Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)

http://ministrymagazine.org/archive/1992/June/are-adventist-pastors-teaching-hypnotism

Following is information from a June 1992 article in Ministry magazine on neuro-linguistic programming.

- In the 1970s an interdenominational training organization, called LEAD Consultants, Inc., developed a seminar to train pastors in visitation skills. The founder, John Savage, was a Methodist minister who was interviewed in May 1983 in Ministry by Robert Spangler. Savage entitled his Lab I seminar "A Laboratory School on Skills for Calling and Caring Ministries." The instructor training program was Lab II.
- “A number of Adventist ministers began using the curriculum because we had no comparable materials. Their goal has been to encourage effective visitation of church members, especially in reclaiming nonattenders.” Lab I provided information on why members drop out of church and included methods on encouraging them to return. It also focused primarily on helping them cope with suffering from illness, death of a loved one, divorce, unemployment, loss of faith, etc.
- “Lab I is not designed to be doctrinal in nature. What little theology it contained offers no threat to Adventist beliefs.” Most of the time is spent learning “listening skills in order to improve interpersonal communication during visits. Good listening enables one to show compassion to a burdened individual.”
- The Ministry article described how Lab I and NLP works. One page in the Lab I manual stated: “...during home visits, one should observe the NLP, or thinking style, of the church member to know what choice of words will communicate most effectively. This is much like hearing another person speak Spanish and (if one is bilingual) switching to Spanish in order to facilitate the conversation. It is also following the counsel of Paul who tells us we need to adapt our communication to be like the person we are attempting to reach (1 Cor. 9:19-23).”
- Ministry stated that “Many ideas espoused are speculative, and the Adventist Church cannot endorse them” and that “No NLP therapy or certification is taught in Lab I” but that “some books about NLP therapy are listed in the
bibliography of the Lab I manual, but Adventist ministers who teach Lab I should warn the participants that these books contain ideas Adventists cannot accept. Some even tear the bibliography page out of the manuals before distributing them.” The article explained that it would be best if SDAs had their own materials. Unfortunately, the damage had already been done from years of using the Savage material. So around 1988 the Church Ministries Department and Ministerial Association of the NAD began writing their own curriculum “based on a firm foundation of Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy” and sponsored its distribution at their “Learning to Care” seminars. Today the leadership no longer tears the bibliography pages out of material that advertises the world’s ideas. Instead they bluntly advertise the books. This is the progression that occurs when men dabble with danger.

- The article states that SDA pastors have not learned hypnotism and that what is taught in Lab I and Lab II “is in no way connected to hypnotism.” The article then compares the “mirroring” technique used to “no more manipulative than Christ’s method of teaching sacred truths in parables suited to His culture.”
- The article goes on to criticize those who warn about the New Age movement.
- Spirit of Prophecy statements are interspersed in the article and are misapplied to approve of the Savage program.
- The article ends by stating the “critics” have offered no proof that these seminars “have hurt anyone.” It stated that many have been blessed by them. The author said he felt “rather foolish” writing the article, that there were more important topics to write about, such as reaching the “deep spiritual hunger” in large cities worldwide, “how small group Sabbath school classes can foster a closer walk with Christ,” and “New Testament church planting strategies.” The question is asked “When will private publications and the rumor mill discuss these questions?”

It is obvious that the author did not have a problem with the Savage seminars and was not happy with those who warned against them. While the Spirit of Prophecy teaches that we should try new methods to reach the world and to understand human nature and the mind, it does not suggest using Satanic methods. If there is any error mixed in, it should be completely avoided.

http://www.leadplus.com/Products.htm#Strategic_Communication_Skills_Manual Savage’s website advertises CDs and DVDs that parallel and support the Listening & Caring Skills (Lab I) conference and manual, which includes NLP. The manual can only be ordered by a Lab II graduate.
There is much use of the word “caring” in SDA institutions. Yet how can you truly care for others when you do not share present truth and warn against the apostasy? When parents truly care for their children, there is discipline. There is much talk of the “disciplines,” yet true discipline is becoming unknown.

The following is quoted from *The Road to Rome* by Colin and Russell Standish, pp. 116-119:

> Does Satan have men within the assemblies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, using hypnotic methods to turn the minds of God’s children to error? Listen!

> “We need to teach our people how to do what I am doing with you now in church. If I can do it in the University Church with 3,500 sitting there joined elbow to elbow, you can do it in your church—regularly.” Tape recording of a Seminar presented to American Seventh-day Adventist Pastors by the Senior Pastor of the Loma Linda University Church.*

*We have this tape recording on file.

Do what, you may ask?

> “The only time we have them [God’s people] at our—at our command in a sense—we’re going to hypnotize them—they’re suggestible people. The only time we can do that is on Sabbath.” Ibid.

Some Seventh-day Adventist pastors have denied that Neuro-Linguistic Programming is used in Lab I and Lab II courses. We possess the official LEAD Consultants Lab I Work Book. We obtained it from the South Pacific Division. On pages 15-16 are listed skills for Effective Listening. One of those cited is Neuro-Linguistics. On page 44 there is an entire page devoted to Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Page 5 lists Neuro-Linguistics among the goals of Lab School and the final page lists the book, *Frogs into Princes: Neuro-Linguistic Programming* (Bandler and Grinder) as the first book on its reading list.

The authors went on to explain the following: (1) No SDA should attend a church where techniques such as these are used, since it is a “grievous danger” to submit to mind control by others; (2) The purpose of Lab II was so that SDA pastors could teach the same techniques to the laity; (3) In Perth, Australia, some pastors were placed in a state of increased suggestibility and told to remember events from their childhood; techniques like “reimprinting” (altering the perception of past experiences), “sleight of mouth” patterns, and “reframing” was used to produce belief changes. Only the Holy Spirit should be changing our hearts and minds; (4) The techniques are used on unwilling participants as well, which is a form of coercion; (5) Another technique used in NLP is “embedding,” which introduces
new “facts” drawn up by the practitioner into the person’s consciousness, which is frequently used by professional counselors. The suggestions are so powerful that these become reality to the person, even if it is not true. Lives are ruined by these techniques, but this is just as Satan would have it. It is interesting to see how these techniques preceded contemplative prayer and other emerging church ideas.


Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is “a model of interpersonal communication chiefly concerned with the relationship between successful patterns of behavior and the subjective experiences (esp. patterns of thought) underlying them and a system of alternative therapy based on this which seeks to educate people in self-awareness and effective communication, and to change their patterns of mental and emotional behavior.” NLP began to be promoted in the 1970s by the co-founders, Richard Bandler and John Grinder. They believed in the connection between neurological processes (‘neuro’), language (‘linguistic’) and behavioral patterns that have been learned through experience (‘programming’) that can be organized to “achieve specific goals in life.” They also believed that it is an “extraordinarily effective and rapid form of psychological therapy” to address phobias, depression, habit disorder, psychosomatic illnesses, learning disorders, etc. It was advertised as having the potential for “self-determination through overcoming learned limitations and emphasized well-being and healthy functioning,” and that these skills “can be learned by anyone to improve their effectiveness both personally and professionally.” This programming has the strongest influence among psychotherapists, hypnotherapists, and has had influence in management training, life coaching, the self-help industry, sales training, and even seduction.

The NLP co-founders credited the late Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, and Milton Erickson as their inspiration. Erickson was an American psychiatrist specializing in medical hypnosis and family therapy. The “Milton model” is a form of hypnotherapy described as “a way of using language to induce and maintain trance in order to contact the hidden resources of our personality.” Satir was a noted American author and psychotherapist, known especially for her approach to family therapy and her work with Systemic Constellations (uses stillness and silence). Perls was a psychiatrist and psychotherapist who believed in the “Gestalt prayer,” which focuses on living in response to one's own needs and that by doing this people can help others do the same, creating space for genuine contact. In other words, “I do my thing and you do your thing.”
NLP and hypnosis are based on mysticism. NLP also teaches that positive change can result if one reproduces the behaviors and beliefs of successful people (modeling) or the more successful parts of oneself and that we have all the resources necessary for success within ourselves. The modeling methods are designed to unconsciously assimilate the unspoken knowledge to learn what the master is doing of which the master is not aware.

**Learning to Care:**

http://www.adventistreview.org/article.php?id=2645

In a June 18, 2009 Adventist Review article about reaching church “dropouts,” it stated that “there are ways and means to [Monte Sahlin] suggested using the “Learning to bring them back home.” Care” training curriculum produced by Ben Maxson.

http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/MIN/MIN19900201-V63-02__B.pdf

The February 1990 issue of *Ministry* magazine featured an article on “World Ministers Council: Personal Seminars/Exploring the pathways others have found that lead to a deepening spirituality” written by Maxson. It explained, “This practical seminar focuses on the dynamics of spirituality and the tools and skills that will help you grow spiritually. It is designed to give you a theological and experiential foundation for enriching your devotional life. It will explore the classic spiritual disciplines that will help you in your walk with God and open you more fully to His transforming power.” It listed the following that would be learned at the seminars: 1) Understanding the Christian disciplines that “great men and women of God have used throughout history”; 2) Ways of expanding and enriching prayer life; 3) Three forms of Christian meditation; 4) Principles for practicing the presence of God.

Those seminars were obviously the beginning of spiritual formation that is spreading in the SDA Church today. Following are more examples of Maxson’s involvement with spiritual formation.

http://adventist-stewardship.net/article.php?id=153

While the G.C. Stewardship Director, Maxson wrote an article on their website entitled “Renewing Our Minds.” It mentioned two ideas as follows: 1) that “spiritual disciplines are tools of discipleship for nurturing intimacy with God.” Along with Bible reading, prayer, and memorization, he mentions meditation, journaling, and “other such avenues” for practicing devotional skills; 2) to practice the presence of God by developing an awareness of His presence, and that as we do this, we will find our lives transformed.
Steps to Discipleship:
http://www.paradiseadventist.org/site/1/docs/S2D_Week_8.pdf
On the Paradise SDA Church website is information on “Steps to Discipleship” with a DVD and study guide written by Maxson. The Week 8 lesson mentions to list the “holy habits” or spiritual disciplines that are easiest and most meaningful to the person. In the previous seven weeks the following “holy habits” were “explored”: “Relational Bible Reading, Prayer, Holy Release [not sure what this is], Practicing the Presence, Journaling, Meditation, Scripture Memorization.” One question asked was “Who has God placed around you that does not know God or is hungering for a deeper walk with God?”

http://www.paradiseadventist.org/article.php?id=54
Under the Resources/Materials section for the Elder’s Peer Discipling Strategy Teaching Material, Maxson states the following ideas:

- God accepts us “even in our sin.” This is a new theology idea.
- Self-talk is a “powerful factor in our lives,” so it is “crucial that we bring it to conscious awareness” and it is “usually programmed by our experiences, especially those during our formative years” (a psychology concept).
- Spiritual disciplines are practical tools and “provide the context for the daily Christian life and growth.”

http://gscadventist.adventistconnect.org/site_data/430/assets/0027/4589/June_Intra syd.pdf
The Greater Sydney Pastoral Team in Australia met with Maxson for a “day of discipleship resourcing.” Maxson also attended their teachers’ meetings, giving instruction on how schools can use his spiritual formation models of discipleship. He also met with the Conference Stewardship leaders and the Greater Sydney pastoral team to work through a “model of Lordship.” Their team was also introduced to the Steps To Discipleship resource. Quite a few of the Sydney churches will be “incorporating this resource into their plans.” Since the presentations were “a great blessing” to the pastors, they plan to continue to resource their conference for “growing in discipleship.”

http://record.net.au/encounter
In November 2009, the South Pacific Division Record featured an article on the Educational Leaders Conference for SDA teachers in Australia and New Zealand where Maxson spoke. It was explained that “some of his work is at the heart of the Encounter program.” He was booked to come back three times to further discuss his “spiritual formation model” that is part of the Encounter foundational structure

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that focuses on developing a “relationship with God.” The curriculum is based on a “transformational planning framework.” Five of the SDA secondary schools in New Zealand and Australia experimented with the Encounter program: Northpine Christian College, Lilydale Academy, Christchurch Adventist School, and Avondale High School. It was stated that the program is “gathering momentum” and is seen as being a “really powerful way to reach kids” and that it could revolutionize the way the Bible is taught. Teams of teachers were trained on the Encounter program so they could write units for it in order to “engender a strong feeling of ownership.” The first teaching units were to be launched in 2010, with it taking about five years to complete the more than 250 units.

In November 2008, the SDA South Pacific website quoted Daryl Murdoch, associate national director of Adventist Schools Australia. He stated that the Encounter program “incorporates a well-articulated spiritual formation model with content covering from Prep to Year 10, and has a fresh approach to the teaching of Bible in our schools.” At least ten writers’ workshops were planned for Bible teachers in Australia and New Zealand in 2009.

http://record.net.au/hidden-springs
In June 2009, the Record wrote that Maxson shared with delegates the “spiritual formation model that underpinned Encounter, providing compelling arguments regarding the authenticity of his spiritual formation model.” Murdoch described the curriculum with having “clear focus on spiritual formation.” He further stated that it is a “valuable tool to serve the mission of the church in Australia and New Zealand” and that they must “ensure that a high quality Bible curriculum is available in the near future.”

How tragic that the youth are being led astray with New Age teachings. What a shame that tithe funds are being used for curriculum that is far from high quality.

Pathways:
http://roseville22.adventistchurchconnect.org/article.php?id=35
The Roseville SDA Church in California included the “Steps to Discipleship” by Maxson on the home page of their website.

This church also developed a program called “Pathways” to be presented to conference leaders, pastors, and church members in the Northern California Conference and is similar to spiritual direction. A Roseville Pathways Retreat was
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The Pathways program was advertised as not only a way to understand the concepts but to “catch the spirit of the special relationships formed between Pathways team members and the newly baptized member” and that the relationship “becomes transformational in the lives of both.” Guests were welcome to join in all the meetings as well as “observe the modeling that happens, and even the intimate bonding between the new member and their Pathways mentor.” It was termed as “a sacred event.” The Roseville leadership team wished to “encourage this type of ministry in as many Adventist Churches as we can.”

**The Bible Echo, October 15, 1892:** We must study the truth for ourselves; no man should be relied upon to think for us, no matter who he may be or in what position he may be placed. We are not to look upon any man as a perfect guide for us. We are to counsel together, and be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment, that we may individually develop a character that will stand the test of the great day.

The goal of Pathways is to “fill a need in the church – turning new converts into a new generation of Adventist leaders” and to equip church members with the “skills necessary to disciple others in the same way Jesus did.” This involves the following: 1) Guiding people to a “spiritual maturity”; 2) Spiritual disciplines that are a “never ceasing passion in Pathways”; 3) Interpersonal skills that are the “pathways that connect ourselves with others” and involves “knowing oneself” and others to bring “wisdom and energy to accomplish our purpose in life”; 4) Mentoring or discipling one person to another “in a bond of love, accountability, learning, and commitment” as the “fastest and most efficient method for growth” and establish “relationships built upon trust, integrity, honesty, commitment and truth.”

Why is the church teaching its members to place so much trust in each other rather than in Christ? This will simply bring them disappointment and troubles, since no one human being can be trusted in comparison to Christ.

Following were classes held by Gordon Arruda and the modeling team during the Sabbath of the weekend retreat: 1) The Gift of Presence: “making myself available
to another person,” (“the first in a trilogy of what it means to become a sacred companion”) and “personalizing presence” with the Pathways partner and sharing with the group that person’s response about what it was like; 2) The Gift of Hospitality: “making space (or place) for another person in my life, receiving them into my heart, devoting myself to them, where they can be welcome, safe, and heard,” then personalizing and sharing again with the group; 3) The Gift of Dialog: “a mutual exchange of inquiry for the purpose of exploring spiritual truth about God” (“a mutual exploration and discovery benefiting both parties”).

The “presence” is the same as that of mystics that leads away from Christ as the only path to God.

The following information comes from a letter written by one of the Roseville pastors. It was stated that Pathways was designed to 1) teach new converts how to have a devotional life through spiritual disciplines; 2) connect them with a trained church mentor who becomes “their most intimate friend” over the next two years; 3) teach them “the reasons behind what we believe”; and 4) “get them involved in ministry.”

The letter also stated that besides using selected books by Ellen White, they also use books by David Benner, including Sacred Companions, which promotes the teachings of mystics such as Thomas Merton and Thomas Keating. They also mentioned some “mentoring handbooks from a company who specializes in working with church groups.” The handbooks come from Faith-Centered Mentoring and More in Grass Valley, California. It is a division of the Coalition of Counseling Centers Inc. and provides “Christian mentoring and life skills resources.” The staff deals with psychology, fundraising, lecturing, consulting, training, administration, leadership, relationship issues, personal development, and developing “culturally appropriate mentoring programs for executives and emerging leaders.” In the Christ-Centered Mentor’s Handbook, p. 8 it reads: “Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese propose a practical and structured approach to spiritual mentoring which is built on the centuries-old concept of spiritual direction. We see their approach as very compatible with our Christ-centered mentoring.” Under the company’s “Customers” tab, we find the Theological Seminary at Andrews University and Adventist Frontier Missions, along with The Salvation Army, miscellaneous non-SDA churches and organizations, including the Saddleback and Willow Creek megachurches.

iFollow: The Discipleship Resource:
http://www.ifollowdiscipleship.org
The November 11, 2010 issue of the *Adventist Review* included information on the iFollow Discipleship Series for SDAs. It is designed to be used in congregations “to assist people in their pursuit of God” through pastor’s sermons, Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, small groups, retreats, training sessions, and discussion groups. The NAD was urged to provide a “discipleship resource that came specifically from the Adventist church” and “reflected more completely the distinctive character of Adventism.” Churches who used “off-the-shelf” discipleship training information from non-SDAs were getting “pushback” from members regarding the content. The iFollow lessons are advertised as a “quality product” to bring “unique value to churches.” Contributors included the Center for Creative Ministry, Mind Over Media, the iFollow Taskforce, and Vervent (NAD Church Resource Center)—leaders in the emerging church movement.

As can be seen in the examples below, the lessons reveal a far different character to what God intended. **It is way past time to bring the SDA Church back to where it should be.** The iFollow series of book development is an “open-ended process, with more books being added to the list of available titles all the time.” It is being done in order that there will be “no lack of available resources you can use to keep the fire burning.” The fire that needs to be burning is one that would devour the books that teach error. Making matters worse, church leaders are supporting the project, writing for it, and promoting it.

- An example of a physical prop for illustrating a point included how C. Mervyn Maxwell used a vacuum cleaner from the podium to illustrate that unless we are “connected to our source of power” we can do nothing. The excuse given is that Jesus used illustrations. **Where in the Bible does it mention Him using such a distraction when He spoke in the temple?**

- Additional resources:
  - *Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery* by Garr Reynolds, who is known as a “Zen-master.” (Zen is a school of Buddhism and a word meaning “meditation” or “meditative state.”)

- For positioning of the speaker:
  - An “Edgar Bergen” principle is explained as well as who he was. Bergen is most famous for being a ventriloquist in the 1930s as well as a radio performer and an actor.
  - Quoted C. S. Lewis, a man who was involved with the occult. It was explained to “make certain that the audio visual materials you use..."
don’t beckon the audience into a side road.” Those involved in iFollow are in danger of taking a side road that is not the straight and narrow path.

- **George Bernard Shaw** is quoted. He was a socialist and an Irish playwright, mostly in drama and comedy.
- Under “Identify Your Dominant Learning Style,” there was mention of “role-playing, large body movements” and “taking time for personal contemplation.”
- For worship team groups, it mentions a praise team and instrumental teams that combine piano, organ, guitar, percussion, etc. and a drama team that provides “creative ways to touch hearts.”
- Celebrity stories were recommended as illustrations for effective preaching.
- Under resources for listening skills:
  - Mention of the 12 step recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous.

The material repeatedly mentions about not “seeking praise from others, but giving praise to God.” First of all, when rock music and drama are performed, it is all about self, not God, and the popular style of “praise” is going to the god of this world.

**If the SDA leaders persist in providing the chaff of this world, they should find employment outside of God’s Church.**

*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 434:* The Lord calls upon His shepherds to feed the flock with pure provender. He would have them present the truth in its simplicity. When this work is faithfully done, many will be convicted and converted by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In April 2002, the **Caribbean Union Conference** of SDAs had a Women’s Ministry Leadership Certification Program that included Level 1 of communication skills; listening techniques; checking feelings from the past and present, self-disclosure; and awareness of body language. Suggested resources were the Friendship Evangelism Seminar - A Concerned Communications Seminar, Monte Sahlin, Advent Source; Leadership and Development Seminar (LEAD) Consultants, John Savage, Pittsford, NY; and Learning to Care, Ben Maxson, Upper Columbia Conference.

No doubt there will continue to be more SDA versions of discipleship programs developed along with many other unbiblical ideas.
Celebrate Recovery:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_W
For William Wilson, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, spiritualism was a life-long interest. He was also involved with parapsychology, which deals with psychic abilities, life after death, and extrasensory perception (ESP). He also participated in séances using a Ouija board.

Celebrate Recovery was founded in 1991 by Pastor John Baker of Saddleback Church for overcoming addictions with a 12 step program based on “Christian” principles. Not only is modern psychology used but also Eastern meditation is promoted. It is also suggested to openly confess your faults to someone you can trust. Psalm 62:8 tells us to “Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.”

http://www.lighthousetrailsresearch.com/blog/?p=1196

Contemplatives recognize the meditative Silence—”thoughtless, empty, and void”—that has been simmering in Alcoholics Anonymous since its inception.

...Literally millions of people have already experienced meditation as part of their 12 Step program.

AA’s 11th Step states: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

“Meditation is something that can always be further developed. It has no boundaries, either of width or height,” writes AA co-founder Bill Wilson. This is equally true of 12 Step theology–there are absolutely no boundaries when it comes to defining the “higher power.”

In the Bible, we are clearly told, “I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.” (Isaiah 42:8)

http://replay.waybackmachine.org/20081208054938/http://www.adventistregenerationministries.org
http://www.adventistrecovery.org/article.php?id=29

Adventist Recovery Ministries/Regeneration Ministries (ARM) advertises their ministry as a Christ-centered 12 step recovery program for addictions. This ministry is located at the SDA General Conference headquarters. Unfortunately, it is based on principles from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It is stated that they encourage membership in AA as well as other 12 step fellowships, such as “The Bridge to Recovery,” which is “confident that, by the time they complete Step 12, they will have experienced a genuine spiritual awakening.” Yet ARM does not
“endorse or have any affiliation with any of the organizations.” How can they encourage membership and yet not endorse it? ARM also promotes Ephesians Life Ministries, which is a Christ-centered counseling ministry that combines biblical teachings and modern psychology.

Marvin Moore, editor of Signs of the Times magazine, writes the following in one of his many books:

I’ll never forget the day I lost the last bit of my risk money. I was wired, a nervous wreck, absolutely incapable of concentrating on anything else. I immediately quit trading real money, but it took me several days to settle down emotionally to the point where I could sleep well at night.

In the weeks that followed I spent a good bit of time reflecting on what had happened, especially my emotional frame of mind. Fortunately, for the previous several years I had been fairly diligent in following what is popularly known as a “recovery program.” I had read a lot of recovery literature, attended many Twelve-Step meetings, and made a serious effort to implement the Twelve Steps to recover from my addictions. All of this had taught me a lot about the nature of addiction and its symptoms. And I realized that my response to commodity trading was a classic case study in addictive behavior. In fact, I came to the sobering conclusion that I was an excellent candidate for becoming a full-blown gambling addict! {The Coming Global Crisis, Marvin Moore, Pacific Press Publishing Association, p. 42.}

One of the suggestions in step 5 of the 12 step program is to admit to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. God’s Word reveals the following:

The Faith I Live By, p. 128: Many, many confessions should never be spoken in the hearing of mortals; for the result is that which the limited judgment of finite beings does not anticipate.... God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the Spirit of God.... Do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear.

Why would SDA Church leaders and members want to promote the 12 step program when it is associated with spiritualism and other non-biblical beliefs and practices? Why not just use the wonderful truths given in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy?
**Promise Keepers:** [http://www.promisekeepers.org/home/about/7-promises](http://www.promisekeepers.org/home/about/7-promises)

- A non-SDA ecumenical, psycho-spiritual (humanistic psychology), political men’s movement since 1990 that is a mix of truth and error in very deceptive ways.
- A charismatic movement to bring about union with the Roman Catholic Church.
- Downplays doctrine for the sake of unity.
- Emphasis on self-effort by trusting others to keep their shared failings a secret rather than dependence on Christ, since He is unfailing at keeping a promise.
- Unscriptural feminizing of men and holds a contradictory stand on homosexuality.
- Promotes secular psychology.
- Misapplies and misinterprets Scripture.
- *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper* book published by Focus on the Family.
- Includes a link to “The Road to Jerusalem,” whose vision it is to mobilize the “body of Christ to partner with the Jewish believer for the salvation of Israel, thus the world.”
- Promise Keepers meetings are promoted in SDA churches and conferences such as Columbia Union, Northern California, Southern California, and the South Australian Conference.


With the promotion of the wrong type of confession through Celebrate Recovery, ARM, and Promise Keepers, it is no surprise that the first quarter 2011 Sabbath School lesson number four included a section entitled "Confess Your Sins to Each Other." In reference to James 5:16, the following was stated:

There is an additional interpretation of James’s text, which offers great healing possibilities. Confessing sins, errors, and transgressions to someone you trust brings about emotional healing. Opening up one’s own imperfection to a godly Christian friend will help alleviate the burden of sin. In addition, mutual confession deepens interpersonal relationships. Trusting and being trusted provide the bonding that will make a friendship genuine and lasting. In fact, the entire counseling profession is founded upon the principle that talking is good for the soul.... Following James’s advice not only will alleviate psychological burden but also bring renewed strength to change destructive behaviors. A word of caution though. Although disclosure of committed sins to a close friend may
bring much relief, it makes the person vulnerable. There is always the risk that our friend will reveal the confidence to others, and this is destructive to those involved. Most important, we always can confess our trespasses to the Lord in full confidence and with the assured certainty of forgiveness.

Since it is cautioned that there is vulnerability and risk involved, why mention the confession idea to begin with? Additionally, God’s word tells us to be cautious of our words, that most people talk too much.

**Proverbs 10:19-21:** In the multitude of words there wants not sin: but he that refrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

**Pamphlet 162 7:** Too many words that yield no good fruit are spoken.