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Evangelism—old commission, new methods?

Dr. Parker, thank you for publishing the results of this study (“Does evangelism still work?” Alan Parker, August 2017). The conclusions are very consistent with my thesis on evangelism in a postmodern culture that you advised me on back in 2010–2012. Good to see that you are continuing your own personal work in the area of evangelism.

—Bryan Canter, by email

I am a pastor, and as I read this article it worries me that we are not reaching many young folks who are the future of our church. As the conclusion says, we need new strategies that would fit in this generation. In today’s world we are surrounded by many college students, and colleges use a challenging method to make the students learn and ask questions. I believe if we adapt this method (asking questions, getting the minds of those who are listening to think for themselves, instead of giving them the

answer; making them question what they believe, so they can look for more information in the Bible), our evangelistic meetings would likely be more effective.

—Jorge Morales, by email

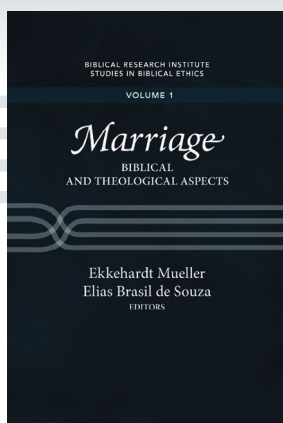
Evangelism—Jesus only?

I have just read the August 2017 issue of *Ministry*, and in particular the article by Jason Morgan entitled “Adventist Evangelism: Alive and Well.” The article raised several concerns for me. It appears that in only 21 days, Jason Morgan was able to “utterly disprove the experts” regarding evangelism in England. One would assume that the “experts” must be English pastors who have spent all their lives in evangelistic ministry in the country. In evangelistic outreach, context is vitally important; and Jason Morgan gives none. We can only hope and pray that this fantastic experience can be replicated all over England, among every segment of society.

My second concern relates to Jason Morgan’s broken heart regarding the

suggestion at a board meeting that we preach “Jesus Only.” Is He not the only thing we have to preach? Do not all the teachings of Holy Scripture center in Him and Him alone? Is He not the only one who forgives sin and redeems? Is He not the only one that we await to come in the clouds of heaven? Is He not the be-all and end-all of everything we proclaim? May I suggest that if we preach Daniel and Revelation without Jesus as the central focus, then we will become no more than a cult. Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ. Our task is not to proclaim the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and our “unique perspective” on end time events—that would make us a cult—but to expound the inspired word of Scripture and to uplift Jesus higher and higher in everything. Is it Jesus only? Yes, it is! My heart leaps at the thought of Jesus only—and may it ever be.

—Pastor Alan Conroy, retired English pastor/evangelist (40 years’ service in England), now residing in Canada



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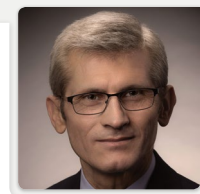
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Pavel Goia, DMin (ABD), is editor of *Ministry*.



This is for my good—really?

Many years ago, my wife, Daniela, and I ran a very profitable business in Romania. We had a comfortable life, with all the necessary means, influence, and friends. Countless times we helped those in need, assisted the church, and carried out charitable activities, and we were “humbly” proud of it.

When God called us into pastoral ministry, we gave up the business, unusually large income, and comfortable life. We did that joyfully and in faith, considering it a sacrifice for God. We said we had no merits, yet quietly regarded our sacrifice as an act of faith and considered ourselves prepared and ready for service. We expected great things to follow.

A few years later, through a series of unexpected circumstances, God led us to the United States. This second sacrifice was greater for us than giving up the business—leaving our house, family, and friends and going to a new country, knowing extremely limited English, without financial reserves or support, on a student visa. We had no friends; no money for food, clothing, utilities, or other necessary things; and no car; shortly thereafter, we became very discouraged. I was especially frustrated when I could not fully understand my teachers and classmates while trying to learn Greek and Hebrew in English.

With very little food and many bills to pay, we prayed desperately, yet there was no immediate answer. We had given up everything, envisioned great things happening, yet we experienced extreme disappointment. We could not understand what was going on or the reason for it. Was God there, was He working? There was no light or hope in sight.

As we look back, we now know that God was in control the whole time. He had a plan, and at every step, through every detail, He was actually working for our benefit. We learned more about real faith, full surrender, and total dependence on God. We also learned to understand people in trials, to love them, listen to them, care for them. We experienced and learned to appreciate humility; genuine, persevering prayer; and many other precious Christian characteristics.

In the same manner and on a much larger scale, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born from what seemed to be a crisis. I cannot imagine the disappointment of the pioneers. Giving up everything, preaching and believing that the Second Coming was imminent, looking up with excitement and anticipation for Jesus’ return, and yet, when the expected period ended, they saw nothing happen.

Nevertheless, what they considered a crisis, a disappointment, not only developed them through crucial lessons but was the very means God used for their salvation. The event that perplexed the pioneers actually marked the antitypical day of atonement—the beginning of the investigative judgment and of Jesus’ work as our Intercessor, High Priest, and Advocate, the single way to salvation.

Likewise, after the cross, the disciples considered Jesus’ death their greatest crisis. But that was, in fact, the greatest news and the very means God used for their salvation. Without the cross there would have been no hope for them or anybody else. In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement—the judgment day—was the best possible news. The sacrifice of the lamb was the single way to forgiveness and eternal

life. The very events we envision as a crisis, God uses for our benefit and to prepare us for a life of service.

Revelation 10 teaches us that there is a distinctive, bittersweet identity that

The very events we envision as a crisis, God uses for our benefit and to prepare us for a life of service.

characterizes God’s church in the final period of earth’s history. There is also a distinctive identity that characterizes each of God’s children. While “the faith of individual members of the church will be tested as though there were not another person in the world,”¹ it is also true that “God knows His people perfectly, and He treats each one as though there were not another person for whom He gave His dear Son.”²

It is the trials that make pure gold; but God knows just how much we can bear. And just as Jesus is preparing a place for us, even so He is preparing us for that place. 📖

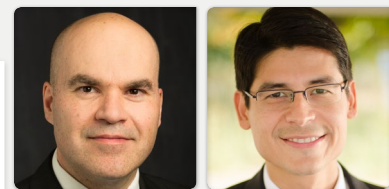
1 Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1992), 260.

2 Ellen G. White, *Steps to Jesus* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1997), 100.

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Making the *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*: An interview with Jacques B. Doukhan¹

Elmer A. Guzman (EG): Welcome, Dr. Doukhan. We understand that you are general editor of the new *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* (SDAIBC), a project that began in 2010 and is scheduled to be completed in 2020. Why is a new Bible commentary needed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, since we already have one?

Jacques Doukhan² (JD): As the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC) was produced some sixty-five years ago, it has become more and more urgent to write a new commentary for at least three reasons. First, the world has changed, and men and women today face new philosophical and spiritual challenges. Second, the knowledge of the Scriptures and its languages has improved. New information and new technical skills have provided us with new findings that illuminate and enrich our reading of Scriptures. Third, the church has changed. From an American majority, it has now grown into an international community. For the first time in history, the Adventist Church benefits from many trained biblical and

theological scholars from all over the world who are proficient in every area of expertise.

Flavio Prestes III (FP): Could you comment on the title *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* (SDAIBC)?

JD: The title, *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, is meant to denote more than just a confessional identity. This name points both to the beginning and the end of the canonical Scriptures. *Seventh-day* refers to the first page of the Bible, with the Sabbath that crowned God's creation and started human history. *Adventist* refers to the last page of the Bible, with the Advent of the Lord that will conclude human history and bring the life, glory, and peace of God's presence. Carrying the two poles of Scriptures, the name *Seventh-day Adventist* is a testimony to the totality of Scriptures and to its profound, unifying message. As for the word *International*, it testifies to the global identity of its writers as well as to the world the gospel is designed to reach.

EG: What is the purpose of the Bible commentary? How should we read it?

JD: The Bible commentary is primarily a tool to aid in the understanding of the Scriptures. While its reading may, at times, be easy and interesting, at other times it will be difficult and demand more careful attention. As the traditional SDABC stated, "A commentary is not a storybook, which may be read for idle diversion and with no concentration of mind. A commentary worth the name is a sober, serious work, very literally a textbook."³ Some may use this commentary in the classroom as a textbook and read it from the first page to the last. Most will use it as a reference work and consult it to address specific problems or because they are interested in particular biblical passages.

FP: What is the target audience of this commentary? Who will benefit the most from these books?

JD: This commentary has, in my view, two kinds of readers. The first consists of pastors, seminary students,

theologians, and Bible teachers who explain and expound the message of the Scriptures in a church or classroom. The second group includes all those who are eager to understand the biblical text at a deeper level. Although the commentary has been worked out on the basis of the original Hebrew and Greek texts, it is written so that it may be read and understood without any knowledge of these ancient languages. However, when a reference to the original language is needed to make an argument, transliteration of the Hebrew or Greek word is provided. The authors of this commentary have tried as much as possible to remain simple and clear in their presentation in order to allow as many readers as possible to follow their explanation and argument. Theological and spiritual lessons along with practical applications are integrated within the commentary and presented as we proceed in the reading of the biblical text. For readers who desire more technical details, we have included discussion in the footnotes, along with relevant bibliographical information.

EG: What is the approach used in this commentary? How is it different from other Bible commentaries, such as those which favor the historical critical method that de-emphasizes the divine element in the Bible?

JD: The method followed in this commentary is that of the “close reading” of the biblical text. This means that we have given careful attention to the biblical text, to the way it speaks, involving a study of its words, meaning, grammar, literary forms, literary structure, and theology. This approach arises out of the conviction that God has acted in history to inspire the biblical writers to convey His message through their own human words and literary expressions. Thus, the text is studied against its historical background, not to determine the context out of which the text arose but, rather, to understand the context within which God communicated His message. This quest for the meaning

of the text from within the particular passage under study is accompanied by the quest for further illumination from the entire biblical context (Old Testament and New Testament). Where other commentators are quoted or noted in the footnotes, this is done to give the scholarly acknowledgment to a piece of carefully investigated biblical research or to appreciate a particularly well-worded statement of a truth and does not represent an endorsement or reliance on everything that author may have written. The speculations and philosophical presuppositions of the historical critical method and its derived theories have been strictly avoided.

FP: What are some of the Seventh-day Adventist theological contributions to Christianity at large, which will be seen in the new commentary series? What do you hope these contributions will accomplish?

JD: I hope that this commentary will be read, appreciated, and respected by other Christians and members of other religions. This project may be viewed as a strategic mission directed at the world at large. I hope these commentaries will not only inform other Christians about the Adventist theology but will also convince many people of the validity, respectability, and relevance of the Seventh-day Adventist testimony of the Word of God. Thus, all the books of this commentary have been the object of intense scrutiny to ensure the correctness and solidity of their theological content and clarity of their expression. For Adventists, it is our hope that the reading of this commentary will not only bring more information and clarity on a given problem or passage but that it will strengthen, enrich, and deepen faith and be an incentive to go further in the exploration of the Scriptures. More importantly, for all, it is our prayer that the consultation of these commentaries will empower the life of the reader and bring him or her nearer to our Lord, the very One who inspired their writing and still speaks to us today.

EG: Besides being the general editor for the SDAIBC series, you have been a seminary professor for about forty years. You have also guided many doctoral dissertations. In your perception, what are some of the most important skills people who want to serve God should acquire during their academic training?

JD: The most important skill is to study the Word of this God they want to serve. You cannot serve a Master efficiently or intelligently if you do not understand the meaning of His Word, rightly and fully, and if you do not appreciate its beauty, depth, riches, and urgent relevancy. Unfortunately, in this world of communications and mass media, the focus has increasingly shifted from the “what”—the content of the truth—to the “how”—the means of communicating this truth. Little by little the noise of the human voice has covered, if not replaced, the voice of the divine Scriptures.

FP: In many parts of the world, a great number of churches are anemic theologically and exegetically. The pulpit is used to promote a variety of interests, but the exposition of the “Holy Text” receives little attention. How could this be reversed?

JD: Alas, you are right! This situation may be observed in Adventist churches as well as in many other Christian denominations. Instead of sharing the Scriptures, the pulpit is used more and more to promote human vanity and cultural, or even political, agendas.

How can this be reversed? We need to revisit our priorities and have a conversion. This should not come through administrative decrees. You do not solve a spiritual problem through corporate power. Of course, we need the power of the Holy Spirit, who will incite new interests and awaken our sensitivities to His Word. Perhaps on our human level we should simply come back to the Holy Text.

Ironically, we often spend more time preaching about the need to study the Word of God than we do actually

studying it and letting it speak for itself. We should take care that our sermons are Bible-centered, rather than self-centered. The sermon should be an occasion for the glorification of the Author of the Word, not entertainment or self-exaltation. The pastor often speaks more about him- or herself than about God. Simply go with your members directly into the inspired Text and engage them in the journey and surprises of the Scriptures.

EG: Pastors, at times, perceive that their academic training does not address the issues of their local congregations. In reaction to this disconnect, an interesting trend among Evangelicals has developed, namely, the “pastor-theologian,” one who can unite theory and practice. In light of this development, how will the SDAIBC help pastors not only think deeply, but also make the biblical text more relevant to pastoral practice?

JD: The commentaries will be helpful not only in clarifying obscure passages but in answering specific questions. Hopefully, the SDAIBC will also assist the pastor in his or her reading of the Bible: it will illuminate sermons and bring fresh meaning to Bible studies. It will certainly strengthen his or her argument in the defense of the Word of God and proclamation of the three angels’ messages.

The concept of “pastor-theologian” is, indeed, an interesting one. Yes, we need more pastors who can think deeply: who would not just maintain the status quo but could inspire and nurture their congregation with the bread of life. But we also need pastors to be humans in touch with the reality and complexity of the world, who are sensitive to suffering and can relate to people by loving them and being loved by them. So yes, the pastor (and the theology professor) should have both perspectives, just as Jesus was the Great Rabbi and the Great Shepherd.

FP: You are well-known for your commentaries on apocalyptic literature

(Daniel and Revelation), as well as wisdom literature (Ecclesiastes and Proverbs), not to mention your works on Genesis. Why is it important for the Bible student to navigate many genres? And what are some traps that Adventists should avoid in their passion for the apocalyptic?

JD: What defines Seventh-day Adventist identity is this: embracing the comprehensiveness of the Word of God. Seventh-day Adventism seems to be part of a dwindling body of believers that takes the whole Bible seriously—Old and New Testaments—recognizing the same degree of inspiration in both Testaments. The whole Bible should receive our equal attention. There are times, however, when certain portions of the biblical text may be more relevant, depending on particular moments in our lives or various periods in human history.

I have personally been drawn to the apocalyptic when I passed through an experience of intense suffering and needed to awaken and nurture my hope. On the other hand, I was personally attracted by wisdom literature because of the depth of its thinking, poetic beauty, and direct existential relevancy. This dual interest can also be observed in the course of history. It is not abnormal to find more interest in the books of Daniel or of Revelation in these days of trouble (and not only in the Seventh-day Adventist Church). Ellen White herself noted that “as we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living.”⁴ But this “special attention” should not distract us from the rest of Scriptures. It would be theologically wrong and psychologically unhealthy to just focus on apocalyptic. History has shown that such an “obsession” has produced mentally disturbed individuals and even dangerous criminals. On the other hand, an excessive attention to wisdom literature at the expense of the apocalyptic may foster skepticism and ultimately lead to the

denial of God. Both apocalyptic and wisdom literature are important and should be taken together.

The need for this collaboration is even testified in the book of Daniel, which combines both apocalyptic and wisdom. Daniel is there described as both an apocalyptic prophet and a wise man. Interestingly, it is the same combination that is present in the very name that defines our Seventh-day Adventist identity. “Adventist” signifies a longing for the kingdom of heaven in the new creation, while “Seventh-day” signifies an urge to experience the kingdom in this creation. This is why the Seventh-day Adventist faith is not just about theological truths and prophecies, which belong to apocalyptic literature; it also concerns our lifestyle, the way we eat and drink and work, and the way we think and behave in this world, which is the domain of wisdom literature.

EG: The Seventh-day Adventist approach to hermeneutics has also distinguished it from others. What is the key factor in our biblical hermeneutics in this regard, and what has been our greatest challenge (e.g., the grammatical-historical method, the cosmic conflict, Christ-centered theodicy)?

JD: I think the method of biblical hermeneutics is important to establish clarity. I am not sure, however, that this discussion is crucial everywhere and at all times. Many good Christians are not even aware of these issues, and yet they are near the Word of God. In my view, the “key factor” in biblical hermeneutics is hardly found in any system—but in the adventure of the sacred text itself. This may involve all of the above but also so much more. Another important key factor in the matter of biblical interpretation is the application of the Word of God to our personal existence. There is a two-way process between the Scriptures and the reader. On the one hand, the reading of the inspired text will affect your person and life. On the other hand, the Spirit-led experience

of continuous “conversion” will guide your quest for a right understanding of the biblical text.

FP: You have written the commentary on Genesis, which has just been published as the first book of the SDAIBC series. How would you describe your experience as the author of this particular book?

JD: The experience of writing a commentary on a text that comes from another culture and another time, far removed from us all, a text we believe has been inspired by the infinite God of the universe, inevitably brings the potentially “arrogant” commentator to humility. This has been my personal experience. Commenting on the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, which touches everything and is so rich and complex and yet so personal and simple, has been a humbling and exciting journey.

Our first contact with this book is ambivalent. On the one hand we marvel before the great God of the universe who created this great masterpiece—our world—and gave life to humans and came close to them, spoke with them, and tenderly cared for their personal needs. These are astonishing stories of divine wonder that convey lessons of ethics, faith, and hope. On the other hand, we stumble on sad and sordid stories about men and women of the flesh. They are cowards (Adam and Eve), liars (Abraham), doubters (Abraham and Sarah), gluttons (Esau), deceivers (Jacob), murderers (Simeon and Levi); they envy (the sons of Jacob), sleep with prostitutes (Judah); and, yet, these sinful humans manage to leave a legacy of high moral and spiritual standards. This paradox carries a relevant message for all of us. These men and women are flesh and blood sinners like us. Their experiences of overcoming are genuine stories that have been written for our benefit (2 Tim. 3:16).

EG: How important is the book of Genesis?

JD: The book of Genesis has been called the most important book ever written. Without the book of Genesis, the Bible would be incomprehensible. Also, this book has shaped the three major religions in our world (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) and significantly influenced world culture, art, music, literature, and philosophy more than any other book of the Bible. For Seventh-day Adventists, the book of Genesis is of great significance. It is noteworthy that nearly all Seventh-day Adventist beliefs are found in this book: the seventh-day Sabbath (Gen. 2:2, 3), the unity of human nature (1:26; 2:7), conditional immortality (2:17; 3:19), the law of God (2:16; 26:4, 5), the great controversy (3:15; 32:22–31), salvation (3:15), substitutionary atonement (3:15; 22:1–19), the practice of tithe (14:20; 28:22), the ideal of a plant-based diet (1:29, 30; 9:3), the distinction between clean and unclean meats (7:2, 3; 8:20), the meaning of baptism (1:1–3; cf. 1 Pet. 3:21), the cosmic significance of the sanctuary doctrine (2:2; cf. Exod. 40:38), the Creation (1:1), the Trinity (1:2, 26; 3:22; 18:2, 22), the responsibility of mission to the nations (4:26; 12:3), and the gift of prophecy (3:15; 20:6). The book of Genesis is therefore the ideal place to start our study.

FP: What would you like to say to pastors who sometimes feel inadequate communicating and teaching the biblical message effectively?

JD: Paradoxically, I have more confidence in those who don’t know how, and feel their need, than in those who feel they have all the answers and know everything. Significantly, the prophet Daniel begins his process of understanding (Dan. 9:1, 2) only after he realized that he did not understand (Dan. 8:27). My point is to encourage them to keep reading and keep needing. God will answer that prayer. The

best way to teach and communicate the biblical message is with humility. Practically, this means to be attentive to the Word, dig into it, interrogate the text, and let the text communicate to you. Sharing it will then flow naturally, with the Holy Spirit in charge of the process.

EG: How do you personally read the Bible?

JD: The Bible has been an essential part of my life from my earliest years. Everything in the Bible speaks to me. I read the Bible as a precious love letter that my personal Lord sent to me and the world. I want to search every corner to make sure that I do not miss one bit.

FP: How would you like Jacques Doukhan to be remembered?

JD: For the moment, I prefer to remember rather than to be remembered. 🙏

1 A version of this interview was first published in the March–April 2017 issue of *Ministerio*, a sister publication of *Ministry*, published by the South American Division.

2 Jacques Benjamin Doukhan was born in Constantine, Algeria, in 1940. Along with his family, he moved to France in the early 1960s. There he received two bachelor’s degrees: theology (1967) and Hebrew language and literature (1970). In 1971 he received a master’s degree and completed a doctorate in Hebrew through the University of Strasbourg, France, in 1973. In 1974 he worked on a postdoctoral program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1978, he received a second doctorate in biblical studies and systematic theology (ThD) from Andrews University, and in 2004, he received a third master’s degree in Egyptology from the University of Montpellier, France.

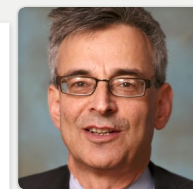
Dr. Doukhan has taught Hebrew, biblical studies, and exegesis at Salève Adventist Seminary in France (1970–1973, 1978–1980), at the Indian Ocean Union Seminary in Mauritius (where he also served as president, 1980–1984), and at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in the United States (1984–present). He is the author of 20 books and numerous articles and he is a former editor of *L’Olivier* and *Shabbat Shalom*.

3 Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1978), 19.

4 Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), 547.

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The day-year principle

Today's world has no shortage of biblical commentators determined to expound on current events, usually in regard to the latest disturbance in the Middle East and the continuous wars there. Some have asked: "Why aren't Seventh-day Adventists, who talk a lot about last-day events, preaching about the Middle East in the context of the impending apocalypse?" The answer is quite straightforward: We are historicists and, as such, view the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation differently from those who, putting the bulk of the prophecies as yet into the future, apply them to, among other things, the constant unrest unfolding in the ancient lands of the Bible.

Without question, historicism—seeing the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as an unfolding of the ancient past through the present and into the future—provides the prophetic framework upon which the Seventh-day Adventist Church has established much of its identity and message, including the sanctuary doctrine of Christ's work as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (see Daniel 8). Central to the historicist approach is the day-year principle, the concept that in certain apocalyptic passages depicting prophetic time, the word *day* or *days* is to be understood as *year* or *years*. That is, in apocalyptic prophecy a day equals a year.

But this position has not gone unchallenged. Some deny it as a valid biblical approach altogether. Decades

ago, amid the theological turmoil in the Adventist Church of the 1970s and 1980s, a few rejected the principle, as do some other Christians even now. Though the day-year hermeneutic is generally accepted among Seventh-day Adventists (and among other Christians as well), we may benefit from a reexamination of foundational concepts like this one, precisely because they are foundational.

Numbers and Ezekiel

Anyone who has presented or attended a Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic series has encountered the day-year principle. The most oft-cited biblical references to it are the following: " 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection' " (Num. 14:34)¹ and " 'When you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year' " (Ezek. 4:6).

In many cases, these two verses comprise the sum total of all that is taught about the day-year principle. They are it, period. Though they certainly establish a scriptural connection between a day and a year and reveal a prophetic link between the terms, the two verses still leave questions unanswered, especially when jumping from them to Daniel 7:25; 8:14; Revelation 12:14; and the like. After all, they are not only different books than Numbers

and Ezekiel but even different literary genre. Certainly, then, we should have more than just two verses to build our hermeneutic, right?

Right.

Days and years

To begin, the Old Testament shows a clear link between the terms *days* and *years*. In various places, though, the texts may be translated *year* or *years* or *yearly*—because that is the obvious meaning—the Hebrew word is, literally, *days*.

The Passover was observed "from days to days" (the literal Hebrew), though it is translated as " 'from year to year' " (Exod. 13:10) because that is what the text means.

Hannah took to Samuel "year by year" (literally "from days to days") the clothing that she had made for him (1 Sam. 2:19).

A "yearly" sacrifice in 1 Samuel 20:6 is, in the original Hebrew, the "sacrifice of the days."

Scripture declares that David and his men dwelt in the land of the Philistines "days and four months" (1 Sam. 27:7, Young's Literal Translation). The obvious meaning is a period of "a year and four months," hence the KJV translation—"a full year and four months."

As far back as Genesis 5, the day-year link appears: "X lived so many years and begat Y. And X lived so many years after he begat Y and begat sons and daughters. And all the *days* of X were so many *years*, and he died."

In what we might consider Scripture's oldest "time" prophecy, we read, "My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh, yet his *days* shall be one hundred and twenty *years*' " (Gen. 6:3; emphasis added). Thus, in Genesis 6 we find a "prophecy" that directly associates *days* and *years*.

Daniel 7

Between the verses above and Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, we can see that a link between *days* and *years* clearly exists. But what justification do we have for applying this principle to the specific texts that we do?

Adventists are historicists. Look at Daniel 2, which begins in ancient history and follows historical events through the rise and fall of four major kingdoms (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome) until the end of all earthly kingdoms and the establishing of God's eternal one (Dan. 2:44).

This historicist approach, then, forms the template for the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel. Daniel 2, in fact, all but hands us the historicist hermeneutic on a platter.

Parallel to Daniel 2 is Daniel 7, in which the same four world kingdoms (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome) rise and fall until, as in Daniel 2, God sets up His eternal kingdom (Dan. 7:27). Thus, this prophecy, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:1) until today (and beyond), covers at least 2,600 years.

Now in the midst of this vast span of history we come across the first prophetic time prophecy in Daniel, the "time and times and half a time" (or three and a half years) of Daniel 7:25, the period when the second phase of the fourth power, the little horn, or papal manifestation, persecuted God's people (Dan. 7:21). Remember, the little horn emerges from the fourth beast, not as a separate entity but only as a latter version of the fourth beast. And what power other than Rome arises after Greece, changes form, and extends to the end of the world? Certainly not Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in the second century B.C.

Now, if we should take the time period literally, then papal Rome's persecution of God's people lasted only three and a half literal years. But if one applies the day-year principle, it becomes 1,260 years, a span that fits not only the historical facts but the vast time frame depicted in the prophecy itself. In other words, in a chapter that begins in late seventh century B.C. and extends to the present—even beyond—the first apocalyptic time prophecy in Daniel 7 depicts an event important enough not only to be included but to be clearly delineated by its time span. *And yet that event only lasts three and a half years?*

Not likely. The time frame does not suffice for its vast context. "Given the comprehensive scope of salvation history which this prophecy covers," wrote William Shea, "such a figure [three and a half literal years] seems like an inordinately short period of time in which to conclude events of this importance."²

Also, Daniel 7 is not really about an actual lion with eagle's wings or about a beast with four heads, and the like. The vision is symbolic, using imagery to depict other truths. Thus, among images of a horn that speaks blasphemy and makes war against God's people, we find a time prophecy. However, if the other images in the vision are symbolic, why take the time period literally, instead of as symbolically as the rest of the vision itself was?

Finally, the phrase *time, times, and half a time* is not a common way in the Bible to express literal time. All through Scripture, when the writers meant literal time, they just said it literally, such as: "Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys" (1 Kings 10:22). Or, "'Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years'" (Lev. 25:21). In short, the biblical author did not write the time prophecy of Daniel 7:25 in the manner one would use to depict literal time because he did not mean literal time.

Daniel 8

Daniel 8, like Daniel 2 and 7, covers vast stretches of time, starting, now, with the Medo-Persian empire and extending to the end time itself (Dan. 8:25). Daniel 8:17, discussing the vision of the chapter, says that it "'refers to the time of the end.'" Considering that in the two parallel visions, Daniel 2 and 7, the time of the end reaches to events still in our future (God's eternal kingdom), Daniel 8 must cover vast expanses of time as well.

The evidence for the day-year principle behind the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27 is abundant—and hardly limited to Adventists.

After depicting the activities of three world powers (Dan. 8:1–12), the prophet hears a question asked (Dan. 8:13), which literally reads like this: "Until when the vision, the daily, and the transgression of desolation giving the sanctuary and the host a trampling?" In other words, the question concerns all the events of the vision itself: the ram, the goat, and the little horn and its activities.

Who were these powers? The ram was Media-Persia (Dan. 8:20); the goat,

Greece (Dan. 8:21); and the little horn, though not named, depicted a power greater than either Media-Persia or Greece, a persecuting agency that arose just after Greece and exists until supernaturally destroyed at the end (“‘he shall be broken without human means’” [Dan. 8:25]). Just as the last earthly power in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 was Rome, this little horn, the final earthly power in Daniel 8, is Rome (pagan and papal) as well.

Again, the question in Daniel 8:13 involved the timing of these historical powers: Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. And the answer given was, “And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed’” (Dan. 8:14).

Twenty-three hundred days equals six years, three months, and 20 days, which presents a problem if taken literally. How could this time prophecy be literal and encompass the entire time span of Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome? Media-Persia itself lasted from 539 to 331 B.C. That empire alone, much less Greece and Rome with it, covers far too much time to fit within just over six years and three months.

The dilemma, however, resolves itself once we apply the day-year principle, because the 6 years, 3 months and 20 days become 2,300 years—more than enough time to encompass the rise and fall of the great powers depicted in the prophecy referred to in Daniel 8:13.

Also, as with the time prophecies of Daniel 7:25 and 8:14, the “‘two thousand three hundred days’” is not the normal way to express time. Why did the text not say, “Unto six years, three months, and 20 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”? Instead, Daniel 8:14 did not follow the usual manner of expressing literal time because it intended to depict prophetic time, not literal time.

And, as with Daniel 7, symbols filled Daniel 8: a ram, a goat that did not touch the earth, and a little horn that exalted itself to heaven. In the context of all this prophetic imagery, it makes sense that

the time frame involved was expressed prophetically, not literally.

Daniel 9

The evidence for the day-year principle behind the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27 is abundant—and hardly limited to Adventists. Exegetes have been applying it to this prophecy for millennia—and with good reason.

To begin with, the prophecy is nonsensical without it. Otherwise, “‘the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince’” (Dan. 9:25) would be a literal 69 weeks, or just one year and four months and one week. Unless “‘the Messiah the Prince,’” Jesus, arose sometime in the fifth century B.C. or the command to “‘restore and build Jerusalem’” occurred early in the first century A.D., the prophecy makes no sense with a literal 69 weeks. However, apply the day-year principle and, surprise of surprises, it fits within the time frame of the two events that the prophecy portrays.

Also, many scholars who do not accept the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 have still acknowledged the link between Daniel 8:14 and 9:24–27. One Orthodox Jewish commentary on Daniel, the ArtScroll Series, ties the 70 weeks directly to Daniel 8:14. The passages are really one prophecy, which means that if you apply the day-year principle to Daniel 8:14, you should do the same to Daniel 9:24–27.


Some have argued that the word for *weeks* in Daniel 9:24 really means “weeks of years.” Even if one accepted this dubious suggestion, far from negating the day-year principle, it only affirms it. If each week really meant a “week of years,” then each week would stand for seven years—the exact conclusion that the day-year principle leads to. The day-year principle is so ingrained in Daniel 9:24–27 that a scholarly notion concocted to debunk it actually confirms it instead.

Then, too, the way that the text expresses the time—“‘seventy weeks’”—was (as with the time

prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8) not a common way to express literal time. Why did Gabriel not say “one year and four months and one week are determined upon thy people,” the typical manner to depict literal time? He did not express it literally because he did not mean it literally.

Conclusion

No question, especially given the prophetic “key” found in Daniel 2, Seventh-day Adventists are on the right track in regard to adhering to the historicist hermeneutic. And central to the historicist hermeneutic is the day-year principle. Without it, not only does historicism self-destruct, the prophetic foundation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church would as well. If the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 were a literal 2,300 days, not 2,300 years, then the prophecy never extended past the fifth century B.C., highly problematic for a movement that found its *raison d’être* in the teaching that Daniel 8:14 reached to A.D. 1844.

Fortunately, we have more than enough reasons for accepting both the day-year principle and the historicist hermeneutic that underpins it. Daniel 2 itself, beginning in the ancient past and then tracing the rise and fall of nations up through the present and, ultimately, the eternal future, establishes that rationale. This approach makes so much more sense than does futurism, which has the prophecies unfolding in the future and literal Middle East, a position that ultimately has Christians looking there, with all the incessant violence, as opposed to heaven, where Christ intercedes as High Priest in our behalf (see Hebrews 7:25). 

1 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture in this article is quoted from the New King James Version.

2 William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, vol. 1 of Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 72, https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/selected_studies_on_prophetic%5B1%5D.pdf.

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The Editor Interviews H. M. S. Richards

Q. When you were a boy you saw Ellen White personally, didn't you? Can you tell me a little bit about her?

A. Yes, when my brother and I were little boys she came to Denver and talked with Father and Mother. My brother sat on one side of her and I on the other, and she talked to us, too. I don't remember much about what she said, but when I was about 16 we had a camp meeting in Boulder, Colorado, where the campus of the University of Colorado is now. There was a big octagon building with an iron roof that seated about 1,000 people. The Adventist population of Colorado then was only about 500, and there were probably about 250 there at that meeting. But that day the building was packed. People of all faiths were interested in seeing the Adventist prophet.

Q. What year was that?

A. It was 1909. She died in 1915. I don't remember her subject, but I was one of the boys who put the furniture in the tents.

She wore a long, black silk dress. She wore good material, very plain—a little white around her wrists and around her throat. On her head was a little motherly cap over her gray hair. I remember her

***What Has the
Spirit of
Prophecy
Meant in Your
Life?***

***H. M. S. Richards,
Sr., is the founder
of the Voice of
Prophecy.***

as a sweet, old motherlike woman. She had a big floppy Bible, and just as she began to talk, it began to rain. You can imagine the noise it made on that iron roof. She had no amplifier, but she did have a tremendous preaching voice. It was just like a silver bell. You could hear it right through all that rain on the iron roof. She talked for about thirty minutes, using more than one hundred texts. She'd turn to the texts in her Bible, but she didn't stop to look and read. She knew and quoted every text she used. One text just after another. It just came as natural as part of her speech.

After about thirty minutes, Willie White came up behind her and said, "Now, Mother, we've got a long journey ahead." That was their first stop from California, you see. "You've got meeting, after meeting, after meeting—dozens of towns and long journeys, and we don't want you to overdo and get tired." She replied, "I don't want to stop yet. I haven't prayed yet; I want to pray first." So she talked for about three minutes more and then knelt down on the platform and began to pray. Her first words were, "Oh, my Father." She didn't say "Our Father"; it was "my Father." Within two minutes there was a mighty power that came over that whole place—a great power. I was afraid to look up for fear I'd see that God was standing right there. She was talking to Him. She'd forgotten all about us. She only prayed about five or six minutes at the most, but as she prayed there were sobs all over that audience—people weeping over their sins. She wasn't even looking at them. She was down on her knees with her eyes closed while praying, and Heaven came down and touched the earth, and God honored her as His prophet.

Q. That personal experience convinced you that she was a prophet?

A. Yes. I know all the arguments why there should be a prophet, and I believe them. But if we didn't have a single one of them, I'd still believe that she was God's prophet because of what I saw. It was one of the turning points in my life. I've never doubted her since. A revival broke out. Those Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and Adventists were all weeping over their sins. You know she was a great revivalist, but she didn't get up and harangue the crowd. She prayed, and men took their stand and some of them became preachers. She was a humble woman. She kept her

place as a mother in Israel. She was like the prophetesses Deborah and Huldah in the Bible.

Q. What you have just said is really quite impressive because today there are so many attacks on Ellen White and questions about her. You know, for instance, she is accused of plagiarism, of absorbing or selecting the ideas and concepts of others.

A. Well, what if she did?

Q. Such charges do bother some people. How do you deal with those who raise these kind of questions?

A. I tell them just what Willie White said to me, that just like any person who was quite sensitive, she could remember much of what she felt and heard as she listened to or read what others had to say. So Ellen couldn't help using many of the things she was exposed to. She's accused of using some of the material from a book on the life of Paul, and, of course, she did. But she asked her editors to put in the quotes for her. They neglected to do so, and she's been blamed. Actually, what we call copyright wasn't very closely monitored in those days. People didn't think so much about it. After all, you find things written by some of the Bible writers that were just like others, don't you?

Q. Tell us what the Spirit of Prophecy has meant to you in your life and in your preaching?

A. I've preached all my life under the wonderful conviction that this movement was predicted in the prophecies. Part of those predictions is that the last church should have the Spirit of Prophecy, and I'm a part of the last church, and we have the Spirit of Prophecy. It gives me great confidence. In fact, I wouldn't want to belong to a church that didn't have the Spirit of Prophecy.

Now what has it really done for me? One man who constantly fought and picked at the Spirit of Prophecy was talking to my father once, and my father couldn't seem to help him. He wouldn't listen to anything but his own loud mouth. Finally, my father said to him, "Well, I guess we can't agree, but before you go, would you please tell me one thing and really be honest with me. When you read these books that you've found fault with, what's the general tendency of them? Is it to make you a better man or a worse man?" "Oh," he said, "a better man, of course." "Well, that's all I wanted to know. That's all I care about," my father said. You get the point.



Q. Do you have any suggestions as to how a minister should use the Spirit of Prophecy? Sometimes we are accused of using it as a club.

A. And sometimes we do. Ellen White never used it that way. In fact, she warns against such misuse. Let me tell you what she told my father. One day when he was pastor of the Denver church he got up to preach, and before he even gave out his text Sister White, Willie, and Miss McEnterfer came in. He didn't even know she was in the country. Father, of course, welcomed them and invited Ellen and Willie White up on the platform—and asked her to speak. She answered, "Now, Brother Richards, did you plan to speak today?" He was just a young man then and exclaimed, "Oh, yes, but I didn't know you were coming." "Well, did you ask God to give you something to speak about?" "Yes." "And did you feel that He gave you something? Did you study and pray about it?" He answered "Yes." "Why," she said, "I wouldn't think of preaching." And she sat right there behind him. Afterward, instead of picking fault with him and criticizing his immature efforts, she took him off to one side and told him that the message was a blessing to her.

Then she added, "Brother Richards, if you keep using your voice the way you do, you're going to die." My father had one cold after another—and sore throats all the time. His colds would settle right down in his chest. I've seen him down on his hands and knees coughing until he nearly died. Ellen White took fifteen minutes that day to teach him how to breathe and how to speak. And Father told me, "I've learned more from Sister White in fifteen minutes than I did in my whole course in public speaking at Battle Creek College." She told him to throw his voice out and to use his abdominal muscles. I learned the same thing from my dad, and I'm telling you it changed everything. You know I haven't had a cold or a sore throat more than once or twice in the past twenty years.

When she had finished her breathing lesson, my father asked her, "Now, Sister White, there's something else that I'd like to find out. How should I use your writings in preaching?" She replied, "Here's the way to use them. First, ask God to give you your subject. When you have the subject chosen, then go to the Bible until you know for sure what the Bible really teaches on that point. After that, turn to the writings and see what you can find on the same subject and

read that. It may cast light on it or guide you into other scriptures or make some point clearer. When you go to the people, however, preach to them out of the Bible.”

Q. What books or passages on the Spirit of Prophecy have meant the most to you?

A. It's very hard for me to choose between *The Desire of Ages* and *Steps to Christ*. To my mind, *The Desire of Ages* is one of the greatest books ever written. You can't read it without weeping at times—I can't. Of course, *Steps to Christ* is wonderful. She wrote it long before the majority of our preachers really understood righteousness by faith. My father was a young intern at that time. That was about 1888-1890. When some say that the church didn't receive that message, I know that's not true. Some didn't, of course. But the church as a whole did not reject it. There were some leaders that were actively against it. Pastor Morrison, the only Ph.D. in the denomination then, I believe, was my father's president. At first he didn't accept it. He thought it was something like the Holy Rollers. But when he understood what it was really all about a year or two later he wanted all his ministers who could possibly go to attend the school for ministers being held that winter at Battle Creek. There wasn't room in the college so they used the Tabernacle. And who were the teachers? Jones, Waggoner, Prescott, Uriah Smith, and Sister White.

My father said he wanted to go, so Pastor Morrison gave him \$50 and said, “When that's up, I'll send you some more. I want you to go if you can.” My father lived on apples and oatmeal all winter and attended those meetings. He said they had no textbook but the Bible. Right in the middle of class sometimes a revival would break out and might last anywhere from forty-five minutes to four hours. Students and teachers both confessed their sins. They had wonderful revivals. My father knew Romans backward and forward, and Galatians, too, because he'd been through those classes. Sister White capped it off and placed her approval on the whole thing. These men went back to their conferences and carried that message back to the ones who couldn't go.

Q. Now let me ask you this. Have there ever been any doubts whatever in your mind about the authenticity of the gift of prophecy?

A. No, there haven't. Not since that



meeting when I heard her pray. That isn't to say there aren't things that I don't understand. There are, of course, but there are also things in the Bible I don't understand. You know, when Paul found that Timothy was having difficulty understanding him, he counseled, “Consider what I say.”

I heard Brother Andreasen tell how, when he was studying the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy one day, he read in *The Desire of Ages* that when Jesus came near the city of Jericho, Zacchaeus climbed up a fig tree. A fig tree, Sister White says. “Why,” he said, “there's a contradiction. The Bible says that he climbed up a sycamore tree. Now,” he said, “it looks like I'll have to give up the second coming of Christ, the state of the dead, and the Spirit of Prophecy because Zacchaeus climbed the wrong tree.”

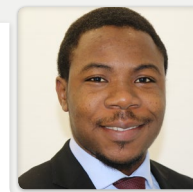
Then one day he was reading the book of Amos, chapter 7, verse 14. There Amos says, “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but . . . a gatherer of sycamore fruit.” The margin says “wild figs.” “Oh, now,” Andreasen said, “they are both right. So I don't have to give up the faith. It's the same kind of tree!”

Here's what I base my advice on to fellows who find things in the Spirit of Prophecy that they can't understand. I've had a number of them that have been cleared up for me. There are some that I don't understand yet. But I believe in the gift enough to believe that it's just like the Bible. I believe the Bible is God's word, but I must confess that there are things that Paul said that I don't understand. Even Peter said that there were some things hard to understand in Paul's writings that the unlearned twist to their own destruction. So I don't want to twist things to my own destruction.

Q. Brother Richards, thank you for sharing the inspiration of your own strong faith with thousands of our ministers around the world field. Do you have a final word for these workers?

A. It's only through God that we have the strength to accomplish God's work. Ellen White demonstrated that in her life. We should, as preachers, not try to make big things of ourselves. But we can say with the famous poet Charles Kingsley: “Be good, . . . and let who will be clever. Do noble things, not dream them, all day long: And so make life, death, and that vast forever, one grand, sweet song.”

Sully Sanon, MPT, at the time of writing, was a master's student at Friedensau Adventist University, Moeckern-Friedensau, Germany. He is one of two first-place winners in the 2016–2017 *Ministry* student writing contest.



Interpersonal supports: *A prophet-scholar model*

Besides her many contributions as a cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White¹ had a revolutionary impact on people's lives.² Yet, as a prophetess, she faced many issues with individuals because she often rebuked people or confronted their secrets.³ Well-known as a scholar, John Nevins Andrews had a lifelong acquaintance with Ellen White. Historian Joseph G. Smoot describes their interaction as “intriguing” and “of the greatest in his [Andrews's] surviving papers.”⁴ Throughout this time, there were “periods of stress and tension,” mutual respect and support,⁵ and Christian love. Their prophet-scholar relationship remains lightly explored, and this article will identify the main features of their interpersonal exchanges, while seeking to reconcile the tensions around a singular model of brotherly interaction. It seeks, then, to draw lessons pertinent to pastoral ministry.

Historical background: Convictions and characters

Ellen White and J. N. Andrews had much in common. As Gordon Balharrie puts it, “deep religious conviction characterized John very early in life.”⁶ He “found the savior”⁷ at the age of thirteen. Ellen, too, dedicated herself to Christ as a teenager. She was baptized

by immersion, at her own insistence, at twelve.⁸ Later, these young Methodist believers adhered to William Miller's preaching, experienced the “Great Disappointment,”⁹ and ended up two of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Andrews reported: “My acquaintance with Sister White began in the summer of 1844, and I have been intimately acquainted with her ever since.”¹⁰ Yet his memorable words during a meeting in Paris, Maine, on September 14, 1849—“I would exchange a thousand errors for one truth,” (testifying to his acceptance of Ellen White's appeal against fanaticism)—mark the foundation of their lifelong relationship. Ellen White described this moment as Andrews's calling: “The Lord was bringing out Bro. Andrews to fit him for future usefulness, and was giving him an experience that would be of great value to him in his future labors, that he should not be influenced by the experience of others, but decide for himself concerning the work of God.”¹¹

From a letter dated July 7, 1842, Andrews's aunt presented him as a “perfect gentleman by nature, and a fine scholar.”¹² He was also a good friend and responsible coworker.¹³ However, his boldness in upholding his convictions, along with idealist and perfectionist propensities, made it hard for him to relate to others. Thus, his reception of Ellen G. White's counsels

often conflicted with his private judgment and thoughts.

Courage, zeal, determination, and dedication are main features of both temperaments.¹⁴ Nevertheless, while Andrews was considered a perfectionist, Ellen was a more balanced and organized person.¹⁵ Where Andrews remained sensitive about what others thought of him, Ellen was concerned about how she could be useful to others. She was quick to confess her mistakes and seek forgiveness; Andrews, in contrast, tended to underestimate his mistakes and magnify his own afflictions.¹⁶ Ellen White's pragmatism contrasted with Andrews's perfectionism.

Interrelational supports¹⁷

On Andrews's relationship with Ellen White. Andrews's relationship with the Whites was characterized by “mutual admiration and trust.”¹⁸ Ellen stayed in his home,¹⁹ where *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* was launched.²⁰ Soon Andrews was called to work as an assistant editor for the *Review*. The time together helped them to know each other quite well. Andrews became a friend to Ellen. In 1855, Andrews wrote a paper at James White's request, using Scripture to show that sunset was the time for beginning the Sabbath. Ellen White had a vision that confirmed his conclusions.²¹ A peaceful and promising interaction started: serious Bible study,

and the visions at the service of the growing movement.

On Andrews's relationship with Annie Smith. While working for the *Review* in Rochester, New York, Andrews met Annie R. Smith, sister to Uriah Smith and coworker in the editing house.²² Some markers in the historical data suggest that Andrews raised Annie's expectations of a future together. They were remarkable intellectuals and shared common values but, unexplainably, Andrews turned his affections toward Angeline Stevens and left Annie with a broken heart. Disappointed, and after a

On Andrews's physical deficiencies. Andrews's mind and body were affected by Annie Smith's death. Depressed, in poor health, he left the ministry, retired to his father's farm in Maine, and later moved to Waukon, Iowa, with the Stevens family. Ellen White and her husband made "a legendary travel" to Iowa, as she saw in vision the need to bring Andrews and J. N. Loughborough back to the ministry. Andrews accepted her counsels and, with financial support from the Whites,²⁵ improved his health and returned to full-time work. "Because of adopting health reform

1858, after hearing Ellen White giving an account of her vision of the great controversy, J. N. Andrews asked her if she had read Milton's epic. She assured him she had not, so he brought a copy to her home."²⁸ The attitude of Andrews and his wife toward Ellen White's visions could be traced back to the influence of the Stevenses, his relatives-in-law. He confessed: "I have not stood up for them (the visions) and borne testimony in their favor."²⁹

Andrews needed time and study to cast away his doubts. In March 1868, he wrote, "My convictions that the testimo-

Andrews "was an idealist at war with reality."⁴³

He was aware of his mistakes, accepted counsels. . . and tried to apply them, albeit within the limits of his independent mind.

long struggle with tuberculosis, Annie died in July 1855. One month later Ellen White wrote to Andrews: "I saw that you could do no better now than to marry Angeline. . . . The best course you can take is to move on, get married, and do what you can in the cause of God. I saw that you [John] were injudicious in her [Annie's] case and it all grew out of a mistaken view you had of James. You thought he was harsh and impatient toward Paris friends, and you stepped right in between Annie and us; sympathized with her in everything. Your interest manifested for her was undue and uncalled for, and showed that you had a great lack of confidence in us."²³

Here, Ellen White's direct admonition to John Andrews is clear: "Don't do the same thing to Angeline that you did to Annie."²⁴ It took some time, but he followed Ellen White's counsels and married Angeline on October 26, 1856.

practices," James White wrote, Andrews "was relieved of 'long-continued digestive distress, and catarrh and other ailments.'"²⁶

Even though he accepted the health reform counsels, John struggled to apply them consistently. Ellen White continued pushing him toward becoming a well-balanced person. By late 1871, early 1872, she seriously challenged Andrews's goal of writing a "too perfect" *History of the Sabbath*: "Don't be too perfect. . . . There are few minds that can follow you unless they give the subject the depth of thought you have done . . . the History of the Sabbath should have been out long ago. You should not wait to have everything so exactly as strong as you can possibly make it before giving it to the people."²⁷

On the visions of Ellen G. White. Until 1870, Andrews nourished doubts about Ellen White's prophetic gift. "In

nies of Sister White are from Heaven, have been greatly strengthened by the opportunity which I have had to observe the life, and experience, and labors of these servants of Christ."³⁰ He then left one of the earliest biblical apologies of her prophetic gift. He wrote, "The Seventh-day Adventists are believers in the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. It is also understood that we regard the visions of Sr. White as given by the Spirit of God."³¹

Andrews's work in Europe: Supports overseas

On September 1874, Andrews sailed to Switzerland as the church's first cross-cultural Adventist missionary. His trials, despair, and discouragement escalated during his ministry in Europe. At his departure, Ellen White's sentiments were mixed. She wrote to her

family members: "He [Andrews] leaves for Europe next week. Our prayers are that God may go with him."³² "I had no opportunity to bid him goodbye and I did not care to say goodbye. We may never, never meet again."³³ Yet, as far as she could, she remained supportive of Andrews in almost all aspects of his life.

In Europe, Andrews lived as a poor man. Mrs. W. Ings pitied his situation: "The way he was living, he must break down soon. Having so . . . an impoverished diet makes him as if he had not a friend on earth."³⁴ While the church leadership could not respond systematically to his financial needs, Ellen sold a dress of her own in order to help support Andrews's work.³⁵ Unfortunately, after years of his efforts, his missionary harvest was still very little; thus his abilities were questioned.

In a letter addressed to "Dear Brethren in Switzerland," Ellen White clearly defended Andrews's authority and called upon a sense of loyalty, enthusiasm, and supportive collaboration toward him. "Bro. Andrews left his aged mother, an only brother . . . and many friends in America, to obey the call of God and enter this new missionary field. He came to you at quite a sacrifice. . . .

"Eld. Andrews is a conscientious servant of Jesus Christ. . . . We sent you the ablest man in all our ranks. . . . We needed Eld. Andrews here. But we thought his great caution, his experience, his God-fearing dignity in the desk, would be just what you needed."³⁶

At that time, Andrews was about to sail to Battle Creek, Michigan, to attend the upcoming General Conference. He had taken with him his daughter, Mary, who had been diagnosed with tuberculosis. After the conference, Andrews spent most of his time in the sanatorium with Mary, hoping for a recovery. On November 27, Mary died at the age of seventeen.

The loss of Mary was not his first grief. In September 1863, he had buried a four-day-old daughter. In September 1865, his daughter Carrie Matilda died, just over one year old. On March 19, 1872, his lovely wife Angeline died at

the age of 48. Andrews buried Mary as a broken man. Only his firstborn, Charles Melville, was alive. Ellen White's sympathy and comfort toward him are described in prophetic words of hope: "Dear Afflicted Brother Andrews:

". . . You are not a stranger to Jesus and His love. . . .

"The Lord loves you, my dear Brother. He loves you. . . .

". . . A better day is coming, precious to the faithful ones. . . . I was shown you with head bowed down and mourning as you followed Mary to her last home in this world.

"Then I saw the Lord look lovingly upon you. I saw the Life-giver come and your wife and children come forth from their graves clothed with immortal splendor. Look at the things which are unseen. . . . May God bless and encourage your heart, is my prayer.

"Your sympathizing sister."³⁷

Ellen not only consoled Andrews but also counseled him to remarry before returning to Europe. Andrews did not comply.³⁸ He went back, broken in soul, and became very sick. There, in his last days, he received his final counsel from Ellen White: "I was shown that you made a mistake in starting for Europe without a companion. . . . You would have done a wise thing, and your usefulness would have been tenfold to what it has been."³⁹

Further, she described how difficult it was for her to relate to Andrews's delicate character: "I have heretofore written you several letters and never sent them, so I attempt to write you again. I know your temperament is peculiar, and I have felt that you were not able even to bear the truth if it is conflicted with your ideas."⁴⁰ She left very strong last words to a dying Andrews, "the truth" that he had to know: "You felt you were a martyr missionary, but it was not so. . . .

". . . You have magnified your own afflictions.

". . . You . . . love to be pitied, to be regarded as one suffering privations, and as a martyr. . . .

"God did not decree that you should die, but the course you have pursued in following your own judgment and

dwelling on your own impressions has been a species of fanaticism. God was not in it. . . .

"Now if you go down into the grave, I do not want you should go in deception. . . .

". . . Oh my brother, nine-tenths of all your trials are born of your imagination. . . .

"You have shut yourself within yourself. . . .

". . . You follow impressions too much; you think your impressions are as the voice of God. . . . You have not discernment of character. You worship intellect."⁴¹

Humbly, Andrews understood how "painful" it was for her to write such words to a dear brother. A few days before he died, he replied to her: "I humble myself before God to receive from his hands the severe rebukes which he has given you for me, I most cordially thank you for your faithfulness in writing me so fully on matters that must be very painful to you to write, I have tried to humble myself before God in the dust in view of my sins. I believe that he does accept me. . . . Do not ever think it possible that I shall not receive whatever testimony you have for me, and if you have still other reproofs to give do not withhold them I pray you."⁴²

Conclusion

The relationship between Ellen G. White and John N. Andrews is a lesson in interpersonal relations and conflict resolution in the church today. Andrews "was an idealist at war with reality."⁴³ He was aware of his mistakes, accepted counsels addressed to him, and tried to apply them, albeit within the limits of his independent mind. Despite his critical distance toward Ellen White's counsels and visions, he proved that biblical scholarly works are not necessarily opposed to the gifts. He provided scholarly assistance to the gift of prophecy, and demonstrated that understanding Ellen White as a person can be an effective starting point toward the acceptance of her prophetic word.

Ellen White fought to make him a more balanced person; he humbly

struggled—but with little success. Interestingly, despite her prophetic authority, Ellen White's counsels to Andrews were contextual and personal. She advised according to the needs of a specific context and respected personal opinions. Her pragmatism

surely contributes to her success as a prophetess and would have helped Andrews achieve a more fruitful life and ministry had he listened more carefully.

The serious Bible studies and life-changing counsels of Ellen White must

remain landmarks in Adventist ethos. In addition, the loving interpersonal support she modeled should not be limited to this remarkable prophet-scholar context; instead, its deeply loving and sincere elements must characterize every Christlike relation. ☞

- 1 From 1848 to 1914, Ellen G. White wrote 5,438 letters and received 35,801 letters. Unquestionably, she had quite a few exchanges with several people during her life. "Bibliography of Ellen G. White Titles Results," Loma Linda University, accessed January 13, 2014, http://www.llu.edu/webapps/univ_library/speccolls/EGWBibliography.php.
- 2 Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: A Brief Biography*, Ellen G. White Estate, updated August 2000, <http://www.whiteestate.org/about/egwbio.asp>.
- 3 "The Lord would rein us up to bear reproof, and then individuals would step right in between us and the people to make our testimony of no effect. Many visions have been given to the effect that we must not shun to declare the counsel of the Lord, but must occupy a position to stir up the people of God, for they are asleep in their sins. But few have sympathized with us, while many have sympathized with the wrong and with those who have been reproved." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2002), 247.
- 4 "More than 100 letters written by or to Andrews are preserved. . . . Most of the letters are from John Andrews to the Whites." Joseph G. Smoot, "John N. Andrews: Faithful to His Service," *Adventist Heritage* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 5.
- 5 Joseph G. Smoot, "John N. Andrews: Humblest Man in All Our Ranks," *Adventist Heritage* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 24.
- 6 Gordon Balharrie, "A Study of the Contribution Made to the Seventh-day Adventist Movement by John Nevins Andrews" (master's thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1949), 6.
- 7 See Ronald Graybill, "John Andrews: The Family Man," in Harry Leonard, *J. N. Andrews: The Man and the Mission* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1985), 16–18.
- 8 "Young as I was, I could see but one mode of baptism authorized by the Scriptures, and that was immersion. Some of my Methodist sisters tried in vain to convince me that sprinkling was Bible baptism. The Methodist minister consented to immerse the candidates if they conscientiously preferred that method, although he intimated that sprinkling would be equally acceptable with God." Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), 25.
- 9 *The Great Disappointment* is a term used by Seventh-day Adventists to refer to the nonappearance of Jesus Christ on October 22, 1844, as expected by William Miller and others. Regarding the Great Disappointment, see Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, eds., *The Disappointed:*

- Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); Jack M. Patt, "The Millerite Awakening and the Great Disappointment of 1844," *Indian Journal of American Studies* 3, no. 1 (1973): 71–82.
- 10 "Early Experiences and Teachings of Ellen G. White: A Testimonial of J. N. Andrews," Ellen G. White Estate, <http://drc.whiteestate.org/files/1541.pdf>.
- 11 Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2 (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1860), 117.
- 12 William A. Spicer, *Pioneer Days of the Advent Movement*, 205, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://adventpioneerbooks.com/Text/Spicer,%20William%20Ambrose/PDF/Pioneer-Days.pdf>.
- 13 Balharrie, "Study of the Contribution Made," 7.
- 14 According to Herbert E. Douglass, "Ellen White was an exceptionally sensitive woman, open to all the human emotions. Her ability to verbalize her various experiences indicates an uncommon capacity for empathy, whether the experience was sad or elevating." *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1998), 73.
- 15 On Ellen G. White's personality, see "The Real Ellen G. White," in Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 1998.
- 16 Mrs. E. G. White to J. N. Andrews, letter dated March 29, 1883.
- 17 Since the paper is dealing with relationships, the emphasis is more factual than chronological.
- 18 Joseph G. Smoot, "The Churchman: Andrews' Relationship with Church Leaders" in Leonard, *The Man and the Mission*, 43.
- 19 In a letter to the church in Brother Hastings's house, Ellen G. White wrote on November 7, 1850, "Our home is in Paris, at Brother Andrews' home, within a few steps of the post office and printing office. We shall stay here some little time. This is a very kind family, yet quite poor. Everything here is free as far as they have."
- 20 In 1850 James White launched *The Advent Review*, and soon combined his two magazines into *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, which reviewed the prophecies of Christ's second coming and heralded the proclamation of the seventh-day Sabbath. Today the magazine is named *The Adventist Review*.
- 21 See White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, 116.
- 22 Ellen G. White to J. N. Andrews, letter dated August 26, 1855, Ellen G. White Estate, Washington, DC, File #A-1-1855; Erica Richards, "The Story of Annie Smith," *Adventist World*, November 2009, 25, <https://archives.adventistworld.org/2009/november/the-story-of-annie-smith.html>; Judith P. Nembhard, "Annie Smith's Hymns of the Blessed Hope," *Review and Herald*, August 28, 1986, 12–14; and James R.

- Nix, "Annie Smith: Pioneer Poet," *Review and Herald*, December 17, 1987, 17.
- 23 Ellen G. White to J. N. Andrews, letter dated August 26, 1855.
- 24 Ron Graybill, "Annie Smith, Her Life and Love," *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1976, 5.
- 25 There was a fund raising by James White addressing the brethren to help John Andrews to recover from his physical illness.
- 26 Marlene Steinweg, "In Defense of the Truth," *Lest We Forget* 6, no. 2 (second quarter, 1996): 4.
- 27 White correspondence 1872, quoted in Joseph G. Smoot, "The Churchman: Andrews' Relationship With Church Leaders," in Leonard, *The Man and the Mission*, 48.
- 28 Ellen G. White Estate, *The Truth About the White Lie*, 5, accessed January 26, 2014, <http://egwtext.whiteestate.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=TAWL&lang=en&collection=6§ion=all&pagenumber=5&m=1¶graphReferences=1>.
- 29 J. N. and Angeline Andrews to James and Ellen White, letter dated February 2, 1862, quoted in Ron Graybill, "John Nevins Andrews as a Family Man," 16, quoted in White Estate, *The Truth About the White Lie*, 5.
- 30 J. N. Andrews, "The Labors of Bro. and Sr. White," *Review and Herald*, March 3, 1868, 184.
- 31 J. N. Andrews, "Our Use of the Visions of Sr. White," *Review and Herald*, February 15, 1870, 64.
- 32 Ellen G. White to Edson and Emma White, letter 50b, 1874, September 1874.
- 33 Ellen G. White to "Dear Husband," letter 51, 1874, September 10, 1874, quoted in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 437.
- 34 Quoted in Jean Zurcher, "John N. Andrews: The Christopher Columbus of Adventism" in *Adventist Heritage* 9, no. 1 (Spring, 1984): 43.
- 35 "Talk Before the European Council," September 20, 1885. Manuscript 14, 1885, Ellen G. White Estate.
- 36 Ellen G. White to "Dear Brethren in Switzerland," letter 2a, 1878, August 29, 1878.
- 37 Ellen G. White to John N. Andrews, Letter 71, 1878, December 5, 1878.
- 38 Letter of J. N. Andrews to Ellen G. White, December 22, 1878, quoted in Ron Graybill, "John N. Andrews: The Family Man." *Adventist Heritage* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 1984), 9–23.
- 39 Ellen White to J. N. Andrews, letter 1, 1883, March 29, 1883.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Balharrie, "Study of the Contribution Made," 81.

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Leadership development and succession planning:

A Seventh-day Adventist perspective

For church growth and development to take place to any meaningful extent, every church needs to have a system for the development of leaders as well as a succession plan based on sound principles. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is no exception. However, the Adventist Church has often overlooked this important factor, and as a result, matching pastors with the right leadership skills for various church appointments has been a critical problem.

Leadership development and succession is as old as the human race. While it has been extensively addressed in secular contexts, the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White provide a rich source of guidance in addressing leadership development and succession. Specific instructions were directed to the Israelites regarding the training and preparation of the emerging generation of leaders¹ (Deut. 6:6–9; 20–25). At the same time, no positional appointments were promised to anyone.² The Spirit of God guides that process. These leaders are selected and developed, and then in turn, they develop others. This process was also critical to the

early church, and is vital to church sustainability today.

In most cases, pastors are appointed to leadership positions based upon the position of trust that they hold or the number of years served. Leadership skills are often not meaningfully assessed, and pastors commonly hold leadership positions without adequate preparation. In addition, no intentional plans exist regarding leadership development and succession when need arises. Because of this deficiency, in many countries the church finds itself facing great challenges in terms of leadership continuity in key positions and developing intellectual and knowledge capital for the future. As Blackaby and Blackaby say, “The greatness of an organization is directly proportional to the greatness of its leader.”³ Sometimes conference leadership vacancies take some months to be filled. Often, those who fill the positions have not been groomed from within the organizational structure to fulfill the position and thus advance the mission of the church. And, too often, vacant positions that fall outside the regular term of

office are filled by a person already burdened with responsibility.

Manuel London says, “Leadership development strategies and programs follow from the changing needs of the environment in which it operates. Development is not a one-time event, but a comprehensive approach to individual and organizational growth and renewal.”⁴ Neglecting leadership development and succession planning can put organizational success at great risk.

Although there are many differences between the early church and the modern church, today’s leaders can learn important lessons from the approaches of leadership development and succession used by the early church. In both Testaments, biblical leaders developed emerging leaders with the intent of handing the baton of spiritual leadership to them. The Old Testament book of Numbers delineates the relationship between Moses and Joshua and typifies the leadership development and succession planning that was needed then and now. Frank Gaebelein states, “Numbers 27:12–21, the context of this passage is the

succession of leadership from Moses to Joshua and how Joshua was prepared to be the next leader.”⁵ All elements of successful leadership development and succession are a part of this biblical account. The relationship between Moses and Joshua started years prior. Kevin Beery notes that “Forty years before Moses’ death, God had begun to prepare Joshua for the task of leading the people to inherit the land. A careful study of Joshua’s development in the Pentateuch confirms this to be true... Moses mentored Joshua for nearly 40 years before the leadership transition took place.”⁶ This was because leadership succession is too important to wait for a vacancy to be filled before a plan is considered.

In Exodus 17:8–16, Moses chose Joshua to lead a battle against the Amalekites due to his recognition of his leadership skills. By so doing, Moses was providing Joshua with the needed opportunities to develop him for challenges that he would face in his future leadership position. Similarly, it is important for institutions to provide opportunities for upcoming leaders to develop their leadership skills in preparation for greater leadership responsibilities.

In Exodus 24:13, we see Joshua accompanying Moses to receive the Ten Commandments from God. Joshua was also put in charge of the military, while still subject to Moses. Acting in the capacity of Moses’ assistant, therefore, developed him into an even more capable leader. After this experience he gained other skills before eventually accepting full responsibility when Moses died. The case of leadership development and succession from Moses to Joshua provides a biblical foundation that should guide leaders and institutions as they prepare for seasons of transition.

The succession of leadership from Moses to Joshua was successful because Joshua received direct mentorship from Moses.

The relationship between Elijah and Elisha presents another clear example of leadership development

and succession planning. There is a need for continuous development of potential leaders and providing them with the opportunities to apply and further develop their leadership skills.

The narrative of the leadership development and succession of Elisha to Elijah’s position as the prophet of Israel in 1 Kings 2:13–15 furnishes a wealth of lessons for contemporary leaders and institutions. The story provides an understanding of the need for a successor at all times. Elisha and Elijah had a mutual relationship of respect and service, building a legacy that would survive long after Elijah would leave the scene in his prophetic leadership role. Elijah was developing a leader who would succeed him. Craigie states, “The close relationship between Elijah and Elisha continues until Elijah’s ascension into heaven. This association is so unique that Elijah was mentor to Elisha who was to be successor.”⁷

Had it not been for Elijah’s passion to develop Elisha, it would have been hard for him to find a successor. Elisha was prepared for his prophetic ministry through his close relationship with the prophet Elijah. When Elijah was taken up into heaven, his mantle fell on Elisha, and he received a double portion of the Spirit. In other words, Elijah developed a leader who was greater than he was. Collins believes that “the figure of Elisha is unique. He is the only example of a prophet being designated and appointed as the direct successor of another.”⁸ Elisha is represented not just as a disciple but almost as a continuation of Elijah. He not only carries on the spirit of Elijah, he completes a number of actions in the story that were begun by Elijah, particularly those concerned with Hazael and Jehu. From this we see that grooming leaders will facilitate the continuity of any institution.

In the New Testament, Jesus’ leadership development and succession planning is the most healthy and productive strategy that we possess. For maximum effectiveness, Jesus spent time developing His successors when He recruited His disciples to follow Him.

In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus entrusted the leadership succession of His church to His eleven disciples. Jesus selected each of these persons, taught them, modeled leadership to them, gave them leadership experiences, and allowed them to make mistakes. In doing so, He transformed a group of very ordinary followers into a nucleus who would turn society upside down in just one generation. These were the future leaders Jesus intended to use to build His church. They became the fruit of Jesus’ succession plan. If we fail to learn from Jesus’ example, we will have walked away from a most precious mandate and will have left a leadership vacuum.

As the time for the Lord’s departure draws closer, Jesus reminds His disciples of His impending death for a third time. Here we see Jesus clearly preparing His successors for their succession before it occurs. It is crucially important to recognize the fact that Jesus makes the timing of the leadership transition clear. Here we see that biblical leadership development and succession must go beyond just good intentions; it must be action-based.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul recognized the value of leadership development and succession planning when he developed Timothy into a more effective minister of the gospel. The successful relationship between Paul and Barnabas prepared Paul to develop and prepare Timothy as an emerging leader in ministry. Stacy Hoehl states that “Paul carefully selected Timothy to work with him in the ministry, equipped him for ministerial tasks, empowered him for success, [and] employed him in a challenging work environment.”⁹ As such, Timothy emerges as a great leader whom Paul prepared to be his successor. Their relationship is a good example of leadership development and succession planning.

Perry Stepp asserts that “Paul’s intent to develop Timothy as his successor is clearly expressed in his letters to Timothy and the churches to which he recommended him in 1 Timothy 1:3,

1:18; 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:6; Phil. 2:19-24.”¹⁰ As Paul gained confidence in Timothy’s work as a minister, he employed Timothy to work in Ephesus. Paul had spent a great deal of time developing a successor. Hoehl points out that “by offering Timothy the challenging position of handling the heresies in Ephesus, Paul gave him the opportunity to maximize his ministerial competencies and increase his effectiveness as a servant of God.”¹¹

We can learn here that leadership succession is a planned transition. It is a deliberate process that facilitates the transfer of leadership from one leader to another. Leaders who fail to develop others and plan for succession equally fail to own up to the fact that they will not be there forever. Leadership development and succession planning are not short-term strategies; they entail a long-term investment.

Paul had such a long-term view in his strategy for developing the young leader Timothy for leadership succession. Hoehl states, “Paul recognized the importance of equipping a successor to carry on the gospel message after his life and ministry were over.”¹² Richard Ascough concludes that it is abundantly clear in the letters to Timothy and Titus that Paul has in mind apostolic succession and that there is a shift “from flexible, multiple leadership options towards stability and order.”¹³

By implementing biblical leadership development and succession strategies, contemporary leaders can develop followers who are committed, motivated, personally satisfied with their work, and prepared to face the leadership challenges of the future.

The counsels of Ellen White offer much in the area of leadership development and succession planning. In most of her counsels, she uses the words *train*, *teach*, *educate*, *instruct*, and *prepare*, pointing to leadership development and succession planning. She states, “Those placed in positions of responsibility should patiently seek to make others familiar with all parts of the work. This will reveal that they do not desire to be first, but that they are

glad to have others become acquainted with details, and to become as efficient as they are. Those who faithfully fulfill their duty in this respect, will, in time, have standing by their side a large number of intelligent workers whom they have trained.”¹⁴ Here she is pointing out that if we develop others, it becomes an advantage to the institution and to the top leadership because they would have on their side people who are intelligent and able to work

positions. White goes on to say, “We want every responsible man to drop responsibilities upon others. Set others at work that will require them to plan, and to use judgment.”¹⁸ Those who are in leadership positions should identify potential in people who can succeed in leadership roles by developing them. White asserts: “Instead of keeping them engaged in doing things of minor importance, give them an opportunity to obtain an experience

In the New Testament, Jesus’ leadership development and succession planning is the most healthy and productive strategy that we possess.

with little supervision and are capable of leading when the need arises. Max DePree supported this thought when he said, “Leaders are also responsible for future leadership. They need to identify, develop, and nurture future leaders.”¹⁵ This means the first step to effective leadership development is to have the support and participation of those who are placed in leadership positions.

To develop leaders, White advocates that leaders should place responsibility on others: “Leading men should place responsibilities upon others, and allow them to plan and devise and execute, so that they may obtain an experience.”¹⁶ William Rothwell suggests that in order to identify high-potential employees, organizations may utilize employee rating and evaluation tools such as multi-raters or 360-degree assessments that elicit feedback from above, below, and across the organization.¹⁷

By doing so, many will develop their skills and ability to do their work and be prepared for leadership

by which they may develop into trustworthy workers.”¹⁹ When people are given the opportunity to develop in an institution, they become trustworthy to lead the institution when need arises. Even when it comes to succession, an institution will not face problems because they have trustworthy workers who understand the operations of the institution.

Furthermore, from her writings, we learn that institutional leaders should not be afraid to develop people: leaders must rejoice when they develop leaders greater than themselves, and because they know that they will not lead forever, they should also leave trustworthy people who can succeed them. White advocates that “if in their ministry those whom we teach develop an energy and an intelligence even superior to that which we possess, we should be led to rejoice over the privilege of having a part in the work of training them.”²⁰ A good leader should develop leaders who are greater than they are in every institution.

In line with succession planning, White indicates that the key element needed by any leader is training others. She emphasizes that “although it may appear to you difficult to disentangle yourself from responsibilities which others cannot take, it is your duty to train others to stand in responsible positions that should you need a change and rest, which is your due, you can have it.”²¹ KeGroves finds that for optimal development of a healthy leadership pipeline, best practice organizations encourage effective integration of leadership development

and succession planning systems.²² Training others assures a smoother continuity for institutions during times of transition.

Ellen White goes on to make an argument for working with young people in the line of leadership development and succession planning. She argues that “we cannot but look anxiously upon the youth of today as those who must take these burdens, and upon whom responsibilities must fall. These must take up the work where others leave it.”²³ It is the responsibility of the leaders to develop youths into

leaders who will succeed when the burden and responsibility of leadership falls on them. Ellen White emphasizes that “we should educate the youth to help the youth; and as they seek to do this work they will gain an experience that will qualify them to become consecrated workers in a larger sphere.”²⁴

From the writing of Ellen White, as it is found in the Bible, the process of leadership development and succession planning does more than ensure a smooth leadership transition; it also prepares the incumbent for acceptance by the church. Paul’s vision and passion

“Worthy is the Lamb”

I have often tried to imagine the scene from Revelation 5:11, 12. Millions of extraterrestrial beings, far superior to us in every way, gathered in a vast stadium with dimensions we cannot begin to grasp, intent on honoring God—a Supreme Being far beyond and above anything they themselves can understand—the Creator of the Universe.

Like a throwback to an old science fiction movie, my mind tries to grasp what I have never seen. What would it be like to hear those magnificent beings harmoniously singing music composed by talent that surpasses the best Earth has to offer?

The disciple John tried to describe what he was seeing in the only way he could—with the vocabulary of his time. He saw Someone on a throne. We know He was not human because John describes Him as fiery red—the colors of jasper and carnelian. John sees an energy about Him—a force field that surrounds the throne—and he can only describe it as a rainbow of color, complete with flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder.

The prophet Zechariah tells us there will come a day when we, His people—His church—will understand like never before God’s supreme gift to us: “And I will pour on the house of David and on

the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication: and they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zech. 12:10–12, NKJV).

I have not yet cried like that for Jesus. But I long for the day when we as a church are brought to our knees in love and gratitude—a gratitude born of understanding our hopeless condition and the incredible gift that was given to us. That day when “one interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness.”¹

Am I expressing too much emotion over this? Perhaps, but perhaps not. Ellen White states, “You will meet with those who will say, ‘You are too much excited over this matter. You are too much in earnest. You should not be reaching for the righteousness of Christ, and making so much of that. You should preach the law.’ As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God.”²

Let us lift Jesus up here—in our living, in our preaching, and in our

Revival & REFORMATION

evangelism. Only then will we be able to sing with the billions throughout the galaxies,

“Worthy is the Lamb,
Seated on the throne.
Crown You now with many crowns,
You reign victorious.
High and lifted up, Jesus Son of God.
The Treasure of Heaven crucified.
Worthy is the Lamb!”³ 🎵

—Robert Costa is an associate ministerial secretary and worldwide evangelism coordinator of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.


- 1 Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn. 1955), 259.
- 2 *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 560.
- 3 Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, “Worthy Is the Lamb,” <http://www.songlyrics.com/brooklyn-tabernacle-choir/worthy-is-the-lamb-lyrics/>. The song “Worthy Is the Lamb” was written by Darlene Zschech and is copyright © 2000 Wondrous Worship.

to reach the whole world with the gospel message compelled him not only to develop leaders for leadership succession but to prepare leadership for the then fast-growing church. The church should be concerned as we are in the forefront of evangelism campaigns; yet we are apparently doing little to provide effective leadership for the growth of the church. Leadership development and succession planning are best placed in churches that have a vision for church growth with the aim to impact many future generations. In the New Testament, Jesus' instruction to His disciples implied leadership development and succession. He stated, " 'Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' " (Matt. 28:19, 20, NIV). Inclusive in the call for church leaders is the passion to empower followers for the work of the ministry. Leaders who are committed to the call for leadership development and succession equip, support, motivate, and mentor other emerging leaders to realize their full leadership potential.

Ellen White makes a great contribution to the conversation concerning leadership development and succession issues by drawing our attention to the inspired words of God. She presents increased understanding of leadership development and succession planning as outlined by the Bible and other authors. Her writings carefully illustrate the principles promoted by the Bible. We also see examples from her writings, life, and experience illustrating how she applied these leadership development principles in her own work as a Christian leader. Both the Bible and the writings of Ellen White stress that succession planning is essential for continuity and leadership development. That was true for the early church, and it is true for the contemporary church. When leadership development and succession planning are implemented in the churches, the church will benefit from the simplicity of the three core constructs of the early church: select leaders with the

right experience, select leaders with the right character, and select leaders with the right competencies for the job.

If biblical leaders considered leadership development as key to equipping emerging leaders for leadership succession, leaders of the church cannot ignore it; if they do ignore it, they place many of today's churches in a weak position, lacking leadership bench strength and making them vulnerable to an environment that is more demanding than ever. The writings of Ellen White on the subject of leadership development and succession planning make it clear that she was seeking to center the church on the clarion call of God for full inclusion in the life and ministry of the church. We are called to develop and mobilize leaders of all ages, inclusive of gender and race, to make a difference. Today, we need to trust God for the "who" as He prepares that person to take over when the time comes. That said, leaders need to create opportunities for those being developed to put their skills to use. If Moses had not let Joshua lead while he was still with him, Joshua would not have become the leader he eventually became.

The importance and necessity of effective leadership development and succession planning cannot be overstressed. Without training in a second rung of leadership development in the church, the work will suffer. No one can remain a leader forever, and no organization can succeed in its mission without adequate provision for the next round of leaders, and that is where leadership development and succession planning counts. When leadership development and succession is handled according to biblical principles, it can launch the church into the next phase of God's purposes for it. A competent leader will carefully study the leadership development and succession principles found in the pages of God's Word to prepare for the inevitable transition to a new leader. "It's no coincidence that great spiritual leaders follow in the footsteps of great spiritual leaders."²⁵ 

- 1 Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001).
- 2 Ken B. Godevenos, "Will Succession Planning Work for You?" accessed May 22, 2007, http://www.churchbusiness.com/articles/644/644_251staff.html.
- 3 Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 51.
- 4 Manuel London, *Leadership Development: Paths to Self-Insight and Professional Growth* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 21. See also Prince Ng'andu, "The Succession Planning Concept and How the Church Leadership of the Adventist Education Institution in Africa Perceive the Succession Plans," *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities* 2, no. 9 (November 2017).
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- 18 White, *Christian Leadership*, 43.
- 19 White, *Christian Leadership*, 56.
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Longing for God: A Prayer and Bible Journal

by Frank M. Hasel, Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2017, ISBN 978-0-8163-6336-0

Longing for God articulates our deepest need and desire—to have a vibrant personal relationship with the living God—and provides practical tools to create those life-changing encounters. This 352-page book leads readers through the entire Bible in one year and shows them how to encounter God in practical and life-changing ways

In this insightful book, Frank Hasel gives practical suggestions that are tried, tested, and refined in the crucible of experience. His suggestions, if applied, will have the same transformative result—a richer, more meaningful relationship with God. In simple, logical steps he teaches us how to pray for others in a more meaningful, effective, and structured way, bringing blessing to both the person who is praying and the person prayed for.

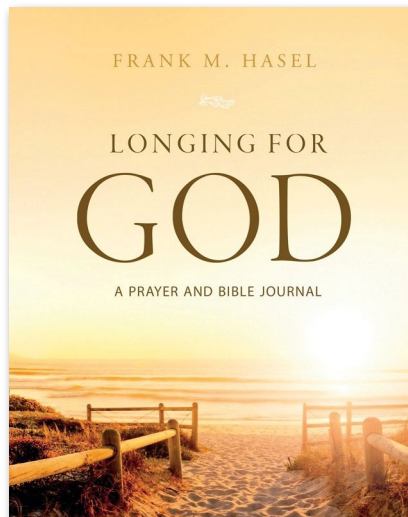
To call the book a prayer and Bible journal is somewhat inaccurate. It has four distinct components: a guide to productive Bible study, a book on prayer, a Bible reading plan, and a journal. Hasel skillfully interweaves these components, creating a whole that is considerably more than its constituent parts.

In the introduction and first part, Hasel draws on his experience as teacher, pastor, and theologian, providing suggestions and tips as to how the reader can engage and explore the Word, applying it at a deeply personal level. His challenge to the reader to diligence and engagement, leading to new and refreshing encounters with God, is coupled with a touch of realism. Should intentions and practice not align for a day or two or ten, he encourages the reader-user not to be discouraged but to pick up where they are and continue.

The Bible reading plan divides the Bible into Old Testament, New

Testament, and Psalms. The occasional irritant of a psalm popping up in the middle of a gospel is outweighed as the sprinkling of psalms throughout the year provides a welcome counterbalance to some more challenging passages.

Every encounter with God and His Word involves prayer. At the end of each month there are practical



insights and tips on a specific aspect of prayer. This is where the book excels. Each section is a gem showing a different facet of prayer, enhancing and deepening understanding and experience. The authenticity of the author and his intimate walk with God shine through. This is not academic theory; rather, these are practical, personal lessons, gained in the crucible of pain and loss. The book deals with some challenging aspects of prayer: What happens when my prayers are not fulfilled the way I was hoping for them to be? What does it mean to pray and to fast? How do I get rid of bitter feelings and grudges? How can

I meaningfully praise God and develop an attitude of gratitude?


Longing for God invites engagement. The pages for each day's reading provide space for reflection on the Word and prayer. For the journaling novice, the amount of space is not daunting. For the more experienced, the space limitations prompt deeper reflection to encapsulate the thoughts, ideas, and questions from the day's passage. Writing acts as an antidote to spiritual amnesia, and as the year progresses, themes and reflections feed into each other, creating valuable insights that otherwise might be missed.

The prayer space provides a framework for more dynamic prayer by reminding the reader-user to begin with praise, then thanks, before finally arriving at petitions. The regular expression of praise and thanks recalibrates and enhances our relationship with God. It prevents the slot-machine prayers that just ask, hoping that we hit the jackpot and get the desired answer.

As a delightful, thought-provoking bonus, quotes about prayer from a wide variety of authors are found on the left-hand pages throughout the book.

This book is designed to be written in and used. It is a powerful, practical tool that will enrich and deepen your relationship with the living God.

It is a practical tool that will enrich, deepen, and expand your understanding of the Bible and help you to remember and apply what you learn to your life.

This is not a book to set on the shelf; rather, it is a daily companion to be used and applied. I would recommend this to anyone who is willing to step out and try something practical and different and who longs for a closer walk with God. 

—Audrey Andersson, executive secretary, Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists

► Pathfinder recounts terrifying experience of Florida high-school shooting

Columbia, Maryland, United States—At Pompano Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, Florida, United States, **Samantha Grady**, a Seventh-day Adventist and Pathfinder, and her parents, shared parts of the moving testimony of her surviving the mass shooting that claimed the life of her close friend and 16 others at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, United States. Seventeen were killed and 14 were injured when the gunman, a former student, opened fire on campus and entered a building.

According to a news report on NBC Today.com, Samantha was working on an assignment about the Holocaust when she heard two shots in the hallway. Her best friend pushed her down, and the two then ran toward a big bookshelf. The friend urged Grady to grab a book and use it for protection. Grady was injured but survived. According to family friends, Grady's friend had been attending church with her. She did not survive.

W. Derrick Lea, Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) director, stated that while the school had people in place to provide emotional and spiritual care in such situations, the ACS DR team from the Florida and Southeastern Adventist conferences set up a help center at the Pompano Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, the closest Adventist church to the high school. Lea said, "Our local ACS DR plans to offer this help to the community—if people want to come in and talk—with certified emotional and spiritual care providers and will be prepared to assist if other needs come up."

Teen survivors called for a march on Washington to demand action on gun control. **Cameron Kasky**, an 11th-grader, stated that the demonstration should transcend politics. "This isn't



about the Republicans," Kasky said. "This isn't about the Democrats. This is about the adults. We feel neglected, and at this point, you're either with us or against us."

Many churches within the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church participated in the marches. The North American Division has asked all members to please "keep our communities in prayer." The Stoneman Douglas High School incident was the 18th school shooting in the United States thus far in 2018. [North American Division, Office of Communication]

Church leaders influence president of Uganda

Kampala, Uganda—Responding to an appeal by **Ted N. C. Wilson**, the Seventh-day Adventist Church General Conference president, to abolish Saturday exams, Uganda's leader announced that he would take steps to accommodate the convictions of Adventist students—and also those of Sunday-keeping Christians and Friday-keeping Muslims. As with any successful appeal, seeds had previously been sown by faithful church members and church leaders in the East-Central Africa Division.

"I thank Pastor Wilson for visiting Uganda," Ugandan president **Yoweri Museveni** wrote on Twitter. "I commend

members of the SDA community in Uganda for their discipline. We shall consider the church's request about our education institutions not conducting examinations on Saturday."

He added: "We shall also look at the interests of other Christian denominations that need to be freed from school examinations on Sundays and also for the Muslim community on Fridays."

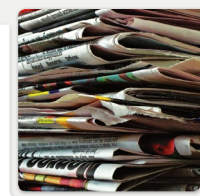
Local Adventist Church leaders applauded the surprise development. "This is exciting! Many people have suffered," said **Daniel Matte**, president of the Adventist Uganda Union Mission, whose own son had to repeat a three-year state university course

in agriculture after exams fell on Saturday.

"This is more than we desired," said **Blasious Ruguri**, president of the Adventist Church's East-Central Africa Division, whose territory includes Uganda. "Everybody is being blessed."

At the visit, Museveni asked about the origins of the Adventist Church, and Wilson offered a short history lesson, starting with the Protestant Reformation. Museveni seized on the fact that Adventists observe the Sabbath on Saturday, unlike other denominations that emerged from the Reformation.

Wilson expressed gratitude for the government's support of religious



freedom. After that, he made a personal appeal for Adventist students to be allowed to reschedule Saturday exams at public schools.

“No problem, no problem,” Museveni replied. “Why should we quarrel over days?”

Wilson offered a gift of a pen engraved with the name and emblem of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He suggested that Museveni could use the pen to sign important documents or, more important, to underline verses in the Bible.

Wilson also presented Museveni with a leather Bible, Ellen White’s *Steps to Christ*, and the booklet *Help in Daily Living*, which contains key chapters from White’s book *The Ministry of Healing*. He encouraged the president to read *Steps to Christ*, saying the book’s 13 chapters could be read easily in a single afternoon or between engagements.

Attendees described the one-hour meeting as a unique worship service that broke usual protocol by replacing



Photo: Prince Bahati/ECO

political speeches with friendly, spiritual conversation.

Museveni has donated funds to Adventist projects, including a community center in the western town of Kasese, and he has spoken with admiration about Adventist efforts to improve the well-being of their communities.

“We had an extremely gracious meeting,” Wilson said. “He knows Adventists—in fact he was instructed as a very young schoolboy by Seventh-day Adventist teachers. He holds a warm spot in his heart for that and for what God is doing through His church in Uganda.” [Andrew McChesney, Adventist Mission]

Pastors lead thousands in pledge to put God first

Silver Spring, Maryland, United States—Thousands of Seventh-day Adventists recently pledged to put God first in a special commitment ceremony that capped week-long Holy Convocations. These convocations were held simultaneously in Mexico City, Mexico, where 333 pastors from the Central Mexican Union Mission and other regions within the Inter-American Division participated, and in Manado, Indonesia, where 94 pastors from the Minahasa Conference joined in.

A Holy Convocation is a week of intense training and discipleship sponsored by the Stewardship department of a specific union or territory. Pastors and stewardship leaders come together to focus on personal revival and members’ spiritual growth. After morning training sessions, they visit church members in

their homes, using a small card with a list of spiritual disciplines as a spring board for conversation. Each evening they preach a series of revival messages in area churches. The highlight of their experience is the Sabbath-morning commitment ceremony.



Pastors and lay leaders encouraged members in different areas: daily personal and family devotional time, improving relationships, establishing healthy habits, witnessing to others, keeping the Sabbath holy, and faithfully returning tithes and offerings.

Marcos Bomfim, director of Stewardship Ministries for the General Conference, says this is the ultimate goal of stewardship ministry. “Stewardship involves more than money. We are not here to work with money! Our main focus is revival and reformation, and

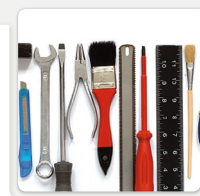
pastoral visitation is a key issue. This visitation program is fundamental to pastoral ministry and encouraging the spirituality of church members.”



Photo: Adventist Stewardship

At the conclusion of the week, pastors and leaders rejoiced to witness more than 14,000 members from the two participating regions recommit their lives to the Lord, pledging to put Him first. [Beth Thomas, Adventist News Network]  

S. Joseph Kidder, DMin, is professor of Christian ministry and discipleship at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.



It is all about relationships:

Practical pointers for positive pastoring

Among the most sacred of relationships are those the pastor has with his or her elders, deacons and deaconesses, and church members. God is honored when the people are satisfied with the pastor and when the pastor has a positive attitude toward them. God wants the pastor, local church leaders, and church members to love each other, pray for each other, work together, serve together, worship together, and win souls together. Following are some suggestions that might help the pastor develop healthy relationships with his or her people.

1. Love your people

Recently, I interviewed a seasoned pastor with more than 40 years of successful pastoral experience. I asked him to tell me two things he had learned about pastoral work. He said, “I can sum up pastoral work in two phrases. Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and love others as you love yourself. It is about having a heart for God and for people.” Paul had this kind of affection toward his people. He remembered them fondly. He prayed for them and built strong partnerships with them to spread the gospel (Phil. 1:3–5). Ask God to give you a heart full of love for the people you serve.

2. Encourage your people

Be expressive in your love for your people. As a pastor, I told my congregations repeatedly, from the pulpit and other venues, that I loved them and continually prayed for them. I spent two to three hours every week writing notes of encouragement to many of the people in my churches. I wrote these notes to people on anniversaries and birthdays and to volunteers who did something to

make a difference in the community or church. In one of the churches I pastored, there was a woman married to a seeker who came to church several times. After she led out in Vacation Bible School, the church sent both of them to an all-expense-paid retreat to show our love and appreciation. He was so touched that after they came back from the retreat, he asked to study the Bible with me. Several months later, I had the privilege of baptizing him. Expressing appreciation is a form of blessing that touches both parties.

3. Pray for your people

The pastor should pray individually for his people, especially those who have burdens and heartaches. When a home is having trouble, the pastor should pray for them. When someone is ill, the pastor should call on them and pray for them. Many times a little note of encouragement or a phone call might be a great blessing. As a pastor, I spent Mondays praying for my church and community. I lifted up the names of each member and called to tell them I was praying for them, and I asked whether they had any specific requests. Prayer took care of conflict that plagued the church for many years by bringing love and forgiveness.

4. Care for your people

Remember that people are more important than programs. People like to feel that they are loved and cared for. Some pastors might convey the impression that they are about programming, techniques, and strategies. All of these are important and necessary. But that is not what makes the church. When you have great people who love Jesus and reflect His grace, then you have a

great church filled with blessings that is naturally growing. Spend your time with your members, fellowship with them, love them, pray for them, and seek their good. Cut down on your programming and move more into discipleship. Your members will grow, and the church will prosper.

5. Build your people

Do not use your people to build a great ministry, rather, use your ministry to build great people. Some have the idea that their present church is a stepping-stone to a bigger and more prominent ministry. The greatest product of a pastor's ministry is a steadfast Christian who grows in the grace of the Lord. Individuals are important. They matter infinitely to God. Therefore, they must matter to us. When a preacher loves his or her people and rejoices more over a Christian who grows than over anything else, he has developed a true pastor's heart.

When I arrived at a new pastoral assignment, the church had about 40 people in attendance, a debt of about US\$100,000, and was full of conflict. By God's grace, I showed love and care for the congregation, fed them spiritually, and gave them opportunities to grow. I focused on people, their needs, and their growth. When I left 12 years later, we had about 500 people in attendance, no debt, about US\$60,000 in the bank, and an environment full of harmony and joy. But when they held a farewell party for us, none of those details were mentioned. Instead, one by one they said, “Thank you for loving us, being with us, and for making church a fun place to be.”

I believe pastoral work is about having the heart of God for people. Ask Him for that today. 🙏

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