Should our church ordain women?
**Letters**

**Some like it (not?)**

What an excellent contribution to theory, theology, and practice of hospital visitation from Gerald W. Paul ("Expanding the Patient’s World," November, 1984). Many thanks for your printing it.—Pastor, Metropolis, Illinois.

I hope when I am hospitalized that Gerald Paul never comes to visit me! It is quite obvious from his article that when he visits sick people, his major concern is meeting his own needs, not those of the sick. So the man gets bored—don’t we all! However, there is much, much more behind those boring recitations.

What surprises me more is that a magazine of your stature should publish such an article. Perhaps you and Mr. Paul both have been fortunate enough not to have been assailed by some of the extremely heavy stuff of life—but others have not been so spared. The way to refocus is not by ignoring and covering up the patient’s needs, and instead meeting the pastor’s (or visitor’s) needs. The patient’s agenda is, after all, the most important.—Pastor, Springboro, Ohio.

Gerald W. Paul says that “explicit theologizing with patients is taboo among the devotees of pastoral psychology.” Paul has set up a straw man and ridiculed it. I am amazed that your journal, which has printed many articles helpful to pastors, would print this essentially dishonest piece.

What many teachers of pastoral care in seminary and hospital do warn against is the minister’s escaping into ill-timed preaching or theologizing because he/she doesn’t want to pay attention to what a sick person is saying. One has to wonder if this is Mr. Paul’s problem.

Mr. Paul’s prescription sounds more like the work of Levites and scribes than like that of Samaritans.—Kenneth R. Mitchell, Schultz Professor of Pastoral Theology, Eden Theological Seminary.

Paul’s article supplies what we believe to be excellent suggestions for brightening patients’ lives. While his is not a definitive statement on the psychology of ministering to the seriously ill, we believe his suggestions to be valid alternatives for helping patients. Besides, we like his sense of humor! For other excellent suggestions on hospital visitation, see “Visiting Those Who Hurt” by Larry Yeagley, MINISTRY, November, 1982.

A portion of Gerald Paul’s response to Professor Mitchell follows.—Editors.

In a single sentence of my 2,500-word piece, Kenneth R. Mitchell somehow discerns that I’m a dishonest escapist who sets up straw men and that I’m more Levite and scribe than Samaritan. O for the perspicacity of this professor of pastoral theology!

Clergy and academics looking for ways of making visits more effective might treat my article as a think piece and use it to critique their own methods. My piece is a joyful piece describing a joyful approach to hospital visitation; Professor Mitchell’s letter is an angry piece defending a joyless approach to pastoral care. Sick or well, we need both his stress on the cross and mine on the resurrection. What I’m saying is that in the hospital the patient is only too aware of the suffering of the cross. What’s needed are visiting ministers who reflect, primarily, the joy of the resurrection.—Gerald W. Paul.

**Put me on!**

I am writing to ask if my name might be added to your mailing list! I have just perused a copy of your July, 1984, edition and have truly been encouraged, edified, and pleasantly surprised by the number of fine articles included!

But when I came to “Why MINISTRY Is Our Gift to You,” I was fairly taken aback! Please forgive my boldness, but I have always been taught that Seventh-day Adventism is a cult! I can see that I shall indeed have to revise my ideas. I have always been taught that Seventh-day Adventists teach works as a corollary to the finished work of Christ. Your article seems to present keeping the seventh-day observance as obedience for the redeemed rather than as a means of salvation. Is this so?—Bible College, Missouri.

Yes.—Editors.

**Religion has status?**

I was greatly surprised by the conclusions you reached about religious freedom in the U.S.S.R. ("The Status of Religion in the U.S.S.R.,” September, 1984). It is true that the U.S.S.R.’s constitution provides for the separation of the church and state. But that separation is meant to hinder the church. And the result is very clear—the believing congregation is imprisoned in the four walls of its building! No evangelism, no Christian education, and no works of charity and mercy are allowed.

It is true enough that Seventh-day Adventists are not singled out and persecuted as they were under the Czars. But being in the same terrible situation in which the Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Baptists find themselves in the U.S.S.R. is nothing to rejoice about. Individual Adventists are harassed and persecuted too.

If you leave your article uncorrected, you join that sorry lot of instant “Soviet experts” that is so ably led by Billy Graham. He does it to get permission to preach in Russia—what is your excuse?—Vilis Varsbergs, President, Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

I am a Jewish Christian pastor and have been persecuted since childhood for being a Jew. Almost my entire family perished in the Holocaust. After I became a Christian and a pastor I was in Nazi prisons, and then in Communist jails for fourteen years. Now in America I lead a mission that helps the Christians persecuted in Communist countries. Every day I read reports about Christians who are imprisoned, tortured, and killed there. What weighs upon me is the unloving attitude of American Christians toward their persecuted brethren.

Your magazine is an example of this. (Continued on page 8)
The Ten Commandments: Are They Still Valid?/4. Klaus Bockmuehl takes a hard look at contemporary opinions and attitudes about the Decalogue, then leads us into a search for God’s opinion.

How to Buy a Church Computer/6. Shopping for a computer is not like shopping for a car or anything else you’ve ever done. Michael R. Tucker has purchased several for his church, and his step-by-step guidelines could save you many hours, dollars, and headaches.

Unacceptable Gifts/9. Is it possible that some of your gifts to God have insulted Him? What about your members’ gifts? Mel Rees’s straightforward article is the third in our Keeping Church Finance Christian series.

Should Our Church Ordain Women?/14. Willmore Eva and Bernard E. Seton have taken a look at the Biblical evidence and come up with differing answers to the same question. Whether you agree with one or the other, or have your own opinion, the issue will be decided soon.

Editorials/23.

Cooperation or Confrontation?/24. Kenneth R. Wade.

Gone but Not Forgotten/26. Our Parson to Parson question about pastors who keep returning to former churches generated more response than any previous question. You’ll find some creative answers here.

Don’t Pity Me/29. Your plea may be the same as Anne Elver’s once you’ve read her encouraging article!
Are the Ten Commandments still valid for us today? Are they valid only for Christians, or for all people? Or are they perhaps only for Jews and pagans, but not for Christians? And is it merely piety or the inertia of conservatism that keeps them in our catechism, in the doctrinal strong room of the church? Are they still with us simply because no one has dared to question the ancient moral habits of the church? Wouldn’t a business, eager to rationalize for the sake of success, have long ago cleared them out and relegated them to a museum of the ancient Near East?

Some prominent speakers in the church have come to just this conclusion and caught the headlines with it. One, a German church president, stated that it was impossible to prescribe a catalog of eternal norms of conduct; rather, the Christian was to decide in the given situation what love would command him or her to do. Therefore, when it came to personal ethics, the Decalogue was out of the question. On another occasion this same man said that it was equally impossible in a pluralistic society to accept the Ten Commandments as the basis for social morality and the law of the state—something most countries took for granted until very recently.

Another Protestant ethicist, with earned doctorates in theology and sociology, brought his sociological thinking to bear on the Decalogue. Calling the Ten Commandments “those ancient norms” and “a nomad law,” he relativized them historically and sociologically. The civilized world of the industrial age was too far removed from the world of the Ten Commandments; they could hardly help us, let alone be authoritative. They were, rather, a hindrance to modern life.

According to at least two theologians, then—to put it in terms used during the Reformation—the Decalogue belongs neither to the pulpit nor to the town hall. Where, then, does it belong? Merely to the history of Israel? How shall we answer these two suggestions? Should we agree with one or the other, and if not, why not? Why does the church continue to preach the Ten Commandments? To whom are the Ten Commandments given?

I shall try to answer these questions with three theses: (1) the Ten Commandments oblige the people of God to whom they are given; (2) the Ten Commandments recommend themselves to every person as an appropriate definition of the good; (3) the Ten Commandments are the framework of Christian ethics; they need to be filled by love, by the guidance of God’s Spirit.

The Ten Commandments oblige the people of God

Is the Decalogue valid today, and for whom? It is indeed still necessary to ask these questions. While one is studying the Bible it is of primary importance to take notice of the circumstances and context of the text. For example, consider this introduction to the Ten Commandments: “And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them; that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, gives you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deut. 4:1, 2).

To whom is this appeal of Moses directed? To Israel, of course, and more exactly to a certain generation in the history of the people of Israel—those who came out of Egypt. The Exodus is the original historical setting of the Ten Commandments.

But is that single generation the only one to whom the Decalogue is addressed?
By reason of the authority of Christ, the Ten Commandments are as valid for the people of God today as when they were first given.

Already at Mount Sinai, questions about the general and timeless applicability of these words were raised—the first precedent for similar questions asked today: "When your son asks you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you?" (chap. 6:20).

"The Lord our God"—that the Lord of the Decalogue is our God is accepted. But as to the commandments, we hear the little note of disassociation (as verses 21-25 go on to say): "which the Lord... has commanded you." This second generation was already being told that the commandments were binding on all generations of Israel, every living generation, because they all belong together as a "corporate personality."

The Decalogue, then, is addressed to Israel, meaning this distinctive nation which has come from Egypt. The introduction to the actual text of the Decalogue makes this point: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2). And in Deuteronomy, the peculiar and unique character of Israel is unmistakably expressed: "Yet has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" (chap. 3:14).

Second, it is by the authority of Christ that the Ten Commandments are valid for all who follow Him. Moses is an authority for Christians insofar as Jesus took up His teaching. Jesus took the Ten Commandments seriously, unconditionally. In His meeting with the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:18, 19), He quoted them as the basic instruction for the way to eternal life. He submitted to the Decalogue when He contrasted God's commandments to the traditions of the elders (chap. 15:3). Part of His sermon on the mount is based on commandments from the Decalogue; His own new teaching is a heightening, an intensification, of the Decalogue's commandments and not, as is often said, an antithesis to them.

Jesus warned His listeners not to form a misconception of what He intended, a misconception which could easily come up where no distinction is made between God's commandments and human moral traditions. "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets," Jesus said; "I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (chap. 5:17).

In His actions, too, Jesus is true to the commandments. His much-debated actions on the Sabbath are no exception. If there is to be no contradiction between Jesus' words and His actions, then His deeds on the Sabbath have to be understood not as the abolition, but as the fulfillment of the Sabbath commandment. For Jesus said: "'For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

This righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees is the righteousness (Continued on page 25)
How to buy a church computer

The computer age has arrived. Some churches have jumped in with both feet, only to find the water deeper than they thought. Others are still waiting on the shore. How can you decide whether or not your church needs a computer? And how can you select the right hardware and software? You’ll find good answers here. —by Michael R. Tucker

John Naisbitt in his best-seller Megatrends warns, “By one estimate, 75 percent of all jobs by 1985 will involve computers in some way—and people who don’t know how to use them will be at a disadvantage.” 1 It is already true that churches without computers are at a disadvantage. If you haven’t already purchased a computer for your church, you probably have wondered whether you should. But there are inherent problems with churches popping into the world of computers: most pastors are trained in the social rather than physical sciences; churches tend to view themselves as the last bulwark against an impersonal, technological society; pastors and church staff consider themselves far too busy to experiment (i.e., “play”) on a computer. While many church staffers can visualize themselves using a computer, few see themselves as qualified to be involved in the actual purchase of one. But buying the right equipment is really not as difficult as it might seem.

John Naisbitt

Get acquainted

The first thing a pastor considering purchase of a computer must do is get acquainted with the “miracle machines.” If the pastor has no working knowledge of computer capabilities, it is unlikely that the church will get a computer or that it will properly utilize one if it does. By “working knowledge” I do not mean that the pastor must understand “computerese.” Knowing the difference between a byte and a hex code isn’t really necessary at the beginning. But talking to a friend who has a computer at home, discussing the possibilities with a salesperson or two, and seeking the advice of pastors who already have computers can be very enlightening. One thing you will learn is that computers are not really miracle machines at all. In fact, they are actually quite stupid. They can do only what they are told to do. They can follow directions precisely and quickly, but they can do nothing more or less than the operator instructs.

Decide what you want

The second step is for the pastor to write down what he would like for a computer to do. Here is my list:

POSSIBLE USES FOR A COMPUTER

1. Data retrieval
   List the 450 family units
   • by name (each person in each family)
   • by birthday
   • by address for mailing list
   • by skills, experience for service
   Keep weekly attendance record
   Record keeping
For this task a committee is a bad idea. Committees discuss, give advice, and consent. This is a task that requires one or two people to do the research, shop, and make a decision.

2. Word processing
   - Type weekly newsletter and church bulletin
   - Type articles and book manuscripts
3. Scheduling
   - Use of all church facilities
   - Use of all gym activities during the week
   - Use of all rooms used by outside groups
   - Use of rooms used for weddings
4. Financial records
   - Keep entire accounts receivable and payable

This list proved very helpful when I actually started shopping for a computer. In fact, every time I went into a store and the salesperson discovered that I had such a list, he or she asked for a copy.

**How to purchase**

The third step is a don't. *Don't form a committee to purchase a computer!* I have talked with many churches and Christian organizations during the past three years who (1) are hopelessly bogged down in the process of purchasing a computer or (2) bought the wrong equipment, because they formed a committee. Now don't misunderstand; I'm not against committees. I am a pastor, and I know the value of committees. I don't like these corny jabs such as "A camel is a horse put together by a committee." But for this task a committee is a bad idea. Committees discuss, give advice, and consent. This is a task that requires one or two people to do the research, shop, and make a decision. Of course, you may need ultimate authority from a committee or board, but that is different from inviting the whole group to be part of the process. It is the kind of decision with which there will be disagreement. I can almost guarantee that no matter what you eventually buy, someone (probably several "someones") will disagree.

The best way to shop for a computer is to take along one or two people who are knowledgeable about computers and, preferably, about the church you serve. You as the pastor should have in mind what you want the computer to do. Your companions should know how to ask the right technical questions.

Although you do not need to know technical language, you do need to know the difference between hardware and software. Hardware is the stuff you can see and touch: keyboard, screen, plastic box, electronic circuits, disk drives, printer. Software is the program: the instructions, the rules, that tell the hardware what to do. Your television is hardware. The programs you watch (60 Minutes, Diff'rent Strokes) are, roughly speaking in this analogy, software. Got it?

**Shop for software first**

The fourth step is to shop for software—what you want a computer to do for you. Once you discover the proper software, you can easily find hardware to run it.

At this point you also need to remember to be very cautious about accepting a computer as a gift. For years churches have been dumping grounds for old couches, tables, typewriters, and mimeograph machines. Now people who want to upgrade their equipment are dumping their old computers on churches. If you accept a gift computer you will have to make do with whatever software it will run. When you want to expand or upgrade, you will have to do exactly what the last owner of that computer did—find an unwitting charitable organization that will accept it.

When looking for software for a church, you have three alternatives. You can purchase a package that is specifically designed for churches. The advantage is that you don't need to adapt very much to your own situation. The disadvantage is that it is often nearly impossible to program such a package (change the software to your needs). In other words, you have to take the whole package as it is. You pay for the parts of the package you can use, and you pay for the parts of the package you can't use in your particular situation. For instance, most church financial packages have a pledge feature. That is, the package will keep track of how much a person pledges to give and how he is doing with that commitment. Some packages even offer periodic reminders to those who pledge a certain amount of money and have not met their pledge. Our church does not use the pledge system at all. So if we bought a church financial package with that feature, we would pay for something we could not use.

Another choice is to write all your own programs. That usually is not practical for churches. Such a task requires a much larger commitment of time and personnel than it might seem.

Many churches will choose basic, generic software that has many built-in features but will also allow some simple adaptations to suit their own needs. For instance, a word-processing package will allow you to do all your typing (letters, church bulletins, newsletters, etc.) on a computer. (Be sure your word processor is capable of handling multicolumn material.) A standard data-base package will allow you to select what information you want to keep on each member. You may wish to keep a list of parishioners that includes everyone's birthday but does not include attendance. You may wish to include other items unique to your church or denomination.

Be sure that the computer you purchase has a large enough capacity to handle new uses you will develop as you learn more about computers and their possibilities. When I first started looking at computers I thought we had about 450 family units in our church. But after we started using the computer and our record keeping became more accurate I learned that we had many more family units who attended our church occasionally. Now, two and a half years later, we have 2,463 on our records. Already we have doubled the amount of storage space on the computer we originally purchased. Most churches probably should start with a computer that uses a hard disk (ask the salesperson to explain that) rather than only floppy disks.

At the time you purchase your computer you will also need a printer. There are two basic kinds: dot matrix and letter...
You will be able to purchase both software and hardware from catalogs at cheaper prices than from retail stores. But you won’t get the help you need when you have a question. It is important to have that help!

quality. Most dot-matrix printers give the kind of fuzzy print that looks computer-produced. There are some new models, however, that offer the speed and versatility of dot-matrix printers without sacrificing much print quality. But they usually do not offer the possibility of printing with ribbons of different colors. Letter-quality printers are slower and more expensive but produce clearer print.

Where to buy

The fifth step is to make the purchase from someone who can give you adequate support. You will be able to purchase both software and hardware from catalogs at cheaper prices than from retail stores. But you won’t get the help you need when you have a question or a problem. At the beginning it is important to have that help! Yesterday I talked with my friend Tom, who owns the racquetball club where I play. His computer was not working, and he could not find anyone to repair it. It is not a major brand, and the store where he purchased it is now out of business. When I returned to my office I read a letter from a fellow pastor in town who had purchased a little-known brand of computer a year ago and is now giving it away because it just won’t do the job his growing church needs. In both cases the necessary support is not available, and those owners are now faced with several options, all of them unpleasant and time-consuming.

Be sure to shop around for the best prices from among those who will give you support. Prices are flexible in this market. You might be tempted to purchase part of your equipment from one store and part from another to save money. But remember that support is more important initially than saving a few dollars. If you buy your computer from one store and your printer from another, whom will you call if the two quit talking to each other? Recently we purchased a printer at a discount store that does not offer adequate support. But (1) we already have another printer exactly like it and (2) we do have some experience now.

Here are the five steps to happy computer ownership:

1. Gain an elementary knowledge of computers through reading, attending seminars, and asking questions.
2. Make a list of what you want a computer to do for you.
3. Don’t form a committee to purchase a computer.
4. Shop for software.
5. Buy where you are guaranteed support.

Through the past few years I have also observed that churches that start with only a financial package make a mistake. Word-processing and data-base (the list of your parishioners, et cetera) uses are far more important than the financial package in most cases. The other problem with starting with only the financial package is that the pastor usually is not the person who keeps the financial records. It is important for the pastor to be one of the first people to learn how to use the computer. The pastor who wants a computer for the church secretary but does not ever intend to learn how to use it himself will severely limit its use. The creative and specific uses of a computer will often come from the pastor’s head, but only if he is familiar with the machine and what it can do. Watching the church secretary is not good enough; he must learn to use it.

A computer won’t do everything, but it will do a lot to help you in your ministry. It is just a machine, but who among us would try to operate our ministries efficiently without machines in today’s world? Your church will own a computer (unless your church also opposes telephones and typewriters). The question is not if, but when.

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Letters

From page 2

In your article about Russia you find similarity between Marx and God’s promises. Before finding this similarity you should have studied Marx and Lenin. The latter wrote to Gorki: “Thousands of natural catastrophes and epidemics are preferable to the slightest notion of God.” This is the major difference between us and Marxists: love toward God and hatred toward Him.

It was not the endeavors of [leadership] that sparked the reunification of your church. It was the fact that the KGB put in jail every Adventist who dared to say, “We do not collaborate with Communists.”

Why had the audience no place in the church in Kiev? Such things are solved simply. Why do they not have a second church?

When I was in South Africa I heard that Communists jailed there are tortured. I knocked at the gate of their jail and asked to see them in the absence of any guards. I was permitted without difficulty. They themselves denied the story of tortures. In every civilized country pastors have access to prisons. Why did you not ask for permission to visit the imprisoned Adventists? Wherever you are, you are meant to seek Jesus. Jesus has given His address in Russia: “I was in jail and you visited Me not.” Did you even try? A refusal of the authorities would also have been illuminating.

I am sure you would have neither the courtesy nor courage to publish this.—Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, Torrance, California.

Pastor Wurmbrand’s letter would have covered nearly two pages had we published it in full. While our juxtaposition of Christianity and Marxism was intended to show the similarity of certain goals, we also meant to contrast the methods of achievement.—Editors.

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Unacceptable gifts

The methods you use to assure adequate income for your church will depend on whether you want a quick fix or a sustained outpouring of benevolence. In this third in our series on Christian finance, Mel Rees points out the problems with the former, and points toward principles for achieving the latter.

Keeping Church Finance Christian □ 3  Mel Rees

Benevolence” has become a catchword to cover all types of charitable giving. However, true benevolence goes far beyond the mere transfer of goods—it goes to the motive that prompts it. For this reason, if a person doesn’t really want to give, he shouldn’t. The gift would be unacceptable. In fact, it wouldn’t be a gift at all, but merely a transaction.

Many Christians would cringe at the thought that some of their supposedly benevolent acts are really motivated by selfishness, and are therefore unacceptable to God.

However, before discussing the quality of the gift, we must establish what “giving to God” means. Does it refer only to regular church offerings, or does it have a wider application? In reality, any gift that will assist the work of God on earth, whether it be helping someone in need or building and maintaining a church, is giving to God. Jesus pointed out that even a cup of cold water given to one who is thirsty would be regarded as giving to Him.

Fund-raising problems

Probably no area of church activity so actively promotes selfishness as certain types of fund-raising. The results of self-centered fund-raising are all too predictably temporary, unrewarding, and even counterproductive. They actually contribute to selfishness instead of encouraging liberality.

The problem is one of confused priorities. The church, ordained to seek and save the lost, often succumbs to the temptation to squander its energies in simply maintaining its own structural existence.

The modern church is not alone in misjudging or forgetting God’s will concerning offerings. In Old Testament times every gift was intended to point forward to Christ’s perfect sacrifice. Hence the instruction found in Leviticus 22:21, 22: “And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord.”

Unfortunately these instructions were not always followed. The prophet Malachi addressed a scathing rebuke to the priests of his day. “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts” (Mal. 1:7, 8).

The priests, no doubt, reasoned that since the offering was just going to go up in smoke, there was no need to sacrifice a perfect animal that could be used for breeding stock to produce more income (and additional offerings for the Lord). Instead, why not dispose of an animal that was going to die anyway? But their reasoning led to actions in direct violation of God’s command. And in disobeying they insulted the One whom the sacrifice represented. The priests’ rationalization brought a curse upon their entire nation.

By the time of Christ the Jewish leaders had, for the most part, lost sight of the meaning and objective of their sacrificial system. Missing the point of
sacrifice, they buried its meaning under an avalanche of rules and regulations. People were taught to give in response to rules rather than in response to God. Jesus' condemnation was unequivocal: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7).

Jesus taught that love is more important than conformity, that principles are more important than rules. He emphasized that every spiritual activity should be a response of love and gratitude to God—that every offering should be the response of the heart, rather than a response to rules or external stimulation.

Historians record that the Christian church followed Jesus' teaching into the second century but gradually drifted back into the old law-enforcement method of assuring support. As the church began to mushroom in size and structure, its leaders lost their vision of an evangelized world and began to focus more and more on building and maintaining the organization itself. As evangelistic fervor waned, leaders had to look for other means of motivating members to give. Unfortunately, they soon settled on un-Biblical fund-raising methods.

The free exercise of benevolence was once again replaced by compulsion; giving degenerated into a tax determined by the church and enforced by the state. The church came to resemble a shearer rather than a kindly shepherd. The spiritual needs of the giver were ignored in the feverish search for new sources of income. It was truly a dark age for freedom of thought and response.

The Reformers introduced a measure of theological daylight, but even they, for the most part, did not understand or teach New Testament principles of benevolence. For example, England, during the time of John Wesley, had a very oppressive tithe/tax system for the support of the state church.

We are aware that the early church groups who settled on the shores of the New World fled from England in search of religious freedom. But we tend to forget that although they sought freedom of theological thought and expression, they also wanted to escape the tithe/tax system that was so distasteful. It is little wonder that in establishing their new churches they tended to shy away from any method of church support that would remind them of the abuses they had experienced in their homeland. John Smyth, a Separatist preacher, is quoted as saying: "We hold that tithes are either Jewish or Popish . . . that the officers of the Church in the necessity of the Church ought to work for their living, as Paul made tents."—Charles F. Dole, "The Voluntary System in the Support of Churches," Unitarian Review, July, 1887.

The devil had succeeded in reducing God's beautiful plan for the support of His church to a dismal tax—an odious thing. The tithing principle, which was intended to serve as a continual reminder of God's ownership, had become stigmatized. Many had come to view God as a greedy tyrant rather than a loving Father.

As a result of rejecting God's plan of systematic benevolence, churches were forced to seek other means of support. Turning to man-made plans, the church in America became tainted by such un-Biblical schemes as an excise tax on rum and wine and the raising and selling of tobacco. Today church suppers and bingo are popular motivations for "giving." One must believe that the people who plan and carry out these programs do so from the best of motives (the benefit of God's work), but could they look down the road and see the awful results of these unscriptural methods, they would shun them as they would a poisonous serpent. The end does not justify the means—the short-term benefits do not justify the long-term results.

Gifting to get

Giving to get has such magnetic appeal. There appears to be no exception to the observation that instead of appealing to a person's reason, benevolence, or any of the nobler faculties, the most successful appeal that can be made is to the appetite. Men and women will part with their money for self-gratifica-
Gambling teaches principles directly contrary to Christian principles. Instead of teaching responsibility and helpfulness, it teaches participants to take advantage of others’ misfortunes.

that their appeal is to the selfish heart (which really needs no stimulation). The principle of “giving to get” is common to nearly all these approaches. This might be termed yo-yo giving—it has a string on it so it always comes back!

Gambling for God?
One of the sinister results of the fairs and bazaars that enjoy such popularity is the element of gambling that often creeps in.

While such programs often blight the spirituality of the adult members, they are even more devastating to the youth, many of whom drift into evil habits as a result. Too often the seeds of undesirable fruit are sown by the church, or at least under its auspices. Can a youth be expected to distinguish between good and bad when the church makes so little distinction?

I was a guest in the home of a friend when his 10-year-old son, who had just returned from a church fair with his mother, burst through the front door, crying, “Daddy! Daddy! I almost won! I almost won!”

His father, taken aback by this outburst, asked, “What did you almost win?”

“A prize, Daddy—a prize! The winning number was 19577, a-a-a-and I had 19576. I almost won!”

After the lad ran outside to play, his father turned to me. “What was that look in my son’s eyes? I’ve never seen that before.”

“Maybe the look of a gambler,” I suggested. “Maybe your son has just had his first lesson in a game of chance.”

Getting something for nothing is especially demoralizing to children and youth; it sows seed that can bear awful results in later life. Surely the church must never be guilty of contributing to delinquency.

Gambling in any form (even under a religious blanket) is contrary to a well-regulated society because it transfers money and property in a manner not in harmony with planned order. (Money and property are to be earned by labor.) Gambling teaches principles directly contrary to Christian principles. Instead of teaching responsibility and helpfulness, it teaches participants to take advantage of others’ misfortunes. And as the desire to get something for nothing grows, the benevolent impulses are dulled. Even regard for law and order is lessened; greed comes to be regarded as a virtue.

What about “athons”?
The suffix athon can be attached to almost any verb to promote a fund-raising activity. We have bikeathons, walkathons, skateathons, and Frisbeeathons. There are even rockathons (in rocking chairs) for those less inclined to activity. These too must come under indictment. While those who participate may expend prodigious amounts of time and energy, most produce nothing beneficial to society. There are two probable negative results: They reward the participant for nonproductive effort, and they provide the wrong motivation for the sponsors.

One man, vigorously defending his sponsorship of a bikeathon, was asked if he would give the same amount to the project without this stimulation. “Probably not” was his honest reply. Surely our benevolence should be an outward expression of our appreciation of God’s love and care for us, and not have to be primed by walkathons, bikeathons, or Frisbeeathons.

The right way
Every gift to God should be the result of some personal sacrifice. Sacrifice is related not to the gift itself, but rather to the desire in the heart that keeping the gift would have satisfied. It is in this sense that a sacrifice is made.

God has given only one method for the support of His work: tithes and offerings. Financial success, then, should depend upon a continual education in Christian stewardship. Unfortunately, it is easier to promote a program than it is to educate members in Biblical principles of benevolence. As a whole, people find it easier (and more desirable) to be a part of a structured program than to assume individual responsibility; it is easier to follow procedures than to apply principles.

Stewardship education will not be an easy task for the busy pastor. Most of his congregation already will have been trained in other approaches since child-

(Continued on page 30)
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**Course Numbers and Titles**

**Monday, June 24**
1:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.
- GCM7036 Bible Study Evangelism
- GCM7037 The Art of Gaining More Decisions
- GCM7040 Health Evangelism
- GCM7041 Evangelismo Latinoamericano (Spanish)
- GCM7043 Evangelism: The Urban Dilemma
- GCM7045 Issues in Conference Administration
- GCM7049 Understanding Children
- GCM7051 Church Planting: You Can Activate Your Church
- GCM7053 Counseling Techniques
- GCM7054 Holding and Reclaiming Members (contd. on Tues.)
- GCM7056 Loss, Grief, and the Church
- GCM7057 Motivating Volunteers
- GCM7058 Improving Your Preaching
- GCM7059 Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts
- GCM7061 Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples
- GGS7060 Clergy Marriage
- GTH7063 The Shape of the Church to Come
- GTH7064 The Minister and Medical-Ethical Issues
- GOT7065 The Sanctuary in Daniel: Recent Developments
- GWM7067 Reaching the Secular Mind
- GGS7069 Ellen G. de White: Autoridad e Inspiración (Spanish)

**Tuesday, June 25**
1:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.
- GCM7036 Bible Study Evangelism
- GCM7037 The Art of Gaining More Decisions
- GCM7038 Electronic Evangelism Resources
- GCM7040 Health Evangelism
- GCM7044 Organizing Home Bible Fellowship Groups
- GCM7046 Problem Solving and Conflict Management
- GCM7049 Understanding Children
- GCM7051 Church Planting: You Can Activate Your Church
- GCM7053 Counseling Techniques
- GCM7054 Holding and Reclaiming Members (contd. from Mon.)
- GCM7056 Loss, Grief, and the Church
- GCM7058 Improving Your Preaching
- GCM7059 Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts
- GCM7061 Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples
- GGS7060 Clergy Marriage
- GTH7064 The Minister and Medical-Ethical Issues
- GWS7069 Ellen G. de White: Autoridad e Inspiración (Spanish)

**Wednesday, June 26**
1:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.
- GCM7036 Bible Study Evangelism
- GCM7037 The Art of Gaining More Decisions
- GCM7038 Electronic Evangelism Resources
- GCM7040 Health Evangelism
- GCM7044 Organizing Home Bible Fellowship Groups
- GCM7046 Problem Solving and Conflict Management
- GCM7049 Understanding Children
- GCM7051 Church Planting: You Can Activate Your Church
- GCM7053 Counseling Techniques
- GCM7055 Managing for Mission
- GCM7056 Loss, Grief, and the Church
- GCM7057 Motivating Volunteers
- GCM7058 Improving Your Preaching
- GCM7059 Discovering and Developing Spiritual Gifts
- GCM7061 Team Ministry for Pastoral Couples
- GGS7060 Clergy Marriage
- GTH7063 The Shape of the Church to Come
- GTH7066 Current Issues and Revelation-Inspiration
- GTH7068 Current Issues in Science and the Bible
- GTH7071 Current Issues in Prophetic Interpretation

**Thursday, June 27**
7:45 A.M.-12:15 P.M.
- GCM7037 The Art of Gaining More Decisions
- GCM7042 Seminar Evangelism
- GCM7046 Problem Solving and Conflict Management
- GCM7048 Caring Church Seminar (contd. from Wed.)
- GCM7050 Understanding Youth
- GCM7052 Computers in the Church
- GCM7053 Counseling Techniques
- GCM7054 Holding and Reclaiming Members (contd. from Thurs.)
- GCM7056 Loss, Grief, and the Church
- GCM7057 Motivating Volunteers
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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
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Eva begins by comparing the hermeneutics of those who support and those who object to women's ordination to the ministry. Then he argues for women's ordination on the basis of the larger Biblical picture, discussing also the texts that seem to point against it. by Willmore Eva

The question of the role and standing of women in the Christian church is almost as old as the church itself. Sporadic yet lively discussion has characterized the issue from the time of Paul, through the Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation, on down through the past two decades. During the past fifteen years

Seventh-day Adventists have been trying to discover some kind of unifying approach to the issue.

The hermeneutical question

In Adventist discussions of the legitimacy of women in the ministry, much of the disagreement over the Biblical data arises because of hermeneutical differences. This problem is not merely academic. It lies near the heart of our struggle to stand together. Complicating our hermeneutical differences is the fact that the Christian church in our century faces many issues that had not arisen during the Biblical period. For this reason we must be especially responsible

in the way we apply Scripture to any social or ethical question.

We might characterize one of the two hermeneutical approaches Adventists tend to use in applying the Biblical data to contemporary issues as the literalistic approach. Its proponents tend to focus upon Biblical statements or specific scriptural cases. In contrast, proponents of the second hermeneutic tend to look for the general principles they find inherent in the flow of Scripture. They also take into account the historical and cultural dynamics within which the inspired writer worked.

One can readily see how two divergent, even opposing positions may be taken upon a question if two different hermeneutics are employed. Those who follow the first hermeneutic tend to view the others as ignoring, rationalizing, or compromising undeniable scriptural evidence. They also tend to accentuate the demands of law in Scripture when settling ethical questions.

Conversely, those who adopt the scriptural approach that settles ethical questions by wholistically searching out Biblical principles tend to see their counterparts as unaware of the central thrust of the combined Biblical and historical evidence. They see them as dogmatic in their adherence to positions the Bible never intended to be of eternal import. Their view of ethical questions tends to be dominated by their view of God's grace.

Richard N. Longenecker states this hermeneutical divergence in another way. He says it involves "the question of how we correlate the theological categories of creation (which includes both Creation and the Fall) and redemption. When the former is stressed, subordination and submission of women are usually emphasized; . . . where the latter is stressed, freedom, mutuality, and equality are usually emphasized."

Not only must we correlate the two foundational events of Scripture, allowing them unitedly to inform our ethical questions; we must also take into account the fact that the New Testa- (Continued on page 16)
Should our church ordain women? No

Seton notes that God created men and women equal but gave them different roles. Scripture consistently presents a male priesthood and ministry, while welcoming women’s contributions to the church through other forms of service. ☐ by Bernard E. Seton

Many assume that anyone who opposes the ordination of women to the gospel ministry is either a male chauvinist or an oppressed woman who has been brainwashed by decades of male dominance. If so, then this article represents an exception to the rule. I have long accepted the moral superiority of women in many of life’s situations and continue to admire their contributions to the human race and the church. And I deeply deplore the injustices to which many are still subjected.

But admiration and appreciation do not answer the current question about the validity of ordaining women to the ministry. To answer that, the church must consult the Bible, its authority for doctrine and practice. The Bible may not spell out the answer to every one of the church’s questions, but with reverent, careful study the church can find the principles and practices God would have it follow.

This approach is particularly cogent for Seventh-day Adventists. We continually declare that the Bible is the only source for our beliefs and practices.¹ By doing so, we commit ourselves to some awkward, uncomfortable, demanding doctrines that make few concessions to contemporary public opinion. If we succeed at solving our current question in harmony with scriptural teachings, we will strengthen our international unity and build a stronger church. If we fail, we could undermine our integrity and weaken our worldwide witness.

Beginning with the Creation account, we will survey some of the principal Biblical passages that impinge on our topic. We hope to discover whether the Bible supports the idea of female ordination or denies its validity.

Created equal but different

In His inerrant wisdom the Creator decided to populate this earth through self-propagating human beings. To that end He “created man in his own image . . . male and female created he them” and told them, “Be fruitful, and multiply” (Gen. 1:27, 28). The more detailed account in Genesis 2 reveals that the initial creation was a two-stage process:

Bernard E. Seton, before his retirement, served as an associate secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

God made Adam first (verse 7), and then Eve (verses 21, 22). She was not an afterthought. The All-wise One intended the two-stage creation to enable man to realize his own loneliness and insufficiency, his need for a partner. “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him’” (verse 18, N.I.V.). And so God formed Eve, the first woman, from Adam’s own structure.

Scripture reveals that Satan brought about our first parents’ fall by seducing Eve, who then persuaded Adam to share in her transgression (chap. 3:1-13). Because of Eve’s initiative in disobedience, her childbearing became a source of great pain, and in addition, she was subordinated to her husband (verse 16). Throughout history that twofold sentence has brought much suffering to women and much cause for shame to men. Man’s selfishness and insensitivity has made his partner’s burden much heavier.

But Genesis does not teach that man is (Continued on page 16)
Yes

From page 14

The implications of Genesis 1-3

Genesis 1:27, 28 describes God's creation of "man" in His own image. In God's crowning creative act, female is included with male within the clearly generic Hebrew term 'adam, "man." Here male and female together constitute humanity in God's image. Only as male and female do Adam and Eve make up the image and likeness of God. Together they are told to subdue and rule the planet as it is populated through them. Thus Scripture leaves very little question about the pre-Fall equality of the sexes and their complementary nature.

Genesis 2:18-24 indicates that the male was created before the female and tells why and how Eve was created. In verses 18 and 20 the word helper (R.S.V., N.I.V.) or partner (N.E.B.) is used of Eve. Neither the Hebrew word for partner nor the context of these verses suggests any inequality between the sexes. Instead, the text states that Eve was created to assuage the man's loneliness, to provide someone like him, someone complementary to him.

The manner in which God creates Eve is consistent with this interpretation. She is created from Adam's side, and there she is to stand "as an equal." Adam's exclamation as God brings Eve to him (verse 23) confirms this interpretation. Adams sees Eve as of his very substance. In her he recognizes companionship and oneness: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (N.I.V.). There is no hint of Adam's viewing Eve in any other way than as an equal—and they are the prototype of all later male-female unions in becoming "one flesh" (verse 24).

It is true that in explaining the reason for his practice of not allowing women to teach or "to usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2:12), Paul refers to the fact that Adam was created before Eve (verse 13). And he seems to advocate a hierarchical system that places women below men (1 Cor. 11:3). Yet we must note that the primary thrust of the Genesis account itself has to do with the husband-wife relationship and not directly with the overall cultural or ecclesiastical relationships of all males with all females. (Paul's position is discussed later.)

Genesis 3 describes the effects of the entry of sin. We are particularly

No

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superior to woman or woman to man. They were created equal but different, and for differing though complementary purposes. No man can become a mother; no woman can become a father. Voluntary exchange of roles is contrary to the divine order, though hard circumstances may sometimes oblige members of one sex to bear some responsibilities that ideally belong to the other.

Religious roles of the sexes

The Bible establishes an all-male priesthood, or ministry, both within and outside of the family. When sin came into our world the Lord appointed Adam and his successors to be the priests of their families. "In the beginning the head of each family was considered ruler and priest of his own household." Consequently, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other heads of families served as priests for their family units. Later, as population increased and society became more complex, a specialized priesthood was appointed for full-time religious service that was not restricted to family ministry. Aaron and his male descendants were set aside for that holy purpose and continued to fill that office until their successors disqualified themselves by bringing about the Saviour's death.

Our Lord certainly foresaw that, as a result of His crucifixion, the Jewish priestly system would end. He could have taken that opportunity to break the mold of an all-male ministry if He had wanted to. That He did not do so speaks clearly against any sexual change and in favor of continuing the pattern of male priesthood. Jesus took care to appoint twelve men, "designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14, N.I.V.; see also Matt. 10:1-6; Luke 6:13-16). That act showed the trend that marked His thinking from the early days of His ministry. He gave awesome spiritual authority to those same disciples while He was still with them (Matt. 18:18, 19; John 20:19-23). When the time came for Him to return to His Father's side He confirmed the appointments, not on a temporary basis, but "even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20; see also verses 16-19; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:1-8). The days of the Levitical priesthood had passed; the apostolic age was about to dawn. But in each age men filled the priestly roles.

The early church followed its Founder's example. Judas' death had left a vacancy. After the ascension the 120 prayed the Lord to show them His choice (Acts 1:24) as they cast lots for one of two candidates. The choice fell upon Matthias, "and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (verse 26).

As the church grew, it needed more spiritual leaders. The apostles could have appointed some of the many faithful and capable women if the Holy Spirit had so indicated. But they did not take that course. Instead, they called Paul and
interested in the impact that sin had upon the standing of the sexes in relation to each other. Although many inferences have been drawn from the Genesis 3 account, only those meanings drawn by an inspired writer such as Paul should be viewed as authoritative.

It must be emphasized that Genesis 3 gives an objective, blow-by-blow account of the Fall and includes Adam’s part in the act. It does not assign Eve any more blame than Adam. Both simultaneously discover their nakedness (verse 7), both sew fig leaves for coverings (verse 7), and both hide from God (verse 8). Both are held accountable by God (verses 9-13), who expresses a curse on each (verses 16-19).

The curse of Eve (verse 16) is viewed by some as conclusive evidence for the subordinate role of women generally and in the church particularly. Paul seems to adopt this view in 1 Corinthians 14:34, where his appeal to “the law” seems to refer to Genesis 3. The statement in the curse over which disagreement arises is “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (N.I.V.). While Paul probably used this passage to enjoin silence on women in the church, it should be noted that in its own context this statement does not imply the general rule of all men over all women in all circumstances. A change in the relative standing of the sexes did take place, but Genesis limits it to the marriage relationship. The multiplying of travail in pregnancy is an experience that takes place in marriage. . . . Pain in childbirth is likewise an experience which takes place within the sphere of marriage [as is] the wife’s desire for her husband. Then, after this threefold reference to changes which are associated with the marriage institution, comes the sentence “He [your husband] shall rule over you.” [R.S.V.]. . . . The ruling of man over woman is restricted to the sphere of marriage.” 4

Although the Genesis account itself limits this change to the marriage relationship, Paul’s use of the account in passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 is not so limited. At this point some (especially those using the first hermeneutic mentioned earlier) would see the whole matter to be settled. Others agree that due weight should be given to these Pauline statements. They, however, opt for the more wholistic understanding of Scripture and its setting, allowing the collected evidence to decide the question of whether or not the doors of formal Adventist ministry should be completely opened to women.

For these reasons we must turn to the New Testament and the heart of Paul’s theology—God’s redemptive act in Christ. We will deal with its impact on the curse of Genesis 3 and thus on the status of women. True to our hermeneutic, we will also look directly at the relevant Pauline statements concerning women in the church and the social and cultural setting of the churches to which Paul wrote. We will attempt to relate all of these elements responsibly and in such a way as to produce some definitive answers for our situation.

**Women in the New Testament churches**

In Galatians 3:10-29 Paul summarizes the gospel, placing it in the flow of sacred history. The ultimate effect of this gospel on human relationships is summed up in the pivotal statement “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (verse 28, N.I.V.).

Paul begins this passage by declaring that a curse rests upon anyone whose

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Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and others and, with the possible exception of Silas, ordained them to carry the spiritual leadership of the burgeoning church (see chaps. 9:15-17; 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

While the Old Testament depicts a strongly male-oriented society, it also records some of: the achievements of a few notable women, among whom we may list Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, and Huldah the prophetess. But that is thin coverage for four thousand years! Moreover, not one of them was called to be a priestess.

There were also many faithful and able women who associated with Jesus. Chieftest among them was Mary His mother, chosen for the holiest task of all. But she filled it unobtrusively during her Son’s childhood and young manhood and never, by any stretch of an ecclesiastical imagination, laid claim to ministerial status! There was “Anna, a prophetess, . . . which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2:36, 37).

There were “Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance” (chap. 8:3). As far as we know, none of these were offered ministerial responsibilities or carried out such functions.

After the ascension of their Lord, noble-minded women contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Roman world. Among the better-known were Tabitha, or Dorcas (Acts 9:36), Mary the mother of John Mark (chap. 12:12), and Lydia (chap. 16:14, 15, 40). Of special note is Priscilla, wife of Aquila (chap. 18:2; Romans 16:3, 4; 1 Cor. 16:19). But, hard-working, capable, and honored as she was, Scripture gives no hint of her having been ordained to Christian ministry. Neither does the mention of “Junia” in Romans 16:7 lend support to the suggestion that there was a lady apostle. The correct reading of the name is masculine, Junias, as The New English Bible makes clear: “Greet Andronicus and Junias my fellow-countrymen and comrades in cap-tivity. They are eminent among the apostles.”

In short, while Biblical writers duly honor the women who courageously supported their faith, they do not ascribe ministerial or apostolic status to any of them.

**Paul’s approach**

We now turn to passages in the Pauline Epistles that are often cited in support of women’s ordination. Please remember that neither Paul nor those to whom he originally wrote were primarily concerned with this question.

In 1 Corinthians the apostle stresses the inspired nature of the counsel he gives. He states that he declared unto his readers “the testimony of God.” His preaching was “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” to the end that their faith “should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (chap. 2:1, 4, 5). He claims that “we speak the wisdom of God” (verse 7), and states that “we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God.”
confidence before God depends upon his or her success in doing what the law says. No one has always done all the law says, and therefore everyone is subject to a curse. (It is by faith, not by the law, that the righteous live.) When Christ came, He "redeemed us from the curse of the law" (verse 13) and thus opened for all people the free flow of God's promises (particularly that of the Spirit). Paul shows that the promise to bring redemption was not interrupted by the law; instead, the law was meant to lead us to the fulfillment of the promise. Although "we were held prisoners by the law" (verse 23, N.I.V.), this was only to be until faith or the Seed (Christ) came, when we would no longer be supervised by the law in the way we had been.

The implications of this are clear to Paul. All who live by this faith in Christ are God's children (verses 26 and 27). For this reason—a great pivotal reason—Paul declares the old distinctions between people to be void. Since Christ (or faith) has arrived, the old ways of defining interpersonal relationships are removed. Redemption restores them to their original pre-Fall configuration, as though they had never been disturbed by the entry of sin and the curse.

(verse 12), while recognizing that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (verse 14). Those claims apply not only to his second chapter but to the entire Epistle.

In chapter 11 Paul responds to the church's question of whether women should veil their heads in church. He gives his counsel in the setting of first-century Greco-Roman customs, and it cannot be totally transferred to our own day. Nevertheless, his answer touches on some basic principles that relate to our topic, and these merit consideration.

From the beginning of his response the apostle establishes a chain of authority: God, Christ, man, woman (verse 3). The reference to the relationship between God and Christ is reassuring; it sets a pattern for the connections that follow, namely, those between Christ, man, and woman. It places the counsel firmly in a Christ-centered setting. How fully men and women model their conduct on that of our Father and His Son determines how acceptable the outcome will be. "As the church does not experience dishonor by being dependent on Christ (see Eph. 1:18-23; 3:17-19; 4:13, 15, 16), neither does woman by being dependent on man." And, we might add, neither does man by being dependent on woman in other spheres. Who can quarrel with that concept?

While a superficial reading of 1 Corinthians 11:7, "The woman is the glory of the man," can raise one's hackles, a careful study of Paul's intent can enrich married life for both partners. Seeking to solve the local question concerning the covering of heads in church, the apostle analyzes the ideal husband-wife relationship. Man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). According to the Genesis account, woman was created from substance taken from Adam's own body (chap. 2:21-24). Paul carefully emphasizes that the fact that all men, apart from Adam, are born of women keeps the relationship in balance (see 1 Cor. 11:12). This takes the sting of inferiority out of the man-woman relationship. Each is inextricably indebted to the other; neither can continue to exist without the other! That is the message these verses give for our guidance today.

A cluster of verses in 1 Corinthians 14 is often used to keep women out of the pulpit. I doubt such an application of Paul's counsel is valid. His discussion of the problems arising because some were speaking in unknown tongues during church services forms the context of verses 34 and 35. Speaking from the floor and not from whatever represented the pulpit in those days, such speakers often interrupted the orderly conduct of worship. Paul wished to see that disorder eliminated. Observing that the God they were claiming to serve "is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (verse 33), he implied that the interrupters should keep quiet and let public worship proceed in an orderly fashion.

Apparently interruptions had also come from women who had not fully understood what was being taught or who rushed to add their own contribu-
religious community whose sign of identity was exclusively male also made the male dominant. More significantly, it can be readily seen that the removal of this rite would inevitably tend to reverse the way men and women viewed each other's status. And the sign of the new covenant—baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit—emphasized this reversal, since it was universal and sexually indifferent by nature (in keeping with the universality and equality basic to the new creation). No doubt, God's hand was prominent not only in removing circumcision from Christianity but also in the effects that this had upon the relative standing of men and women in the church.

Of the three relationships mentioned in Galatians 3:28, Paul concentrated most upon the breaking down of the wall of partition that stood between Jew and Gentile. By the time of his death the church had become relatively clear in its collective mind about the proper relationship between these cultural/national groups.

Early Christianity progressed much more slowly on the slave-free question. With the exception of the Philemon letter, Paul said little about it. The fact is that although he felt slave and free to be equal in Christ, Paul did not call for the abolition of slavery. He appealed to the Christian community to remove only the worst of the conditions prevalent in the master-slave relationship.

The same kind of situation existed in Paul's day when it came to the male-female question, and therefore Paul, for his own reasons and for reasons within the community, was not able to insist on the sort of changes he did in the case of the Jew-Gentile issue. In fact, for these reasons he employed arguments from Genesis 1, 2, and 3 against women leading, teaching, or even speaking in the churches. 1 Timothy 3:10-13, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, and 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 give the most outstanding evidence of this. We will turn briefly to these statements, attempting to give them their full weight in our discussion.

Paul on the role of women

In 1 Timothy 2:11 Paul calls for women to "learn in quietness and full submission" (N.I.V.). This injunction coincides with 1 Corinthians 14:34, in which he says, "It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" (N.I.V.). The same basic stance is also strongly emphasized in 1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-10, and 12, which verses call for the submission of women not only in the realm of marriage but particularly in the church. Paul also says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12, N.I.V.).

Paul's rationale is rooted in the Creation-Fall account of Genesis 1-3. In 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 Paul states that only the man is in God's image and that woman came from man and not vice versa. In 1 Timothy 2:13, 14 he says, "Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman" (N.I.V.). Then, as I have stated, in 1 Corinthians 14:34 Paul calls for women's silence in church on the basis of what "the Law says" (N.I.V.; "Law" almost certainly referring to Gen. 3:16).

A question must now be faced squarely: If Paul's position on the standing of women in the church is that they be silent, submissive, and subservient to men, and if his reasons for this position are as fundamental as they seem to be, how can any Christian adopt a view that allows women to stand equally with men in the formal ministry of the church?
First, we will note certain points arising directly out of the scriptural statements to which we have just referred. The King James Version’s rendition of 1 Timothy 2:12 reads, “But I suffer not a woman...to usurp authority over the man.” This translation is borne out by the primary meaning of the Greek word authentein, which is “one who acts in his own (or, to act in one's own) authority, an autocrat.” 3 Moffatt translates it thus: “I allow no woman to...dictate to men.” Apparently there were women in some of the churches who in their newfound Christian liberty tended to grasp aggressively at the prestige of teaching and leading in the congregations. This, understandably, could not be allowed, especially because of the attitude prevalent toward women in the surrounding culture (see the next section). First Corinthians 11:16 gives further evidence of this attitude: “If anyone wants to be contentious about this [the man-woman relationship Paul prescribes], we have no other practice” (N.I.V.).

This problem seems to have been especially pronounced in Corinth. When Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians he spoke only of the equality in Christ of Jew and Greek, slave and free (chap. 12:13). When the Galatian letter is compared with it (Gal. 3:28), the absence of any mention in this Corinthian letter of male-female equality is conspicuous. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Paul purposely made no reference to the male-female relationship when he wrote his Corinthian letters because he knew of the special problems there.

Undoubtedly these contentious, dictatorial, usurping women concerned Paul, causing him to take a more culturally conservative stand as he sought to articulate the role of women in the church. Paul’s task was particularly delicate because of the cultural, social, and religious dynamics surrounding first-century congregations.

**Paul in his culture**

In the Jewish culture, out of which Christianity had barely come, the strict rabbis was not to talk to a woman in public, no even his wife, daughter, or sister. Some Pharisees closed their eyes when they saw a woman approaching.4 Such Jewish attitudes and practices throw significant light on Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy.

What Paul enjoins in these passages correlates remarkably with what was prevalent in the surrounding culture. Please compare carefully the customs noted below with the passages cited.

William Barclay points out: “Women had no part in the Synagogue service; they were shut apart in a section of the Synagogue where they could not be seen (see 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34)... A man came to the Synagogue to learn; but, at the most, a woman came to hear. In the Synagogue the lesson from Scripture was read by members of the congregations; but not by women (see 1 Cor. 14:35). ... It was absolutely forbidden for a woman to teach in a school; she might not even teach the youngest children (see 1 Tim. 2:12: “I do not permit a woman to teach” (N.I.V.). ... No nation ever gave a bigger place to women in home and family things than Jews did (reflected in 1 Tim. 2:15); but officially the position of women was very low.”

Although women were given a new and more respected standing in the early Christian community, it was difficult for Paul as a man, and as a leader of people who had grown up in such a culture, to advocate any more of a shift in the

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scriptures yield their full message in isolation; they need to be considered in their context. We should, therefore, give this verse the benefit of its setting so that we do not distort its meaning.

In his Epistle to the Galatians Paul proclaims freedom from dependence on Judaistic legalism to those who accept salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. His reasoning reaches a peak in the closing verses of the third chapter, especially in verses 26-29.

Paul argues there that legalism, by its very nature, is exclusive. In contrast, faith is inclusive, ready to give the embrace of salvation to all who allow it to function in their religious experience. “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (verse 26). The outward ceremony that signified the inward miracle is baptism. “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (verse 27). Baptism signifies that we have indeed “put on Christ,” or “have been clothed with Christ” (N.I.V.).

Reasoning from this, Paul states that from the time of baptism, those who are “in Christ Jesus” (verse 28) are no longer subject to the limitations that are traditionally imposed by race (Jew or Greek), by social status (slave or free), or by sex (male or female). Genuine acceptance of Christianity removes those racial, social, and sexual barriers that have hindered unity, and all Christians who are truly “in Christ Jesus” are “one” in Him. National barriers fall down, social distinctions lose their significance, sexual conflicts fade away. A common love for and allegiance to the Lord, and common dependence on Him alone for redemption, bring all people to the same level in respect of salvation.

But the verse does not say that racial, social, and sexual differences are abolished. A Caucasian remains a Caucasian, a Polyenese remains a Polyenese, and an African, an African. In Paul’s world a slave remained a slave unless he was freed by a happy circumstance, which might have no connection with his religion. In 1985, acceptance of Christ does not automatically wait a convert from rags to riches. Neither does baptism eliminate sexual distinctions: a man remains a male, a woman remains female. From the Christian perspective, none of the three listed categories—or any category, for that matter—can nullify the unity brought among members of diverse groups as they become Christians. The overriding factor is “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Verse 29 emphasizes this message: “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” And that message concerns salvation, and salvation only.

So, rightly considered, Galatians 3:28 has no direct relevance to the topic of ordination for women, and it should not be cited in its favor. Converted men and women can, and should, have sanctified respect and affection one for the other, for they are of equal value in the sight of our Lord, who died to redeem members of both sexes. But the fact that both sexes are saved by grace does not inaugurate a body of Christian priestesses! We should remember that we
standing of women than he did. If the changes as to Jew-Gentile relations and on circumcision almost divided the church, agitation in another controversial direction would almost certainly have split it completely. Thus we have Paul advocating a conservative stand on the issue of women's role in the church, and calling on the Biblical Creation-Fall account to affirm it. Though Paul's teaching on women did allow for progress, it did not approach the degree of progress implied in the inspired, redemption-based mandate that in Christ "there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). This had to be left, as was the slavery question, for a later generation.

In the Greek, or Gentile, culture "the place of women was [also] very low. The Temple of Aphrodite in Corinth had . . . priestesses who were sacred prostitutes and every evening plied their trade in the city streets" (as did their counterparts in other cities of the New Testament world). Thus we can understand why Paul insisted that women conduct themselves conservatively, especially when it came to leadership in the church. He would not have wanted them to be seen as the counterparts of these heathen priestesses. "The fact is that if in a Greek town Christian women had taken an active speaking and teaching part in the work of the Christian Church, the church would inevitably have gained the reputation of being a resort for loose and immoral women." 9

We must note an important factor about Paul's own attitude toward women. In the mind of the Jewish man, "women, slaves, and children were classed together. In the morning prayers a man thanked God that God had not made him a Gentile, a slave, or a woman." 10 Notice the remarkable parallel between this prayer and the categories of Galatians 3:28: Jew or Gentile, free or slave, and male or female. Paul, having been a Pharisee, would almost certainly have daily prayed the Jewish man's prayer. 3 Becoming a Christian and realizing the implications of Christ's arrival, he repudiated it. And, in Galatians 3:28, he unequivocally declared that in the light of Christ and His new creation, all of God's children have an equivalent standing.

I believe that had it not been for the cultural and social constraints that existed in his environment, Paul himself would have pressed the standing of women in the church further than he did. These constraints no longer exist. If anything, in many parts of the world the cultural constraints now impel us to open fully to women the doors of formal ministry.

**Inconsistent present practices**

It is critical for us to acknowledge that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with most other Christian churches, has never generally advocated Paul's position on women's role in the church. For example, women in most churches in the United States have not covered their heads in worship for years (1 Cor. 11:5, 6). They have long held official, permanent teaching positions in seminaries, colleges, academies, and elementary schools. They regularly lead out as superintendents in Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath schools, an office that gives "authority over men" (1 Tim. 2:12, R.S.V.). Women have not remained "silent" (R.S.V.) in the way Paul enjoined.

As Christians we have felt free to adjust much of Paul's teaching, interpreting it according to the circumstances in our own congregations. Can we, then, allow ourselves to use the Bible generally, and the Pauline statements specifi-

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have no inspired successor countermanding the Pauline and other Biblical declarations. We need to exercise great care not to nullify or warp their inspired counsel (see Rev. 22:18, 19).

**Ordaining women: un-Biblical, unwise**

The church was still young when Paul wrote. It was functioning in a pagan society that had little sympathy with Christian practices and that would have been still more antagonistic if women had played prominent roles in the church services. The church needed to establish itself and to develop its organizational pattern still further. Under those circumstances, assigning women prominent speaking responsibilities would have handicapped the church.

Such a situation is a far, far cry from the opportunities for leadership that are open to Christian women now. Those opportunities run from cradle roll and kindergarten to adult Sabbath school superintendency and teaching positions, from personal ministries leadership, both on and off the rostrum, through wide-ranging youth leadership, speaking opportunities, and to the office of head deaconess. Those having a willingness to serve and public speaking talents or any of a variety of abilities can exercise their gifts with incalculable benefit to the church and with deep satisfaction and fulfillment for themselves.

But not one of these channels for service is linked with ordination to the gospel ministry. We should acknowledge that the scriptures we have just considered do not authorize ministerial status for women. It is doubtful that that idea had even crossed the mind of either Paul or his fellow Christians. Any reason advanced in favor of such a move must come from outside the Bible, for it presents none in its hundreds of pages. And if, in the almost two thousand years that have passed since the canon was closed, the church has had no scriptural mandate to change its style of ministerial selection and service, why should it now be urged into a course on which Scripture is silent?

Any reasoning from the general to the particular needs careful handling. A careful administration should listen to reactions from a sizable portion of its constituency and from both sides of the question on so important a matter as ordination. Masculine and feminine gifts, in spite of present-day unisexual trends, still display inbred distinctions based on God-designed differences. These should not be ignored or swept under any committee table. In theory it might seem admirable to turn a blind eye to these differences; in practice they exert a considerable influence on congregational reactions to male versus female preachers. A large though not very vocal section of the church believes that the masculine nature and gifts are better adapted to the preaching ministry than are the feminine. These words of warning, then, merit serious consideration:

"A neglect on the part of woman to follow God's plan in her creation, an effort to reach for important positions which He has not qualified her to fill, leaves vacant the position that she could
cally, to bar women from fuller participation in the ministry of the church? If, on the basis of statements such as Paul's in I Timothy 2 and in I Corinthians 11 and 14, we continue to limit the role of women in the church, then we are taking a logically untenable stand. Upon what basis could we embark on this rather literalistic view of Scripture while we largely neglect some of the central principles of the Bible and the sweep of its wholistic thrust? Such a course, it seems to me, only appears to be Biblical.

If we are going to bar women from full participation in ministry on the basis of this rather "verbatim" use of Scripture, we would be more consistent to insist also that women cover their heads at church gatherings, that they remain silent, that they not teach, that if they want to know anything they wait until they get home to ask their husbands (if they all have husbands), and that they hold no position in the church that involves any authority over any man.

Conclusion

Definite social, cultural, and thus religious constraints rested on the early Christian community, preventing it from fulfilling the mandate of the gospel, which commanded equivalent standing for all God's children in Christ. In the case of the slave-free issue, a time came to drop the concessions and to respond fully to this mandate. Now also, on the issue of women in the Christian community and the church, the time has come. In fact, in widespread areas of the world, conditions are such that if we withhold from women the standing that the Bible calls for them to have, we will be wrong—not only in the eyes of society but especially in the light of the gospel mandate.

It is disconcerting to note that in relatively recent history the Bible was used by Christians to try to justify the slave trade. It is also alarming to see how the curse of Ham (see Gen. 9:25) has been used more recently by Christians to try to maintain a wholly unjust stand against full equality for black people. The use today of the Biblical account of the curse of Eve to exclude women from full standing in the ministry is so similar to this kind of reasoning that today's church must not in any way be party to it.

I believe, on the basis of the Biblical evidence as a whole, that to understand Paul properly we must proceed from the same point he does: the impact of Christ's arrival upon the lives of human beings. Apparent contradictions found elsewhere, even in Paul, must be subjected to the redemption-based mandate of statements of principle such as Galatians 3:28, and not vice versa. God's redeeming act in Christ, and its implications, must be the ultimate touchstone in defining the activity and practice of the church.
Ordination of Women

Will the Church allow the ordination of women issue, regardless of the decision, to disrupt its divine mission?

For several years ordination of women has been the center of discussion on various occasions. We are not the only denomination struggling with this issue, since it is a focal point of controversy in both Protestant and Catholic circles. Women's issues are not limited to the religious realm. In recent years women have struggled and achieved certain victories in finding positions in both business and politics. In politics Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman in history to be nominated by a major U.S. political party for the Vice Presidency.

When it comes to the role of women in religion, business, or politics, women themselves are not in total unity. The majority of women who voted in the U.S. Presidential election failed to support the ticket with a woman on it. Within our church the women are divided as to attitudes about ordination. The numerous letters, telephone calls, and conversations that I have had indicate that some of the strongest attitudes against the ordination of women are exhibited by women, not men. In view of this, we are trying to be as objective as possible in presenting two viewpoints on the subject.

At the 1984 Annual Council certain steps were mandated for achieving a final decision at the General Conference session this July. (Please read carefully the report of these steps in the December, 1984, MINISTRY, page 26.) In brief, these steps include having two representatives from each of the world divisions attend a meeting prior to the 1985 General Conference Spring Meeting. This committee is to study the issue and give a report of their meeting to the delegates of the Spring Meeting, which in turn will refer recommendations to the 1985 General Conference session for decision.

The Biblical Research Institute is coordinating this special committee meeting and has been requested to send to all the delegates of the General Conference session "a balanced summary of the available theological positions in connection with this subject." And finally, "the decision of the 1985 General Conference session will be definitive and should be accepted as such by the church worldwide."

Observations for consideration

The church's attempts, especially in the North American Division, to place women in professional soul-winning positions have not met with wide acceptance or success. In the early seventies, ten internships were provided for Bible instructors. (These were not exclusively designated for women.) Unfortunately, these ten internships were little used. Since 1979, only six have been used, and none are currently being used. Later, five internships for associates in pastoral care were provided specifically for women. The training for associates in pastoral care differed somewhat from the Bible instructor program in that the training requirements for the position of associate in pastoral care were identical to the ministerial training program on both college and seminary levels. Research shows that only four internships have ever been used and that only one is in current use. Unless more openings in the churches are made available for associates in pastoral care, we may face the same decrease in interest as we have for the Bible instructor work. In other words, women have little incentive to prepare for the ministry unless they can expect to be hired for the ministry.

In connection with this point, it should be noted that in North America our theological seminary has three hundred regular and fifteen special scholarships available for conference-sponsored or nonsponsored students to study for the M.Div. degree. Only sponsored students are guaranteed a position in the ministry upon graduation. Of the 296 students using these scholarships last fall quarter, only 188 were sponsored by conferences. This means that more than one hundred individuals face graduation from the seminary with no guaranteed call to a salaried position in the ministry. Although this problem is not directly related to the ordination of women, it is a logistical problem that church leaders must take into consideration.

A second observation relates to the work of the special committee and Spring Council. There is confusion in the minds of some as to the work of the committee itself. Is it their responsibility to ascertain from a Biblical standpoint that there is a prohibition against the ordination of women? President Wilson's remarks at the last Annual Council referred to the number of excellent papers that have already been prepared, and he said that most indicated that the Bible and the writings of Ellen White neither endorse nor condemn ordination of women. Furthermore, at the 1975 Spring Meeting, action was taken that opened the way for ordination of deaconesses and of women as local elders. Thus the concept of women being ordained has been approved by the church. The only question left is whether to ordain women for the gospel ministry. Perhaps an important question to be settled by the committee and the Spring Council delegates is whether this is a policy decision rather than a theological one. If it is defined as a policy decision, then the world church in session may find it easier to make a decision.

My third observation is in connection with an Annual Council comment by President Wilson that essentially the church must either back up or go forward. He indicated that the church's present stand is quite untenable because of past decisions to allow women to receive the same training in college and seminary as their male counterparts. In view of this, the question may be asked whether the church is willing to retreat from this position. If not, then is it
Cooperation or confrontation?

“And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him” (Acts 8:1, 2, R.S.V.). But I wonder how the less devout felt about the incident.

Can you hear the discussion in a church board meeting? “That fellow, I always knew he was a bit blunt, but this time he went too far!”

“Yeah, things were just starting to go good—we were getting a lot of the priests and even some Pharisees on our side—then he goes and calls the council stiff-necked and accuses them of being prophet killers!”

“Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that we send a letter to the council disavowing Stephen’s speech. As mad as the elders are, we’re liable to have to leave town to keep from getting stoned like our ‘dear deacon’!”

Cooperation or confrontation— which is better for the church that finds itself besieged by hostility from without or within? The question has challenged leadership at least since the day Moses killed the Egyptian taskmaster. Jesus Himself faced it, and answered it unequivocally when Satan offered Him a

“cooperative” kingdom. Jesus did not hesitate. Not for one second would He compromise to secure cooperation.

But if we read our New Testaments carefully we soon recognize that cooperation does not always mean compromise. In relation to civil government, Jesus’ counsel to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s comest to mind first. Then Paul’s “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed” (Rom. 13:1, 2, R.S.V.). And, of course, Peter’s “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him” (1 Peter 2:13, 14, R.S.V.).

It would be easy to dismiss Paul’s and Peter’s counsels as light and easy talk from men who hadn’t seen the depths of injustice we see in some nations and even in some religious organizations today. But one point of faith and two points of fact prevent such easy dismissal. 1. Faith in the inspiration of all of Scripture. 2. The fact that these apostles had suffered imprisonment or torture at the hands of both civil and ecclesiastical government. 3. The fact that both of these counsels probably were written during the reign of Nero, who had claimed his throne in the wake of fiendish machinations culminating in the assassination of his predecessor.

Could the Holy Spirit really direct the apostles to teach cooperation with such a government as Nero’s?

Yes.

Today we hear some voices calling Christians to oppose evil governments and others calling us to enforce Christian morality through civil authority.

Two letters to the editor published in this issue chastise MINISTRY for not taking a hard line against the Communist government of the Soviet Union. And Seventh-day Adventist administrators have recently been criticized for recognizing the portion of the Hungarian Adventist church that cooperates with that country’s government.

From a pragmatic standpoint it would be easy to answer such criticisms by simply saying that having some church organization is better than having none. If church leadership followed a consistent course of confrontation in some countries, organization might soon disappear altogether. Pragmatically, cooperation seems the only viable option.

But there is a thin line between pragmatism and rationalization. It is even thinner and harder to discern than the line between cooperation and compromise. It is not safe to be purely pragmatic. It is only safe to avoid compromise.

As a pragmatist Stephen could have uttered mealymouthed phrases that kept everyone comfortable. But equivocation in his situation would have constituted compromise, not cooperation. Stephen preached for conversions, not for comforts. And that is what got him into trouble.

Paul before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa could have simply pleaded innocent and been released. Instead he took the opportunity to preach evangelistic sermon after evangelistic sermon, even though he knew his zeal might only fuel the ire of those who held his life in the balance. There was nothing pandering about this evangelist who urged cooperation.

Paul and Stephen give us good examples of how to deal with the forces around us, whether they be governments, church organizations, or our own congregations. My job as a Christian is to present the claims of the gospel upon individuals—let the chips fall where
they may. If I will do that consistently, prayerfully, and with an evangelistic zeal like Stephen's and Paul's, I will not be found to be compromising with evil.—K.R.W.

Outward structure, inward faith

Where should one look to find Christ's church? In the reaction against ecclesiastical dominance, modern reformers have advanced the theory of the invisible church. This theory also appeals to those of a mystical mind. They imagine that external organization matters little as long as they have inward faith. Thus it is hard to get them to make the needed profession that entails sacrifice, and so the cause of Christ is hindered and His work weakened.

But "the invisible church" is a practical absurdity. It is a contradiction in terms. If one thing is more clearly stated than another in Scripture, it is that the church is the body of Christ. Now if words mean anything, this clearly signifies that it is the outward and perceptible habitation of His Spirit. On earth we have no such thing as an invisible human body.

Had the apostle wished to convey the idea that while Christ is the foundation of the church, it is not to have an external structure, he might have used other analogies to interpret that thought. But he would certainly not have chosen that of the human body. Christ Himself set up two central pillars of a visible church when He founded the two outward sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Had the church been intended to be invisible, why these external rites? Yet He commanded that external organization matters little as long as they have inward faith. Thus it is hard to get them to make the needed profession that entails sacrifice, and so the cause of Christ is hindered and His work weakened.

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The Ten

From page 5

given to us free from God. Jesus makes this clear when He rebukes the scribes and Pharisees for teaching harsh laws but themselves not living up to them (chap. 23:1-4). This righteousness, though freely given by God, must be realized both in the sentiments of our heart and in our actual deeds—keeping the commandments and doing the things the Spirit teaches us—which by far surpass the law. For those, then, who according to the Great Commission have been taught to obey everything He commanded His apostles, the Ten Commandments remain in force "till heaven and earth pass away."

That the apostles repeated the commandments in the letters of the early church, and that the church as a matter of course continued to single out a special day of the week, witness to the validity of the Decalogue for the Christian church. The Lord God of Israel is the Father of Jesus Christ. His character, His sanctity, and righteousness will not change. By reason of the authority of Christ, the Ten Commandments are as valid for the people of God today as when they were first given. They are the framework, the basis, for God's communion with His people. Observing them spells blessing; transgressing them brings the curse of the Eternal.

Concerning the Ten Commandments, Karl Barth wrote: "The Decalogue . . . is . . . in fact the basic event in the story of Israel—it unfolds the programme of the whole history of this people . . . and therefore by implication of His elect community . . . the Church. It was not, therefore, without justification that the Decalogue was adopted as the basis of the Christian catechism. It is the foundation statute of the divine covenant of grace and valid for all ages. Everything that the true God, the Founder and Lord of this covenant, has commanded and forbidden, or will command and forbid, is to be found within the framework of the programme of all His decisions and purposes as contained in the Decalogue."—Church Dogmatics, Vol. II, part 2, p. 685.

In our May issue Bockmuehl concludes his study of the Decalogue with an examination of natural law and Christian ethics.
Parson to Parson: What would you do?

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.

The question we feature this month brought the highest number of letters we have had since we began Parson to Parson. (More people submitted this question than any other also.) To squeeze in as many answers as possible, we’ve taken excerpts from many of the best letters. The proportion of each type of response represents approximately the proportion of letters of that type we actually received.

In the past, when we have not received enough answers to questions we’ve published, we’ve recruited people to write answers for us. Now we know you’re out there! In the future, if we don’t get enough answers, we will assume the question wasn’t interesting or the answers were not available, and we will not use the question in Parson to Parson.—Editors.

Insecure?

Ministry is selfless service, not ownership. It is leading people to look to Christ, not to the pastor. If a pastor feels intimidated or intruded upon by a former pastor returning by request to perform marriages, funerals, etc., he needs to ask himself some probing questions about his own insecurity and pride.

If a former pastor has been able to establish good and sound relationships, let’s celebrate it and not deny it. Rather than diminish the present pastor’s influence, it will greatly enhance it. The members will appreciate his healthy attitude in recognizing that he cannot and should not try to be the sole source of ministry in their lives, but rather a contributing source in a long line of pastors who cared.

As a pastor I have tried my best to seek out former pastors and let them know I want them to return as often as they can for preaching appointments and special services. I have gained much through this practice. The members and former pastors both appreciate me for doing this.—Stan Caylor, McKinleyville, California.

Openness breeds discretion

I have been in the pastoral ministry for nearly thirty years and have served six churches, performed hundreds of marriages and funerals, and built several buildings and congregations. One can’t just remove himself and pretend he was never part of the lives of members to whom he previously ministered.

I cannot control circumstances, but I can choose how I am going to respond to them. When I take a new assignment I invite my predecessor to come back as he would choose. At times I have specifically invited him to return for the encouragement of the flock. I let my people know he is welcome, therefore there is an openness, a gracious feeling, a generosity.

Invariably, if I take this attitude the previous pastor is charitable and discreet, and there is a feeling of oneness. We want the kingdom to prosper and we are a team.—Robert V. Marston, Temperance, Michigan.

Invite him back

I do not want the former minister to be forgotten. While he was shepherding the flock to whom I am now pastor, they changed much together. Every former pastor leaves a small group behind who love him dearly. It may be that their children are the same age or that he was with the family at a particularly tragic moment, or he may be the one who helped turn an alcoholic’s life around, or possibly he was the person responsible for the miracle of salvation in a family member’s life.

I found early in my ministry that by inviting these men back to preach and for special celebrations, I received a blessing. All the deep love shared by the former pastor and those of my flock was not only deepened but was now given to me in greater measure.

When a person died who was known to be close to a former pastor, the first question I asked was “Would you like for me to contact Brother Bill and let him know of this death?” My willingness to share with others was rewarded many times over by a new love and appreciation for me by many, and a new, higher level of tolerance by a few.—Bob Reynolds, Norman, Oklahoma.

Are we competitors?

Would there be a problem, and if so, what is the source of the problem? Insecurity? Would I feel threatened by your (the former pastor’s) return? If so, I should take it to the Lord in prayer, who will give me faith strong enough to overcome this weakness.

Does ignorance of our roles lie behind the problem? Do I view you as a competitor or a partner in the ministry? Paul wrote, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase... For we are God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:6-9, N.K.J.V.).

I’d be glad to have you take baptisms or funerals in my church as long as you take the entire church service—sermon
and all—and I get to sit on the back pew and listen for a change. And weddings—wonderful! You can shoot the whole evening at the rehearsal while I get some work done or relax with my family.—Richard Youn Roseman, Tavernier, Florida.

**No room for jealousy**

There is no room for jealousy in the ministry. . . . If a couple is to be married and they were raised in the church during the ministry of a former pastor, he should be the one to perform the ceremony.—Bill G. Grove, DeWitt, Arkansas.

**District superintendent’s role**

I have not had a lot of problems with this, perhaps because of my denominational system of government. However, I would do three things.

First, I would tell my district superintendent the circumstances and have him speak to the offender. I believe that is important what the superintendent gets paid for.

Second, I would speak directly to the pastor who insists on returning to my parish about the ethics of the whole thing.

Third, I would tell my pastoral committee, board, or whomever, the struggles I am having with the former pastor’s returning. If my people really want the former pastor for a particular reason, the board should insist that I be asked and that I issue the invitation. The board should know that the ethics of the whole thing almost demand that I be considered in all services of the church.—William D. Armold, Ainsworth, Nebraska.

**Pastor must face serious questions**

For Methodist pastors, the last day in the pulpit involves, along with all the tearful goodbyes, the clear statement that the incoming pastor will be the pastor, and that he (or she) will be completely in charge, including weddings, funerals, et cetera. I always make this clear, and add to it that our personal relationships will always be there, but the new man is the man, period.

If a family member wants to have another minister perform a liturgical task or to assist, he comes to the pastor and explains that request. The task will invite the other minister to come and help, and the spirit of working together abides. I would never go to another church I once served unless personally cleared with and/or invited by the minister of that church, no matter who in the church wanted me there. That is good, sound, ethical professionalism, and any pastor who objects will have to stand while some very serious questions are asked him.—H. A. Harrington, West Monroe, Louisiana.

**He can’t run a branch office**

Dealing with a former pastor who lacks all sense of professional ethics is not the problem of the pastor at all. Instead, the president or chief officer of the congregation should tactfully inform congregation members that this practice is in violation of ethical standards, and bluntly if necessary advise the offending pastor that he is not running a branch office.—A. Heidmann, Springfield, Ohio.

**Inform congregation of your own policy**

I inform my congregation that I have a personal policy of ministerial ethics. This includes not performing a service of any kind in another church without the approval of that pastor and church board or council of elders and deacons.

When people from my congregation invite their former pastor without consulting me, I can only graciously step aside to allow that pastor the opportunity to fulfill the request. However, the first Sunday that I serve in a church, I ask the congregation to accept me as their servant of the Lord and inform them in my message or in a written statement in the bulletin what they may expect of me as their pastor, and also what I expect of them as my parishioners. This has proven a helpful procedure thus far in my ministry during almost thirty-two years.—David C. Ter Beest, South Holland, Illinois.

**Divorce involved?**

To discourage the congregation from inviting others back, I mention in a newsletter that a new minister is like a second husband. He feels a bit insecure for a time and does not like the idea of having the previous husband invited back for various functions. If they really do want the other person to perform a ceremony, the proper thing to do is to make the request through me.—Robert McNeill, Airdrie, Alberta.

**Facilitate his return**

Regarding “Gone but Not Forgotten”:

1. Be “big” enough to facilitate and support the former pastor’s return for these special events. 2. Attend if possible even if you do not participate with him (unless you’re not wanted). 3. Do a good job as pastor, and the problem will shrink in time.—Albert C. Savage, Jr., Hazard, Kentucky.

**Heap coals of fire**

Besides securing the cooperation of the lay authorities in the congregation, I’ve found coals of fire effective. When you find out that Pastor X has been invited by someone in the church, assume that he is a more ethical person than he appears to be, and write an invitation of your own. He knows, as do you, that the ethical rule is that a pastor never returns to a parish except at the specific invitation of the present pastor. So you invite him to perform the ceremony, sending a copy of your letter to the people in the church who have invited him. It’s valuable to say something like this: “I know that you are aware that before you can ethically agree to perform this (wedding, baptism, funeral), you must have an invitation from me. I am happy to extend that invitation.”—Kenneth R. Mitchell, Webster Groves, Missouri.

**Transform problem into a program**

Ministers who are “gone” from the pastorate for which you are now responsible, “but not forgotten” by older
members at times of baptisms, weddings, and funerals, often pose problems, but they always present opportunities. In a word: The pastor should ensure such are not gone forever, by purposeful invitations back for appropriate reasons. Memory should be carefully nurtured for constructive continuity.

A surrender to the problem? Not at all. Rather, such an approach transforms the problem into a program, by preaction rather than reaction.

Such ceremonies should not strive to be nice and beautiful at the moment as much as they should attempt to be helpful ministry for the years ahead. Effective, sustained pastoral care requires the emotional leverage gained by the sentimental associations of such events, and it is the current pastor who needs the advantage because he carries the responsibility.

Engage in a frank and open discussion with the congregation until you formulate a policy that enjoys reasonable consensus. Let the people own the policy so that it becomes self-enforcing. In the same spirit, have a private conference or correspondence with former pastors. Listen to their perspective because it could be quite different from what you fear.

Such a policy probably should require all substitute pastoral care to be coordinated by the pastor. Individuals ought not to extend an invitation without prior approval from the pastor. All the better if the pastor himself initiates the matter upon the individual’s request. If neither happens, the invited minister should himself ask the pastor for concurrence and not accept without it. Utterly crucial: Give a little, and be reasonable.

If all else fails (which it sometimes does), invite the old fellow every week until the people tire of him again. If the pastor himself initiates the matter if the pastor himself initiates the matter, I went into the church, made my way to the altar, and began to pray about this disturbing situation.

The essence of my prayer was this: “Lord, You have a ministry for me here. And You know I can’t control the former pastor’s returning and I can’t win the members’ confidence as long as he continues to return. I feel that the success or failure of my ministry here depends upon Your intervention in this problem. The results are Yours to bear; I’m trusting You to work it out to Your glory.” He did! — Carl D. Smith, Manning, West Virginia.

**Survival weapon**

There is one avenue for the present pastor to take—it is the avenue of long-suffering. One must cultivate that attitude early in one’s ministry in order to survive.—Vernon E. Firme, Hightown, Maryland.

**Ultimate solution found**

I was surprised and delighted to see my question as the topic for the next Parson to Parson column. Since I wrote to you I myself have found a way of dealing with the problem: I have relocated to another church where the former pastor has moved more than 1,500 miles away.—Name withheld.

**“Blessed are the poor”?**

I know that Scripture says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” but the giving is getting to me. I pastor a small rural church and work full-time to support my family and ministry. Every time the Lord blesses us financially, it seems everybody knows—and finds our house with his hand out, having hard times. We love the Lord and give liberally in addition to tithing. Where can I draw the line and not feel guilty?

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. MINISTRY will now pay you $15 if you write a letter that we use. The lead time required for the publication of MINISTRY means that we need your response right away.

We need questions as well. We will pay $15 for any questions 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 □ Anne Elver

Don’t pity me

It is sometimes nice to know you’re not alone in your problems. Anne Elver has taken a hard look at some of the challenges ministerial families face and discovered that they aren’t so unique after all!

You may not agree with the author’s thrust that pastors’ wives are not unique. However, her comparisons and illustrations are compelling proof of her point.

My husband and I moved thirty-five times and pastored several churches in seaport cities where needy people often found their way to our home for handouts. We also raised two daughters who faced pressures because their dad was a minister, so I found real delight in Anne Elver’s convincing logic. Here is one article you would do well to cut out and file under the heading “When depressed, read this!”

Anne has truly turned hardships into stepping-stones to the kingdom. The least this article will do for you is to increase your joy in being a minister’s wife.—Marie Spangler.

“You’re moving again, you poor thing. It’s so hard being married to a pastor. I’m glad I didn’t marry one,” Delores said when I told her my husband’s transfer required another move.

Mrs. Tuttle, a new neighbor, introduced herself with these words: “I used to baby-sit for the former pastor’s wife. One day a parishioner bawled her out because the pastor had overlooked the parishioner’s absence from church. I feel sorry for any pastor’s wife; it’s such a hard life.”

Donna called the parsonage one evening, asking to speak to the pastor. “He’s out for the evening, Donna. Can I take a message?” I replied.

“It must be rough having a busy pastor for a husband,” Donna commented. “Can you have him call me tomorrow?”

Donna, Mrs. Tuttle, and Delores have one thing in common—they pity me because my husband is a pastor.

But I shun being the object of their pity because pastors’ wives are not unique in the trials that they face. Sure, there are some evenings when my husband is out on business and I stay home alone. Criticism comes my way occasionally. We move more frequently than I like. And my husband’s salary isn’t what it should be.

But other careers involve all of these disadvantages too. Our local school superintendent is out many evenings at meetings, but I’ve never heard anybody say, “Poor Betty, she has it hard being his wife.” Military wives move frequently too, and people accept this as a matter of course for them. Plenty of men are underpaid for their qualifications. Criticism falls on everyone occasionally. Remember this the next time you’re feeling sorry for yourself. You’re not in a unique role. The trials you face refine your character.

Of course, I have some gripes about my role as a pastor’s wife. Often my advice is sought when I’m not the proper person to see. The telephone rings during dinner some evenings. There are other irritants that I face, but they are a way for the Lord to purify me, and I need this.

For example, one church my husband pastored was near a busy highway.

Prayers from the parsonage

When Dick leaves early for church and I follow later with the children, when his “free” morning is usurped by a meeting, when he’s gone by 8:00 A.M. and we see him only for supper, I start to feel sorry for myself. If too many Bible studies last until 10:30 P.M. or too many counseling sessions take priority, I think, I would have stayed single if I’d wanted to be alone this much.

In response to a comment about the demands of my husband’s job, I’ve joked that I’m a “grass widow.” In response to my own needs, I’ve sometimes complained, “I feel like a single parent.”

Forgive me, Lord, for the ease with which I’ve used these terms: unmarried, single parent, widow. This month my husband is participating in a two-week Maranatha project in Honduras, and I have glimpsed what it would be like to be truly alone.

No quick calls from church, no enthusiastic homecomings. I miss our good talks and shared laughter. Our double bed seems too wide, and I am afraid when I awake at night and cannot reach out for Dick.

The children miss him too. Although he hardly sees them some days, on other days he builds a birdhouse with Hans or works on a computer game with Lisa. Now there is no one else to add his personality and interests to their development. No one to help Hans fix his bicycle or Lisa learn about generators.

I also realize how much we depend on his skill and knowledge to keep our home functioning. The lawn, car, furnace, and water heater—my list could go on—are cared for by my husband.

Two weeks have reminded me of how fortunate I am. Help me to express appreciation for all Dick contributes to our family. May I show him every day how much I love and need him.

Appreciation for all Dick contributes to our family. May I show him every day how much I love and need him.

Keep me from self-pity or a critical manner. When I occasionally need to remind Dick of how much he’s been gone, let me do it kindly, with understanding.

Thank You, Lord, for our great times as husband and wife, parents and children. My I never take them for granted.

Cherry B. Habenicht
Every trial I have because of being married to a pastor is used to God's glory when I yield it to Him. Every disadvantage I face as a pastor's wife has some unseen compensation.

Parsonages have all been next door to the church, and our churches have all been located on the main street in town. I can't go into my yard without someone noticing. Once when I was pulling weeds in the hot sun, I greeted a friend as she left the church building. Several minutes later she returned. "Here," she said. "Use my weed trimmer. You'll get the job done quicker." Her expression of love and generosity touched me deeply.

My lack of personal privacy is like most of the other disadvantages I face because my husband is a pastor—the price isn't so high when I look at the compensations. My spiritual gifts are enhanced because of who my husband is. Frequently I deliver the sermon in our church. No one questions the propriety of my doing this. Teaching is one of my spiritual gifts, and there is always a group needing me wherever we live. My writing ministry is enhanced by those who share testimonies with me. I often write their stories for them and rejoice with them when they realize that they have a story that might see publication.

It is a privilege to pray with those who call my husband and share their needs with me when they discover he isn't home. Our congregation's openness to receive from me blesses me greatly and helps my husband, too.

I don't want anyone's pity. I count it a blessing to belong to a group of women sharing the role of being married to a pastor. We are not a unique group of women. I feel that our trials refine our characters, our hardships are offset with abundant compensations, and our husbands' ministries enhance our own spiritual gifts. What a privilege!

Unacceptable gifts

From page 11

Provided, of course, that you are willing to accept the negative side effects. If the objective is people (souls), then you will need to consider spending a longer period of time in teaching, encouraging, and leading your flock to new heights of spiritual response.

Individuals motivated by love for God will not require rewards or entertainment to tap their wellsprings of benevolence. Neither will they require the pressure pump of promotion. Their benevolence will overflow like an artisan well.

Financial support, then, will be a result rather than a method; it will be the continual response of the heart rather than the fleeting outburst of emotion. Using God's method, our congregations can become vibrant, happy Christian stewards of whom it can be said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (chap. 25:21). Our financial and spiritual goals will be in complete harmony—and totally acceptable.

Transients often stopped by the parsonage, seeking aid. This bothered me at first. Stories of robberies, bilking, and other rip-offs tempted me to turn a deaf ear to each one. And these people usually came at inconvenient times. But each time someone in need stopped by, I would recall Jesus' promise that anything done in His name was done to Him. Then I would force myself to swallow my feelings and assist the one in need.

At my urging our church set up a fund and food basket to meet these needs. Through the years our church gained a reputation for being a caring fellowship as those we helped began telling others about our aid. I rejoiced that the Lord had given me enough love to reach out and to guide our people into this ministry. And He refined the spot in my character that wanted to pull back from giving aid, fearing getting "taken."

Every trial I have because of being married to a pastor is used to God's glory when I yield it to Him. Every disadvantage I face as a pastor's wife has some unseen compensation. My husband's evenings out are offset by his proximity to home during the day. Not many women get to enjoy their husband's company at lunch as I do.

I dislike moving, and my husband's ministry forces frequent moves on me. This personal aggravation is offset by the ease with which I fit into a new community and church just because of my husband's role. Numerous friends in each former home are blessings I might not have had if Harry were in another occupation.

My children have had to face pressures because their father is a minister, and this troubles me occasionally. I have had to lovingly remind some church members that my children are just like theirs—they aren't perfect, they don't want to accept an office in each church-related organization they join, and unrealistic expectations of them are unfair.

Recently my daughter pointed out a compensation that I had overlooked. "Being a preacher's kid works for, not against, me," she said. "My friends don't ask me to join them in activities that aren't right. Lots of temptations pass me by because of Dad's ministry."

The lack of personal privacy does trouble me, but I am more than adequately compensated for this by the abundance of love coming from our church members. For example, our
Shop talk

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A Humanizing Ministry

At first glance the book appeared to be just another written by an idealist on the bandwagon for social justice. But in fact the author not only has a vision of a much needed ministry but also gives much practical how-to advice.

Christ ministered to the outcasts, the dehumanized, the devalued and forgotten people of the world, and the church should do no less. However, the author states that many Christian ministries and social services can be dehumanizing. He points out some of the myths that have arisen regarding the retarded. The myth of dread, for example, which is rooted in fear, causes us to segregate the handicapped; perceiving them as children causes us to deny them opportunities for growth; regarding them as objects of pity or charity makes us feel good about ourselves. The author also states that “unfortunately telethons and charity drives make it appear that persons with handicaps are totally dependent on others, as they can do nothing for themselves. It makes their right to meaningful human existence appear to be a privilege bestowed on them by valued members of society.”

The author’s suggestions for making the church a caring community are mainly in the area of providing services that involve personal commitment with people rather than only for them. This, he considers, provides a humanizing ministry.

Celebration of Discipline: Paths to Spiritual Growth

Foster has asked the right questions and provided realistic ways of living the life of grace. Not only laypeople but also clergy need to be fed, and practicing what this book suggests will be a true boon for you in your work for Christ.

The book’s three sections are devoted to the inward disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting, and study, which enrich the life of grace; the outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service, which clear away obstructions to living a Christian life; and corporate disciplines including confession, worship, spiritual guidance, and celebration of our life in the living Lord.

In addition a separate and helpful Celebration of Discipline Study Guide is available from the same publisher.

What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation

Kimball’s intention is “to present as clear and unbiased an interpretation of Christ’s prophetic words as possible.” This exegetical study of Matthew 24 and 25 and Luke 21 engages itself with the teachings of dispensationalism that insist on a future observable sign of a seven-year period of tribulation before the final judgment. It also presents a fundamental challenge to Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Matthew 24.

The predicted “great tribulation” is interpreted not as an end-time event, but as the terrible calamity attending the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The weak point in Kimball’s interpretation is his use of Luke’s account to interpret Matthew rather than using Matthew’s own context. The problem becomes evident when Kimball spiritualizes the signs in the sun, moon, and stars.

In spite of our criticism we are nevertheless greatly indebted to Kimball for his challenging and thought-provoking study. Above all, his stress on Christ-centered waiting instead of event-centered chronological calculations is a welcome corrective to some modern outlines of Christ’s prophetic discourse.