Your Secretary: A Partner in Ministry
Ties between Rome and Washington

True to B. B. Beach’s logic regarding separation of church and state (“Undiplomatic Relations,” March, 1984), I move the U.S.A. break diplomatic relations with Great Britain, since the head of that state, namely Queen Elizabeth II, is also the head of the Anglican Church!—Pastor, Montreal, Canada.

Why doesn’t B. B. Beach come out in the open and say that the real reason why he resents the United States having diplomatic relations with the Vatican is that he foresees no time in history when his church will have a leader in any way comparable to John Paul II in wielding influence in international affairs? If the separation of church and state is the reason, why doesn’t he raise his voice against Jesse Jackson, a minister in the Baptist Church running for President?—Roman Catholic Church, New Jersey.

You have done a great disservice to religion by publishing “Undiplomatic Relations.” In the age of ecumenism it would seem that you would be more broad-minded and not revive the fears of the Al Smith days. The author’s arguments seem to be based on motives of anti-Catholicism and surely not on constitutional law.—Roman Catholic Church, Detroit, Michigan.

I have been receiving your publication now for a number of years, not by choice, but because someone, unknown to me, paid for the subscription. I have always found your magazine understandable and at times informative. However, your March, 1984, issue is making me think twice. The article “Undiplomatic Relations” is nothing more than verbal garbage to hide the real issue on diplomatic relations with the Vatican, i.e., “basic bigotry.” Isn’t it rather strange there is no objector asking for recall of the ambassador to England—ambassador to the Court of St. James—whose head is the queen of England, head of the Church of England and the Anglican communion? And you say there is no bigotry involved. “What is good for the goose is good for the gander.”—Roman Catholic Church, New York.

The article “Undiplomatic Relations” states on page 4: “It is not a coincidence that at this very time the Catholic Church, having reached the nadir of its political pretensions as a state, endeavored to bolster its claims of church supremacy by proclaiming the dogma of papal infallibility.” The statement of Vatican I came as the result of a prolonged appeal from many Catholics throughout the world and made it practically impossible for the pope to do what some of the ultramontans wished him to do, that is, deliver infallible pronouncements right and left, almost as one would dictate a breakfast menu. To set the statement of Vatican I within the framework of the declining temporal power of the Papacy makes as much sense as setting the statements of the early ecumenical councils, which all bibliologically centered and traditional Christians would certainly accept, within the context of a corrupt and declining empire.

Speaking of papal primacy, which has nothing to do with the papal temporal power, do your readers realize that there are more references in the early Church Fathers to the leadership of the Roman pontiff than to the presence of our Lord in the Eucharist? The Eucharistic presence is accepted by all orthodox Christians, but the papal primacy is accepted only by Roman Catholics. How illogical!—Roman Catholic Church, Indiana.

To refer to the Vatican as “the Holy See,” as your article continually did, is to say that the Vatican is “the” Holy See, as distinct from the other apostolic sees, all of which are Eastern Orthodox. Ignatius IV, “our most Holy Father, 13th of the Holy Apostles,” et cetera, also has what to the casual observer may seem to be extravagant titles, but the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Antioch (Syria) and all of the East does not rule over any territory, while the Bishop of Rome, patriarch of the West, does. You are beating a dead horse. The popes have been temporal rulers since Clovis gave them territory in the fifth century. That that was not so from 1870 to 1929 is an aberration. Relax! The world around us neither cares nor understands what you are so exercised about.—Eastern Orthodox Church, Ohio.

Having read your article “Undiplomatic Relations,” I was impressed by your bias in regard to the Roman Catholic Church. With the thesis that you have presented, we should then withdraw all diplomatic ties from Israel, Iran, and England, to name but a few nations that have as their head a religious leader (Iran) or are considered religious states (Israel) or whose leader/monarch is the head of the church (England). Cyprus, when Archbishop Makarios was also its president, should not have had a diplomat/ambassador either.—Greek Orthodox Church, New Hampshire.

If you’re receiving MINISTRY bi-monthly without having paid for a subscription, it’s not a mistake. Since 1928, MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too.

We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy; requests should be on church letterhead.

Your Secretary: A Partner in Ministry/7. Having a secretary can free a pastor for his major tasks of studying God’s Word and equipping his people for ministry. Donald L. Bubna indicates how you can best use a secretary—from volunteer to paid professional.

Say It With a Prayer!/10. Morris Chalfant points out both our continuing need to pray and how we may make prayer more central to our lives.

Sermons People Can Follow/12. Adequate sermon structuring can make the difference between a sermon that has a lasting impact and one that does not. Steven P. Vitrano suggests a number of ways you can structure textual or exegetical sermons.

Ministers and Muggers/18. Kermit Netteburg and Pam Patterson. Because the minister’s profession often calls him out at night, he may be particularly vulnerable to this kind of crime. Preventive measures can reduce the probability of attack, however.


Are They God’s Gift to the Church?/22. Some volunteers you could do without! How do pastors relate to or redirect church members who want certain offices or jobs in the church but who would do more damage than good in fulfilling them?

How to Live on a Pastor’s Pay/24. Living contentedly on a pastor’s pay requires certain attitudes as well as wise handling of one’s money. Anne Elver speaks of both in this article.

Pottery—A Boon to Archeologists/26. Larry G. Herr. An archeologist relates why pottery is important to his discipline, and how it reveals a society’s culture and date.
Did Matthew twist Scripture?

The New Testament freely refers to and quotes the Old, finding in the Old Testament the authority for the claims it makes about Jesus. Some of these usages are problematic. Does the New Testament "proof-text" the Old? Does it disregard context? We can grow in our understanding of the New Testament's message by recognizing how it is using the Old Testament.

by David C. Jarnes

During his hearing before the Diet of Worms, Martin Luther spoke the now-famous words "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason... my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand." Those last three words, though their authenticity has been disputed, have become a familiar slogan.

When, while expressing his convictions, someone says, "Here I stand," we do not conclude he is telling us his geographical location! The historical context of the statement tells us something larger is involved. The words bring to mind Luther's confrontation with the powers of church and state. They carry the context of deep conviction, of a firm commitment regardless of consequences. Those few words carry meaning beyond what they in themselves signify.

C. H. Dodd suggests the writers of the New Testament at times used the Old Testament in a somewhat analogous way. Some New Testament uses of the Old Testament are problematic (e.g., Matt. 2:15 and Hosea 11:1). Instances such as this have led some people to posit farfetched suggestions as to the relations and meanings of these Old and New Testament passages. Others suppose such uses by the New Testament of the Old to be instances of prophecies with dual applications. The first is to be understood historically and in context, relating to the people to whom it was given. The second application, that made by the New Testament writer (and by implication unhistorical and out of context), is said to relate to a later situation not foreseen by the Old Testament prophet. The fact that the New Testament writer worked under inspiration justifies, in their thinking, his using the Old Testament in such a way.

Still others consider these usages as examples of the New Testament using the Old Testament for its own purposes, without regard to the original context. M. J. Down, for instance, arguing as a conservative for the historicity of Matthew's birth narratives, concludes: "The evangelist did not start with prophecy and invent a story; he started with a story and slipped in certain prophecies, in some cases not too cleverly." The title of S. Vernon McCasland's article characterizes this particular understanding well: "Matthew Twists the Scriptures!" These scholars see the New Testament as simply proof-texting the Old Testament in these instances—and make no attempt to justify it.

Dodd's better approach

Dodd's approach is more satisfying both in that it takes more seriously the New Testament's use of the Old Testament and in that using it offers deeper insights into the New Testament passages themselves. His suggestion as to this one way in which the New Testament uses the Old rests upon two bases: their common perspective of history and the New Testament kerygma.

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Other expressions in the psalm reveal the emotions and attitude Jesus apparently experienced in common with the psalmist. Recognition of the Old Testament context of Jesus’ words transforms them from a cry of utter despair to one of triumphant faith in the face of despair. Psalm 22 begins with the psalmist’s expression of distress at what seems to him the Lord’s desertion of him. He has been crying for help and receiving neither answer nor aid. But the psalm moves from this mood of despair to one of faith. Because God is holy, He will certainly answer in His own time. Note the positive expressions this psalm makes—expressions that Jesus must have claimed as His own as He hung upon the cross, and expressions that He must have wished to call to the minds of those who heard Him:

“My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

Yet thou art holy. . . .
In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
To thee they cried, and were saved; in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. . . .
I will tell of thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee. . . .
For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. . . .
Posterity shall serve him; men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it.”

We noted earlier that the Old Testament writers looked for God to work through a two-phase movement involving oppression and/or judgment followed by renewal or deliverance. This psalm, as do many others, contains a clear example of this. The New Testament kerygma presents Jesus as the fulfillment of these Old Testament expectations. In the events of the crucifixion and of the resurrection and ascension, He experienced oppression, God’s judgment (as our substitute), and then God’s deliverance. A little later in the Isaiah 42 passage, these words describe the mission of the Lord’s servant: “I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon.” In Luke 4, Jesus says that a like passage, also from Isaiah, is programmatic of His mission. The thought in this section of Isaiah continues through chapters 43 and 44 to speak of judgment upon God’s people—but also of an ultimate restoration.

And not only does the Isaiah passage itself contain rich implications, God’s link of Jesus’ mission with the servant of Isaiah at the beginning of His ministry means God was at least hinting that Jesus’ mission would include suffering. This servant of Isaiah 42 is not to be disconnected from the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, who “was wounded for our transgressions and with whose stripes we are healed.”

Space limitations preclude further expansion on examples. Let me just mention a few that may start you on some investigations of your own. In Matthew 3:3, John the Baptist’s identi-
Your secretary: a partner in ministry

After the pastor, the very next staff person a church should acquire is the secretary, says the author, who has worked with many secretaries. You can’t afford one? Start with a volunteer. You’re afraid you can’t keep a secretary busy? Relax! Your job isn’t to make work for her but to let her make you more effective in your work. The author describes what secretaries have done for his ministry and how best to utilize their skills. — by Donald L. Bubna

A friend was assuming greater responsibilities in a Christian organization. “Don,” he said to me, “my superior thinks I need more secretarial help! But some things I just like to do my way, and I’ve never been able to commit them to a secretary. I see I need to shake loose of that attitude in order to grow as a leader.”

I suspect that’s where many pastors are: deeply committed to ministry, but bound by numerous tasks which they have never learned to delegate. Our primary work as pastors is studying God’s Word and equipping people for ministry. A competent secretary can free you and extend your ministry as nothing else can.

The first staff person a church acquires is generally the pastor. The second should always be the secretary—before the janitor, Christian educator, or youth person!

How do you begin?

At pastors’ workshops when I discuss subjects such as time management and secretaries, I often hear, “But we can’t afford a secretary!” So begin with a volunteer. Then build a core of volunteers. Our church now has several paid secretaries who serve the staff pastors. But we continue to have volunteers; these remain valuable supplements we could not get along without. They fold and mail bulletins, answer the phone, type letters, assist with big mailings, and perform many other necessary (though often mundane) tasks. From this pool we are sometimes able to draw staff secretarial help.

My first secretary was a volunteer, as were a series thereafter. Some typed; some did not. I asked them to guard the church phone several mornings a week: “Pacific Beach Alliance church; this is Suzy Joy. May I help you?” “Is Pastor Bubna in?” was the invariable question. “He is in his study in prayer this morning and asked that calls, other than emergencies, be held until 11:30. May he return your call, or may I help you?”

Three out of four times the caller asked something like this: “Is there a nursery Friday night?” or, “Is such-and-such on the calendar?” or, “Could this announcement go into the bulletin?” My volunteer could easily resolve many such requests, and my own prayer and study time continued undisturbed.

Sometimes I have spotted talented high school girls in the congregation. “We need to supplement our office help with a volunteer,” I might begin. “We can’t offer you any pay right now, but we can provide you with valuable experience! With the office skills you gain I believe you can always find a job.” A young wife and mother in our church has worked part-time in the office for about thirteen years. She started as a high school volunteer, gained proficiency in...
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secretarial areas, and has long been a highly valued employee.

From volunteer to paid staff
I hold a general philosophy about paying people (not only secretaries): pay those who need financial support to free them for the greater exercise of their gifts in the church body, or those who can offer more consistent service than volunteers. I prefer working with the known rather than the unknown whenever possible. If I have observed an especially dedicated volunteer, I will approach that person about employment. If necessary, however, we do advertise through our church bulletin or work with an outside agency, such as a state employment agency.

Here is what I look for in a prospective church secretary:

Attitudes and commitment: I want my secretary to have a commitment to Christ. I also request a commitment to ministry. The job must not merely be a stepping-stone to another career.

"If you are looking for short-term work," I tell prospective secretaries, "I would appreciate your not pursuing this job. I really believe in what we are doing. I have given my life to it, and I'm trying to fashion a team to work with me. I am not requiring you to sign up for a ten-year sentence, but I do ask for commitment."

This is an important approach to working with people, and I find it slows down staff turnover.

Skills: The secretary in the church office must be as highly skilled as any secretary in any office. Outsiders are frequently unaware of the intensity of our workweek, ranging from busy to chaotic! Each secretary must be able to type, operate copiers and other machines, and in more and more churches to work with computers. My secretary needs shorthand knowledge as well. I generally use the dictaphone, but sometimes I may need to dictate something quickly when we are passing in the hall!

Home situation: It is important that my secretary have a stable marriage and home situation. This is a protection from transference of affection between two people who work closely together. In addition, the secretary "carries" the pastor. She is the "right hand" that supports him and frees him to minister. It would be counterproductive to reverse this situation, especially if she needed his constant counsel and support to keep her going.

Naturally, periods of stress and emergency occur in every life. As part of God's family, we are all called upon to offer loving concern and aid when one member hurts. We pastors, routinely responding to people with needs, also need to be sensitive to those who serve in our own support system.

The secretary's duties
You have acquired a secretary. Now what do you do? A fellow pastor, a good friend of mine, wrote: "A secretary used to make me feel uptight. I lived in constant dread that she would run out of work to do. Soon the concept of my job had degenerated into keeping her busy. I was thinking of letters I ought to write and memos that ought to be gotten out and schedules that ought to be developed. And I thought I was doing the right thing if I kept her busy. Instead of being a pastor, I had become an office manager."

Many of us feel that way. I used to! But it's an unreal problem. A secretary develops and finds things to do. If she is not constantly busy when you start out, relax! It's better for her to have a little time to waste than for you to feel you have to manufacture chores for her.

My secretary has worked with me through the years as our church grew from average size to relatively large. Together we have written down the typical duties of a secretary, first in the smaller setting and then in the larger church.

In the small church, the secretary does everything! She has to because she's the only one in the office. Daily chores will include phone and receptionist duty, opening mail (my secretary has always opened and read all my mail, other than that marked "Personal" or "Confidential"), preparing the bulletin, ordering supplies, duplicating papers for committees, taking dictation, and trying to keep the pastor on his schedule. Obviously she must be versatile and able to work with interruptions. Looking back fifteen years in our own situation, we find the secretary also prepared visitation cards, took mail to the post office nightly, kept the bulletin board updated and the literature table stocked, dusted and straightened the office, maintained an orderly file system, and welcomed and dealt with all office callers.

In the larger church a multiple secretarial staff serves together. A receptionist fields incoming calls and visitors. Another person prepares the bulletin. The administrator and his assistant worry about the supplies and literature table. The janitor cleans the office. The secretary to the senior pastor finds her work changing, until in some ways she has become his assistant.

Representing the pastor
To an increasing degree the secretary's major role is that of freeing the pastor to concentrate on greater matters. She will be constructing part of his calendar, returning some of his calls, and making his appointments: "I am calling for Pastor Bubna. He has asked to have lunch with you next week. When could you get together?"

Very often she might jot down a few of the pastor's remarks during conference and then write letters for him. She can assist with sermon research and sometimes write an article for him. She certainly represents him and the church he serves as she responds to the public. Her voice and manner may be the first impression some people will have of the church. While the secretary will not take over the pastor's discipling ministries, she very often will minister to hurting people over the phone or even in her own office—listening, counseling, and praying with them. She can be a strong encouragement to the church's volunteers, perhaps showing appreciation in little ways such as thank-you notes or lunches out together.
The church secretary is a unique and priceless coworker in God's vineyard. Her role lacks visibility or personal glory. Her purpose is to help another succeed—the true definition of servanthood.

The pastor's secretary works primarily for him, not for the entire church, the board, the committees, or the children's departments. Our secretaries are flexible and graciously help church people to a great degree. At the same time we have made available the copiers, the folder, and paper cutter, and encourage people to prepare and reproduce their own materials as much as possible.

Guidelines for a secretary

In the unusual setting of the church office, "people problems" of variable magnitude are everyday business. The pastor is dependent on his coworkers. I have prepared a list of necessary secretarial attitudes and other guidelines which enhance a working relationship:

Loyalty: I need absolute confidence that my secretary is loyal to me, will represent me, will not make me look bad, but will in fact do all she can to help me look better than I am! Carrying loyalty to an extreme, I'd even like her to laugh at my jokes.

Confidentiality: "I trust you," I periodically tell my coworkers. "You must keep what I do and even whom I do it with in absolute confidentiality. If you ever have reason to doubt my ethics or morality, come and tell me. If you think I do not hear you, then go to any elder in the church. You must do that instead of telling even your husband."

One secretary was married to an elder on our board. "You will have to work this out with your husband," I told her. "He needs to understand that there are things he should not know about your work." The pastor may be preparing reports and studies which he does not yet want the governing board to know about. His secretary has to know what he is doing, but she also must have the discipline to keep that knowledge to herself.

Team Concept: The pastor and his secretary serve as a team. They are privy to information that other people do not have. The secretary has to know when a certain home is in crisis or when an elder is frustrated. Her knowledge enables her to know when she must interrupt the pastor with a phone call from a particular person.

In these areas of confidentiality and teamwork the pastor has crossed the difficult hurdle of being open and vulnerable to his secretary. Their effective partnership depends on mutual commitments in trust and integrity.

Memory: Even with the best filing system in the world, the pastor will not remember everything. The secretary who has worked with him over a period of time has developed her own memory bank; she often remembers things for him and rescues him. It is an ideal situation to find a coworker who will think the job along with you, remembering, planning, and keeping you on target. This person is now functioning as an executive secretary!

My secretary is well aware of the "peak" seasons on the church calendar. She knows not to plan her vacation at Easter, in early fall, or other times when she will be most needed. She thinks and plans ahead, laying out projects with me weeks and months in advance.

"You have a board meeting the week after next," she'll remind me. "Where are we with the agenda?" She knows I want the agenda prepared this week; she is keeping me on track.

Dress: I believe the way we dress communicates the value we place on what we are doing and on the people we are serving. Dress seems to me to communicate "know-how." I don't object to slacks in a casual setting, but I strongly urge professional clothing in the office. Expensive wardrobes are unnecessary; flashy or suggestive outfits are inappropriate. I believe the women who represent Christ and the ministry of His church appear at their best in simple and classic clothes.

What the church can offer a secretary

Many churches cannot offer pay or retirement benefits like industry does. We do offer flexible schedules, interesting work, and the opportunity to share in this avenue of the Lord's service. Most paid secretaries in our office begin at minimum wage. I prefer to start someone below her worth and tell her that in ninety days her salary will be reviewed—and at that time, and each year thereafter offer a significant raise—rather than to start high and be forced to remain at that point.

I strongly advocate showing gratitude to a secretary in a variety of ways. Praise her in the presence of others. Your governing board might authorize a small Christmas bonus. Most weeks I try to write my secretary a little note of appreciation. Some days on the way in from lunch I will drop a mint on her typewriter. My wife and I give her a gift for Christmas. My secretary is an invaluable asset to my ministry and a personal friend as well, and I want her to feel that.

Before changing my weekly schedule, I used to work Fridays, and would deliver what became known in the office as my "Friday speech." Sometime between 3:00 and 5:00 P.M., I would go out into the secretaries' office and announce something like this:

"Well, it's Friday, and I want to tell you what I think of you and this week. It's been a terribly full week, but you have made it tolerable. You have come through and you are amazing people!"

They'd respond with mild giggling and sputtering that I was conning them again, but those brief Friday afternoon minutes were memorable. We generally had worked hard all week—and some weeks were uphill all the way—but we knew we had all pulled through together.

The church secretary is a unique and priceless coworker in God's vineyard. Her role lacks visibility or personal glory. Her purpose is to help another succeed—the true definition of servanthood.

I like to think that the day of rewards will hold a few surprises for us. Wouldn't it be great if the more prominent Christians of our age were asked to wait a little while until God could call forth for honor and regard all His unnoticed saints—the humble people who had served Him lovingly and labored faithfully without glory for the coming of His kingdom? High in their ranks I'm convinced would be our church secretaries.
If we wish to minister with power, we must pray. But often we find prayer squeezed out of our lives by the multiplicity of duties that fill our days. The author suggests how prayer can begin again to surcharge our lives and empower our ministry. □ by Morris Chalfant

When the telephone company tells us “Long distance is the next best thing to being there,” it is reminding us to communicate with someone we love. Hallmark offers its cards for those times “when you care enough to send the very best.” It, too, is reminding us to communicate something to someone. The florist suggests, “Say it with flowers.”

Why all this emphasis on communication? Because the producers of these goods and services have studied consumers enough to know that most of us do care about our friends, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances. But they also know that we forget to communicate our feelings to each other. Their businesses depend on reminding us to communicate with their products.

Now, if you and I in the busyness of our lives need to be reminded at every turn to place telephone calls or to send greeting cards or flowers to people we know and have seen, how much more—if we are honest—do we need help in remembering to communicate with our Father in heaven whom we have not seen! Any relationship that suffers an extended lack of communication eventually becomes damaged or severed. Surely no one in the gospel ministry wants a damaged or severed relationship with God! Yet that is the course we are pursuing if we fail day after day and week upon week to communicate with God in a vital, personal way, sharing our thoughts with Him and listening as He imparts His wisdom and guidance to us. We may pause for a quick, “It’s great to know You’re up there somewhere, God. Get me through today, and I’ll try for a longer talk tomorrow.” But this is not real communication. Far too many of us, even among the clergy, tend to ignore the Holy Spirit’s prompting—His reminding—that we need to take the time to pray!

I hesitate to say it—even more to put it in print—but I believe, from experience as both an evangelist and a pastor, that prayerlessness is one of the greatest sins among God’s people today. Not
Prayerlessness is a symptom of deeper spiritual maladies. It is a display of self-sufficiency that says, in effect, “I do not need divine aid and fellowship.”

most of us are guilty of great willful transgressions against God, but many of us are guilty of the sin of prayerlessness.

Prayerlessness ties God’s hands as well as our own. Electricity and water flow toward my home; but not a watt will brighten a lamp, not a drop will spill into my basin, until I turn on a switch or open a faucet. A law governs the distribution of these things into my home. Prayer is like that. No prayer, no power! I must ask in order to receive. James, the commonsense writer in the New Testament, said under inspiration, “Ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4:2).

The Bible calls prayerlessness sin (see 1 Samuel 12:23). We usually call it neglect or apathy. Certainly it is one of those seldom-mentioned sins about which many Christians have little sense of conviction.

Perhaps we lack conviction regarding this sin because it is an omission rather than a commission, and we consider it less offensive to God than actual transgression. The Bible says, “Thou shalt not steal,” but it also says, “Pray without ceasing.” Both are direct commands of God. Are we justified in considering the violation of one less critical than the other?

Prayerlessness or a careless attitude toward prayer is an invitation to spiritual disaster. When the Bible tells us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), it underscores the absolute necessity of prayer—not as a mere form or activity, but as a relationship. This is important, for it shapes our attitudes and responses in the matter of prayer.

Prayer is universal in some form to all religions. However, as a relationship, prayer finds its fulfillment only in the experience of one who has met Christ as Saviour and Lord. To the born-again Christian, prayer is more than petition. It is the force that maintains and nourishes his spiritual life.

Prayerlessness is a symptom of deeper spiritual maladies. It indicates a preoccupation with lesser things and a cooling of devotion. It is a display of self-sufficiency that says, in effect, “I do not need divine aid and fellowship.”

Prayerlessness causes spiritual deficiency. We are told to ask, seek, and knock in order that we may have, but James tells us, “Ye have not, because ye ask not.” How often we lack the spiritual benefits God longs to give us because we fail to pray!

Prayerlessness underlies our spiritual defeats. Had Peter obeyed the Lord to “watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,” surely his course (and the course of the church) would have been different.

Prayerlessness also brings untold loss to the work of God. It languishes and suffers. Yet He has plainly promised to bless and revive His people if they come to Him in humble repentance and prayer (see 2 Chronicles 7:14). Behind every revival will be found agonizing prayer. Our greatest failures are prayer failures.

Resolving to be more faithful in prayer is not enough. We cannot overcome prayerlessness simply by struggling against it. It is a sin and must be dealt with as such. We must confess it to God, seek His forgiveness and cleansing, and appropriate His provision for victory. Often when we come to pray we feel the coldness of our hearts. We must confess this to Him and ask that His Spirit will lead in our praying. Then God will work in us a life of prayer that is pleasing to Him. But only by maintaining a close daily fellowship with Him can we have continued victory over the sin of prayerlessness.

One secret to victory in prayer is having a definite time each day to communicate with God. Put it on your agenda of daily activities. And give it the best time of the day. This is not easy, and only as you realize its true importance will you be willing to give it precedence over numerous pressing demands. Doubtless Daniel’s great achievements in prayer came from deliberately setting apart time for prayer three times a day (see Daniel 6:10). Each person must find and use the schedule best suited to his own circumstances, but the main thing is to have definite times for prayer.

Scripture commands us to pray without ceasing (see 1 Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean, of course, that we should forsake daily tasks and remain constantly on our knees, but it does mean that we must be regular and systematic about praying. An attitude of prayerfulness in everything is imperative if we would practice the presence of God. Herein lies the secret of victory over prayerlessness.

How much do you pray? Do you excuse yourself with the stress and strain, the hustle and bustle, the multiplicity of things in your service for God? Does your prayer life consist of a whispered word morning and evening, or a thought lifted somewhere in the course of the day? Are you ignoring His direction to “come apart into a quiet place?” Regardless of how busy you may think you are, there is no substitute for the quiet place in your life—the quiet place with the door closed, the world shut out, the soul alone with Him. Whatever else must be excluded, make room for time apart with Him.

When Jonathan Edwards preached, men cried and clung to the columns of the church for fear they would slide into an eternity without God. This man was not a great preacher. He wore thick glasses, read most of his sermons, and had awkward gestures. What most do not know is that he often spent ten, twelve, sometimes fifteen and eighteen hours on his knees in prayer before he preached!

Edward Payson prayed until his knees wore grooves in the floor! Luther rose before 4:00 a.m. to pray. David Brainerd, the great missionary to the Indians, would prostrate himself in the snow and pray until the snow melted beneath him!

Let’s be honest. Let’s rebuild the damaged or severed lines of communication between ourselves and God. Ask Him to change your “attitude of prayerlessness” to a “habit of prayerfulness.” You need not confess your sin of omission to anyone but Him. But if you are sincere, when the work is completed and the lines are repaired, a watching world—your world of family, friends, neighbors, and church members—will witness a transformation in your life that will testify to renewed communication between you and God.
Sermons people can follow

True expository preaching finds not only its theme but its development of that theme in the text. But fashioning an expository outline is not as straightforward a task as is developing an outline for a topical sermon. In this article the author identifies, mostly through concrete examples, various types of structures that work well for expository sermons.

Toward Better Preaching

Steven P. Vitrano

Did you ever listen to a sermon that fell gelatinously all over the congregation? “Gelatinously”? Julian Huxley first used the term in reference to the perambulations of an invertebrate sea animal. Halford Luccock saw it as a fit description of a sermon without structure.

A gelatinous sermon lacks clarity and meaningful coordination. Now, to be sure, the gospel and the Bible that we preach contain profound mysteries that no amount of sermonizing can eliminate. But our preaching shouldn’t compound the mysteries. It should help our listeners comprehend all they can of what God has said.

Too often, after listening to a sermon, the hearer says, “I heard the preacher say many good things, but I couldn’t follow him—I didn’t know what he was getting at or where he was going.” The problem very well could be that the sermon was poorly structured or had no structure at all.

William J. Carl III writes: “Because we desire order and structure, we supply it even if it’s not there entirely. We hear a lecture or a sermon and we unconsciously do our best to put together in our minds what the lecturer or the preacher is trying to say; or we tune out altogether. We try to bring order to sermons that otherwise might be ‘without form, and void.’”

When people speak or write, they usually speak or write about something. If not, we generally consider what they say incoherent or meaningless. This is another way of saying that meaningful communication has a theme—a focus, what Robinson calls “the big idea.” But to talk about something is to say something about it. If the something is the theme, then what is said about it is the elaboration of the theme.

Moreover, what one says about the theme moves in some meaningful way from beginning to end—it follows a progression or design. If the elaboration of the theme just “tumbles forth,” it may confuse rather than inform or it may get sidetracked so that it does not say anything about the intended theme, possibly even becoming a theme of its own. The hearer may not be able to analyze what happened, but he knows something got lost.

Steven P. Vitrano, Ph.D. is professor of preaching and field education at the Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.
In textual preaching, the sermon comes from the text rather than being imposed upon it. This suggests that the structures of the sermon should also be determined by the text.

Scriptural writers worked within this framework too. Either they were writing about something or they were not. Either we preach about something or we do not. And what the writers said and what we say about that “something” may be shaped in numerous ways: chronologically, as in biography; logically, as in argumentation; psychologically, as in persuasion; episodically, dynamically, or dramatically, as in a story; dialogically, as in conversation; et cetera. God forbid that we should preach so that the hearers have no idea of what we are talking about or what we are saying about it. It has happened, and more often than we care to remember!

Preaching and speech making always have been concerned with structure, but they usually have approached it topically, that is the topic has been structured. One reads, for instance, of the “two point” outline, the “question” outline, the “classification” outline, the “Hegelian” outline, et cetera. But this approach to structure hardly suffices for textual or expository preaching, and not just because the classifications seem trivial.

In textual preaching, the sermon comes from the text rather than being imposed upon it. In other words, the text determines the theme of the sermon and how the theme is developed. This suggests that the structure of the sermon should also be determined by the text. Since the Biblical authors carefully arranged what they wrote, one can base the sermon’s structure on the organization of the text. Sometimes one can strengthen the sermon by rearranging the parts of the elaboration of the theme in a particular passage of Scripture. The occasion for the sermon and the needs of the audience determine whether this rearranging is justified.

So much for the theory. The crunch comes when one attempts to put the theory into practice. Dogma on method is always dangerous; someone always has a “better idea.” What follows, therefore, is suggestive. It is intended to show how analysis of the structure of the text can lead to the use of various sermon designs without doing violence to the text—without arbitrarily forcing a given structure upon it.

**Example I**

R. C. H. Lenski suggests perhaps the most direct and fundamental formula: The theme of the text is the theme of the sermon, and the parts of the text are the parts of the sermon. Some passages in Scripture naturally offer this sermonic design:

**PSALM 24:3-6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of his salvation.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:** "Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob."

One probably cannot come closer to preaching the text as a homily while at the same time observing the unity of the passage and its parts. The progression is straightforward—each part of the text is considered in its turn, one following the other.

**Example II**

Monroe’s motivational sequence has long been considered an effective design for persuasive speechmaking. Not that Alan Monroe invented the rules of persuasion; rather, he made the observation that good persuasive speeches contain five steps—attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action.

Everyone acquainted with the New Testament knows that the apostle Paul engaged in a great deal of persuasion. He was an evangelist. He traveled far and wide to win people to Christ—to persuade them to become followers of Jesus. It should not surprise us, then, to find these steps to persuasion in his writings. When Paul wished to correct believers or to renew their faith, he used persuasion.

**ROMANS 6:1-14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Visualization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

God forbid that we should preach so that the hearers have no idea of what we are talking about or what we are saying about it. It has happened, and more often than we care to remember!
What follows is intended to show how analysis of the structure of the text can lead to the use of various sermon designs without doing violence to the text—arbitrarily forcing a given structure upon it.

be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Action:** “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

In this sequence the attention step serves as the introduction, not only gaining the attention of the hearers but focusing their attention on the theme—the Christian life and the problem of sinning. The elaboration of the theme comes in steps three and four, satisfaction and visualization.

**Example III**
Logic and reasoning are not foreign to the writers of the Bible. True, the Hebrew and Greek ways of thinking may have differed. But mankind is a rational being, and in every culture people draw conclusions by inference from other conclusions. So when the Scripture presents truth in a rational way, utilizing logic, we would best recognize it as such and let the sermon develop with the text.

Without dwelling at length upon the intricacies of the logical process, let us consider two basic ways of thinking we commonly use: 1. Inductive reasoning, which draws general conclusions from specific instances, and 2. Deductive reasoning, which applies general conclusions to specific instances.

### INDUCTIVE: ROMANS 4:1-3, 18-22

**Introduction:** “What then shall we say about Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’”

**Instance 1:** “In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, ‘So shall your descendants be.’

**Instance 2:** “He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.

**Instance 3:** “No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

**Conclusion:** “That is why his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

### DEDUCTIVE: HEBREWS 10:19-25

**General Conclusion 1:** “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and

**General Conclusion 2:** “since we have a great priest over the house of God.

**Specific Application 1:** “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**Specific Application 2:** “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and

**Specific Application 3:** “let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is

The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
I recommend that preachers in general and young preachers in particular not try to be clever when it comes to structure. Keep it simple and clear. When preaching textually, use whatever the passage has to offer.

Scripture whether or not one agrees with all of the assumptions and presuppositions of "theology as story" from which story preaching got its impetus. In fact, for the most part, the Bible is a storybook. It comprises the story of God's people, Israel, in the Old Testament, and the story of Jesus in the New Testament.

In the parable sermon and the story sermon, the whole sermon consists of telling a story. This communicates very effectively, carrying with it an internal dynamic and progression. The story holds the interest of the hearer and captures his empathy as episode follows episode and suspense succeeds suspense until the climax. Through the story the message comes across forcefully. But the story-sermon movement has had its excesses. Not every sermon can be presented as a story. The mode does not fit all of Scripture, including some of the most important portions. As much as we may decry "moralizing," a good portion of the Bible consists of moral instruction. It is propositional and calls for a clear, unambiguous "this is the way, walk in it" proclamation.

Moreover, to tell a parable or a story for fifteen to twenty minutes and keep the interest of the congregation, while at the same time making the "message" clear, takes special skills that not all preachers possess. Although serious study and training will help, this ability is basically a gift. For those who wish to develop this approach, Milton Crum's Manual on Preaching offers some exciting possibilities. He sees sermon development in terms of a "process," moving through situation and complication to resolution. Five factors give this process vitality and the dynamics of a story: (1) symptomatic behavior—a description of some commonly experienced behavior that needs to be changed by the gospel; (2) root cause—of the symptomatic behavior; (3) resulting consequences—of the symptomatic behavior; (4) gospel content—the word from God that offers an alternative to the old ways of believing and perceiving; (5) new results—which follow the new way of believing and perceiving. Interestingly enough, though not surprisingly, this process can be found in Scripture:

1 CORINTHIANS 15

Symptomatic behavior (situation): "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (verse 12). (The human tendency to doubt the supernatural—the wisdom and power of God.)

Root cause (complication): "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.' Come to your right mind, and sin no more. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame" (verses 33, 34).

Resulting consequences (complication): "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied" (verses 13-19).

Gospel content (resolution): "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (verses 20-23).

New results (resolution): "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (verse 58).

The theme for this sermon is found in the "situation"—the symptomatic behavior. The elaboration of the theme follows through the other four dynamic factors.

Example V

Eugene Lowry's The Homiletical Plot also provides help for the task of story preaching. Lowry's "plot," or process, comes through analogy with drama. The unfolding of the plot corresponds to the unfolding of the drama. He says: "Because a sermon is an event-in-time—existing in time, not space—a process and not a collection of parts, it is helpful to think of sequence rather than structure. I propose five basic sequential stages to a typical sermonic process. . . . The stages are: (1) upsetting the equilibrium, (2) analyzing the discrepancy, (3) disclosing the clue to resolution, (4) experiencing the gospel, and (5) anticipating the consequences." This process may also be found in Scripture. Note that the theme is in the last section of this construct rather than the first—"What it means to be a son of God."

GALATIANS 4:1-7

Upsetting the equilibrium: "I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate;

Analyzing the discrepancy: "but is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe.

Disclosing the clue to resolution: "But when the time had fully

(Continued on page 30)
CHURCH GROWTH SEMINAR IV

Church Growth Through Preaching and Discipling

Andrews University's Institute of Church Ministry presents this five-day-long seminar, **August 26-30, 1984.** Comprised of plenary sessions and workshops, it will help you build your church and stabilize your members by sharpening these major parts of your ministry. After all, you win and hold members by doing really well what a church should do.

**Plenary session speakers**

[Images of speakers]

- **David Seifert,** pastor of the Big Valley Grace Community church in Modesto, California, and coauthor of *The Complete Book of Church Growth,* "Disciple-making—Key to Church Growth."
- **Floyd Bresee,** a director of continuing education for ministers (Dr. Bresee developed the preaching course currently being featured in MINISTRY), "Preaching Skills Workshop."
- **Robert C. Connor,** a ministerial director and evangelist in the Great Lakes area, "Building a Church Through Evangelistic Preaching."
- **Ron Halvorsen,** pastor of the Takoma Park, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist church and noted public evangelist, "Building a Church Through Congregational Preaching."

**Workshop directors**

- **Des Cummings, Jr.**, director of the Institute of Church Ministry and associate professor in the Church and Ministry Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, "Church Growth Consulting."
- **Elias Gomez**, director of the Institute of Hispanic Studies of the Theological Center at Andrews University, "How to Get Members Involved in Outreach Ministry."
- **Clarence Gruesbeck**, associate professor in the Church and Ministry Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, "Church Planting."
- **Monte Sahlin**, pastor of the Worthington, Ohio, Seventh-day Adventist church, "Church Growth Through Family Ministries."
Schedule of Events

Sunday, August 26
7:00-9:00 P.M., Floyd Bresee, “Preaching Skills Workshop,” Part 1

Monday, August 27
8:00-9:50 A.M., Floyd Bresee, “Preaching Skills Workshop,” Part 2
10:00-12:00 N., Robert C. Connor, “Building a Church Through Evangelistic Preaching,” Part 1
12:00-3:15 P.M., Lunch and Recreation
3:30-5:30 P.M., Workshops:
1. Elias Gomez, “How to Get Members Involved in Outreach Ministry,” Part 1
3. Clarence Gruesbeck, “Church Planting,” Part 1

5:45-6:45 P.M., Dinner
7:00-9:00 P.M., Robert C. Connor, “Building a Church Through Evangelistic Preaching,” Part 2

Tuesday, August 28
8:00-9:50 A.M., Floyd Bresee, “Preaching Skills Workshop,” Part 3
10:00-12:00 N., David Seifert, “Disciple-making—Key to Church Growth,” Part 1

3:30-5:30 P.M., Workshops:

5:45-6:45 P.M., Dinner
7:00-9:00 P.M., David Seifert, “Disciple-making—Key to Church Growth,” Part 2

Wednesday, August 29
8:00-9:50 A.M., Floyd Bresee, “Preaching Skills Workshop,” Part 4
10:00-12:00 N., David Seifert, “Disciple-making—Key to Church Growth,” Part 3
12:00-3:15 P.M., Lunch and Recreation
3:30-5:30 P.M., Workshops:

5:45-6:45 P.M., Dinner
7:00-9:00 P.M., David Seifert, “Disciple-making—Key to Church Growth,” Part 3

Thursday, August 30
8:00-9:50 A.M., Floyd Bresee, “Preaching Skills Workshop,” Part 5
10:00-12:00 N., Ron Halvorsen, “Building a Church Through Congregational Preaching,” Part 1
12:00-3:15 P.M., Lunch and Recreation
3:30-5:30 P.M., Workshops:
3. Clarence Gruesbeck, “Church Planting,” Part 4

5:45-6:45 P.M., Dinner
7:00-9:00 P.M., Ron Halvorsen, “Building a Church Through Congregational Preaching,” Part 2

Registration information

Seminar rates
Two hours academic credit $235.00
One hour academic credit 121.00
Noncredit fee 90.00
Ten percent discount for preregistration by August 1.
(Fees must accompany preregistration. Group rates are available.
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[ ] attendance without academic credit 90.00

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Ministers and muggers

Crimes touch the lives of pastors as well as their parishioners. In fact, in some ways ministers may be more vulnerable than most people. But by following the authors' suggestions, you can make yourself a less tempting target.

by Kermit Netteburg and Pam Patterson

A crime wave rolls across America, killing thousands and hurting millions each year. In 1980, 25,000 people were murdered and more than 1 million were robbed. Ministers are no more exempt than anyone else. When the Rev. Basilio David answered the knock at Saint Benedict's rectory door in Detroit, he didn't expect to face a gun-wielding assailant. The man demanded money, then tried to shoot Father David. Because the gun jammed repeatedly, Father David escaped with his life—but he lost $175.

Wayne Olson, a Battle Creek, Michigan, pastor, was robbed in broad daylight after making a pastoral visit. (See accompanying story.) He bought four new security locks for his home the same day. His wife now hates to be home alone at night. Olson casts a wary eye over his shoulder. He lost far more than $30 in the robbery.

The Figgie Report on Fear of Crime warned, "Americans today have become afraid of one another. Fear of violent crime seems to have made the country helpless, incapable of dealing with the sources of its fear."

According to a Time article on crime, "Fear is measurable in the ways in which Americans are adapting to the new realities of crime—the gun sales, the overbooked karate classes, the rush to buy burglarproof locks for doors and windows. It can also be seen in the way in which Americans have consciously changed the patterns of their lives. Wealthy businessmen, fearful of kidnaping, who drive to work by different routes each day. Ordinary citizens who learn to walk the streets turning their heads from side to side to check on who might be behind them. Joggers who carry at least $20 'muggers' money' to avoid being shot."

Ministers face the problem of crime more frequently than other citizens. They do much of their work during evening hours. Parishioners who need help often live in high-crime areas. Pastors frequently are called to mediate tense home battles in which one family member is threatening another.

It's enough to make a pastor stay in his study.

But a pastor can't. The call of the ministry is the call to serve people. Like Jesus, the pastor's task is "to minister, not to be ministered unto." The minister can't run out on people who need help.

So the minister wants to stay home but feels compelled to go. God wants him to go, and God has promised in Psalm 34:7 that angels will protect him. But experts in crime prevention know that the minister can cooperate with God by not looking like a "target." Their advice could save ministers a lot of grief—and money.

Although nothing is foolproof, preventive measures do reduce the probability of attack. To protect yourself and your property, here are things you should know.

1. If you're ever lost in an unfamiliar part of a city, don't stop to look for addresses. Muggers prey on people who appear lost or confused. Ask directions from a police officer, a hotel employee, or a store clerk.

2. Avoid public restrooms and stairwells in buildings and public areas—especially after dark.

3. In a bank or store don't advertise your money. Be particularly discreet at the bank, a place thugs like to keep under surveillance. Put your money in your wallet before leaving the teller's window. Before using a bank's outside money machine, be aware of who's around. In stores, replace your wallet in your pocket as soon as you have paid for your purchase.

Experts in crime prevention also know that no precaution will guarantee you a mugger-free day. If you are threatened in a confrontation, their advice will help you live to make another pastoral visit.

1. If your assailant has a weapon, don't resist. Your safest bet in all cases is compliance. Remember that robbers usually are desperate, often are on drugs,
Experts in crime prevention also know that no precaution will guarantee you a mugger-free day. If you are threatened in a confrontation, their advice will help you live to make another pastoral visit.

and can harm you over the slightest provocation.
2. Do not attempt to negotiate for some of your belongings. The longer you delay the mugger, the more impatient—and more violent—he is likely to become.
3. Do not make any sudden moves when reaching for your wallet or purse; a nervous mugger may misunderstand and attack you. Instead, say in advance what you plan to do and then move slowly.
4. Always carry some cash with you. If your pockets are empty, some muggers will turn violent out of sheer frustration.
Detective Roy Southerland of the Dade County Public Safety Department says: "Never give an armed robber the excuse he is looking for to work you over." Whether it's your money or your life, these precautions will help you avoid looking like a target and allow you to continue your ministry of serving others.

The thief on the cross street

by Peter Marquez

"Act calm!" he muttered through clenched teeth.
Pastor Wayne Olson tried to comply, but the gun trembling at his ribs made it difficult. Who would have thought that around the corner from historic Battle Creek Sanitarium, in front of the home of a fellow Adventist, he would come a nervous index finger away from death?

There had been nothing special about the day—no omens, no warnings. As associate pastor of the Battle Creek Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist church, Wayne's day started with a 9:00 a.m. Bible study at the home of a church member.

Wayne looked forward to sharing God's Word as he drove past the old sanitarium. A turn from Michigan onto Howland brought him to the right house, but no one answered the door. He returned to his car to note the missed Bible study in a notebook he carried in his briefcase. Wayne was so intent on making notes that he failed to notice the lone figure approaching. Wayne put the briefcase on the seat beside him and looked up. The figure had halved the distance between them. He looked lost, Wayne thought. Perhaps he needed directions.

The man crossed the street, and suddenly he whipped out a snub-nosed pistol and ordered Wayne to open the window. Before Wayne could speak, cold black steel pressed to his forehead.

"I don't want to hurt you. I only want your money."
"It's in my jacket..." 
"OK, get it...slowly!"
Wayne carefully reached for his wallet, remembering the promise he had read during morning worship: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him" (Psalm 34:7, N.I.V.).

He smiled as he thought of the unnumbered mornings he had asked God for guidance and protection. He was grateful for the habit of morning devotions.

With the gun still at his temple, Wayne handed the thief all of his money, $30.

"Is that it?"
"That's it."
"I'm a minister. I wouldn't lie to you!"
"I'm a minister. I wouldn't lie to you!"
The fleeing man turned like a shot. Wayne put his head beneath the dash. But as the gun pulled away from his side and the thief began to flee, Wayne changed his mind.

"Hey, wait a minute. Come back!"
"Yeah."
With that the thief was off. He ran down the street and disappeared between some houses.

Wayne was left alone and alive.
"Pastor Risks Life to Witness for God." It was the kind of story told in church—the kind that always happened somewhere far away. But here? It was almost too much to believe. Who would have guessed it, a mission story from old Battle Creek.

Peter Marquez is a 1982 graduate of Andrews University. This story appeared in the December 7, 1982, issue of Insight. Used by permission.
From the Editor

Why MINISTRY Is Our Gift to You

The editor responds to the following questions being asked frequently by clergy receiving a gift subscription: “How can your church afford to do this?” “What is behind this project?” and “What’s the catch?”

Recent participation in four MINISTRY Professional Growth Seminars in North and South Dakota again highlighted the need to inform you, our readers, as to why we are sending our journal to nearly a quarter of a million clergy of all faiths.

To answer the above frequently asked questions let’s begin with the in-house label we have given this project. PREACH is an acronym composed of the first letters of the words Project for Reaching Every Active Clergyman at Home. Naturally it is a rather expensive plan for the church. But we have a large number of dedicated Seventh-day Adventist laymen and pastors who give their tithes and offerings on a regular basis, and out of these funds the church allocates a certain portion for special projects. PREACH benefits from these funds. In addition, we receive donations through the mail from clergy of various faiths who are appreciative of the service we are offering. As you can imagine, it’s no easy task to maintain a financial base for PREACH. It is a struggle. But as someone has said: “Every good and excellent thing stands moment by moment on the razor’s edge of danger and must be fought for.” In spite of a world recession, and in spite of the pressing demands for funds in a multitude of other projects, we pledge ourselves to keeping the PREACH project operating.

What’s the catch?

Why do we do this? I shall mention two major reasons for sharing MINISTRY with clergy of all faiths. First of all, we have a special burden to encourage and strengthen those precious few individuals who have committed their time and talents to the ministry of healing and of reconciliation through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only God sees the enormity of the world’s needs. Burdened with disasters, heartaches, fear, disease, and guilt, mankind knows so little of what our Lord has to offer. If the contents of our journal can aid religious leaders of all communions in meeting these needs, we shall feel rewarded.

Our second reason for this outreach could be called self-serving. Seventh-day Adventists are perhaps among the most misunderstood religious movements in modern history. We are constantly being confused with religious organizations whose somewhat strange doctrinal beliefs cannot be supported by Scripture. Add to this a misunderstanding relative to some of the beliefs that we hold. Recently a leading theologian confessed that he erroneously thought that the name Seventh-day Adventist meant that we believed Christ’s second advent would occur on the seventh-day Sabbath. We were mildly shocked to hear this, of course. Obviously our church name emphasizes two major doctrines in our system of beliefs. But they have nothing to do with Christ’s coming on the seventh day. We do observe the seventh-day Sabbath as commanded by God in the fourth law of the Decalogue. And we fervently believe in the literal, visible, and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, we believe, is imminent.

Another illustration of a gross misunderstanding centers in a question asked by a seminar attendee a few weeks ago: “Do you believe in the doctrine of the atonement?” My emphatic reply was “Absolutely!” We affirm this in number 9 of our Fundamental Beliefs, which in part states, “In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God’s law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming.”—Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 1981, p. 35.

Another major misunderstanding is related to date-setting for the second coming of Christ. Our church has never set a date for His coming. True, our roots are traceable to the Millerite movement of the early 1800s, and it was William Miller who believed the Advent would occur in the mid-1840s. But remember this great advent movement was composed of ministers and laypeople of many denominations, such as Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, et cetera.

It was not until after this movement dissipated that a small group organized itself into a church known as the Seventh-day Adventists. We have never set a date for Christ’s return and we never shall.

Input from readers

We are thrilled that thousands of ministers have been in attendance at our MINISTRY Professional Growth Seminars. The fellowship has been delightful (see the ad on page 31).

We are also grateful for the responses via letter from clergy of all faiths who read and appreciate our magazine. One of our readers expresses how his attitude toward Adventists has changed since he has been receiving MINISTRY magazine. He writes, “In my seminary days, and early in my ministry, I had numerous reasons for classifying Adventists as something less than completely ‘orthodox’ Christians. But [now] I thank God for a better understanding of the ministry of those we call ‘Adventists.’”

In conclusion, we urge readers to please send us names of any clergy who are full-time pastor-evangelists, seminary teachers, rabbis, et cetera, so that we can put them on the mailing list. It is our privilege to bring you opportunities for interfaith fellowship and professional growth experience.—J.R.S.
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Parson to Parson: What would you do?

Are they God’s gift to the church?

How do you rechannel the energy and enthusiasm of certain individuals who feel they are God’s gift to the church? They want to teach the adult classes (no kids’ stuff for them), preach the sermons in the pastor’s absence, sponsor the teen organization, et cetera. But they are not well-balanced Christians; their lives do not witness to Christianity as well as the lives of most of the other church members. Except for the few who can be used by these individuals to rally support for themselves, most of the members are uncomfortable around them.

I cannot see using them in leadership capacities. When leadership positions are available, how do I continue to bypass them and withhold my endorsement without undue offense either to them or to those few who do support them?

They learn by teaching

To continually bypass and/or ignore the “troublesome” individual will help no one. As a minister you have a responsibility to feed all of your flock, not only those easily fed. There are several ways you can help this person and thereby the entire congregation:

1. Sit down with the person and share your views with him (and anyone else directly involved). Open communication and increased understanding are the best ways to begin resolving any problem.

2. A person never grows if never given any responsibility (ask anyone who has raised children). One of the best ways for a person to learn is to teach. By allowing the person to lead a well-structured Bible study, you can help insure that the person won’t run away with the class. And if you, the minister, visit the study occasionally (a good idea no matter who is leading), you can monitor the leader’s growth and effectiveness.

3. The person ought to be required to attend at least one other study as a student (preferably one you lead). One of the best ways for a person to learn is to teach. By allowing the person to lead a well-structured Bible study, you can help insure that the person won’t run away with the class. And if you, the minister, visit the study occasionally (a good idea no matter who is leading), you can monitor the leader’s growth and effectiveness.

Find a backstage job

In praying about this situation, and prayer should have top priority, I’d ask the Lord to help me grow through the situation, to meet the real needs of these problem children, and to turn the situation into a real blessing for the entire church. And because this type of behavior often evidences some kind of personal problem, I think I might get some professional input as to what those members’ real problems might be. Then I could begin dealing with the underlying problems and not just the obnoxious symptoms.

But I would also try a couple other things. First, I’d sit down and make out a list of those “backstage” jobs that just never seem to get done, yet are necessary to the smooth functioning of the church. And I have a roster of activities that my “dream church” would perform—such as sending personal notes to everyone who enters the city’s hospitals. I’d add some of these to my list of backstage jobs. Then, when one of these persons came to me with one of their “requests,” I’d try to sidetrack them on to something from my list. Or I might even try to forestall the situation by asking them before they came to me.

Very possibly that would fail, and they wouldn’t bite on the list but instead would become adamant that they just had to get one of those “glory” positions. Then I’d have to level lovingly with them as to the problem their unbalanced lifestyle is presenting to others.—John Glass, Escanaba, Michigan.

Find their spiritual gifts

One of the premises of any growing church family is that everyone has been gifted by God to do ministry for Him. It is not always easy, however, to discover just what these gifts might be and in what areas these ministries should be channeled. Those who believe they are “especially gifted” by God should be encouraged to study the Bible teachings on spiritual gifts and to take an inventory assessment of their gifts. Doing the study and inventory in a small group setting will encourage them to find new ways in which God is leading them.

Pastors should not thwart God’s leading in the lives of sincere and growing church members. A minister would far better spend his time in helping the “specially gifted” discover just what God wants them to do and in creating opportunities for them to carry on their new ministry. It is better to affirm individuals in new God-given ministries than continually to discourage them.
from doing what they think God has called them to do.—Al Konrad, Takoma Park, Maryland.

**Gifts must be validated**

I have found the most helpful way of dealing with this is to present the subject of spiritual gifts. Since I've become aware of spiritual gifts, one of the first things I do when I move to a new church is to lead the members in an in-depth study of them. In the seminar as we work at identifying the gifts of the participants, I make very clear that we are only pointing out indications of what their gifts may be. Only when we have the validation from the more objective identification by other members of the body and in the results produced by using those gifts in a ministry can we say with assurance that the gifts are present.

The body uses its awareness of these gifts, among other ways, in its selection of leaders. If it fills positions without making reference to the gifts, then it is turning from the Spirit's leadership of the church.—Wayne Willey, Hartford, Connecticut.

**Changing the congregation's perspective**

The situation described is familiar to every pastor. A solution may be possible if the problem is examined from the following three perspectives: individual responsibility, pastoral opportunity, and congregational perception.

Responsibility rests upon individual church members to make an accurate assessment of their abilities and graces. Paul counsels all to "think your way to a sober estimate based on the measure of faith that God has dealt to each of you" (Rom. 12:3, N.E.B.).* Sober thinking neither exaggerates nor depreciates such gifts as God has bestowed.

While each church member has the responsibility of evaluating his gifts, the church through its pastor has the opportunity of leading the members to understand their gifts and their unique place within the body of Christ (see 2 Tim. 2:2). One of the pastor's responsibilities is to "equip God's people for work in his service" (Eph. 4:12, N.E.B.). All have a place, even those who inaccurately assess their role. To ignore such persons is an abdication of pastoral duty. They should be gently confronted and led into a ministry that matches their gifts.

As to the congregational perception, people in our churches tend to define themselves and give themselves a sense of worth by their actions. The gospel teaches that God values us, first as human beings made in His own image, and when redeemed by Christ, as His children. There is no higher identity.

But the typical congregation accords status differences based on an individual's participation in various programs or activities. Paul specifically warns against such differentiation. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul affirms differences in gifts but insists that as each is essential to the body, no one is greater or lesser than another because he or she possesses a particular gift or plays a particular role in the body.

When persons are valued for what they do, unusual pressure is placed on the less mature. The new Christian and the believer who has just begun to grow after a long period on a plateau sense, without being told, which ministries and persons the congregation honors. They will seek out similar ministries or gifts; young believers will feel a tremendous pressure to perform. They may miss the fact that God's voice will call them to their ministry when they are ready and feel instead that they must experience His call now.

To maintain this delicate tension is a distinct challenge to the spiritual leadership of the church. They must try to create a loving, accepting climate in which people are valued for themselves. At the same time there needs to be a continuing expectation that believers will grow, recognize their gifts, and be called to that ministry of service for which God has suited them.—Rex Edwards, Takoma Park, Maryland.


**Taming the paperwork tiger**

**How can I better handle the paperwork requirements encountered in ministry?**

Like so many other ministers, I have no training in administration and have often had to function without the support of a full-time church secretary. I have often found myself wasting valuable time, handling correspondence inefficiently, lugging work home only to bring most of it back to the office unfinished, and staring at denominational reports for the umpteenth time and still not having the data to complete them.

**What tricks of the trade do the rest of you have to share?**

If you have some ideas as to how a pastor might successfully handle this situation, please sit right down, put your suggestions on paper, and send them to us. The lead time required for the publication of MINISTRY means that we need your response right away.

We need questions as well. We will pay $15 for any question you submit on the practice of ministry that we use in Parson to Parson. Specific and detailed questions meet our needs best.

Our address is: Parson to Parson, MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.
How to live on a pastor's pay

Here are three tips from a pastor's wife who for years has been coping with the limitations of a minister's salary. One will help you stretch the budget, but the other two may prove to be even more beneficial.

This month Anne Elver gives the minister's wife some practical suggestions for bridging the gulf between ever-present desires and real needs. It is possible, although not easy, to have contentment on a limited income.

The aspect of Anne's testimony that especially appeals to my heart is the spiritual foundation upon which she builds in solving the challenges of balancing the clergy budget. She doesn't use the word "stewardship," but she sets forth true principles of stewardship as they relate to the use of money.

It's exhilarating to understand that God is our owner and that we are His managers of time, talents, treasures, and the body temples He has loaned us. Anne has found that God makes Himself responsible for success in financial matters if we consider our income a "trust" and "spend it wisely and prayerfully."

You'll benefit from a single reading of her message. But several readings will help you see even more clearly the "unseen assets" that truly are part of the clergy couple's compensation.—Marie Spangler.

"I hate being a pastor's wife," Betty blurted out as we discussed stretching our husbands' salaries. "If Tom would leave the ministry, I'd be delighted. We never have enough money!" I cringed at the resentment in her tone, but understood her feelings.

Betty's words affected me strongly because I believe every pastor's wife has a unique role in her husband's ministry. I have often been dissatisfied with my husband's salary too, but an attitude like Betty's might endanger her marriage and could ruin her husband's ministry. Budgeting is difficult on a pastor's salary. Years of practice, however, have convinced me that it has its benefits as well as its disadvantages and that Betty's feelings aren't justified.

Anne Elver writes from Ringwood, Oklahoma.

My budget is a blessing in disguise, forcing me to learn self-discipline that I might not otherwise learn. My faith has grown because of my husband's salary, since I must depend on the Lord to guide my budgeting. Here are some ways that I cope with living on a pastor's salary.

1. I refuse to entertain thoughts that rob me of contentment over our budget. Only someone in total isolation could avoid comparing himself to others materially. I am no exception. When I accidentally or deliberately notice the material status of others, I'm tempted to start feeling either deprived or proud, neither of which pleases the Lord. Material status doesn't indicate individual worth, intelligence, or spirituality.

2. My income is a trust; I spend it wisely and prayerfully. I pray about our wants and needs, and the Lord always provides. No matter how He answers, I stay receptive.

3. To protect my contentment, I also have to squelch the fond notion that more money would solve my financial plight. Some interesting statistics I heard somewhere prove this. A pollster asked people how much more money they thought would make them happy doing anything else. Some 20 to 30 percent would be necessary! Occasionally, when our needs seem so greatly to outdistance our income, I have been tempted to encourage my husband to find another profession. But I know that the Lord issued Harry's call, and neither he nor I would be happy doing anything else. So I push aside thoughts of discontent. No matter what Harry's occupation, there would be some facet I wouldn't like.

I am unique, and my ability to cope with our family's finances is an individual matter; therefore I guard my attitudes toward material assets carefully to avoid either self-pity or pride. Contentment with our financial situation resides largely in my own attitude, and I will control my attitude.

My daughter recently wanted a silk flower arrangement for her room. I prayed that God would help me find one. Several days later I visited a friend, and before I left she said, "I have some extra flower arrangements. Would you like to have several?" She offered me two, one in the colors my daughter had wanted and another matching my room! I told my friend that her gift had answered prayer. If the Lord provides for me in this way, I will be a gracious receiver, knowing that He works through others.

Sometimes I save by shopping for our needs at garage sales, secondhand shops, and through newspaper advertisements. "Anne, that white blouse is lovely. Where did you get it?" a friend asked the first time I wore it. She was shocked to learn that I'd picked it up for three dollars at a garage sale. I often find quality items this way, and I thank the Lord each time. This stretches my budget further.

End-of-season sales stretch my clothing dollar too, and I am thankful for the money saved. My wardrobe is built around several neutral colors and classic styles, enabling me to use my clothes until they wear out. This lets me pick up sale items, knowing that colors and styles will match.

Secondhand and sale items, however, can cause the unwary to become so fascinated with saving money that he wastes it instead. I judge potential
purchases by certain guidelines to avoid this trap. When I bought the blouse my friend complimented, I also considered a purple one for less money. I selected the white one because it would match anything. The purple blouse, even though a bit more economical, would have matched only one skirt. The limited use expected from the purple blouse made the white one, at more money, a better buy.

When purchasing secondhand items, carefully examine them first. Stains on permanent press items won’t wash out. If a garment shows wear in obvious places, I don’t buy it. And if something is of questionable fit, I don’t buy it either. Not long ago I passed up a new jean skirt at a garage sale that might have fit my daughter. The price was attractive, but only if it fit. Otherwise, the money would have been completely wasted.

I extend our budget by purchasing secondhand equipment as well as clothes. Since equipment may have hidden flaws, I try to obtain a guarantee. I once located a camera in a pawn shop and persuaded the owner to give me a ninety-day guarantee. When the first roll of film revealed needed repairs that I couldn’t have detected otherwise, the seller made the guarantee good. But without his backing the camera wouldn’t have been a wise purchase.

The Lord often works within me when I pray about a particular purchase. I prayed once for a camper so our family could take economical vacations. Later that summer a church family loaned us theirs, and we did save on motel costs, as I anticipated. When we returned, our friends announced that they were selling the camper. Unseen expenses—insurance, storage, and maintenance—caused them to make this decision. I realized then that for us motels were more economical than a camper. My desire to own one disappeared.

Neither had I foreseen, when praying for a camper, the limited time we could use one. God was wise not to provide a camper when I asked Him to. Resentment might have troubled me when Harry’s ministry kept us from enjoying it. Whenever God delays answering my prayers, I know He is doing so for a better reason than I can see, so I try to accept His “No” graciously.

The Lord provides for our family’s needs and many wants as well when I prayerfully consider both. Sometimes He provides through gifts from others, sometimes through new and used bargains, and sometimes by changing my wants. But whenever I cooperate with Him, my finances are adequate.

3. The blessings I receive as a pastor’s wife are more valuable than money. I count these unseen assets as compensation. Many women in our church are as qualified to give advice as I am, but some people who won’t go to anyone else seek me out. This gives me a unique opportunity to minister. I rejoice each time someone tells me, “Thanks for listening ... and praying.” Such satisfaction is priceless.

My husband appreciates my abilities and makes provision for me to use them when I desire to. A few days ago he answered the telephone, talked to the caller a few moments, and then excused himself to determine if I was available and willing to see this person Monday morning. He had an out-of-town meeting that day, and this woman needed counsel. She agreed to see me, and I had the privilege ofshouldering her burden and encouraging her in Harry’s place. Not many occupations permit this extra compensation of being a “minister by marriage.”

Harry and I enjoy counseling engaged couples together. The Biblical advice for husbands and wives comes alive as we tell them how we apply it to ourselves. Each time we open ourselves like this our relationship grows stronger and our love increases. The ministry provides a unique opportunity for marital growth. This benefit isn’t measurable in financial terms either.

My husband’s ministry has awakened me to interests I might not have pursued otherwise. When members of our church expressed concern for a relative who had joined a cult, I researched the group thoroughly out of personal interest. My thirst for knowledge was fed, and later I was able to discuss the implications of the cult group with the family.

Frequent moves have taught me to turn a church-owned parsonage into a personalized dwelling quickly. When someone comments on how I’ve made the parsonage a home, I have a unique chance to testify to the grace and love of the Lord working in me, since moving isn’t my favorite thing. My testimony might be the turning point in someone’s life. This is compensation that may show up only in eternity, but it is real nevertheless.

Like Betty’s husband, my husband’s salary isn’t what it should be. But I will not let this rob me of my contentment. I guard my attitudes toward material things and finances carefully, spend wisely, and consider the blessings I enjoy from being a pastor’s wife as unlimited riches. My attitude toward my husband’s salary can make my lot in life a blessing or a curse, and I want it to be a blessing.

Prayers from the parsonage

Memphis, Egypt

Ramses II is shown alive in this colossal statue, though he has been dead for more than three thousand years. His attached beard is straight rather than curled as in death. His left foot is advanced as if he is ready to step forward. This is only one of many great statues, as well as magnificent temples, which Ramses ordered constructed during his reign of sixty-seven years. Proud and jealous, he appropriated predecessors’ monuments along the Nile by removing their names and inscribing his own.

How zealously this Pharaoh sought immortality! He could not foresee that the statue would lie buried in sand for centuries, its left side eroded by river water. Nor could he know that a confused Egyptian inspector would one day tax his mummy as imported dried fish!

Eternal God, each of us seeks immortality in some way. We do not want to be like grass or the flower of the field. We work to leave memorials: assets, accomplishments, buildings, heirs. Let this statue—a nearly perfect representation of an imperfect man—remind me that there is only one “Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality,” (1 Tim. 6:15, 16).

Cherry B. Habenicht
Pottery—A Boon to Archeologists

Pottery is to the archeologist what bones are to the paleontologist and books are to the preacher. Here an archeologist gives real-life examples of how he uses this important tool of his trade.

If you were to travel to the Bible lands today and walk over the mound of debris containing the ruins of an ancient Biblical city, you would observe hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of broken pieces of pottery, the shattered remains of ancient ceramic vessels used in the everyday life of the average citizen of Bible times. During the 1,500 years of Biblical history stretching from Moses to John, potters were making vessels daily by the scores. Children and housewives were accidentally breaking or losing them almost as fast, thus creating the potsherds found so easily today. An average-size excavation team collects roughly 10,000 pieces of broken pottery every day. Because a normal site may need a thousand to 1,500 days of work to be adequately excavated by such a team (a site is never completely excavated, however), the amount of pottery to be found in an ancient city is clearly mind-boggling.

But why have potsherds been preserved in such numbers for archeologists to find today? There are actually several reasons. First, while today we use cooking, eating, and storage vessels made of metal and plastic, the ancients used metal only very rarely and ceramic vessels for just about everything. At any one time an average household may have contained fifty to a hundred or more vessels of all types. Second, a fired pottery vessel is very easy to break, like any piece of china in a modern kitchen. Third, because they were made from clay, a raw material easily obtained, and because labor was very cheap, the vessels were so inexpensive that the people simply replaced the broken vessel with a new one. The broken pieces were used as children’s toys, loom weights, and writing surfaces for short notes, or simply cast into refuse pits. And fourth, broken sherds were virtually impossible to destroy. The ancient firing techniques used with pottery effectively turned the clay into stone so that pottery several thousand years old can look like pottery made just a few years ago to the modern observer. Burial also preserves its features. Thus, unless broken pottery was collected systematically and ground into a sandlike binder for bricks or other pottery (as was done only very rarely), the broken sherds from every vessel made in antiquity are still present today, needing only to be found by the archeologist’s attentive eye.

This accounts for the awesome quantities of sherds found by archeological expeditions today, but it does not account for their importance. Although their vast numbers tend to chasing potsherds as artifacts when compared to much rarer finds, such as statues or inscriptions, they are nevertheless extremely valuable to the specialist in two major ways: (1) as cultural inferences and (2) as chronological indicators. These material products (“artifacts” to the archeologist) reflect the values inherent within the culture and specific to the times. If a person is conversant with the times and the culture, therefore, he can recognize the values behind the artifacts.

For example, in certain times and places pottery vessels were highly decorated. This would suggest that the society was prosperous enough to dedicate leisure time to the devotions of the arts. Ruggedly made pottery, on the other hand, reflects a lack of concern with the fineries of life, implying that the people were poor and more concerned with subsistence than with leisure.

Of course, at no single time and place will the values of all the people be identical. But this diversity will also be recognizable in the diversity of the pottery. Cultural value tendencies can be suggested by statistical studies. For example, the proportion of decorated pottery to undecorated pottery, or the proportion of crudely made vessels to finely made ones can suggest the proportion of rich to poor or the proportion of people with leisure time to those without. Such study is aided by the huge numbers in which potsherds are found.

You are correct in placing your humble potsherd in the time of the Israelite conquest. Joshua may have crushed that pot as the Israelites invaded the land.

Larry G. Herr, Ph.D., is professor of Old Testament at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines.

With massive quantities to sample, the resulting generalizations should reflect the culture more accurately.

In addition to their use in determining culture, the large numbers of potsherds also serve as chronological indicators. Because pottery is made by humans, it changes or develops through time. Someone who knows pottery well can date the vessels in the same way that someone who knows automobiles can date cars. But pottery developed much more slowly in antiquity than automobiles do today. This means that the dates given the pottery by an archeologist must be in terms of centuries or half centuries, not single years or decades, as one can do with cars.

Because pottery is easily broken, relatively few complete vessels are recovered by archeologists. Most of the dating process in archeology must be
accomplished with the use of small broken potsherds. How do archeologists overcome this problem and ascribe the potsherds to specific chronological periods?

Pottery that was made on a wheel is always circular in shape. Furthermore, the wheel enabled the potter to make many vessels rapidly that were almost identical. Even when pottery was handmade, without the aid of the wheel, the individual pieces tended to look very much alike. Today, if a person knows the construction of an automobile well, he can actually determine the make and year of a car simply by examining a single part. So from a single piece a potter expert can often reconstruct the way the complete vessel looked because he recognizes certain unique features. These features are few in number, but because the vessel was originally circular, they usually appear continuously around the complete vessel. They thus have a good chance of appearing on the potsherd under study.

But, like pieces from a car, some potsherds are more diagnostic than others. The best potsherds for dating purposes include at least a small portion of the rim or lip of the vessel. Of secondary importance are the base, handle (if present), and any decorative features. Unless decorated or made with a distinctive ware, body sherds from the sides of the pottery offer very few distinctive diagnostic features, just as a small piece of metal from the side of a car could not offer much information about the make or year of the car.

One can glean much information from the rim of the vessel. Because pottery was made on a wheel, the opening of the vessel normally is a circle. The diameter of the mouth can thus be projected from the curving arc of a single potsherd. When complete, the mouth of the vessel should also have been parallel to the ground. By rotating the potsherd so that the rim is again parallel with the ground, one can determine the “stance,” or position, of the potsherd in the original vessel. In this way one can tell whether the vessel was open (the mouth being wider than the base) or closed (the mouth being narrower than the base). From the thickness of the potsherd it is often possible to tell whether the original vessel was large or small.

Also, certain pottery forms are indicative of characteristic uses. For example, cooking pots designed to be used over an open fire were made of a crude, highly porous clay that contained a relatively large proportion of sand so that the pot could expand and contract in the heat of the fire without breaking. Likewise, some forms were characteristically decorated, while others were not. For example, bowls for holding soupy substances were often coated with a thin layer of wet clay that, after it dried, was polished into a hard, waterproof layer, making the bowls less absorbent as well as easier to clean.

Knowing the original form of the vessel is extremely important because of this value in providing dates. Just as today men’s and women’s clothing styles are constantly changing, so ancient vessels evolved at different rates and in different ways. Because the ceramic expert knows what each type of vessel looked like at various periods and thus understands its individual rate of change, he can place the theoretical vessel, reconstructed in his mind from the single potsherd in his hand, into that progression of pottery types, and from it he can establish a date.

As an example, let us consider a single sherd that you have found (Fig. 1A). With the practiced eye of a ceramic expert you notice that it includes the rim and a portion of the upper body. From the arc of the rim you can tell that the diameter was roughly 30 centimeters, or 12 inches. If you move the sherd so that the top of the rim is horizontal, as it is in the illustration, you will see that it forms a crude S-shape and that the body will probably extend downward and to the left so that the mouth will be larger than the base.

From the shape of the ware and the black smoke stains you can see immediately that the sherd once belonged to the cooking-pot type. The lack of decoration, such as paint, molding, or burnish (polish) also fits in with the cooking pot determination. Because cooking pots were intended to be placed on top of the coals of an open fire, most of them had no base, their bottoms being round. You, therefore, reconstruct a round bottom to your sherd and, together with the estimated diameter of the rim, can visualize the size and appearance of the complete pot as it was in antiquity, based on a comparison with other complete cooking pots.

Although artifacts change through time, they almost never change abruptly. Appearance and function are so interrelated in a housewife’s mind that she would tend not to buy vessels that looked different from what she expected. Because of this, pottery styles evolved slowly through time, each change along the way being minor. With this slow evolution in mind, you place your reconstructed cooking pot into the overall evolution of the type, looking for the closest parallel to your particular form.

You know that in the Early Bronze Age, near the end of which Abraham probably lived, there was no cooking-pot ware such as this, so your mind does not even think about that period as you analyze the potsherd. You know that during the Middle Bronze Age, the time of the late patriarchs and the sojourn in Egypt, cooking pots looked very much like the original form behind your potsherd (Fig. 1B). Looking closely at your potsherd, however, you see that the rim is triangular in shape. But Middle Bronze cooking-pot rims were plain, not triangular.

You also know that cooking-pot rims in the Iron I period (Fig. 1C), the time of the judges, had a long flange, and the body tended to bend sharply instead of curving in a gentle S-shape. The rim also tended to point straight up, whereas your potsherd has the rim everted. During the Iron II period, the time of the divided monarchy of Israel, the flange degenerated into a bump near the top of the rim (Fig. 1D), and the rim was inverted.

Because change is slow but continuous in pottery styles, the stance of the rims in all these examples should tell you in general where to place your sherd. It is everted and in an S-shape like the Middle
Bronze form, whereas the Iron Age forms were first vertical and then inverted. This suggests that the progression went from everted to vertical to inverted between the Middle Bronze Age and the Iron Age. On the basis of this progression you suspect that your potsherd should be placed prior to the Iron Age and near the Middle Bronze Age.

Looking now more specifically at the rims of the cooking pots (Fig. 1), you notice that in the Middle Bronze Age the rim was plain, but by the Iron I period there was a very pronounced flange, which gradually disappeared through the Iron II period into a slight bump. If you suspect that the triangular head on the rim of your potsherd represents the beginning of the Iron I flange, you are correct. This means that you can again place your potsherd prior to the Iron I period, but now you can also say that it definitely dates after the Middle Bronze Age.

You therefore date your potsherd to the Late Bronze Age. Because you know that most Late Bronze cooking pots had an everted-rim stance, a gentle S-shaped curve to the upper body, and a triangular rim section, you are correct in placing your humble potsherd in the Late Bronze Age, the time of the Israelite conquest and early settlement. Joshua may have crushed that pot as the Israelites invaded the land.

While cooking pots were very conservative in their development through time, thus making it difficult to be more precise in one's dating than general time periods of up to 200 to 300 years, other forms such as the potsherd in Figure 2A developed much more rapidly, allowing the ceramic expert to date them more precisely. As you pick up this potsherd and rotate its stance to the correct position you notice that the ware is not like that of a cooking pot but is of a uniform white color and looks fairly fine. You notice no decoration except for a crude coating of a light-colored clay, a little darker than the ware itself. The rim is plain, but there is a jog outward in the lower body.

Because its diameter is roughly 15 centimeters, or 6 inches, you are able to determine that the vessel type was originally a small bowl with its mouth wider than its base. You quickly recognize this bowl as a form belonging to a specific tradition of Middle and Late Bronze Age bowls, so that you can reconstruct it with a small, slightly elevated base.

Your mind quickly runs through the evolution of this form. In the Middle Bronze IIA period, perhaps the time of Israel's entry into Egypt, the form had a very high everted rim with a slight outturn at the tip. The base was a simple disc.

In the Middle Bronze IIA period, perhaps the time of Israel's entry into Egypt, the form had a very high everted rim with a slight outturn at the tip. The base was a simple disc.
outturn at the tip, and the outward jog in the lower body was actually a tightly shaped curve (Fig. 2B). The base was a simple disc placed at the bottom of the bowl. Later, in the Middle Bronze IIB and C periods, the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, the top of the rim lost its slight outturn, the jog on the lower body was less defined, and the base rose up almost to a pedestal (Fig. 2C).

In the Late Bronze I period (Fig. 2D), perhaps the time of the Exodus and conquest, the ware became thicker and was not nearly as well made as in the Middle Bronze Age. The jog degenerated from an elegantly defined curve of earlier ages to a simple angular jog, and the base came back down to a ring base.

In the Late Bronze II period, when the Israelites began their settlement in the land, this process of degeneration continued (Fig. 2E). The ware was still thick and sloppy, the jog became a simple rounded angular corner, and the overall shape of the bowl was uneven, a sorry descendant of an extremely elegant ancestor.

The thickness of your potsherd suggests that it should be placed in the Late Bronze Age rather than among the elegantly thin forms of the Middle Bronze Age. The degenerated jog on the body would further limit it correctly to the Late Bronze II period, though it is not as badly shaped as the example in Fig. 2E.

This second example, the bowl, exhibits a relatively rapidly changing form, but still our analysis could not date the individual piece any narrower than a century at best. How can archeologists date materials to tighter periods, as many of them do?

Within each period of time there were several different types of vessels, each following its own rate of change. Together these make up a corpus of forms, which is called a horizon when dating to a specific point in time. But as time progressed, each form within the corpus changed at variable rates. Because the archeologist finds hundreds of sherds, he is able to compare the evolution of hundreds of forms caught in the single horizon of his archeological deposit. One sherd may be near the end of this development, while another may be near the beginning. Thus the deposit must date to the time when the one form stopped and the other began. In this manner the deposit can be more narrowly dated, sometimes to within a generation.

It is thus the complete corpus of pottery is assembled from a single horizon and is used in determining the archeological dates reported to you in this column of MINISTRY.

In the Late Bronze I period, perhaps the time of the Exodus and conquest, the ware became thicker and was not nearly as well made as in the Middle Bronze Age.

Figure 2. Carinated bowls from the Middle Bronze IIA period (B); the Middle Bronze IIB and C periods (C); the Late Bronze Age I period (D); and the Late Bronze Age II period (E).
Did Matthew twist Scripture?

From page 6

fication of himself as Isaiah's "voice crying in the wilderness" (Isa. 40:3) brings with it the themes "comfort my people," "her warfare is ended, . . . her iniquity is pardoned," and the "good tidings" that God gives to them (for their restoration), feeding His flock "like a shepherd."

Jesus' reply to Satan's suggestion that He change stones to bread (Matt. 4:4) comes from a rich context that speaks of the Lord's testing to know whether His people would keep His commandments or not. "And He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna . . . that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone" (Deut. 8:3). The passage continues with the promise that "you shall eat and be full" (verse 10). 11

While in our study of catchphrases we have considered mainly passages from the gospels, the writers of other parts of the New Testament used them also. Dodd, for instance, takes his prime example from Peter's sermon recorded in Acts 2.12 And Paul also used this approach.13 Of course, even when an author may not have been using catchphrases, one should always be aware of the original context of quotations taken from the Old Testament.

In summary, you can often grow in your understanding of a New Testament passage that quotes the Old Testament by examining the larger context of the Old Testament quotation. Using this insight may help you to penetrate the mysteries of a problem passage or add greater depth of meaning to a New Testament verse upon which you wish to preach.

1 Though the principles outlined in this article are part of the solution, the problem of the relationship of these passages is too involved to handle in this article. Perhaps I can present my view in a subsequent article.


5 Ibid., p. 129.

6 Dodd's realized eschatology suggests that the final "eschaton" has come in Christ. Certainly the New Testament sees it begins in Jesus' first advent, but looks to His second advent for its completion. Dodd himself says that "the tension . . . between realisation and unfulfilled expectation [what would happen] is thoroughly characteristic of the early Christian outlook, for which the Fourth Evangelist found the appropriate expression: 'the moment is coming and is here' ..."-Ibid., p. 74.

7 Ibid., pp. 11, 12.

8 Dodd throughout, but especially pp. 58-60.

9 The New Testament understands God's raising Jesus as evidence of His complete vindication, connecting it with His exaltation to a position of authority at God's right hand. This evidence again the New Testament use of the Old Testament two-phase scheme. See Acts 2:32—a passage replete with this concept and catchphrases.

10 Interestingly, Luke parallels Matthew's account except that Jesus' last words differ: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (Luke 23:46). They also are taken from a psalm (Psalm 31) that conveys the movement from oppression to deliverance and expresses faith in the face of distress. The words Luke actually quotes convey this faith more clearly than Matthew's do, but both suggest the idea by the Old Testament passages to which they refer.

11 I don't think it's coincidental that Jesus' scriptural replies to Satan's wilderness temptations are all taken from passages related to Israel's wilderness experience.

12 Dodd, op. cit., p. 47.

13 See, for example, 1 Corinthians 10:20 and Deuteronomy 32:17. God as the Rock is the unifying theme to both passages, but does not appear in the verse quoted.

Sermons people can follow

From page 15

come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Experiencing the gospel: "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'

Anticipating the consequences: "So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir."

Both processes illustrated above work very well with narrative portions of Scripture—historical narrative, biography, parable, et cetera. I have intentionally applied them to nonnarrative passages to show that they are not limited to just storytelling. The process can bring the dynamics of the story to preaching generally while at the same time giving the sermon a shape that keeps it from falling gelatinously all over the place.

Remember that these matters of structure, or shape, or process form only one part of sermon preparation. This article on structure has not considered hermeneutics, exegesis, language style, application, or matters of delivery, et cetera. All of these are vital to the work of preaching. It would be a drastic mistake to major in sermon design to the neglect of everything else. I recommend that preachers in general and young preachers in particular not try to be clever when it comes to structure. Keep it simple and clear. Use whatever seems most likely to give clarity and movement to the sermon. When preaching textually, use whatever the passage has to offer. This will make the sermon all the more Biblical. Save your "creativity" and cleverness to make the content interesting, vital, and challenging.

Above all give attention to the question, "So what?" There must be an urgent reason why you are preaching this particular sermon at this particular time to this particular audience. The gospel today must have a biting relevance.

1 Halford E. Luccock, In the Minister's Workshop (New York: Abingdon Press, 1944).


4 In subsequent usage in this article, the word textual is used to represent preaching from a pericope or Scripture portion. It is used for both expository and textual, replacing the traditional distinction of expository as preaching on a longer passage and textual, a shorter one.


6 Subsequent outlines are set forth more in keeping with Clyde Fant's "oral manuscript" directional phrases or sentences rather than the traditional major divisions and subdivisions (A, B, C, et cetera). Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).


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Half the Congregation: Ministry with 18 to 40 Year Olds
R. T. Gibbon, The Alban Institute, 1984, 29 pages, $7.00 + $1.25 postage and handling, paper. Reviewed by David C. James, assistant editor, MINISTRY.

This manual (about the equivalent of a fifty-page book) is based on cross-denominational research conducted by the Alban Institute since 1976. The author points out that half the U.S. population is under the age of 40. And he notes that those who turn away from the church during their adolescence are most likely to return during the ages he deals with in this manual. He sets forth the manual's purposes as being "to provide . . . an overview of issues involved in incorporating young adults into the life of the church" (p. 2), to summarize the characteristics of the various age groups included (transitional young adults—18 to 25, adults in their 20s, and adults in their 30s), and to give suggestions as to what churches may do to attract and hold those in these age groups.

You should find, as I did, the insights the manual contains to be quite helpful and stimulating. But don't expect detailed development of the insights or suggestions. You are left to plan how to utilize them yourself, which may be just as well anyway. The manual includes listings of other resources which are available. I do think the price is somewhat steep for the size of the booklet. If you want to obtain a copy, write (include payment): The Alban Institute, Inc., Mount Saint Alban, Washington, D.C. 20016.

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This excellent volume is comprised of twenty-five sermons preached by Dr. Lloyd-Jones in Westminster Chapel, London, during 1946 and 1947. Each is an example of clear Biblical thinking, sound conclusions, and penetrating wording. The reader will find that these sermons not only inspire him to preach expositively with equal power but they will also speak to his own heart spiritually.

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How to Mobilize Church Volunteers. Marlene Wilson, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1983, 156 pages, $8.95, paper.

