Secretary says Thanks

I really appreciated Mr. Bubna’s article on church secretaries (“Your Secretary: A Partner in Ministry,” July, 1984). Too many times people think the secretary just sits around or just answers the phone. Our church has a membership of almost five hundred, and we have three pastors. So we do keep busy, and I am able to share their joys and burdens in a small way.

I would also like to thank you for your fine magazine. As the church secretary, I read through it and mark articles I think our pastors might want to read, or at least read first. As you know, most pastors are so busy they do not get to read all they want to. May God bless you as you continue this fine work.—Pastor, Richmond, Virginia.

Send me one, too!

Two years ago I discovered your most excellent and helpful journal through my colleague here at our church. With the arrival of each issue, we find ourselves reading over each other’s shoulder, trying to share the single issue in brotherly love! Would it be possible for me to be on your mailing list as well, so that my friend and associate can enjoy his issue in peace? We are both so grateful and appreciative for your making this informative and richly rewarding resource available to those of us beyond your denomination.—Associate Rector, Encino, California.

I am writing to ask you to put my name on the mailing list for the MINISTRY magazine. I have heard many good things about this magazine and am looking forward to receiving my first copy.—Pastor, Bowdon, Georgia.

I read one of your magazines while visiting a fellow clergyman, and I like it very much. I would like to receive it regularly.—Pastor, Muncie, Indiana.

For a number of years I have been receiving MINISTRY “without having paid for a subscription.” You are gracious, too, to add the words “it’s not a mistake.”

It would be difficult for me to tell you how much MINISTRY has blessed and encouraged and enlightened me! Your evangelical yet distinctly scholarly magazine provides good reading and palatable food for my heart and spirit! May God continue to bless and use you in your great work.—Pastor, Fort Worth, Texas.

Undiplomatic or just unique?

I was surprised at the letters (July, 1984) objecting to your article on U.S. diplomatic relations with the Vatican (March, 1984) that compare the Vatican as a state with some other states such as England, Iran, and Israel.

Such a comparison today is embarrassing to the Roman Catholic Church. In civil/temporal matters, the Vatican State might be the most discriminatory government in the world. Public office is barred to non-Roman Catholics, non-clergy, women, and males who were or were married. Even “citizenship” is barred from most of the same people.

Among the very few eligible to elect the “head of state,” many are citizens of other states. The present head of state I assume still is a citizen of Poland, also, which is unique.

John Paul II has declared that Roman Catholic clergy should not hold public office. Consequently, ambassadors from the Vatican to the United States and other states should not be clergy, nor should the head of the Vatican State be clergy.

This is not intended as a mockery of the Vatican or the Catholic Church. The point is that the Vatican is singularly unique. Whether that uniqueness justifies diplomatic relations with the United States is a primary issue, and justification cannot be based on comparison of the Vatican as a state with other states. The U.S. Constitution also is quite unique.—Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Living or surviving?

I just finished reading “How to Live on a Pastor’s Pay” (Shepherdess, July, 1984). I believe in and have followed these principles for many years. But there is a negative side that you did not address. I was contented with my lot in life but found that our people were looking down on us for what we were doing instead of being proud that we were doing as we were with as little as we had! Comments got back to me that I needed a new coat—l was embarrassing my church members. My car was not professional-looking enough to be parked by the church. No one ever asked why I was wearing a worn-out coat or checked to see if we had any other financial responsibilities. At the time we were trying to help my husband’s ill and elderly minister parents in their last days. They wound up on welfare because they had nothing to show financially for fifty-two years of ministry.

I think salaries and the lack of them are going to be one of the biggest problems of the church today.—Former Pastor, Fort Worth, Texas.

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.
Expanding the Patient's World/4. Gerald W. Paul tried various techniques to bring out the patient's true feelings before discovering that what helped most was for him to bring some part of the outside world in to the patient. His suggestions may help you be more helpful in the hospital.

Advent on Ice?/7. After 140 years of proclaiming the soon return of Jesus, is it time for Seventh-day Adventists to rethink their Adventism? Richard Lehmann considers several options for explaining the delay, and points to a balanced view of Jesus' promises.

I Was in Prison/11. Allen D. Hanson has spent time on both sides of the prison bars, and suggests an important area for outreach that is available close to almost any church.

The Temptations of Ministry/12. Kenneth L. Gibble's devotional analysis of the temptations of Jesus focuses on what we who preach about temptation can learn about ourselves from Jesus' experience. Insights to help you see inside!

Preach What You Believe!/14. Charles D. Brooks. What one thing could make this preacher step down from the pulpit? What is the one sermon every preacher must preach?

Motivating Your Members/17. Wayne Owen suggests ways to apply the principles of effective motivation for volunteers.

Stress in the Chaplaincy/20. The greatest threat to a hospital chaplain's health does not come from constant exposure to infectious diseases, but from stress. Walter E. Kloss illustrates the problem and suggests a way of coping.


Taming the Paperwork Tiger/24.


Expanding the patient's world

Are pastors just supposed to listen and pray, or is there something more we can do to help speed recovery for our hospitalized parishioners? Gerald W. Paul suggests ways to go beyond being interested to being helpful. His ideas will help you broaden and brighten the patient's outlook.

by Gerald W. Paul

John Scott, a Presbyterian minister-physician who founded the palliative care unit of St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, says, "A visit from a clergyperson might be the equivalent of ten milligrams of morphine." Since some cancer patients get more than seven hundred milligrams every four hours, Scott doesn't give much value to a minister's visit. While translating religion into chemistry is not really possible, the statement is well worth considering.

I began my ministry with a simple motto for hospital visitation: "To love is to listen." I'd make my rounds eliciting catalogs of symptoms, oft-told tales of operations, and self-centered sagas of all the trials and pains the sick had suffered.

With a Rogerian focus on patients, and a masochistic need to listen to their tales of woe and make them monarchs for the day, I suited well the popular stereotype of clergy as passive-responsive hospital visitors.

Concentrating on my parishioner-patients' needs, I learned much about gallstones and diabetes, alcoholism and drug abuse, labor pains and cesareans, strokes and heart attacks, as well as sixty-four varieties of backache, headache, and bellyache. Allowing patients to have my ear like the wedding guest whose ears the ancient mariner grabbed, I was privileged to learn of last night's overcooked broccoli, the failure of the hospital shop to stock a preferred brand of cigarette, the nurse's glacially slow response to an overused buzzer, and how the cleaning staff made enough noise to waken the dead.

At times I'd wonder about the value to me of bits and snippets of the inside dope on emphysema, institutional meals, and idiosyncrasies of staff. But for years I never doubted the value to patients of having a chance to level with the minister. By expressing what was on their minds, I reasoned, they would be spared the heaviness of heart and sadness of soul that sooner or later descends on those who have no outlet for their feelings. Short-range pain for me meant long-range gain for them.

Reinforcing my blotterlike role in hospitals was the remembered story about the old psychiatrist telling a group of interns that the trouble with novice psychiatrists is "they abhor a silence." Not having any idea of what a clergy hospital visitor should be up to, I let the droppings of psychiatry at least give me a tongue to stand on. After initiating a conversation with "Hello, how are you feeling?"-ending with a marked rising inflection—regardless of the length of the silence or the depth of my embarrassment as I waited determinedly for a response, I held my peace.

On one occasion when there wasn't a murmur in response to my ministerial salutation, the passing seconds seemed like a thousand ages in my sight. It struck me as not unlike the fabled contest between the sun and the north wind: the patient seemed to be as determined not to respond as I was to wait for her response. At first we avoided eye contact. Then by gradual steps, awkwardly taking turns, we moved irrevocably from glance to gaze to glare. For a while the principle of the thing held me stubbornly steadfast. But as time wore on and I thought of the other calls I had to make, I decided to settle for a saw-off. Rookie-like, I made a clumsy but unmistakably military left turn. And with lips sealed, marched venerably out of the room.

In one of Kübler-Ross's articles on

Gerald W. Paul writes from Kingston, Ontario, Canada.
While confession may be good for the soul, repetition is good for nothing. By encouraging an outpouring of self-pity we reinforce the alienation of our hospitalized parishioners.

dead and dying, I'd read that her favorite way of getting patients to talk about what really matters is to lean over the patient's bed and whisper existentially, "It must be tough, eh?" Apparently the gifted physician could evoke an avalanche of anger, drain a lagoon of loneliness, and extract a desert of depression by simply uttering those magic words.

I made the mistake of trying her incantation on my hospital rounds. While I had the question right, "It must be tough, eh?" the responses I got were of the "I'm OK, you're not OK" variety. Sentences were not only clipped ("Who, me? I get along fine, thank you") but were accompanied by threatening emphases suggesting that patients will not tolerate any insinuation that the visiting minister has the inside dope on the real condition of their body or soul.

After five years of nondirective passive responsiveness utilizing the fixed conversation starters associated with patient-centered visitation, I had enough medical knowledge to be dangerous and enough trivia to outdo the town's top gossip. But in spite of such personal gains, I kept wondering whether letting patients pull out all the stops—repeat the unrepeatable, dig up dross and call it gold, or focus on their navels, their wounds, their aches, or their incisions—had anything to do with my calling as a Christian minister. And if, for that matter, by encouraging self-indulgence and self-centeredness, perhaps my visit was making patients not better, but sicker.

Experience and reasoning led me to amend my "To love is to listen" visitor's motto to read "To love is to listen, once." Shifting from submission to taking charge, I learned to concentrate not on getting the patient to recite his troubles, his feelings, or his fears, but rather on giving him a picture of the outside world. I continued to focus on the well-being of the patient. But instead of evoking the patient's world, I brought the larger world into his life as the preferred path of healing.

As an amateur naturalist I started bringing nature into the hospital. In spring I'd wear a violet, in summer a dandelion, in autumn an aster, and in winter, when I could afford it, a rose. In my pockets I'd carry fossils from the limestone ridge, shells from the beach, maple leaves from the trees. In season, pussy willows in my hand brought beauty into the patient's world.

Instead of my listening to repeated recitals of ailments, my "show" of nature created opportunity for a "tell" of nature. As I told of May's marvelous bird migration I'd whistle like a cardinal, quack like a mallard, sing like a song sparrow. Bringing some beauty from outside into the hospital triggered reminiscence. Patients would tell me of killdeer seen in the plowed fields of the old farm, and of fence-post-loving bluebirds thinning out as steel fences replaced the rails. My visits helped patients enjoy a remission from, rather than a reinforcement of, their illness. I soon became convinced that I was now doing more good than a few milligrams of morphine.

In a small town of six thousand where I ministered for six years, I used to bring not only nature but Main Street into the hospital. "Saw your friend Jim Walker in the Sunrise Restaurant. He asked about you. Sends his love." As I delivered the good news to patients that they were not forgotten by friends, they'd often talk about Jim's skill at catching trout or Wilma's run-in with a skunk in the chicken coop. As the images of others filled their minds they gained relief from the hospital hazard of self-centeredness, where one's world tends to shrink to the size of a hospital room.

With a Rogerian focus on patients, and a masochistic need to listen to their tales of woe, I suited well the popular stereotype of clergy as passive-responsive hospital visitors.

While confession may be good for the soul, repetition is good for nothing. Permit patients to call the shots or set the mood, and nearly always it's a downer. By encouraging an outpouring of self-pity we reinforce the alienation of our hospitalized parishioners. It's better to take charge and bring the bigger world to the patient's smaller one. By doing this I escape the needless doldrums imposed on me every time I give a "poor, poor me" wretch the reins. The other patients in the room are spared listening ad nauseam to an account of all the terrible things their roommate's been through. And I think patients are better off when the clergy caller provides a breath of fresh air from the outside.

Another aid I bring into the hospital is poetry. I'm a firm believer in memorizing reams of verse. Before making my calls on St. Patrick's Day, for example, I review the Irish poems I've memorized through the years. When I enter a room where a patient has even a vague connection with Ireland, standing at the bed, I wish Paddy or Maureen a happy St. Pat's. Introductions completed, I run through all the verse of "Ah, Sweet Is Tipperary," and before the patient recovers from my initial burst of poetry, I strike again with "I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree . . . ." When the patient toises in a remembered line or two, we recite in concert. I feel in my "deep heart's core" that a few lines of poetry from the visitor brings more healing than a whole catalog of complaints from the patient.

I used to stress hospital visitation as a one-to-one relationship between pastor and parishioner. How wrong I was!
shifting from submission to taking charge, I learned to concentrate not on getting the patient to recite his troubles, but rather on giving him a picture of the outside world.

Adapting psychological rather than sociological assumptions makes it easy to reduce reality to “just me and you.” While that kind of relationship has its place, I’ve come to believe that the pastor when visiting the hospital is not alone. What I’m saying is that the corporate dimension of pastoral work is by far the most important side of hospital calling. During a visit I mention other people in the Christian community—Alice in the choir, Bill on the mission committee, the Radcliffe twins baptized last week. This approach motivates the patient to ask about others, and before long we have a goodly company encircling the bed. Prayer, remembering some of the dear souls of the church, and rejoicing in the communion of saints further strengthens the tie that binds.

I hit upon a more concrete way of bringing the corporate healing community into the patients’ narrowed world. In our small-town hospital there were always a few others from our church visiting their relatives or friends. When a patient had special needs I’d ask the healthy visitors to join hands around the sick patient’s bed, and we’d say our prayers together. A slice of the Christian community at prayer I judged to be a richer symbol of healing and wholeness than pastor and patient having their private devotions.

Perhaps you’ve noticed the importance patients attach to what I call the cardbox community of support. Get-well and thinking-of-you cards are arranged on the patient’s bedside table with the care of a devoted curator. Collectively the cards form a portrait gallery symbolizing the loving community of outside support.

To reinforce this sense of community I often pick up a card, read the message aloud, and add the name of the sender. After I’ve read a few cards, a patient usually perks up. Thinking of other caring people in the religious community liberates us from the prison of self-centeredness.

On my hospital rounds the Bible is another resource I use to expand horizons. But early in my ministry I discovered that reading from a heavy black book at a hospital bed gave patients the image not of walking out of the hospital healed, but of being carried out dead. I spent years memorizing the book of Psalms. While there are some psalms of lament and some psalms of wailing and woe, the Psalms provide choice morsels for visitation of the sick, and help the patient move from thinking of the sickness of self to pondering the providence of God. So when it seems fitting during a visit, I’ll recite the twenty-fourth or 150th or eighth psalm, along with a small serving of the first lines of a variety of psalms directing our attention away from self and to the Lord.

Rearrangement of other Scripture passages into a medley of the faith is within every minister’s power. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.” “They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.” “Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God.” “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” “Behold, I make all things new.”

The focus of the Scripture selections I recite for patients is not Mary’s gallbladder or Jim’s bicuspid valve, but God’s guiding, guarding, governing providence. While there are times when the religious experience of the patient should be mentioned, I usually place the emphasis not on the patient, but on the greatness and goodness of God. The big Scripture themes with God occupying the center of the stage constitute the healing word of God. Contemplating the God who creates, sustains, and saves long-term patient. Confinement freezes clock and calendar. So I bring to such patients reminders of the seasons. Instead of sprucing up in the lobby, I visit with trench coat dripping, snow on my toe, windswept hair, and sunglasses in place. It’s important to provide living imagery of passages—to show that time goes by, that we don’t get to go around again, that it’s now or never. That if it’s the will to live that’s missing, it’s essential to act now to pull oneself together, to “take up one’s bed” and walk. My seasonal symbols make patients weather-wise, bringing them out of the deadly timelessness that mummifies the sick, into the dynamic rhythm of the outside world.

Although explicit theologizing with patients is taboo among the devotees of pastoral psychology, I’ve found that
Advent on ice?

Some New Testament texts seem to expect Christ to return almost immediately. Others point to a delay of His advent, or to events that must occur before He returns. Christians have long probed this dilemma. Are these passages in conflict? How shall we understand them? What do they say to us as we look for the Lord’s advent? □ by Richard Lehmann

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, sharing the hope of the New Testament writers, has proclaimed the return of Christ and the end of the world for almost 140 years. When the church gathers around the table of the Lord, it continues to “shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). To the Lord who says to her, “I come quickly,” the church replies, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

And yet Jesus has not come back. It appears to some that the Lord tarries in the fulfillment of His promises. In answering the question that this “delay” poses, some say that He has already returned in an invisible manner. Others postulate that the Parousia is dependent on the faithfulness with which the church fulfills its mission. Still others claim that this is not the essential point, for since His first coming we are complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). In fact, the majority of the great theological (and hermeneutical) systems have been built up with respect to the delay of the Parousia.

Attempts at explanation

In grappling with the problem, Albert Schweitzer developed what is known as consistent eschatology. He believed that Jesus had mistakenly announced the imminent establishment of the eternal kingdom. Schweitzer taught that Jesus first expected to see it come to pass in His lifetime, and that He later looked for it to be established immediately after His death. In his view, Christians remained in expectation after the crucifixion. When nothing happened they answered this distressing problem by concluding that the mystical union with Christ through the sacraments enabled them to enjoy the final blessings.

Schweitzer’s thesis has been strongly criticized. It gives to the expectation of the kingdom a character so central in the eyes of Jesus that the failure of this expectation makes Christian teaching lose all its credibility. If Christ expected so strongly to see the kingdom established and that did not take place, for what can we still hope? As E. Brunner puts it: “To suppose that such a theory is correct would put an end to Christian dogmatics, for it would represent nothing more than the systematization of a mistake.”

C. H. Dodd gave to us the approach known today as realized eschatology. While according to Schweitzer, Jesus gave His eschatology an exclusively future character, the kingdom of God, according to Dodd, attained its eschatological inauguration in the ministry of Jesus, and all futuristic perspective is insignificant. Some disciples did not understand Jesus, so their expectation was disappointed. These kept their hope directed toward the future; they were responsible for the book of Revelation, Mark 13, and 2 Thessalonians 2. On the other hand, others such as Paul had the same concept of eschatology as did Jesus. For Paul, 1 Peter, Hebrews, and especially the Gospel of John, the end had already come. The resurrection of Christ meant that all had been fulfilled.

We cannot here thoroughly critique Dodd’s thesis. Let us say quite simply that we do not follow him in separating the New Testament writings into that which is “in the line” and that which is not.

In 1941 Rudolf Bultmann made known his purpose of liberating the Christian faith from mythology. For Bultmann only one thing mattered—the encounter with Christ here and now. The future is built in the present by the response that one gives when confronted by the word of Christ and His history. For Bultmann apocalyptic itself does not envisage a distant future. It seeks only to describe, as did John the Gospel writer, that the end-time began in the present time. Bultmann distinguished two currents in the New Testament. The futuristic current tries to explain delay by mission. The church has a time of indefinite duration, dependent on mission. He identified this as the Lucan current. The other current, Johannine and Pauline, eliminates all the false hopes that Jesus had aroused in speaking of an imminent end. Besides, he said, this expectation was not at the heart of the thought of Jesus; He had borrowed it from Judaism to give more background to His principal idea. This expectation must be forgotten in order to put the emphasis on the present. Everything that is not linked to this thought springs...
Either Jesus actually said that He would return in the first century and made a mistake or He meant something different and we must restudy His teachings in order to preserve the vitality of our faith.

from myth. Only the appeal of Jesus, which asks us to make our decision now, matters.

Bultmann's doctrine affects one's understanding of canon, of inspiration, and of the validity of the Old Testament.

Adventists believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. We take the Bible in its entirety as the rule of faith. We are therefore confronted with the following dilemma: Either Jesus actually said that He would return in the first century and made a mistake (in this case we cannot place our trust in Him) or He meant something different and we must restudy His teachings in order to preserve the unity of the Scriptures and the vitality of our faith. I prefer this latter alternative. I believe with Gerhard Hasel that "the final aim of New Testament theology is to demonstrate the unity that binds together the various theologies and longitudinal themes, concepts, and motifs" belonging to the different writers of the New Testament.

Furthermore, a Christ-centered New Testament theology will not destroy the teaching of the Old Testament. In our particular case, this means it will preserve the Old Testament's chronological conception of history.

From this foundation let us approach certain "problem" texts.

Some difficult texts


"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

According to one interpretation, this text proves "Christ declared that He had made plans to return to those living in the generation to which He was speaking. The determining factor is that the expression 'this generation' appears fourteen times in the Gospels and always applies to Christ's contemporaries."

Interpreting the words of Jesus in this way deals too lightly with the problem. The disciples wrote more than thirty years after the death of Jesus. They were part of a generation that was dying out. How would their contemporaries understand these words? Did Jesus mean that before the last apostle's death He would return? Wishing to avoid mistaken attempts at interpreting these remarks chronologically, Matthew and Mark hasten to report those other words of Jesus: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32; cf. Matt. 24:36). They consider it useless to speculate about the moment of the end. Whoever wanted to fix the time of the Parousia from this saying would have the audacity to claim to know as much about it as the Father.

What must we understand, then? Note that the expression is always connected with words of reproach. "This generation" has a bad connotation. It refers to a generation that is wicked, adulterous, sinful, faithless, one that asks for signs in order to believe, and that because of its wickedness toward the prophets and the apostles would have to give account for all the blood shed since the foundation of the world (Luke 11:50).

The Hebrew word "dor," which the Greek word "genea" overlaps, has in addition a very different meaning. While it can mean a generation of about forty years (Deut. 2:14), it can also suggest the idea of race (Ps. 78:8; Mark 9:19). Certain commentators see this latter meaning in Matthew 24:34, understanding that the prophecy concerned the Jewish people. The term, then, does not have an arithmetical meaning only.

In the Old Testament, this wider meaning is especially evident in the verses in which it has a bad connotation. In Psalm 78:8 the "stubborn and rebellious generation" includes several generations. In Proverbs 30:11-14 the evil generation concerns men of all times. In the New Testament, in Mark 8:38, "this adulterous and sinful generation" is the world here below in contrast with the world to come. In Mark 8:12 the word can very well be translated "these people." So the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:34 can, without forcing the text, describe men in general, all those who by their unbelief made Jesus sigh, all those who are liable to judgment. According to Matthew 12:41, 42, Jesus did not expect that they would be living at His coming, for when the end comes they will rise from the dead with the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south.

The usages of the word generation, then, imply that it concerns unbelieving men of all time.

So, in Matthew 24:34 Jesus was not presenting chronological fact (verse 36 makes this clear). He was simply stating that the generation of unbelieving men would see before the end of time the fulfillment of all that He had declared. Nothing that He had declared would come to naught.

By repeating some characteristic statements of Jesus, Mark demonstrates that we must not expect such an acceleration of the time that everything takes place in "this generation." He notes that Jesus said: "The end shall not be yet" (Mark 13:7); "These are the beginnings of sorrows" (verse 8); "The gospel must first be published among all nations" (verse 10); "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (verse 13). The events will begin in Judea (verse 14) and finish "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (verse 27).

Does that mean that the contemporaries of Jesus are not involved? Not at all! The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple give the best assurance that what Jesus announced will happen and that the Son of man will appear with glory. For a Jew, the Temple's destruction practically guaranteed the realization of the other part of the prophecy.


"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

The Gospel writers who reported these words certainly wanted at the same time to answer the questions that their contemporaries would raise: Who will
It was because the disciples were in danger of concluding that His return did not concern them that Jesus emphasized so insistently the necessity of being ready and watching.

have the privilege of not dying? Who will see the Son of man in His glory? This statement has led numerous exegetes and church fathers, and our eminent contemporaries (J. Jeremias, for example), to see in the words of Jesus the announcement not of His parousia, but of His transfiguration. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary suggests the same interpretation, finding confirmation in the words of 2 Peter 1:16-18. In this case the "some standing here" would be Peter, James, and John. Jesus was not announcing, then, the coming of His kingdom before all His contemporaries died, but a special revelation to certain ones.

There may be more to this verse than first meets the eye. In each of the Synoptic Gospels, this verse is preceded by references to a crisis. One must take up the cross and risk one's life, says Matthew 16:24, 25. The Son of man will judge in terms of this obligation (verse 27). Mark mentions not only the cross but also the witness to be borne in the midst of a sinful generation. Matthew 16:28 seems to relate to seeing Christ in His glory and confessing Him unto death.

In support of this, note that the three apostles who went up the Mount of Transfiguration are the only ones whose earthly fates are mentioned in the New Testament: Peter and James, who were martyred (John 21:18, 19; Acts 12:2), and John, who endured a special time of waiting (John 21:23). By witnessing for Christ even unto death, these disciples followed the example of their Master.

Jesus' condemnation came in response to His testimony before the Sanhedrin regarding the Son of man coming in the clouds (Matt. 26:64). And I do not think that it is unintentional that Luke tells us so much detail of the end of Stephen, the first martyr, who signed his death warrant by declaring that he saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).

Jesus, then, was not announcing that His return would be seen by certain persons then living, but that some then living would see Him in His glory and would die for testifying to it.

3. Matthew 10:23
   "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

Albert Schweitzer thought he saw in this statement a delusion that Jesus had conceived concerning the establishment of the eternal kingdom. If it is interpreted as meaning an imminent end of the world, we can only agree with his thesis. I prefer the approach taken by both The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary and Pierre Bonnard. The latter says, "This verse does not emphasize the proximity of the return of Jesus, but all the possibilities of witnessing given to Israel until His return."* Jesus simply desired to tell His disciples that at His return He would find them still at

The term delay is ambiguous. It corresponds to a human sentiment but not to God's point of view. The Lord does not delay in the fulfillment of His promises.

their task. Therefore, they did not have to worry if because of persecution they could not finish their work in one city and were forced to enter another one. This whole group of texts, used to support the view that Jesus expected to return after a brief delay, had the purpose of warning exactly the opposite. According to Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus described a large number of signs. He did not intend to give His disciples a proof of His soon return, but to show that many things had yet to happen before He came. Though the signs were many, they would all take place. The generation of unbelievers could not hope to see even one of them fail.

It was because the disciples were in danger of concluding that His return did not concern them that Jesus emphasized so insistently the necessity of being ready to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." In other words, the prophecies were not given to allow speculation about the time of the return, but so that faith should be strengthened by the signs of the times when they were manifested (see also John 14:28, 29). One thing only is necessary: Watch, for you will be surprised, Christ will soon return.

With this understanding we are not surprised to see the apostle Paul living in expectation of an imminent end. This attitude harmonizes with the will of Christ. His resurrection bears witness that the victory has been gained, that the end time has begun, that believers have entered into the time of hope. So Peter could, a short time after Pentecost, encourage this expectation (Acts 3:20, 21). Paul in the middle of his ministry (1 Cor. 7:29-31) and John at the close of
The Parousia, placed in the future, calls for endurance. But we must not draw the conclusion that we can relax in our watching, for God can advance these days in response to the prayer of His own.

the century could repeat it with the same conviction (Rev. 1:7). It was a matter of their living not under a delusion, but in the assurance that God was coming (verse 8). They could not understand the prophecies referring to the end of the 2300 evening-mornings and to the 1260 days, for these were written for a special time (see Dan. 12:4, 9)—the time when they would be fulfilled. But they could expect that things would endure, for Jesus had warned His disciples that they would be subjected to a test. They would be tempted to consider the extension of the time as a delay.

Texts specifying a delay

We use the term delay provisionally, but we must examine it, for it has an ambiguous character. Let us examine a number of Jesus' teachings that form a significant sequel to the eschatological discourse recorded in Matthew 24 and its parallels.

1. The evil servant: Matthew 24:48-51

This servant is not like the scoffers mentioned in 2 Peter. The point of the parable does not rest on what he believed, but on what he did. He was a believer, but also a hypocrite (Matt. 24:51). Just like the man who received only one talent, he knew something, but he disregarded it (chap. 25:26, 27). The evil servant knew that his Lord would not come immediately, and as a result he should have held himself ready at any moment. According to the parable, the apparent delay implies an unexpected return.

2. The ten virgins: Matthew 25:1-13

Drawn from the usual pattern of Oriental weddings, this parable announces a delay: that of the bridegroom. The foolish virgins are reproached because they have not taken account of the fact that the bridegroom could delay and have let themselves be surprised. They ought to have thought of that and to have done what was necessary to have been ready at any moment. Their mistake did not lie in thinking that the bridegroom was coming soon, but in being unprepared for an extension of the time of waiting. "Watch therefore," said Jesus, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour" (verse 13).


"This parable applies specifically to the experience of God's people in the last days (COL 164), in anticipation of the deception they must meet and the persecution they must suffer." It taught those who listened to Jesus that they must not find a cause for discouragement in God's delay to render justice. They must always pray and not faint (verse 1), for God will surely render justice. But this assurance is only for those who have faith (verse 8).

An echo of this parable is found in Revelation 6:10, where the souls under the altar ask how long the Lord will tarry in executing justice. The reply given is interesting: Until the plan of salvation should be accomplished (verse 11).

We cannot consider all the passages that mention an extension of the time, but let us note here a few more significant verses:

Matthew 25:19. After a long time the Lord comes and reckons with the servants.

Luke 19:12. The royal investiture takes place in a far country. (Verse 11 indicates that this parable was directed to those who "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.")

Matthew 22:7, 9. The king had the city destroyed and burned and then called others to the wedding.

Luke 21:8. "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them."

Paul's writings contain some ambiguity: at times he is certain of being present at the Parousia (1 Thess. 4:15ff., 1 Cor. 15:51ff.); at other times he is ready to envisage his death beforehand (2 Cor. 5:1ff.). But his second letter to the Thessalonians specifies certain events that must intervene between the time he wrote and the Parousia: "We beseech you, brethren, . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled . . . [by whatever might be spoken], as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (chap. 2:1-3).

The time may be shortened

On examining these verses, we see that the term delay is ambiguous. It corresponds to a human sentiment but not to God's point of view. The Lord does not delay in the fulfillment of His promises. The extension of the time is part of the plan of salvation, for God desires that all shall come to repentance. Believers are warned that God has a plan of long maturity, but seeing that the date has not been revealed to them, they must hold themselves ready at any moment. Things can continue: God must organize His church, the Spirit will yet establish certain ministries, and apostasy must arise before Christ returns. As Oscar Cullmann says, "Jesus shows His disciples how to live in the world. The gift of order implies tomorrow." In other words, if Jesus wishes to build His church (Matt. 16:18), He must have time to do it.

Why, then, does the church expect that the Master will return soon, say the skeptics, since Jesus announced His delay? Because the church suffers and it knows that the prayer that it offers to God each day, "Thy kingdom come," is not just empty words. Jesus spoke not only of delay but also of advance: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7, 8). If God maintained the duration that He fixed beforehand, nobody would be able to stand until the end of the time of trouble. "But for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days" (Mark 13:20).

The Parousia, placed in the future, calls for endurance. But we must not draw the conclusion that we can relax in our watching, for God can advance these days in response to the prayer of His own. If He has not yet done this, it is because He hopes that His fig tree will bring forth fruit (Luke 13:6-8); He desires that all shall come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9), (Continued on page 30)
I was in prison...

You don’t have to serve time in jail before you are qualified to begin a prison ministry. These practical suggestions should open your eyes to the need for this sadly neglected type of evangelism. □ by Allen D. Hanson

In assessing your community's needs for specialized ministries, you may have overlooked one potential means of gospel outreach—the local lockup or county jail. Many of these facilities are old, overcrowded, and dirty. They are normally used to temporarily hold men and women who are awaiting trial or legal hearings, although short prison sentences are often actually served in these institutions as well. As a consequence, all types of prisoners can be found here, from the first-time offender to the career criminal. The trauma of arrest and incarceration will occasionally jolt a new inmate into a serious evaluation of his priorities and present life style. It is relatively simple for you or your church to begin a ministry to those in the county jail. The result? An unusual opportunity right in your own hometown to reach prisoners for Jesus Christ and to minister to them at a time when they are experiencing a dramatic upheaval in life and therefore may be more receptive to God.

How does one go about beginning such a ministry? If you are considering a prison ministry, try to join a group doing such work in a nearby town for several weeks of "on-the-job" training.

When you feel ready to begin your own prison ministry, try to arrange with the appropriate authorities a special time each week when your visit will not interrupt regular family or lawyer visiting hours. Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings are among the best available times. Question officials in charge regarding their criminal case. Often they are ministering under extreme stress and trauma conditions even in the local jail.

You will find it easier to start a new prison ministry if two or three concerned Christians go into the jail together. If you and your Christian associates are the only such visitors at the jail, you will get all the attention from both the staff and inmates. Your visits will be anticipated by prisoners who spend several weeks at the institution, and they will look forward to your next call.

Here are several items that you should keep in mind in order to have an effective ministry in the local jail:

1. Pray daily for this ministry and everyone involved in it. Start each prison visit with prayer.
2. Maintain a definite schedule without interruption. Prisoners will anticipate your regular visits.
3. Dress conservatively. A suit coat and tie, although not necessary, is never out of place in jail. Clergy may wear collars for identification if they wish.
4. Don't give prisoners anything without first checking with authorities. Stay well within the established rules of the institution.
5. Don't ask prisoners for details regarding their criminal case. Often charges are pending trial or appeal. If you learn anything about a prisoner's legal status, keep it confidential.
6. Don't expect normal responses such as you might expect on the outside. Conditions in jail are not normal. You will be reaching the inmate with your Christian witness even if he doesn't respond immediately or outwardly. Don't be discouraged.
7. Whenever possible and warranted, arrange for follow-up by a local church to minister to an offender after his release.
8. Be forgiving. The justice system is tough enough without your personal judgment and condemnation. Radiate the love of God in your visits.
9. Keep your visits away from denominational sectarianism. Most prisoners have little church background and will not understand theological differences.
10. Put yourself in the prisoner's place and try to understand the way he thinks. "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them" (Heb. 13:3, R.S.V.).
The temptations of ministry

Kenneth L. Gibble’s introspective look at the temptations of Jesus turned the spotlight on a few tarnishes on his clerical halo. You’ll want to examine yours too, to see where it needs a little polishing by the grace of God.

by Kenneth L. Gibble

Matthew introduces the account of Jesus and His encounter with Satan with these words: “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (chap. 4:1, R.S.V.). Many people overlook that little phrase “by the Spirit.” Apparently God had some purpose in mind in this confrontation. I daresay that few of us when we come into our own wildernesses, when we face the darkness of temptation’s season, would suppose it was God’s Spirit that had led us there. But then again, who of us knows the ways of God? They are indeed beyond finding out.

At any rate, Jesus had just come from His ordination service, so to speak. Just prior to the temptation event, Matthew tells us, Jesus had gone to John to be baptized, and as He was coming out of the water the heavens opened. Jesus saw the Spirit descending like a dove and heard a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (chap. 3:16, 17, R.S.V.).

Granted, none of us ordained to ministry has experienced anything quite as wonderful as that. But it is certainly true that our highs are often enough followed by lows. The thrill of seminary graduation gives way to the unnerving experience of placement; the miracle of a newborn child gives way to the brain-numbing task of early-morning feedings; the inspiration of Sabbath or Sunday worship gives way to Monday morning blues. Jesus hears a voice from heaven. The next voice He hears is that of the tempter.

Although I have read what the scholars say about the temptations and although I have myself wrestled with this Biblical account, all I can say is I don’t know what the temptations meant to Jesus. Obviously He was alone during this experience, and it tells us something about Him that He let His disciples in on what had happened.

But rather than speculate about our Lord’s motives and His understanding of His temptations, I want to reflect instead on the temptations that are especially seductive to ministers today. The three temptations Jesus faced may give us some insights into our own struggles.

First, then, was the temptation of bread to satisfy physical hunger. “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

When one is preaching on this text, it is easy to wheel out that old standby “Beware of the evils of materialism.” Not that this message is out of date; if anything, it’s more relevant now than ever before.

But a while back I made a discovery. My brother and sister and I had the job of helping our mother move from her three-room apartment to a much smaller space in a retirement village. While I was sorting through some of the things she could not keep, it occurred to me that material possessions are important. Sometimes those of us called to ministry are all too eager to declaim what a
Looking at the temptations Jesus faced in this more personal way can be devastating. We see that we have not been as strong as our Lord in resisting the tempter. Repentance is in order.

terrible thing materialism is. How much of our indignation stems from simple envy of some of our parishioners who are a bit better off financially? In any case, we often overlook the fact that what we own does help define who we are.

It was hard for my mother to part with many of her things. Not because they had high market value, but because they had high personal value. Mother would see an object and say, “Oh, there’s that bowl Dad and I got for a wedding present.” I happened to hold up one of her old toys, a little bank for coins. Mother insisted on stopping and telling me the story of how she had gotten that bank as a child, and the memory it evoked in her. As tired as I was from packing, I stopped and listened to her story. And I realized how much our personal identities are invested in material objects.

Of course, what has happened is that most people have too many things. Our identity gets diffused, lost, among all the things we possess until what we own doesn’t reveal much of anything about who we are. Things have only a functional value to us, seldom a symbolic value. My mother loved a bank in the shape of a rooster. Can you imagine electronic games sixty years from now? We hope our things will make us somebody; in fact, the more things we have, the more we become nobody in particular.

Those of us in ministry suffer this temptation to turn stones into bread as much as anyone. But, in our case, the temptation takes a subtle twist. The particular bread we crave may be that of ego gratification. We feed on the kind words people send our way. It is some rationalization of self-pity. Or should we call it self-righteous indignation? Because our work is so closely connected with people and their response, we ministers are especially vulnerable to this temptation. We sometimes assert, “I didn’t think I came across very clearly in my sermon today.” “Oh, yes, you did, pastor. It was really inspiring.”

Maybe, as Jesus suggests, we had better not tempt either the Lord or others with this kind of statement. Because one day someone is bound to agree with us, “I’m such a scatterbrain. I just can’t get organized.” “You’re right. I’ve never met anyone as confused about things as you are.”

For ministers, one of the greatest temptations comes from wanting to be liked. It’s human nature to want to be well thought of, admired, loved. So we learn how to play the game of keeping people happy. Along the way our integrity suffers. Rather than risk a personal confrontation, rather than ruffle feathers, we back away, we word the sermon so as not to offend. It isn’t hard to rationalize our actions. But after a while we may discover that we have bowed down to something other than the true and living God.

Looking at the temptations Jesus faced in this more personal way can be devastating. We see that we have not been as strong as our Lord in resisting the tempter. Repentance is in order. God, be merciful to me, a sinner. The good news, of course, is that there is mercy with God—even for ministers! It’s what enables us to carry on with the ministry to which God in His grace has called us.

To me the words of Jeremiah have been tremendously helpful. His listeners laughed at him, disparaged his work. Yet Jeremiah could not help speaking. “If I say, ‘I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,’ there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot’” (Jer. 20:9, R.S.V.).

I know a Jeremiah. He is a fellow minister and friend. When his wife of ten years died of cancer, he preached the funeral sermon. He began by saying, “Some people have suggested to me that it is a bit strange and maybe even inappropriate that I should preach this sermon. First, then, I must tell you that my wife requested that I do so. And second, on this day of all days, there is no place I’d rather be than right here.” I suspect that my friend would object strenuously to being called a Jeremiah. Yet I believe that in his Yes to the word inside him, a word demanding to be given form and voice, he stands in the tradition of the prophet who did not quench the Spirit within him.

For maybe this is the greatest temptation we ministers face—to deny the truth we know, to hold back the word of comfort or forgiveness or promise when it shouts to be spoken, to hold our arms rigid when someone aches to be embraced, to choke on our own pride when salvation is only a handclasp away.

God be merciful to us, sinners all.
Preach what you believe!

Charles D. Brooks, a well-known Adventist preacher, is not so much interested in the mechanics of preaching as in the reality of the message. He turns away from concern about how the sermon is prepared to concern with how the preacher is prepared. His message will make you stand tall in the pulpit!

Toward Better Preaching  □ 11  Charles D. Brooks

Someone has written, “We are called to preach. Preaching is our function as Christians. The essence of our calling is not something to do but something to be.” And so in a real sense every Christian is called to be a preacher. But God also gives special callings. The call to be a pulpit preacher is one of those

special callings. What a great privilege it is to be called to be a preacher of the gospel in this grand and awful time. There is nothing mysterious about this calling. God makes His call clear to each one He chooses. The call may be utterly personal and even unique, yet it will be perfectly clear to the one who receives it.

I have seen cheap radios that made reception unintelligible because of incessant static. The problem was not with the transmitting station, but with the receiving instrument. Other radios were picking up clear signals. And so it is with messages from God. He sends clear signals. We must clear all the channels of the soul in order to receive His messages. Let there be no problem of reception. Would that all God’s corps of end-time preachers could have settled minds about their call and then get excited about the wonderful privilege of being chosen especially by God Himself from among the world’s billions. We need to settle in

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our minds that we are indeed called, and get on with the work of fulfilling our appointed tasks. Satan may succeed in driving us back from our firm opinions, our theological concepts, and our pet theories. He may discourage us with our own humanity. But we ought to have certain points past which we do not retreat. Our conversion ought to be one of these; our sure call to preach, another. With Paul, let us feel deep in our souls, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not!”

God’s call to preach carries with it no options—no alternatives! With Paul, our determination must be “This one thing I do.” Pity the poor preacher who still wonders, “Should I go into law or medicine?” I tell young men, “Do not volunteer for the ministry, but if called, do not be turned aside by anyone or anything—least of all by the quest for prestige. To look upon the ministry as unworthy of one’s gifts is to insult the Giver of gifts.”

Another key attitudinal ingredient that is absolutely essential to our ministry is clear, simple confidence in the message we are called to deliver. Without undulled confidence, our preaching will manifest a tragic lack of conviction, certainty, and power. There is no good preaching without these! Without them we will come across as insipid and irrelevant. Our message will appear unimportant, unworthy of serious consideration—just another “noise” in the heightening cacophony of religious confusion. And since we represent God in a special way to the people, He will not seem worthy of their first interest and love. The urgency of God’s last warning truths will lose their cutting edge.

If our preaching lacks conviction, we will never have to tell anyone so. We will wear our lack of confidence as a garment more glaring than the proudest vestments. We will have emanating from us an aura of uncertainty both in and out of the pulpit. We will appear shallow, empty, ineffective, useless! How can great preaching ever come from such a crippled vessel?

Once in Egypt I had to use interpreters to convey my message to the congregation. I shall never forget what was said to me over and over: “Sir, we listen to your men, but we watch you, and we can tell by looking into your eyes that you really
Sermons ought not to come easily every time, regardless of our gifts or time with books. Preachers need to be disquieted sometimes, restless sometimes, groaning, panting, intense!

believe all that you say to us."

Truthfully, I would not preach what I do not believe. If I did not believe the message I am called to bear, I would leave the ministry today! I could not possibly be so good at acting that I could convince men of the “truthfulness” of a message that I doubted. I would be frustrated and miserable, and everyone would know it. Besides, gifted men who lack confidence in the truth can find easier and more lucrative ways to make a living. I therefore acknowledge the certainty of the message I preach. As Paul put it, God’s Spirit bears witness with my spirit.

Christ must be at the center of our message as the means of salvation. Thus our message will be full of compassion, yet uncompromising. We need not weaken its demands or lower its standards to accommodate the weaknesses of those “upon whom the ends of the world are come.” Rather, we must pray to fill our message so with Christ that men can see the “way” by which they may live up to it. I will not bring the standards down! I want to lift Jesus up so that men will not be discouraged by the most holy faith that is to prepare a people for a face-to-face encounter with God. They will see the holy standard of God’s will. And they will see grace as the means of salvation. Thus our message will be full of compassion, yet uncompromising.

With Christ at the center of our preaching, there is power, great and wonderful power! And there is excitement and ecstasy abounding as we see lives transformed by the Lord. Spurgeon once said of his preaching: “After I have fired off my shot and delivered all my matter, I have often rammed my soul into the gun and fired my heart at the congregation, and the discharge has under God won the victory.” One cannot preach like that with shifting conviction. Duplicity is fatal.

Go back with me to the humble cottage of the Shunammite. Elisha is gripped by the enormous gravity of the moment. He bends over a corpse with superhuman intensity—mouth to mouth, eye to eye, heart to heart—transferring life! He will either warm this child or be chilled by its death. Even so, we are dealing with life or death every time we enter the pulpit. There is no time for frivolity. We are with God’s Word and power claiming and reclaiming men from the precincts of death, snatching them from the bloody maw of the dragon. If we do not thoroughly believe our sermons, there will be no fire in them. And no life. The preacher who does not believe the gospel is a consummate fraud playing a most dangerous game. Our sermons must show that we are saved, or they will embarrass us. Our sermons must be erected upon deep personal experience or they will sink in the mire of human contrivance. Coating them with the syrup of erudition will not rescue them. No candy coating of eloquence will hide their bitter, hopeless heart.

Do you feel frustration with such overmastering necessities? Then praise God! This is providential to shut you off from your own fancied might, your sense of self-sufficiency, to make you feel your need of prayer.

It is in the agony and intensity of prayer that resolution comes. God’s Spirit bears witness with our spirit. Bombard heaven with prayer. One biographer wrote that “Luther planted a cannon at heaven’s gates to blow them open... Luther cried ‘Victrix!’ I have conquered! ‘The kingdom of heaven sufferseth violence, and the violent take it by force.’” Did you ever hear of prayer in language like that? We could actually pray ourselves out of our doubts and fears.

Sermons ought not to come easily every time, regardless of our gifts or time with books. Preachers need to be disquieted sometimes, restless sometimes, groaning, panting, intense! Sighing and weeping between the porch and the altar. God has no unsolvable problems! He will help us solve ours there in the audience chamber of prayer. The preacher who thus touches God and moves in the sphere of faith will dwell in the realms of wonder. Such ministry and preaching with its assured productivity will be exciting, and all the “siren calls” of other professions will be dimmed by the sheer joy of working with God. Why should this be considered incredible or unattainable or idealistic? Know we not with whom we have to do?

Jeremiah in Judah and Ezekiel in Babylon were both staggered by the austerity and severity of the messages God gave them. Jeremiah wanted to preach smoother things, while Ezekiel intoned imploringly, “Ah Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables [fables]?” (Eze. 20:49). In both these called men was a tone of renunciation with God. The nature of their messages was unpopular with the people. Hear poor Ezekiel with his “they say, . . .” They who? The very miserable, enslaved crowd to whom he was sent to proclaim God’s solution to their problems. These prophets wanted to be like the popular preachers of their day, who were as sterile and barren as desert mules braying in the wind. Ah, Lord God, this truth is the truth, but it is not in the most acceptable form.

Well, truth in the most acceptable form generally ceases to be the truth; rather, it becomes a mixture of truths mingled with error. Implied in the prophets’ tone are petitions to be allowed to adjust the truth, to fix it up and make it more palatable. They were out of sync with the theologians and popular evangelists of their day—out of harmony with their hearers’ carnality. But the word was the Lord’s, not theirs. The messages were determined in heaven and did not need to be properly adjusted in Judah or Babylon. God called them to preach the message, not invent it.

Never apologize for God’s methods or His message. The power is in the truth, and the Holy Spirit attends it, bringing conviction to hungry souls. If you will faithfully, with unceasing prayer, expound what you faithfully believe, you can leave the results with God.

J. F. Newton wrote: "There is but one sermon to preach; no matter what text or title you use, no matter how you alter or distort it, your one sermon is the truth made real in your own heart. No matter how vivid you are in vision, you can tell
We are dealing with life or death every time we enter the pulpit. We are with God's Word and power reclaiming men from the precincts of death, snatching them from the bloody maw of the dragon.

no other truth triumphantly. Many a congregation is drowsy on Sabbath morning, or indifferent or apathetic or carnal, because the eloquent preacher is not preaching his truth! There is no fire; they will not learn. They will not heed." Error can easily dominate over ignorance, but not over experiential knowledge. Your best evidence of the validity of your message is what it has done for you in your own life. F. L. Peterson used to tell young preachers, "Have an experience and tell it." There is no substitute for this.

John Knox spoke of himself, "God hath revealed unto me secrets unknown to the world. He hath also made my tongue a trumpet to forewarn realms and nations." He had a large concept of the ministry—his ministry! We are watchmen called to watch on the wall in this time of greatest danger and darkness. And God is going to require an accounting of us all.

I am touched with awe by the company of human souls who come to hear me preach. What a privilege! Who wouldn't get excited when God gives us the attention of the masses! We must not waste time. A wasted pulpit opportunity is not just 40 minutes of the preacher's time wasted, but those minutes compounded by the size of the congregation. If there are 10 hearers, he has wasted 400 minutes. If there are 1,000 in the audience, he has wasted 40,000 minutes, or more than 666 hours—that's close to a month lost in one sermon.

Hungry congregations gather about the preacher to be fed a worthy meal, to be led and uplifted. They are seeking a glint of glory in a dreary, common world. They seek to have their faith strengthened, not to have it weakened by the preacher's doubts. They want to learn how to live and how to die, to hope and to love despite the heavy tramp of the oppressive years. Deal gently and wisely with them. Preach the Word, but not with cold austerity. A God who is all power and nothing but power could be a monster. The psalmist says, "Power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy." God stoops with motherly grace to help and to heal and to save. Power is in merciful hands and controlled by an infinitely compassionate heart. Omnipotence is impregnated with tender pity and infinite, caring concern.

Preach the Word! Believe the old, old message and preach it! Irresolute preaching breeds contempt for the gospel. Defections to radical cults, schisms, mysticism, and religious fanaticism can be blamed all too often on irresolute preachers.

Preach the Word, for nothing else is sure-based. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven," says Psalm 119:89. The value of preaching relates to this. Preach the Word, and preach it not only because God calls you to but because with all your heart you believe it.

Expanding the patient's world

introducing theological discussion has much more therapeutic value than eliciting symptom recitation. For years I visited John, a mechanic stricken with MS that finally took his life. We talked about the role of God in suffering. While we started with his suffering, we quickly moved beyond his particular question to general theological questions concerning human suffering and the nature of God. We wondered why some people strike out on fastballs, and others on curves, and what makes one person give up but another perk up when times get tough. We didn't come up with back-of-the-book answers. But accepting that there are no answers to some big questions, we discovered that the questioning is part of the answer. By talking about the really big questions we ended up feeling quite a bit better about ourselves and a lot better about God and God's world.

Before John died we put on a cassette what we'd learned together: that gentleness of spirit can persist in spite of harshness of existence; that there is more hope in the lives of the sick than in the lives of the healthy; and that a successful life can be lived in spite of what life hands us—providing we have a bigger view of the universe than our sick selves.

In stressing the expansion of the patient's world as a means of escaping from the hospital cage into the big, beautiful world, I discovered I could sometimes stimulate patients to summon from their own experience a wider world of healing connections. When an old beekeeper started to serialize his stings, I injected the line "All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee." He immediately launched, with obvious pleasure, into a biography of the bee, touched with traces of wonder and awe akin to religion. In my judgment, my time with the beekeeper was well spent. I was doing what a hospital visitor should do: enlarging the patient's world by making the connection with nature, other people, and God.

Although I still have some doubts about my effectiveness as a hospital visitor, since shifting my focus from the patient's diminutive hospitalized world to the living, expansive outside world, I feel I'm throwing my weight on the side of healing and hope rather than pity and despair. While physicians, nurses, cooks, technicians, and other hospital workers focus on the patients and reinforce their sense of helplessness, I focus on the outside world of connections with people, places, and ideas. In doing so I help counteract the centrifugal force at work in hospitals with my centrifugal approach to patient-parishioner.

So bye-bye, Carl Rogers and Kübler-Ross. It's been good to know you, but I've got to be rolling along. No more shall I close the door and pull the curtain to set the stage for one-to-one counseling. I'll keep on connecting the patients' small slice of reality with the bigger vision of nature, others, and God. As bridge rather than blotter, my visits will continue to be more vital, more helpful, more theological, and last but not least, more fun.
Motivating your members

Motivating members of any volunteer organization, including the church, can be a particularly challenging task. But recent theories of motivation arising from the business world offer insights that the pastor will find helpful.

by Wayne Owen

Getting someone to take leadership in the church is a struggle that many pastors face. The pastor who finds that the first choice of the nominating committee is willing to serve considers himself lucky. Because few church members take the work of the church as seriously as pastors wish they would, the work of the pastor often becomes one of constantly prodding people to perform effectively.

The flow of programs generated by most denominations illustrates the necessity of the pastor's being a persuasive motivator and tireless promoter. Unfortunately, few of these programs have demonstrated the success their inventors dreamed possible. The lack of implementation has not necessarily been because the programs were poorly conceived. More often the churches simply did not catch the vision and see the potential.

Ellen G. White, herself an effective motivator and church leader, counseled that the pastor upon entering a new pastorate "should at first seek not so much to convert unbelievers, as to train the church-members for acceptable cooperation." This goal of helping his members both to grow and to work for others can be reached only as the members are motivated to work together. Emphasizing the pastor's role as motivator, White wrote, "Nothing lasting can be accomplished for churches... unless they are aroused to feel that a responsibility rests upon them." 1

In their efforts to motivate, pastors have been known to try methods ranging from instilling guilt to shaming, bribing, and coercion, and even in a few instances blackmail. The strides within business management over the past forty years offer some insights regarding the principles of motivation. These principles of management do have application to the pastor's work: "In some respects the pastor occupies a position similar to that of a foreman of a gang of laboring men or the captain of a ship's crew. They are expected to see that the men over whom they are set, do the work assigned them correctly and promptly, and only in case of emergency are they to execute in detail." 2

Many pastors with some business background would like to have control over monetary remuneration for work that is done within the church. They would like to be able to give raises to some and to dock the pay of others. But pastors are working with volunteers rather than employees. They must use other principles of motivation.

Understanding motivation

Theories of motivation abound in the business world as a result of this century's struggle to increase production while maintaining worker satisfaction. In today's world the manager must be very competent to satisfy the goals of the company. He has to strive to reduce the amount of employee absenteeism and increase the employees' production while maintaining the maximum level of quality. Douglas McGregor, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, delineates the perception of people's attitude toward work, which for decades had influenced management. This view (he labels it Theory X) was: 1. The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can. 2. Because of this human characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, or threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives. 3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all. 4

Theory X has generated a whole battery of motivational techniques that McGregor identifies as the carrot-and-stick (reward-and-punishment) approach. Some pastors view the church through the eyes of Theory X, not realizing that the carrot-and-stick

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Competition does work as a great motivator, but inevitably someone must lose. And the negative impact upon the losers makes competition totally unacceptable as a motivational strategy within the church.

Method will not work. Most church offices do not offer direct rewards sufficient to motivate those asked to fill them. And using “punishment” (negative reinforcement) in a volunteer organization is counterproductive—and may even drive the members away.

McGregor’s Theory Y, on the other hand, based upon the research of recent years, advances another view of potential workers: 1. Humans expend physical and mental effort in work as naturally as they play or rest. 2. External control and threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. People will exercise self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed. 3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement. 4. The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility. 5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population. 6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potential of the average human being is only partially utilized.

Both of these theories are based upon the very general concept that people do what they do because something pushes them. What pushes them is the center of the controversy. Theory X holds that extrinsic forces push people, and Theory Y suggests that intrinsic forces push people. Theory Y probably reflects the realities of the church more accurately. One’s basic assumptions about his church members will largely determine his effectiveness as a motivating agent.

And what comprises these intrinsic forces? Apart from the regenerating and motivating influence of the Holy Spirit, members have certain needs that must be met before they will function well in the church. The wise pastor knows the principles that govern individual behavior—why people do what they do. According to Susan Schaefer, this constitutes motivation.

Dr. Abraham Maslow suggests that every individual must satisfy certain basic needs. As these needs are met they no longer motivate a person. The primary universal needs that Maslow sees are the physiological—food, rest, and shelter. He suggests that when these basic needs are met a person next seeks to satisfy the need for safety, then for social relationships, next for self-esteem, and finally self-actualization.

Frederick Herzberg contributes another popular model for motivation. He suggests that personal recognition, job importance, and the opportunity for advancement motivate people. According to him, the need for self-esteem lies behind these motivating factors.

The motivational theory known as “cognitive dissonance” complements the perspective of Theory Y. Cognitive dissonance simply suggests that a person gets what he expects from others. If he expects incompetence, he will get it; if he expects competency and focuses on it, he will get competent performances. The application to the church is obvious. The pastor who has faith and has a vision will see things happen.

The theory of personal causation is also very useful for church motivation. This theory holds that the need to cause changes in one’s environment is a primary motivator. “Most people do not want to have their lives to be determined, to be manipulated, to be pawns.”

Strategies for motivation

We do not have to determine which of the foregoing theories most accurately portrays human motivation. The insights these theories afford suggest several possible strategies for motivating people. But putting them into a package that church administrators can use presents a real challenge: A pastor needs to look for strategies that, while being highly effective, do not compromise the ideals of the church. Let’s examine eight potential strategies for motivation.

1. Competition. For years pastors have relied upon competition to motivate the church. (One prevalent example is the fund-raising campaign in which the church divides into competing groups—with a goal device, of course.) Competition interests people, and for that reason it has played a very significant role in our churches. It does work as a great motivator, but inevitably someone must lose. And the negative impact upon the losers makes competition totally unacceptable as a motivational strategy within the church. Those who desire to motivate children use competition especially frequently, with the unfortunate result of a damaging loss of self-esteem to the highly vulnerable victims.

Even entire churches may have low self-esteem. This has often been unwittingly fostered by insensitive pastors or departmental men who pit against each other churches of varying makeup and circumstances in an attempt to reach financial and campaign goals. The caring pastor will not risk the potential damage to child, adult, or church inherent in competition with others.

The pastor can safely use one form of competition as a motivator—competition with oneself. Comparison with one’s own performance can be a high motivator when it arises out of the desire of the individual to excel and to offer the very best to the Lord.

2. Self-esteem. Nothing has greater impact upon motivation than self-esteem. The focus upon building and protecting a person’s self-esteem is a fairly recent phenomenon. Robert Schuller suggests that this is the new reformation arising within the church.

In a volunteer organization the high self-esteem of the volunteers is an absolute necessity for maintaining their interest and continued support. In demonstrating the importance of self-esteem, Bernard Rosenbaum refers to Abraham Korann’s findings: 1. Individuals who are told they are incompetent to achieve a specific goal or task, even though they have had no previous experience with the task, will perform worse than those who are told they are competent to achieve the task goals. 2. Self-perceived ability based upon previous performances is positively related to
Our first reaction to the idea of appraisal may be one of cold, sweaty fear. But the volunteer worker needs to know that his work is important enough to be reviewed.

later performances. 3. The more a person has failed in the past, the less he or she will aspire to succeed in the future. 4. If groups have failed previously, they set goals in ways that increase the probability of their failing again. 5. Individuals and groups with low self-esteem are less likely to achieve difficult goals they have set for themselves than individuals with high self-esteem. 10

The caring pastor will be very protective not only of his individual member’s self-esteem but also of that of the group. He will do all he can through his preaching, teaching, and in his leadership to increase each member’s self-esteem.

3. Reinforcement. An often-overlooked strategy for increasing people’s motivation is that of positive reinforcement. This strategy succeeds simply because “people are more likely to repeat an action if its consequences are pleasant, just as they are more likely not to repeat it if the consequences are unpleasant.” 11 We need to remember, when complimenting someone on a job well done, to be specific. We should explain what we appreciate about his work. Jesus illustrated this principle in the parable of the talents. A “well done, thou good and faithful servant” goes a long way.

4. Communication. The President of the United States, as well as all political candidates and corporations, know that a good press secretary is an absolute necessity. Within the church structure there must be good communication. Every member must know what is going on, why, and when. Lack of information increases distrust and apathy.

Church committees, as well as the pastor, must recognize the value of two-way communication. Many times the church board will wrestle with a difficult financial problem that would be quickly resolved if brought to the entire congregation.

5. Goal-setting. Most churches that take their mission to the world seriously will find themselves setting goals. In the past few years much has been written about the importance of goal-setting. Organizational theories such as management by objective and the systemic model of organization have stressed the importance of goals. But the motivating potential of goal-setting has been almost totally neglected in the organizational activity within the church. The church board argues and, finally, formulates the goals. Then the pastor and the board expect the members to rally around to implement these goals with which they have had nothing to do, and in which in some cases they are not even interested. One of the principles of motivation is that a person will attempt to achieve only the objectives to which he is committed. Pastors must seek ways of involving the full congregation in generating genuine church goals and objectives. Once the members “own” the goals, they will develop the motivation to reach them.

6. Performance appraisal. Our first reaction to the idea of appraisal may be one of cold, sweaty fear. But the volunteer worker needs to know that his work is important enough to be reviewed. We can lessen the fright by suggesting that he do his own appraisal, evaluating his own efforts. This gives the church board, or preferably the program audit committee, 12 something to reward. If the worker was pleased with success, but they can prevent the pastor’s motivation to carry out their work.

8. Image. In understanding how to motivate people to serve in the church, we also need to consider the overall image of the church and the department that needs help. A good image, or reputation, will go a long way in motivating a person to give his time and energy to that department.

Admittedly, the pastor will never find the task of motivating an average church easily accomplished. But these principles of motivation, wisely practiced, will increase his effectiveness as a leader. The work of soul winning still belongs to the Holy Spirit, but without dedicated and motivated laymen the church faces defeat. These principles cannot promise success, but they can prevent the pastor’s leadership from inhibiting the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the church members.

2 Ibid., p. 197.
4 Ibid., pp. 47, 48.
8 Rosennbaum, op. cit., p. 35.
9 Ibid., p. 59.
Stress in the chaplaincy

It would be nice if our bodies had built-in red lights that would flash when we encounter excessive and harmful levels of stress. On second thought, we would probably pay no more attention to flashing red lights than we do to obvious signs of stress already present. One facet of ministry that is especially vulnerable to stress-related problems is hospital chaplaincy.

by Walter E. Kloss

Code 99, emergency! Code 99, emergency!” The urgent call summoned the crisis team from all corners of the hospital. Skilled physicians and technicians rushed to the aid of an elderly gentleman in cardiac arrest. Frightened and concerned, the patient’s wife waited outside the cubicle where her husband was lying critically ill. A member of the crisis team, the hospital chaplain greeted her and guided her to the seclusion of the patients’ lounge. They visited quietly as the team worked on her husband.

This was to have been a day of celebration for the patient and his wife—the last day of work before retirement. She had packed his last lunch that morning. In a week they would move to Florida. As the chaplain visited with her it became apparent that the longer the team worked on her husband the grimmer the prospects became. Her tears flowed freely as the harsh reality of the situation developed.

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“I'm so frightened,” she said, “so frightened. What will I do if I lose him?” The crisis team coordinator motioned for the chaplain to join her. “He didn’t make it, chaplain; they couldn’t bring him around. He never responded. Perhaps you should break the news to her.” The chaplain dreaded the task. His heart went out to her. As he turned to face the woman, his face revealed the truth.

“He’s gone, isn’t he?” There was a sense of reality in her voice, but the chaplain could see the pleading in her eyes. “Yes, I’m afraid he is. They couldn’t save him. They did all they could, but he’s gone.” She and the chaplain cried together. They shared the pain of her loss and her memories of thirty-eight years of marriage.

After the bereaved wife said goodbyes at the bedside, she thanked the chaplain for being with her during the ordeal. They embraced, and she left. As the chaplain watched her leave, he knew he had shared the most intense moment of her life. He thought of Moses’ experience, and saw new meaning in the words “Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5).

Hospital chaplains routinely respond to emergencies like this. Moved by the Lord’s counsel to “love thy neighbor,” they work in an environment of crisis and pain. One moment the summons is to the bedside of a frightened young woman facing breast surgery. The next to a grieving husband whose wife lies dying in the intensive care unit. Whatever the crisis, the chaplain must meet the urgency and gravity of the moment. There is no time to plan strategy.
A recent study exploring work-related stress in the chaplaincy demonstrated considerably higher levels of impairment in that profession than in the general population.

Reacting appropriately demands an emotional commitment to share the anguish of a fellow human being. But this is not achieved without paying a price.

A retired U.S. Army hospital chaplain, with twenty-seven years' experience, comments on this cost: "There is a great amount of stress-related illness among those who serve as health-care chaplains. Even the 'giants' in the field are human. I believe their health problems were related to their vocation."

Social psychiatry supports the Army chaplain's suspicion. Research has established a significant link between health problems and work stress. High levels of worry, role conflict, and a sense of unfulfilled role expectations are the main stressors contributing to tension-related physical and psychological illness.

Most chaplains have only a vague awareness of the link between physical problems and their vocation. James, a 44-year-old chaplain with thirteen years' experience, is typical. He is widely recognized in his hospital for the ability to nurture, to care, and to bring serenity and peace to suffering patients. But he suffers from serious high blood pressure, a condition that could lead to heart attack or stroke. The medication prescribed controls his blood pressure, but has made him sexually impotent. Though James was initially skeptical, he is beginning to accept the connection between his work and his blood pressure.

A recent study exploring work-related stress in the chaplaincy demonstrated considerably higher levels of impairment in that profession than in the general population. The study used physical symptoms to explore various organ systems and overall reactions such as fatigue, sleep problems, and mood disturbances. A cross section of the College of Chaplains, the certifying body for the profession, reported 57.7 percent impairment (based on three or more symptoms), as compared to 32.8 percent in the general population. More than 90 percent of the cross section reported one or more symptoms pointing to stress-related illness. Paradoxically hospital chaplains, in ministering to the stress-induced ailments of others, have largely ignored their own vulnerability to stress-related disease. They are professionals trained to recognize the warning signals, yet 76 percent of them reported excessive levels of fatigue—one of the major warning signals of stress.

One chaplain's response to the survey typifies the difficulty the profession has in accepting the idea that psychological stress in chaplains can be converted to physical impairment. Although he reported in the survey no physical or psychological symptoms, he stated orally to the researcher that twice within the previous five years he had undergone triple bypass surgery and saw no connection between it and his vocation.

Denial of the reality of psychosomatic illness can result in serious difficulty.

Chaplains accept symptoms of stress as the necessary price that must be paid to carry out their pastoral role. The significance of the telltale symptoms are minimized or denied.

Paul has been a hospital chaplain for thirty-five years. He is loved for his capacity to teach the gentle art of pastoral care. Literally hundreds of chaplains and pastors have received their pastoral vision from Paul. But he has had little time for himself or his family. Every year or so, however, Paul is hospitalized for extreme fatigue and symptoms of heart attack. Even in the hospital he makes himself available to his people. He won't admit the obvious relationship between the stress of his work and his hospitalizations. Paul's experience emphasizes the results of the study of stress in the chaplaincy.

The survey uncovered a number of startling findings concerning the overall health of hospital chaplains. Gastrointestinal complaints were the most prevalent (37 percent). A significant group reported cardiovascular symptoms (32 percent). Twenty-two percent experienced circulatory system difficulties.

Why do chaplains continue to deny the stress of their work? For one thing, stress-related diseases develop slowly after a crisis is encountered. Chaplains learn to adjust to symptoms of stress much like the victims of the Buffalo Creek flood, which nearly wiped out the town, had to adjust to the aftereffects. For more than two years after the dam burst, burying four thousand homes, survivors continued to suffer abnormally frequent major and minor physical ailments not directly caused by the accident. Chaplains also accept symptoms of stress as the necessary price that must be paid to carry out their pastoral role. The significance of the telltale symptoms are minimized or denied.

Unlike the treatment of infectious disease, which may require no more than a single shot of penicillin, the management of chronic stress-related illness demands a lifelong commitment to be responsible for maintaining one's own health. This requires hard work, serious commitment, and persistent practice of preventive techniques. Unfortunately, the busy life of the hospital chaplain often has no room for such a commitment in time and energy.

The summons "Love thy neighbor" takes priority over all else in the chaplain's daily schedule. Perhaps the chaplaincy needs to restudy that Biblical counsel in its entirety. The complete text reads "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

Research for this article has come from the doctoral dissertation "The Effect of Work Role on the Mental Health of Hospital Chaplains," by Walter E. Kloss, Ph.D., 1983, on file at Newport University, Newport Beach, California.
In 1888 the direction of the Adventist Church took an upward turn at the Minneapolis ministerial presession. The slide toward legalism came face to face with the uplifted Christ, and the church has not been the same since.

The 1985 World Ministers Council follows in the tradition of 1888. Once again the church is calling its ministers, administrators, evangelists, pastors' wives, and Bible workers together to study the Word. This just may be the greatest presession in a century. Ten power-packed plenary sessions and thirty-six Spirit-filled seminars presage powerful potential.

You won't want to miss this event. If you are a denominational employee, contact your employing organization for details of any plans to help you be there. We welcome the clergy of all faiths to attend. Non-Adventist clergy please write to Ministry for details.

In praise of guilt

In this age, guilt has acquired a bad reputation. But more often than not it functions positively, helping preserve societal and personal relationships, and highlighting our need of God.

We live in the “me” generation. Our age has seen the acceptance of such farsighted wisdom as “If it feels good, do it.” Current popular psychology suggests that guilt is an emotion to be avoided at all costs. If we experience guilt we are encouraged to get rid of it by any means possible to avoid the damage it may do to our tender psyches.

The media have suggested that religion makes people feel guilty for doing what comes naturally. Those who arouse this emotion in others are often portrayed as unhappy ogres. This has made many (and particularly ministers) sensitive to the charge of “laying guilt trips” on people.

The April 30, 1984, U.S. News & World Report carried an article titled “The Emotion of Guilt Has Been Given a Bum Rap,” which rebuts distortions such as these. In the article Dr. Willard Gaylin, clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons, notes that inappropriate guilt, like other inappropriate emotions, is destructive. But that does not make guilt bad.

Dr. Gaylin contrasts guilt with “guilty fear,” which is fear of punishment for wrongdoing. We feel guilty fear when we become afraid of being caught violating external standards. Guilt, on the other hand, is a form of self-punishment for failure to live up to internal values. It often requires—and invites—punishment for its relief.

Guilty fear may show that the one experiencing it has not yet internalized the value system violated (as a child might fear punishment but experience no guilt for disregarding a parental value that the child has not yet internalized). Or it may indicate that the person involved has rejected the precept as having little or no consequence.

Guilt, then, is an emotion of maturity. It presupposes internalized standards, a developed conscience.

Gaylin states, “When you have actually done something morally wrong, it is always good to experience guilt—always.” Guilt serves to maintain the larger society. And it assists in preserving personal relationships by leading us to apologize for unjustified bad behavior.

Gaylin concludes by saying: “When we examine either the behavior on our public streets or the moral behavior of many of our public officials, we begin to sense that the problem of our time is not an overwhelming sense of guilt but an underdeveloped one. When you do bad, feel guilty. It is good for you and for the rest of us who share your environment.”

I did a quick survey of the Biblical view of guilt and found the following. Like Dr. Gaylin, Scripture closely associates guilt and punishment. In the Bible the threat of punishment functions as a deterrent—even for Christians. And guilt is an appropriate emotion for people (including Christians) when they have transgressed moral standards. Guilt, or more accurately an attitude that does not recognize and deal with guilt, separates one from God (Hosea 5:15). And—it’s almost a truism—Scripture is concerned with the way of clearing guilt. It points to the God of salvation as the one who can deliver from guilt (Psalm 51:14).

Guilt continually carried can become a burden that eventually breaks a person mentally and physically as well as spiritually. Here Christianity offers release. Jesus spoke of our need to make things right with our fellow human beings as part of the process of dealing with our guilt: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matt. 5:23, 24, R.S.V.). The Temple altar, of course, was used primarily in services designed to expiate guilt.

The good news that is ours offers forgiveness: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, R.S.V.). And it offers us the hope that we need not repeat the same offenses (see Jude 24; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Romans 6; et cetera).

Guilt, then, serves a positive function in our spiritual life, as well as in our societal and personal relationships. It highlights our weaknesses—our need of God’s grace both to forgive and to empower us to break out of our bad patterns of living.

When you do bad, feel guilty. It is good for you and for the rest of us who share your environment.”

I am not suggesting that guilt is an emotion we all should “enjoy” continuously, just that it is an emotion appropriate to all of us at times. It serves a purpose. And we may deal with guilt in better ways than denying, repressing, or ignoring it.

And I am suggesting that we should not live in terror of arousing this emotion in those to whom we minister. Although we should not deliberately seek to play on the emotions of our hearers in order to arouse guilt and thus manipulate them into doing what we think they ought to do, at times our members should feel guilty. And at those times, if we through our preaching or our counseling arouse this emotion in them, we have done them a service. Through this means they may be led to straighten out their relationships with God and/or other people.—D.C.J.
Parson to Parson: What would you do?

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?

Planning and goal-setting

The two primary principles of personal management—planning and goal-setting—will help in handling the paperwork problem.

It is surprising how much work can be done, and done with enthusiasm, when you have spent time planning for it. Time is like money. If you do not budget your money, paying bills is a terrible task. It just seems as though there is never enough to go around, and your accounts payable seem endless. But when you take time to budget for each household expense, bill-paying can even become a pleasure and can be completed on time. So it is with time. At least once a week take time to plan your work. The more detailed your plan, at least at first, the more satisfaction you will have in accomplishing your tasks.

Set aside at least a few hours each week, preferably in one block of time, for correspondence. Personally I find Monday morning a good time for correspondence and church business chores. This leaves the rest of the week free for study, sermon preparation, and visitation. If you have a regular time for letter writing, you will find that you develop a mind-set for the work, which will make it easier to accomplish. Tackle the most important or most difficult letters first. The sense of satisfaction that comes with accomplishment will give wings to your work.

Once you have planned your week, set mini goals for yourself. Write down what is to be accomplished each day and make a frequent check to see how you are doing. In other words, keep your eye on the ball. This will start your built-in automatic guidance system working for you, and you will find your work becoming easier and more pleasant.

The work of filling in denominational reports may come in a different category. Most of these reports should be done by laymen who are responsible for the particular department involved. Delegate to them the work of reporting. If they are doing their job they should have the necessary data on hand to complete them.—Lyndon McDowell, Washington, D.C.

In answer to our question on paperwork, we received an illustration of how Max Hickerson, of Houston, Texas, handles his correspondence. He wrote on the page containing the question, "I answer correspondence like this. And keep a Xerox copy for my file. No need to dictate a letter." He attached a label containing his return address to the page.

Answering your correspondence by writing the reply on the letter received allows for an immediate response and reduces the need for secretarial help. It would suffice in many situations. Of course, when first impressions count, you would want to weigh these advantages against those a professional-appearing reply offers.—Editors.

I have no secretary, so the responsibility of answering and/or originating correspondence and typing it is mine. As a matter of good stewardship, I send letters rather than make telephone calls if at all possible. The flow of letters does not decrease; however, I use a couple of methods to do the work a little faster.

First, I do not even open third- or fourth-class letters unless they are from someone I know personally and I know that the contents will interest me (for example, church mailings from former pastorates or from good friends). I figure that information important enough to demand my personal attention is important enough to use first-class postage.

Second, I try to handle my correspondence immediately so it does not pile up. I usually set aside late mornings and early afternoons for administrative work. I try to answer letters within a day, and if I need to send a letter in follow-up to a phone call, I do it within a day. The longer I wait to answer or originate letters, the harder it is for me to get them done.

To save my sanity and my family life I never take administrative work home with me!—Tony Belarmino, Gabbs, Nevada.

Civilization's curse

The curse of civilization is paperwork, in triplicate!

Treat as part of your responsibilities

I have fought this battle and, although not the ultimate victor, have the following suggestions:
1. Acknowledge this as a necessary part of one’s ministerial responsibilities and commit a definite, protected time to it.

2. Decide what is important in the incoming mail. The minister gets subscription offers, urgent pleas to help everything from world hunger to TV ministries, questionnaires regarding his work, et cetera, et cetera. Most of the time he/she is not looking for new curriculum materials or a mission project to support. It is not an uncharitable act to discard this and much other third-class material.

3. In the instance of something that does hold some possibilities for a congregation’s ministry, pass this item on to the appropriate layperson responsible for that program area—for example, missions, education, stewardship. Let him/her digest and evaluate and make recommendations.

4. Handle any administrative item only once. Granted, there are some exceptions, but as a rule this can be done. Answer a letter as soon as you have read it. Sometimes it can be done at the bottom of the sheet it comes on, with a simple handwritten response. Subscribe or don’t subscribe to an offer, but don’t lay it aside for later consideration. Trash those items that absolutely have no appeal to you.

5. Develop a workable file system—one that works for you. There are some things that need to be retrieved at a later date. Keep the system simple!

6. Denominational reports do not have to be that difficult. Most ministers know what reports are required, the schedule on which they are due, and in general the type of information that will be called for. The secret is to collect the data in the categories that will be required. Then when report time comes, one simply takes the cumulative totals and transfers them to the report form.

My denomination has an annual report with seventy-two line items (some with a, b, c sublines) that relate to membership statistics, Sunday school membership and participation, finances in categories of buildings and grounds, local program expenses, local operating expenses, and benevolences. Using a system that gives cumulative numbers, this report can be completed in less than one hour with no difficulty. (It’s one of the most liberating experiences of my ministry!)—Dow C. Harleston, Port Arthur, Texas.

**Schedule; use volunteers**

I have had some experience as a parish secretary and can relate to some of the problems. I would suggest you set aside a time each day to do the office work, scheduling the day of the week when certain things have to be done. For instance, use Tuesday for the following Sunday’s service sheet, Wednesday to write the sermon for the following Sunday, and Thursday to work with the Christian education program. Stick to your schedule as much as possible. The telephone is an interruption and so are the people who come into the office, but with scheduling, you can manage. Do not take work home. It serves no purpose but to confuse and exasperate when it comes back undone the next day. Stay an extra fifteen minutes and complete it. If you start a job, finish it before you leave, if it is at all possible.

Your correspondence should be handled immediately according to urgency. Many times people overlook the telephone as a means of answering correspondence. A great deal of time and money is used to dictate and type letters when an answer is only a dial away.

Possibly you have in your church a girl who is trying to learn to work in an office. I am sure she would be glad to give you a hand at typing stencils, et cetera. Perhaps there is a school nearby with potential help just waiting for a chance for real experience. Also some office work can be done by volunteers with little or no office experience. Most people can file, change records, and answer phones. Good luck!—Anna D. Fortune, North Attleboro, Massachusetts.

**Keep your desk cleared**

1. I never open any Addressographed or third-class mail. I toss it without a second look.

2. I open the rest, read it, sort it, then leave it for a few hours. When I come back to it I am able to take whatever action may be necessary.

3. I generally toss out immediately magazines, brochures, and booklets that I have not subscribed to or requested. Magazines like Ministry and Pulpit Helps are exceptions, but they are the only ones.

4. I clear my desk every day by 5:00 P.M. except for letters that aren’t yet overdue to relatives and friends.—Charles Gallagher, La Grange, Illinois.

**Gone but not forgotten**

How should I deal with a former pastor who persists in returning to perform weddings, funerals, and baptisms? The situation is complicated by the obvious fact that he has returned at the invitation of the members involved. I would like to know how other clergy have dealt with this common problem without alienating either the church members or the former pastor.

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. Upon your request we will withhold your name and address.

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.
Shepherdess  □  Barbara Nelson

Are you caught in the mold?

Caught between the modern admonition to “be yourself” and the reality of traditional role expectations, a minister’s wife can begin to wonder who she really is. Here are some positive ways to seek the answer.

My dear friend Barbara has handled a most important topic in a sensitive and sensible manner. She has maintained balance for ministers’ wives who must walk a precarious tightrope between turning uniqueness into unbridled freedom and turning conformity into a straitjacket. I especially appreciate her emphasis on living up to God’s expectations rather than others’ expectations as the key to true success.

If you have been discouraged, confused, or hopeless in the confinement of an expected or stereotyped role as a minister’s wife, your spirits will soar as you read her suggestions for finding the freedom meant for you in the Lord’s service.—Marie Spangler.

Are you caught in the mold? You know, the typical minister’s wife mold—the image bit? Or have you slipped out of the mold and decided to “be yourself” no matter what others expect?

While there does seem to be a growing liberalization from the traditional role expectations for ministers’ wives, the woman who does her own thing still risks being labeled a renegade. In the past wives were just expected to be husband’s assistant, perfect housekeeper and hostess, super home economist, model mother with model children, church musician, and the list could go on! Many congregations still hold, perhaps unconsciously, to these expectations when measuring the virtues of their pastor’s wife.

How should we react to the usually silent but still tangible intimations that we are not quite measuring up to the standard? Should we develop tough hides, shrug our shoulders and say it’s the members’ problem? Or should we try to

Barbara Nelson, who writes from Bozeman, Montana, knows whereof she writes. She grew up in a minister’s home and then married a pastor. (Her three children now have “ministerial homes” of their own also!) make ourselves over to please our congregations? Must we suffer in silent hopelessness? Too often I hear young pastor’s wives complain, “I just don’t seem to have the qualities for being a pastor’s wife” or “I feel so confined to a role; I can’t just be myself” or “It’s just impossible to be all everybody expects me to be!”

These days the traditional role of women is being closely scrutinized, and a great deal of attention is being directed toward liberating them from “confining” roles. In this climate, isn’t it possible to consider that the greatest contribution we can make is to be ourselves, to develop the personalities and spiritual graces that the Lord has given each of us, and to cultivate those inherent interests we love and feel most comfortable with? What it really boils down to is this: Are you what your church expects you to be, or are you what God wants you to be? If the two coincide, praise the Lord!

The Scriptures are almost silent as to the role of a pastor’s wife, but we do have the image of Jesus to pattern our lives after. How can we be ourselves, be accepted on our own merits, and still grow into the image of Jesus? God hasn’t endowed any of us with all of life’s spiritual gifts, but He has given each one enough to make us useful to our families, our congregations, and His cause. He has planted unique qualities within our personalities that with encouragement and proper motivation can bring fulfillment to our lives.

Growing into His image includes developing an honest sense of self-worth—after all, you were “bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20). In order to learn to really like yourself, you need to understand yourself and how you became the person you are. Do you think of yourself as just the pastor’s wife? That is not who you are. When you discover the wonder of self-acceptance, you become capable of reaching out to give and receive love. With the beautiful moti-vating promise “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9, R.S.V.), you can go on to understand yourself so that you can relate creatively to others. Jesus commanded us to love ourselves when He taught that the supreme law is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love your fellow men as you love yourself.

At conversion God offers us the possibility to change. He does not destroy your identity, but helps you become the person you were meant to be. Finding the true you involves discovering two things: how you are like people in general and how you are uniquely different.

One thing we have in common with everyone else is our basic needs: acceptance, approval, and affection. Acceptance—how we long for it from our churches. The opposite of this is rejection, one of the most painful of all experiences. Approval—how we work to win it at least from the “significant” people, sometimes seeking it by performance rather than by being our real self. Affection—how we long to feel its warmth from knowing that others care about us as people, not just as performers. These needs are common to all mankind. But how can you discover your unique qualities?

In his book The One and Only You, Bruce Larson gives an exercise that helps in discovering those things that have made you what you are. He suggests asking yourself some questions to trigger your thinking about some of the forces that have come into your life to shape the one and only you today. First, he suggests that you try to recall some of the sights, smells, and sounds of pleasant childhood experiences. (I can still smell the aroma of roasting chestnuts and the steam whistle of the drum oven as the vendor with his cart passed by our compound in Korea. Just the thought of it brings on a happy, tingling sensation!) What was the best advice you ever
received? What book other than the Bible has made the greatest impression on you? If you could relive one day of your life, which would it be? What is the childlike quality that you have retained? What is the most sentimental possession you have? What quality or characteristic do you like best about yourself? Reliving some of the pleasant childhood memories and focusing on some of these questions will help to reacquaint you with your past experiences and present feelings. You are the product of countless interactions and influences and present feelings. You are the unique you and can use you in His unique way.

It is interesting to note that even after his conversion the apostle Paul retained some of the unique characteristics that he had as a Pharisee before his encounter with Jesus. Until the very end he was opinionated, sometimes overpowering and critical, but still he was a changed person with new visions, goals, and purpose in life. He allowed Christ to sanctify and use his uniqueness for the gospel's sake. You too can say with conviction, "This is me. This is what I am most comfortable with. This is what I have to give to God."

Which isn't to say that we don't need to be concerned about our faults and weaknesses. Or that we can dismiss them as just a part of our uniqueness! Not at all. But to truly discover yourself you must not dwell on your weaknesses. Self-criticism is as destructive as criticism of others. Confess your weaknesses to Jesus, leave them with Him, and reach forth unto those things which are before and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

Jesus gave a basic principle that will do more to make you like yourself than anything else: "Give, and it will be given to you" (Luke 6:38, R.S.V.). Give whatever you have, whether it is love, sympathy, help, understanding, forgiveness, food, or money where needed. You have a special quality that someone needs. It may be a simple note of appreciation, giving undivided attention to someone who needs a listening ear, or pausing to have a conversation with a child or with a withdrawn visitor at church. This may be the special ministry the Lord has given you.

I was blessed with two godly grandmothers who were ministers' wives. Neither of them was highly gifted in the traditional talents expected of the minister's wife. Neither was an aggressive leader or fluent speaker. Neither had outstanding musical abilities, but both were at peace with God and with themselves. Each realized her sphere of usefulness and capitalized on it. One grandmother was an excellent seamstress who not only saw to her family's needs but was often found sewing for some child whose mother was ill or some person who was experiencing financial difficulties. My other grandmother, who was known for her wholesome, tasty cooking, shared her love and concern for people who needed not only the Bread of Life but physical food for an empty stomach. Both women were loved and respected, and I have no doubt that they made a very positive contribution to their husbands' lives and ministry.

One pastor's wife who sometimes bemoans the fact that she was "missing the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14). The verse marked T.L.B. is taken from The Living Bible, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

Prayers from the parsonage

Well, Lord, we should all know how to manage on our own now that so much self-help material is available.

I wonder how marriages survived before manuals on communication, sex, and division of labor became available. How did parents bring up children before someone told them how to play with their baby, love their child, and talk with their teenager? People must just have muddled through life's crises before there were books about living as a single parent or managing as a widow. We even have guides for enjoying a holiday or creating family traditions!

Everyone's looking for answers, and it's much easier to turn to another person's experience, advice, or research and follow the formula: steps a, b, and c. Yet isn't the best learning forged in the crucible of life?

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness. Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is wholehearted and straightforward and sincere" (James 3:17, T.L.B.).

I've got so much to learn, dear Teacher. Reveal my areas of need (but not all at once, please!). Then lead me to the Bible for basic principles. As I apply these, give me discernment.

Make me observant of others whose example could save me frustration and mistakes. If my circumstances are too narrow, bring wise counselors into my life. But let them know me well enough to match their suggestions to my personality and lifestyle.

If I still need help, lead me to the best of the how-to books. As I read, may I realize that what works for someone else may be ineffective for me and that there is more than one side to a subject. Let me know when to stop reading and start doing, for I do not want to become an armchair expert.

Finally, keep me patient with people who believe there is only one way to do something—thiers. Make me tolerant of people who parrot the latest best-seller or pass on empty cliches.

Dear Teacher, I believe that You give each of us the time we need to gain essential knowledge. With Your guidance I shall know when to look to others for help and when the answers can be discovered by myself.

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With its 206 bones, 639 muscles, 4 million pain sensors in the skin, 750 million air sacs in the lungs, 16 billion nerve cells, and 30 trillion cells in total, the human body is remarkably designed for life.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:26, 27). Mankind has been fascinated with the form and function of the human body from the very beginning. For beauty and sheer simplicity of line, it is unmatched.

As a machine, the human body is the pinnacle of God's work, formed on the sixth day of Creation, after which God declared, “It is very good.”

Chemically, the body is unequalled for complexity. Each one of its 30 trillion cells is a mini chemical factory that performs about 10,000 chemical functions. And every cell has about 10^9 (1 trillion) bits of data—equal to every letter in 4 million books! Each one also replaces itself every seven years. Each one is independent, yet cooperates with millions of other cells.

Even though there are over 4 billion people alive today, each body is exorbitantly expensive (and about 50 billion humans have been born since Adam). If its organic chemicals were bought on the open market, a medium-sized human body would cost at least $6 million.

The body’s billions of parts all work together as a team—its 206 bones provide the framework, and its 639 muscles enable it to move with incredible split-second timing. Its skill of balance is such that we can perform feats of acrobatics and yet have such strength that human weight-lifting feats abound. Even demonstrations of incredible strength by normal people under adversity are common in medical records. Mrs. Maxwell Rogers once lifted the end of a 3,600-pound car. The jack holding it up had collapsed, and the car had fallen on her son.

The strength of the developed human body is phenomenal. Paul Anderson, of Toccoa, Georgia, lifted three tons (6,270 pounds) of dead weight in a back lift. For years he was called the strongest man on earth. He was also the first man in history who could press a barbell of 400 pounds. The record for this feat is now held by Leonid Zhabotinsky, of the U.S.S.R., who pressed 482 pounds.

Our body is controlled and coordinated by over 16 billion neurons and 120 trillion “connection boxes” packed together into an unfathomably complex set of neuropassageways. The system is much like a modern nation, interconnected by billions of telephone wires. All of this in a brain and spinal column that weighs slightly over three pounds! In comparison, a bee has only about 900 nerve cells, an ant only 250. In the large-gauge fibers, nerve impulses flash along at more than 200 miles per hour. All told, the human brain and nervous system is the most complex arrangement of matter anywhere in the universe. The whole body system functions as a unified whole to enable a human to run, sing, remember, create, and achieve the myriads of other phenomenal tasks we usually take for granted.

We are incredibly complicated in other ways as well. The adjectives in an unabridged dictionary that refer to human dispositions number a staggering 17,958. All of these words describe ways in which individuals can potentially categorize themselves—brave, kindly, liberal, powerful—the list seems endless. When the possible behavioral tendencies, talents, abilities, tastes, interests, attitudes, and values—such as enjoying stamp collecting, travel, music, or even one’s inner thoughts and feelings—are added to the list, an almost infinite number is produced. One scientist estimated that our brain, on the average, processes over 10,000 thoughts and concepts each day—and some people process a much greater number.

Athletic feats amaze millions, but the human voice captures our hearts and minds even more. All cultures have their music, and singing praises to the glory of God is a prominent part of almost every worship service. Some of the most beautiful music in history was composed to glorify our Maker. Paul said to keep “singing and making melody . . . to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). And the most beautiful voices in history have sung music to the Lord in the wide range of notes that the human voice can produce. The highest note on record sung by the normal voice is C#; the lowest is Great E#. The normal human voice can be heard as far away as 200 yards, although practice has enabled it to carry as far as six miles.

Words are formed by the vocal cords producing a wide range of sounds, which, in turn, are modified by the tongue, teeth, lips, and movement of the cheeks. The English language contains well over a million words, although the average person knows only about 50,000. The voice system, although able to produce hundreds of billions of unique and different words, speaks an average of only 4,800 daily.

The body also conveys information much as words do. With the eyes, lips, and movements of the face muscles, over 4,000 different messages, all of which can be silently communicated by our face, have been cataloged. Fear, anger, happiness, and concern are just a few of these messages that we convey to each other many times every day.

The human ear, with its 24,000 “hair cells,” which convert vibrations to electrical impulses, is capable of hearing sounds of astonishingly low-level acoustic energy. Under favorable conditions a normal person may actually perceive

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sound waves with the power of only $10^{-48}$ (1/10,000,000,000,000,000) of a watt. This is so little energy that if our ears were slightly more sensitive, we could actually hear the noise of the collision of molecules in the air.

Looking at the eye, we find that the amount of radiation (light energy) necessary to stimulate the human optic nerve is so small that if the mechanical energy required to lift a single pea one inch were converted into light energy, it would provide enough stimulus to activate the optic nerve!

To work this marvelous machine, we need energy and building materials. Our three and one-half pounds of daily food intake is chewed by 32 teeth (one of our most precious possessions) and mixed by saliva, a mild digestant secreted from glands located in the mouth area. After food has gone down the esophagus, digestion continues in the stomach, an amazing organ that must dissolve food and yet not dissolve itself. The acid in it would eat the varnish off a kitchen table in seconds. If this precarious balance is lost, ulcers (in which the stomach digests itself) result. The food then moves into the small intestine, a 20-foot tube that transfers vitamins and minerals from the food into the bloodstream, then through the five-foot-long large intestine, which absorbs water and other liquids. These, then, are the components of the 35- to 40-foot alimentary canal.

For eating and in between, the average person swallows about 2,000 times every 24 hours. Our heart beats over 100,000 times daily to move blood 168 million miles around our body. We take about 23,800 breaths per day to bring about 438 cubic feet of air to our lungs. The airways to the lungs are lined with glands that secrete a sticky mucous film. The mucus acts like flypaper, catching germs and dust so they can be swept away by cilia, thousands of microscopic hairs that move back and forth 12 times a second. They move faster when they sweep toward the throat than when they move toward the lungs, pushing the thousands of bacteria and dirt particles in the system toward the throat where they are harmless.

The air passes through the trachea into the lungs, whose purpose is to exchange gases—taking into the body life-giving oxygen and removing carbon dioxide and other waste products of body metabolism. This process is done by over 750 million microscopic air sacs called alveoli. If spread flat, they would cover over 600 square feet, a surface area some 25 times greater than that of the skin.

The body has a remarkable and complex system to keep its temperature at about 98.6°F. Humans, though, have been known to survive at abnormally low temperatures for long periods of time. Dorothy May Stephens experienced an internal temperature drop to 64.4°F—more than 34 degrees below normal. She was found unconscious one winter morning in 1951. Mrs. Stephens survived only because of the adaptability of the body and the heroic efforts of the hospital. The record, however, is held by 2-year-old Vickie Davis, who in 1956 was found unconscious with an internal temperature of 60.8°F and survived!

These extremes illustrate only the ability of the body to survive—it has an incredibly efficient system that almost always keeps the temperature within extremely narrow parameters and normally experiences less than a degree of variation. Controlled by the hypothalamus, part of the brain, the body is cooled by secretions of liquids from the body's approximately 2 million sweat glands. Sweating is a remarkably efficient and an essential means of fine-tuning the body's temperature. The evaporation of sweat causes cooling, a process that goes on constantly. The body works by oxidation (burning, literally), and burning food requires oxygen, as do all fires. For this reason we breathe. As in all fires, heat is given off. Perspiration in the form of vapor, called insensible perspiration, is used to cool the body and control the hair-breath temperature adjustments. The result is about a quart of fluids secreted daily. When we are cold, the problem is mostly that too much heat is being lost. We often reduce the heat loss by putting on something warm to keep the body's heat in. The body generates enough heat so we can normally stay quite warm, even if the air around us is −50°F. Only if the loss is faster than the gain do we feel cold.

To convey information about temperature and other body conditions to the brain, the skin alone has about 4 million structures that are sensitive to pain. In addition, it has about 500,000 sensitive to touch and 200,000 to temperature. These "report stations" keep the brain attuned to conditions all over the body. It is an elaborate "spy" network without parallel in the man-made world.

Some people say that all of this "just happened" through mistakes in reproduction (mutations), and the very few beneficial ones were accumulated by "natural selection" and chance. Yet, the more we learn about the body, the more we realize that there is much more yet to be discovered. One could spend a lifetime studying a single organ or organ system (and many people do). Thus we have cardiologists, hematologists, urologists, proctologists, gynecologists, neurologists, psychiatrists, et cetera. We are indeed, as Psalm 139:14 states, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and God's creation is worthy of praise.

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World Stewardship Day

On December 15, Seventh-day Adventist congregations around the world will observe World Stewardship Day. This is not a day to promote an offering or seek some commitment to a program; rather, it is a time for pastors to lead their congregations into a realization of the nature of God's covenant with the believer and of His immeasurable goodness to all. I urge every minister who preaches on that Sabbath (or an alternate Sabbath if the church so chooses) to present the Word of God skillfully, clearly emphasizing the great mercy of God to us, and the worth of obedience. As congregational leaders, we can make it a day of thankfulness and rejoicing.

Deuteronomy 28, the chapter of blessings and cursings, is a most appropriate Scripture passage from which to preach. You might consider verses 9 to 11 as a text:

"The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee."

Elder James O. Cunningham, stewardship secretary of the Pacific Union Conference, North American Division, has prepared a sample sermon for World Stewardship Day. In it he demonstrates that:

1. Obedience is man's option and privilege, and it expresses our love to God and our response to His invitation.
2. As man responds to God in obedience and love, God especially blesses, protects, enriches, and empowers.
3. Disobedience is also man's option, and God will not interfere in such a choice.

4. As man chooses disobedience, the path of self-dependence, he removes himself from God's special blessing, protection, enrichment, and empowerment, leaving himself a helpless victim of Satan's sophistries and manipulation.

Pastors, conference leaders, and departmental directors, on this special day let us join with all God's people around the world in a great celebration of the goodness of God. Let us praise God as the Source of all blessings: material wealth, health of body and mind, the talent of time, the blessings of family and loved ones, the privilege of influence, the ability to empathize, and the privilege of sharing God's eternal plan for the salvation of man.

W. B. Quigley, Associate Secretary, Ministerial/Stewardship Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Advent on Ice?

From page 10

that the number of the redeemed shall be made up (Rev. 6:11), and that it will reach the completeness of 144,000 (see chap. 14:3).

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:35-37).

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2 C. H. Dodd preferred later to speak of inaugurated eschatology, then followed the suggestion of J. Jeremias, who proposed speaking of an eschatology in process of fulfillment: "self-fulfilling eschatology.
4 When Desmond Ford claims that in Matthew 24:34 Jesus "said that He planned to return in the time of the generation to which He was speaking" (Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment, p. 297), he places himself in the line of the eschatological outlook of the preceding writers but does not solve the problem any better than they. He leaves himself two alternatives: Either he places himself in the line of Jewish eschatology and considers Jesus mistaken (then the thesis of a missionary task to fulfill is only an a posteriori justification for His failure to return) or he abandons futuristic eschatology and takes sides with the thesis of realized eschatology. This position raises the problem of the canon.
6 Ford, loc. cit.
Help for church organists

The American Guild of Organists offers a number of publications that your congregation and church organist may find helpful. Pamphlets include "Repertoire for the Small Organ," "Buying an Organ," and "Acoustics in Worship Spaces." Cassettes include "Establishing a Church Music Program," "Creative Use of Hymns in Worship," and "Introduction to Electronic Music." A list of inexpensive resource materials is available from American Guild of Organists, 815 Second Avenue, Suite 318, New York, New York 10017.

Personalizing baby dedications

Want to personalize baby dedication services and at the same time add potential for a lasting impact on the children's lives? Select for each child a Bible text that can become in a special sense his text, and give it to him as part of the dedicatory service.

Here's how I have done it. First, I find the meaning of the baby's name in a good baby name book. (You may have to trace some of the modern names back to their older forms.) Then, to use the meaning I've found, I open a concordance to select an appropriate text for the baby. For example, Stephanie means "crowned one." Among the verses under "crown" in the concordance, I used Revelation 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." During the service, after introducing the parents and child, I give the meaning of her name and then give the text to her, with a short remark to the effect that this is the only crown worth centering one's life upon. If you mention each child individually in the dedicatory prayer, you might refer to the theme of the text, also.

I also write the text out for the parents to keep, either directly on the dedication certificate or on a card that I put with the certificate. (I include the baby's name and its meaning with the text.) If someone in your congregation does calligraphy, he might be willing to write the text on a card so that it would be suitable for framing.

Some suggestions: Not all names are as easy to work with as Stephanie. Sometimes you will have to use a synonym or find a text on a theme related to the meaning of the baby's name. For example, Mark, "warlike one," 2 Timothy 2:3, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." I have sometimes used the baby's middle name when the first name was too difficult. If the name yields nothing suitable, choose a good verse unrelated to the name. Your introductory remarks here will be especially important.

In choosing the text, keep it God/Christ-centered. And keep it positive. For instance, in reference to Mark, "warlike one," don't use a text that tells the child not to be warlike. Instead, find a positive aspect of the meaning on which you can dwell. You need not limit the text to just one verse. On the soldier, 2 Timothy 2:4 adds a further thought worth including. Check several versions to see which words of the text fit the occasion most nicely. If in a service you have more than one baby with the same name, try to use different texts for each.
Recommended reading

Sing a New Song: Worship Renewal for Adventists Today

Here is a launching pad for worship renewal. The first of four parts puts Adventist worship in its contemporary and Biblical context. Holmes points out two foci of worship: the presence of God, and the victory of Christ; and two matching human responses: awe and faith.

Part two deals with the theological context of Adventist worship. Worship is related to the Sabbath, Christ's heavenly ministry, the second advent, and the sacraments. Holmes includes suggestions for making a baptism or communion the focus of a service instead of an add-on.

Part three deals with how worship can be made evangelistic by highlighting distinctive doctrines within the service. Part four focuses on the role of preaching in worship. Holmes strikes a healthy balance: "Any trend that increases and elaborates liturgy and decreases and de-emphasizes the sermon is dangerous and counterproductive to the church's life and mission. But by the same token the sermon is not the object of worship. The congregation gathers to celebrate the presence of God, to adore Him and praise His holy name."

Recently published

Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties. Gleason L. Archer, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1982, 352 pages, $16.95. Written to defend the standpoint of Biblical inerrancy as opposed to infallibility by showing that texts sometimes regarded as problem texts really aren't problems at all. The introduction is valuable as a brief compendium of types of errors encountered in transmission. The body of the book makes interesting reading, although some of the arguments proffered would be acceptable only to those inclined as strongly as Mr. Archer toward belief in inerrancy. Archer goes through the Bible, dealing with each difficult text individually.

What Kids Need Most in a Dad. Tim Hansel, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1984, 188 pages, $9.95. The author is accustomed to facing challenges as founder of a Christian wilderness survival school. He challenges his readers to take their responsibility as Dad seriously and suggests positive steps for supplying what kids need most.


Reach Out: Evangelism for the Joy of It. Paul J. Foust and Richard G. Korthals, Concordia, St. Louis, 1984, 95 pages, $3.95, paper. Part of the Speaking the Gospel Series. Comparing the Christian's faith-sharing work to a boy working with his father to build a birdhouse, the authors deal with the principles of successful evangelism through enjoying working together with God.

The Great Omission. Robertson McQuilkin, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1984, 102 pages, $4.95, paper. McQuilkin sees five major reasons the church is not fulfilling the Great Commission very well: We don't care that much, we don't see very well, we think there must be some other way, our prayers are peripheral, someone isn't listening. In five chapters he examines each of these problems, shows what fallacies have led to failure, and challenges the church to take the Lord's commission seriously. Two appendices round out the presentation with a "Great Commission Commitment" and a list of specific questions that individual Christians should confront in deciding to prepare to meet the mission challenge.