Helping People Work Together
Standards set by technology?

Your recent article "Adventist Values: Flying High?" (April, 1985) greatly disturbed me.

The article stated, "It seems that our standards have not kept step with technology." Since when do we measure our church standards by technology?

Why are we publishing such statements in our church publications as: "Most serious, the Adventist stand on movies appears a lost cause . . ."? Since when have we begun to measure our church standards by the number of members that are living up to them? What is right has never been popular. Truth is truth.

I agree that our standards need to be clearly defined. We need preachers to preach them, and we need leaders to support the preachers who do.

We need to realize [that] the more we approach the day of final harvest, the more the lives of the righteous will be a thorn in the flesh of the unrighteous, causing the shaking in God’s church.

The more we compromise our standards to keep harmony in the church, the more we delay our Lord’s coming. We need to realize that the more we compromise our standards, the more members that are living up to them?

It is refreshing to note that Dr. Müller (January, 1985) entitled “Abortion: A Moral Issue?” for it forthrightly sets before the readers the Hebraic or Biblical concept of the nature of man, especially in the early stages of life, which is of concern for so many.

There is a relevant comment in the January 14, 1985, issue of Newsweek that brings out that there are just two views or attitudes in society affecting decisions for elective abortion—the relativist view that human life is achieved by degrees over nine months of gestation and “the absolutist position that life begins at conception” (italics supplied)—and states that “it is nearly impossible to imagine the meeting point that would satisfy both.” In the relativist view, which largely comes from Platonic and Greek philosophical sources, the fetus in the early stages does not qualify to have the status as a human being, for in that teaching a “soul” is gradually infused into the body of the fetus, and then, [and] only then, does it develop the value and status of humanity, thus having greater worth. With such a viewpoint one need not be seriously concerned regarding the morality of elective abortion in the early stages of pregnancy.

In view of this, please tell us how our Inter-American brothers and sisters are addressing the principalities and powers; how they, like the remnant in the book of Amos and the Jesus of the Gospels, are witnessing against corruption in public life.—Charles Scriven, College Place, Washington.

Injustice in Inter-America

The editorial “What’s Right With Inter-America?” (April, 1985) celebrates and explains the “fantastic progress” of the gospel in this “politically troubled” place. It is commitment to evangelism, we are told, that accounts for the phenomenal success in “saving souls” that our workers there enjoy.

You do not, however, tell us how all this evangelism addresses the political troubles of the area—the injustice, the violations of human dignity, the outright violence. The Bible announces deliverance for the poor and oppressed; it tells us that Jesus Christ is the servant foretold in Isaiah, the one who will bring justice to victory; it calls the church to be Christ’s body, the community that continues His work in the world.

More on abortion

The editors of the MINISTRY should be complimented for publishing the article by Dr. Richard Müller (January, 1985) entitled “Abortion: A Moral Issue?” for it forthrightly sets before the readers the Hebraic or Biblical concept of the nature of man, especially in the early stages of life, which is of concern for so many.

There is a relevant comment in the January 14, 1985, issue of Newsweek that brings out that there are just two views or attitudes in society affecting decisions for elective abortion—the relativist view that human life is achieved by degrees over nine months of gestation and “the absolutist position that life begins at conception” (italics supplied)—and states that “it is nearly impossible to imagine the meeting point that would satisfy both.” In the relativist view, which largely comes from Platonic and Greek philosophical sources, the fetus in the early stages does not qualify to have the status as a human being, for in that teaching a “soul” is gradually infused into the body of the fetus, and then, [and] only then, does it develop the value and status of humanity, thus having greater worth. With such a viewpoint one need not be seriously concerned regarding the morality of elective abortion in the early stages of pregnancy, for then the fetus is not yet regarded as fully human. However, later, when the body “becomes informed of a soul,” the matter becomes more important and serious from a moral viewpoint. This, then, is the summary of the relativist position.

It is refreshing to note that Dr. Müller takes the Biblical or absolutist position, which defines humanity beginning at the moment of conception, the beginning of life, when a fetus does not “receive a soul” but “becomes a soul” and from then on can be recognized as a living person, a human being with moral and legal rights.—Robert H. Dunn, M.D., Eau Claire, Michigan.

Ordination of women

This issue ought to be looked at in the light of practicality. 1. The duties of a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general ought to be analyzed, and a detailed job description, updated toward the year 2000, prepared. 2. The second analysis should concern itself with the positive and negative factors of female or male ministers.

Where the greatest issue of dispute arises is, in my opinion, the service of the fully ordained male local church pastor. The single woman overseas missionary and local Bible worker may wonder whether their faithful labor will ever lead to any denominational recognition.

The women working in similar areas of ministerial work are restricted to “missionary licenses” or “credentials,” as I remember.

I met and interviewed several ordained women of non-Adventist denominations, serving as full-fledged pastors. In none of the cases did the women mention that they could not effectively fill the place of a minister. They all were well-educated, professional, and also well-groomed women, definitely not sacrificing femininity for the pulpit they occupied. Some of them were married and had families.

The success of the Adventist female pastor in the pulpit will largely depend on the acceptance factor of the local church, women notwithstanding. As I see it, her profile will be: “well educated,” “charming,” “well groomed,” and definitely feminine. Especially professional women will need to be able to identify with her.—Elfriede Matejisik, Ph.D., Chicago, Illinois.
Helping People Work Together/4. How do people work together in today's technological society? John Fowler shares what has been happening in Ohio, especially as it has affected conference planning.

Ohio Changes System/8. J. David Newman describes some of the innovations that are increasing the effectiveness of soul winning, especially in the local church.

Twisting Their Tales/10. In many ways Jesus' parables resembled those of the rabbis. But His contained significant differences, also. Robert Johnston shows how these differences help explain why they wanted Him crucified.

Administering Church Money/12. A budget is essential to a well-run church. And financing most local needs through one offering item makes life much easier for both church leaders and members. Warren Zork explains a simple way to set up and operate a combined budget program.

Enlarge Your Church Through Your Sabbath School/16. Discover how to vitalize your church through the Sabbath school, as revealed by Charles H. Betz.

Ordination of Women: A Question of Status or Function?/19. Is the issue of women's ordination sociological or theological? Roger Dudley asks whether denying women certain privileges is meant simply to keep them "in their place."

Who Ministers to the Minister?/22. For several reasons, ministering to ministers is difficult. Dick Tibbits suggests two sources of help for ministers.

From the Editors

Is Our Church Putting First Things First?/24. J. David Newman

Invitation to Terror/25. Kenneth R. Wade

When the Pastor's Wife Rebels/26. Do pastors' wives ever rebel? Cathy McBride identifies six causes of rebellion and suggests how each may be handled.
Helping people work together

How do people work together in today’s technological society? More specifically, how can church leaders and lay leaders combine their efforts so as to be productive rather than disruptive? by John W. Fowler

America is undergoing a profound sociological revolution following close on the heels of a technological revolution and fueled by the behavioral sciences. Gordon F. Shea says this revolution is “as far-reaching as any in history, is as fundamental as the emergence of democracy and self-govern-

ment, the growth of public education, and the rise of capitalism.”

This sociological ferment affects how individuals and groups, particularly secular and religious organizations, interact. Its greatest impact is in the area of management. The development and application of “humanitarian” management principles within organizations stem from this sociological revolution and specifically from the work of social scientists, who are researching better ways for people to interact within social structures. This article will identify some of those humanitarian management principles applicable to the work of the church.

Norman Shawchuck, professor of church management at McCormick Theological Seminary, sees the application of humanitarian management principles to the church as theologically sound and necessary. He writes: “Management in the church is theology in action. The structures and programs of the church give body to the life of Christ within the organized church. Management practice is perhaps the purest form of practical (practicing) theology.”

Neal C. Wilson, world leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, acknowledged the importance of this emphasis within the church in his reference to the use of “management principles” during his keynote address at the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas.

Leaders’ views of human nature often dictate their understanding and application of management principles. Christian leaders will identify more with McGregor’s Y than with his X theory of management. The first assumes that people belong to their organization because they sincerely desire its good and are willing to do all they can to see it succeed. The second sees people as lazy and irresponsible. This latter assumption lessens trust and confidence within the organization and hinders effective interaction.

Humanitarian management principles in the church are predicated on the belief that Christian people are basically honest, upright, and trustworthy, desiring primarily the success of the organization and the advancement of God’s work. While we recognize that people are often driven by fear, anger, ambition, and selfishness, we believe that God’s grace is able to hold these negative drives in check and free people to work together effectively for the good of the church.

Asserting that management principles must be understood in the context of satisfying and productive relationships in no way compromises performance standards and the pursuit of challenging goals within the church. In fact, just the opposite is true. This approach appears to be the only way to bring the needed commitment, involvement, and achievement within an organization, particularly a church organization. Helping people learn how to work together in a satisfying and productive way is the essence of management practice.

H.M.S. Richards, Sr., expressed it well when asked at a workers’ meeting in Missouri what he thought about management principles: “Students of management have identified laws and principles that govern the way responsible groups think and act. Management is simply the application of those principles in leading
Any group of workers who feel they are being used to achieve goals that belong only to leadership will resist the goals and consciously or unconsciously sabotage their achievement.

organized groups to work together satisfactorily in the achievement of their common goals."

Humanitarian management principles

The first humanitarian management principle is consensus. People will interact effectively and satisfyingly in achieving common goals only if they agree on the goals. We refer to this as goal ownership. If the majority of the group identify with the goals set and are committed to them, they will work to accomplish those goals.

To achieve consensus, leaders must ask certain questions. Once Napoleon was asked how he was so effective in his military conquests. He replied that he had five astute helpers that never failed him: the simple questions What? Why? Where? How? and When? Finding good answers to those questions enabled Napoleon to be one of the world's greatest military leaders. Those questions may prove helpful to church leaders, also. In church organizations, however, the groups determine the answers; church leaders must direct the groups in processing the questions until a consensus develops regarding the answers. This is the only way in an educated, cultured, and at times skeptical society that a consensus can be developed and goal ownership achieved. Sociological studies in organizational development have discovered that any group of workers who feel they are being used to achieve goals that belong only to leadership will resist the goals and consciously or unconsciously sabotage their achievement.

Developing a consensus as to what the church is supposed to do and how it is to do it is the first step in building trusting relationships.

The second management principle is delegation. Trusting relationships are necessary to delegation of authority. If the leaders of an organization can delegate authority to the lowest possible level, their organization becomes very powerful. In the church, delegation of authority to the grass-roots level allows an intrinsic motivation to develop at that level, enlisting the willing support of a large majority within the church. If everyone owns the goals and puts his shoulder to the wheel, a powerful drive develops. This is the stuff movements are made of.

In church organizations, leadership needs to develop a consensus concerning the direction the church should take. However, each unit of organization must set its own goals and develop its own action plans within the parameters negotiated with the corporate body.

Upon his return from a celebrated trip to Iowa in 1959, Nikita Khrushchev raved about the production of corn as animal feed. For years afterward every state and collective farm, no matter what its climate, had to plant corn. The result was spotty corn production and no miracle in animal feed. Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev, who followed Khrushchev, learned from past mistakes and "insisted that 'farms should plant crops suited to their local conditions and be allowed methods that suit the conditions.'"

The next principle is the development of the human resources of the organization. Possibly leaders' greatest failure is delegating responsibility and authority to individuals without properly training and equipping them. If a person is committed to a particular task and has the gifts and skills to accomplish it, that person will generally be highly motivated and effective in his or her work. Ellen G. White says that the work of the pastor in training the laity is even more important than preaching.

Very few churches have developed a comprehensive training program for the members of their congregations. The result is that they have far too few capable, well-trained, experienced lay leaders. If a church has a strong pastor, it does well. With a weak pastor little happens. A similar problem appears to exist at every level of organization. A rapidly changing information society demands continuing education for every category of church employee as well as for the laity. It is time that our denomination seriously address this basic management principle. We laud the efforts being made here in North America; some progress is evident, but much remains to be done.

Our denomination needs a support system that will provide encouragement for each level of organization and specifically for the local church. It must also provide the training opportunities requested by each level of organization. Only then will the members of the body of Christ begin to interact in a satisfying and productive way. This effort will cause each level of organization to focus downward where church growth actually takes place, until finally the total resources of the denomination are made available to the local church. Focusing downward to the unit of organization that actually produces the consumer product is characteristic of successful organizations.

The next principle is developing responsible relationships within the organization. People must relate effectively together if they are to achieve the common goals. They must have clear-cut goals, abiding principles, and adequate guidelines with which they can develop and goal ownership achieved. Sociological studies in organizational development have discovered that any group of workers who feel they are being used to achieve goals that belong only to leadership will resist the goals and consciously or unconsciously sabotage their achievement.

Too often we accustom ourselves to irresponsible relationships and unproductive behavior in both the clergy and the laity.

Responsible relationships in the work of the church demand that a lack of performance be confronted. Accountability is essential. Associates who cannot confront each other effectively will never develop mature and rewarding relationships.

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The departmental leaders then became an integral part of administration, serving as consultants to pastors. Some of them were given additional training as consultants.

relationships. Even between the best of friends, one will occasionally do something that bothers the other and threatens to impair the relationship. If they are unable to work out these differences, the relationship will deteriorate and performance will suffer. An information system and frequent feedback are essential to accountability. How irresponsible relationships are confronted within the church is crucial. However, space will not allow further elaboration of this important question.

Finally, there must be rewards within the church organization. While the church cannot reward laymen or its paid workers with higher wages or promotion as do secular organizations, it can provide them with the greatest rewards possible in this life. A few of those rewards are the continual growth and development of their spiritual gifts, a satisfying and fruitful ministry within the church, a harmonious relationship with their fellow workers, a sense of achievement in helping to bring unity of action to the body of Christ, the attainment of goals at every level of organizational structure, and, finally, the continual advancement of the kingdom of God.

Implementing these principles will bring results. However, commitment and patience are necessary. Participative leadership requires a greater sharing of authority and responsibility than traditional methods of church growth. Since the churches have become dependent on church leadership and the church organization, their thinking must be reoriented so they will be willing to assume responsibility for their own growth. Retraining local church leaders, enabling them to give effective leadership, takes time. There is no quick fix. However, we must not allow the time factor to discourage us. We must make a beginning!

The proof of the pudding

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating." We have attempted to put these principles into practice in the Ohio Conference, and I have seen them produce positive results in three areas.

We wanted, for instance, to develop a support system for the pastoral ministry. So we employed Paul Robberson, a Seventh-day Adventist, as a consultant to work with the pastors in identifying what support activities they needed from the conference and how those activities could be supplied.

Desiring a consensus concerning what the pastors are supposed to do, we asked them to write their own job description. This, in turn, formed the basis for planning the conference support system.

The pastors requested that the conference dispense with departments that sell programs to them. Instead they wanted it to provide individuals who would labor alongside the pastors, helping them individually to work through the problems they face and assisting the local churches to create viable programs for growth.

As a result, the conference retrained the department directors and reorganized their activities to provide the help the pastors were requesting. The concept of conference consultants, whom we call assistants to the president, was born. The departmental leaders then became an integral part of administration, serving as consultants to the pastors. Some of them were given additional training as consultants—one in nurture, one in outreach, and one in church administration. (When the pastors wrote their job descriptions, we found that all their work fit in one or another of these three major categories.)

At the first workers' meeting where the support system was presented to the pastors, the three consultants shared how they could help pastors and churches. We distributed request slips for their services among the pastors. To our amazement, we received twenty-seven requests for the consultants. Church administration received the fewest because it was the least understood. However, since then, more requests have come in for help in church administration than in any other area.

Second, we applied these management principles to the conference's planning process. Over the weekend a planning committee comprised of seventy individuals—forty pastors and thirty laymen—met to identify the key result areas in church growth. The seventy individuals were divided into ten groups of seven each. They were asked to develop a list of not less than five and not more than seven key result areas. The key result areas were to suggest the primary focus for planning at the local church level.

Each group worked through the weekend, its activity interspersed with the regular worship services, small group Bible study, et cetera. On Sunday morning the groups reported their lists of key result areas. Surprisingly the ten lists were similar. It was not difficult to gain a consensus on five key result areas: nurture, church growth, evangelism, leadership training, and finances. Later we refined the five areas to three basic areas: nurture, outreach, finance. We considered leadership training part of all three.

The conference executive committee, the pastors at large, and the local churches accepted these three key result areas as the basis for each church's planning. It has taken time to educate the churches as to the need for planning. After four years a majority of churches are planning regularly for church growth. (For one church's set of plans, see page 9.)

The final area concerned the conference executive committee. At its latest...
R

eaching consensus took several months, but within one year the committee began to function effectively. Now we evaluate the process periodically so we can discuss our progress or lack of it.

regular constituency session (spring, 1984) the Ohio Conference enlarged its executive committee to twenty-nine members, a majority of them being laypeople. Primarily these laypeople are professional people with heavy responsibilities in business and industry.

Immediately we set out to develop a consensus on a job description for the conference executive committee and its several subcommittees, including the administrative committee. We also needed norms to guide the committee process. Using questionnaires and small group work, we developed job descriptions. In the same way we established sixteen group norms to guide committee processes. (See box accompanying article.) Reaching this kind of consensus took several months, but within one year the committee began to function effectively. Now we evaluate the committee process periodically so we can discuss our progress or lack of it.

The apostle Paul best summarized the results of practicing Christian principles of management when he said: "Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph. 4:15, 16, N.I.V.).

We the Ohio Conference Executive Committee value the following as norms for our committee:
1. The right of each individual to speak his/her mind in a kindly way.
2. The necessity for each member to be patient and understanding with each other.
3. The recognition of unity in diversity.
4. The importance of making major decisions by consensus (defined as at least 70 percent of those present), minor matters by simple majority. (Financial norm—major decision is $25,000 and above.)
5. The need to allow enough time for consensus to develop on major decisions.
6. The need for confidentiality. While it is recognized that committee members will be asked to interpret committee decisions, it is unethical to report how individual members responded. There will be times when sensitive issues need to be discussed with no discussion outside of the committee; for this to happen the committee needs to go into "executive session" (when, determined by norm 4).
7. The willingness to support and defend all actions voted by the committee. This need not apply to recommendations made to the constituency or to another committee.
8. The developing of an agenda with support materials. This agenda with supporting data is to arrive at least one week before the committee meets. The agenda is to have a suggested time frame for each item. The support materials are to follow this outline:
   a. Date
   b. Presenter
   c. Topic
   d. Background
   e. Current situation
   f. Alternatives
   g. Recommendations
   h. Motion (proposal)
9. The right of each member to submit items to the chairman for placing on the agenda. These items need to be in two weeks ahead of the committee meeting.
10. The importance of setting beginning and ending times for the meeting. Each meeting is to begin and end on time unless a consensus exists to do otherwise.
11. The use of small group discussion on major items so as to allow for more participation.
12. The willingness to discipline itself as needed.
13. The stressing of social time together—at least one retreat a year.
14. The need to revise the norms in the light of experience (norm 4 applies). In any case, norms will be reviewed annually.
15. The right of any member to ask for a secret ballot.
16. At the beginning of each meeting the chairman will ask if there are any additional items to be added to the agenda and then take a vote on whether they will be added to the agenda for that day.

Ohio Conference Executive Committee
Group Norms

1 Building Trust in the Workplace (American Management Association publication, 1984), preface.
3 The Human Relations Pocket Memo (1980).
4 H.M.S. Richards, Sr., taped message, Missouri workers' meeting, 1978.

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Ohio changes system

What happens when a conference changes its departmental system? Is the church ready for another 1901 reorganization? Ohio is experimenting with innovative ways to complete the work God has given it.

by J. David Newman

Change comes slowly in the church. The seeds of a quiet revolution were planted in Ohio in the fall of 1980. The previous article by John Fowler describes how this change developed.

The key factor in the process was the redefining of the role of the departments. Conference departmental directors were shifted from being promoters to being consultants. Instead of “selling” what the conference thought best, the consultant now sat down with the pastor and the church to discover their needs. From this research the consultant tailored a proposal for that church.

The 1984 Annual Council moved in a similar direction when it redefined the role of the union departmental directors. Now they “serve as resource people and consultants to the departments in the local conferences/missions of the union.” So far only the role of departmental directors on the union level is defined in this way.

Peter Block differentiates between the roles of consultants and managers: “A consultant is a person in a position to have some influence over an individual, a group, or an organization, but who has no direct power to make changes or implement programs. A manager is someone who has direct control over the action. The moment you take direct control, you are acting as a manager.” Understanding the difference is crucial if the term consultant is not to gain a bad reputation. Someone serving as a consultant helps persons or groups achieve their goals. He does not enforce the policies or programs of the higher levels of church organization.

In Ohio the new system has a dual role. While the assistants to the president function mainly as consultants, they also function as managers, as extensions of administration. Once a year the assistants sit down with the pastors and evaluate their progress in reaching their goals—not the pastor’s personal goals, but the corporate goals of their churches. Each church sets its own goals in three key result areas: in the area of nurture, the church sets the number it aims to involve in missionary and church work, and the worship service attendance it wishes to reach; in outreach, the number of baptisms and increase in membership it wishes to attain; and in finances, the tithe, local church budget, and world budget it seeks to raise. This system of accountability is very important. When the Ohio Conference decided to shift from conference-imposed goals to individual church goals, it negotiated with the pastors that in return each church would complete an extensive church growth planning work sheet. (See sample accompanying article.) Each church would vote acceptance of the work sheet and submit it to the conference. Then it would become the basis for the annual evaluation. Thus the pastor was evaluated, not on how successful he had been individually, but on how successful he was in motivating and leading his churches to accomplish the various goals.

The next step in the development of the system was to change the quarterly reporting system. Pastors had complained for years that conference officials were interested only in baptisms. They felt that other factors like attendance were at least as important.

The difference between what the conference required in reporting spiritual and financial accomplishments also commented on its values. Each month the conference required the churches to send in a financial report, but it wanted the church growth report only once a
The question was ‘Do you think we should go back to the old departmental system?’ Pastors’ response was 97 percent No and 3 percent Yes. Laymen’s response was 84 percent No and 16 percent Yes.

Quarter. So Ohio changed to a monthly clerk’s report that showed attendance as well as baptisms. This new report immediately revealed great discrepancies between the book membership and the attending membership. As a result, strategies are now being developed to meet this problem. Attendance as a percent of membership is a much better indicator of the quality of life in the church than either baptisms or membership figures.

At the 1981 constituency meeting, church representatives voted to try this new system of consultants and assistants for a three-year period. In preparation for the 1984 constituency meeting, the conference committee established a management review committee. This group, comprised of four pastors and four laymen, was to review all aspects of the work in Ohio and make recommendations. (Continued on page 29)
Twisting their tales

In many ways Jesus’ parables resembled those of the rabbis. But His contained significant differences, also. In fact, the differences help explain why they wanted Him crucified. — by Robert M. Johnston

Jesus was not the only parabler in Palestine. As Ellen White noted, “Parable teaching was popular, and commanded the respect and attention, not only of the Jews, but of the people of other nations.”

The scribes and Pharisees also taught in parables, many of which are preserved in the literature of the ancient rabbis. When we compare the parables of Jesus with those of the rabbis, not only do we see Jesus’ parables in a new light but we can more clearly understand Jesus’ mission as a teacher and why it led to His crucifixion.

Similarities

The parables told in Palestine were unlike those told anywhere else, and since the parables of Jesus and the parables of the rabbis are both Palestinian, they formally resemble each other. As literary critics say, they belong to the same genre.

The oldest rabbinic book, the Mishnah, contains an example that makes this resemblance very clear. In order to teach that one should not learn more than he is willing to practice, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah said: “He whose wisdom is more abundant than his works, unto what is he like? He is like a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are many; so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow against it, it cannot be stirred from its place.” — Aboth 3:18.

The formal similarity of this parable to that of Jesus in Matthew 7:24-27 is obvious: “Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. “And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.” (R.S.V.).

The majority of the rabbinic parables, like some of the parables of Jesus, have explicit interpretations attached. The significance of this fact is that in the past most Biblical critics argued that a good parable would not need to explain his parables, and would certainly not supply “allegorizing” interpretations that invest several details in the parable with meanings of their own.

Robert M. Johnston, Ph.D., is a professor of New Testament at the Theological Seminary, Andrews University.

Mark’s Gospel, for instance, supplies the parable of the sower (chap. 4:3-9) with an interpretation (verses 13-20), in which the four soils, the seed, the birds, the sun, and the thorns symbolize something else. This interpretation, the critics contended, is un-Jewish and therefore not Jesus’ authentic words; rather, it must have been the creation of the early church or the evangelist himself, arising after the parable was used in a Gentile environment.

The rabbinic parables, however, are certainly not un-Jewish. And yet they offer similar kinds of interpretation. An example comes from an ancient midrash (which is a sort of homiletic commentary), Mekilta of Rabbi Ishmael: “They [the Egyptians] said: If we had been plagued without letting them [the Israelites] go, it would have been enough. But we were plagued and let them go, and our money was taken. A parable. Unto what is the matter like? It is like one who said to his slave: Go get me a fish from the market. The slave went and brought him a rotten fish. He said to the slave: I decree that you eat the fish or receive a hundred lashes or pay
The parables told in Palestine were unlike those told anywhere else, and since the parables of Jesus and the parables of the rabbis are both Palestinian, they formally resemble each other.

We now begin to glimpse what the difference is between the parables of the rabbis and the parables of Jesus. It is not the literary form or the subject matter. Both collections of parables tell of nature, of agriculture, of merchants, kings, and servants. In fact, as we shall see, Jesus even adapted some of the same stories that the rabbis told (or, in some cases, perhaps vice versa). The real difference between the two collections of parables is that while the rabbinic parables seek to resolve difficulties, the parables of Jesus create difficulties. The parables of the rabbis were intended to reinforce the conventional values of the time, the parables of Jesus subverted those values, even turning them upside down and standing them on their heads.

**Revolutionary teachings**

An anonymous parable found in Sifra illustrates this startling fact. The parable accomplishes two purposes: It explains a verse in Leviticus that seems to imply that God is a respecter of persons. And it justifies the trouble of living the strict Pharisaic lifestyle, which involved keeping many rules.

"...And I will have regard for you" (chap. 26:9, R.S.V.).

"They parable a parable. Unto what is the matter like? It is like a king who hired many laborers. And along with them was one laborer who had worked for him many days. All the laborers went to receive their pay for the day, and this one special laborer went also. He said to this one special laborer: I will have regard for you. The others, who have worked for me only a little, to them I will give small pay. But you will receive a large recompense."

This parable is perfectly natural and logical. Showing that it was worth the trouble to be an observant Jew, it must have been very popular. Jesus surely had heard a story similar to this one, and it is of great interest to see how He adapted it to His own purposes in Matthew 20:1-16.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard."

"And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; and to them he said, "You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went."

"Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, "Why do you stand here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You go into the vineyard too!!!" (R.S.V.).

So far so good. The people could sit back and enjoy the familiar story. They enjoyed the way Jesus parabled, putting in all sorts of vivid details, and they thought they knew how the story was going to end. They knew that one denarius was the normal wage paid to an agricultural laborer for a full day's work. It was also about the amount he needed to support a family for a day. Jesus' audience must have noted that the employer made a specific monetary agreement only with those laborers hired at the beginning of the day. The others would receive only whatever was fair. And since the employer must have been a sane and normal man, he clearly would not pay those laborers who worked only part of the day as much as those who worked a full day!

Furthermore, Jesus' audience would have immediately understood the standpoint.

(Continued on page 28)
Administering church money

A budget is essential to a well-run church. And financing most local needs through one offering item makes life easier for both church leaders and members. Here’s a simple way to set up and operate a combined budget program.

Warren Zork serves as the pastor for stewardship at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church, Takoma Park, Maryland. He says that while stewardship education and financial administration require considerably more attention to detail in a large church like Sligo than in a smaller congregation, the principles for implementing financial responsibility are similar. He credits Sligo’s business administrator, Israel Castro, for many of the ideas and practical suggestions this article contains.

A church budget is essential for fiscal responsibility and trust between a pastor and his congregation. I want my members to consider the inreach and outreach ministries of their church as their own. If they are to do this they must know what the church plans and what is actually happening. Jesus said, “Which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it?” (Luke 14:28, Jerusalem). His point was “You plan ahead for your secular affairs. How much more essential planning is to a life of discipleship!”

A budget simply consists of a careful estimate of the cost of operating the church—both its inreach and outreach aspects—and how we plan to pay those costs.

Two years ago my local church began following the Personal Giving Plan. For the first time we combined every aspect of our church life into one budget. Up until then we had called for separate offerings for the youth, the summer recreation program, our outreach (personal ministries), Sabbath school, worthy student fund, Community Services, school subsidy, and church plant and office operations. Now we were bringing these needs all together in one budget, asking our people for a single offering commitment for a balanced church program.

Influential members objected, fearing that such a plan wouldn’t work. Some thought we were taking away their freedom to give to the local need of their choice. We fully acknowledged their right to continue to give in this way. But we believed the benefits derived from having everyone in the congregation see the whole program of the church in perspective outweighed these objections.

Our budget formulation process included input from lay leadership, pastors, the finance committee, and finally an open board meeting. Those church leaders (lay and pastoral) responsible for each section of the expense side of the budget were given ample opportunity to explain why they needed the amount they had specified. Our treasurer explained the income (or offering) side of the budget. He showed us the giving patterns for each part of the budget over the past several years and the approximate number of giving units supporting the church program. (A giving unit represents either a nuclear family or a single adult supporting himself.)
Influential members objected, fearing that such a plan wouldn’t work. Some thought we were taking away their freedom to give to the local need of their choice.

Though our budgeted expenses totaled about 7 percent more than our highest previous year’s offerings, we decided to vote the new budget and take the challenge to our people. We believed we could raise the extra amount necessary by tactfully but clearly focusing our stewardship efforts on members who previously had not planned their offering giving in the same routine way they had been returning their tithe. During our stewardship commitment month we conveyed the details of the budget through the church paper and by direct mail.

Our members’ reactions to giving the combined way were mixed. A few hearty souls refused to use the newly designed tithe offering envelope, continuing to turn in their gifts under the old separate headings. Others, seeing for the first time how much we were spending on janitors or music or church bulletins or Sabbath school materials or Community Services, pinpointed their giving for a time. Or, more important, they continued dialogue by asking hard questions such as “Why do you have to pay the organist?” or “Why can’t we mimeograph the bulletin instead of having it printed?” Such discussion, while time-consuming and even intimidating on occasion, let people know that this was our church, that nothing was being shoved under the table, that the church must minister to the needs of a variety of people both inside and outside its membership. Early criticism and giving intransigence have gradually given way to understanding and support.

We have found it important to keep the entire congregation informed of the actual offering income and expenditure needs. A weekly offering report box in our bulletin news section compares what came in the previous Sabbath with what was needed in order to fund our budget fully. The cumulative comparison is there as well. For example, one week (more than ten months into the fiscal year) our bulletin showed the cumulative offering need was $288,403, while our offerings to date were only $275,633.

These figures, and those of other recent Sabbaths, show a trend that must be addressed by church administration. How do we do it?

Administering the budget

We use a computer to record each week’s tithe’s and offerings. In addition to entering all conference funds against their respective trust fund accounts (tithe, World Budget, conference budget, and specially designated conference offerings), we enter all local combined budget offerings into the combined budget account. Once each quarter each member is sent a printout, which serves as a receipt, denoting all gifts he or she made during the preceding quarter. The fourth quarter’s printout shows not only the giving details for that quarter but also the cumulative giving for the entire year. This final receipt is a bona fide record for the entire calendar year and thus is helpful in substantiating church giving if needed for IRS purposes.

Some members choose to give to a specific fund within the local combined budget. Not only do we honor their special designations, but we add their contributions to the funds that are distributed by percentages to the respective funds of the budget. The table accompanying this article illustrates how we do this. The figures it contains are fictional but represent the process our church follows.

Notice several important things the table indicates about the offerings and their distribution: 1. The actual combined budget offerings for the first month were a little short of expectations. 2. Therefore, every operational trust fund within the combined budget shared in the underfunding in exact proportion to its percentage share of the overall budget. 3. Had the actual combined budget offerings been higher than budgeted expectations, every operational fund within the budget would have shared proportionately. 4. Members who chose to give specific offerings to the church school, for example, had their gifts added to the total that came from combined giving. This must always be done. Money must always go for the purpose the giver intended. Only in this way can trust be maintained.

The procedure we’ve described immediately raises two questions. If these patterns of giving continue, some local funds will come up short, and others will have more than planned. How should the church administrator handle this? And the combined budget represents a number of organizations within the church, e.g., Sabbath school, church school, and personal ministries. How does the treasurer keep the leaders of these entities from ordering supplies or otherwise spending more than the available funds will permit? Let’s take these questions one at a time.

Underfunding

Giving and spending trends must be monitored regularly and the implications shared with the church board each month. In most situations it is unwise to readjust the budget during the fiscal year, even by vote of the church board. Weather conditions, vacations, and other seasonal variations may even out the offering income of the church. It usually takes a full twelve-month cycle to establish a complete picture of the total giving power of the church. True, large special donations to particular projects will tend to skew the picture. The church, however, may build up a cash operating reserve by operating in the black for a few years. This can be prudently drawn on during lean months if there is some degree of certainty that larger offering months are just around the corner. (Incidentally, our fictional budget calls for 5 percent of the combined budget offering to go into a miscellaneous fund. In reality we rarely call upon this fund. But it provides for rainy days, helps the church operate in the black, and builds up a cash flow operating reserve.)

Underfunding raises a delicate situation that calls for the wisdom of the entire finance committee, if not the entire church board. There is always room for intelligent faith to be exercised while the church is made aware of the
Each officer of the church must be responsible for intelligent spending within his or her own budget funding. Accountability must be required. Only in this way can trust be maintained.

There is sometimes a very fine line, however, between faith and presumption. The best way to even out the budget is to make adjustments as the board plans the next year's budget, adjusting each main section of the budget to account for recent giving patterns, including special donations.

Occasionally the board may decide to reallocate funds, transferring them from one church entity to another at the end of the fiscal year. For example, a very mild winter may leave the church operation section overfunded. The church board may decide to transfer the extra funds to the Sabbath school expense fund, which has come up short in meeting a Sabbath school lesson quarterly bill.

**Group leader responsibility**

Each officer or pastor of the church must be responsible for intelligent spending within his or her own budget funding. Accountability must be required. Only in this way can trust be maintained. For example, suppose giving is down 10 percent. The pastor and treasurer may together determine that certain expense items will have priority: insurance, the secretary's salary, the heating bill, basic postage needs, and janitorial services. They agree that the painting of the interior, the buying of a typewriter, and new landscaping around the sanctuary can be delayed. The Sabbath school leaders and those in charge of Community Services, outreach, and special programming should follow the same principle. Each should be encouraged to spend within his or her funded budget. The church board should require an accounting from each at least monthly.

The short-term temptation in times of financial crises may be to borrow from other trust funds held by the church—to rob Peter to pay Paul. (Generally speaking, a trust fund is set up to receive gifts members designate for a specific project.) This is unethical and can destroy trust between the members and those of us who are handlers of sacred funds. Another solution is to take up a special offering to cover the shortfall. Let me offer a word of caution here. It is far better to work evenly and steadily at building increased commitment to planned sacrificial giving, encouraging a wider circle of regular church support, than to go after the emergency dollars with a highly emotional appeal.

An honest sharing with your people in time of financial crisis will help them to take seriously the importance of every-member participation in the solution. About the seventh month of our past church year, we saw clearly that if giving did not increase we would have a serious problem in meeting our budget. Our commitments to our school, our new Community Services center, and even the basic operation of our new church addition were threatened.

With careful announcements ahead of time, we called a special business meeting of the church to ask their advice. Several hundred of both the curious and the faithful showed up. Using simple graphics, we explained clearly that it did not appear that our giving would match

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**Typical Monthly Combined Budget Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Combined Operating Budget</th>
<th>Percent of Budget</th>
<th>Actual Offerings for First Month</th>
<th>Specifically Designated Offerings</th>
<th>Totals Into Operating Trust Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 (divided as follows):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 3,500 Church Operating (plant, office, communications, Sabbath services, youth programming)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$3,412.50</td>
<td>+ None</td>
<td>$3,412.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 3,500 Church School Subsidy</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$3,412.50</td>
<td>+ $295</td>
<td>$3,707.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 500 Community Services Center Subsidy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$487.50</td>
<td>+ $269</td>
<td>$756.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 500 Worthy Student Fund</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$487.50</td>
<td>+ $165</td>
<td>$652.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 1,000 Outreach (includes personal ministries)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$975.00</td>
<td>+ $75</td>
<td>$1,050.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 500 Sabbath School Expense</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$487.50</td>
<td>+ None</td>
<td>$487.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 500 Miscellaneous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$487.50</td>
<td>+ None</td>
<td>$487.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Though at times it seems easier for the pastor and the treasurer to make all the financial decisions and inform the board later, this breaks down the trust between the people and their spiritual leader.

For a church to reach its stewardship potential, the pastor as well as the congregation must be committed in principle to the concept of systematic benevolence—that is, spiritually motivated, planned, sacrificial giving. The pastor, in his personal giving commitment, must be practicing what he preaches. While he will not fall into the self-serving trap of advertising his giving habits to the congregation, a pastor will convey his commitment in more subtle ways: by his pulpit enthusiasm for planned giving, by his insistence on keeping details of individual tithe/offering gifts from members confidential, and by maintaining openness and accountability concerning all local fund expenditures. The treasurer must also practice both confidentiality concerning donations and forthrightness about expenditures.

By the very nature of their responsibilities, the church treasurer and the conference auditor have to see individual donations. But I personally do not know and do not want to know specifically how much any member gives to my church. As the pastor of all the people, I do not want to be in the position of even subconsciously assessing any person on the basis of what he gives in relation to what I think he ought to give. It is essential that both the finance committee and the pastor be as free as possible from the subtle but real power to persuade that is so often associated with a church’s big givers.

Administering our church emergency aid fund

Giving to the needy both within and outside the church has a high priority with our congregation. We’ve built a tradition of giving to our less fortunate neighbors through the Festival of Praise. We have retained during the year these five special offerings for the poor outside of the local combined budget.

A ten-member committee administers the emergency aid fund built up from these offerings; one of the pastors attends the regularly called meetings. A smaller church might select for this work some sensitive, caring deacons and deaconesses who can keep confidences. Working from a set of financial guidelines developed for the kinds of financial crises most frequently encountered, the committee assesses the current requests and, after tactful but careful inquiry into the facts, votes financial help. This is no ivory-tower group; each is committed to going out and interviewing destitute church (or community) members, getting the facts required by our guidelines, and then phoning as many committee members as are required to make a decision. This group keeps confidences, works carefully, and is bonded together in a spiritual fellowship through its common agonizing over how best to help and follow through. In this way the task of evenly distributing our emergency aid funds among our own members in crisis is shared. It does not usually become an emotionally exhausting and time-consuming burden upon the pastor alone.

All God’s children are His priests and share equally in the responsibility of administering funds, as well as of giving. Though at times it seems easier for the pastor and the treasurer to make all the financial decisions and inform the board later, in the long term this breaks down the trust between the people and their spiritual leader. While the pastor must speak prophetically from the pulpit about the mission of the congregation, he must take his people with him, letting them share in the setting of financial priorities. A lay finance committee of committed (but not necessarily big) givers should be relied on for advice, a committee not beholden to one or another of the sincere task-oriented leaders of the church. It can do much to help prioritize the many missions of the church, assisting the church in striking a balance between undue restraint on the one hand and unbridled innovation on the other.
Enlarge your church through Sabbath school

The pastor who begins to view Sabbath school as an important part of his church’s ministry will have discovered a powerful soul-winning and spirit-building tool. Discover how to vitalize your church through the Sabbath school by Charles H. Betz

One Sabbath afternoon two weeks after we moved to Dallas, Texas, our doorbell rang and a well-dressed couple about our age greeted us with a warm smile. ‘Hello. I’m Tom, and this is my wife, Sue. We’re from the First Baptist church of Dallas. We’ve come to welcome you to our city.’ They continued:

“We’re from a young adult Sunday school class and we would like to invite you to our class. We enjoy interesting Bible study and have good Christian fellowship. Do you have a church home yet?” I explained our church connection, but thanked them profusely for calling.

I was very interested in their approach. They said nothing about “visiting our church” or “hearing our pastor”—who, by the way, was a nationally known preacher. They didn’t talk about their beautiful sanctuary, their fine music, or their splendid facilities. The purpose of their call was to welcome newcomers to a large metropolis, and to invite them to a small group Bible study with the promise of friendship and Christian fellowship. If we had not been committed members of a Sabbathkeeping denomination, I believe we would have been at the First Baptist church of Dallas the following Sunday. Enrollment of that church’s Sunday school was about eight thousand.

What prompted this warm, friendly visit by this fine Christian couple? What organizational structure was back of the call? How did they get our name? I will deal with these points later. My purpose in this article is to help you lead the members of your Sabbath school into this kind of missionary outreach.

**Inward or outward focus**

There are two kinds of Sabbath schools: inward-focused and outward-focused. Arn, McGavran, and Arn make the following comment about inward-focused Sunday schools: “What happens when the priority of Christian education focuses exclusively on nurture of existing Christians? People are urged to participate in the Sunday school because it will help them. The church is thought of as a refuge for intimate fellowship with other believers; a personal and spiritual center where believers are nurtured to spiritual maturity. Programs, activities, and curricula are focused almost exclusively on the personal concerns of the existing Christians.”

Indeed, Sabbath school must major on nurturing members and helping them to grow in the Lord. Our Sabbath schools were organized for Bible study and nurture. But when inward focus is the whole story we have a problem. Preoccupation with ourselves leads to introversion. Concern for self, even in religion, leads to lethargy and exclusiveness. The
The question every Sabbath school teacher should ask is “This coming week how can we share this glorious truth we have discovered—on the job, in our neighborhoods, and with our unbelieving relatives?”

The visit by the Baptist couple to our home was an expression of the Southern Baptist philosophy of evangelism through Sunday school. Their outward focus is a result of consistent education over the past fifty years. Every Sunday school teacher and class officer is expected to visit. “Every prospect becomes some teacher’s personal responsibility.”

The names of prospects for Southern Baptist Sunday schools come from every available source. They may have secured our names from neighbors or from a utility company. The class president of a young adult Sunday school class probably held up a handful of name cards and asked for visitation volunteers. The young couple who visited us responded by taking our name. Southern Baptists try to match the age level of the visitors and the prospects. The First Baptist church of Dallas through its Sunday school organization motivates members to make more than one thousand visits weekly.

Dr. C. E. Autrey, a Southern Baptist leader, says: “The most effective method in evangelism in the twentieth century is the Sunday school. It should be the contact agency of the church. All ages and types of people are visited and enrolled in the Bible school. Here their hearts are warmed with Bible teaching. They are then led to remain for worship. They are brought into the Bible school, worship service, Christ, and church membership.”

Soul winning is the heartbeat of our Sabbath schools in Central America, South America, and in the Far Eastern Division. I had the privilege of participating in six Sabbath school congresses that were attended by about forty thousand Sabbath school leaders and teachers in the Far East in 1983. More than 450 people were baptized at these congresses—most as the result of branch Sabbath schools conducted by Sabbath school members.

Sabbath school outreach is the most exciting aspect of evangelism in many parts of the world field. I have seen young people, fired with enthusiasm, out on Sabbath afternoon holding branch Sabbath schools. We attended three such schools on a Sabbath afternoon on the outskirts of Manila. One of these was held in an alley by an 18-year-old girl and her friends. Children seemed to appear from everywhere. Soon about forty children and teenagers were lustily singing gospel choruses. There were mothers with babies in arms listening intently to the Bible stories illustrated by felt figures. The earnest faces of these children and their parents witnessed to their response to the Holy Spirit.

Many conferences and unions in the Far Eastern Division have directors of child evangelism. Their job is to train members and encourage Sabbath school outreach. The familiar scenario is “First the children, then their parents, then a branch Sabbath school, and then the evangelistic meeting.” Ellen White said: “We may bring hundreds and thousands of children to Christ if we will work for them.”

At this point you may be saying, “It sounds good, but will such a plan work in my church here in North America?” My answer is Yes. Let me share with you what the Lord did for me. The story began, strangely enough, in a seminary classroom. I was not excited about a required course in religious education. But I found the subject matter of this class to be very different from the usual rarified atmosphere of academia. The professor, a quiet, dignified scholar, shared with us what God was doing in bringing revival and growth to hundreds of Baptist churches. He told story after story of how God was awakening dead churches and reaching thousands of lost people through Sunday school outreach evangelism. As I listened and did my
In three months the Sabbath school attendance showed a slight increase. By a year and a half Sabbath school attendance was regularly exceeding church membership.

research I said to myself, “Here is a man filled with love for souls and sharing a methodology that makes sense.”

I began to read Counsels on Sabbath School Work, by Ellen G. White again. All through this priceless little volume the same message leaped out at me: Bible study and soul winning should go hand in hand. “The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God’s great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth.” “The Sabbath school should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ.”

After receiving my degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary I accepted a call to a suburban church in a metropolitan area. I came to this church with a great truth burning in my soul: Spiritual life prospers only when Christians are actively involved in sharing their faith. And I had a profound belief that the Sabbath school can improve and enlarge the church. The message was repeated in sermon after sermon and shared with church leaders at every opportunity. My strategy was simple:

First, I conducted a series of discussions with church officers and Sabbath school leaders, sharing the philosophy and methodology. I kept repeating the idea, “We are a team. God wants us to grow as persons and as a Sabbath school. The Sabbath school can provide the organizational framework for this objective.”

The next step was to enlarge the Sabbath school organization. Each adult Sabbath school class organized for service by electing a class president, secretary, and group leaders for every six members. The class president assists the teacher in planning for and enlisting members in outreach. The class secretary cares for attendance and visitation records, telephoning, and social occasions. The group leaders account for missing members and assist in visitation.

When coming to a new pastorate, I always prepared an up-to-date master prospect card file. Names from the master file were transferred to “Sabbath School Visitation Assignment and Report” cards. The names of nonactive church members were placed on assignment cards along with the names of prospects. We then began sending visitation assignment cards to all adult Sabbath school classes and children’s divisions.

We determined from the beginning that Sabbath school would receive its full time. To provide time for discussion of missionary projects and visitation assignments, we took the ten-minute home missionary period plus another five minutes and added it to the thirty-five-minute lesson study time. We encouraged regular class fellowship gatherings on Sabbath afternoons and during the week.

Fear was a big obstacle to visitation, so I held an ongoing soul-winning clinic each Sabbath one hour before sundown. We talked about how to visit, how to relate to nonattending members and former members, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, skeptics, agnostics, humanists, et cetera. We used simulation exercises to increase interest and involve the people in the learning process. Attendance was excellent from the start. Many people would visit on Sabbath afternoons and then come to the clinic and vesper service.

On Wednesday evenings we conducted meetings for Sabbath school teachers and division leaders. Forty-five minutes was dedicated to teacher training, and the last forty-five minutes was devoted to singing, prayers, testimonies, and a brief Bible study.

I worked hard to develop a friendly, supportive relationship with Sabbath school leaders. We kept careful records of the visits and Sabbath school attendance. These statistics were published weekly in the church bulletin.

Yes, we had some opposition and considerable foot-dragging on the part of some Sabbath school teachers. But, thank the Lord, the core of the Sabbath school and church leadership faithfully supported the program. Interest deepened as we shared visitation experiences and answered prayers at our Sabbath afternoon clinic.

In three months the Sabbath school attendance showed a slight increase. By six months there was a noticeable increase in both Sabbath school and church attendance. After a year Sabbath school membership had zoomed past our church membership. By a year and a half Sabbath school attendance was regularly exceeding church membership. During this period the conference evangelist conducted a crusade, and the Lord gave us an excellent harvest of souls.

In looking back on my experience in this church, I can rejoice and thank the Lord for several things: The program brought new life and enthusiasm to the Sabbath school and helped to create a new interest in Bible study. Scores of people who had been only spectators became involved in visitation and outreach activities. The adult Sabbath school classes developed a genuine identity. Individuals developed strong loyalty to “my class.” We witnessed the power of small groups joining together in Christian service. Best of all, we experienced a perennial program of evangelism and a healthy growth in church membership. The steps are simple: Find the prospects, enlarge the organization, provide training, make assignments, and keep visiting.

One never knows how the Spirit will direct in the accomplishment of a divine purpose. Through a seminary professor the Lord opened my eyes and inspired me to turn to my Sabbath school as a method of evangelism. The Spirit encouraged me when things were down and helped me to persist, and He motivated the members to cooperate. I am not trying to promote a “new method.” You probably already have a file stuffed with methods. I am simply sharing what I believe and what God did for me. Ellen White was right on track when she said: “The influence growing out of Sabbath school work should improve and enlarge the church.”

I have adapted this same approach and used it in other churches with good success.

I have tried organizing my church into small groups around tasks. But somehow after a few months the groups and the tasks became like the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image: They would

(Continued on page 23)
Ordination of women: a question of status or function?

Is the issue of women's ordination sociological or theological? Are women being denied certain privileges simply to keep them "in their place"?

by Roger L. Dudley

As we as Seventh-day Adventists continue to grapple with the issue of ordaining women to the gospel ministry, theologians are preparing material and publishing articles on both sides of the question. However, while the right course must eventually be determined by right theology, the situation in which we find ourselves now may be better understood from a sociological perspective than a theological one. Viewing the question from the sociological perspective may help us discover certain "hidden agendas" that obscure the real issues and keep sincere Christians from coming to agreement.

Therefore in this article I will not deal with theological arguments, but will attempt to show why the problem exists in the first place, not only for Seventh-day Adventists but for religion in general and Christianity in particular. I believe that a better understanding of the problem will point the way toward its solution.

Religion as legitimation

The concept of legitimation is crucial to our understanding of the forces that affect social decisions. According to Peter Berger, the term refers to "socially objectivated 'knowledge' that serves to explain and justify the social order." It provides "answers to any questions about the 'why' of institutional arrangements." By social objectivations Berger means that which passes for knowledge in any given group.

Another way of putting this is to say that a legitimation gives a reason why a person or group who claims authority or leadership should be taken seriously. Why should followers accept these
It is not surprising that religious reasons have often been given to legitimate the status quo. Some examples are: the “divine right” of kings, the persecution of heretics, and slavery.

claims and render allegiance? The request of the religious leaders to Jesus is ever pertinent: “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things” (Luke 20:2, N.I.V.).

Now while would-be leaders have various sources of authority to which they may appeal, Berger holds that “religion has been the historically most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation. All legitimation maintains socially defined reality. Religion legitimates so effectively because it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality” “beyond the contingencies of human meaning and human activity.”

For example: Moses could come down from Mount Sinai with the tablets on which God Himself had written the law (Ex. 32:15, 16). The prophets could say, “The word of the Lord came to me” (Jer. 1:4, N.I.V.). The early church performed wonders and miraculous signs that created awe and respect among the populace (Acts 2:43; 5:12-16). The young Ellen Harmon could demonstrate supernatural physical phenomena in vision and point to fulfilled prophecies as evidence of her divine commission. And leaders in the church can claim God’s appointment as a legitimation for their spiritual authority (Heb. 13:7, 17).

By its very nature religion tends to be conservative, since it seeks to transmit the most worthwhile values of the past. (However, religion has also proved to be a powerful catalyst for social change when its ideals have challenged contemporary social practices; for example, humane treatment for the mentally impaired.) It is not surprising, then, that religious reasons have often been given to legitimate the status quo. Some examples are: the “divine right” of kings, based on such Scriptures as Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17; the Crusades; the persecution of heretics by church-dominated governments in the Middle Ages; the defense of slavery by Southern clergy, using texts such as 1 Peter 2:18-21; the exploitation by colonial nations under the guise of spreading the gospel; and, more recently, the production of nuclear weapons and the retaining of the Panama Canal. It would be a digression to enlarge on those items, but all have been legitimated by religious reasoning.

The gender caste system

According to Meredith B. McGuire, “a caste system is a social arrangement in which access to power and socioeconomic benefits are fixed, typically from birth, according to certain ascribed characteristics of the individual.” Religion has been used (and still is) “to explain why certain social inequalities exist. These explanations justify both the privileges of the upper classes or castes and the relative nonprivileges of the lower ones.”

While historically religion has been used to legitimate a number of caste systems, our interest here is in its use to create and maintain a gender caste system. “Women’s status in most religious groups is also circumscribed by caste. Gender is far more important than theological or spiritual qualifications in determining whether an individual can perform certain rituals such as carrying the Torah or consecrating the communion elements.”

In most historic religions, men have held all significant positions of authority and have used these to set up and interpret norms and practices, and to develop ecclesiastical organizational structures that effectively subordinate women. In various religions this has been symbolized by having certain sacred areas of the temple that women cannot enter, or by allowing women to participate in public worship only as spectators. This separation clearly communicates their inferior status.

Women’s lack of status and power in the religious group has been most clearly communicated through their inferior ritual position. In Christianity this has especially meant being denied the right to administer the sacraments. Ability to consecrate the Eucharist is a special sign of both spiritual and social power. The church has thus kept women in their subordinate status by denying them the authority to do this—that is by not ordaining them to the priesthood. The other major sacrament is baptism. As early as the fourth century the Apostolic Constitution (all-male authorship) stated that “baptism by women is dangerous and godless.”

Some research has traced the historical roots of the exclusion of women from “priestly roles” to the fear on the part of men that women are “unclean” during the menstrual period and therefore could not administer the sacraments without contaminating them. In the Middle Ages women were even believed to be under the influence of the devil during menstruation. Thus the vestiges of a ceremonial law still cling to Christian practice.

But how can religion be used to legitimate a gender caste system? Consider a few points. In nearly all religions the most important deity is depicted as male. Much is made of the fact that Eve was the first to sin and that therefore all women should be in a subordinate position to men (although that is not the reading of Genesis 3). An Orthodox Jewish prayer states: “Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not created me a woman.”

Many hymns treat women as if invisible; for example, “Rise up, O Men of God!” And in Adventist circles it is customary to refer to the leadership of the church as “the brethren.”

The most powerful legitimations in Christianity, however, have been the use of certain New Testament scriptures such as 1 Timothy 2:11-15 (“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent” [verse 12, N.I.V.]) to justify a lower, submissive place for women. I will not digress from my task in order to discuss these scriptures (the theologians are doing that). The question for the church is whether these statements are part of the central message of the Christian gospel or whether they are merely the product of the first-century culture’s gender-role distinctions and thus of limited geographical and chronological application.
I f you explain away clear Bible statements as being culturally conditioned, isn't there a danger that everything in Scripture may be explained away, leaving no absolutes to build a faith upon?”

Actually, few Adventists would accept these statements at face value as the divine command for us today, for women have historically played an important role in preaching and teaching in the Adventist Church (the prime example is Ellen White) and are the backbone of local congregational leadership in many places. But some would make a partial application of the statements to deny to women the full recognition and equality that would be given by ordination.

Some will be uncomfortable at this point. “If you explain away clear Bible statements as being culturally conditioned,” they will say, “isn’t there a danger that everything in Scripture may be explained away, leaving no absolutes to build a faith upon? Don’t Adventists believe in taking the Bible just as it reads?” The answer to the first question is Yes. There is a danger, and it is real. Nevertheless, the church has no choice. It must always be in the process of sifting timeless truth from cultural norms or else find itself locked into the distant past with no contemporary relevance.

That makes the answer to the second question No. Adventists have always found it necessary to reapply the meaning of certain scriptures. Most Adventists don’t celebrate the Passover in spite of clear commands like Exodus 12:14. A church leader who killed a couple found in the act of adultery would be considered an unbalanced criminal, not a hero, despite the example of Phinehas (Num. 25:6-13). We would not consider it necessary or even right to return a runaway slave (see Philemon 12). Ellen White approved the breaking of slavery laws in her day. And if 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 means that women today must be silent in church, only asking questions of their own husbands at home, then the Adventist Church stands in fundamental apostasy from its very beginning because of the key founding role of Ellen White, not to mention the local leadership roles assumed by women today.

The Bible is not a collection of specific rules, but a series of stories in which divine principles are illustrated by showing how God worked in the lives of human beings. The challenge to the church, now as always, is to discover the principles and apply them to situations that confront God’s people today.

When women break the pattern

This brings us to the question Under what conditions are women most likely to be granted equality with men in leadership positions? The answer: In the early years of a religious movement. New religious movements represent a break with traditional authority and therefore are not as likely to have a strictly defined chain of command. They often include charismatic authority. Thus they are more open to positions of leadership for women, especially if women have the charismatic gifts.

New religious movements also tend to draw their followers disproportionately from the nonprivileged classes. Years ago classical sociologist Max Weber wrote:

T he Adventist Church not only accepted the charismatic authority of Ellen White but placed women in other key roles.

“The religion of the disprivileged classes . . . is characterized by a tendency to allot equality to women . . . But only in very rare cases does this practice continue beyond the first stage of a religious community’s formation, when the pneumatic manifestations of charisma are valued as hallmarks of specifically religious exaltation. Thereafter, as routinization and regimentation of community relationships set in, a reaction takes place against pneumatic manifestations among women, which come to be regarded as dishonorable and morbid.”

In the nineteenth century, women played important leadership roles in emerging religions such as Pentecostalism, Christian Science, and, of course, Seventh-day Adventism. The Adventist Church not only accepted the charismatic authority of Ellen White but placed women in other key roles, such as

...tus of the General Conference. But with the passing of time and the creation of more traditional authority structures, a gender caste system has evolved, and women have found themselves subordinated as in traditional religions.

A recent report revealed that women hold fewer leadership positions in the Adventist Church in North America today than they did early in this century. In 1905, twenty local conferences had women treasurers, and thirty local conferences had women executive secretaries. Since 1950 no women have held either office. A significant decrease has also occurred in the number of women in conference departmental posts. In recent years the women’s rights movement and its influence on society in general has led to some improvement in the positioning of women within the church. But the admission of women to ordination remains a formidable hurdle.

Thus the church finds itself in the dilemma of, on the one hand, having to...
Who ministers to the minister?

For several reasons, ministering to ministers is difficult. The author suggests two sources of help for ministers. One is available now, and the other he would like to see our church and hospital system cooperate to establish.

Viewpoint □ Dick Tibbits

The question is centuries old: Quis custodes ipsos custodiet? ("Who takes care of those who take care?") I want to ask: Who ministers to the minister? This question must be asked in light of the ever-increasing number of ministers leaving the profession. This has touched me at a personal level as colleagues of mine have left the ministry. They did not fall out because of theology, but because of neglect. We as a church must take seriously the need to minister to ministers.

Ministering to ministers is a complex issue for three primary reasons: 1. Pastors tend to deny that they are experiencing personal difficulties. 2. Pastors fear to share their pain because they may be labeled, thus jeopardizing opportunities to receive favorable calls. 3. Pastors don’t know where to turn for help.

Let’s look at each of these reasons to find ways of releasing the hold they have on ministers. Then perhaps we can make help available with reasonable assurance that such help will be utilized.

Ministers are seen by their members as God’s representatives. A minister thus becomes something other than human. People think nothing of bringing their problems to a minister, but on the other hand, do not think of the pastor as a person like themselves, with his own problems. Ministers tend to begin thinking this way too. Soon they learn not to show their feelings; they bottle things up inside, thus hiding their pain and showing only their strengths. As a result they become isolated from others, eventually from their spouse, and even from their own needs and feelings. In the midst of many people, ministers and their families know well the loneliness of the profession. They have a hard time facing the reality that they are human and have all the same feelings their members have. Hidden within them is the conceit “Me—need a minister? I am the minister!”

This reasoning gets undergirded with a theology that says if a person’s faith is strong enough and his relationship with God is intact, he won’t have problems. Pain or struggle, then, are read as evidence that something must be wrong with his faith or with his relationship with God. Eventually the minister turns inward with his pain rather than reaching out for support. It is ironic that a minister whose job it is to create a caring community for the support and nurturing of its members does not himself search for a community from which to receive support and care. Relating to a Christian community is such an essential part of the gospel and is absolutely necessary for growth. As Paul says, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). To be a caregiver, one must also be a care receiver. At the very beginning God said that “it is not good that the man should be alone.”
I would like to see our conferences and health systems establish a joint venture. Our hospitals could offer to our ministers the respect, competence, and faith stance needed while protecting confidentiality.

Once a minister accepts the need to reach out for help, he faces the threat of being misunderstood by his community. Haunting him are the voices of others saying, "Who wants a pastor with problems?" If this were only projection it could be worked out, but there is a reality behind that fear. There are those who would prefer to move "the problem" on to another district or area of service rather than deal with it. This attitude prohibits the minister from reaching out for a caring community. To take this threat away from the minister, he must be afforded confidentiality. No one wants the world to know his inner struggles. And a minister has difficulty finding privacy.

I also wonder whether those who could encourage the minister to seek help fail to do so because they buy the theology already mentioned—they view an emotional struggle as a spiritual problem. I myself have fallen victim to this trap, which in reality is crass judgmentalism. Its effect is to turn away those who need help, when, in fact, we should minister to the minister. If we were honest we all would have to admit we have wounds. In accepting our own struggle, we are motivated to help others in theirs.

The final problem is perhaps the most difficult. Even if the issue of confidentiality can be assured (and that can be done for a minister), of whom does he ask help? The minister cannot look to his church members, for it could jeopardize his leadership in that congregation. The minister cannot turn to the conference president (no matter how pastoral that person is) because of their professional relationship. And the fear of being stripped of his religious values may prevent him from seeking help from the mental health community.

I would like to offer two suggestions as to where the minister may turn for help. The first is the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC). Members of this association are professionally trained and supervised persons with clear religious values and commitments. The national office (9508-A Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia 22031) can supply names of pastoral counselors in your area.

The other suggestion is not yet a reality. I would like to see our conferences and health systems establish a joint venture. Our hospitals could offer to our ministers the respect, professionalism, competence, and faith stance needed while protecting confidentiality. They already have an acceptance of pain (emotional or physical) and a commitment to healing without the judgmentalism so often feared. They could offer retreat programs as a preventive approach to emotional health, and have backup systems available to deal with the more disturbed person.

Testing, diagnosis, and treatment plans are already available through our hospitals. If we could utilize their resources with a more intentional approach to the uniqueness of ministers, I believe we could have quality help with a high level of confidentiality. This confidentiality could be further enhanced through a billing system between Adventist hospitals and conferences that eliminated the use of names and so protected the pastor. Both already know the denominational policy for medical reimbursement. If they offered an intensive mini-retreat program, a pastor could find spiritual refreshing without admitting (by mere attendance) that he has deeper struggles. Through a carefully considered working relationship, a ministry to the minister could be established and encouraged.

What do we as a denomination have to gain by this approach? Much! Only as ministers receive grace, forgiveness, and help for their wounds can they be healers for others. David perhaps best illustrates this. He wrote many psalms out of the depths of his own pain, struggle, and joy; and it is the Psalms, more than anything else, that offers help to those who are struggling. How often we ministers read from the Psalms when visiting the sick.

It is a paradox, but those who have suffered the most can help the most. Paul confirmed this insight by saying, "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). One who has experienced restoration is more inclined to restore others. The Biblical prophets are excellent examples of the dynamic ministry of restored ministers. I believe that providing ways of ministering to the minister will strengthen the church.

Enlarge your church

From page 18

"not cleave one to another." The Sabbath school organization is already intact; it provides a small group with a leader who is responsible for the accomplishment of specific missionary tasks. Remember that "the formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err." 11

So take another look at your Sabbath school. Enlist the people with gifts for child evangelism in Vacation Bible Schools and branch Sabbath schools. Give your Sabbath school classes time to discuss missionary projects and visitation. Groups tend to "own" projects they talk about. Why not work with the Lord to enlarge your church through your Sabbath school?

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7 Ibid., p. 9.
8 Ibid., p. 9.
From the Editors

Is our church putting first things first?

Our church has become a large enterprise. Is the commitment of the church's employees to its mission based primarily on material or spiritual values? Does the church need an annual priority audit?

What is the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Is its focus blurred or sharp, clearly defined or ambiguous? Our church has more than 4 million members, more than 100,000 employees, and billions of dollars in assets. Is it still putting first things first in the spending of its money and the deployment of its personnel?

Is the mission of the church to provide health care to the community?

Is the mission of the church to provide education in all subject matters to its members and others who care to enroll?

Is the mission of the church to develop a large and complex international relief agency?

Is the mission of the church to develop a large insurance agency?

All of these, and others could be included, take time, money, and people. These services are good—actually the church needs them—but the question still remains: What is the church's mission? Does it have a single focus? Or has it become weakened by diversions? The phrase “putting first things first” implies that some things are of primary and some of secondary importance. Danger threatens if services and agencies that should remain secondary are elevated to primary concern.

Article II of the constitution of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists succinctly states the mission of our church: “The object of this Conference is to teach all nations the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the commandments of God.”

All activities, institutions, services, and programs, then, need to be evaluated by two basic criteria: 1. Are they giving priority to communicating the gospel? 2. Are they giving priority to preparing, training, and equipping people to assist in this task? The church may engage in many good activities, but if its activities do not fulfill these two basic criteria, then it is not putting first things first.

An important key to establishing these priorities is the commitment of the people working for the church and its institutions. Recently a committee has been studying problems connected with the wage scale. One college president reported that he cannot find a professor for his nursing department because our colleges pay much less than our hospitals. The committee is recommending that the salary of college teachers be raised. If this recommendation passes, teachers would receive about 30 percent more than pastors. Concern is already rising in the church over the “brain drain” from education and the ministry into the health systems, where the pay is much higher. Is the remedy simply to raise salaries? Is the church putting first things first?

When Jesus lived on earth he had a very important mission to fulfill. The devil constantly tried to divert Him from that mission. Someone came to Jesus and asked: “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus' reply is most instructive: “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” (Luke 12:13, 14). * Jesus refused to be diverted from His mission, good as that request might have seemed. Jesus knew His priorities. Does the church know its? When a church medical institution has on its staff only a minority of Seventh-day Adventists, can it still put first things first? Can it still effectively witness to the gospel and the soon return of Christ? When church employees consider remuneration more important than mission, are they still putting first things first? Are the policies our church votes based on pragmatism and politics or on principle and our primary mission?

After Jesus rebuked the individual who wanted Him to intercede, He made this incisive comment: “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (verse 15). The Seventh-day Adventist Church likes to see itself as fulfilling the roles of Elijah and John the Baptist. These men were famous for putting first things first. Their mission was to warn people of judgment and bring them to repentance. Their lifestyle gave credence to their words. They did not ask what their salary would be or what allowances were in the policy. They did not seek the approval of the public or say that which was expedient and popular. They had a mission to perform and a message to give.

Our church today needs the same kind of commitment. Too many of its employees, like Gehazi, see no problem in accepting silver and merchandise. They lust after the material things of this life. Because of this their witness is muted. If the church cannot find sufficient dedicated persons to staff its programs and institutions, it would be better off with fewer programs and institutions. God is not beholden by numbers, but He does need commitment and sacrifice. Our church was founded on sacrifice, and its work will be completed only by sacrifice.

The church should not aim to have as many institutions and workers as possible, but to have dedicated, sacrificing, priority-setting institutions and workers. It should not try to duplicate what the world provides, but to offer that which the world is not supplying, that which is unique—the giving of the gospel and the heralding of the coming of our Lord.

Our church would do well to have a priority audit each year. It conducts an annual financial audit to see if it is on target, so why not a spiritual audit? If every institution, every agency, and every department would yearly evaluate its priorities to see how it is contributing to the spiritual mission of the church, what a revolution that would bring!

As church members and employees, let us remember that we are aliens in this land and that the world is constantly
trying to squeeze us into its mold. Let's give the proper priority to the church's mission.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1, 2).—J.D.N.

Bible texts in this article are from The New International Version.

**Invitation to terror**

Terrorism is nothing new, although it has taken new forms in recent years. Terrorists today relish their reputation for being able to strike anywhere, at any time—preferably when least expected. Their use of surprise and cruelty is calculated to prey upon one of the most basic fears common to all mankind: fear of the unknown. No one would volunteer to be terrorism's next hostage or casualty. As the art of terror is honed more and more into a science, it is practiced by perpetrators who understand the intricacies of negotiation, of staying out of range of antiterrorist forces, and of planting bombs where even heads of state can be victimised. Even the stouthearted Israeli Knesset has been forced to tacitly capitulate to terrorist demands.

During the height of the wave of skyjackings to Cuba in the 1960s I can remember thinking that it might be kind of interesting to be on a plane that detoured to Havana. The passengers were always released unharmed and returned home within a day or so, and there really wasn't much danger involved in the oft-repeated process. But there certainly wouldn't be anything enjoyable about being a skyjack victim today. No one would voluntarily set himself up to be humiliated, harangued, and held for days on end while negotiators weighed his life against terrorist demands. Given a choice, we all avoid such situations.

But there was a time when the whole world was held hostage by terrorists who had practiced and refined their art to include elements unheard of even today. Their ultimatum included dire consequences for anyone who would try to rescue the hostages. Bent on creating a torture too horrible for even God to endure, they honed and refined their terror techniques to seeming perfection, then dared God's Son to test His mettle against it. Satan's challenge to Jesus was an invitation to terror. There would be no element of surprise in this terror attack—only unmitigated cruelty.

And the wonder of it is that Jesus accepted the invitation. A recent article in Biblical Archaeology Review (Vassilios Tzaferis, "Crucifixion—The Archaeological Evidence," January-February, 1985) deepened my understanding of what Jesus voluntarily walked into as He stooped to enter our planet's predicament. The facts that impressed me most concerned the history of crucifixion.

Although crucifixion had been used at least since the Assyrians' day, it took the mad genius of the Roman executioners to polish it to the excruciating perfection it had reached by the time the power of the Most High overshadowed Mary in Nazareth to incarnate the Son of God in pink, pain-sensitive human flesh.

Before the end of the first century B.C. the Romans used crucifixion chiefly as a nonlethal humiliation for slaves, but by Herod's day it had become the most horrible of executions. By then the cross itself had been modified to include every imaginable feature for prolonging and intensifying suffering.

But to speak of the cross is to run ahead of the story. Before the cross came the flagellation or scourging. James Michener in The Source (New York: Random House House, 1965) describes a flagellation thus: "They stripped the old man till he stood naked; they then tied him to a pillar, where ten swift blows of the lash tore at him terribly. The speeding lead tips caught at his face and ripped out one of his eyes. They tore away a corner of his mouth and laid bare the muscles of his neck."—Page 317.

Michener's description goes on to describe flagellation of the lower half of the body, and the gory details are more graphic than I care to repeat.

Crucifixion on a plain cross, such as we see in most artists' depictions, would cause death within a few hours. But in Jesus' day the cross had been modified by the addition of a pointed sedile on which one lacerated buttock could rest, and a suppedaneum for foot support. Crosses with these added features often served as a man's last home for three or more agonizing days.

Was it mere coincidence that Rome perfected the cross as an instrument of torture just before the advent of the Messiah? I hardly think so. It was part of Satan's well-considered plan to dissuade Jesus from His planned rescue mission.

But He came anyway. Praise His name!—K.R.W.

**When the pastor's wife rebels**

From page 27

take some time, but it is necessary if we are to be whole, healthy Christians. Begin by devouring a variety of positive literature on God's personality. Romans, the Gospel of John, and the Psalms are excellent starting places. These along with such Christian classics as The Singer, by Calvin Miller, and Basic Christianity, by John Stott, enable us to paint an image of a vibrant God, pulsating with warmth, creativity, and flexibility. Don't be concerned if others envision God differently. Remember that God is God. He is really beyond personality as we know it and therefore always "adjusting" according to what His creatures need. If your concept of God works for you, is Biblical, and is Christ-centered, then it is appropriate. Cling to it, drawing strength from its encouraging image.

Much pain lies buried under the mask of rebellion. Encountering it does not make us weak or worthless or unacceptable to God. It does make us frustrated, confused, and in need of help. Indeed, rebellion is a serious matter. But, when confronted, it can become a challenging adventure brimming with growth and self-discovery.
Entering the empty house, she flings her worn Bible onto the unmade bed. With arms outstretched to God, but tense with rage, she cries out, “I’m sick of it all, God. I’m sick of this insane trap of being a minister’s wife. If I force one more sweet smile or conjure up one more helpful, artificial word I’ll scream. I want a normal life for a change, instead of one bursting with church demands. I’m sick of everything. And, God,” she adds, her anger exploding like detonated dynamite, “I’m even sick of You.” Images suddenly flash into her mind of the woman down the street who got up as usual one morning, dressed, and strolled casually out of the lives of her husband and three children—forever. She envies that woman. She wants that freedom. She wants to run. She’s a minister’s wife, and she’s rebelling.

Rebellion. It somehow tastes of slapping God in the face. Weak people rebel. People who are restless and immature. Their backbones, once strong with faith, appear to have collapsed into a sea of mush. We rarely even speak of such insurrection.

It’s bad enough when someone else commits mutiny against God, but when it’s the pastor’s wife it is unforgivable. You can almost hear the church elders shouting, “Brand her with a scarlet R and display her in the town square for all to see!” It’s equated with the pastor himself rebelling—possibly considered even worse. For isn’t she supposed to be the spiritual rock of support for her hard-working husband? When he comes home tired and exhausted from a self-sacrificing day, shouldn’t she provide him with a needed dose of faith along with his slippers and the evening paper? Never should she utter anything that would distress his work-worn spirit.

But it must be admitted that even though it may be only inwardly, most ministers’ wives do rebel sometime during their pastoral pilgrimage. And for them the guilt is often overwhelming. Paradoxically, their greatest danger is that this guilt will hinder their recovery from rebellion. But is this terrible, destructive guilt really necessary? Is the rebellion ministers’ wives experience really an unpardonable sin? Fortunately, when God judges insubordination He sees more than the outward storm of words or unprecedented acts. His vision penetrates inward, piercing through the foggy atmosphere of our pain and discovering the real wound. If our truest wish is to be God’s woman, He realizes this—regardless of our inability to harmonize our thoughts and actions with this wish. Our purpose should be the same as God’s—to uncover the real reason behind the dehance. This proper focus will enable us to see that God’s grace is also for the rebellious.

There are at least two distinct types of rebels. One type’s reason for mutiny against God is concise and clear. Such a person wants to be free to revel in some earthly wickedness, to experience a little carnal excitement. In contrast, a pastor’s wife would probably feel her reasons for abandoning God are unclear. She might be heard to admit, “I just feel so confused and frustrated. I don’t know what’s happening to me.” Precisely. Peel off the outer layers of rebellion, and you’ll very often find frustration, inflamed and tormenting. If we place rebellion and frustration under the microscope, we can more clearly determine their causes. And seeing the causes, we can find the cures.

Causes of rebellion

The causes of rebellion and frustration range from the simple, easily alleviated to the complex and deeply entrenched. Six common causes are fatigue, boredom, overbooking, self-imposed guilt, anger, and a false concept of God. When we examine these, hope blossoms forth like a rose in a winter snowstorm—unexpected, yet refreshingly beautiful.

One simple but often ignored cause of rebellion is fatigue. (Remember poor Elijah?) Physical exhaustion almost always paints reality a distorted color. If thoughts of rebellion are tempting you because you’re simply worn out, you’re in luck! The prescription is a long, luscious day and night of self-indulgence! Pamper yourself! Spend an evening meditating, listening to some relaxing music, take a hot bath, and get a good night’s rest. Think only of soaking and soothing your overstretched body and soul. You might even consider a good cry to release some of the pent-up tension. These simple remedies may be all it takes to free you from rebellion’s grip. Feel guilty if you don’t take advantage of them!

Boredom has much the same effect. Each of us receives her share of the routine; we must add to it the spices of excitement and variety. Otherwise, life becomes as stale and humdrum as a week-old biscuit. Determine to do something a little bold, or at least something you’ve never done before. Take cross-country skiing or Chinese cooking lessons; register for a class in interpretive poetry. Even going shopping or dining at an unusual ethnic restaurant with your husband or a friend can be enough to break the depressing spell of the mundane.

“As you suggested, we assigned you to nineteen of the twenty church committees for the coming year. And, oh yes, Mrs. Harris can’t lead the women’s Bible study tonight. I told her I was sure you wouldn’t mind taking over. Since you’re the pastor’s wife, I know it won’t take any time at all for you to whip up an exciting study on the book of Leviticus. You are always so eager to accept new challenges. And, oh, a couple more things…” When we allow ourselves to be overbooked we roll out the red carpet for frustration and rebellion, and they

Cathy McBride writes from Moultrie, Georgia.
walk right in. Let's face it, we have not yet been translated and still possess a few human limitations. Among them is the inability to perform the impossible—even though we often make a valiant effort! If we continue an artificial love affair with unrealistic or unwanted responsibilities, we become frustrated, then angry, and finally rebellious. We must ask ourselves the questions "Why can't I admit my imperfections? Why am I trying so hard to please others and secure their respect? Could it be I feel God does not accept me until I perform perfectly?" Rest in God's unconditional love, then resign from eighteen of those nineteen committees, and choose a few duties that you can be most creative with. Now is not the time to cling to the martyr syndrome—or you'll end up a rebellious heroine!

Self-imposed guilt

We may also use rebellion to free ourselves from self-imposed guilt. Perhaps a congregation has certain expectations of the minister's wife. "Mrs. Terrific, our last pastor's wife, was so socially minded. Why, she single-handedly organized the town's food bank." Or, just as agonizing, Mrs. Terrific may have been stuffy and proper while you are innovative and open-minded. Either way, you feel you are being stretched and twisted to fit into her abandoned skin—her old wineskins—but it is definitely not what God has asked you to be. If you assume Mrs. Terrific's hand-me-down personality, you will feel miserable and frustrated, but if you do not take on the role you feel extremely guilty. You fear disappointing your new congregation or hindering your husband's success in the church. How do you reach a compromise? Too often, to escape the badgering of the destructive guilt feelings, you may outwardly conform to the role while inwardly rebelling. You relish the captivating idea of sending the gifted Mrs. Terrific on a one-way trip to Mars! Instead, politely (practice your most angelic smile in the mirror before you go) tell everyone, including your husband, that although you're not Mrs. Terrific, you'll be happy to serve the church with your own uniqueness. (Who knows? Our dear Mrs. Terrific may have been inwardly rebellious herself!)

If unconfronted, anger can cause defiant feelings to multiply like hyperactive rabbits. We often find it hard to confess our hostility and even harder to give it up. So strong is the desire to continue embracing our anger that we often subconsciously repress God's voice rather than confront our resentment.

We should never be afraid to admit anger. We should be afraid not to. Force yourself to face your negative emotions, get them under control, and then zero in on their real cause. But keep in mind that the well of hostility is often deeper than the first trip down indicates. The true reason for your anger is usually not the surface reason. For instance, you may think you're upset with your husband because he's been home only fifteen minutes in the past five years (reason enough!), but your real concern may be that your own creative energies are stifled. You feel cheated and envious when you see him so engrossed and stimulated. Take responsibility for your anger. No one makes you angry; you allow yourself to become angry. Clothing your frustration with restraint and then voicing it to significant others is God's plan for dealing with anger. It will bring healing to yourself, your relationship with God, and your relationship with those you have ceased to love.

"This is my tenth chocolate-chip cookie, and they're supposed to be for tonight's church social. God must think I'm a fat slob. He'll punish me for sure. Oh, well, if He's already mad, I might as well have one more. What's the use of trying?" A faulty concept of God affects our personality and emotional health more than we imagine. If we view God as critical and demanding, we may rebel much as an adolescent rebels against an unfair parent. To release ourselves from this "monster god" we have created may (Continued on page 25)

Prayers from the parsonage

A little boy's prayer

Jesus, I've been thinking about heaven. People always talk about wanting to go there, but I'm not sure why.

Heaven seems to me like church: a beautiful place where you look and listen, but where you're not allowed to run, or shout, or laugh. In pictures I've seen, the children stand and smile or sit and pet a lion. They're never playing games, working on collections, or riding bicycles.

The gardens look like the "Keep Off the Grass" kind. Is heaven one big park, or are there forests and mountains and oceans to explore? Will there be wind for flying kites? Will there be rain for stomping in puddles? Will there be snow for sledging?

I haven't seen any lively animals in the pictures either. I hope they'll chase each other sometimes and roll and tumble in play.

Do all the children have to wear white robes—even the boys? Would You mind if we dressed in T-shirts and jeans and a favorite pair of tennis shoes?

Harp lessons don't sound very interesting, but I'd sure like to learn to play the banjo. And while Dad and Mom are reading the heavenly records, could I use Your computer?

I hope our mansion is easy to clean and that my room has lots of shelves so I'll have a place for all the things I like to keep. Please allow pets inside, and give us a big yard with lots of trees for climbing.

Would it be OK if my best friend, Justin, was our next-door neighbor, and if Grandpa and Grandma and all our uncles and aunts and cousins lived nearby?

I'm not very old, but already lots of people I've known have died: Grandpa, one of my Sabbath school teachers, the lady in the house on the corner, and a little boy who got hit by a school bus. My dog died, and so did all of our fish. I guess I see something dead almost every day: a leaf, a flower, a squirrel in the street.

Other things make me sad too. And there are days when nothing seems to go right.

I don't know much about pain, but it would be great never to bang my knee or get a stomachache. I'll be glad not to have to go to the doctor or the dentist.

Jesus, You've got lots of good ideas. I guess I'll just trust You to know what kids like. I know You were once a boy Yourself.

Sure is nice to talk to You. I've got to go now.

Cherry B. Habenicht
Twisting their tales

From page 11

dard metaphors in His parable. The employer represented God. And the various laborers signified—well, in the light of the familiar story, the laborers who worked all day must mean the Pharisees, strict religious people who observed all the 613 laws of Moses as well as the many traditional laws derived from or based upon them. God would have regard for them. And the others? Perhaps they represented other Jewish denominations, the Ammei ha-Aretz (less carefully observant Jews), publicans and sinners, the Samaritans, and finally (the eleventh-hour people) the Gentiles—at least those who kept the seven laws of the sons of Noah.

Jesus continued: "And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first."

"And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."

"But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you, and go; I give to this last as I give to you. Take what belongs to you, and go; I give to this last as I give to you."

We have become too well accustomed to the parables of Jesus. We are likely to read the story of the Pharisee and the publican and exclaim, "God, I thank Thee that I am not like that hypocritical Pharisee!" But when we exercise our historical imagination and begin to sense how His parables must have struck their first hearers, we realize how upsetting they were. Jesus was a disturber of the values are challenged, when their tidy world is turned upside down. A revolutionary should not be surprised to find himself crucified.

We have domesticated Jesus and tamed His parables. But rightly understood, His parables still shock. We will find it much harder to come to terms with them if we can hear them afresh.
functions of ministry. They can preach, win converts, teach, pray publicly, chair boards, and counsel parishioners. Many perform these functions—in all divisions of the world field.

What is it they cannot do without ordination? Administer the "sacraments"—baptism and the Lord's Supper. Why? Because in historical religion this is the symbol of spiritual authority. It is not function that is in question, but status. Are women in the church fully equal to men, or in some way still subordinate to them?

Socialization and social control

Why do well-meaning, intelligent people who live in a society that stresses equal treatment cling to caste systems when it comes to religion? The answer is found in the twin processes of socialization and social control.

McGuire describes the process by which socialization ingrains certain social values in individuals: "Religion is a personally meaningful combination of beliefs, values, and practices that is usually related to the world view of a larger group into which that individual has been socialized. In socialization, the individual typically receives many of these beliefs, values, and practices from representatives of the larger group such as parents and teachers. Much of this received meaning system becomes internalized—that is, made a part of the individual's own way of thinking about self and others." 15

A part of this socialization process is the group's definition of maleness and femaleness. "Males and females are taught their culturally assigned gender roles—the social group's expectations of behaviors, attitudes, and motivations 'appropriate' to males or females." 16 Thus many women oppose ordination for women, and choose subordination to men, because this concept has become thoroughly internalized by years of socialization. It seems the "right" thing to do, even though it denies full dignity to womanhood.

The related process of social control "seeks to contain individual or group resistances within tolerable limits." 17 This is usually done informally as the group makes evident its disapproval of what is seems to be social deviance. Thus women who aspire to the ministry may sense a coolness from their peer group, may be openly discouraged, or may even be shunned. Social control may also have its more formal aspects. The news media recently carried a story of a Mormon woman who received church discipline because she openly supported the proposed equal rights amendment.

In view of all this, what should the Seventh-day Adventist Church do? If our Biblical and theological studies inform us of the dignity and equality of all persons as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28) and as restored through the liberating power of the gospel (Gal. 3:26-29), then we must not let ourselves be bound by sociological considerations. Sociology tells us how groups have traditionally organized themselves—it does not say that they must continue in that pattern.

Much of what I have written is not directed specifically to Adventists, but applies to religion in general. Adventists, however, now have an opportunity to make a bold statement about their belief in the worth of people under the gospel. They have the chance to break the gender caste system and discontinue using religious reasons to legitimate treating some persons as if they were of less worth than others for reasons beyond those persons' control. "Christ came to break down every wall of partition... The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste." 18 "No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste is recognized by God." 19

By removing the barrier to the ordination of women, by according them full equality of status in the structure of the church, Seventh-day Adventists may now make a positive statement about the character of God to the watching world.

Ohio changes system

From page 9

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1986 World Ministers Field Conference on Archaeology and Evangelism

In July 1986 the Madaba Plains Excavation project will host a seven-day field conference on archaeology and evangelism in Amman, Jordan, in conjunction with our excavation season at Tell el-Umeiri.

The conference, which opens Sunday evening, July 20, and concludes the following Saturday evening, July 26, is uniquely designed for busy Adventist pastors, evangelists, and clergy of all faiths.

The key speaker for the conference is internationally known religious television personality George Vendeman of It Is Written fame.

Pastor Vendeman will conduct nightly lectures on the interrelationship of biblical history, archaeology and contemporary evangelism.

These timely presentations will be part of an interest-packed program that draws on the expertise of a number of evangelists, archaeologists and scholars. Dig patron H. R. H. Prince Raad Ibn Zied will give the keynote address on Sunday evening. Other Jordanian speakers will include: Dr. Fawzi Zayyadine (Amman and Its Environs) and Dr. Nabil Khairy (The History and Archaeology of Petra).

During the day delegates to the conference will join the excavation team working at Tell el-Umeiri and undertake a wide range of excavating and field laboratory experiences under the guidance of Lawrence T. Geraty, Dig Director.

An extensive study tour of archaeological highlights in Jordan and Israel is to immediately follow the conference.

The tour director is Abraham Terian, Professor of Intertestamental and Christian Literatures at Andrews University.

Dr. Terian will also conduct a lecture series at the conference on the geography of Bible lands.

The cost of the conference and tour (total 18 days—July 19 till August 8) is $2530 and includes: round-trip economy-class air fares from New York or Chicago, full board during the conference, half board during the tour of Israel with first-class hotels (double occupancy), all entrances, sightseeing, ground transportation, conference supplies and excavation fees.

Reservations should be accompanied by a $250 deposit; the balance is due April 1. Make checks payable to: Madaba Plains Project, Atlantic Union College.

Madaba Plains Project, Jordan

For a comprehensive brochure on the conference or for bookings, write to: W. John Hackwell, Administrative Director, Madaba Plains Project, Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, MA 01561 or call us at (617) 365-4561.
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Free sample abstracts and a detailed information packet are available from Current Christian Abstracts, P.O. Box 7596, Columbia, Missouri 65205. A subscription to their service costs $25.

World Health and Temperance Day Offering

October 13-19, 1985, has been designated Health Emphasis Week. This week should be used by churches as a special opportunity to conduct the new Breathe Free Plan to Stop Smoking (the revised Five-Day Plan), to pass out special health literature to friends and neighbors, to conduct alcohol programs in schools and communities, to put on special health fairs and displays, to show films in homes and communities, to write letters of concern about health issues to legislators, and to promote health evangelism and temperance work in the community.

On Sabbath, October 19, the World Health and Temperance Day Offering will be taken. Forty percent of the offering will remain in local conferences for use in local church or conference projects, 10 percent will be used for union health/temperance projects, 20 percent for North America health/temperance, 20 percent for the General Conference Health and Temperance Department, and 10 percent for the International Temperance Association.

The health and temperance work of the church is often referred to as the right arm of the message. The health message and its resulting programs have had a prominent place in the development and history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It continues to play a significant role through health-related educational institutions, health-care institutions, health education programs, international temperance organizations, and many other health-related programs.

Help your church fight the inroads of the diabolical scourge of intemperance in the church and in society at large. Give of your love, your time, talents, and your offering during the week of October 13-19.

“Sermon Analysis Response Form”

Date: ___________________________

Preacher: _________________________

Scripture Text: _____________________

Theme: ___________________________

1. What did the preacher say? (What points came across?)
   a. ____________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________
   c. ____________________________________________
   d. ____________________________________________
   e. ____________________________________________
   f. ____________________________________________

2. What difference did it make? (the practical value)
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. What was the strongest thing about the sermon?
   (reference to scripture/hymns/stories, et cetera)
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. What was the weakest?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

5. If you were talking to all pastors you’ve heard preach, what would you most want to tell them?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

(Please hand in after service—no need to sign.)

Thanks.
Personal Evangelism for Today

Pastors who feel that personal evangelism is important will find this book a good resource for helping develop their own role model as well as for leading laypeople into more effective ministry.

After dealing with the Biblical basis for witnessing, Schweer presents the urgency of evangelism from the theological, practical, and ethical points of view, then deals with the practical how-to aspects of witnessing, sharing some important tools, and also some important questions about "instant conversions" through gospel presentations that do not place enough emphasis on discipling the person who accepts Christ. The chapter on "Winning the Satisfied" gives valuable insights for reaching the secular mind.

The author has done a good job of covering many aspects of witnessing. Both pastors and laypersons should find his insights and suggestions helpful.

Before Saying "I Do"

In this time when marriage difficulty and deterioration affect the Christian community as well as the secular world, premarital books and guides are proliferating. Many give consideration to the dozen or so topics that sooner or later concern couples—money, sex, in-laws, and so forth. This volume, however, reflects much more thoroughly than others on the meaning of Christian marriage with such chapters as "The Case for Exclusive Marriage," "The Spiritual Dimensions in Marriage," "Are You in Love?" and "Confirming Your Choice." The material here is so good no couple should marry without considering it.

The difficulty is that couples preparing for marriage may give only limited attention to such a book. Perhaps calling their attention to the chapters on "Sex Before Marriage," "Planning the Honeymoon," and "Bedroom Knowledge for Beginners" may entice them to read the entire book. Reflection questions at the beginning of each chapter may also help lure readers to discover the insights the author shares.

Bible-centered as well as people-oriented, the author shares practical counsel based on a lifetime of ministry. He includes thoughtful consideration of the issues involved in remarriage, and a chapter on marriage and divorce laws in all fifty States. A fairly extensive bibliography suggests further source materials.

Recently published
The Minister's Library. Cyril J. Barber, Moody Press, Chicago, 1985, 510 pages, $15.95. This thorough annotated bibliography of books useful to the pastor in various areas of need and interest was originally published in 1974 and has just been updated. Also included are practical suggestions and specific plans for organizing and cataloging your library.

When Bad Things Happen to God's People. Richard Rice, Pacific Press, Boise, Idaho, 1985, 93 pages, $4.95, paper. Rice deals not only with the problem of suffering but with its value and place in "soul building," and goes on to suggest ways of coping with suffering.

J. B. Phillips: The Wounded Healer. Vera Phillips and Edwin Robertson, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984, 110 pages, $5.95, paper. The widow of the famous author and Bible translator reveals the internal struggles her husband endured throughout his life. Phillips' correspondence portrays his ability to guide and help many through trying times, and also reveals a man who knew what it meant to struggle with doubt and depression.

The Hospital Handbook. Lawrence D. Reimer and James T. Wagner, Morehouse-Barlow Company, Wilton, Connecticut, 1984, 128 pages, $5.95, paper. This book contains not only helpful suggestions for prayers and Scripture readings but practical information about modern hospitals and how the pastor can be a part of the healing team. A brief glossary of medical terms focuses on the types of procedures and terminology a pastor is most likely to encounter.

Fundamentalism Today: What Makes It So Attractive? Marla J. Selvidge, editor, Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, 1984, 144 pages, $7.95, paper. As Jerry Falwell's foreword to this book of critical essays points out, fundamentalism today is difficult to stereotype, and this makes fair criticism difficult. Nevertheless, the authors pose some important questions for fundamentalist thinkers. The chapter on Reagan and the Evangelicals provides some intriguing history of how religion can get entangled in politics.

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