Give the translator his due

Three cheers for Borge Schantz and his article, “Interpreters Aren’t Interrupters,” in the October issue. Having spent two years as a full-time translator and countless hours on platforms trying to communicate sometimes untranslatable material into something understandable to the receptor audience, I can only applaud the fact that someone else has realized the importance that must be placed on this phase of the work as the church grows larger in the Third World.

Too many speakers refuse to acknowledge that it is necessary to take the translation into account at all. It is grossly unfair to ask a translator to stand in the pulpit and instantaneously communicate concepts the speaker has probably spent days and weeks putting together. The very least consideration that could be given to the translator is to share the material with him beforehand so that it can be studied and digested.

Another fallacy is that literary ability in the target language is the prime criteria for a translator. Without an accurate understanding of the receptor language, translation becomes a farce.

Schantz mentioned only in passing a point that ought to be emphasized more emphatically. Translators are seldom remembered when the accolades are being passed out. I have watched people who did nothing at all except lend their names to some presentation receive all kinds of praise, while translators who had worked until they were emotionally and physically fatigued were not even mentioned.

James W. Zackrison

Well documented

I have just read with great interest also the latest issue of MINISTRY. I find it well documented and very scholarly written during the time that I have been reading the magazine. I have appreciated its faithfulness and clear and concise articles.

Presbyterian minister

Virginia

Appreciates evangelical position

I must say that I do not hold the distinctive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—Saturday Sabbath, stress on vegetarianism, etc.; nor do I enjoy the stress on these things in the MINISTRY.

But I must confess that I have enjoyed your publication and found numerous valuable articles in it. I appreciate your evangelical position of salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus too!

Pastor

Pennsylvania

A great help

I did appreciate so much the article telling of the many areas from which the Adventists gathered their teachings. This publication is a great help to me in my work as pastor, and I look forward to each copy that comes to my desk.

METHODIST PASTOR

New Jersey

Helpful and Enlightening

I wish to thank you for sending me your magazine THE MINISTRY. I have found many articles in it very helpful and enlightening. Then there were articles I could not fully agree with, especially in the field of prophecy. But generally your magazine is very good. I would like to have you continue to send THE MINISTRY.

Pastor

Pennsylvania

Helps understand Adventist beliefs

The magazine has been of great value to me in understanding the beliefs of the many Seventh-day Adventists here in the city of Warburton, as well as being of great general interest.

Pastor

Australia

Enjoyed each issue

I have been receiving gratis copies of MINISTRY for quite some time and have enjoyed each issue with admiration. Being a minister of the old Methodist-Episcopal series and having been retired since 1965 as a result of a stroke, I just thought it my duty to thank you for your infinite kindness in including me to receive free copies.

Working with the Lord has always been an inspiration, and I pray that I may be forgiven for not writing sooner expressing my gratitude for your many kindnesses to me.

METHODIST MINISTER

Maryland

Credits wrong

Here is one reader who is highly gratified with your editorial in the November issue of the MINISTRY. Let me commend you on both the content of this editorial, and the manner in which the content was expressed.

In this editorial you have shown a fine sensitivity to the issues with which the Field Study Conference last summer was concerned. Your discussion of the dominant issue is well developed and is presented in a manner that needs to be brought before the working force of our church.

Please indulge me with one slight negative comment. The picture credits listed R. H. Brown as the source of some of the photographs that were used to illustrate your editorial. The facts are that I have taken none of these pictures, nor have I been the channel through which any of these pictures have been routed.

Pastor

Berrien Springs, Michigan
4 I Am a Pastor. Read a portion of James J. Londis’ intriguing diary. Londis, pastor of a 3,500 member congregation, claims that human needs always exceed human resources, and that there is no other profession which causes a person to give his best so consistently and in so many areas.

7 Seven Reasons for Studying the Book of Revelation. Orley Berg doesn’t think the Book of Revelation is an incomprehensible mystery. In future articles the letters to the seven churches as outlined in the first three chapters of the book will be examined.

10 Confrontation at Calvary. The author, Rex Edwards, describes in vivid detail the capitulation of a soul fortress that resisted every assault for over twenty years.

12 What About Form Criticism? E. Edward Zinke

15 The Meaning of Life. Carsten Johnsen’s article may take several readings before the full impact of its message is realized. It describes clearly the dilemmas in both evolution and theistic evolution.

18 The Male Middle-age Identity Crisis. Although there are many stereotypes of the middle-aged man, what are the real issues at stake?

21 Why Walk? Albert E. Shirer is convinced that no matter what ails you, even if walking doesn’t cure it, it sure helps you feel better!

22 A Solution to the Chronological Problems of the Hebrew Kings. Edwin R. Thiele has brought order out of chaos in his examination of the Hebrew reigns of the monarchies, thus giving us a renewed confidence in the accuracy of the Scriptures.

28 Glowing and Growing. La Verne Beeler

2 Letters

18 Health and Religion

22 Biblical Archeology

27 Widening Our Ministerial Word Power

28 Shepherdess

30 Recommended Reading

31 Shop Talk

32 News Briefs
I AM A PASTOR

I feel compelled to be what I am despite long hours, intense pressures, and low pay—compelled by a sense of chosenness that I cannot shake.

by James J. Londis

October 3: Bruises blotch nearly every inch of her body. Her husband beat her with a rubber hose. The doctors fear kidney damage.

October 7: It appears he committed suicide. No one knows why, but there is some evidence he contracted a degenerative disease while doing medical experimentation with the government. She had been married to him little more than a year. I try to comfort her with the assurance that God is compassionate and will not judge him solely on the basis of his last act.

October 10: I study the twelfth chapter of John’s Gospel in the morning to prepare my sermon. It is a profound experience.

October 11: Notes of appreciation and criticism are coming to me about my sermon last Sabbath on the role of women in the church.

October 12: Early reactions to a book manuscript I’ve written on the Ten Commandments are favorable. I pray that the importance of the law as a discipline for freedom and love comes through clearly.

October 13: “I haven’t been to church for fifteen years. I guess my verbal requests to be dropped have not been honored.”

“Write me a letter of withdrawal and we will honor it,” I reply. He is so bitter he will not discuss the matter with me.

October 16: At the church picnic a father tells me he will never forget how promptly the church acted in behalf of his daughter, who had violated the law.

October 22: A recently married young woman greets me warmly after church, and she gushes about the joy her marriage gives her. I think I shall never regret having married this couple.

October 24: A middle-aged woman tells me she cannot live with the pain of her marriage any longer.

I am a pastor...

I share the darkest cruelties and the brightest gifts life bestows on people. I accept their trust in me as a sacred responsibility and I am humbled. The most secluded, intimate rooms of their lives are opened to me because they want the grace of Jesus Christ to heal their pain and bless their delight.

I feel compelled to be what I am despite long hours, intense pressures, and low pay—compelled by a sense of chosenness that I cannot shake. While my calling is to minister the grace of Jesus Christ, I realize I minister that grace uniquely because I am who I am.

My vocation stretches me to the limit in opposing directions: a little girl dies of a brain tumor, and I am there sorrowing in Christ’s name; a baby boy is born, and I am there rejoicing in Christ’s name. Seldom do I touch lives in trivial ways. I know of no work that summons the best from a person as consistently and in so many areas as this work.

When a member suffers, I suffer, because I am a pastor and not a clinician. Clinical detachment from suffering does not reflect the suffering of God with men or the bond of brotherhood in Jesus Christ. My life is woven into my congregation’s life in a seamless fabric. A tear in any part tears the whole.

However, because human needs exceed human resources, I am often torn between conflicting demands. While divine power is infinite, I am limited. I cannot be everywhere at once; I have only so much time; I have a family and a personal identity. Shall my congregation, or my family, or the needs of my own soul have first claim on my time today? Will the coming funeral cancel our vacation plans? Shall I skip the committee meeting and spend the morning in meditation and study?

There are times when I must choose who will be hurt because of my refusal; at such times I can only trust God to keep His kingdom in spite of my limitations.

Even as I cannot serve everyone at all times, I cannot do all that should be done. What I choose to do depends on the need and on my gifts. Administrative detail is not my gift, but it is the gift of my secretary. Preaching, counseling, writing, and a concern for the people of the city are my gifts.

And unless I am willing to be honest about my gifts I cannot encourage my members to be honest about theirs. No matter how wild
their dreams may seem, I want my members to be willing to take risks with their spiritual gifts. One woman expresses interest in establishing a clinic to help rape victims cope with their trauma; I encourage her. Another wants to establish a full-time community services center to help the disadvantaged; she also is encouraged. That is part of my calling—to help my members exercise their gifts in the work of reconciliation and ministry. I am their servant to aid them in their ministries.

This is one reason the worship hour is so important, especially in a large church. Only during that time is the whole community of believers enjoying Christ's fellowship together. Only then does the Word of God address the corporate body. Conducted properly, worship makes vivid the power of the Holy Spirit to enable my members to be sprinkled into the world like grains of salt. It is not only they who help me accomplish my ministry, but I who help them.

Many pastors become cynical about worship, especially the preaching service, after being in a parish for some time. But the evidence suggests that most Christians receive their primary spiritual help from the morning service—especially the sermon—and not from personal Bible study or prayer. Is the quality of our preaching related to this phenomenon?

Some will say Yes because they feel that superior preaching spoon-feeds people so much they depend on the sermon for everything. They fast during the week or settle for crackers and cheese because the banquet during worship ruins their appetite. I have a hunch that the converse is more true, that good preaching produces eager Bible students. When people listen week after week to uninspiring, trite sermons coming from someone with a graduate degree in religion, why should they bother investigating, especially since they lack the formal education and have little time to dig for themselves? If the experts can find only warmed-over food, why bother?

But let the people taste fresh food served from the pulpit and they will hunger for more of the bread of life. They will see the sermon as an appetizer only.

However, to bring things "new and old" out of the Scriptures, I must be a competent exegete and widely read. As Karl Barth once observed, the preacher must read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Specialized scholarship is not the trade-mark of the pastor (though many pastors are scholars); general competence is. When theology emerges largely out of the universities rather than out of congregational life, it is often divorced from the concreteness of daily existence—which does not specialize into schools of thought over the meaning of religious language, for example.

While most of the time my life is as one with my congregation, there are those rare moments when I must stand over against it to bear a prophetic message concerning a moral issue. Race relations is a case in point. No one wants to displease the crowd, but authentic ministry must transcend mere crowd-pleasing. Popularity polls are not the primary index to the quality of ministry rendered by a local pastor. In fact, there are few examples in Scripture of "popular" prophets.

Not only giving, but also accepting, criticism is essential to my ministry. There are times when I am wrong and need rebuke. To the extent I can accept loving criticism graciously, to that extent the members of my congregation are free to admit their mistakes. A spirit of tolerance and charity grows. People can make a mistake and feel safe, and can learn that forgiveness and healing are much more real than anger and resentment.

Above all, even before I am their pastor, I am a member of my congregation. My function is more visible within the body, but no more important. They accord me a recognition by ordination that makes it appear I am higher, but the Scripture teaches I am not. It does not matter. . . Each of us has a unique ministry to render to accomplish His purposes. God has chosen to need us. Therefore, my message and my work is twofold: man the sinner needs God's redemption and God's redemption needs man to proclaim it.

God be praised,
Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work and loves
the true . . .
And for my fame—when any master
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
Made violins, and made them of the
best . . .
I say not God Himself can make
man's best
Without best men to help Him . . .
'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He
could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio.
—From "Stradivarius," by George Eliot

I am a pastor. I have found the place God has given me. And I am content.

James J. Londis is pastor of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church, Takoma Park, Maryland.
Seven reasons for studying the book of Revelation

by Orley M. Berg

To the Ephesian elders Paul declared, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Ministers who would be equally faithful to their trust cannot neglect this portion of the Sacred Scriptures.

Let me share with you seven reasons why we should study the book of Revelation.

1 The Revelation is from Jesus Christ. The introductory words, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” may have been the title John gave his letter. What higher recommendation could it have? This phrase can be understood to mean either that the visions were from Jesus or about Jesus. The former is probably the primary intent, for it is the revelation “which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants.” To the prophet, lying prostrate before His radiant form, Jesus declared, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18). It was the same Jesus whom John had known and loved, He who died, rose again, and ascended to the Father. Now He appears to the last survivor of the first-chosen disciples.

More than half a century had passed since John had seen His Lord. How reassuring the news that Christ was indeed alive and still ministering to His church! How grand the vision of Christ’s atoning ministry beyond the cross to the grand finale of the drama of the ages. The followers of Jesus were familiar with Christ’s promise to return. But why the delay? What was He doing? Had He forgotten them?

John’s revelation re-emphasizes the answer of the book of Hebrews. Having “purged our sins,” He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). Upon His ascension He was inaugurated into His priestly role to administer the benefits of His atonement, as foretold in the Old Testament ritual (chs. 8:1-5; 9). To these insights into Christ’s post-Calvary ministry, the visions of John added assurance of Christ’s care for, and guardianship of, the church to the very end of the age.

2 It is the Revelation of Jesus. The visions have their source in Jesus and they are also about Him. He is the great Hero of the book, the central figure. He walks among the candlesticks (churches) and holds their stars (faithful ministers) in His right hand (Rev. 1:12, 13, 20). He alone is able to “take the book, and to open the seals thereof” (chap. 5:9). He will ultimately “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (chap. 12:5).

Revelation is saturated with Jesus. His titles or allusions to Him appear forty-nine times in chapter 1; thirty-nine times in chapter 2; forty-nine times in chapter 3. He is the Creator, the Eternal, the Almighty, the God
of heaven, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb—both the sacrificial Lamb and the conquering Lamb, the Bright and Morning Star, the Holy One, the Key of David. Altogether, nineteen descriptive names of Him appear within the book. We come to know more of His character and mission as we study its message.

3 It is especially commended to our study. In this respect Revelation is unique, for no other book of the sacred canon contains such a promise of special blessing upon its readers. It opens with the words “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein” (chap. 1:3). It closes with the promise “Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (chap. 22:7). Then it adds the warning against corrupting it by either taking away from it or adding to it (chap. 22:18, 19).

These words imply that the book is to be understood. John designated the message by the word apocalypse, a “revelation,” an unveiling or uncovering, a title which in itself suggests clarity. The book is a revelation from Jesus about Jesus, and Jesus is not the author of confusion.

4 It is the capstone of Divine Revelation. Revelation completes and crowns the sacred canon. In it strands from all the books of the Bible come together in a triumphant finale. Few recognize how thoroughly Revelation is permeated with the Old Testament. Westcott and Hort list more than 400 quotations from this source. Adding allusions to the Old Testament that Revelation contains brings the number to more than 500. The vast majority are from seven books: Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah.

The rich imagery of Revelation is drawn from the Old Testament. There are place names such as Jerusalem, Babylon, the Euphrates; also, objects such as the temple and its furniture, as well as characters such as Balaam and Jezebel. Their meaning in the Old Testament is a key to their meaning in Revelation. Drawing from the Old Testament, the book of Revelation becomes an extension and fulfillment of it. Without it the Bible would be incomplete.

5 It provides warnings and promises to the church through ages of conflict to the final victory. Revelation is the only book of the New Testament that is entirely prophetic. The message identifies itself as prophecy. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy” (chap. 1:3). “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book” (chap. 22:18). John clearly intended it as a prophetic message to be given to the churches.

The historicist interpretation of the book sees its scenes taking place for the most part within the period from John to the eschatological climax. Some within the historicist school see the successive visions as a continuous line of events reaching to end time, while others see the various series of messages—the seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets—as parallel treatments of the same periods.

Kenneth A. Strand, who has given special study to the literary analysis of Revelation, calls this latter view the “recapitulationist” interpretation. “The same historical ground is traversed several times, as it were, from different perspectives, with each sequence culminating in an eschatological climax.”—Interpreting the Book of Revelation, p. 49. He concludes that the literary structure of the book mandates recapitulation as opposed to the “straight line” method.

6 It sets forth the true philosophy of history. This book reveals God in control of history. All life is moving toward the consummation of a great goal, according to the purposes of His will. Man may hinder, deflect, or delay God’s plans, but he cannot destroy them. Righteousness ultimately will triumph and evil will forever be overcome.

The God of Revelation is the Creator God. The beings about the throne proclaim, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things” (chap. 4:11). And the flying angel of Revelation 14:7 declares, “Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.” He made us. He is with His people. He is guiding the course of human events and His cause ultimately will triumph.

The book is especially applicable to those who will live through the last great crisis. Alvin Toffler’s Future Shock addresses itself to the rapid changes occurring in our society and projects what conditions may be like in the near future. It emphasizes the need of developing new skills and technologies that will
able us to cope with the changed conditions. Likewise the book of Revelation looks to the future, giving special prominence to the crisis to come upon the world just prior to the return of Christ, when the whole world will be brought to a decision for or against God.

The climax of the age-long conflict between Christ and Satan is epitomized in those scenes portraying the woman versus the dragon, the Lamb versus the beast, and Jerusalem versus Babylon. In the climax there will be only two classes of people, those who receive the seal of God and those who receive the mark of the beast. Then comes the double harvest, the harvest of grain for God's kingdom and the harvest of the grapes for destruction.

It gives assurance of final victory to the church. As Christians face the final crisis, "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:1), they are comforted and encouraged as they review how God has upheld the faithful through the centuries. He has been the guard and protector of the loyal and true within His church in every age, and He will be with them to the very end. He still walks among the candlesticks. He still holds the stars in His right hand. He is still the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is still the slain and conquering Lamb.

The last conflict will be the greatest ever. The spirits of devils will gather the whole world "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). But He who is Faithful and True, whose name is the Word of God, on whose vesture is written KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, will lead forth the armies of heaven in victory over all His adversaries (chap. 19:11-21).

Before He went away Jesus promised John and the other disciples, "I will come again" (John 14:3). At the beginning of John's Patmos vision the promise is repeated by the angel of prophecy, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7). The coming of Christ will be the great finale. Like the closing burst of glorious music in a grand symphony, the righteous will look up and proclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9).

Enthralled with wonder and awe at the prospects of the coming King, John closes his writings with the promise and prayer, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

The seven letters to the seven churches as recorded in Revelation, chapters one through three, constitute the introduction and foundational prophecy for the rest of the book. These letters will be considered in successive alternate issues of Ministry.

Orley M. Berg is an executive editor of Ministry.
For more than twenty years his soul fortress resisted every assault, then...

CONFRONTATION AT CALVARY

by Rex D. Edwards

His scarcely audible voice expelled from quivering lips four words that betrayed the emotion of the moment—"I will do it!"

For more than twenty years this soft-spoken individual had been the target of his well-intentioned wife peppering him with spiritual volleys, an evangelist in a three-hour session battering him with eschatological terrorism, and various pastors con-
continuing the siege operation with the cut and thrust of argument. But the battlements resisted all incursions. When my turn came to join the siege I wondered what I could say that had not already been discussed. As evangelistic meetings continued, I noticed that his place in the auditorium was never vacant. He responded with only a few carefully chosen words and a firm handshake at the conclusion of each meeting.

The final week came. I set up an appointment. Inexorably the hands of the clock moved toward the moment of confrontation. Still I knew no strategy that would breach the wall of his heart. Meticulously I reviewed what I had been teaching my students in personal evangelism. After all, I was supposed to have all the answers. I reminded myself that success in winning souls comes only with dependence on the grace and power of God to convict and convert hearts. Mentally I probed the tension between human responsibility and divine sovereignty in the eventualistic initiative. I remembered that the call to discipleship is both a transaction between human responsibility and divine sovereignty in the eventualistic initiative. I remembered that the call to discipleship is both a declaration of what God has done and an invitation to the performance of what God commands man to do. To extend the invitation was unavoidable.

And then it came again, a truth that had been persuasively emphasized in a classroom two decades before and reinforced in numerous evangelistic councils since: the Son of God uplifted upon the cross—this should be the foundation of every discourse. It is the "relentless love of God" externalized on Calvary that wins men to His side. Did not Paul, with magnificent daring, expose "the depth of God's compassion" by wielding the hammer of Calvary? Hearts were broken by his presentation of the love of God as revealed in the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. I recalled that it is "the account of His sufferings (italics supplied). His crucifixion, His resurrection" that reveals "the marvelous love of God" and "imparts a power to the truth." 1 Would this be the source of That Hideous Strength that would soften the heart? 2

I had been reading Jim Bishop's The Day Christ Died, and quite suddenly felt impressed to pocket it, having first marked passages that focused on the Suffering One. And so the confrontation came. I shared my pilgrimage of faith—the adequacy of grace in my own experience. I spoke of the wonder of a God who will never stop loving us, of His sensitivity to our right to choose Him—or not to choose Him—but who nonetheless pursues us with "unperturbed pace, deliberate speed, majestic instance" 3 of grace that offers us a life that measures with the life of God . . . of the futility of a life that sees all the treasured honey spent and no new life to show . . . the emptiness of an existence that just fills in time until death . . . the extent to which Love spent itself—a God who deals with evil, taking the full effect upon Himself; of divine judgment upon sin not abrogated, but borne by Deity Himself . . . the inscrutable synthesis of Suffering and Royalty made visible on Calvary . . . the awful cost.

I opened Bishop's book and began to read (it seemed the most natural thing to do): "They took Jesus to the nearest of the posts and removed all of his clothing and bent his body forward. They pulled both wrists down the far side of the post and tied them to the ring . . . The fresh coolness of the morning breeze came down on the back of Jesus, and the muscles of his legs trembled involuntarily. The soldier who performed flagellations . . . bent down to see the face of the victim. He then moved to a position about six feet behind Jesus, and spread his legs. The flagellum [a short circular piece of wood with several strips of leather, at the end of which were sewn chunks of bone or small pieces of iron chain] was brought all the way back and whistled forward and made a dull drum sound as the strips of leather smashed against the back of the rib cage. The bits of bone and chain curled around the right side of the body and raised small subcutaneous hemorrhages on the chest. A moan escaped the lips of Jesus and he almost collapsed. The knees bent, then, by effort they straightened . . . The lips of Jesus seemed to be moving in prayer. The flagellum now moved in slow heavy rhythm . . . It was over . . . The executioner, with no more feelings of compassion than the priest had for the lamb with its head through the ring, untied the wrist ropes and Jesus at once fell off the pillar and rolled onto his back on the stones. He was unconscious." 4

I paused and searched the eyes of my listener. He was intent, his face reflecting both compassion and concern. I continued. The scenes of the trial . . . Via Dolorosa . . . the crucifixion . . . We seemed to be there . . . the pain of it all reenacted in our midst . . . "His arms were now in the V position, . . . the pain in his wrists was beyond bearing, . . . muscle cramps knotted his forearms and upper arms . . . his pectoral muscles at the sides of his chest were momentarily paralyzed. This induced in him an involuntary panic; for he found that while he could draw air into his lungs, he was powerless to exhale. At once, Jesus raised himself on his bleeding feet. As the weight of his body came down on the insteps, the single nail pressed hard against the top of the wound. Slowly, steadily, Jesus was forced to raise himself higher . . . Then, when his shoulders were on a level with his hands, breathing was rapid and easier . . . Then, unable to bear the pain below, which cramped legs and thighs . . . he let his torso sag lower and lower, and his knees projected a little at a time until, with a deep sigh, he felt himself to be hanging by the wrists . . . ." 5

All at once the listener raised his hand. I stopped reading. He shuddered and his overladen heart uttered the words of surrender—"I will do it!" The cross had triumphed.

Later, I reflected. Brunner's line seemed pertinent: "In faith man ventures to be most daring, to identify himself with Christ, because Christ identifies with him." 6 His "incomparable originality" 7 in identifying Himself with those He came to save now evokes a parallel response—identification with Him. Truly, everything noble and generous in man will respond to the contemplation of the Christ upon the cross.

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1 Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, June 18, 1895.
5 Ibid., p. 280.
6 Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, p. 487.
7 Rudolf Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, p. 255.

Rex D. Edwards, D. Div., is a member of the department of religion at Columbia Union College, Washington, D.C.
What about form criticism?

Have the methods of Biblical-critical studies been developed in full recognition of the authoritative role of Scripture?

by E. Edward Zinke

A critical approach to the study of the Bible is characteristic of much of the theology of the modern era. Which fact leads us to ask: Is the Biblical critic really open to the possibility of hearing the Word of God? Does his method of studying Scripture allow God to speak to him and others, to reveal Himself as He really is? Have the methods of Biblical-critical studies been developed in full recognition of the authoritative role of Scripture, or have these critical studies themselves become a norm by which to govern and judge Scripture? In discussing such questions, the purpose of this article is to survey the origins of one of the basic methods used by Biblical critics in their study of the Bible, namely, form criticism, and to assess it as an illustration of Biblical-critical studies in general.

The use of form criticism arose during the early part of the twentieth century out of influences that developed during the nineteenth century. The rise of sociology, plus a growing disenchantment with the overemphasis on individuality, led to concentration upon the group as a living entity rather than upon the individual. Anthropology began to give attention to the historical diffusion of ideas among primitive peoples and to comparative mythology, noting that variations in the content of oral and written materials were related to a wide variety of circumstances. Combined with these, the history-of-religion school operated on the concept that religion is the result of the beliefs of the masses. Scripture was considered to be the reflection of the collective genius of people.

Form criticism developed as a means of studying the literary forms that gave expression to the beliefs of the popular religion of the community and to the life setting out of which these beliefs arose. The study of folklore, particularly the work of the Grimm brothers, who collected the folk traditions of the German people, contributed to the idea of applying the same methods of study to the Old Testament.

Hermann Gunkel, a man of inventive genius, was able to combine the various insights of the nineteenth century into the form-critical method for Biblical studies. He felt that literary criticism, being a coldly analytical method, could not reflect an appreciation for the esthetic sense of form in literature, and he proposed that a history of literature must deal with the way in which that literature grew out of the history of
the people involved. Considering the Old Testament to be an expression of the spiritual experience of the people of Israel, he sought to discover the life situation out of which their literature grew. He was also interested in obtaining insight into the conceptual content of the popular religions by an analysis of the various literary forms in which the people gave expression to their beliefs. In this way Gunkel sought to recapture the spiritual experience of ancient Israel in order to translate it meaningfully to contemporary man.

Gunkel’s concept of the nature of scripture

Gunkel presupposed that Old Testament materials were developed and modified over a long period of time by means of a process of oral transmission within the life of Israel. Some of the materials were created within a specific segment of the life of Israel and others were imported from other cultures. As stories migrated from one part of the country to another and were brought into contact with new situations and succeeding generations, they were modified to meet the situations in which they found themselves. To a certain extent, then, the changes in the traditions followed the changes in the conditions of the people. Therefore, he reasoned, the conditions of the people could be traced to some extent by studying the history of their literature.

Gunkel stated that oral material developed according to certain laws that were outlined in the study of German folk literature. These laws of transmission of literary materials, he felt, could be applied to the study of the literary history of the Old Testament.

Historicity of narratives examined

By looking to the laws of the formation of literature as understood by form criticism, Gunkel concluded that the writing of history does not arise during the early formative period of a group of people, but is associated with a later development of a strong political system. Thus the Genesis stories partake of the nature of saga, which intends to convey religious thought rather than history. History is a scientific activity that presupposes the practice of writing, whereas saga is transmitted orally and cannot remain uncorrupted for any length of time. History deals with public occurrences, whereas saga deals with that which is of interest to the common people. Any historical document that has credibility is able to show the connection between the eyewitness and the individual, whereas saga depends upon tradition and imagination. Obviously no one was present at the creation of the universe.

Saga frequently reports that which is incredible. Any historian, says Gunkel, knows that animals—serpents and she-asses—do not speak and that there is no tree that can confer immortality. Saga depicts God in anthropomorphisms that are not acceptable to the historical mind. According to Gunkel, the historian understands that God operates universally in the background. God is in control in a marvelous interdependence of things; however, nowhere does He operate directly as one factor along with others, but always and only as the last and ultimate cause of everything. Saga, by contrast, depicts God as walking in the Garden, as breathing His own breath into man’s nostrils.

Only one who is “ignorant” or a “pious barbarian,” Gunkel suggests, can regard the labeling of Genesis as saga as irreverent. It is rather the judgment of reverence and love to pronounce the saga as saga in order that it might be interpreted aright. The legends of Genesis are perhaps the most beautiful and profound ever known on earth. He states, “A child, indeed, unable to distinguish between reality and poetry, loses something when he is told that its dearest stories are not true. But the modern theologian should be further developed. The evangelical churches and their chosen representatives would do well not to dispute the fact that Genesis contains legends—as has been done too frequently—but to recognize that the knowledge of this fact is the indispensable condition to an historical understanding of Genesis.”

Gunkel viewed the narratives of Genesis as being the product of professional storytellers who recounted their stories regularly at popular festivals—tales of snakes and trees and floods. He attempts to trace the history of the literature of Genesis from its earliest primitive inception through its long evolution as it was molded in different parts of the country under differing circumstances and by different tribes, and as it assimilated the various foreign influences that were imposed upon it.

Criteria for determining age

Gunkel finds a number of criteria for determining the age of a saga. The older materials, classified as myths or primitive legends, are stories of the gods. They represent childlike belief in a divinity whose operations are not shrouded in mystery. Myths were not accepted favorably in Israel because monotheism does not allow stories of the gods. Thus the few myths found in Genesis is evidence of an early date. Saga, on the other hand, contains the more contemporary viewpoint, where God is seen only as forming a backdrop out of which history takes place. Such narratives must be given at a later date.

The age of sagas may also be determined by their characteristics. For example, the earlier sagas were short, simple, and clear compared to the later, longer and more complicated ones. The earlier sagas contained a clear outline, dealt with very few personages (one of whom was the dominant person), and gave little expression to the character traits or thoughts of that person. Details were held to a minimum and the focus was on action. Primitive sagas also had a unity of theme with a definite purpose.

Over a period of time stories were circulated under differing circumstances and were combined with other stories. Similar stories were grouped side by side, and gradually legend cycles developed by attaching several related legends to one another. Changes gradually took place within the stories as they were handed down from generation to generation. Long speeches were added. Various additional motives were added to the stories. When the stories were retold under new circumstances, certain portions were omitted, and thus truncated stories are contained within the legend cycles. The sagas were molded according to the laws of change that can be determined and studied by form criticism.

An amalgamation took place within the age whereby it was infilled with the spirit of the higher
religion of Israel, so that polytheism was dropped in favor of monotheism. Foreign personages were replaced by native ones, and the legends of worship were transferred to Yahweh. Combinations of local traditions came about as the result of travel, perhaps on the occasion of great pilgrimages to tribal sanctuaries.4

According to form criticism, progress can be seen also in various other ways. There is a change regarding God’s relation to man. At first God is seen as holding men in check, as guarding certain favored individuals in accordance with His sovereign pleasure and as glorifying His people above all others. Later, He is represented as making His decisions regarding men upon a higher plane such as upon the righteousness of men. In the earlier sagas there is a mixing of the religious with the profane, whereas in the later sagas such mixing is no longer tolerated. The earlier sagas show little sense of ethics, so that there is almost pleasure in relating the cunning of Jacob and the defiance of Hagar, whereas the later sagas depict a patient and unfortunate Hagar and the wonderful prayer of gratitude of Jacob.

Finally, after the legends became very old, they were put in writing. After the legends were initially written down, they were gradually brought together and rewritten into larger units. Much of what takes place in Old Testament form criticism today reflects the approach of Gunkel. His contribution to form-critical method is often recognized as conservative compared to the excesses of some later form critics.

Critique of Gunkel’s thesis

Gunkel’s declaration that narratives in Genesis do not relate history must be recognized as an a priori. He makes this declaration on the basis that Genesis describes incidents that are incredible to contemporary man. He assumes that God operates only in the background of history, rather than directly intervening in history, and that Scripture can thus be studied on the basis of literary and historical methods that operate within the limits of natural understanding.

If, in fact, God has supernaturally revealed Himself in the affairs of men as recorded in Scripture, form criticism loses its significance, because those disciplines that operate on a human level deal with that which can be explained only on a human basis. Neither God nor His revelation can be put in a test tube, nor can God be explained on any human level. To attempt to do so is a priori to structure His acts and His revelation on that same human level.

Gunkel’s description of the history of the development of the narratives of Genesis can be justified only on the assumption of an evolutionary, progressive development. It is only on the basis of such an assumption that the coarse, profane, and the secular can, for instance, be assigned to an earlier period than the sacred and the tender, or the shorter narratives, the simple stories and the harmonious units to an earlier period than the longer narratives. Gunkel, it seems, begins with an evolutionary a priori from which he establishes criteria external to the text as a basis for separating the “primitive” from the “more recent,” the “ancient” from that of a “later date.”

Gunkel’s assumptions are not warranted by the text itself, but are imposed upon the text from without. In using this method, he does not allow the text to speak to him, he speaks to the text, telling the text how it developed, rather than the reverse. It is necessary to accept Gunkel’s evolutionary assumption if one is to accept his treatment of Genesis.

Associated with the assumption of an evolutionary development is Gunkel’s God-concept, which is based upon contemporary observation of the natural world. On the basis of this observation, Gunkel concluded that God is not active as an individual force in the affairs of men, and thus He does nothing apart from the natural world. This surmise meant the rejection of any concept of God’s revealing Himself in a direct way to the “author” of Genesis.

The book of Genesis cannot be taken seriously as history, Gunkel says, because it speaks of Creation and the Flood, for which there is no eyewitness. These events are incredible to the contemporary mindset; therefore, they must be legends. The fact that something is incredible, however, is no evidence that it did not happen as revealed by God. This judgment can be made only on the basis of a pre-understanding of God and the way He has acted and revealed Himself in the history of this earth.

The limited space of this article, of course, prevents us from dealing with the entire question of form criticism. The reader is referred to the supplement published in the October, 1977, Ministry for a further consideration of how conservative Christians might relate to form criticism.

Although many later advances have been made beyond the work of Gunkel, in general form critics nevertheless see themselves as operating somewhat in harmony with the methods that he developed for Biblical studies. Even the more conservative form critic develops his criteria of operation from the natural world and thus places a priori construction upon Scripture. When approaches similar to Gunkel’s are taken, a decision has already been made regarding the nature of the activities of God and of His revelation. The declaration of Scripture regarding its own nature is discarded as naive and prescientific. It is then necessary to preclude on an a priori basis any specific revelatory activities of God in the history of earth.

Any record of any activity of God that is not in harmony with what has been predetermined that God can do must be labeled as myth or legend. It is not possible to listen to God or to observe His actions from this starting point, for one has already decided what God can do and say. This approach places the individual outside the possibility of receiving revelation from God. According to this concept, knowledge of God can only come from within man himself. On the basis of man’s possibilities, one postulates a concept of God that is in fact only a reflection of man and not a reflection of the revealing God.


2 Gunkel, The Legends of Genesis, pp. 11, 12. See also pp. 1-10.

3 Ibid., pp. 43-107.

4 E. Edward Zinke, “A Conservative Approach to Theology,” appearing in the October, 1977, issue of Ministry Supplement (45 cents, single copy; 35 cents, ten or more copies), which was a reduced form of papers presented at the European Bible Conference, summer of 1977. The longer form is available at $1.00 a copy. Address requests to the Biblical Research Institute, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

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Does Life Have Personal Meaning?

The "triumph" of the species is now solemnly proclaimed as the eternal law of the universe. And that proclamation is made with the most cynical disrespect of the individual.

by Carsten Johnsen

Human beings, especially youth, have a deep-seated desire for meaning, purpose, and a standard of perfection in life. Unfortunately, advancement in age tends to destroy the idealism of meaning and perfection.

Probably nineteenth-century evolutionary theories constitute the greatest threat against concepts of meaning and perfection.

What, then, is the precise attitude of evolution toward perfection and meaningfulness? It would be wrong to say that it is entirely negative in all respects. Evolution seems to believe in a definitely forward-pressing tendency. It speaks most eloquently about a certain goal in life, an end of the most impressive magnitude, a high degree of "meaningfulness" at the center of the sober realms of biological science.

In the mind of the nineteenth-century English philosopher Herbert Spencer, evolution became almost synonymous with an increase in all values in our world. There was a universal law of blessed necessity that supposedly directed everything toward a wonderful perfection. In his view even the emotional nature of man could not avoid being lifted up toward an ever-more-desirable state. Such a view was the inevitable result of the entire surging spirit of universal progress that characterized the times. Just as his contemporary, the French philosopher Comte, had not been hindered by a stern positivism from including such sublime values as altruism in his peculiar system of human progress, so Spencer, in portraying a new type of humanity, used terminology more characteristic of the Gospels than of hard natural philosophy.

However, one cannot refrain from asking, How could a universal law of evolution lead so inevitably to the highest summits of human perfection, in mind and spirit as well as in body, when it remained so utterly imperfect in itself—imperfect above all in the means it uses to reach the end of perfection? Would not the result of such a process be a cold and unfeeling state inconsistent with our inborn concept of meaning and perfection?

We all know the terrible clash that came—and was bound to come—between orthodox Christianity and the new "religion" of the nineteenth century.

More than ever before in the history of natural science, the simple record of the creation of life, as found in the first chapter of the Bible, came to be looked upon as a myth of a naivété bordering on the ridiculous.

In this article we are not primarily concerned with the arguments of dogmatic Christian theology or of dogmatic biology. Our task here is not to show who is right in the strife regarding biological and cosmological facts. Whether it be the evolutionist,
the Christian fundamentalist (or special creationist), or a third group—that of the theologian bridge-builders who try to reconcile the two extremes, is outside the scope of our present examination.

The question that interests us is, In what spirit was the battle fought at its inception? We can go back to the time when there was no open battle at all and ask, In what spirit were those ideas reached that were bound to cause the battle sooner or later? Was it with a heavy heart that the intellectual elite of Occidental culture who arrived at the conclusion that the old opinions, so confidently held by the Christian scholars of "darker" ages, must be abandoned as untenable myths? No. Often it was with iconoclastic joy, and seldom with any concern about the more tragic consequences.

Personal meaning of prime importance

What are the more tragic consequences? The loss of a standard of perfection, the decline of the hope that individual human life has enduring meaning. To Christianity, and also to Humanism, the concept of personal life and personal meaning is of prime importance.

Schopenhauer, of Germany, writing at the same time as Comte, expressed a pessimism that included disbelief in the preservation of individual human life. But long before Schopenhauer or Charles Darwin it had been impressed on human minds that nature is concerned only with the survival of the species, not the individual. Hence the development of a forceful myth in human thinking—the species is the only true value. That myth probably had its source at least as early as Platonic philosophy (fourth century B.C.), for to Platonism real existence was attributed only to the general thing, the idea.

Thomas Aquinas, the great Christian philosopher of the Middle Ages, refused to succumb to the appearance that the individual is of consequence only as a member of the species. He said, "Individuals, too, belong to nature's principle plan." But his protest was soon forgotten by modern philosophy, and Plato's dualism once more gained the ascendency. Schopenhauer's duality of Wille und Vorstellung is, in fact, nothing but the old duality of the idea versus the world of phenomena. Once more there was taught a radical dualism of the general versus the individual, and of these two the individual is considered to be of illusory value. In Schopenhauer's scheme the individual is destroyed simply because it is not worthy of being preserved.

The historian observing the development of human ideas may be impressed by the cocksureness with which the particular idea of a "crushing superiority of the species" has been heralded as almost an axiom of both scientific research and philosophical speculation. When Thomas Aquinas arrived at a totally different conclusion it was probably owing to nothing but the greater spirituality characterizing both him and the age he represented. Who can say that nature's entire intention is set on the species? One might rather say that nature's intention is directed toward something higher than both the species and the individual—that is, something including both of them.

Of course, in the pursuit of so lofty an aim, it may easily appear—in a given case—as though nature had really made the survival of the species her primary object. Every one of us knows only too well the conditions prevailing as far as life is concerned (we mean life in our world at the present time)—individuals are corruptible. But one chance for biological continuation still exists in this world—the species has a possibility of being maintained. At least it has succeeded in maintaining itself thus far. So nature simply seizes the chance open to her. What else could she do? She saves the species.

But to conclude that this is her preference or that it gives her full satisfaction is too bold. In fact, would not that be tantamount to making a postulate that we think none but an obstinate Platonist would be inclined to offer: The highest form of life toward which any biology, under any circumstances, can be assumed to aspire is not the individual entity, but the generic one.

Of course, it is a fact that survival—here, today—reaches no higher level than that of the species. But is that equal to proving that no higher level has ever been reached or that no higher level can ever be reached in the future?

Individual element essential

We have stated that the truly meaningful in human life cannot, in any possible way, do without the individual element. In other words, precisely that life of the individual person, which nature is said to consider unworthy of being preserved, is the life that has any importance at all in the sense of a genuinely human finality.

We are here appealing to men—not necessarily to men with Christian sympathies, but to men with sound human sentiments and sound human reason. Frankly speaking, how could any man today actually have any chance whatsoever of finding any deeper sense in human existence unless he is able to pass beyond what has been scientifically given in the field of biology even thousands of years before Darwin's age—individuals die; only species go on living?

And what happens to discourage mankind completely in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the great age of evolutionism? The "triumph" of the species is now solemnly proclaimed as the eternal law of the universe. And that proclamation is made with the most cynical disrespect of the individual.

One may, of course, also call it a simple ignoring of the individual. One may even call it idealism. So it was called in ancient Greece—and in modern Germany. The same principle that Darwin applied to biology was unscrupulously applied to history by the early nineteenth-century
German philosopher Hegel.

A perfect way required

Let us assume the possibility that the ultimate goal reached by this carnage after millions of years is a certain perfection. Still, the human observer to that drama might legitimately object: finality to me means something more than a perfect goal, it also means a perfect way toward that goal. Is the way suggested by the evolutionist perfect?

It is often said that the mills of God grind slowly. But what a cruel slowness this would be. Think of the streams of blood running from that crushing millstone of evolutionist creation (theistic evolution) down into the sands of eternity. How could any creature with secret longing for a meaning-filled life—or a creature with any trace of decent feelings left in him at all—discern anything reminiscent, even remotely, of perfection and finality in this process of “natural selection”?

Admittedly, even the creationist biologist (or the fundamentalistic theologian) is bound to face the facts of a fearful amount of cruelty and suffering in this world of ours. But with childlike faith in the God of Christianity and in a revelation meaningfully handed over to the human race by that God, he may at least refer to the historical accident of the introduction of sin into this world. The responsibility for imperfection may thus be placed on the shoulders of beings endowed with sufficient intelligence and sufficient freedom of volition to be perfectly able to make their own choice between good and evil—a voluntary choice absolutely indispensable for the highest happiness of intelligent creatures.

No place for moral or human arguments

But what is the situation when we come to the huge slaughterhouse of modern evolution? Within its lugubrious walls we find no place for any moral or human arguments. How could a human soul with a sincere thirst for perfect righteousness manage to account for the infinite grimmness of cruelty and suffering there? At what stage of that illustrious race toward final perfection could the evolutionist-minded theologian endeavor to introduce the historical element of a fall into sin? Was it perhaps the primeval mullusk that fell into sin? Or was it some naughty amoeba “way back somewhere at the dawn of the eons that brought guilt and ensuing misery over this world “for ages on ages”?

This is not meant as a sarcastic joke. It is the desperately serious question of that noble creature whom Kant (late-eighteenth-century German theistic evolutionist) describes as still having within his human breast an endless yearning for justice and perfection. How is he to find a trace of divine righteousness in such an eternal trampling down of individuals—individuals more or less provided with senses and feelings—in completely inhuman carnage through millions and millions of years, for the purpose of paving a road toward eventual perfection? In the last analysis even that purpose is as blind as a bat.

There may be any amount of subtle speculation in such a theory. There may be other fascinating aspects also. But one thing there is not—meaning. There is no Christianity either. For Christianity cannot be imagined without true meaning—something that can completely fill human lives.

The inescapable fruitage of evolution

Small wonder, then, that a hitherto unheard of dechristianization has followed in the wake of evolutionist theories in every country in which they have been asserted.

As far as we can see, the relentless evolutionistic attack against the individual and the personal is the most cunning and cruel attack against meaningfulness in human life ever launched throughout the history of human philosophy. Let us be logical and consistent in our reason-
Like most pastors, Don had a busy schedule. Bible studies, pastoral counseling, church committee meetings, speaking appointments, administrative duties—the typical fare for a pastor of a large and growing congregation. On top of that, his wife, Karen, was experiencing flare-ups of a long-standing physical condition and had been unable to accompany him as he carried out his vigorous visitation program.

Don liked people. He had an outgoing personality. Although approaching middle age, he was handsome and rugged-looking. He and Karen had two fine boys who had now started homes of their own. As Don grew older he felt that by dressing more nattily and acting accordingly he would be able to keep in touch with the younger set. He even purchased a sports car, in which he proudly made his rounds. Of course, some of the older, more conservative church members raised their eyebrows over that!

Then Jane plummeted into his life. It all started out so innocently. A recently divorced nurse, Jane moved to Don’s city and began attending his church. In his routine visitation, Don visited Jane at home—alone—and found her to be a warm, sensitive person in her mid-twenties who radiated an abundant love for life.

It could have ended there, but Don had been sensing a lack of companionship, owing to his wife’s illness, and felt drawn by Jane’s compassionate response to his situation. And she, feeling a similar loss of intimacy, saw in Don someone with stability and concern.

What followed shouldn’t have. But it did. Don and Jane saw a lot of each other after that. They became less discreet. Don even found himself lying to Karen when he returned home late at night. Karen became suspicious, but pride kept her from expressing her concern.

Eventually others found out, and Don’s career was ruined. He lost his ministerial credentials. Having divorced Karen, he married Jane and is now an insurance salesman in a large western city.

Sad? Yes. But it’s happening to others—many others. Why? One answer is that some men suffer a behavioral crisis between the ages of 35 and 55. They find their traditional responsibilities changing and sometimes even question their “manliness.”

A changing awareness

While stereotypes about middle-aged men abound—increased hedonism revolving around sportier clothes, sportier cars, and attraction to women half their age—one of the real issues deals with reassessment of one’s values, beliefs, and commitments and the way these relate to previous functions. There is sometimes a changing awareness of one’s job, physical fitness, and marital and other family relationships.

That personality continues to change over the course of adulthood has been verified by many researchers. Roger L. Gould, of UCLA, discovered that with adults in various stages of life there is a continuing expansion of the personality well into the 50’s. In the fifth decade this often takes the form of “a quiet urgency,” an awareness that time is not infinite. This period often finds locked-in responsibilities that may have at one time been challenging but which now contribute to confusion and a feeling of helplessness.

Developmental Psychologist Erik H. Erikson sees those involved in this stage of life ending up with either a sense of generativity or a sense of stagnation. A generative person is outgoing, "others-centered.” He develops interests that provide opportunity to mature and offer fulfillment and contribution. Stagnation, or a sense of boredom, is self-centered. It results from an apprehension about one’s waning physical or psychological powers that may give rise to a feeling of inadequate achievement of expected goals.

Areas of conflict

Areas of conflict frequently faced by the middle-aged man include:

Work—It has been said that a man identifies at least 60 percent with his work. In mid-life he frequently either finds he has reached many of his goals or realizes he never will, and so he questions his work and his relationship to it.

Physical—All too often, as he approaches middle age, a man’s physical nature changes, owing to altered metabolism, increasing weight, and loss of former abilities. He just is not the same man he used to be, and this raises questions about his physical ability.

Sex—With increasing age there may come decreased sex drive, change in habits, and, often, fear of impotency. As sexuality changes, so does the self-image associated with sexual relations.

Marriage and family—Marital relationships often become strained in mid-life, and may be further complicated by a change in perceived relationships. The male is left to further question his capability as a husband and father.

Many American men in their 40’s
experience depression. Some realize they will never head the company or attain the leadership role they expected. Others realize they won’t write that book or make that million. Trapped by the pension, the company-paid insurance, and feelings of obsolescence, they find life meaningless and without alternatives. Because of the difficulty middle-aged men encounter in changing careers, F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, “There are no second acts in American lives.”

Dero A. Saunders feels this “executive discontent” is a result of feelings of entrapment, frustration, and boredom. These, in turn, come from failure to attain one’s goals (apart from God) or the realization that one may never reach them and is not in a position to change careers. Often, concern is turned inward, affecting personal life and emotional well-being. The middle-aged man’s success often becomes the source of his restlessness, and his work is no longer satisfying.

**Blocked goals**

Other factors reinforce a growing sense of entrapment. He realizes he is not going to get one of the top positions in his company; he also knows that switching to another company is difficult. Without the freedom to change jobs as he might have ten or fifteen years earlier, many a middle-aged man is trapped. Adding to this frustration, he sees his own superior, occupying the position he covets, doing a lackluster job yet delaying retirement.

Having goals blocked by personal limitations or those of the social system can result in psychosomatic illness and diminished ability to work effectively with others. Ironically, achieving one’s goals may have the same effects. Attaining youthful goals related to personal and professional life—mortgage paid, children reared, comfortable income—can cause loss of purpose, and monotony sets in. Either attaining goals or denying them may disturb one’s emotional state, markedly affecting his capacity for decisive-ness and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Perceived threats and insecurities brought about by younger colleagues whose more recent technical training gives them an edge often are an additional concern, even to the clergyman. Unable to express this to his superiors or new subordinates, the middle-aged man becomes frustrated and indulges in self-pity, which shatters his personal life.

**Physical identity**

With middle age comes a heightened awareness of changing physical strengths. Often one recognizes a decrease in his body’s efficiency, or friends of the same age become sick or die. Body changes seem to be the most salient characteristic of aging men in mid-life. This stage has been referred to as the age of expansion on two fronts—the forehead and midriff! This new sense of physical vulnerability is disturbing.

Apprehension seems justified. The proportion of men who become ill rises gradually until the age of 45 or 50, then accelerates sharply, as does absence from work because of illness. Deaths owing to heart disease, cancer, and stroke occur in epidemic proportions. The skin changes. Unused muscles atrophy, and subcutaneous fat begins to disappear, leaving the less-elastic skin wrinkled. In addition, unequally distributed pigment may cause the skin to become blotchy.

Muscular strength is usually greatest between the ages of 25 and 30, after which there is a gradual decline in the speed and power of muscular contraction and the capacity for sustained effort. After the age of about 50 the number of active muscle fibers declines steadily.

As age increases, the basal-metabolism rate also declines. Involved in this decline are: a decrease in the total number of cells, a slowing of thyroid secretions, and less activity in such organs as the liver and the muscles. Weight frequently changes, as does reaction to temperature variations. A 65-year-old man needs to walk nine miles to burn off the calories he would have burned sitting in a chair 45 years earlier.

**Sexual factors**

Sexual interest and activity may remain strong into middle-age and beyond or may decrease. A recent study of sexual interest and activity of men and women between 46 and 71 reports that 49 percent of the men had noted some decline in their sexual interest and activity by age 50.

Advancing age brought an overall pattern of decline in sexual interest and activity, although sex continued to play an important part in the lives of the subjects.

As the mid-life male finds his interest in sex waning and fears of inadequacy increasing, the incidence of secondary impotence increases markedly. Understanding the place and purpose of sex in God’s plan can help the middle-aged man overcome the fears he has in this area.

**Marriage, family, and social relationships**

The identification and satisfaction a man feels in his marriage and family and social relationships may also change in mid-life. Often at this time many married couples become disenchanted. Personalities often change throughout the life cycle, and the resulting strains on marriages usually become most pronounced in mid-life. Contributing may be the decline or absence of certain intimacies such as confiding, kissing, and reciprocal settlement of disagreements. Even those individuals whose adjustment and personality characteristics seem to be unaffected often report loneliness at this time. Particularly crucial seems to be the loss of shared activities and interests, and disagreement over how affection should be demonstrated. Legal separation and divorce rates reach a peak with males in the 40- to 44-year-old bracket.

The changing roles of male and female in society may challenge the middle-aged male’s perception of manhood and womanhood.

Women make up nearly one third
of the national labor force. More and more women are entering what used to be male-dominated professions. The division of sexes is blurred by selecting names for the newborn that are not gender specific—Leslie, Robin, Dana.

From middle-age to renaissance

All is not bleak, however. As personalities continue to evolve in middle age and beyond, the challenge to personal growth represents a potential renaissance for the middle-aged man, a time for self-renewal and continued personality development.

Robert C. Peck identifies four necessary growth areas as part of the process essential for personality development. Taken as a whole, they help the middle-aged man redefine his relationships in the areas of work, physical fitness, and marriage and family, and they help him move from middle age to renewal.

1. Valuing wisdom versus physical powers. By shifting from reliance on the physical to more mental pursuits the middle-aged man is enabled to remain effective and continue to make meaningful contributions. The wisdom he possesses in midlife, owing to a wide range of life experiences, allows him now to make effective choices and decisions; he can retain a sense of worth by transmitting this wisdom to younger generations in the home and at work.

2. Socializing versus sexualizing in human relationships. Increasing appreciation of, and companionship with, his wife helps the middle-aged man develop relationships in all areas of life, which are deeper and more meaningful than at an earlier age; further, it decreases the emphasis on sex in his marital relationship and reduces some of his fears. As a result, his sexual relationship can develop out of a process of intimacy and a greater understanding of his feelings and those of the person he is closest to.

3. Emotional flexibility versus emotional impoverishment. Emotional impoverishment results from inability to reinvest one’s emotions in other people, pursuits, or life settings. Because of his great potential for reinvestment—a wide circle of personal and professional contacts, and wisdom gained through his life—the middle-aged man has opportunity to develop more varied relationships than earlier in life.

4. Mental flexibility versus mental rigidity. The tendency to become inflexible in opinions and actions is usually first seen in middle age. Because they have previously worked out a set of answers for themselves, many forgo further mental effort to seek new or varying answers. The tendency in mid-life is to be dominated by past experiences. The challenge lies in mastering experiences, achieving some degree of detachment from them, and using them as guides to solutions of new problems.

Though middle age represents a time of changing relationships for men, it also represents a time for growth and renewal—a renaissance. Most middle-aged men find themselves in fairly good health, with their psychological capacities relatively unimpaired. Their accumulated knowledge and experience are a great advantage at work and in domestic or public affairs, and the financial status of most middle-aged men is as secure as it is ever likely to be. The potential for growth and development is as great now as in any previous life stage. Coupled with this, the minister’s growing experience with and confidence in God can make middle age one of the most satisfying and productive periods of life.

If Dan had had this vision of middle age, he might still be a pastor rather than an insurance salesman.

Bibliography


Walking helps us to overcome fatigue, takes our minds off our problems, and improves our outlook on life.

What's the best exercise for sedentary workers such as clergymen? Since Albert E. Shirer's job requires a good deal of sitting, his doctor suggested that he walk during every lunch hour in order to stimulate his circulation. Not only did his health benefit but, as recorded in the current issue of Life and Health magazine (January, 1978), he also discovered several enjoyable side effects.

Says Shirer: "Walking helps to overcome fatigue. It aids circulation by speeding blood to the heart against the pull of gravity. It soothes the nervous system by creating rhythmic contractions that drain away anxiety, tension, and frustration."

How do you get the most out of walking? Shirer suggests a number of ways to make walking an enjoyable as well as healthy activity. Here are six ways adapted for our clergyman readers:

1. **Select several walking routes.** Using several different walking routes provides variety and cuts down on boredom. Determine a turn-about point one mile from the start, as indicated on your car's odometer. This establishes a two-mile course, which experience shows can be readily walked at a brisk pace in 40 minutes.

2. **Take soul food along.** Take a pocket Bible or a good, inspirational paperback book with you. At the end of your first 20 minutes out, find a quiet place to spend 20 more minutes feeding the spiritual man. Several recent studies have established a close correlation between good health and good religion (see "Good Life-style = Good Health" in the January, 1977, Ministry). If you have an office job you might find a fast (but nutritional) food restaurant near the end of your mile out or take your lunch with you. Even while eating, the inspirational reading can feed your soul.

3. **Watch where you're going.** Train yourself to look about you as you walk. Learn to appreciate God's world. Observe children, houses, buildings, flowers, grass, clouds.

4. **Cultivate mental tranquillity.** Shirer suggests that you make your walk a solitary activity that allows your mind to float and forget routine business and problems. But companionship can also make your walk meaningful and pleasant.

5. **Walk year around.** Determine to make this a daily routine in all seasons—cold, hot, windy, and snowy. Of course, dress appropriately and wear substantial shoes and comfortable socks.

6. **Check your mileage.** Keep a tally every day of your accumulated mileage. If you were to walk 300 days each year, you could cover 600 miles! That's farther than walking from Washington, D.C., to Indianapolis, Indiana—a distance of only 558 miles.

Some people prefer jogging for exercise, but it can be too strenuous and "sweats up" traditional office clothing. Dr. Joseph Beninson, 57, a specialist at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital, cites an advantage of walking:

"Walking is better exercise than jogging because of less risk of damaging your back. When you jog you come down on your heel and squash your back like an accordion."

Another benefit of walking is enhanced blood circulation; as brain cells are saturated with oxygen the mental powers can be used more effectively. One's whole outlook on life can be remarkably improved.

So why not start on a walking program? It will put you into a wonderful world where breezes blow, flowers bloom, children laugh, birds sing, and, best of all, a clear mind is more readily attuned to the voice of God.

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Lift your heart to God and be aware of His presence.

Al Shirer is manager at Envirotech Corporation and has just begun free-lance writing.
Perhaps most perplexing of all attacks made on the Bible are those focused on the chronology of the Hebrew kings. While the subject may at first glance seem uninteresting—and even boring—the implications of contradictory data are considerable, as skeptics and Bible scholars alike have well understood. Little wonder, then, that for more than 2,000 years scholars have wrestled with synchronisms and lengths of reign for the rulers of Judah and Israel in the books of Kings.

It can be shown, however, that charges of error in the king lists are not justified. Once the basic chronological principles employed by the Hebrew recorders are understood, the regnal data of Kings are amazingly reliable and may be woven into a pattern of internal harmony in accord with contemporary chronology at every point where a precise contact can be established. 1

At first glance, however, disagreement rather than agreement seems to predominate. In 1 Kings 15:25 Nadab in Israel is said to have begun his reign of two years in the second year of Asa of Judah, but according to 1 Kings 15:33 he was succeeded by Baasha in the third year of Asa. That would give him only one year rather than two. According to 1 Kings 16:23 Omri began in the thirty-first year of Asa and reigned 12 years. But according to 1 Kings 16:29 he was succeeded by Ahab in the thirty-eighth year of Asa, which would give him only seven, not 12, years.

The statement in 2 Kings 3:1 that Jehoram (Joram) began to reign in Israel in the eighteenth year of Jeoshaphat of Judah appears to disagree with the statement in 2 Kings 1:17 that he began in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jeoshaphat. According to 2 Kings 8:25 Ahaziah of Judah began in the twelfth year of Joram of Israel, but according to 2 Kings 9:29 he began in the eleventh year.

In 2 Kings 1:17 we are told that Jehoram of Israel began in the second year of Jehoram of Judah, and thus Jehoram began in Judah before Jehoram came to the throne in Israel. But according to 2 Kings 8:16 Joram began in Israel before Jehoram began in Judah, for Jehoram began in the fifth year of Joram.

According to 2 Kings 9:24, 27, Jehu slew Jehoram of Israel and Athaliah of Judah on the same occasion. So Jehu began in Israel at the same time that Athaliah succeeded Athaliah in Judah. And according to 2 Kings 15:25-27 Pekahiah in Israel was slain and succeeded by Pekah in the fifty-second year of Azariah of Judah. So the years of Israel from the beginning of Jehu to the death of Pekahiah should be equal to the years of Judah from the accession of Athaliah to the death of Azariah in his fifty-second year. But the years of the two nations for this period are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Judah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jehu</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoahaz</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoash</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
<td>41 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachariah</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallum</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menahem</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pekahiah</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114 years 7 months</td>
<td>128 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Edwin R. Thiele is a former missionary, editor, college and university professor who is now retired. He has gained worldwide recognition for bringing “order out of chaos” in the area of the chronology of the Hebrew kings. The work entitled The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings, published by Eerdmans in 1966, resulted in a growing respect being accorded the accuracy of the Bible record. His most recent work, published in 1977 by Zondervan, is A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings. Thiele holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago (1943) and a D.D. degree from Andrews University (1965).
Not only is the total for Israel not the same as the total for Judah, but the years for Israel are about a dozen years in excess of the years of contemporary Assyria, while those of Judah have long been known to be about a quarter of a century in excess of contemporary Assyria.

Difficulties such as these have brought many of the world’s leading Biblical scholars to the conclusion that the numbers of the Hebrew kings are grossly in error, and are not to be relied on for the establishment of a sound chronological pattern of Hebrew history. In the Encyclopaedia Britannica we have the following opinion expressed: “Errors which have vitiating more or less the entire chronology have crept in . . . The length of the reigns of the various kings is not the same according to the traditional and the synchronistic figures. Since, however, it is clear on various grounds that these synchronisms are not original, any attempt to base a chronological scheme on them may be disregarded. . . . Unless Assyrian or Babylonian records touch those of Israel and Judah, no certainty is possible; nor, in spite of the ingenuity expended on the problem, have scholars reached an agreement. The presence of errors in the Biblical figures is patent, but it is not equally clear where the errors lie.” 2

Albright, the renowned American scholar, said: “It is incredible that all these numbers can have been handed down through so many editors and copyists without often becoming corrupt. . . . We note that the century between 842 and 742 B.C. is occupied in Kings by four Judahite reigns, totaling 128 years. . . . The excess of some 24 years can be eliminated entirely by disregarding the total reigns attributed to the kings of Judah and basing our revised estimates of their reigns solely on the synchronisms with Israel (which throughout contradict the regnal totals of the kings of Judah). . . . By similar methods we are in a position to revise the chronology of the period which antedates the rebellion of Jehu. In this period, however, most of the synchronisms were calculated by some later editor, so they cannot be used as primary material, though they do enable us to correct the regnal totals for the rulers of the Omride Dynasty.” 3

A point of primary importance in resolving the problems is the method employed for reckoning the regnal years. According to the accession-year system—post-dating—the year when a king began his reign is termed his accession year, and his first official year begins with the next new year. Years reckoned in this way are equal to actual years and absolute time. According to another method, however—ante-dating, or the nonaccession-year system—the year when a king began his reign is termed his first year and his second official year begins with the next new year. Since the last year of the old king and the first year of the new ruler are the same year, years reckoned according to this method are counted twice and therefore totals increase by one year for every reign over absolute time. When this system is employed it is necessary to deduct one year from the official length of every reign in order to keep in accord with absolute time and with reigns reckoned in accord with the accession-year method.

A comparison of the lengths of reign of the rulers of Israel and Judah for the period immediately after the disruption reveals the system each nation then was using. Jeroboam began in Israel in the same year that Rehoboam began in Judah, and Ahaziah died in Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat of Judah (2 Kings 3:1). When the 86 official years of Israel for this period are reduced to actual years for each king, they are exactly equal to the 79 years of Judah. Thus the numbers of Judah and Israel, which throughout this period appear to contradict each other, are found to be harmonious, and the fact is revealed that at this time Judah employed accession-year reckoning and Israel followed the nonaccession-year method. The following are the numbers involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>official years</strong></td>
<td><strong>actual years</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abijam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoshaphat</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israel</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>official years</strong></td>
<td><strong>actual years</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeroboam</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadab</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baasha</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elah</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omri</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahab</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Careful study of the data reveals that Judah employed the accession-year system from Rehoboam to Jehoshaphat, but then shifted to Israel’s nonaccession-year system when, in a period of rapprochement between Judah and Israel, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat was married to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:18). Judah followed the nonaccession-year system for the reigns of Jehoram, Athaliah, and Joash, and then shifted back to the accession-year system with Amaziah and followed it to the end of its history. That this change was made at this time is shown by the two synchronisms for the accession of Ahaziah, in the eleventh year of Joram (2 Kings 9:29) according to the old accession-year system, but in the twelfth year of Joram (2 Kings 8:25) according to the newly adopted nonaccession-year method. In Israel nonaccession-year reckoning was employed from Jeroboam to Jehoahaz, but under Jehoash Israel adopted the accession-year system simultaneously with Amaziah of Judah.
Both Judah and Israel followed their own systems of reckoning for the lengths of reign of their own rulers and also for the synchronistic years of the rulers of the other nation.

In Israel the regnal year began with the month of Nisan in the spring and in Judah it began with Tishri in the fall.

Another chronological procedure that needs to be understood is the system employed for the regnal data of Omri, who ruled half of the nation of Israel while Tibni ruled the other half (1 Kings 16:21, 22). Omri was raised to the throne in the twenty-seventh year of Asa at his elimination of Zimri (1 Kings 16:15, 16). But the synchronism for his accession is the thirty-first year of Asa and the length of his reign was 12 years (1 Kings 16:23). Omri terminated his reign in the thirty-eighth year of Asa when he was succeeded by Ahab (1 Kings 16:29). The datum for the length of Omri's reign includes both the years of his overlap with Tibni and those of his sole reign, but his synchronism denotes the year when his overlap with Tibni ended and his sole reign began. This system of recording I have termed "dual dating."

It is vital that this procedure be understood, for it is used not only for Omri but also for Jeroboam II and Pekah in Israel and for Jehosha-
The greatest problems with the chronological data of the Hebrew kings have arisen from a failure to understand the employment of dual dating for the reigns involved. These data were recorded to set forth the details of the overlapping reigns to which they applied, and they fit those reigns with exactitude. When, however, the original historical situations are not understood and an attempt is made to apply these data to ordinary reigns of our own invention, they will not fit, and we find ourselves bewildered and ready to condemn as contradictory and erroneous data that are actually perfectly sound.

Dual dating for Azariah and Jeroboam II, it will be seen, will solve the very serious problems of the twelve excess years for Israel and the twenty-four extra years for Judah for that century. Here I will set forth in diagrammatic form the arrangements of reigns for the five areas where dual dating is involved.

For Omri the dual-dating pattern is shown on chart no. 1.

That dual dating was not understood in the centuries preceding the Christian era is shown by the variant data in the Greek texts of Kings which at 1 Kings 16:28 synchronize the accession of Jehoshaphat with the eleventh year of Omri instead of the fourth year of Ahab according to the Hebrew, and which at 1 Kings 16:28 synchronize the accession of Jehoshaphat with the eleventh year of Omri instead of the fourth year of Ahab according to the Hebrew. 

Ministry, January/1978
16:29 place the accession of Ahab in the second year of Jehoshaphat instead of the 38th year of Asa, as in the Hebrew. Chart no. 2 shows the Greek pattern for this period in which Omri begins his 12 years in the thirty-first year of Asa instead of his twenty-seventh year, as in the Hebrew pattern where dual-dating practice is followed.

From Jehoshaphat and Ahab to Athaliah and Jehu the pattern is as illustrated in chart no. 3.

Jehoshaphat began his 25 years (1 Kings 22:42) in 872 as coregent with Asa who was seriously ill in his thirty-ninth year (2 Chron. 16:12). The synchronism of his accession, however, is the fourth year of Ahab (1 Kings 22:41), which marks the end of his regency and the beginning of his sole reign in accord with dual-dating practice. The eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, when Joram began in Israel, is the second year of Jehoram’s regency with Jehoshaphat. While this coregency is revealed by the Israelite synchronism in 2 Kings 1:17 of Jehoram’s accession, the Judean regnal data of Jehoram begin his official eight years of reign in the fifth year of Joram (chap. 8:16, 17).

The pattern for the regnal data of 2 Kings 14 and 15 involving dual dating for Jeroboam II of Israel and Azariah of Judah is as shown on chart no. 4.

For Pekah in Israel chart no. 5 is the pattern of his dual dating. Hosea 5:5 points to two kingdoms in the north at this time, besides Judah in the south. If dual dating for Pekah is not understood, and if his 20 years are begun in 740 (2 Kings 15:27) and not in 752, the pattern as shown in chart no. 6 results.

In this pattern Pekah is thrust 12 years beyond his true position, bringing the accession of Hoshea 12 years beyond the twentieth year of Jotham, and causing his reign to overlap that of Hezekiah in accord with the following synchronisms as shown in chart no. 7.

Since all these synchronisms concern Hoshea, the last king of Israel, who ruled during the turbulent days when Assyria was devastating the land, we have indications that during those chaotic times the work of chronological recording was interrupted and that the final editors of Kings, failing to find any synchronism beyond that of the slaying of Pekah in the eleventh year of Jotham and not understanding dual dating, began the reign of Pekah in 740 instead of 752 and thus brought into being the synchronisms of 2 Kings 17 and 18.

That this is what happened is revealed by the sequence in which the reigns were placed in 2 Kings 15. The custom in Kings is to place the reigns in accord with the sequence in which the rulers began. Since Pekah began in 752, his account should have followed that of Menahem, who also began in 752. Next should have been Jotham, who began in 750, and then Pekiahiah, who began in 742. But the sequence in Kings reveals the following as the dates when it was thought that these rulers began their reigns:

- 742: Pekiahiah 2 Kings 15:23-26
- 740: Pekah 2 Kings 15:27-31
- 740: Jotham 2 Kings 15:32-38

Perhaps all this may seem to the casual reader to be "much ado about nothing." But, beyond the satisfaction that comes in finding a solution to a puzzle that has long perplexed us, the understanding of how to synchronize the lengths of reign for the rulers of Judah and Israel is rewarding in that it helps justify faith in the accuracy and reliability of the Bible record.

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**DATES OF THE RULERS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>932-913</td>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>Jeroboam I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>913-910</td>
<td>Abijam</td>
<td>Nadab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>910-869</td>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>Baasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>872-869</td>
<td>Jehoshaphat coregent</td>
<td>Elah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>872-848</td>
<td>Jehoshaphat total reign</td>
<td>Zimri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>853-848</td>
<td>Jehoram coregent</td>
<td>Tibni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>853-848</td>
<td>Jehoram total reign</td>
<td>Omri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>872-869</td>
<td>Ahaz coregent</td>
<td>Amon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>872-869</td>
<td>Ahaz total reign</td>
<td>Manasseh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841</td>
<td>Athaliah</td>
<td>Jehoash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841-835</td>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>835-796</td>
<td>Azariah</td>
<td>Jehoahaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>796-767</td>
<td>Jehoiada</td>
<td>Jehoiakim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>792-767</td>
<td>Athaliah overlap with Amaziah</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>792-740</td>
<td>Azariah total reign</td>
<td>King of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>753</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
<td>Jehoiachin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752-742</td>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752</td>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>Jehoiachin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752-732</td>
<td>Ahaz overlap with Jotham</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752-732</td>
<td>Ahaz official years</td>
<td>King of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752-740</td>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>Jerusalem conquered by Assyria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>697-686</td>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>Jehoiada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 642-640    | Amon | Jehoahaz 
| 640-609    | Josiah | Jehoash |
| 609        | Jehoahaz | Jeroboam II |
| 609-598    | Jehoiakim | Jehoash |
| 598-597    | Jehoiachin | Jeroboam II |
| 597-586    | Zedekiah | Zedekiah | King of Judah |
| 586-580    | Manasseh | Zedekiah | King of Judah |
| 580-578    | Jehoiakim | King of Judah |
| 578-576    | Zedekiah | King of Judah |

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**DATES OF THE RULERS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>930-909</td>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>Jeroboam I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>909-908</td>
<td>Abijam</td>
<td>Nadab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>908-886</td>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>Baasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>886-885</td>
<td>Jehoram coregency</td>
<td>Elah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>885</td>
<td>Jotham official reign</td>
<td>Zimri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>885-880</td>
<td>Jotham total years</td>
<td>Tibni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>884-874</td>
<td>Ahaz coregent</td>
<td>Omri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>874-853</td>
<td>Ahaz total reign</td>
<td>Amon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>853-852</td>
<td>Azariah</td>
<td>Manasseh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>852-841</td>
<td>Joram</td>
<td>Jehoash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841-814</td>
<td>Jehu</td>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>814-798</td>
<td>Jehoahaz</td>
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<td>798-782</td>
<td>Jehoash</td>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
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<td>793-782</td>
<td>Jeroboam II coregency</td>
<td>King of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>793-753</td>
<td>Jeroboam II total reign</td>
<td>King of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>753</td>
<td>Zachariah</td>
<td>Jeroboam II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>735-723</td>
<td>Shallum</td>
<td>Shalmaneser III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752-742</td>
<td>Menahem</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>752-732</td>
<td>Pekah</td>
<td>Zedekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742-740</td>
<td>Pekahiah</td>
<td>King of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>732-723</td>
<td>Hoshea</td>
<td>King of Judah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sacred Words
Philippians 1
Vs. 8—Bowels or Affection?
This verse provides one of the best examples of the fact that a literal translation may actually be an incorrect translation. Paul says that he longs after the Philippians in the "bowels" of Jesus Christ.
The Greek word is splanchnon, which means "bowels" or "inward parts." It is used literally of these physical organs in Acts 1:18. But elsewhere in the NT (10 times) it is employed metaphorically. The Greeks thought of the bowels as the center of affection. But we use the term "heart" for that. So the translation "bowels" here is actually misleading. Not only does it convey entirely the wrong idea, but it is apt to start the mind off on a side-track of unpleasant thought that will divert the attention away from the true meaning of the passage.
Therefore any well-informed person reading the Bible in public will change the word "bowels" to "inward parts."
It is interesting to note that in Luke 1:78 the King James translators rendered what is literally "bowels of mercy of our God" as "tender mercy of our God." Evidently they balked at speaking of the bowels of God! But is "bowels of Jesus Christ" in our present passage any better? In 2 Cor. 7:15 they rightly used "inward affection" for splanchnon.
Vs. 19—Bountiful Supply
The Greek word for "supply" is epichorēgō. It comes from chorēgos, "chorus-leader." The verb epichorēgō first meant to furnish a chorus at one's own expense, then simply to supply. So the noun is normally translated "provision" (NASB), "supply," or "support" (AG). It is a late and rare word, found in only one inscription (from A.D. 79). Vincent says: "The word implies bountiful supply." (3:423). This seems to be the best translation (see Weymouth, C. B. Williams).
Regarding the following phrase, "of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," Vincent comments: "Either the supply furnished by the Spirit, or the supply which is the Spirit. It is better to take it as including both." (ibid.).

Vs. 20—Boldness or Courage?
Paul hopes that with "all boldness" he may magnify Christ. The Greek for "boldness" is parrésia (see comments on Eph. 3:12). Arndt and Gingrich give as its meaning: "1. outspokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, that conceals nothing and passes over nothing. . . . 2. 'Openness' sometimes develops into openness to the public, before whom speaking and actions take place. . . . 3. courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness, especially in the presence of persons of high rank" (pp. 635, 636).
Weymouth adopts the first of these definitions. He renders the phrase "by my perfect freedom of speech." Arndt and Gingrich prefer the second. But most recent translators adopt the third—"unfailing courage" (TDNT, Goodspeed), "fearless courage" (Moffatt), "full courage" (RSV). The context seems to favor "sufficient courage" (NIV).

Secular Words
James H. Stirling
Ideas are the public speaker's stock in trade. A pastor or Bible teacher who hopes to keep up with the ideas expressed in current journals and books in theology, church administration, counseling, and other fields related to his work must have a large working vocabulary. Words are like handles by which you may grasp concepts. Knowing the words and their corresponding concepts enables you to read with greater comprehension and speed.
As a speaker, of course, you should take into account the probable recognition vocabulary of your audience. In presenting a sermon, aim at informing and inspiring your listeners, not at showing off your erudition. New ideas and words need to be explained. The terms offered for this first "Word Power" smorgasbord were drawn from professional literature, articles in this issue of MINISTRY, and popular speech. Test your knowledge of each of these words by selecting from among the words or phrases listed after it the one that comes closest in meaning to it.

1. altruism: (a) self-consciousness; (b) regard for the interests of others; (c) pompousness; (d) disregard of the rights of others.
2. dualism: (a) soul and body; (b) idea and action; (c) hope and fear; (d) love and respect.
3. ecumenical: (a) tending toward unity; (b) tending toward division; (c) tending toward compromise; (d) tending toward surrender.
4. glossolalia: (a) divine healing; (b) superficial; (c) ecstatic utterances; (d) inspired preaching.
5. idealism: (a) philosophical view that nature is inherently good; (b) view that man is perfectible; (c) view that the best things are unattainable; (d) view that ultimate reality lies in a realm transcending phenomena.
6. koinonia: (a) congregation of believers; (b) offering; (c) sharing in something with someone; (d) prayer of thanksgiving.
7. lugubrious: (a) pulling hard; (b) exaggeratedly mournful; (c) hilarious; (d) reluctant.
8. naïveté: (a) worldly wisdom; (b) kindness; (c) gentleness; (d) credulousness.
9. orientate: (a) face east; (b) place in order with respect to a fixed point; (c) Chinese food; (d) organize.
10. sine qua non: (a) indispensable thing; (b) unnecessary thing; (c) useful thing; (d) desirable thing.
11. soteriology: (a) study of last-day events; (b) study of salvation; (c) old writings; (d) mysticism.
12. vicissitude: (a) disaster; (b) evil intention; (c) bad habit; (d) alternating change.
For the correct answers, turn to page 31.

James H. Stirling, Ph.D., is currently on leave as professor of anthropology, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California.
Only the angels are perfect, which proves that there is room for improvement in all of us.

Dear Shepherdess: With this January issue we welcome many new readers. This section of the magazine is particularly for the minister’s wife, but you husbands can read it too! However, please share this section each month with your “shepherdess” and tell her we’d be pleased to hear from her. The article that follows comes from La Verne Beeler, who wrote it as a letter to her friend Millie at the time of her husband’s ordination to the gospel ministry. No matter how many years you’ve been in the ministry, I believe you’ll find it helpful. With love, Kay.

Glowing and growing
by La Verne Beeler

Dear Millie,

As I looked at you and Mark last night—you were both radiant, sparkling ambassadors for Christ. Your career as helpmeet to your minister husband has begun and your role as a minister’s wife will enhance or limit his ministry. Parishioners can be curt or cordial—almost in the same breath, but they are usually tolerant of a person who is glowing and growing. According to a Spanish proverb, “Solo los angeles son perfectos” (only the angels are perfect), which indicates room for growth in us all.

When you asked me what counsel I might have for a young minister’s wife, the concept of glowing and growing came to mind. Thirty-five years ago, when my husband, Charles, was newly ordained, a dear friend, seasoned and solid and delightfully charming, spent an afternoon talking to me about growing with my husband intellectually and spiritually. She said, “One never stays status quo—we grow or diminish; it’s up to us.”

Self-improvement is the key and it is a lifelong study—but a most rewarding one. A motto that has motivated me since the days I studied elementary education is, “You are the attitude of your classroom.” This same idea can be applied to the role of a homemaker or a minister’s wife. It may read “You are the attitude of your family, or your church.” A challenge of this kind requires vigilance and devotion.

Millie, you are one of God’s cameos—fashioned by Him. Putting Him first in your life will be the secret of success in every area of your activities. Find time for quiet meditation, Bible study and prayer. It may mean getting up before the family does, but it pays rich dividends. To keep a journal of thoughts that particularly impress you as you study is also a rewarding experience. The inner glow of a deep commitment inspires confidence and faith.

Your Bible and denominational reading matter will claim priority in your reading, but there are many other publications and books worthy of study. These will broaden your scope of understanding. Reach out to learn the trends of thinking in your neighborhood and community. Your personal goals and study will be different from Mark’s but will give him a new avenue of insights into the areas where you witness most effectively.

Your family and the organization you represent want always to be proud of you. That means you will face up to the weak spots in your ministry as a wife, mother, and member of your church and community.

Your personal appearance gives an immediate résumé of who you are. This index to your character is obvious to all who meet you. Because this first impression is so important, an inventory of your personal appearance would be an appropriate beginning. It may encourage you to list your assets and go from there—from top to toe.

Hair.—Shiny, healthy, neatly styled. A hair style that takes more than ten minutes to arrange each morning is too complicated to maintain.

Skin.—Clear and clean. A good cleanser and moisture cream will help in these areas. Make-up is a cover-up. It should not be obvious.

Eyes.—Warm, expressive. They are the windows to your soul.

From the neck down, it is clothes. One guideline I find most helpful reads: “A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire. Chaste simplicity in dress, when united with modesty of demeanor, will go far toward surrounding a young woman with that atmosphere of sacred reserve which will be to her a shield from a thousand perils.”—Education, p. 248.

Simple lines, good quality fabric, becoming colors, and well-fitting clothes are always in good taste. That isn’t always easy to attain, but it is possible. Everyone has a figure problem of some kind. There are ways to minimize these. A class in basic sewing will help. Learning to make some of your own clothing is challenging and economical. One becoming dress is better than 2 or 3 of lesser aesthetic quality. Since our commission is to “Go ye . . . to all
"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal . . . ." (Matt. 6:19).

Even though You said this, I am so grateful to You that my cherished possessions survived another move.

Here are two delicate stem goblets of the pattern Dick and I chose before our wedding. One was a gift; the other we bought ourselves. We never completed the set.

This antique crystal jar, set in an ornate sterling frame, belonged to Dick's great aunt. I always saw it displayed on the buffet in his home.

And here is the fragile hand-painted tea set promised me by Grandmother when I was a young girl looking with awe at the bright poppies and gold trim on each piece of china.

These are some of my treasures on earth. They are not very practical, and I use them only occasionally, but they add color and richness.

I think of the cycle of heirlooms, each object cared for carefully and passed to the next generation to keep the aesthetic sense alive.

In this world of Melamine, Tupperware, and Teflon, a thing of beauty is a special joy. Thank You.

La Verne Beeler is a pastor's wife residing in Lincoln, Nebraska.
RECOMMENDED READING


To those who may wonder why another book is needed or has been written on the Beatitudes, the obvious answer is that it isn't—unless it makes a unique contribution. And I believe this one does. Not only is the introduction to Christ's Sermon on the Mount viewed as a series of progressive steps in the experience of becoming sons and daughters of God but each step is analyzed from three specific viewpoints that deal with practical problems of Christian living.

Each Beatitude is shown to be based on a specific common problem or human predicament. Christ's answer to the problem and the practical implications for Christian living are not only clearly brought out in each of the Beatitudes but outlined in a simple analytical chart at the introduction of each chapter that builds on each step until all seven are included in the diagram. This kind of development makes this book ideal for use in a prayer meeting or sermon series.

Another real contribution is the incisive analysis of the radical departure from the religious tradition of Christ's day that is involved in the presentation outlined in the fifth chapter of Matthew. Actually, it is still quite radical today. The impossibility of our measuring up to Christ's exemplary life without experiencing the development outlined in the Beatitudes is graphically driven home and God's laws are viewed as word pictures of the truly converted person's character—the kind of life that is achieved only when Christ lives out this life in us. The Beatitudes ultimately demonstrate how Christ leads us step by step to achieve what He has already made possible for us. This significant volume can be ordered through your local Adventist Book Center or from the Aspire Book Club, c/o MINISTRY Magazine, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

J. R. Spangler


I was in a prison camp in the Orient during World War II when I first learned of the author's amazing solutions to the chronological Biblical problems that had baffled scholars for centuries. When in 1946 his work, published in the Journal of Near Eastern Studies, vol. 3 (1944), became available to me I discovered that Thiele had succeeded in going far beyond the solutions that others, myself included, had found to the intricate chronological problems of the period of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Although I had worked on these same problems for years and reached some conclusions that paralleled those of Thiele, he had obtained solutions for several problems that still eluded me.

In 1951 the author's work was published in a more extended form as a monograph by the University of Chicago Press under the title The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings. The book was immediately hailed by many Bible scholars throughout the Western world as the greatest breakthrough in Old Testament chronology, and his chronological scheme was widely adopted by Biblical historians. A new printing of his book appeared in 1955, and ten years later, in 1965, a revised, though slightly shorter, edition was published by William B. Eerdmans in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

And now, after another twelve years, we can greet a new, revised, and greatly abbreviated pocket-sized edition in which all pertinent results of Thiele's system are presented as simply and as clearly as Biblical chronology can be. An extensive use of diagrams, charts, and tables helps the Bible student to follow the author's reasoning step by step. Those who want a deeper and more thorough study in which all pertinent arguments and sources are presented will have to go back to Thiele's earlier editions and to the several articles he has written on aspects of Hebrew chronology as discoveries have brought to light new evidence.

I had the privilege of working closely with the author for a number of years as a colleague at Andrews University. Sharing common interests and having come to some similar solutions in our studies, we became good friends. I learned a lot from Thiele and accepted several of the solutions to chronological problems that had eluded me for so long. However, honesty requires me to state that we also have gone our separate ways with regard to one chronological problem—the reign of Hezekiah—where my views differ from his. (For my views see AUSS, 2 [1964], 40-52, and the article of E. A. Parker, AUSS, 6 [1968], 129-133, with whose explanations I agree.) Also, we disagree on another minor point. I believe that Jeremiah employed a calendar that started with Tishri, while Thiele is convinced that Jeremiah used a Nisan year. (See his statement in the book under review on page 68, note 3; and for my view, AUSS, 5 [1967], 12-27.)

Aside from these minor disagreements I accept Thiele's chronological scheme, and have for more than a quarter of a century recommended it to my students. His chronology has slowly obtained a secure place in the reconstruction of the history of the ancient Hebrews and is used by an ever-increasing number of scholars. It is marvelous that the author, now an octogenarian, has been able to provide us with a shortened and popularly written synthesis of his great work. We are grateful for what he has done in a field in which giants among Bible students had failed for so long. Siegfried H. Horn
Plan for Visitation

The following notice, appearing in the Garden Grove church bulletin of the Southeastern California Conference, may suggest something for your church:

The members of the pastoral staff invite you to visit the other members of the congregation with them.

The purpose of this visitation will be simply to become better acquainted with those with whom we worship. A mature Christian can worship God where he is not well acquainted with anyone and still receive a blessing. How much more rewarding it is to worship with a group in which you have at least a few close friends.

The pastoral staff members invite you to join them in visitation that will begin on Wednesday, February 2. The regularly scheduled times for visitation with laymen will be Wednesday evenings, 7:00–9:00, Thursday afternoons, 1:30–5:00, and the first Sabbath afternoon of each month, 2:00–5:00, following fellowship dinner.

You are invited to call Dot Hall any morning at the church to let us know when you would like to visit with us. We plan to visit those interested in our faith as well as our members.

Ladies are requested to come to visit two by two. Men may come alone or bring their wives.

Why not call the church office today and reserve a time for visitation with one of the pastors.

To know Jesus well is a necessity for the Christian.

To know some of God’s children well adds another important dimension to the Christian life. “I thank my God every time I remember you” (Phil. 1:3, N.I.V.*). —Norman Versteg


The Cross on Fire

One enterprising youth pastor got the idea of having his youth dig a cross outdoors where an outdoor service was to be held. The trench was filled with shavings that were later soaked with a fuel-oil type of inflammable material. As the pastor spoke on the meaning of Christ’s cross, the cross was lighted and continued to burn, to the warmth and delight of the youth who huddled around it to hear their pastor’s “burning” message.

Hospital Card

Bill Bloom leaves this card when he makes hospital calls. A good idea that is inexpensive.

Answers to “Ministerial Word Power” (see page 27).

1. altruism: (b) From the French altruism, “other people.” In ethics, the supposed “natural impulse” a person has for doing good to others.

2. dualism: (a) The philosophical position that reality consists of two separate, irreducible elements.

3. ekkleton: (a) From the Greek ekkleton, “the inhabited world.”

4. glossolalia: (c) From Greek glossa, “tongue,” and talia, “talk.”

5. idealism: (b) Seeks to counter the mechanistic views of the universe.

6. koinonia: (c) From the Greek koinos, “common.”

7. lugure: (b) From Latin lugere, “to mourn.”

8. narvete: (d) From the French naïve, or sometimes foolishly simple.

9. orientate: (a) From French orienter, to adjust to a particular situation.

10. sine qua non: (a) Latin, “without which not.”

11. soteriology: (b) From the Greek soter., “saviour.” Used in Titus 2:13

12. vicissitude: (d) From the Latin viciss, “change.”

Scores: 12-11 Excellent. (You ought to write for MINISTRY.) 10-9 Very good. 8-7 Good.
**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Plans to Construct Islamic Centers in Europe**

Between six and eight million Moslems live in Western Europe. The Islam Council for Europe plans to construct Islamic centers in major European cities, and is pushing European governments to guarantee the rights of Moslem minorities. Studies in West Germany indicate that children of Turkish families living in Germany are more open to the gospel than their parents. German churches are gearing their evangelistic thrust in this direction.—*The Church Around the World*, May, 1977.

**Catholic Magazine Poll Shows Readers Favor “Right to Die”**

CHICAGO—A sampling of readers of a Catholic magazine here strongly favored the “right to die” in cases where extraordinary means are required to maintain life, but opposed death in circumstances approaching euthanasia.

Responding to six hypothetical “hopeless” cases, one of which closely paralleled the Karen Quinlan situation, the readers of U.S. Catholic, published here by the Claretian Fathers, indicated that it would be morally correct to allow a person to die, but the majority balked at killing the person.

Asked what they would do if they were named legal guardian of a comatose man with irreversible brain damage who was receiving intravenous feeding and whose breathing was being aided by a respirator, 45 percent agreed to remove the respirator and discontinue intravenous feeding. Thirty-eight percent opted for discontinuing the respirator only. One percent recommended a fatal injection.

Although the majority (50 percent to 34 percent) said it was morally right to allow a severely brain-damaged woman to die when surgery could keep her alive, 74 percent (to 21 percent) said it would be morally wrong to allow a hopelessly deformed baby to die of pneumonia without attempting to save its life.

In another case, in which a terminally ill man leaves instruction that the family should kill him if his pain grows unbearable, 75 percent (to 17 percent) said the family should not kill him.

Similarly, in a case where a woman has brain cancer, only a month to live and is in severe pain, 73 percent of the respondents said they would “wait for her to die,” while only 5 percent said they would “give her the means to kill herself.”

**Alcoholism in Sixth-graders Is Called “Lion Outside the Door”**

DENVER—Society is ignoring many “lions outside the door,” a schoolteacher and coordinator of family living and drug education warned here, and one of them is alcoholism among elementary students.

Donald E. Shaw addressed a three-hour workshop on youthful alcoholism for school counselors. The Jefferson County teacher and counselor told his listeners that in each case of juvenile alcoholism the pattern was the same. Both parents worked and left for work before the child left for school. In each case, the child decided to drink his breakfast.

Two years ago, he noted, a fifth-grader came to school drunk. That was the first such case, but it set off a pattern involving other fifth-graders, followed by an investigation of the problem. Mr. Shaw asked for groups of 100 as a basis for his surveys. Some results: Never did fewer than 84 say that they hadn’t tried alcohol at least once. Never did fewer than 50 say they hadn’t tried it 10 times.

In a survey of sixth-graders, 6 to 9 percent had experienced sex, and almost all of these had been allowed unsupervised dating by the time they were 11 years old. The sex scene, the drug scene, and the family scene are related, Mr. Shaw said.

“I can tell you counselors in alcoholism that if we don’t get some different feelings about families, we’re going to flood you with people, and you’ll get deeper and deeper into the hole,” he said.

Adding urgency to the session were police statistics reported by Sgt. William Spickard, of the Denver police department. These indicated that 73 percent of burglaries are committed by youths under 18, with 67 percent of all crimes in the Denver area involving youth.

Unless otherwise credited, these news items are taken from Religious News Service.

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E. M. Peterson, Circulation Manager