assured readers that their belief is "as precious as ours," using the Greek *isotimos*. Their faith is of equal validity to that of the apostles. Believers who have never encountered Jesus in the flesh do not receive a second-class faith. Peter ended this verse by taking a clear stand for the New-Testament doctrine of righteousness by faith, when he declared that his readers' faith came through the *righteousness* of their "God and Savior Jesus Christ." Thus from the epistle's opening verse, Peter established the central importance of faith. "Grace to you and peace! May both keep increasing in response to the *saving knowledge of God and of Jesus, Lord of us all,*" (v. 2)

The expression *grace to you* immediately declares this epistle to be Christian. Early Christians modified the standard Greek epistolary introduction, changing Greek *chairein* "greetings" into what was to become a key "Christian" word, *charis*, "grace." *Jesus, Lord of us all*, also clearly marks the epistle as Christian. Sandwiched between these, we find *epignōsis*,

translated here as "saving knowledge." It appears three additional times in this epistle (2 Pet. 1:3, 8; 2:20) to name that sense of certainty that Christians served the only real, true, and living God, "whose *divine power* has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the saving knowledge of the One who called us by his own *glory and excellence*" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Divine power (Greek *theia dunamis*) was an established Greek expression for the power of God, or the gods, which entered into and empowered humans. The philosopher Plato (427–347 B.C.) used *theia dunamis* in describing the legendary strong man and founder of the Spartan nation, Lacedaemon, "a man whose human nature had become joined to divine power" (Plato, *Laws* 691E). Elsewhere he illustrates the working of divine power by comparing it to the ability of a magnet to transmit its magnetism to and even through a piece of iron: "the god who . . . draws the souls of people wherever he pleases" (Plato, *Ion* 536E). According to the Jewish author Philo, a contemporary of the apostles, it was divine power, not a wind, that dried the waters of Noah's Flood (Philo, *Questions in Genesis* 3.28) and that enables barren women to give birth (Philo, *Questions in Genesis* 3.18). The church historian Eusebius, writing about 300 A.D., declared that this same divine power entered Christians

threatened with martyrdom, enabling them to declare their belief in the presence of hostile Roman judges (*Church History* 8.9).

Aretē excellence and the Olympic games

The final Greek word of 2 Peter 1:3, *aretē*, refers to God's excellence, while in verse 5 it refers to human excellence. This word becomes important

opening sacrifices and religious rituals, through the displays of the contestants' dedication, determination, skill, and single-mindedness, to the closing ceremony, the ancient Olympic Games foregrounded and backgrounded a single, overarching quality—*aretē*! For Greeks *aretē* "includes the concepts of excellence, goodness, manliness, valor, nobility, and virtue."⁴ According to the next verse, God's *aretē* backed up His

passively for this. Only by personal effort would *aretē* enter them and empower their efforts. This is clear from one of the oldest and best-known Greek descriptions of *aretē*, by the eighth-century B.C. author Hesiod: "in front of *aretē* the immortal gods have set sweat, and the path to her is long and steep, and rough at first."⁵ Even the natural scientist Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) expressed awe in the presence of the spiritual



That longer reach began with God, who "loved the world so much" (John 3:16) that He gave His Son, thus bridging the greatest "distance" in the universe—that which separated a holy God and this unholy and rebellious world.

to the argument of this epistle, where it occurs three times. The best window into the meaning of *aretē* is provided by the ancient Olympic Games, where *aretē* expressed the crucial quality of excellence—first as a quality of the patron god of the games; then as a quality that the patron god extended to the winning competitors. From the

calling of believers in the same way that pagan Greeks believed Zeus backed up his calling of Olympic contestants to victory with his *aretē*. "Through these things [God's glory and *aretē*], we have received God's great and valuable promises" (v. 4a).

But *aretē* was not simply handed down to athletes as they waited

quality of *aretē*, when he wrote "*aretē*, for human beings hardest-earned, most coveted prize of a life-time's hunt . . . for your sake [O *aretē*] . . . even dying is considered in Greece a desirable fate, and also putting up with crushing, endless tasks."⁶ Even a struggle to the death could provide evidence that one had received *aretē*. One ancient Greek

athlete who died in a demonstration of *aretē* was the wrestling contestant Arrhachion, whom the judges declared winner even though he died during the contest. They decided that “he won . . . partly because of his own *aretē*.”⁷ In the next verse Peter, like an Olympic trainer, urged his “trainee” Christians on to spiritual victory, empowered by God’s gift of *aretē*. Wrote Peter “This is why, by really exerting yourselves, you must support your faith with *aretē*!” (v. 5a)

However, *aretē* on its own is inadequate to fully support faith, so Peter added a second support: “to your *aretē* add *gnōsis* practical wisdom” (v. 5b).

Faith’s second support is *gnōsis*, best translated here “practical wisdom,” that differed from the *epignōsis*, “saving knowledge,” of verse 2. Practical wisdom supports the faith of believers by helping them negotiate practical challenges of daily living, and it accumulates through life. We see it, for example, in the strategies put in place by Nehemiah when he left employment as cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes and returned to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls. He approached this delicate task using diplomacy, tact, and persuasion. But, when necessary, he could employ direct confrontation (Neh. 2:6).

Faith’s third support is *egkrateia*, “self-control,” avoiding self-indulgence while keeping eye and mind on the goal. The word is rare in the New Testament but would have been familiar to every Greek schoolboy because of the maxim *egkrateia askei*, “Practice self-control!” attributed to one of the legendary Seven Sages of ancient Greece.⁸ But *egkrateia*, even when joined to practical wisdom and excellence, seems inadequate to fully support faith: “to your *egkrateia* add *hupomonē* patient endurance” (2 Pet. 1:6b)

Faith’s fourth support, midpoint in Peter’s list of seven, is *hupomonē*, “patient endurance.” It evokes that determination that sustains contestants on the long stretch to the finish line. Every Christian is called to support faith with *hupomonē*. Its importance for end-time believers is highlighted in

the book of Revelation, where it occurs seven times, the final one at the conclusion of the three angels’ messages: “Here is the *hupomonē* of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). Peter wrote: “to your *hupomonē* add *eusebeia* proper conduct” (2 Pet. 1:6c).

What entered the mind of Greeks when they heard the word *eusebeia*?

First, it was the standard word calling for appropriate conduct in their relationship to their gods, covering behavior during worship, proper performance of religious rituals, and bringing correct sacrifices and offerings. In the secular realm, it called for proper behavior in relation to significant persons such as emperors and governors. This was its meaning in a thank-you note the emperor Claudius wrote in 46 A.D. to an athletic club, acknowledging their display of *eusebeia* toward him when they sent him a golden crown to honor his successful military campaign in Britain.⁹

Second, Peter’s intention, when including *eusebeia* among the seven supports of faith, was made more clear in 2 Peter 3:11, where *eusebeia* occurs alongside *anastrophē*, which means “conduct expressed according to certain principles.”¹⁰ Most New Testament occurrences of *eusebeia* are in epistles addressed to the pastors Timothy and Titus, encouraging them to conduct themselves according to principle rather than impulse, so as not to bring reproach on themselves, on fellow believers, or on the gospel.

From individual to community: Faith’s supports six and seven

Peter’s first five faith supports focus on individual, internal qualities: excellence, practical wisdom, self-control, patient endurance, and proper conduct. These supports could, at least in theory, be practiced by persons isolated from community. But supports six and seven focus directly on how individuals live their faith within community or what, in the spirit of the Olympics might be labeled “teamwork.” He wrote: “to

your *eusebeia* add *philadelphia* family loyalty” (2 Pet. 1:7a).

Philadelphia, a word frequent in Jewish Greek documents but surprisingly rare in pagan Greek literature, it expressed loyalty within one’s family of origin. The Jewish historian Josephus (37–c. 100 A.D.) used *philadelphia* to describe how Joseph, as viceroy of Egypt, treated his brothers and their families. The best-known pagan Greek model for *philadelphia* was the legend of Castor and Pollux, human sons of the god Zeus. As Castor lay dying after an attack, Zeus offered immortality to his brother Pollux who, out of deep *philadelphia*, refused to abandon his dying brother in order to accept the offer. Zeus then modified his offer into an arrangement by which the brothers could take turns being alive and dead. While one spent a day alive in the company of the gods on Mount Olympus, the other would spend that day dead and buried. They would switch roles the next day. Pollux accepted the offer, sharing alternating daily life and death with Castor through eternity. This exemplary display of *philadelphia* served as a pagan Greek template for family loyalty.

Philadelphia extended beyond biological families to govern members of organizations and societies. Plutarch (c. 50–120 A.D.), in a widely known essay titled “*Peri Philadelphias*” (“On Brotherly Love”), urged “We should next pattern ourselves after the Pythagoreans who, though related not at all by birth, yet sharing a common discipline, if ever they were led by anger into recrimination, never let the sun go down before they joined right hands, embraced each other, and were reconciled” (“On Brotherly Love,” 488C).¹¹ How would our faith family be strengthened if, at the close of every board meeting, we parted with an embrace of genuine *philadelphia*?¹²

Peter continues: “to your *philadelphia* add *agapē* love” (v. 7b).


Peter used *agapē*, probably the best-known Greek word among contemporary Christians, to name faith’s seventh and final support. *Agapē* is that

love for others that moves believers to make others' well-being a priority. We find the word rare in pagan literature but frequent in Jewish documents, from where it transitioned into the New Testament. How does *agapē* differ from *philadelphia*? In a word, *agapē* has a much longer reach, extending well beyond family, church, and local community. That longer reach began with God, who "loved the world so much" (John 3:16) that He gave His Son, thus bridging the greatest "distance" in the universe—that which separated a holy God and this unholy and rebellious world. Peter, on the mount of transfiguration, had firsthand evidence that Jesus was God's ultimate demonstration of *agapē*. He recalled hearing God's voice on that mountain declare, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am fully pleased" (2 Pet. 1:17). God's *agapē* for His Son, and for this world, will ignite in believers an *agapē* motivating them to share, in word and deed, the good news of God's saving love.

Conclusion: "Getting real" with faith's seven supports

Wrote Peter, "So, if you take possession of these [seven supports of

faith] and develop them, you will never be ineffective or unproductive in your relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8). According to Peter, Christian faith becomes "real" only when grounded upon these seven supports. Ellen White declared "These words are full of instruction, and strike the keynote of victory."¹³ Every time Peter wrote *you* in these verses, he used the Greek plural form—"all of you!" Only in community can faith rest on all seven supports, as believers strive to live as Christian "Olympians" in their homes, congregations, local communities, and the wider world.

This is Peter's answer to the question "What must I *do* to be saved?" Fellow pastors, we can strengthen our own proclamation of the gospel and point the way to victory in Christian living as we draw more widely from the full range of New Testament imagery, and link it with current events such as the Olympic Games.¹⁴ 

- 1 "Rio 2016 Olympic Games," The Governor General of Canada, August 2, 2016, www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=16515&lan=eng.
- 2 All New Testament quotations are the author's own translations.
- 3 This study does not enter the debate about authorship of the epistles but adopts ancient

Christian attributions of authorship.

- 4 Stephen Miller, *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 209.
- 5 Hesiod, "Works and Days," lines 289–291, *Hesiod*, vol. 1, trans. Glenn W. Most, Loeb Classical Library 57 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 111.
- 6 Aristotle's "Hymn to *Arete*," trans. William D. Furley and Jan Maarten Bremer, *Greek Hymns: Selected Cult Songs from the Archaic to the Hellenistic Period*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 262, 263.
- 7 Pausanias, *Guide to Greece* 8.40.2, in Miller, *Arete: Greek Sports*, 36.
- 8 Greek text from F. W. A. Mullah, *Fragmenta philosophorum Graecorum*, vol. 1 (Paris: Didot, 1860), 215, 216, quoted in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, "Septem Sapientes," "Sententiae."
- 9 P. Lond 1178, quoted in J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (1930; reprinted Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), s.v. "eusebeia."
- 10 Walter Bauer and Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. "eusebeia."
- 11 Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. W. C. Helmbold, Loeb Classical Library 337 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 303.
- 12 Paul's appeal "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26) comes immediately to mind and will be developed in the next installment of this study.
- 13 Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 530.
- 14 For suggestions on applying Olympic games imagery to Christian living, see S. E. Gregg, *The Christian Olympics: Going for the Gold Crowns* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2006) and Richard A. Holder, *The Olympic Christian* (London, UK: Richard A. Holder, 2012).

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LETTERS

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through recollection of history, of which the prophets may have been hinting through usage of the prophetic perfect in predictive prophecies.

Secondly, Dr. Paulien highlights God's doings as a basis for worship of God. However, inasmuch as Dr. Paulien's first text, Revelation 4:9-11, indicates that the "twenty-four elders . . . worship the One who lives forever and ever," this is evidently an emphasis, rather than an absolute, since the being of God is herein also highlighted as a basis for worshiping God. Indeed, in the Hebrew and

Greek Scriptures, as in contemporary languages, being is as much a verbal concept as doing, and verbs typically denote action. This subtlety is further demonstrated in the divine name, the Tetragrammaton, YHWH/YHVH, which is usually translated, "I am." This reverent reticence on the part of the Hebrews to pronounce the name of God indicates an equal worshipful response to God's being as to God's being expressed and manifested in redemptive and relational actions. A parallel attitude on the human level is the deep respect springing forth in

regard to childbirth, nurture, and the miracle of life.

While the above supports Dr. Paulien's intuition that worship does indeed center on the creatorship and creativeness of God, and God's mighty doings as the Creator, one question remains. Would Dr. Paulien consider utilizing his scholarly finesse to pen a follow-up article on worship, centering on the being of God, including God's latent but all-sufficient doings before they are manifested or expressed in saving actions?

—John Tumpkin, South Africa 

Vernon Waters, MDiv, pastors the Glenridge Seventh-day Adventist Church in District Heights, Maryland, United States.



The saving grace of pastoral work

It was one of the most stirring and direct messages to pastors and workers that I have ever heard. In it the speaker said that God did not call him into ministry because he was somebody special and had extraordinary gifts for preaching. “No,” the speaker affirmed, “God called me into the ministry to save me! He couldn’t trust me to be a layperson!”

Quite a sobering thought!

Recently I heard that speaker again. He reiterated the same seminal idea: the reason he serves as a pastor is because it is the only way God can save him. Though he was referring to himself, this assertion seemed to resonate deeply with me. I was unexpectedly and emphatically reminded of the humbling call to the gospel ministry and also stimulated to biblically and personally explore that idea to see whether this assertion may be more than just a personal philosophy. Is the call to the gospel ministry somehow a grace that God uses to save me?

The calling of the apostle Paul seems to lend credence to this unflattering reality. Scripture may insinuate that this man of such noble stature and proud reputation was indeed a hard man to win, so hard that Jesus had to do it Himself (Acts 26:12–18). Not only did Jesus win Paul to Himself He also appointed him to the gospel ministry. Is it possible that Jesus could not leave Paul to serve only as a member in the

pew? How long would a man like Paul last in the pew of a local church? Of even greater concern, with a gospel zealot like Paul in the pew, how long could the other members last there? Did Paul’s hard nature require a position that would force him to rely completely upon Christ on a more demanding scale or else risk a miserable failure?

A critical tie

Romans 1:1 gives us a hint. Paul understood the critical tie between his call and his personal relationship to Christ: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.”¹ The Greek for bondservant is *doulos*. As an adjective it signifies being in bondage. As a noun, the way it is used here, it means “servant” and indicates subjection without the idea of bondage.² In other words, it is not a forced subjection but a *voluntary one*—subjecting one’s will and life wholly at the disposal of another.³ Paul’s call and success in serving as an apostle hinged unequivocally upon his personal subjection and adherence to the lordship of Christ. I believe this is to be true for every gospel minister. It is an uncompromising obligation that we adhere to our Lord in every way or risk a miserable failure.

A great deal of literature is available on the multifaceted nature of the gospel ministry, but that is not my purpose here. My burden is different and best

expressed in two statements from the pen of Ellen G. White: “We shall seek God earnestly, and as ministers of God preaching the gospel, we should carry these great truths into our daily lives, and show that we are living examples of what we preach—that we are carrying into our everyday life practical godliness—then wherever we go we will be a power.”⁴ “The success of a minister depends upon *his deportment out of the desk*. When he ceases preaching and leaves the desk, his work is not finished; it is only commenced. He must then carry out what he has preached. He should not move heedlessly, but set a watch over himself, lest something that he may do and say be taken advantage of by the enemy, and a reproach be brought upon the cause of Christ.”⁵ Simply put, our call demands adherence to Christ and adhering to Christ is an experience of being saved in Christ.

Left behind

Our pride and self-confidence as ministers of the gospel can sabotage the purpose of God’s call. While it may be good to have a bit of holy ego, it is an absolute imperative to have a large dose of humility to keep the holy ego in check. That humility comes from remembering who we are and whose we are. As the Lord said to Israel through Moses: “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any

other people, for you were the least of all peoples” (Deut. 7:7). So we must ever remember that it is not because we are something great that God chose us but because He is great! Let these sobering words sink in: “Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people” (Deut. 9:6).

The admonition and warning to the children of Israel prior to inheriting the Promised Land also rings true to us as ministers of the gospel: “When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

of our preaching par excellence, or simply given us the grace of many years of service, then we are admonished to remember the strong counsel, “Do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes” (Deut. 8:11). In the daily grind and growth of our ministry experience we are to remember God and to remain reverent before Him, exemplified through a humble life of loving obedience.

Ellen White makes a spine-tingling denouncement: “The reason why there is so little of the Spirit of God manifested is that ministers learn to do without it. They lack the grace of God,

funds or lead without divine enablement, everyone does it better with God’s help . . . God never intended a pastor’s work to be mere human effort.”⁷

Changing proximity

We sabotage the purpose of the call when we distance ourselves from the Master and lose the reverence by which the work of the gospel is to be performed. Like Mary and Joseph, we must go back and find Jesus so that we are not without Him for the rest of our journey. A man or woman of God who is distant from Jesus cannot be trusted with the things of God. By close proximity to Jesus, ministers

This call has placed an urgent demand upon my life to model to my children the grace of Jesus, so when I stand up to preach about grace, they are firsthand witnesses.

“Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deut. 8:10–14).

When the Lord has prospered our preaching, multiplied our congregants, expanded our houses of worship, placed us in positions of administrative service or high repute among preachers, increased the tithe of our churches, caused us to be well traveled because

lack forbearance and patience, lack a spirit of consecration and sacrifice; and this is the only reason why some are doubting the evidences of God’s Word. The trouble is not at all in the word of God, but in themselves. They lack the grace of God, lack devotion, personal piety, and holiness. This leads them to be unstable, and throws them often on Satan’s battlefield.”⁶

The truth is that in our pastoral routines, it is so easy, like Mary and Joseph journeying back from the Jerusalem Passover celebration, to leave Jesus behind. Neil B. Wiseman and H. B. London Jr., in their great book *The Heart of a Great Pastor*, write: “In pastoral routines, it is easy to forget that ministry at its core has a supernatural linkage with the resources of God. Although most pastors can preach, counsel, visit, comfort, raise

of the gospel become people of holy integrity. Samuel Logan Brengle says that spiritual authority and leadership are “not won nor established by promotion, but by many prayers tears and confessions of sin and heart-searchings and humblings before God, and self-surrender and a courageous sacrifice of every idol and a bold and deathless, and uncompromising and uncomplaining embrace of the Cross and an eternal unfaltering looking unto Jesus crucified. . . . That is a great price, but it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be not merely a nominal, but a real spiritual leader of men.”⁸

As real spiritual leaders, we cannot be distant from the people we shepherd. It is a fatal mistake to believe that great preaching suffices for the absence of pastoral visitation. By temperament

I am an introvert. My natural tendency is to shy away from people. I have discovered that yielding to this personality trait does not help build strong bonds, subsequently leading to lost opportunities. However, having learned this lesson the hard way, I now make a concerted effort to mingle among the people as one who desires their good, visiting with them in their homes to help meet their needs. Ellen White writes: “If he [the pastor] neglects this work, the visiting of the people in their homes, he is an unfaithful shepherd, and the rebuke of God is upon him. His work is not half done.”⁹

As real spiritual leaders we cannot be distant from our families. Broken pastors’ families can be a most harmful, negative influence in the ministry. “A pastor’s family is invaluable. Failure at home can lead to failure in ministry. If you cannot live happily with your wife and children, how can you counsel others and lead their families? You must devote the time and energy required to maintain a healthy home life.”¹⁰

It is imperative that in our effort to remain reverent to the calling of God, we safeguard our marriages and family. I have a son in college. My greatest concern is that I have been so busy with the ministry that I have failed to instill in him the raw material he needs to live a life of godly integrity away from the safeguards of home. Time will tell. I have come to learn that my greatest achievement is not the good work I have done with the church but what I have done in my own home.

As real spiritual leaders we cannot be distant from proper temple care. The apostle Paul exclaimed that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, we are not our own but have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 16:19, 20). Surely, we believe this. But if this is the case, why do we not take better care of ourselves? Why do we suffer with high blood pressure? Why are we overweight? I have often wondered how much of the gospel is not being preached because our consciences are

pricked by its testimony against us. God knows our stubbornness, which is why He called us to the gospel ministry. Through it we are confronted by the very things that in the pew might not move us. Do not skip over it; live it so that you can preach it in all honesty.

There is one more thing. As real spiritual leaders, we must change our proximity to the people in the communities where we pastor. I have an unflattering confession to make and am willing to make it if it will help somebody. My self-confidence was intact as long I did the parts of pastoral work that were the most comfortable to me. Truth is, where I felt most able, I also felt less needy of the Lord. Preaching was, to some degree, one of those areas. But then one Tuesday afternoon as I walked silently in the sanctuary, I felt the Lord impressing me with a new burden to get out from behind the desk and begin to pastor the people of the community. For an introvert, such an impression was not inspiring. Suddenly I felt my need of the Lord more than ever! This newer direction has led to more fervent humble prayer and a waiting attitude as I allow the Lord to teach me compassionate community ministry.

Through adjusting our proximity in these areas, ministering as He did, our Lord is able to help us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling and complete the work He started in us (Phil. 2:12; 1:6). The call is designed to save us.

Not just a theory

All in all, I believe I am a better man, husband, father, and church member because of His call upon my life. This call has placed an urgent demand upon my life to model to my children the grace of Jesus, so that when I stand up to preach about grace, they are

firsthand witnesses. As a husband, the regular study of the Word has inspired me to love my wife honestly, compassionately, and joyfully. The practical duties of the work help me to consistently live a godly life not only in relation to church members but in my own neighborhood as I seek to demonstrate the love of God where I live.

I cannot testify for anyone else, but for me, the call of God is a gift of grace that, in the faithful discharge of its duties, brings about the fruit of His salvation in me. For that I will be eternally grateful. 🙏

- 1 All Scripture passages are from the New King James Version.
- 2 W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 562.
- 3 Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), s.v. Rom. 1:1.
- 4 Ellen G. White, *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1 (ebook, Ellen G. White Estate Inc. 1990), 63.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 380. Emphasis supplied.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 383.
- 7 H. B. London Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *The Heart of A Great Pastor: How to Grow Strong and Thrive Wherever God Has Planted You* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1994), 40.
- 8 Samuel Logan Brengle, *The Soul-Winner's Secret* (London: Salvation Army, 1918), 22.
- 9 Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970), 440.
- 10 Jonas Arrais, *Wanted: A Good Pastor* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 2011), 59.



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Bridging the gap between religion and business: A conversation

Editor's Note: *Michael Cafferky and Douglas Jacobs dialogue about a perceived gap between pastors and business professionals.*

Douglas Jacobs (DJ): A research survey of workers across the country found that the percentage of workers who observed misconduct at a workplace fell to an all-time low of 41 percent in 2013, down from a high of 55 percent in 2007. While reported ethical misbehavior is down, 60 percent of ethical misconduct involves managers—the very ones we expect to set a positive example for others. As a teacher of business ethics, how do you feel pastors can minister to such professionals?

Michael Cafferky (MC): Doug, ethics must govern Christian business professionals, but clearly there are areas where improvement is still needed. Some pastors might unintentionally ignore the particular needs of business professionals in their ministry. Even our Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental belief no. 22, Christian Behavior, did not refer to Christian behavior in business until its revision at the 2015 General Conference Session. Now that fundamental belief speaks of our behavior in the marketplace.¹

DJ: If I remember correctly, you wrote to the revision committee suggesting that

Christian behavior include business behavior.

MC: Yes. Most people work or volunteer in some way. Whether you have a job or you volunteer, you are involved with business-related activities! Christian behavior includes our health and entertainment, but we also need to address how to live as Christians in the marketplace. In fact, most persons interact with the marketplace, at least as buyers. Isn't that a part of business too?

DJ: Perhaps pastors could help business professionals integrate faith and work. We may have forgotten that several Bible heroes were business leaders. Joseph ran the entire economy of Egypt at a time of record crops and profits (Gen. 41:41–49). Daniel so distinguished himself as the chief financial officer for the kingdom of Medo-Persia that even his enemies couldn't find any corruption or negligence in his work (Dan. 6:1–4).

MC: Yes, the Bible records the exemplary contribution of many business professionals. Of the link between religion and business, Adventist author Ellen White says: "Religion and business

are not two separate things; they are one."² If that is so, what is the nature of the connection between the two?

DJ: Paul and his associates Priscilla and Aquila made tents for a living and to fund their evangelistic work (Acts 18:1–4; 20:34); hence the expression "tentmakers." It refers to business professionals who, while doing their secular jobs, participate in or fund activities to take the gospel to unreached areas or people groups. In Paul's model, the marketplace provides not only the funding for ministry but also the place where the gospel and the world come together. As Adventists, we've seen the biblical connection between the health-care professional and religion, but somehow we've missed the equally strong biblical connection between the business professional and religion. For Paul, tentmaking and evangelism were two sides of the same coin—living the Christian calling.

MC: So if the Bible and Ellen White both connect business and religion, why have pastors too often ignored business professionals in their ministry? Is it because many pastors haven't had

training in business or because they think of business as somehow less spiritual of an occupation than being a pastor, teacher, or health professional?

DJ: Pastors may tend to think that members in business put profits above mission or compromise ethics in search of success. When I was a pastor, I wondered if some Christian business professionals emphasized doing well financially more than doing good through service and ministry. But I discovered it was a grave mistake to think that a successful person in a secular setting must either compromise or minimize principles of Christian living.

MC: I learned at a young age that a calling was something that pastors receive. When I made the transition from pastoral work to health-care management, at first the question of calling bothered me. I thought perhaps I was turning my back on God. Since then, I have discovered that a calling is applicable not only to pastors but also to other professions. The main focus should be: Am I in what I do to fulfill God's will for me and for society at large? I can go one step further: a job is not necessary to feel a sense of calling. Don't retired people or disabled people have a calling, even if they don't have paid employment?

DJ: It seems, then, that our identity, as well as our calling, should be in our relationship with Jesus, not in our specific work skill. In Romans 1:1, Paul describes himself as "a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God" (NIV). Paul's identity as a servant of Jesus, his calling as an apostle, and his preaching of the gospel were all the same. Whether he was preaching from the Areopagus in Athens, sewing tents in Corinth, or imprisoned in Rome, he was fulfilling God's call. I wish now that, as a pastor, I had conveyed this concept in my preaching so that whether my listeners were business professionals, retirees, or even unemployed, they would have realized that they shared Paul's identity, calling, and mission.

MC: Perhaps this lack of shared identity is why business professionals may find it difficult to talk with the pastor about their struggles in balancing the competing needs of work, family, and church life. They may not want to talk about the complex ethical dilemmas that involve confidential information. Additionally, in some business situations, more than one right thing needs to be done, and more than one potentially bad outcome may need to be avoided.

DJ: Here's another cause for misunderstanding between pastors and business professionals. Friends who operate businesses have told me that some clergy members feel entitled to receive special "deals." The business owner may give the deal but then feel bitter about it and even stop attending the pastor's church.

MC: I have seen this. That can leave a sour taste and damage the pastor's credibility with the very people he or she wants to reach.

DJ: I'm a pastor who wants to have some competence in understanding the business world. What types of business professionals are in a typical congregation?

MC: Supervisors, foremen, managers, owners, entrepreneurs, and executives are all business professionals. People who work in trades or agriculture may not wear a suit to work every day, but they are as much business professionals as the Wall Street executives. Many business professionals serve in staff support roles like accounting, marketing, quality control, human resources management, software development, and so on. Even if they don't manage a team of people, their organization depends on their business expertise.

DJ: That might include the majority of members in many congregations! What are key concerns in business that pastors should understand?

MC: When you consider the wide variety of businesses that are represented

in a congregation, the common key concerns tend to be really big issues. Managing uncertainty and risk would be one. When faced with uncertainty, businesses need to control their key resources that provide value to customers. This includes, among other things, acquiring cash, materials, equipment, land, customers, and employees. In terms of relationships, a key concern is fostering positive relationships with workers and developing leadership abilities in employees.

DJ: Could one gap between pastors and business professionals be the different language we use to describe similar concerns? I talk about interests and evangelism, but my business friend talks about customers and sales. Church officers can be compared to employees, and leadership training seems very similar to discipling. We both deal with cash, materials, equipment, and land, but we approach concerns from different perspectives.

As pastors, we may feel pressure from business professionals who want to see measurable programs, progress, and profits. We may believe that God will take care of risks if we just step out in faith—that the church's profit should be measured not in money in the bank but in baptisms, membership gains, service to the community, and spiritual growth.

MC: But, Doug, is not the efficient use of money and the efficient making of profit one of the ways we legitimately serve God?

DJ: If you are talking about being a good steward of money, of course. We want to use God's money most efficiently, but are you suggesting that the business professionals in my church serve God by making financial profits? Is that one of their responsibilities? Is it immoral to make a profit?

MC: No, it is not immoral to make a profit. Not earning a profit means that the organization's ability to continue contributing to a flourishing life is undermined. Believers do serve God by

spreading the gospel. Serving God is not limited to fostering only the spiritual dimension of life to the exclusion of the physical, social, economic, and international spheres.

Earning a profit becomes important to the ongoing success of a business, but, by itself, it does not adequately express the idea of purpose. Profit, if that alone is the focus, downplays other social goals that are at the root of why we buy and sell with each other in the marketplace.

If the organization has made a commitment to serve the greater good of society, and if that commitment is designed to foster flourishing life in all dimensions, then, all things being equal, it would be immoral not to be faithful to this commitment. Earning profit gives the organization resources needed to fulfill its commitment to service.

DJ: Michael, I hear you saying that the Bible's wholistic theology of human nature serves as an effective foundation for business with a Christian commitment. Where a link exists between biblical anthropology and biblical work ethics, out of that springs forth the biblical view of value. What determines value in the business world?

MC: I would approach your question in two ways. First, value as commonly understood in business is located in resource, its availability, and its demand. The more a resource is scarce but desirable, the higher its value tends to become. When customers have funds available to purchase something they want, this tends to increase the price of a product. Additionally, the availability of substitutes has a large influence on the value of a resource. The more viable the substitutes, the lower the price of that resource. Some business professionals possibly tend to define value too narrowly in terms of the monetary value of a resource; that is, the price. Nevertheless, price is practical, and for this reason it should not be discounted as a useful decision-making tool. The price of products and services helps us balance our desires for other goods.

Price also helps the producers of goods avoid trying to sell goods that are not valued.

A second way of looking at value would be to keep in mind the purpose for which an organization exists. That purpose is normally related to what is going on in the environment outside the organization. From this broader perspective, the purpose of business is to provide what is needed for society in order to help that society to flourish, which in turn would return to society more than the value of the resources consumed in the process of operating the business.

From a biblical point of view, the purpose of business is deeper than can be seen on a balance sheet, in a bank account, or even in projects with humane value. We find the real purpose—within the larger goal of demonstrating the character of God to a watching universe—is to sustain flourishing life and to build value-oriented communities. I'm not sure how many business professionals see their role in this light. But from a biblical perspective, business must contribute to the process of blessing others and building communities that will be permanent channels of love and care. The

Pastors may tend to think that members in business put profits above mission or compromise ethics in search of success.

DJ: That's profit or value—whether in money or in some other measure. Does the way one measures value have an impact on how one defines the purpose of one's business? For example, from a biblical perspective, it is easy to see that God values people more than anything else. Jesus paid for us with His own blood, the ultimate price. His purpose was to save us. How is the purpose of a business determined?

MC: Purpose is absolutely vital in business! But is it to make profit and ensure growth for oneself or one's family and its future? Is it to succeed in the world of similar business and launch an empire of great strength? Or, in addition to the reasons above, is the purpose of a business located on a higher plane? Unless a business returns to society more than it consumes, it is destroying prosperity.


end result will be a valuable setting that will glorify God, uplift His worship, and develop men and women who will reflect God's image. Says Ellen White: "God calls upon men to serve Him in every transaction of life. Business is a snare when the law of God is not made the law of the daily life. He who has anything to do with the Master's work is to maintain unswerving integrity. In all business transactions, as verily as when on bended knees he seeks help from on high, God's will is to be his will. He is to keep the Lord ever before him, constantly studying the subjects about which the Holy Word speaks. Thus, though living amid that which would debase a man of lax principles, the man of piety and stern integrity preserves his Christianity."³ Faithful business professionals thus are coworkers with God just as much as is the pastor, missionary, or evangelist.

DJ: One of the purposes of business, then, includes Jesus' work of teaching, preaching, and healing—essentially building up the kingdom of God. Since we are made in God's image and God's image includes His ability to create, when we create goods and services that provide a meaningful life for others, we are reflecting God's image to others. Products that promote life such as the LifeStraw, a straw-shaped water filter giving anyone access to clean drinking water, are as much a part of the gospel ministry as Jesus' healing miracles. One of the greatest ways business builds up God's kingdom is in providing productive work, living wages, and family support through health care and other benefits.

MC: I agree. The core value offered to customers *should be* related to the theological purpose of business. Business must contribute to the building of the kingdom of God by blessing others, by being a setting where the restoration of the image of God is promoted through the work processes and by the

products and services, themselves, that contribute to flourishing life in all dimensions, not just the economic dimension. This means, as reflected in the biblical point of view on economic prosperity, business is just one of several types of organizations in society that have an opportunity to contribute to or support God's plan of redemption for this earth. This means that business may be closer to the work of the church than is typically conceived.

DJ: We gravely err when we see business and other professionals as less spiritual because they operate in the secular world of production and profits. Instead we, especially pastors, must see business and secular professionals as being valuable contact points with the world and key partners in promoting the kingdom of God on earth. If we define health as wholistic health or as flourishing well-being, then business professionals, along with health-care professionals, can be seen as partners in doing Jesus' work on Earth. Similarly

to other professions: they may not be directly church related, but those involved in such professions can be "tentmakers" and be so respected. The biblical model, as demonstrated in Acts, is for the gospel to be proclaimed by business professionals in their arena, the marketplace, and financed by their profits. Pastors can help business professionals develop better theological foundations for their work, find deeper biblical purposes for their businesses, and make greater professional contributions, with their expertise and skills, to the mission of the church. 

- 1 The first sentence of fundamental belief no. 22, with the revisions voted at the 2015 San Antonio General Conference Session in italics, reads, "We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with *biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life.*" "Living Christian Behavior," Seventh-day Adventist Church, accessed May 3, 2016, www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/living/christian-behavior/.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn. 1941), 349.
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), 90.

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Revival and Reformation While We Wait

God's desire is that "everyone" will "come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9, NIV). Though we cannot do the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to repentance, we are called to reach them with the message of salvation, which, if accepted, will lead to repentance.

We, too, as church members; need to be in an attitude of repentance. Repentance is part of the process of revival and reformation. Revival means to come back to life, to be renewed, and to be restored. Reformation means to be reshaped, reformed—to be a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). . . .

The "how should we wait" passages in [Matthew 25:1–13] illustrate conditions and outcomes of revival and reformation. For example, all ten virgins needed to be revived, awakened out of sleep. . . . The foolish virgins needed to increase their capacity for the Holy Spirit in their lives. When we humble ourselves, die to self, unselfishly pray, study God's Word, and lovingly share it with others in word and loving deeds, we increase our capacity for an infilling of the Holy Spirit in latter-rain power. However, it is possible to study the Bible for hours and still be a selfish person. We could pray for revival and

the latter rain but selfishly want it only for ourselves. Revival always leads to unselfish concern for others. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will be reformed into passionate, mission- and service-centered disciples.

—Excerpt from Gaspar F. Colón and May-Ellen M. Colón, "The Role of the Church in the Community," Adult Bible Study Guide, third quarter, 2016, 106.

Revival
and REFORMATION
YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR CHURCH, YOUR COMMUNITY

Michael Goetz, DMin, is lead pastor of the Campion Seventh-day Adventist church, Loveland, Colorado, United States.



Treating preaching as a practice

Every week preachers become the little boy on the hillside who sat in the multitude listening to Jesus and was willing to give his two fish and five rolls into the hands of the Master. Haddon Robinson closes his book *Biblical Preaching* with this picture: “We will give Him our best. Yet, in the final analysis there are no great preachers. There’s only a great Christ who does startling things when we place ourselves and our preaching in His hands. . . . Even on our best weeks we have only some fish and bread. But we serve the living Lord. Give Him your small lunch and trust Him to feed His people.”¹

Thus, when it comes to preaching, the best lesson comes from a nameless boy sitting on the grass, responding to the question asked by Andrew: “Will you give what you have to Jesus?”

As preachers, we cannot turn away from Robinson’s line: “We will give Him our best.”

Preaching has always been at the center of Christianity because Christianity has as its foundation the Word of God, and preaching is its exposition. Preaching is the most visible part of a pastor’s ministry and has a significant influence on the spiritual journey of a congregation.² However, there are problems and questions in the shadow of the pulpit.

Problems in the pulpit

No preacher seeks to be irrelevant, but any preacher can become so.

Research by the Barna Group said that 46 percent of all churchgoers reported no impact from their time there, and “three out of five church attenders said they could not recall an important new religious insight from their last church visit.”³ The research (based only on churchgoers) showed that while they do see an importance in attending, half of those in church do not perceive any benefit from what they experience. While these numbers can be influenced by several factors, it stands to reason that the sermon, being the central part of the worship service in most churches, is at least a primary factor.

In the opening chapter of his book *As One Without Authority*,⁴ Fred Craddock gives six reasons⁵ why preaching struggles today. While each is worth the time for every preacher to review, they are, to some degree, outside of the preacher’s control, except for the last one. Craddock believes the difficulty of achieving meaningful communication is that few preachers are naturally good at it. Maybe we have been giving ourselves a pass. We slide because there were half a dozen members last week who said it was the best sermon ever and two elders confided that the preaching was better than that of the last pastor.

Treating preaching as a practice

While an individual may have gifts, abilities, or even a personality that

supports the calling to preach; excellence in preaching is not an innate activity. Preaching with excellence is a learned and developed practice, similar in some respects to the practices of law and medicine.

The practice-oriented treatment of preaching can be distilled to five central components:⁶ (1) frequent exposure to examples of excellence, (2) a supportive environment of high expectations, (3) identifying and learning the distinct interrelated parts that constitute the specific practice, (4) engaging in an action-reflection model of learning, and (5) a commitment to lifelong learning and development in the practice.

1. *Frequent exposure to examples of excellence.* The impact of frequent exposure to examples of excellence was well illustrated by the world-famous Japanese violin instructor, Shinichi Suzuki. Suzuki was known for developing a violin pedagogy in the mid-twentieth century that is still in use today. His inspiration came when he observed that all children were able to learn their native tongue, without respect for ability or talent. Suzuki’s conclusion was that people learn from their environment because of constant exposure to the environment. In teaching violin, Suzuki encouraged saturation to music as early as possible, with students playing in groups and performing in public as often as possible, to make it natural.⁷

Augustine pointed to the experience of infants learning to speak by observing the expression of speakers and maintained that preachers could be made “eloquent” by reading and hearing the expressions of the eloquent.⁸ The key factor, then, is exposure to excellent preaching from various preachers, including historical greats. Through this listening-watching experience, the preacher may become aware of a consistent set of principles manifested through a variety of styles.⁹

2. *A supportive environment of high expectations.* Preaching has always been difficult. In an ever-changing world, the listening congregations are individuals who come with a different past, a unique present, and a myriad of distractions. Our modern era is arguably the era of greatest need in communicating God’s Word. While the need and task are great, so is the lack of excellent preachers. When asked what counsel he would give to pastors preaching to or teaching the

generation of postmoderns, Thom Rainer responded: “First of all, do not take the moment of preaching lightly. Be extremely well prepared. Study. This generation knows the difference.”¹⁰

While an environment of high expectations is, at the foundation, an individual choice, something must be said of the responsibility of the local conference or hiring organization. Most often at this level, the environment of support and high expectations can be created. Business and administrative duties must take place, but part of that business must include accountability in the area of preaching. This accountability might include the pastor’s diagnosis of congregational needs and an assessment of the quality of preaching employed in addressing the expressed needs.

3. *Identifying and learning the parts of the specific practice.* Fred Craddock was right in stating that while it is possible to learn to preach, “preaching itself is a very complex activity.”¹¹ Homiletical

instructors agree that breaking down the components that make up the practice of preaching increases the ability of the student to excel by targeting each part separately.¹² Support for this position comes from educational greats like Suzuki as well as Maria Montessori.¹³ “In 1971, Albert Mehrabian published *Silent Messages*, in which he discussed his research on nonverbal communication.” Based on his conclusions, the words on your paper are only 7 percent of the communication process. The way you say those words is 38 percent, and your body language (including eye contact and facial expression) is 55 percent.¹⁴ While the accuracy of these percentages has been challenged,¹⁵ we generally accept that how the speaker communicates significantly impacts the listener. The need to be able to identify the interrelated parts and target them for excellence cannot be restricted to sermon delivery (i.e., verbal and nonverbal) but is also relevant for sermon construction (e.g., introduction and appeal).

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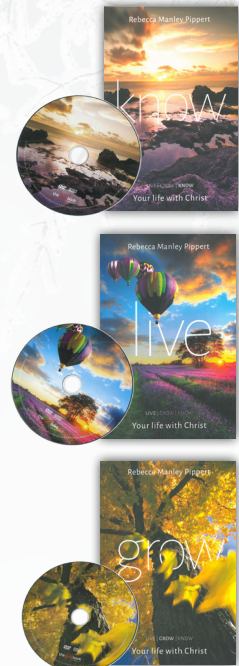
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4. *Engaging in an action-reflection model of learning.* Ben Mandrell states, “Practice is prerequisite to excellence, and a sermon should be spoken several times before it’s publically shared.”¹⁶ Derek Morris maintains that practice should be undertaken “at least five times prior to preaching your sermon in public” and that “during your walk-throughs, think of gestures and visual aids that will help you drive home your main idea.”¹⁷ Part of a successful action-reflection includes the discipline of writing out a manuscript of the sermon. Whether or not that manuscript is positioned in the pulpit will depend on the style

In a study of expertise, Malcolm Gladwell notes that researchers found that masters in the game of chess spend thousands of hours learning to recognize patterns of chess pieces’ positions on the chessboard and then memorizing and selecting game strategies based on those perceptions. From that research came an entire field within psychology focused on observation. Gladwell maintains that “it takes a lot of practice to be good at complex tasks.”¹⁸ If ever there was a complex task—influencing with one talk the destinies of 1 or 1,000 individuals, each unique in personality and experiences—it would be preaching. Gladwell concludes: “The

of pastoral family stress. Although the study is not published yet, this team of researchers and professors believe that continuing education for the pastor would reduce the stress that comes from the ministry and result in greater longevity.²⁰

Ellen White was careful not to discourage preachers who have little or no training, while pressing the call for preachers to be diligently prepared: “The cause of God needs efficient men. Education and training are rightly regarded as an essential preparation for business life; and how much more essential is thorough preparation for the work of presenting the last message

Preaching is the most visible part of a pastor’s ministry and has a significant influence on the spiritual journey of a congregation.

and preference of the preacher, but the discipline of writing the manuscript will afford the preacher invaluable reflection.

In the spring of 2013, a semester-long approach focusing on the discipline of practice was formed and implemented in one of two biblical preaching classes taught in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Two specific focuses were on the impact of peer accountability and task repetition (reflection/action) make on one’s preaching ability. The effectiveness of the disciplines of peer accountability and task repetition was measured by classroom observation and qualitative interviews. The discipline that was reported to have had the most impact on improving preachers was watching or listening to their sermon with someone while reflecting on areas of strengths and weaknesses.

ten-thousand-hour research reminds us that ‘the closer psychologists look at the careers of the gifted, the smaller the role innate talent seems to play and the bigger the role preparation seems to play.’ In cognitively demanding fields, there are no naturals. Nobody walks into an operating room, straight out of a surgical rotation, and does world-class neurosurgery. And second . . . the amount of practice necessary for exceptional performance is so extensive that people who end up on top need help.”¹⁹ Practice means engaging in an action-reflection model of learning that really looks more like action-action-reflection-action-action-reflection. Pastors will need to ensure that preaching excellence does not come with pastoral burnout.

5. *Instilling a commitment to lifelong learning and development.* In 2012, an interdisciplinary team from Andrews University began working on a study

of mercy to the world! This training cannot be gained by merely listening to preaching . . . Nothing less than constant cultivation will develop the value of the gifts that God has bestowed for wise improvement.”²¹

Giving the best

Preaching is the most visible part of a pastor’s ministry, and it has a significant influence on the spiritual journey of the congregation. The sacrifice of a little boy’s lunch is a testimony that “[b]ecoming a preacher demands costly personal involvement.”²² Preaching is very personal, while being so much bigger than one person. Preaching is ultimately about Jesus Christ communicating to His church through His Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit will convict hearts and change lives. The responsibility of preachers involves standing with the little boy on the hill, offering our best

to Jesus, and letting Him multiply His Word to the hungry. 📖

- 1 Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 224.
- 2 Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville, TN: B&H Pub. Group, 2012).
- 3 Adelle Banks, "Survey: Half of Churchgoers' Lives Not Affected by Time in Pews," *EthicsDaily.com*, January 16, 2012, ethicsdaily.com/survey-half-of-churchgoers-lives-not-affected-by-time-in-pews-cms-19114.
- 4 Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001).
- 5 First is the Social Gospel Movement and its push toward action, not talk. Thus, preaching is denigrated by the comparison to just—talk. A second reason is that the words the church holds on to are often language the world mistrusts. The third reason is the change from oral to visual sensitivity in a person's sensorium brought on by television. The fourth cause is the loss of certainty and the rise of tentativeness in culture and among preachers. Those who stand and speak of the absolute are viewed with skepticism. The fifth cause for the long shadow from the pulpit is the relationship of the speaker

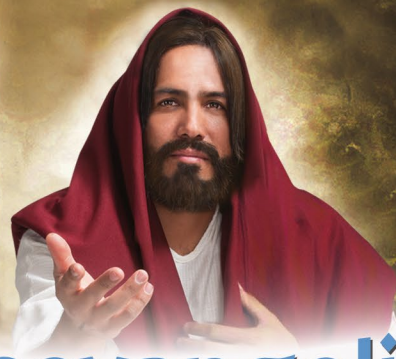
to the listener. There is much discussion about the traditional preaching motif—a raised stage, one-way communication, and an authority figure versus the learner. The final reason Craddock listed is the difficulty of having meaningful communication. It is hard, and very few are naturally good at it. Craddock, 6–20.

- 6 Thomas G. Long and Lenora Tubbs Tisdale, eds., *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 44–51.
- 7 Shinichi Suzuki, *Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 1983).
- 8 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson Jr. (Indianapolis, IN: Macmillan / Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), 121.
- 9 Michael Duduit, ed., *Preaching With Power: Dynamic Insights From Twenty Top Communicators* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006).
- 10 Michael Duduit, "Reaching the Millennials: An Interview with Thom Rainer," *Preaching* (January/February 2012): 6–12, www.preaching.com/resources/articles/reaching-the-millennials-an-interview-with-thom-rainer/.
- 11 Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 16.
- 12 Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed.

(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

- 13 Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind* (New York, NY: Henry Holt, 1995).
- 14 Philip Yaffe, "The 7% Rule: Fact, Fiction, or Misunderstanding," *Ubiquity* (October 2011), 1–5, ubiquity.acm.org/article.cfm?id=2043156.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ben Mandrell, "Staying the Course," *Preaching* (September/October, 2012), 19–22, www.preaching.com/resources/articles/staying-the-course/.
- 17 Derek Morris, "12 Steps for Preparing and Delivering Powerful Biblical Sermons," *Elder's Digest* (October/December, 2012), 22–25, cdn.ministerialassociation.org/cdn/eldersdigest.org/issues/ED%20Q4%202012.pdf.
- 18 Malcolm Gladwell, "Complexity and the Ten-Thousand-Hour Rule," *The New Yorker*, August 21, 2013, www.newyorker.com/the-sporting-scene/complexity-and-the-ten-thousand-hour-rule.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Duane McBride et al., "The Stresses of Being a Pastor," *FOCUS 5* (Summer 2014), 10, 11.
- 21 Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), 538, 539.
- 22 Long, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice*, 5.

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Called to power?

Years ago, a union president proudly informed me that he had just been promoted to a “higher position” at the division. I was taken aback by this statement of promotion from one whom I considered a humble and godly leader. Immediately I sensed the insidious and corrupting nature of position and power and how easily one can be enticed to seek a higher pedestal rather than God’s will.

Not that we do not have many spiritual and selfless leaders at all levels in the church. Ellen White speaks of such persons as “men and women who will not be bought or sold . . . whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole.”¹ These men and women are convicted about their call to a ministry of service at the most basic levels in the church. These are administrators and pastors in remote places, serving with heartfelt conviction that ministry is a calling to lift up Christ and not self. These are also students in our colleges and seminaries who are not fascinated by the trappings of power but are passionate about self-sacrificing service in the most rudimentary positions and isolated places.

While we are fortunate to have such men and women who serve the church with devotion and humility, it is observable that some misuse the power that is inherent in their position to exalt self and not Christ. The purpose of this article is to generate a thoughtful dialogue about how easily power can be misused in the church,

with the hope that this recognition will call us back from the edge of the abyss to once again embrace ethical, biblical leadership.

Our fervent hope should ever be that all pastors and leaders accept God’s call to ministry with hearts aflame, determined to serve wherever God places us, and work with humility, compassion, and rejection of pride in any form. We have all too often forgotten that we are called to a ministry of self-sacrificing service; not one of self-promotion, professional pride, and pretension. The call to pastoral ministry is identified as “not from human origin but of divine instigation.”² This uniqueness of ministry is due to its divine appointment and means that it is more than a profession; it is a calling.

I still recall the sense of passion and wonderment at my own initial call to pastoral ministry. I experienced an intense joy at my appointment to full-time ministry. The reasons for my joy were twofold: first, God had called and prepared me for ministry; second, God had made me realize that the power to transform lives and save souls is His—and never mine. I recall my sense of bashful amazement that mature adults would listen to me and choose to be spiritually influenced by my service and ministry. The call of Saul (1 Sam. 10:20–27) reveals how a divine empowerment to lead often begins with a great sense of awe and personal unworthiness but can quickly deteriorate into a debilitating attitude of entitlement and abuse of power.

Lessons from Saul

The experience of Saul, Israel’s first king, provides an instructive parallel to the dangers faced by those of us called by God and entrusted by Him with power to lead. Wiest and Smith state that when a pastor is ordained, that act of ordination by the church bestows on the clergyperson a special responsibility and a sacred role within the community of faith. If that sacred responsibility is treated and used as though it were the clergy’s personal possession, the pastor is indulging in an abuse of power.³ Raymond Edwards observes that the acquisition and exercising of power in religious ministry is not only dynamic and delicate but also potentially dangerous. It is obvious that no one called to ministry is immune to the risk of the abuse of power. That risk is inherent in leadership positions and, therefore, requires careful monitoring.⁴

Initial humility

The humility involved in Saul’s initial response to the divine call reflects two factors identifiable in the response of most individuals to their initial call to pastoral ministry. First, the call is to a divine task—something impossible to fulfill with human ability alone. Second, the pastor is called from among his or her peers. This calling involves a divine empowerment to influence and provide spiritual leadership for those from among whom he or she is called.

These two factors can produce a sense of personal unworthiness as the individual seeks for divine

empowerment. Notice Saul's first reaction when he was chosen by God through the prophet Samuel. Saul felt so unworthy for this divine task that he left his peers and hid himself. At Samuel's command, Saul was brought to stand before the prophet to hear his calling. One moment Saul was just one among his friends, and the next moment, people were hailing him, "God save the king."

Saul responded to this sudden transition and empowerment with quiet dignity. He chose not to be offended by the animosity of those who rejected him. A certain sense of timidity and naïveté marked his responses. It was as if power and privilege had been too suddenly thrust on him. Awkward and uncertain, he shied away from embracing the power, almost as if he sensed its conceited nature. Though he was given a position of power, he had not yet grasped the power of the position. His humility and hesitant embrace of power at his calling is the complete

opposite of the arrogance, pride, and abuse that he showed a few years into his leadership. If Saul's response to the initial call to kingship showed a humble, God-dependent mind, his later style of leadership showed the corporate mind-set into which a proud and arrogant Saul fell.

The corporate mind-set

We have some pastors today who have a heartfelt acceptance that true ministry is about providing spiritual leadership, service, and influence to bring people into a saving relationship with Christ. There are others, unfortunately, who see ministry as an accumulation of power and privilege, based on the continuous attaining of "higher" positions within the church organization. We are also painfully aware of the unhealthy use of influence and power that occurs at all levels of the church during the election of leaders. The model displayed is that successful ministry is being attached to large

churches, administrative offices, and leadership positions in the hierarchy of the church. This approach to ministry results in abuse of power and display of pride in positions. Such postures are not representative of Christ's model of servant leadership but, rather, examples of a corporate mind-set.

Richard Exley notes that when the negative influence of power is allowed to creep into the ministry, ministry loses its intended purpose of saving and serving souls. This potential to abuse power is present in everyone. It is not necessarily true humility that keeps the abuse of power in check but rather a lack of opportunity to exercise power.⁵ Indeed we all search for power, and we are all vulnerable to misusing power, even when that power is given by God to serve His cause and His people.

Review the kingship of Saul again, and note the power dynamics at play in his style of leadership. Such a review of these dynamics gives us three kinds of Saul: the hesitant and naïve Saul

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(1 Sam. 10:21–27); the confident, God-empowered Saul (1 Sam. 11:6–15); and the despotic, self-reliant, power-hungry and power-abusing Saul (1 Sam. 13:7–31:13). With which Saul do I most identify?

A brief look at a couple of definitions for power will create an understanding of the corrosive nature of power and its impact on ministry. Power is described as

with certain physical structures and trappings to consolidate and signal the power of the position. These perks and benefits are often disguised as essentials for effectively delivering ministry. At the level of the local church these can be reserved parking spaces, private toilet facilities, personal telephone lines, credit card facility, and personal deacon escorts. These trappings can be rationalized as simple conveniences to

by the despiritualizing process, not dissimilar to the later Saul, caused by our new valued currency of pride and position in ascendancy over one's peers. Power positions are sought and retained not so much for service but for influence, recognition, and esteem. The focus is on personal ambitions rather than on service and mission. This model results in cynicism, vindictive behaviors, and a failure to view the

We have some pastors today who have a heartfelt acceptance that true ministry is about providing spiritual leadership, service, and influence to bring people into a saving relationship with Christ.

- great or marked ability to do or act; strength; might; force and⁶
- possession of control, authority, or influence over others.⁷

Both definitions provide a general context for understanding what power looks like in the church.

Secular power positions are often accompanied by attractive financial compensations, with privileges and perks. Power positions in the church are, however, not attached to financial compensations that are particularly higher than what others in ministry receive. The perceived reward is, therefore, not pay, but positions of control, command, and authority. The church has created its own currency of value, which is pride of ascendant positions in a pecking order. This involves esteem, influence, and recognition of being “first among equals.”

Raymond Edwards observes that some churches support power positions

facilitate ministry, but in effect they are exclusive privileges that consolidate and signal the power, priority, and primacy of power positions.⁸

Power and positions

Power positions in the church are associated with control over resources as well as over the welfare of one's peers. The early King Saul reveals a leader who was not self-serving in his control over resources and not vindictive concerning the welfare of his peers who had rejected him. It is this Saul that demonstrates the potential God identified when He initially called this future king from among his peers (1 Sam. 10:20–22; 11).

Unlike this early Saul, too many church administrators act like the later Saul—creating and maintaining positions of power rather than acting to enhance their quality of service in ministry. The church today is threatened

church as the spiritual body of Christ.

Exley notes that personal ambition in a pastor can be justified as a vision for the kingdom, a divine call, or the following of God's will. This mixing of power and pride is, however, combustible.⁹ The danger lies in conflating our personal egos with the illusion that we are enabled by divine empowerment to use our influence for self-centered purposes in the name of God's cause.

The more we value the new currency we have created, the less we value the priesthood of all believers and the pastoral calling of service to a congregation. The call to “ministry” becomes a call to seek hierarchical power positions instead of a call to pastoral service. Pastors, then, can simply become pawns or shrewd professionals in the business of gaining these power positions and awaiting their turn to do so.

This is not the biblical servant leadership model of Christ. The church

will lose its appeal to a cynical generation because her structures, values, and culture reflect those of the world. When the world no longer views the church as morally and ethically different, those who are looking for examples of Christlikeness are disillusioned by this new norm.

Power through humility


A brief examination of the confident, God-empowered Saul (1 Sam. 11:6–15) can help us avoid these pitfalls of the abuse of power. When Saul, as a new king, defeated the Ammonites in his first battle, he faced the temptation to be vindictive to his own people who had not initially supported him. His response was not self-serving but instead a genuine reflection of humility for what God had done (1 Sam. 11:13).

Saul clearly understood his own frailty and gave credit to God, who brought about the victory. He recognized that power and position were not to be grasped for self-advancement


but to be placed in service to God. In 1 Samuel 11:13–15 we see Saul rejecting the temptation to be vindictive. This Christlike example is then followed by Samuel’s “call to the people” to renew the kingdom. All Israel “rejoiced greatly” and accepted Saul “as king before the Lord.”

Such utility of power to expand God’s kingdom and preserve the unity of God’s people is the biblical model of empowered ministry. When we embrace such humility in service, we discover the antidote for the corrosive effects of the abuse of power in ministry. Did not Jesus say: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to

give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25–28, NKJV; cf. also Phil. 2:5–9).

It is clear that the call of Jesus is a call to positions of service and not to positions of power. The call to Christlikeness in ministry is not to selfish advancement but to selfless, God-empowered service of humility. 

- 1 Ellen G. White, *True Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2000), 38.
- 2 *Seventh-day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association, 2009), 15.
- 3 Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith, *Ethics in Ministry: A Guide for the Professional* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 60.
- 4 Raymond S. Edwards, *Power and the Pastor: How to Build Power and Use it Wisely* (Brooklyn, NY: MOHDC, 2005), 24.
- 5 Richard Exley, *Perils of Power* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association, 1995), 66.
- 6 *Dictionary.com*, s.v. “power,” accessed September 17, 2013, dictionary.reference.com/browse/power?s=t.
- 7 *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “power,” accessed September 17, 2013, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/power.
- 8 Edwards, *Power and the Pastor*, 40.
- 9 Exley, *Perils of Power*, 62.



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10. **Befriend** new members and disciple them.
11. **Pray like never before** for the advancement of the Gospel in hard-to-reach areas of the world. Pray that God will reveal ways that you can personally work in His vineyard.

► New Adventist garden in Britain honors those who stand for peace

Watford, England—A Seventh-day Adventist public garden—spotlighted at night, with seating in tranquil surroundings and a three-tier fountain as the centerpiece—is now a national British memorial to all those who stand for peace in wartime.

The idea for the garden, which opened in Stanborough Park in Watford, England, on September 21, the International Day of Peace, rose from the recognition that 130 Adventist men, many of them based in the area, went to prison and suffered severely for their noncombatant stance during World War I.

Ian Sweeney, president of the British Union Conference of the Adventist Church, told the ceremony



Photo: Dejan Stojkovic

attendees in the Stanborough Park Seventh-day Adventist Church that Adventists are citizens of two kingdoms and that the kingdom of God must take priority when those kingdoms clash.

It was **Victor Hulbert**, now Trans-European Division communication director, whose research three years ago found that 130 Seventh-day Adventist conscripts refused to bear arms during World War I and at the

same time observed the biblical seventh-day Sabbath.

Hulbert emphasized at the ceremony that the garden was created as a memorial to those soldiers' courageous stance amid ridicule and opposition—as well as to the 20,000 people in Britain who refused to bear arms or take another's life during World War I and all those who work for peace today. [Richard Daly | Trans-European Division]

► Hispanics in Europe Gather for Total Member Involvement Training

Newbold College, England—This summer, over 150 Hispanics from the Inter-European and Trans-European Divisions gathered for an inspiring missionary training meeting at Newbold College, England, under the theme Evangelism Everyone Everywhere.

The keynote speakers were **Robert Costa**, evangelism and church growth director at the General Conference, **Hermes Tavera-Buena** from the Greater New York Conference, and **Dr. Ebenezer Chambi** from Loma Linda in California, USA. These meetings, held by the Association of Latin American Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Europe (AIALE), aimed at training attendees to bring people into the kingdom.

“In Latin American culture, there is a strong desire for doing the mission—

bringing people into the kingdom. We go directly to knock on doors, ask them

to sit down and have Bible studies, and talk about Jesus,” explained Wilson



Photo: Inter-European Division



Lagos, a pastor in London, England, and executive secretary of AIALE. “At the end of the day, we bring them to church and make disciples of them, the way Jesus wants us to.”

Some of their witnessing methods to engage people to join Bible study and go

to church are through youth meetings or sports days. However, this group of people faces some difficulties when trying to reach out to locals. Language or culture clashes come in the way of witnessing.

“As a Spanish speaker in Europe, we have no resources in our language.

Many of these attendees have no pastors, they have no churches in their home languages,” said Lagos. “But, they are willing to do the mission.”

For more information visit AIALE.com. [Natasha Mirilov | Newbold College]

► *Tell the World* showcases Adventist church pioneers' struggles and triumphs



Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—After years of planning, fundraising, and production, **Chester Stanley**, former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia, saw his dream come true with the completion of the *Tell the World* cinematic production, which tells the history of the global denomination's pioneers and is the largest media production in the denomination's history.

Tell the World was produced by Hope Channel Australia, the official broadcast network of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia. Its story of the birth and development of the early Advent movement was brought to life by 95 actors, 157 crew members, and 1,000 extras.

Tell the World will allow viewers to see the Advent pioneers

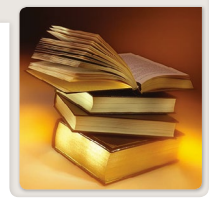
wrestle to understand Scripture, debate theology, and overcome bitter disappointment. Through it all, the pioneers were led and inspired by God as they journeyed to find the truth.

The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is coordinating the distribution of the project, which will be available in three formats: short historical clips that were released in August 2016; a television series of six episodes that aired on Hope Channel and was streamed online in October 2016; and a feature-length film that will be available on streaming services, including Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, and Google Play at a later date. The month of October was selected to air *Tell the World* to coincide with the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844.

The project was designed for members to connect with the church's movement and to rediscover what it means to be an Adventist. *Tell the World* will also provide an opportunity for people who are unfamiliar with the church to gain a deeper understanding of the denomination that has more than 19 million members worldwide.

“I believe that this film will be a tremendous spiritual encouragement to God's people and the public,” said **Ted Wilson**, president of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference.

Tell the World will be dubbed in French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Over the course of three years, subtitles will be available in the 30 most spoken languages of the world. [tellttheworld.adventist.org]. 📺



A. G. Daniells: Shaper of Twentieth-Century Adventism

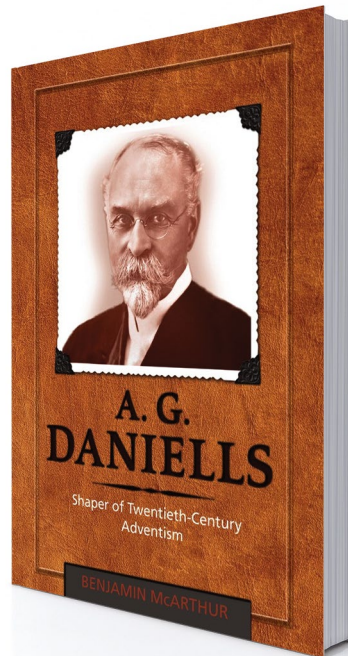
by Benjamin McArthur: Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016.

In the history of Adventist leadership, A. G. Daniells belongs right beside James White, Joseph Bates, and Ellen G. White. Certainly Daniells's position is secure despite his rise from relative obscurity. Benjamin McArthur's biography is a tour de force of Adventist history. In a masterful way, this consummate historian gives color to the rich tapestry of Daniells's life.

As a young man, Daniells found ministry to be a steep learning curve, particularly as a young missionary to Australia and New Zealand. He rose to leadership at a pivotal moment when Ellen G. White challenged church leaders to restructure the denomination after several aborted attempts. He went on to become the longest-serving General Conference president in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination (1901–1922), and his administrative decisions in many ways continue to shape the denomination to the present day.

McArthur's biography narrates two central motifs that drove Daniells as a person. First, Daniells was one of the most capable administrators the Seventh-day Adventist Church has ever known, and second, Daniells was a champion of world missions. His greatest legacy was his ability to merge these two interests into one. He was a driven man, yet despite his intense schedule of meetings, speaking appointments, and demanding correspondence, he maintained a focus on what he believed was his purpose and overall sense of mission, namely to convey the conviction that God was accompanying their efforts and had commissioned the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a message for the world.

During Daniells's lifetime, the denomination went through its "turbulent teenage" years as it in many ways grew up. If Adventism is "a movement of



Benjamin McArthur's biography is a tour de force of Adventist history.

institutions" (164, 165), then the career of Daniells essentially represents the bureaucratization of the church. He was a man obsessed with numbers. It represented his need to objectify progress. "Denominational numeracy spoke to a long-standing Adventist predilection for hard data as the proper measure of progress" (376, 377). If numbers are therefore a measure of success, the rapid proliferation of institutions combined with the multiplication of church members cemented Daniells as a great administrator.

Yet McArthur does not avoid discussing how even one of the administrative "greats" of Adventist history had "growing pains" along the journey. For Daniells, there was no greater conflict than his conflict with Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, the so-called "golden boy" of Adventism. Here Daniells at last met his match. Each had an opposite personality, and sadly the battle lines were drawn so firmly that Kellogg eventually parted company

with the church (taking the Battle Creek Sanitarium along with him). The journey down this exit ramp is the most bitter leadership feud in Adventist history, replete with a coup d'état attempt by Kellogg to oust Daniells. During turbulent times such as these, Daniells could count on the support of Ellen G. White. It may not have always felt like support at the time, as Daniells was also the recipient of pointed messages of reproof. Still, this relationship with the Adventist messenger to the remnant church—as well as with her son, W. C. White—was the most enriching of his career.

Challenges appeared almost to energize Daniells. Of the many other notable dramas during his tenure, chapter seven is a personal favorite as McArthur narrates the epic story of race relations during Daniells's presidency. How the denomination dealt with Lewis B. Sheafe set the stage for many

Continued on page 30



Larry Yeagley is a retired pastor, chaplain, and author residing in Gentry, Arkansas, United States.

The funeral

My first funeral was a fiasco. The funeral director took notice and offered to be my mentor. I was young and proud. Rather than accept his help, I pulled a book off my shelf, *The Funeral* by Andrew Watterson Blackwood. I read the book for the first time after my dismal failure. I was determined to avoid embarrassment at all costs. It helped to shape me for a lifetime of ministry to those who hurt. It is my hope that these insights will be of benefit to you.

Things to avoid

Do not pass the microphone. I have observed the impromptu “tributes,” namely, people in the congregation relating their experiences with the deceased. Many of these tributes were humorous, producing laughter in the audience. While this went on, I noticed the family seated near the casket—no laughter; only tears. Tributes should be scheduled.

Do not insist on calling a funeral a “celebration.” A single mother came to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) every day for a year. Despite all the professional care, her baby girl died. At the funeral, the pastor insisted, “This is not a time to weep, it is a time for celebration.” The mother choked back the tears. As soon as the funeral ended, she drove home alone. The NICU staff was furious. The next day they brought the mother to the hospital chapel. Each staff member placed a white rose on the altar. Some read a scripture. One nurse sang a song. They allowed the mother to weep. They took her to the fresh grave, where they placed the white roses, embraced her, and prayed. That day was a day of grieving; not a “celebration.”

Use the slide show with care. Sometimes 10 or 15 minutes of family

pictures are shown. Some pictures may be better shown to family members privately. If used, it may be preferable to view slides while the congregation awaits the start of the service.

Moderate the life sketch. A lengthy life sketch in the bulletin is a wonderful keepsake, but difficult listening. The family may elect simply to read highlights aloud during the service.

Prioritize the ministry of comfort. The focus is on the family. A sermon on the state of the dead or the second com-

ing of Jesus has a proper place but not at the expense of the deceased. While some deliver an appeal at the close for people to accept Jesus as Savior, let us not lose sight of the ministry of comfort that desperately needs to be delivered.

ing of Jesus has a proper place but not at the expense of the deceased. While some deliver an appeal at the close for people to accept Jesus as Savior, let us not lose sight of the ministry of comfort that desperately needs to be delivered.

Pastors would profit from asking themselves, If I were seated with the family, would what I am planning to say be helpful and comforting to me?

ing of Jesus has a proper place but not at the expense of the deceased. While some deliver an appeal at the close for people to accept Jesus as Savior, let us not lose sight of the ministry of comfort that desperately needs to be delivered.

Be sensitive to tone. Tone of voice and volume can be both arresting and soothing. Be aware of your speech and movement. Recognize the value of the pause. In some cultures, pacing back and forth on the platform is jarring to family members for whom life has come to a standstill.

Avoid the funeral file. Pulling out a past sermon from the file is an insult to the family. An uplifting and comforting funeral takes time and prayer. No two

Helpful ideas

A family meeting. Before the day of the funeral, a meeting with the family has great value. Family members can reminisce, weep, and occasionally laugh. Burl Ives said in one of his songs,

laughing is a funny way of crying. In the family setting, laughter is very appropriate. As the pastor listens, the life sketch takes shape and the funeral sermon is informed. Prayer for the family is offered. Funeral participants, the order of service, and any other issues are addressed during this occasion.

Write it word for word. It is profitable for the sermon to be written word for word. A copy can be transcribed on attractive paper and given to the family after the funeral. The family gains a blessing by reading it after the numbing effect of the funeral.

A sacred time. The funeral is a sacred time. It begins and ends with the reading of Scripture and prayer.



Selected scripture should be practiced in the pastor's study. Read with expression. Read slowly. There is power in the reading of Scripture. Include an abundance of it. Prayer acknowledges the sovereignty and mercy of God. Both lamentation and praise are part of prayer. Jesus' prayer in the Garden contained both. He is a worthy model.

Acknowledge and permit grief. The family is in deep grief during the funeral. The pastor must not minimize or ignore it. I like to tell family that tears are the jewels of remembrance, painful but glistening with the beauty of the past. Jesus mingled the tears of divinity with the tears of humanity. In a sense, our tears are prophetic of the tears of the Man of Sorrows and prophetic of the wiping away of tears in eternity.

Emphasize Jesus' compassion. Using stories of Jesus raising the dead and healing the sick may not be appropriate. After all, the family may have been praying for healing for months, yet death came. Recall the compassion of Jesus. It is comforting to know that the

Lord is close to us even in our loss. He sent the Holy Spirit to comfort us. The Holy Spirit is the agent of compassion.

Be brief. For years I have had funeral directors tell me that brevity is most effective. Some prefer under an hour. Aside from accommodating their schedule, family members have thanked me for being prepared, organized, and brief. It can be extremely stressful to endure long funeral services.

Use the best tool. Scripture is the treasure chest of comfort. I have sometimes read Scripture almost exclusively. A Church of God pastor was in the family. After the funeral he said, "I have read the passages you used, but I have never understood them as I did today. I am going to spend more time with them."

Grieve with them. Jesus entered into the pain of others. People had a strong sense that He carried them on His heart. While working to pay my tuition, I met a pastor who did just that for my family before I was born.

My parents had lost two children to scarlet fever in the same week.

The home was quarantined.

It was the dead of winter. The funeral could not be held in the church. The young pastor held the funeral on the front porch. Decades later, the now elderly pastor told me, "It was a blustery day. I was chilled to the bone. Your parents opened a window a little bit so they could hear me. I read the scripture and prayed, and then the funeral director and I took the two little boxes to the cemetery. It was a very sad day for me. I was close to your parents. Losing those babies was hard for all of us."

I watched his old face. I could tell the loss was not forgotten in over six decades. He had entered into the pain of my parents before I came into the world. When I told my parents about meeting the pastor, they knew his name and told me about his funeral on the front porch. His words, his compassion, and his presence were not forgotten.

Allow God to work through you during these times of sorrow. 🙏

RESOURCES

Continued from page 28



future struggles. Chapter eleven is similarly worth the price of the book as it explores the struggle of how to go on without a living messenger. The section on the 1919 Bible Conference is a superb treatment of a controversial meeting that spelled Daniells's demise. Any church leader, especially one as forceful as Daniells, is bound to make enemies. No enemy was more vitriolic than J. S. Washburn, who devoted his life to unseat Daniells at the 1922 General Conference session. Such bitterness led Washburn to even fabricate a portion of a letter! Daniells navigated through such perilous waters by trying to educate the church about how to properly understand and interpret the writings of Ellen G. White, a role that he fulfilled as the chair of the Ellen G. White Estate Board of Trustees.

Readers of this publication will especially appreciate the passion Daniells had for ministerial education. He believed that the health of the church was dependent upon the health of its clergy. He mentored a cadre of young church leaders, most notably L. E. Froom and T. G. Bunch, among many others. The same year that he was ousted as church president, 1922, he essentially founded what became the ministerial department of the denomination and was also primarily responsible for the founding of *Ministry* magazine. Pastors will also appreciate how Daniells was concerned that Adventist pastors and evangelists used credible research when speaking in public.

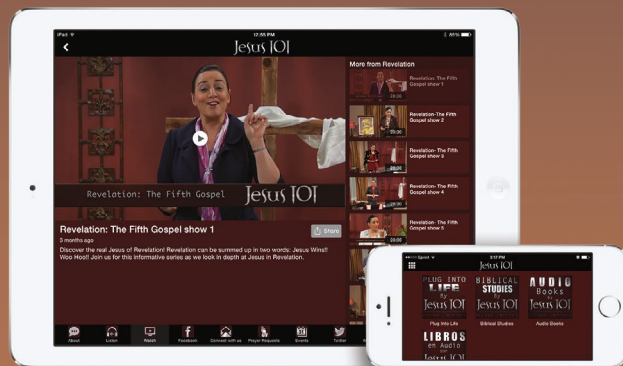
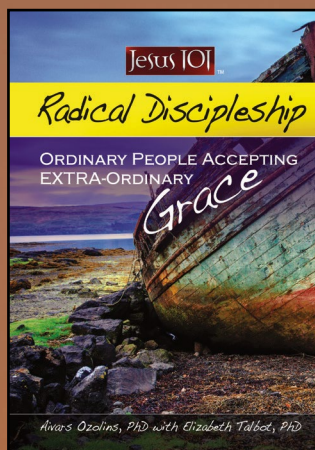
As the tenth volume in the Adventist Pioneer Series, this biography is an

invaluable addition that demands to be read. Although the personalities and issues have changed, many Adventists will be able to easily discern similar issues that confront the church today. Whether the issues relate to church governance (issues of "power and control") or how to interpret properly the inspired writings of Ellen G. White, both the specialist in Adventist studies as well as the novice will find this biography a welcome guide. McArthur provides a much clearer understanding about the role of one influential actor across the stage of Adventist history.

Reviewed by Michael W. Campbell, PhD, associate professor, theological-historical studies, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines. 🙏

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Protestant Reformation Tour, Summer 2017

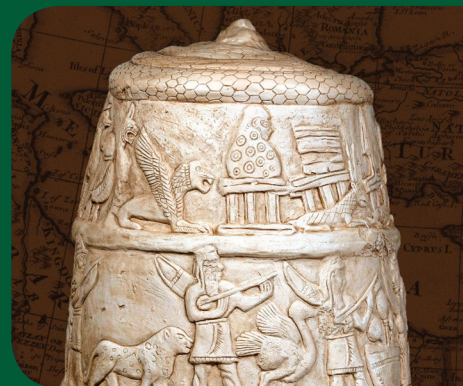
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