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“Religion and Communism” saddens and uplifts

I was saddened by your article “Religion and Communism” (March 1987).

1. In the history of Communist rule, no believer was ever sentenced because he or she was a believer. If Christians are gathered to sing and pray outside of the “allowed” church buildings, they are sentenced under “hooliganism,” or when they possess Bibles or Christian literature they are sentenced under “propaganda against the government.”

2. The people who are officially selected are trained to give the type of answers that Spangler has accepted.

3. I would like to see an article about the fate of the largest Seventh-day Adventist church in Bucharest that was destroyed in December 1986, against the protests of the believers.

My conclusion is that Spangler went to hear the government line and missed the suffering of the church.—George Hancock-Stefan, Executive Director, Romanian Missionary Society, Wheaton, Illinois.

I would believe that you have been thoroughly duped. Ministerial friends of mine who have relatives living in Communist areas of Europe, and who should know what conditions are like because they live there the year around, tell an entirely different story than you have told. I have to believe they know what they’re talking about.—Glenn Calhoun, Grace Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado.

I am grateful to God for the article “Religion and Communism” (March 1987). I have grieved for several years over the church’s increased political involvement, and for the strife and bitterness that entanglement in the worldly affairs of men always brings. No government on earth is a threat to Christ. Indeed, it is He who ordains the governments that be, as you so rightly noted.

As a Pentecostal minister, I have been particularly pained to see at the forefront of the church’s quest for earthly political power some noted Pentecostal and “charismatic” leaders. Would God that they would prayerfully consider your sober and sensible article. Their ears, to this point, have been deaf to my pleas to remember that our enemies are not the Communists any more than our enemies are Americans. Our enemies are spiritual blindness and wickedness.—Rev. John David Clark, Henderson, North Carolina.

To ordain or not—insulting

The underlying thesis of the article (“To Ordain or Not,” March 1987) is that women have been barred from priestly functions both in Bible times and in today’s developing countries “because most societies associate ritual uncleanness with the female reproductive cycle.” To support this thesis the author refers to the concern over ritual impurity of the Old Testament, a concern that Christ allegedly replaced with a moral understanding of purity (Mark 7:14-16).

This thesis is unfounded, because nowhere does the Scripture suggest that women were excluded from serving as priests because of their monthly seven-day ritual of impurity (Lev. 15:19-24). Men became ritually unclean more frequently than women did; not just once a month, but every time they had a natural or unnatural discharge of semen (Lev. 15:1-18). Women could have served at the Temple on a rotating basis, like men, according to their ritual status (1 Chron. 24; Luke 1:5, 9).

Women did serve in a limited role at the tabernacle (Ex. 38:8; 1 Sam. 2:22). If ritual impurity were the factor keeping them from serving as priests, it would also have disqualified them from ministering at the entrance to the tabernacle.

From a sociological perspective the ritual uncleanness thesis is wrong for two reasons. First, in both ancient and modern pagan religions women have served and are serving as priestesses. In pagan religions the female reproductive cycle has made women especially suited to function as priestesses since this cycle has been viewed as indicative of unique divine powers.

Second, it is untrue that Adventists in the Third World do not favor the ordination of women because “the societies in which they live are still too close to concepts of ritual purity and defilement.” During the five years I spent in Africa I never detected the presence of such thinking in the mind of our Adventist believers. In fact, several students from developing countries who heard the oral presentation of the article at Pioneer Memorial church told me that they found such a view not only untrue but insulting.

The reason that women in Bible times were included in prophetic, religious, and social ministries but were excluded from serving as priests in the Old Testament and as elders and pastors in the New Testament was not because of their ritual impurity or because of the chauvinistic mentality of Bible writers, but simply because the Bible upholds the functional role distinction that God assigned to men and women at Creation. This Scriptural role distinction applies equally to the home and to the church. The representative role of a priest, elder, or pastor is seen in the Scripture as that of a father of the extended family of believers, the household of God (1 Tim. 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Cor. 4:15).—Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Faith and reason

I found your article (“Reconciling Faith and Reason,” March 1987) misleading and treading on very dangerous ground. It is not necessary to attempt any type of reconciliation between faith and reason.

The Scriptures tell us that “the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they (Continued on page 21)

If you’re receiving Ministry bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it’s not a mistake. Since 1928, Ministry has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy; requests should be on church letterhead.
Joe Davis traveled several hundred miles to spend a weekend with an old friend. Sam told Joe how he had been fired from his church-related job with less than one day’s notice. There had been no warning, no letters hinting that such an action might be taken. Since the firing he had not attended church. The pastor had never called. He felt isolated and angry with the church and with God.

At church Joe mentioned to the pastor that Sam had observed that the pastor had never called. “That’s correct,” replied the pastor. “He is such a difficult case that I must use my time elsewhere. There are others who will respond much more quickly.”

How do you minister to people you might consider obnoxious? Do you have a responsibility to minister in some way to everyone, regardless of his promise? Do those who fired Sam have a responsibility to keep some kind of contact, no matter how minimal? These are tough questions. Jack Drumm shares experiences that point to an answer in “Must I Shepherd All the Flock?”

Everlasting fire means a fire that constantly burns and never goes out for all eternity. Right? Maybe. You may not agree with everything in “Is the Hell of the Bible Unending?” but consider that words have no meaning in themselves. They are only symbols for concepts; and as symbols, they take on any meaning you give them, and sometimes more than one meaning. When you hear the word mustang, what immediately comes to mind? For some it will be a car, for others a horse, and for yet others a combination of both. Same word, different meanings.

Burnout is always a potential problem in the minister’s life. You will want to study carefully the burnout cycle diagramed by Jose Fuentes in the center of this magazine. Now is the time for action—not when the “burn” has almost consumed you.

These are only a few of the stimulating articles we feature this month. While not every article might fill an immediate need, we hope that at least one will grab your attention, help make your day, and even change your ministry.
Discipline yourself

Robert McNeill

To many, discipline has negative connotations. But your self-discipline will benefit yourself, your family, and your church.

Which better motivates you, rewards or punishment? For me it is rewards. My folks believed that if they spared the rod, they spoiled the child, so the word discipline raises "tender" memories. But I can use rewards to further self-discipline. For instance, if I discipline myself to get my sermon finished two days before I must preach it, I take the next day off. It works. I've had my sermons ready a day early for years.

Ministers are generally self-starters, and most may not have a problem with self-discipline, but I want to suggest four areas in which some of us need to exercise more control of our lives. We need to make sure our minds, our bodies, our souls, and our home lives are in good shape.

Keep your mind healthy

One way we may keep our minds in good shape is by studying regularly. Our minds are creatures of habit. If we condition ourselves to study in a particular place at a particular time of day, our minds will respond. That's why it is a good idea to devote the morning hours, for instance, to sermon preparation and not to let anything interrupt that time. Now, you might be an owl instead of a lark and prefer the evening for study. But if you choose some regular time and follow through, it will pay off.

Many of us find it difficult to get the sermon started. So we tend to sit chewing our pencils, waiting for inspiration to come. But it comes only as we start writing. And the hardest sentence to write is the first one. Are you old enough to remember the old-fashioned pump at the well? You had to give it some water to get it going. When you sit down at your typewriter or computer, "prime the pump"; write anything, even if it is nonsense, just to get the juices flowing.

Sometimes I'm tempted to use an old sermon just to see how many people remember it! I think they would more likely recall the illustrations than anything else, and if I changed those I might get away with it. But I usually feel guilty when I let the week go by without preparing a fresh sermon—and I'm happy with that. For I find that when I get out of the routine of sermon preparation for a while, say for the summer holidays, it is hard to get back into it again. Using old sermons frequently has the same effect. Regular preparation makes for easier preparation. So if you devote all your energies to the sermon as soon as you get back into the office after the weekend, you will have fewer problems preparing it. But if you fritter your energies away in smaller tasks, you will have less left for the important jobs.

If you are like me, you hate to do some things your work requires. Perhaps you need to make an unpleasant visit. You have had a disagreement with a member of the congregation and you know you should get it straightened out before it gets any worse. Or there is someone to phone, and you know she could talk the leg off a stool. You are tempted to put these things off until you finally have to do them. But this approach will drain your energy. It's like having a nagging toothache and refusing to do anything about it. You get so miserable that eventually your family begs you to go to the dentist. If you can do the unpleasant tasks first and get them out of the way, then you can reward yourself with the more pleasant ones.

One aspect of the ministry that presents both advantages and dangers is...
we don't have time clocks to punch. No one keeps track of the time we spend in the office, especially if it is in our home. But we know. And since we have to live with ourselves, it is very important for us to keep strict office hours.

God expects us to be workmen who are worthy of our hire. Someday we will have to give to Him an account of what we have done with our time. An old minister in England at the turn of the century said that he could not lie in his bed and be lazy when he heard the miners in his congregation going to work at 5:00 a.m., so he got up and went to his work also. I am very thankful my people don't start work at dawn, but if they are at work by 8:00 a.m., I like to be also.

Another temptation comes to those who work at home. They may find it easy to wander into their office unshaven, in a robe and slippers. I believe that our mental attitude takes its cue from our outward appearance. If we are sloppily dressed, we won't produce our best work. If we are smartly dressed, our minds will pick up their cue and fall into line.

Our appearance affects not only our own attitude and productivity but the attitudes of others as well. No executive in his business office downtown would be seen dressed in a careless manner, for he believes himself to be a representative of his firm. We work for the greatest firm in this world, and sometimes we let it down by the way we represent it. People judge our church by the way we keep our property. If the church building has a run-down appearance, people will probably go looking for one whose members seem to care about it. If they judge the building that way, they are likely to judge the minister in the same way.

Keep your body healthy

Physical fitness complements mental alertness. Paul talked about pummeling his body to bring it into shape (1 Cor. 9:27). Some of us, unfortunately, need to do more pummeling than others, but physical fitness should be a requirement for the ministry. We don't need to be fanatics about it and we don't need to be marathon runners, but a fit body makes for a fit mind. I used to jog, but I have come to the conclusion that a good brisk walk is just as good as, if not better than, running. It is kinder to the knees than pounding the pavement. If I can live within walking distance of the church, so much the better. There are good exercise programs on TV in the morning for you, then buy a video recorder and do them later. Justify the expense of the VCR by renting some of the video programs Ministry has been offering to its readers!

So much of our work involves sitting at a desk. We can do some exercises there to relieve tension and increase our fitness. Flexing a muscle for as little as six seconds can help to keep it in shape. So as you sit in your chair, draw your stomach muscles in until they seem to touch your spine, and hold them there for six seconds. Do that several times. Then put your hands on the arms of your chair, and if possible, slowly raise yourself off the seat.

You can relieve tension in your neck by clasping your hands behind your head and exerting slight pressure on your head as you turn it from side to side. Other useful exercises include lifting your feet off the floor and holding them up, pulling your toes up until you feel the back of your legs begin to hurt, and rolling your ankles to the right and to the left.

Taking a cold shower in the morning will help tone you up. Articles I have read recently suggest finishing off your morning shower with several alternating hot and cold blasts of about 15 seconds each. So I have been trying it and hating it—it's torture. However, it leaves my skin tingling and certainly wakes me up!

Keep your spirit healthy

Two lighthouse keepers lived on an isolated island. Neighbors kept coming to them to borrow oil for their lamps, and the keepers generously gave it to them. One day they ran out of oil, and when the lighthouse lamp went out, many ships were wrecked on the rocks. The keepers had generously given of their resources, but had not replenished them.

People draw resources from us continually, so we need time for spiritual renewal. But often we keep ourselves so busy studying books about the Bible that we forget to study the Bible itself. Even when we have our devotions, we end up looking for texts to preach from instead of trying to draw spiritual nourishment from what we are reading. We must not neglect our devotions—and we must be sure we benefit from them spiritually, as well as professionally.

But daily devotions may not be enough. Even Christ needed time away from people so that He could rest physically and spiritually. And if He didn't need it, how much more do we. I believe most of us could benefit from taking a spiritual retreat. Retreats allow our souls to catch up with our bodies. We come back from them refreshed and filled with zest for our work again.

Keep your family life healthy

Many ministers have a great need to be needed. Often their families suffer while they go out looking for someone who will boost their egos. I know of a minister who came home late on Christmas Eve. He proudly told his wife that he had been helping a member of the congregation put up his Christmas tree. With a withering look she said bitterly, "It would have done you more good if you had come home and helped your family put up theirs."

Ask your spouse how much time you spent with your family in the past week. Or in the past month. Your children won't be with you very long. When they leave, what memories will they take of you? And when they pray, "Our Father . . . .", what image will come into their minds?

Be sure your schedule includes evenings at home with your family. It might be a good idea to take your calendar home and ask your spouse and children what they would like to plan together with you for the month ahead.

And take your day off religiously. Your church will manage perfectly well without you. Most of us don't think so, and we become slaves to our work. I once took a three-month sabbatical from my church to study in Europe. When I came back, I found that not only was the church still standing, but some of the irregular attendees did not even know I had been away! You are not as important as you think. In fact, six months after you leave your present charge, they will have forgotten you! Somebody else will have taken your place, and the church will continue on as if you had never been there. But that's not true of your family, and particularly not of your spouse.

Mark Twain once said that habits can't be thrown out the upstairs window. They must be coaxied down one step at a time. If you are not as inner directed as you would like to be, practice becoming so—one step at a time. Don't use a system of punishments to make you feel guilty when you fail—use rewards to make you feel good when you succeed. And you will be well on your way to the self-disciplined life.
Must I shepherd all the flock?

Jack Drumm

When was the first time you received a pastoral visit? Do you ignore some members because they are harder to visit?

We drove my Pinto through the July heat from Michigan to southern California to participate in a field school of evangelism. My companion was one of the bright boys at the seminary.

I considered him a prize catch for the student church I pastored. He had begun attending toward the end of the spring term. Our mission as a church was to reclaim college and graduate students who, despite their enrollment in a church-run university, were losing their connection with the church. Surely our fledgling group would benefit greatly from Dave's vision and energy. He read books and spoke passionately about the need for creativity and compassion in church life—a model pastor in the making.

Dave's brilliance and wide reading intimidated me. I was not quite in his class; however, I really looked forward to spending a couple of days driving and talking together.

Our “driving talk” confirmed my impressions: Dave was well read, articulate, and visionary. But the conflict between his vision of what the church should be and his view of what it was so disheartened and wearied him that for months before he began attending our irregular student church he had not attended church anywhere. I had pursued him for the great contributions I was certain he would make. I never dreamed that he needed gentle care, that he was a bruised dreamer struggling with faith.

He told me he had declined my repeated invitations to our church from fear of further disillusionment. The reports about our church couldn't be true. Even to visit would be to risk again the bitter dashing of his hopes.

Finally he had come. The next week he brought Jim, a friend equally disillusioned, who after that first visit traveled unbelievable distances to be in church on Sabbath morning. Dave began again to indulge hope that their vision of the church was more than idle fancy. Somehow that hope was tied to my role as the pastor of an unofficial, almost make-believe church. Never mind that he was smarter than I or had read more books or was more sophisticated. I was Dave's pastor.

As we drove west on the interstate through the hot hours and into the night, he talked of his doubts and of his dreams for heroic and effective ministry, doubts and dreams born during his internship in “the real world” of a small church—a world to which I was an alien. Certain of a divine call to the pastorate, he found himself unable to harmonize the lifestyle he craved with the lifestyle required by his vocation. He had married a woman with whom he could share his vacations but not his vocation. He drove a Scirocco but wanted a Porsche. They spent two weeks sailing the Caribbean; he dreamed of his own boat in the harbor—an Alejuela 38 ft for sailing to Tahiti or New Zealand. He needed to share all this with his pastor. He counted himself part of my flock.

Unvisited members

During field school we spent our mornings in class, our afternoons and evenings in actual fieldwork. Since most of us would never be full-time evangelists, we focused on methods for pastoral evangelism. The cardinal principle of
pastoral care and pastoral evangelism was visitation.

"Visit your people!" our teacher emphasized. "Many of our members never receive a pastoral visit in their entire lives." No pastor had ever visited him!

The teacher recalled an incident when he visited the wife of a well-known church leader who was a member of his church. The woman cried with pain and gratitude: the pain of vainly longing for years for someone to be concerned about her personal spiritual health, and overflowing gratitude that a pastor—her pastor—had finally visited. At last someone had not assumed that she needed no pastoral care because her husband was a clergyman. "Visit your members. Visit all of them."

That afternoon while we were driving between visits to interests from the evangelistic meetings, Dave turned to me. "Jack, we have got to give Prof a pastoral visit. What do you say?"

We had Fridays off. Prof was sure to be home. We found his house, parked, and rang his doorbell. I felt a little foolish making a pastoral call on the evangelist who was teaching us pastoral visitation. The door opened, not widely. I don't know what we were interrupting—sermon preparation? letter writing? balancing the checkbook? He greeted us, but his voice, his posture, and the way he held the door, close, himself filling the opening—everything said he was not looking forward to having his day interrupted by a couple of students who were not the most productive in the class. I could see him wondering, how much of my time are you going to require?

We hastily explained our mission: "In class you mentioned that you had never had a pastoral visit in all your life. We decided that you should have at least one before you die. We are here to pay you a brief pastoral call."

He barely held back the tears. The door opened all the way against the wall. He almost pulled us inside. What did we want to drink? Would we like to see his study? He explained the great value of his favorite commentary set, discussed how to make time for adequate study in a crowded schedule. Finally, embarrassed at how much of his time we had taken, we interrupted, "Since this is a pastoral call, would you like us to have prayer for you and your family before we go?" We knelt on the carpet in his magnificent study. Again tears pooled just short of spilling over, and I carried away a new vision of who my flock is.

**Visiting the hostile**

My first official pastoral assignment was a war-torn church in the suburbs. When I arrived, the hostilities were in a temporary lull as the armies waited to see which side I'd join. Before too long I was thoroughly embroiled. As the first year blunted into the second the tension between Dr. Jackson, the church school principal, and myself became so great I finally told the board that I could no longer work with that man. Either they found another principal or they found another school board chairman. One of the more levelheaded board members rebuked my failure to keep personality separated from business; however, the principal and I continued our contest at every meeting.

I rejoiced on the Sabbaths the Jacksons went elsewhere for church. When they did attend, he carefully avoided approaching the door as long as I greeted people. With great reluctance I would force myself to find him and shake his hand. Finally they began to attend a church that was closer to their home. Sabbath was more pleasant for me and, I hoped, for Dr. Jackson and his family. With undue eagerness I awaited his request for transfer of membership.

Months later I heard through the grapevine that Mrs. Jackson had entered the hospital for surgery. I considered visiting her but thought better of it. Probably the mere sight of my face would cause fresh bleeding from her ulcer. And I could imagine her choking with cynicism when I prayed for her. They never came to my church anymore. The people from the other church would probably visit her.

I was busy with pastoral visitation. The Smiths' teenage daughter was considering baptism. When I came to their house to study with her daughter, Mrs. Smith made over me like her own son. She hoped out loud that somehow my visits and my wonderful personality would influence her husband to join the church.

I visited the Breen's. Mr. Breen, a Ph.D. in math, a professor, was slowly recovering from deep wounds incurred in conflict with a pastor in another town. He often attended services Sabbath morning with his family, but refused to accept any office or attend church socials or business meetings or any other functions. My frequent visits seemed to make a difference. He drew closer to the church, slowly lowering his guard. Surely this was real pastoral visitation—ministry to my flock. There were other families, widows, and invalids who appreciated my visits and said so.

With so many people to serve, it seemed an unwise use of time to go chasing off to the hospital to see Mrs. Jackson, who did not like me anyway.

When I answered the phone, my mouth went dry. It always did when Dr. Jackson called. He did not call unless he had a complaint. And his complaints were never mild. Nor did he ever intentionally give me time to think about something before answering him. But his complaint this time not only left me momentarily speechless, but ever since has shaped my ministry.

"Have you dropped our names from your church list? My wife was in the hospital for two and a half weeks. You never visited. You never called. You sent no card. We haven't been in church for three months. You have never been to visit us; you have never inquired why. Aren't we still members of the church? Aren't you still our pastor?"

I wanted to explain that I would have been glad to visit his wife if I had thought I was wanted. I would have visited their home if I had not thought that the major reason for their going to another church was to avoid having to look at me on Sabbath morning. I would have loved to put in a dig: If you so highly value my role as pastor, why don't you cooperate with me in the management of the school?

My natural cynicism suggested that his complaint about my failure to give pastoral care was just another skillful stratagem—an unanswerable charge of
What do you say to an ex-pastor who knows the Bible backward and forward, loves to debate, is clever and sharp—and is having marriage difficulties?

professional misconduct that could be turned to good purpose when arguing about policy matters. But whether the hurt in his voice was feigned or real, I had failed. In fact, I had not cared if they left our congregation. I had hoped they would. I did not wish illness on his wife, but I had so distanced myself from them that I was not pained to hear that she was in pain. I did not feel that one of my sheep was sick. At best, the Jacksons appeared to me as someone else’s unruly sheep dogs (if not actually wolves in sheep’s clothing). I had not considered them part of my flock. But they were.

The Jacksons were not natives of the United States. I felt that their view of the significance of pastoral care was conditioned by the different cultural expectations of their homeland. Certainly middle-class and professional people who have grown up in America do not feel the same need for pastoral care. If Dr. Jackson had grown up in America, he wouldn’t have wanted visits from a preacher with whom he was in such profound conflict. At least that is what I wanted to think.

Pastors need care

My cousin Jean was on the phone. Bill, her older brother, was having trouble at home. It looked as if he and Sally were going to divorce. Could I call him?

Bill had pastored for several years. His churches seemed to greatly appreciate his ministry. He was bright, articulate, forceful. His wife and two sons contributed to his image of a successful pastor. Leaving the pastorate, he began graduate study in another field, but theology remained his first love. After a period of time he also left his wife.

At the same time he developed a conflict with his pastor. They disputed about the relation between law and grace, God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. Bill’s favorite theologian was Calvin. The pastor was decidedly Arminian in belief. Bill had utter disdain for the pastor’s lesser scholarship and for what Bill saw as shoddy, careless reasoning. He made no great effort to hide his impatience with the pastor’s performance from the pulpit.

The pastor stopped asking him to preach and removed him from teaching his Sabbath school class. He also opposed a Sabbath afternoon Bible study group that others had asked Bill to conduct. Bill’s attendance at the church became less frequent. It took a while before the church members knew that he and Sally were in serious marital trouble.

Naturally the pastor did not want to antagonize Bill. Bill had not committed adultery, so no church discipline was required. So the pastor did the prudent thing—let things ride. He did not want to appear to have a holier-than-thou attitude. He did not want to cross swords with Bill in argument. What do you say to an ex-pastor who knows the Bible backward and forward, loves to debate, is clever and sharp—and is having marriage difficulties?

When I called, Bill was not his usual cocky self. The hurt in his voice seemed utterly out of place. It was a note of neediness and dependence I had never heard from him before. “When I began to miss church, no one called. Not even the pastor. When Sally and I separated, no one cared. The pastor did not even call.”

Bill had never needed anyone. He had been self-sufficient, strong, a leader, a preacher, a born troublemaker. If he had been a member of my church, I am sure that I too would have left him to fend for himself. I would not have seen his hurting as the pain of a sheep under my charge. Yet he too longs for a shepherd’s care. He too is part of the flock.

The appreciation of pastoral attention is not limited to the hurting and discouraged. Phillip and Susan moved into a church-owned apartment and became members of our church. Despite the fact that his position in a denominationally owned business took them away sometimes two or three Sabbaths a month, the strength of their commitment to God and to our church added something special to our congregational life. Everyone liked them. Within a year of their arrival, despite Phillip’s academic lack, I strongly recommended him to the conference leadership for a pastoral position. I could easily envision him as my successor in the church I served.

A couple of months after they had moved in, I stopped by their apartment to ask Phillip about something—I don’t remember what. Something mundane. Our conversation drifted to spiritual matters without any particular direction on my part. Suddenly I was brought up short. Susan was telling me something with obvious emotion: “No pastor ever visited us before. You are the first ever to make a pastoral call in our home.”

Suddenly I was listening to myself. What had I been saying? Had I really addressed their spiritual needs? Her remark gets full credit for my offering to have prayer with them before I left. Even those who are whole enjoy the personal attention of their physician. Even healthy sheep profit from the care of their shepherd.

My hero

When I entered the pastoral ministry, I already knew who my hero was among the ministers of our conference. I had met him while working in a parachurch organization and was immediately captivated. Thomas Bromden was the kind of person I dreamed of being. He was a model of the pastor I hoped to become.

Watching him at workers’ meetings and camp meeting did nothing to tarnish his halo. He was rugged, informal, indefatigable. My wife and I attended a parenting seminar he conducted with his wife. He gave me copies of articles that would help me in my own work with families.

As I got over being awestruck and began to have the courage to relate to him familiarly, he shut me out. He was not rude, just cold, aloof. He responded with bare civility to my greetings. It hurt. But then there are people seeking my company who drive me up the wall—life is full of unrequited love. I did my best to be reserved around him. I had the feeling that I annoyed him in much the same way a little brother annoys an older brother.

After wondering for two years whether there was any way I could change myself to be more acceptable to the pastor I most admired, I finally called him up.

“Tom, this may sound crazy, but I...”

(Continued on page 29)
One of your most vital roles as a minister has nothing to do with where your church is located or the size of your congregation. There are times when human beings desperately need God. And often their minister is a tangible part of knowing He is truly there. They can feel the presence of Jesus Christ. They can touch, they can see, and they can hear you.

I remember well a couple who were close friends of my parents. The wife had cancer, and her physician sent her to a large hospital in New York City that specialized in treating her type of cancer. While she was spending hours undergoing tests, her husband tried to pass the time. He drank coffee in the cafeteria. He looked at magazines he couldn't bring himself to read. And finally he sought comfort in the hospital chapel.

This man had tried to hold back his tears. He felt as if he were going to explode. And then he felt a strong hand on his shoulder. He knew, somehow he knew, it was the chaplain. And suddenly he cried. Sobs racked his body. The chaplain simply stood by him, the strength of his hand bringing strength to the man. Later they talked. But it was those moments of just having a minister with him that gave this man the courage to go on.

At age 20, a college student, and already selling some of my writing, I found myself in love. Tom was a postgraduate student. What a future he had. He could write both poetry and serious short stories. He composed classical music and was an accomplished pianist. He had exhibited some of his art and taught art to mentally handicapped children in a regional center. Because we had much in common and belonged to the same church, I anticipated sharing our lives together and in our happiness bringing joy to others. How wonderful the future looked!

Tom's severe headaches made me think he was overworking, using his eyes too much. I asked him to do less. He did, but the headaches became worse. Finally he went to a doctor. The medication helped only briefly. He entered the hospital for tests that resulted in an operation to remove a growth.

Tom recovered, but he had lost some of his coordination. If this discouraged him, he didn't let it show. He became a full-time teacher at the regional center, using art forms to help the children and youth. The future still looked bright—until the headaches returned. Tom returned to the hospital.

Tom's mother broke the news to me. He had a few weeks to live. I held myself together until I left the hospital. I drove home, but instead of going into the house, I ran into the woods behind our property. For a while, I turned against God and everything else. I ran until the pain in my chest prevented me from continuing. Then I hit my hands against an old grandfather tree until blood actually ran down my arms. And at last, too exhausted to do anything else, I slid down to the ground, my body shaking.

Then someone sat on the ground beside me. He didn't speak. He pulled a large white handkerchief from his pocket and wrapped it around the hand that was bleeding the most. Then he pulled my head to his shoulder while I vented my emotion. When my body finally became still, he gently picked me up and carried me out of the woods. It was my pastor. He listened when I wanted to talk. And he talked when I was ready to listen. Until then, he was simply there. Thank God he was there.

Every situation does not have to be so dramatic. The young couple just starting their life together needs to know their pastor is there if they need him. The troubled person may find it easier to understand that he is not forsaken if his pastor is behind him. The family who has just lost someone takes comfort in knowing their minister is with them.

The child just starting to know Jesus feels his pastor is there if they need him. The troubled family needs to know their pastor is behind him. The family who has just lost someone takes comfort in knowing their minister is with them.

A pastor recently told me about some middle-of-the-night calls from a young man. During the day this man could handle the knowledge that he had AIDS. Night, however, was different. He lay awake, tossing and turning. He tried prayer but couldn't pray. So he called a minister he didn't know and who he had finally been able to pray. The minister never heard from the young man again. Several months later a woman telephoned the minister. She was the mother of the young man. She had found the pastor's number in a diary along with some notes about those calls.

"Thanks be to God, you were there for my son when he needed you," the saddened mother said.

A minister plays many roles. Among the most important is knowing how to listen and just being there.
Is the hell of the Bible unending?

Traditionally, most of Christianity has believed in an unending hell. But does the Bible really support such a teaching?

As a child, Robert Ingersoll heard a preacher proclaim the doctrine that God subjects sinners to unending torment in hell. Ingersoll decided that if God was like that, then he hated Him. Later he wrote of this belief that it "makes man an eternal victim and God an eternal fiend. It is the one infinite horror. . . . Below this Christian dogma, savagery cannot go."

There are substantial moral and logical difficulties in believing in a God who tortures His enemies forever. Like Robert Ingersoll, thousands of thinking men have turned away from such a God. Can this doctrine be reconciled with the Bible's teaching of a God of love (1 John 4:8) who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Eze. 33:11), whose destruction of them is called His "strange" act (Isa. 28:21, 22)?

What does the Bible say?

There is no question that the Bible teaches that the wicked will burn in the fires of hell. However, contrary to popular understanding, both the Old and New Testaments testify that hell is future and will burn only until the wicked are reduced to ashes.

Note the testimony of Malachi: "For behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 4:1-3).

This is not the only passage that teaches that the wicked will be annihilated "root and branch" and turned into ashes. According to Psalm 37:10, 20, the wicked will be utterly destroyed and cease to exist; Obadiah 15, 16 says they will become as though they had never existed.

And the New Testament makes clear that Christ explicitly taught the annihilation of the wicked. His statement in Matthew 10:28 that God can destroy both the body and the soul in hell is unequivocal. This text implies the same clear contrast between the first death, which is temporary, and the second, which results in the utter extinction of the soul, that may be seen in Revelation 20 (verses 5 and 14, respectively).

It is important to note here that nowhere in Scripture is the soul called eternal or immortal. On the contrary, souls are said to die (Eze. 18:4; Lev. 23:29, 30, KJV; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 16:3, KJV). God alone is immortal (1 Tim. 6:15, 16). Immortality is something for which the righteous seek (Rom. 2:7), and which will be bestowed upon them only at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Note that inherent immortality should not be confused with eternal life, which belongs by faith to the righteous now (1 John 5:13).

The creation account itself contradicts the common belief that what sets people apart from the animals is that they possess immortal souls. There both animals (Gen. 1:21, 24; 2:19; 9:10, 15, 16, etc.) and people (Gen. 2:7) are
called souls (Hebrews nephesh). The soul is the entire organism (Gen. 2:7), and the term may be used to denote any living creature—whether human or animal.

As to the time and place of hell, Malachi 4:1-3, quoted above, implies that hell is yet future, and that the wicked are to be destroyed on the earth, where the righteous later walk on their ashes. The New Testament is even more explicit—hell occurs at the end of the world. Note the following three passages:

"Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:40-43).

"God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:6-10).

"By the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. . . . But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:7-13).

These passages give no hint of any ongoing subterranean fire. Instead, they state that the wicked will be burned at the end of the age. It would be wrong to interpret the Hebrew expression “eat dust” literally, or to interpret it by equating it with the English “bite the dust.” Unfortunately, in interpreting some of the biblical passages on the punishment of the wicked, people commonly make this sort of mistake. To be specific, the Hebrew and Greek equivalents of the English forever, eternal, and everlasting do not always imply something that never ends.

Several New Testament passages speak of eternal or everlasting fire: "Then he [Christ] will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' . . . And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:41-46; compare 18:8). It is true, as advocates of eternal punishment have maintained, that the “eternal punishment” of Matthew 25:46 must last as long as the "eternal life" mentioned in the same sentence; but this is true of the result, not the process. The wicked will be dead as long as the righteous are alive.

The expression “eternal fire” should be understood in the same way. It does not mean eternal burning, but a fire the results of which are eternal. The way this expression is used in Jude demonstrates this.
According to Jude 7, Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with “eternal fire.” But Sodom is not burning now.

According to Jude 7, Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with “eternal fire.” The parallel verse in 2 Peter 2:6, 7, that fire is said to have reduced these cities to ashes. And it is said to be an example of what is going to happen to the wicked. But Sodom is not burning now. The fire was eternal because its results are eternal, not because it never stopped burning. These two verses imply that the eternal fire that will burn the wicked will reduce them to ashes and then go out.

Another misunderstood expression is “unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:12; Mark 9:43ff.). This does not mean fire that never goes out. In Jeremiah 7:20 God threatened to pour out His anger upon Jerusalem: “it will burn and not be quenched.” According to 2 Chronicles 36:19, 21, the threat was fulfilled when the Babylonians “burned the house of God.” This fire reduced the gates of Jerusalem to ashes (Neh. 2:3), and then, of course, went out. Unquenchable fire, then, means fire that cannot be quenched, or put out, until it goes out by itself after there is nothing more to burn. It does not mean fire that burns forever.

An overstretched parable

The common idea that hell is a place—perhaps somewhere beneath the surface of the earth—where the dead are now being tortured finds alleged support in only one passage of Scripture. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is one of a group of parables on the use of money in chapters 15 and 16 of Luke. The fact that this story is not explicitly called a parable is not significant, as only the first of the five parables in this group is so designated (Luke 15:3). One cannot base a theological belief on the incidental details of a parable. For example, the parable of the talking plants (Judges 9:8-15) is not intended to teach that plants can talk. And while, in the parable of the dishonest steward that also appears in Luke 16, “the master commended the unjust steward” (Luke 16:8), we should not come to the conclusion that Christians should be dishonest.

The essential elements of the story of the rich man and Lazarus were already part of popular Jewish folklore in the time of Christ; they can be found in contemporary Jewish literature. Christ simply borrowed the story to make a point about how the use of money affects our destiny. His subject was not the state of the damned, but stewardship.

Biblical expressions such as “in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40) and “into the lower parts of the earth” (Eph. 4:9), where Jesus is said to have gone after His crucifixion, are simply a reference to the grave and not some point deep inside the globe. A similar expression is used in Jonah 2:2. There Jonah, in the fish’s belly, claims to be in “the belly of hell (KJV).”

But what about Revelation 14:10, 11, which describes the punishment of the wicked in the most graphic terms? “He shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night.” Surely, here the Bible clearly teaches the unending torture of the wicked!

We must let the Bible define its own terms. Like the words eternal and everlasting, forever does not necessarily mean absolute endlessness. In fact, it tends to have the meaning “indefinitely.” The sprinkling of blood at the Passover is said to be “for ever” (Ex. 12:24). And the same concept is used concerning the Aaronic priesthood (Ex. 29:9; 40:15; Lev. 3:17), Caleb’s inheritance (Joshua 14:9), Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 8:12, 13), and Gehazi’s leprosy (2 Kings 5:27). Yet none of these things exist today.

Forever can mean “as long as life lasts” (see 1 Sam. 1:22, 28; Ex. 21:6). It can refer to a very short period (Jonah 2:6). It can even mean “as long as necessary.” Speaking to rebellious Israel, Jeremiah quotes God as saying, “I will make you serve your enemies in a land which you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled which shall burn forever” (Jer. 17:4). However, Jeremiah 23:20 makes clear that “forever” meant “until he [God] has executed and accomplished the intents of his mind.” And Ezekiel 5:13 indicates that God's anger will spend itself when its purposes have been satisfied. What is said of metaphorical fire is evidently true of literal hell: it will burn “forever”—that is, as long as necessary, until the purpose is accomplished.

However, we still have not solved the problem of Revelation 14:11, which does not merely say “forever,” but “for ever and ever,” and adds that “they have no rest, day or night.” The book of Isaiah holds the key to the meaning of this passage. John’s words reflect Isaiah’s prophecy concerning Edom: “The streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into brimstone; her land shall become burning pitch. Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up for ever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (Isa. 34:9, 10).

Isaiah 34:5 to 35:10 pictures the destruction by fire and then the restoration of the land of Edom. Although Isaiah 34:10 seems to indicate that the fire in Edom will burn forever, the following verses indicate that wild plants will grow there and wild animals will live there! Obviously, the fire must eventually die out.

But there is more. The last part of verse 10 says that “for ever and ever” no one will pass through the land. And verse 17 says that the animals will possess the land “for ever”—that is, the land will be perpetually uninhabited by human beings. Yet the following chapter (Isa. 35) describes the restoration of this same land, and its repopulation by the righteous! Conditions will then be so altered that this once-deserted “haunt of jackals” (Isa. 34:13; KJV, “habitation of dragons”) will someday become a garden where no jackals dwell (Isa. 35:7, 9).

This passage describes the same pattern (“eternal” fire followed by restoration and repopulation) that we have already detected elsewhere. It is clear that here the expression “forever and ever” means only a limited period of time.
We need not understand these expressions any more literally in Revelation 14:11 than we do in Isaiah—particularly when such highly figurative imagery is the trademark of the book of Revelation.

Where worms never die

Isaiah 66:24 uses similar metaphorical language of the destruction of the wicked. There was a garbage dump in a valley outside Jerusalem where the worms that fed on abandoned carcasses never seemed to disappear, and the fires were always burning. This valley, the Valley of Hinnom, became a symbol of what would happen to the wicked. (The Greek word for hell, Gehenna, is a transliteration of the Hebrew for Valley of Hinnom.)

The worms Isaiah refers to are literal maggots that feed on dead flesh (see Job 17:14; 21:26; 24:19, 20; Isa. 14:11; 51:8). Nowhere in the Bible does the word worm mean "soul." Like the "unquenchable" fire, the worms will never die—until their task is finished. Earlier in the chapter Isaiah had written: "For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke [verse 19] with flames of fire. For by fire will the Lord execute judgment, and by his sword, upon all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many. Those . . . shall come to an end, says the Lord" (Isa. 66:15-17).

We must consider one other text. Second Peter 2:9 may be translated to say either that the wicked are to be held for punishment unto the day of judgment or that they are to be held while being punished. The analogy of 1 Peter 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 2:4; 3:7; and Jude 6 strongly supports the rendering "held for punishment," as opposed to the rendering that implies the punishment is going on now. At any rate, a text whose translation is disputed should not be used to support a disputed doctrine.

But if hell is not forever, then how long will it burn? We cannot say. Jesus warned those who failed to make things right with the judge that they would be jailed and would "never get out till you have paid the last penny" (Matt. 5:26). The unforgiving servant, whose own forgiveness was revoked, was delivered to the "torturers, till he should pay all his debt" as an example of what would happen to others equally ungenerous (Matt. 18:34, margin).

These warnings imply that there is a limit to the punishment process, a time when the debt would be paid. This appeals to our sense of justice. It is not right that a child who should happen to die without being saved should suffer as long as Adolf Hitler. The fact that the degree of punishment differs, depending on how much of truth a person has known (Luke 12:47, 48), implies the same thing.

This would not be possible if all were punished forever. Moreover, if hell were burning now, then the length of punishment would be greater for those who lived and died in earlier ages (and knew less of God's truth) than for those who lived later (and knew more)—just the opposite of what Luke 12 teaches. Cain, who murdered one man, would have suffered for thousands of years longer in hell than Adolf Hitler, who was responsible for the death of millions. How could this be fair?

A long tradition in the Christian church regards the words of Ezekiel 28:14-19 as a description of Satan. If this is correct, then this passage, using the "prophetic past tense," teaches that the devil will someday be utterly destroyed by fire (verses 18, 19). It is unlikely that God would bring the devil's sufferings to an end, yet allow those whom he deceived to suffer forever.

Francis Bacon said, "It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of him. For the one is unbelief, the other is contumely. . . . Plutarch saith well to that purpose: 'Surely,' saith he, 'I had rather a great deal men should say there was no such a man at all as Plutarch, than they should say there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born.'"

Reacting to the concept that He would subject His enemies to unending torture in hell, many have turned from God. But the Bible makes clear that this is a misunderstanding. Its picture of God as just, and more than that, as a loving Father, is consistent. Its portrayal of His merciful dealings with even those who crucified His Son confirms that He is a God worth knowing and serving.


*Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.
Recognizing and handling burnout

Jose A. Fuentes

How can you recognize burnout and differentiate it from other physical and psychological problems? And what can you do about it?

What is burnout? We read and hear a lot about it these days, but the term has come to be a catchword used to describe any number of problems. The term caught the public's imagination in 1980 after the book *Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement* was published, and now it stands in danger of losing all meaning because of the number of maladies that get lumped under the heading "burnout." Recent studies have shown that patients and even clinicians often misdiagnose depression, anemia, or just plain boredom as burnout.

So what is burnout? and more important, how will it affect a pastor? My own succinct ontological definition is as follows: The gradual but eventually severe or critical exhaustion or depletion of one's physical, mental, and/or spiritual resources by taxing one or more of them without providing time for recovering or recharging.

Symptoms

The accompanying table shows many of the symptoms and describes how they develop. It is important to realize, though, that development of burnout does not necessarily follow exactly this pattern. For example, a pastor or other helping professional may experience the symptoms at stage 4 before the symptoms of stage 2 become obvious, but all stages usually take place.

These stages should not be regarded as levels of burnout, but as stages leading to burnout.

Various influences in the pastor's personal and home life may slow or speed up the development of burnout. Personal reconsecration or the efforts of a resourceful and dedicated wife may alleviate the symptoms for a time. But if the burnout is resulting from depletion in areas other than spiritual, reconsecration will not necessarily replenish the energies that are ebbing. And if the wife does not have the psychosocial resources to cope with her husband's needs, her reactions may accelerate the burnout process.

The administrators who deal with the pastor may try to alleviate his or her problems as well. One commonly used tactic for trying to help a pastor snap out of lethargy is to move him or her to a new church. But you can't move away from burnout. It moves with the pastor and soon becomes obvious in the new location, as well. In each new location the pastor may progress through the stages leading to burnout faster than in the previous place.

In the later stages a key symptom of burnout is loss of insight—the ability to take a wide view and understand the reasons behind events. One or more psychosomatic illnesses such as a lingering cold, excessive headaches, lower back pain, and diarrhea often are present in the later stages also.

Since burnout results from depletion of energy reserves, it is important to recognize that not everyone will experience symptoms in exactly the same way. A person whose physical resources are depleted will show different symptoms from one who is mentally burned out. Thus a hardworking carpenter will experience very different symptoms than will a hardworking mathematician.

Depletion and exhaustion are primary symptoms that can lead one to a
diagnosis of burnout. Obvious loss of insight is a further symptom that indicates that the burnout is in an advanced stage.

Who is affected?
The tragedy of burnout is that it often strikes the most highly motivated, idealistic, and enthusiastic workers in the helping professions. In the church it is the full-time professional leaders who are most often victims of burnout. Estimates of the number of pastors experiencing burnout vary widely. R. Oswald found that “one out of six clergy was experiencing the debilitating effects of burnout,” while another study done in Wisconsin in the same year indicated that only about 2 percent of the pastors involved were burned out.

Causes
The causes of burnout can be grouped under three basic headings. First are causes within us, such as a psychological makeup that makes it difficult or impossible to deal creatively and flexibly with stressful events. Second are external causes such as noise, violence, weather, and catastrophes. Third are causes that result from our interaction with our environment. The way we respond to these determines the impact they have on our lives.

 Ministers are particularly susceptible to the third group of causes because of their constant interaction with people. E. M. Ansel points out that anyone who has direct and intensive interpersonal contact with people and assumes a helpful role is a candidate for burnout, and that it is the especially zealous or overdedicated worker who is most susceptible.

Factors contributing to burnout among helping professionals include limiting work to one type of activity, overwork, the general difficulty in dealing with people’s problems, discouragement, and the tendency of therapeutic work to bring out the professional’s own personal conflicts. Added to these problems are frustration and a sense of hopelessness that develop from caring deeply but being unable to alleviate some people’s problems.

These frustrations lead to a series of symptoms that make it more and more difficult to be effective as a helping professional. First, the burned-out helper begins to work mechanically, showing little or no concern for the person being served. Second, he or she develops a sense of detachment and lack of identification with the other person’s problems. Third, work becomes a mere duty rather than a joy. Fourth, cynicism and apathy prevent the helper from getting into the other person’s problem and dealing aggressively with it. Fifth, the helper becomes paranoid and blames others, including clients or patients, for his or her problems. Sixth, fatigue, irritability, and psychosomatic complaints develop.

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Preventing burnout
Having determined the causes of burnout, we can now move on to look at ways of avoiding these causes. Here are seven preventive measures.

1. Attend good conferences and seminars. This will provide new dimensions and perspectives that can replenish your tank of ideas for sermons, activities, and programs.

2. Avoid being constantly on the defensive, changing professions, or reporting accomplishments.

3. Do something different regularly. Work in your garden, paint the house, or take a day off and go away with your family. By having interests other than your work, you can renew yourself. But don’t overdo yourself in your outside activity, or this will only contribute to your sense of exhaustion.

4. Be sure you recognize your own limits. Do not overextend yourself by assuming responsibility for everything that needs to be done. Delegate authority and give your members a chance to feel needed and important in the church.

5. Don’t be afraid to deal with negative feelings about your work. It is better to work through them than to internalize them. Dealing with them will increase your insight into your problems and your work, and will prevent the problems from showing up later as one or more psychophysiological disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome, migraines, and depression.

6. Stagnant spiritual growth. Pastor begins to avoid contact with leaders, does not “sell” his or her plans to local church leaders, and resents their criticism; but instead of mending fences, he expends energy in processing hostility. He sits as a “dead stone” in meetings and seminars. Lack of involvement becomes obvious. His behavior may become paranoid.

7. Inadequate goals. Pastor begins to neglect devotions or spiritual growth. He begins to avoid contact with leaders, does not “sell” his or her plans to local church leaders, and resents their criticism; but instead of mending fences, he expends energy in processing hostility. He sits as a “dead stone” in meetings and seminars. Lack of involvement becomes obvious. His behavior may become paranoid.

8. Extended illnesses, usually of psychosomatic types.

How to recognize burnout in ministers
The following list of signs and symptoms is not exhaustive, but is intended to help administrators identify and help pastors who are on the road to burnout.

1. Increased absenteeism, which is demonstrated through poor results, less commitment to work, or overcontact with church members and/or administrators.

2. Low level of enthusiasm, negative attitude toward new plans or deadlines, lack of excitement in reporting accomplishments.

3. Declining quality or quantity of work. Pastor does not reach goals, or does so mechanically and needs a lot of encouragement.

4. Lack of focus. Church members complain about lack of clear direction. Pastor blames the system for hard-to-implement plans. Focus may change from soul winning to less-demanding activities or personal preferences.

5. Lack of communication. Pastor begins to avoid contact with leaders, does not “sell” his or her plans to local church leaders, and resents their criticism; but instead of mending fences, he expends energy in processing hostility. He sits as a “dead stone” in meetings and seminars. Lack of involvement becomes obvious. His behavior may become paranoid.

6. Stagnant spiritual growth. Pastor begins to neglect devotions or makes them less meaningful.

7. Inadequate goals. As a result of early overextension, the burned-out pastor may adopt minimum goals or not respond to goals at all.

8. Extended illnesses, usually of psychosomatic types.
as asthma, allergies, and peptic ulcers.

6. “Stop the world and get off.” Every so often take time to do an inventory of your responsibilities versus your resources. And while you are doing that, take time to meditate, talk with the Lord, and seek advice, but not as you do it routinely. Make it an intensive self-disclosure and confession—you’ll find it soothing and renewing.

7. If none of these remedies help—after you have given them a thorough try—you may already be experiencing full-fledged burnout. Seek help. Burnout syndrome is not a self-terminating illness.

Interrupting the burnout cycle
During the past two years I conducted several stress management seminars in which I dealt with burnout. Two conference presidents asked me to give them one tip for helping pastors overcome burnout. My suggestion each time was for the president to take time to let the burned-out pastor know that he is important, and to do this not just for the purpose of therapy, but because he is important. Take him out to eat; share with him plans that, though not classified, often escape the rank-and-file minister. Those important working lunches that administrators sometimes spend rehashing decisions they have already made, if spent with a pastor on the burnout path, could be a turning point for him.

The administrators to whom I suggested this tried it, and they shared with me the fact that this therapy has helped. Three different pastors wrote to them to express what a change this type of treatment made in their lives.

3. T. Muldary, Burnout and Health Professionals: Manifestations and Management (Norwalk, Conn.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1983).
4. R. Oswald, Clergy Burnout: A Survival Kit for Church Professionals (Minneapolis: Ministers Life Resources, Inc., 1982).
5. G. Rediger, Coping With Clergy Burnout (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1982).
6. Ansell.
Cycle in a pastor

A pastor of a district or church. He is filled with enthusiasm and “first love.”

**STAGE 1**
Pastor becomes intensely involved in work, accepts more responsibilities than one person can handle, fails to delegate authority, and becomes overextended. First love begins to wane.

**IMPACT AT HOME**
Pastor excuses himself from family worship, which is taken over by spouse. He spends more time at work than at home.

**STAGE 2**
Pastor wakes up every day to a never-ending list of human needs; he has no sense of accomplishment. First symptoms of emotional exhaustion replace original pleasure with work.

**IMPACT AT HOME**
Spouse and children complain that pastor is never home. They have to take over chores that he should do.

**STAGE 3**
Pastor begins to leave things halfway done. Honeymoon with the church is over, and visitation and preaching become just a job that must be done.

**IMPACT AT HOME**
Confronted by spouse, pastor rationalizes or responds sarcastically to hide underlying hostility. Family cohesiveness begins to deteriorate, but family still appears with him in public to protect image.

Researched and developed by Jose A. Fuentes.
Christian education: too much of a good thing?

Angela E. Hunt

How safe are our children within the fortress of Christian education? Are they learning to exercise their faith, or only their minds?

Although I received my education in public schools, my first teaching job was in a Christian school. I certainly did not expect a spiritual utopia when I accepted the position, but I was surprised to find that my students exhibited a sort of spiritual indifference. They were not reprobates or overtly worldly, but most showed a complete lack of fervency in spirit. Oh, they were fervent football fans, cheerleaders, and band members. But for the most part they were not fervent Christians. They were dutiful, but not sincere; religious, but not spiritual; obedient, but not respectful.

Not once did I ever walk through the halls and overhear students talking about Christ. He was taken for granted and regarded as commonplace. As a result my students were stagnant, bored, and seemed spiritually shallow.

What caused this apathy? Most of my students had been in Christian schools since kindergarten; why were they now so spiritually apathetic?

Parents usually place their children in Christian schools to insure that they will be taught a worldview that acknowledges God as the Creator of life and the reason for our existence. In such a school, children are sheltered from the anti-God humanism that is rampant in the public schools. This is good, and I can’t emphasize enough that I do believe in Christian education. We do well to ensure that our children are taught truth.

The danger arises when we allow our children to become monasticized—to become so engulfed by the Christian school and church program that they are cut off entirely from the rest of the world. I do not mean to suggest that children should have intimate fellowship with unbelievers, but I do believe that to deny children the opportunity to stand for Christ among unbelievers is to deny them the opportunity to strengthen Christian character.

A few years ago I worked with a dynamic girl from a Christian family. She attended public school and brought many of her classmates to church. She had led two girls to Christ. The next year her parents decided to send her to a Christian school. Though she is still as sweet as ever, she has cooled spiritually. She now moves only in her small elite group of friends and has not led anyone to the Lord. The girl who was once a spiritual leader is now a spiritual spectator.

Academic love

I am especially concerned about one important difference Christian children experience in Christian schools as compared with public schools. In a Christian school, children learn an academic love for Christ. They learn with the mind who God is and what God does. They are quizzed in Bible classes about facts, names, and events. Their daily devotion time becomes required Bible reading for class. Their meditation becomes memory work for the daily class quiz. Their convictions are not set through prayer or principle, they are dictated at the beginning of each school year by the school’s rulebook. If and when the child acknowledges Christ as Saviour with his heart, his willingness to fall in love with the Saviour is often overwhelmed by the religious regimen required of his mind.

In public schools, on the other hand,
any religious routine exercised by a student is motivated by desire, not compulsion. He or she will learn a necessary love for Christ. Surrounded by non-Christians, this young person will have to take a personal stand on many issues. Will he smoke? Will she drink? Will he cheat? Will she take drugs? Will he consort with other kids who are smoking, drinking, and cheating? This young Christian must find the strength to take a stand. Each stand a student takes for Christ makes them more resolute in the eyes of his fellow students. Those who develop a good reputation among their peers act as “the salt of the earth,” for they are in among the “meat,” acting to preserve it.

If your children attend public school, encourage them to take a stand for what is right in every situation. Teach them the scriptural principles that should guide their actions. Their example, testimony, and witness to students, teachers, and the entire community can be multiplied in the public school. Above all, encourage them to be active in a good church program and to pursue a daily personal relationship with the Lord. They will need all the support they can get from personal devotions and from the Christian community.

Outside exposure
Parents and educators involved with Christian schools must strive to make sure that their children have as much opportunity for output as for input. We must not allow spiritual stagnation. Christian school students must learn to go outside the Christian school—they should play on community Little League teams, participate in the Boy or Girl Scouts, or take swimming lessons at the YMCA. Participating in Saturday’s door-to-door visitation will not make your child spiritual. Children must be as responsible for sharing the gospel in the world as adults. And we parents must allow them to be part of the secular world if they are to learn to influence it.

I once asked my Christian school students if they were acquainted with anyone their age who was not a Christian. Unbelievably, not one student in the class could think of anyone. How tragic.

But at a prayer meeting for the young people of our church, I heard a young public school student stand and request prayer for several classmates to whom she had been witnessing. Another student shared that she had been assigned to give a persuasive speech in one of her classes. She chose the topic “Why You Should Become a Christian.” “I was nervous,” she said, “but I gave the speech and I hope that God will use it to help me to witness to someone in my class.”

Through each of those young high school girls, God was working. If only our Christian school students could have the same opportunity!

I believe that God’s reason for allowing us to be tried is not so He can see how strong we are. He knows how strong we are. He allows us to be tried so that we can see how strong we are.

Our children need to find God’s strength within them. Jesus prayed, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:15). We can shelter our children from some evils by enrolling them in a Christian school, but we must not allow them to become out of touch with the world we all are commanded to serve. We must be willing to encourage our children to be involved in activities outside the church and the Christian school. They will be tempted and tried, but if the foundation and education we have struggled to give them is strong, they will overcome.

We believe in Christian education (parochial schooling) and that Adventist youth ought to be in Adventist schools. We think that our schools have contributed an important, even essential, element to the growth of our church, and we would not want to see their work discontinued. But we also believe that what Angela Hunt says about parochial education in general fits us too. And we believe that by cooperating to meet this need, Adventist parents, pastors, and educators can help our youth become more stable church members and more effective witnesses.—Editors.

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Are you shy?

Carole Kilcher and Peter Blitchington

The pastor’s wife is typically expected to be warm, bubbly, and outgoing. But what if she is naturally shy? What are the roots of shyness, and how can a shy person have an effective ministry?

Kilcher: Recently I led out in a workshop for pastors’ wives. During the feedback session the issue of shyness surfaced. Several women who consider themselves shy expressed frustration. They felt that most people expect the pastor’s wife to be outgoing and friendly to everyone. One wife said that her conference president had gone so far as to take a survey to prove that members indeed did expect this of their pastors’ wives. These women were concerned that they would never measure up. Is it possible for a shy person to change? Is shyness an inherited tendency or a learned behavior?

Blitchington: Shyness is at least partly an inherited trait. But it can also be influenced by learning. Introversion is strongly inherited, and shyness is a product of introversion.

Kilcher: Is the word shy synonymous with the word introverted?

Blitchington: Research shows that the two are very highly correlated but not identical. People are introverted or extroverted because of the way in which the central nervous system is constructed. The introvert seems to have a high level of cortical activation. This makes him or her more prone to avoid stimulation of all kinds, since stimulation brings up the level of cortical activation. In fact, studies show that even looking into another person’s eyes causes one’s level of cortical activation to increase. If you are already functioning at a high level of cortical arousal, an increase in activation may make you uncomfortable. That’s the introvert’s dilemma. They sometimes avoid people, not because they dislike them, but because interaction with others is just too stimulating.

Kilcher: Are you saying that extroverts have an advantage over introverts?

Blitchington: In social relationships they probably do. But we should not downgrade the strengths of introverts. One stereotype says that extroverts like people and introverts don’t. This is not the case. Introverts are likely to have fewer friends, but there is nothing to suggest that they don’t like those friends as much as or more than extroverts like their friends. Introverts are less likely than extroverts to seek out people or to feel at ease in large groups.

Kilcher: I am fascinated. Can a person be half and half? I know sometimes I like being around people and other times I want to be alone.

Blitchington: We’re all more complicated than these two categories imply. And some people are neither introverted nor extroverted. They are what you might call ambiverts. Ambiverts can go either way—toward introversion or extroversion. They have more flexibility but often a vaguer sense of identity.

Kilcher: I hear you saying there are advantages and disadvantages in all three types of personality. What are some of the hurdles facing a shy person?

Blitchington: One hurdle is the subtle conditioning that takes place when the shy person meets strangers or interacts in a group. In a person who already has a high level of cortical activity, these two activities may increase the activation to an extremely uncomfortable level. The shy person experiences a sense of panic in the presence of others and doesn’t know why. This makes the shy person perform poorly, since it is difficult to give your attention to others when you are experiencing pain. Also, the shy person is being punished for interacting with others—punished by his own brain.
activity. The extrovert feels good around others, since the interaction brings his or her level of cortical activation up to a comfortable level and makes social interaction a positive experience.

**Kilcher:** What can the shy person do?

**Blitchington:** The most important first step is self-acceptance. Don’t punish yourself for being shy. You are dealing with powerful forces that were molded by your genes. Accept your basic personality style, even though you don’t like everything about it. You can make changes within your personality style, but I doubt if you can change your basic personality style.

Another thing to keep in mind is to avoid appearing cold and aloof to others. If you feel uncomfortable around people, you might be tempted to reject them before they can reject you. Some people appear stone-faced because they are afraid of others. Even if you are shy, try to smile and be warm. Most people will accept a shy person if he or she comes across as warm and responsive.

There are other techniques. If looking into another person’s eyes makes you uncomfortable, try looking between his eyes.

Psychologist William James advocated giving up all concern over the results of a conversation. He noticed that the students who did best at public speaking were those who were least concerned about how their audience would react. The ones who performed poorly were too concerned with results.

The extrovert feels good around others, since the interaction brings his or her level of cortical activation up to a comfortable level and makes social interaction a positive experience.

**Kilcher:** It appears to me that there is a real lack of understanding of the needs of shy people. I am sure an awareness of these facts we’ve talked about would be beneficial to whole congregations—not just to the shy wife of the pastor.

**Blitchington:** It’s true. We need to become more aware of the strengths of other personality styles. This will help people accept themselves and grow.

**Kilcher:** You’ve done extensive work on the temperament. Do you see any correlations between shyness and any of the four temperaments?

**Blitchington:** I have not done a correlation analysis, but it would appear that shyness is more associated with the melancholy and phlegmatic temperaments.

**Kilcher:** Does the phenomenon of “opposites attract” apply to introversion and extroversion in marital pairing?

**Blitchington:** It would probably be more accurate to say that generally a balance in marriage occurs. Spouses seem to complement each other. This is not limited to shyness. A moody person may need an emotionally stable or even-tempered person. Both may or may not be shy.

**Kilcher:** One final question, Dr. Blitchington. How can the pastor whose wife is naturally shy minimize his wife’s anxieties?

**Blitchington:** He can recognize that his wife’s social needs are different from his. The further he is from her on the extrovert-introvert continuum, the more sensitive he’ll need to be to this issue. She may need more breaks from social interaction than he.

He can also help her be aware that she need not let others intimidate her. She must be affirmed for her strengths and encouraged not to let her self-consciousness prevent her from doing what she wants to do. He can help her remember that God created her just the way she is and that she may be able to relate more effectively than more outgoing women to shy people in her congregation and community.

Letters

From page 2

are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14, NIV).

“Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor. 1:20, NIV).

The Scriptures also tell us, “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe’” (John 20:27, NIV).

Reason and intellect were addressed by Jesus speaking to Thomas. “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (verse 29, NIV).

Faith does not depend on reason. Paul tells us, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1, NIV).

Attempting to reconcile faith and intellectual reason would totally eliminate the mentally retarded and even the unborn from any measure or degree of faith. Faith, without any dependence on intellect, is possible to both these groups. The Scriptures tell us that the unborn John the Baptist related and responded in faith to the unborn Christ by leaping with joy in his mother’s womb at the sound of Mary’s voice (Luke 1:44).

To say that we even have a need to reason our faith is to place ourselves under bondage to Satan. It is Satan’s most earnest desire that we become so confused with different philosophies that we render ourselves blind to the truth—God’s truth!

What the author is saying is just part of the great lie and deception of Christianity by Satan. If Satan can convince us that we have a need to reason our faith, then he has succeeded in planting seeds of doubt.

I would like to suggest to the author that he forget about philosophy and return to the Holy Scriptures. There is no way that you can combine or blend philosophy and Scripture. We are told that “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, NIV).—Rev. David A. Sholes, Marion, Indiana.
Fallen idols

I was feeling pretty good about myself one day not long ago. Then someone told me that something I had said off the cuff several months earlier had deeply wounded a friend. I had been unaware that my quick comment had been mistaken for criticism, so the revelation came as a complete shock. Suddenly I didn't feel so good about myself. In fact, I began to feel like a complete klutz.

I was scheduled to preach that day at my home church, but the revelation of my own fallibility sent me into such a tailspin that I was ready to resign all my leadership responsibilities and go home. Fortunately, I don't usually stay in such a state of despair for long. Coming up on the rebound, I got through my sermon in fine form, and I'm told that God used my vocal chords to implant His word in people’s lives that day. Probably the experience of finding out how feeble and fallible my own words were drove me to rely more closely on God to give me His words.

Which is an important lesson every preacher needs to relearn at least once a week. The pulpit is a lofty perch, and looking down from its heights can give one a feeling of greatness. Human faces upturned in awe or even in mere expectancy can leave a preacher feeling that God has really blessed him or her with abilities worth admiring. At best such an attitude can lead us to walk circumspectly to avoid disappointing or misleading the flock. At worst it can make us walk haughtily and demand obeisance.

But either reaction is sinful in God's sight—even walking circumspectly if my motive is maintaining a good public image. Both reactions are sinful because both look to and exalt the power of the flesh. They both raise the person in the pulpit to an atmosphere more rare than God intended humans to breathe.

Worship is a natural human reaction, and we prefer to worship the visible rather than the invisible. So it is natural for some in the congregation to paint a halo about the preacher's head and to hold him or her in idolatrous esteem.

The peril to the halo painter is exceeded only by the peril of the one thus haloed. The wise man's observation that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" is a prophecy that can spell disaster, both for the one with his or her head in the clouds and the one whose perception of the exalted hero is obscured by those clouds.

Perhaps it is healthy for the preacher's opinion of himself or herself to take an occasional nosedive. Better yet, the preacher should maintain a consistently humble self-image. The best way for us to maintain a proper self-image is to stay on our knees until we catch a clear vision of the exalted God we serve.

James urges us to confess our faults to one another and pray for one another that we may be healed (James 5:16). The ability to recognize and confess our faults and to seek prayer and healing is characteristic of good spiritual health. Inability to see or accept ourselves as poor, naked sinners, as much in need of God's grace as the humblest pew warmer, is a symptom of Laodicean blindness.

And a healthy dose of confession is also valuable as an antidote to members' propensity for clergy veneration. (Of course, confessing your faults is also useful for beating critics to the punch!)

Recently the American media had a heyday criticizing and poking fun at television evangelists. It was amazing to me to see the press continue to play up the story—giving it front-cover exposure on weekly newsmagazines—even weeks after the first revelations about a moral fall and the subsequent cover-up scheme.

In the media response to the story I sensed not just a desire to play up a story people were interested in, but something deeper. Is it possible that the story tapped a reservoir of resentment and released a flood of bitterness that had been just waiting for a small breach in the dike? Newsweek, for example, took the occasion to expose income levels and other noncomplimentary details about several of the most prominent evangelists, some of whom had no direct relationship to what was dubbed the "Pearlygate" scandal.

If there is a reservoir of anger at evangelists, can we blame it totally on the "liberal leanings" of "media moguls"? Or could it be that either intentionally or unintentionally, those who are the focus of the anger have taken on a "holy" image that sets them up for a fall and makes others rejoice over their fall? Could it be that we men and women of the clergy set ourselves up for criticism by simply taking ourselves too seriously?

When I allow myself or any other human being to be viewed as a paragon of virtue, I have missed the point of the gospel, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is "not I, but Christ," who is to "be honored, loved, exalted." "Not I, but Christ," who is to "be seen, be known, be heard."

God is the one we are to take seriously. And He is serious about holiness, virtue, and a circumspect walk. But these are to be the outworking of His Spirit within us, not the outshining of our own attempts at righteousness.—Kenneth R. Wade.
Christian pomp

The April 6 issue of Time magazine carried as its cover story what the editors described as a “sex-and-money scandal” that tarnishes “electronic evangelism.” The problem is that not only does the scandal tarnish the electronic evangelist, but it may adversely affect the attitude of the public toward ministers and Christianity in general.

Perhaps Time’s strongest rebuke came in the lead paragraph, which quoted Ephesians 4:1-3. “Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The next several pages were filled with heartbreaking words and pictures that disgrace the name of Christianity! Involved in the scandal are multimillion-dollar spiritual empires involving luxury, sex, greed, drugs, and ministerial rivalries. The article used the term “spiritual blackmail” to describe the fund-raising method used by a leading evangelist.

The stories exposed in the article probably represent only the tip of the iceberg. What would the public think of Christianity if all the skeletons in the personal and corporate closets were dragged out? Perhaps it is time for all of us as clergypersons to take careful inventory of our lifestyles.

Included in the saviourhood of Christ is His being a role model for all Christians, especially His ministers. His call to His disciples, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” is unmistakable in intent. What do the words “follow me” mean in today’s society? Shouldn’t the application of these words be the same anytime, anywhere, in any society?

Rome in Christ’s day had its extravagance of home, dress, sports, theater, and lifestyle that was in sharp contrast to the poverty and slavery of a large segment of society. With which group did Christ identify? He chose to live on the poverty level. Why didn’t Jesus invade our earth adorned in scarlet- and gold-colored robes, bedecked with precious jewelry in order to attract attention to Himself? Why didn’t He urge His followers to erect ornate churches and temples? Why did He not plan to be born in a wealthy family of renown? Why didn’t He choose a barn for His first earthly residence rather than a marble-pillared palace? Why did He labor in a carpenter’s shop for 30 years before entering His public ministry? His lifestyle and methods of evangelism were unlike the customs and practices of most religions in His day and ours. The ultimate question is What was the point in the way He lived and worked? Obviously His work of redemption is not accomplished through outward show. He clothed His divinity with a common humanity and lifestyle that would cause us to become familiar with His perfect character and gospel purpose without being hindered by outward show. Nothing connected with surface display must obscure this precious principle.

Jesus joined the prophets’ hall of fame by living a humble life. Hebrews 11 makes it clear that our spiritual Old Testament forefathers were “strangers and exiles on the earth.” Note that Moses rejected the opportunity to “live it up” as Pharaoh’s daughter’s son. He deliberately chose to endure hardship and abuse as a man of God.

Throughout history you can trace two distinct types of philosophies related to religious lifestyle and practice. The one type seems to be dedicated to attracting adherents through display and ceremonies that appeal to the senses of the masses. Magnificent churches, colorfully arrayed ministers, lavish processions, sparkling altars, ostentatious shrines, sublime artwork, exquisite sculpture, rich music—all captivate the eye and ear. From this ultimate outward splendor stem more subdued variations, but the show is only a mockery to the longings of the sin-sick soul.

What a contrast between the show and froth of the religious hucksters and the religion of Christ. Paul, a true minister of Christ and martyr for the gospel, sums up beautifully the lifestyle of our Lord in Philippians 2:5-8. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.”

Fellow ministers, when tempted to attract attention by the way you dress, remember these words. When tempted to emphasize sermonic brilliancy of style as the major goal in preaching, remember these words. When tempted to increase your income through sidelines in order to have more of life’s necessities, remember these words. When tempted to build a mansion rather than a functional home as a residence, remember these words. When tempted to erect a church temple as a memorial to your own ego, remember these words.

Let the world understand that no external decorations can enhance the light shining from the cross. Let your lifestyle tell the world that value in God’s sight is determined by a meek and quiet spirit, which is the true beauty of holiness. A religion that elevates the externals attracts unrenewed hearts. The unregenerate heart clamors for philosophies that equate salvation with ceremony, and spirituality with show. The world is eager for bread made from stones. Rise up, O church of God, and live in harmony with our pattern, Jesus Christ.—J. Robert Spangler.
Bulimics and anorexics—
children of fear and anger
Francine Rasco

Perhaps you have seen them without even recognizing them, those children of fear and anger, as I have labeled those who suffer from bulimia or from anorexia nervosa.

Mr. and Mrs. B have decided to consult their minister because they have noted that large quantities of food regularly disappear from the kitchen. Someone has also been taking money from Mrs. B’s purse, and she is almost certain it happens at home. They sometimes find telltale traces of vomitus in the bathroom when no one at home is known to be ill. They are worried, confused, and angry at their daughter Beth because she is evidently behaving in a way that disgusts them and that they do not understand. After the minister agrees to talk with Beth, her parents badger her into seeing him.

Beth is an attractive, neatly dressed 16-year-old. However, her observant minister notes that she has sores at the corner of her mouth (from a nutritional deficiency owing to vomiting and laxative abuse), mild swelling at the far side of her cheeks (swollen parotid glands from vomiting), and a callus on the back of her hand caused by the friction of her front teeth when she induces vomiting. (Others may use a spoon or the end of a toothbrush.) She covers her anxiety and anger about seeing the minister with a bright smile and light, social manner. Soon, however, his kind but direct questioning about her possible disorder produces a depressed and guilty facial expression. She reveals that in addition to binge eating and then vomiting and fasting, she has also been abusing laxatives. She is suffering from the eating disorder called bulimia.

Before we see how the minister proceeds with bulimic Beth, let us consider the parallel situation with another member of his congregation, Annette A, who returned a month ago from her first term at college much thinner than when she left in the fall. Her parents explained to the minister that they became alarmed by her appearance at Christmas and insisted that she return home after the first term so that she could be medically evaluated. Their family physician has informed them that no physical problem has caused her emaciation but that she has an eating disorder called anorexia nervosa and should be admitted to the psychiatric unit of a hospital for treatment.

Mr. and Mrs. A are skeptical of psychiatry. They are ashamed at the thought of their daughter being admitted to a psychiatric unit. They are consulting their minister to see whether there might be an alternative. They admit that Annette “eats like a bird,” but she does not seem totally indifferent to food because she often cooks rich desserts for the rest of the family, even though she does not eat them herself.

They think their physician has been trying to frighten them by saying that Annette might die without adequate treatment. She seems so active and unconcerned that they cannot believe this and wonder whether she would come to her senses after a few sessions with the minister. When Annette comes to see him, he is shocked by her gaunt appearance and puzzled by her lack of concern. Instead of being worried about herself, she actually seems rather smug, as if her behavior has made her superior to others. The minister notes that her clothing is at least two sizes too large for her, as if she has a distorted idea of her size. Indeed, as he talks with her about her parents and the physician’s concern, he learns that she thinks she looks fat even now!

The pastor can help
The minister’s job is not an easy one in either case. Although both sets of parents profess concern for their children, they may resist seeking definitive treatment because of their unconscious fear that Beth or Annette will slip from their control through therapy. As is typical of many parents of bulimics, Beth’s parents are very concerned about appearances and may resist hospitalization because of what their relatives or neighbors might think. Being rather needy, they may also resent the expense.

Mr. and Mrs. A, on the other hand, have enormous difficulty recognizing any signs of distress in their family and will tend to deny the seriousness of Annette’s condition, perhaps even to the point that the minister will wonder whether they unconsciously want her to die.

Beth will probably be more willing to seek treatment than Annette because she recognizes that her eating pattern is bizarre. Annette sees nothing wrong with her eating pattern. Although she
claims that she looks fat, she secretly believes that others are envious of her superior control of her food intake.

However, since the families of Annette and Beth are likely to trust their minister of longstanding more than a psychiatrist previously unknown to them, the minister may be quite helpful in convincing them of the need for treatment. Depending on the severity of their problems, bulimics and anorexics may need psychiatric hospitalization, but some can be helped on an outpatient basis. Unless their physical condition clearly indicates a need for hospitalization (e.g., electrolyte imbalance in the vomiting bulimic or emaciation and malnutrition in the anorexic), a psychiatrist should determine whether outpatient or inpatient treatment is indicated.

Some families of anorexics are more open to hospitalization on a medical unit than on a psychiatric one, but the patient needs more than just medical management of her eating disorder. Otherwise, she will relapse again and again, regardless of how many times she is admitted to a medical unit.

Not just any psychiatric unit will do, either. These patients need a psychiatrist and hospital staff that are experienced and skilled in the treatment of their particular disorder. Some psychologists are also quite skilled in these areas but would require backup by a psychiatrist because of the possible physical complications and the need for medication, such as an antidepressant.

Specific, effective treatment approaches are now available, which are greatly improving the outlook for patients with eating disorders, but not everyone knows how to implement them. A patient may have to go to a hospital outside her community or even outside her state to obtain adequate treatment.

Needless to say, recovery from such disorders is well worth the effort. The minister can facilitate the treatment process by supporting the patient's family, who may feel very threatened, insecure, and angry during their family member's therapy, and will probably feel tempted to withdraw her prematurely from treatment.

Recognizing bulimics and anorexics

Bulimia and anorexia nervosa represent a plague of Western society and, unfortunately, appear to be increasing in prevalence, partly because of our society's idealization of the slender, even underweight, female figure that is more characteristic of an adolescent boy than of a mature woman. Other factors probably contribute to the increased prevalence of these disorders, but research has yet to identify them definitely.

At present 2 percent of American women and a little less than 1 percent of men are bulimic. Although anorexia nervosa is less common than bulimia, studies imply that about 1 percent of women in the high risk age group, 12 to 30 years, develop the disorder. Only 6 percent of anorexics are men. Up to 50 percent of anorexics may also have one or more bulimic phases. Depression often accompanies the eating disorders, affecting up to 60 percent of bulimics and 23 percent of anorexics. The mean age of onset for both disorders is 18, and most cases begin sometime between early adolescence and the late 20s. Because these disorders affect mainly women, I have used feminine pronouns in discussing them, but keep in mind that the problem is not limited to women.

One might easily miss a bulimic, for she will usually appear physically healthy and will be attractively dressed and groomed. One can easily detect an anorexic by her thinness, but until the later stages of the disorder you might still ascribe her appearance to natural causes or fashion consciousness.

Whatever their appearance, these individuals desperately need help, even if they themselves do not think so. Without help, and sometimes even with it, they are at best slaves to their compulsions. At the worst some may die early deaths from their disorders.

How can you recognize and help those in your congregation who suffer from these serious mental disorders?

Several criteria identify each of these disorders. No matter how thin she becomes, the anorexic retains an intense fear of becoming fat. She complains of feeling fat even when she looks as emaciated as a concentration camp victim. She steadfastly refuses to maintain her body weight above the lower limit of normal for her age and height. To be positively diagnosed as anorexic, she must have lost 25 percent of her original body weight or, if she is under 18, the weight she has lost plus the projected weight gain expected from growth charts should amount to the 25 percent. However, it is hoped that someone would suspect the problem before that point.

Bulimics also fear obesity, but the hallmark of their eating disorder is recurrent episodes of binge eating. Although she knows that her eating pattern is abnormal, the bulimic fears that she will not be able to stop eating voluntarily.

After a binge she becomes depressed and is plagued by guilt and self-hatred. The binges usually consist of the consumption of a large amount of easily digested, high caloric food in less than two hours. For instance, one of my patients would consume perhaps a gallon of ice cream, a dozen doughnuts, and a pound of candy. I have heard second-hand of even larger quantities of food being consumed. One atypical patient of mine preferred high-protein binges, such as an entire five-pound roast or a couple of large chickens.

The bulimic tends to indulge in these binges inconspicuously, often while alone. She will stop a binge for a variety of reasons such as abdominal pain, to sleep, interruption by others, or if her guilt becomes so intolerable that she begins to induce vomiting. Whereas the anorexic's eating pattern is a more consistently restrictive one, the bulimic's binges may alternate with desperate attempts to lose weight by dieting severely or fasting for a few days. She may also induce vomiting or use diuretics or large amounts of laxatives. I have personally known patients who vomited up to 30 times per day and/or used up to 50 over-the-counter laxatives per day. Only 5 percent abuse diuretics, but almost half abuse laxatives. As a result of the various attempts at weight control
The families of bulimics also tend to be rather rigid. The parents of both bulimics and anorexics tend to involve the child in their unresolved conflicts.

Causes within the family

Parents of anorexics tend not to permit even normal aggression in their children and to deny the existence of aggression in general. Their hypermorality and overcontrol of their children, combined with the child's desire to please them, lead the child to repress emotions in general. For some of these families, fun for fun's sake is not allowed; everything has to have a noble purpose.

Such repression inevitably leads to adverse consequences, one of which is that, beneath overt reverence for their parents, the children feel themselves to be in the humiliating position of puppets whose strings are pulled by their parents. In short, these families are overprotective and rigid. They fail to recognize the anorexic child's individuality and deny any distress within the family.

Psychoanalysts deduce that these patterns first become apparent in infancy when the child's aggressive drive is thwarted and when the parents overlook the child's cues about basic needs, which are then unmet. Moreover, the parents regard the child's progression through the stages of development as their own accomplishment rather than the child's.

The families of bulimics also tend to be rather rigid. The parents of both anorexics and bulimics tend to involve the affected child in their unresolved conflicts with each other. In addition, families of bulimics are quite competitive with their neighbors and among themselves. They place exaggerated emphasis on appearance and stress achievement without allowing the child the individuality that would make achievement possible.

The affected children of these types of families develop intense internal conflicts, for which they unconsciously attempt to compensate through their eating disorders. Psychoanalysts believe that anorexia nervosa represents a flight from the individual's own unconscious, insatiable, instinctual needs as well as from the female role. This is associated not only with frightening sexual issues but also with resistance to identifying with her mother as a woman because of unconscious rage toward her for not satisfactorily meeting her needs in infancy. I would add to this theory that the rage must also be related to thwarting of the child's natural drive toward autonomy.

Anorexic patients also tell me, and others, that the restriction of their nutritional intake represents a form of control that they alone can exert over themselves, often in defiance of parental pressure. However, in reality it represents a defense against their underlying lack of an intact sense of self, rather than true strength of character. This severe restriction also gives them a sense of moral superiority over others, which covers their intense fears and hostility.

The bulimic lacks the consistent control of the anorexic. Her gorging reflects a loss of this impulse control and not only is related to unsatisfied infantile yearnings for food, closeness, and security but also represents an aggressive discharge. Her deficient control is so threatening that the slightest weight gain often produces panic and a frantic return to exercising, laxatives, and starving.

Seeking help

The families of people with eating disorders are often churchgoers and pillars of society and might very well consult their minister before a physician. If a family contacts their minister about a bulimic, they might initially be seeking consultation regarding the eating disorder or one of the compulsive disorders sometimes associated with it that can be even more troubling to them morally. For instance, their child may be one of the 11 to 24 percent who steal compulsively, sometimes stealing money from family members to buy more food but also sometimes stealing objects from stores or friends, such as jewelry or clothing—a sign of their deep sense of deprivation and anger.

Perhaps the family will be concerned about chemical abuse, since 21 percent of bulimics misuse street drugs, and 18 percent use alcohol weekly or more often. Their poor impulse control can express itself even more directly and self-destructively, since 19 percent attempt suicide and 7 percent mutilate themselves by cutting, burning, or in other ways.

The minister can help, first by strengthening the patient's appreciation of her own spiritual side, which would help to moderate her exaggerated emphasis on appearance and to compensate for her severely impaired self-esteem.

The minister can also serve as a role model for the patient and her family by demonstrating comfort with the open expression of feelings and appreciation for the individuality of each family member, including the right of each individual to develop independent decision-making skills and to behave assertively. He or she can encourage the patient's reliance on her own thinking, feeling, and perception, rather than sole reliance on societal and parental standards.

The road to recovery from an eating disorder may be a long one involving multiple setbacks, but with adequate treatment the setbacks can become shorter and less severe. Also, the sooner treatment is begun, the better the prognosis. Many bulimics and anorexics go for years without definitive therapy or, especially in the case of bulimics, without any therapy at all. By his involvement and guidance into treatment an observant, interested, and understanding minister can help to shorten that misery and the unhappy effects on families.
Free software

Kenneth R. Wade

The amount of software available for personal computers these days is mind-boggling—especially the amount that has been produced for IBM compatibles. In fact, software availability is one of the reasons that I give for recommending that computer shoppers should give careful consideration to an IBM compatible.

Much of the software for the compatibles is fairly reasonably priced. The Software Information Packet that we make available from our office (price $4) describes church-related software ranging in price from $50 to more than $5,000. But there are many programs available for even less than $50. In fact, there may be more software available for free than is available for a price!

But there is a catch. Some of it (maybe the majority) is worth just what it costs—nothing!

The freebie software comes in two varieties. The first is called public domain software. Typically a public domain program is one that an individual or group has developed for doing a specific task. Then, instead of marketing the program, they simply release it into the public domain and make it available to anyone who might be able to use it.

The second type of freebie is typically called shareware, and it doesn't have to cost you anything, but the producer would like to make a little profit for his or her efforts. Shareware works this way: The programmer creates the program, then instead of forming a company to market it, simply releases it in much the same way that public domain software is released. He or she makes it available to anyone who wants to copy it.

The only difference is that the first message that comes up on your computer monitor when you run a shareware program typically says something about the program's developer and makes a pitch for you to send in a registration fee (usually under $100) if you find the program useful. In exchange for the fee you may get a printed instruction manual and a copy of the latest version of the program. In some cases you also receive the right to call the developer for technical assistance. Although you can use this software without paying for it, it seems only fair to register your copy if you decide to use it regularly.

Both types of freebie software are readily available. Most computer user groups keep an extensive library of freebies, and make them available to members either free or for a small copying fee. Users with a modem can call a local bulletin board and download the software available there. And an organization called PC Software & Supply, located at 3319 S. Hennepin, Sioux City, Iowa 51106, offers an annotated list of more than 700 disks of IBM compatible freebie software. You can order disks from them for as little as $2 each if you send formatted disks to them.

But getting back to the catch. You'll find a lot of the software isn't worth the $2 per disk because it just isn't useful to you. And studying the list and trying out the programs is a time-consuming and often frustrating procedure. I know from experience.

In my September column I'll share with you some of the results of my search. Some of the programs I use most often are Shareware programs. You'll also find these listed among the many church-related programs described in our Software Information Packet. The packet costs $4.00 and can be ordered from the MINISTRY office at 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

And if you have found good freebies, please send your list to me too.
Creation's Tiny Mystery

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," a missionary once wrote to a young church (1 Thess. 5:21). A small but growing group of scientists today is daring to apply Paul's dictum to things that many people today consider either unprovable or beyond question—the Bible and the theory of evolution. These scientists, called creationists, are engaged in a search to see whether the simple assertions of Genesis are compatible with the evidence found in nature. This search upsets some of their colleagues because the creationists are questioning two widely held assumptions in science: (1) that God has not interfered with the universe and (2) that it is billions of years old. Some Christians are also upset because some of their assumptions are at stake too: the accuracy of Scripture, how to interpret it, and God's attitude toward questioning such things. Consequently one can hear a great deal about creationists in the media these days, but how often have you heard directly from someone who has done basic scientific research in creationism?

Well, here is your chance. Robert Gentry is well known both as a creationist and a physicist; he has published data supporting creationism in the world's most prestigious scientific journals. He has written his book skillfully, weaving his personal story in among clear explanations of the science involved, making it enjoyable reading for the nonscientist. It is profitable for the scientist, too, because here Gentry makes clear the creationist implications of his evidence, something the journals never allowed him to do. Of high interest to everyone is the glimpse the book gives us of bigotry in the upper levels of the scientific establishment; Gentry's account of his collisions with that group should remove any illusions the reader may have had about their objectivity and fairness.

Gentry tells how he began his scientific odyssey two decades ago in a simple laboratory in his home, studying radiohalos in granite. Radiohalos are tiny spheres of discoloration surrounding a grain of radioactive material in a crystal; under the microscope they look like a bull's-eye, a set of concentric circles of various sizes with the grain at the center. (The book has more than 50 beautiful color photos of halos.) Radiactive atoms in the grain produce the rings, and each type of atom makes a unique set of rings of particular sizes, allowing the researcher to identify which atoms were in the grain. Thus the halos are fossils of past radioactivity, and in effect Gentry's work was that of a nuclear paleontologist, trying to figure out how ancient atoms had lived and died.

Most halos contain rings from a number of elements because radioactive decay occurs in chains. For example, a uranium-238 atom will transform itself into a thorium atom, then into protactinium, and so on, until after 14 generations it finally becomes lead, which is stable. Midway along this chain is polonium-218 (Po-218), an element that decays in a few minutes, much faster than its predecessors along the chain. It is so short-lived that its rings should always be nested among the rings of its ancestors, because there is not enough time for the polonium atoms to move away from the other atoms in a site, especially not in a solid crystal. But Gentry spent several years pondering some extraordinary exceptions: Po-218 halos without any evidence of ancestors. How could they have been formed? He could find no natural explanation.

Then one spring afternoon in 1965 it occurred to him that the explanation might be supernatural: the rock and the polonium might have been created instantaneously together! This thought stunned him at first, but then, he reports, "it became the driving, motivating force behind all my research." There followed a series of articles in Science, Nature, and other highly respected journals. (The appendix of the book contains reprints of many of these articles, a compilation that the scientific reader will find convenient.) The Oak Ridge National Laboratory, a well-known nuclear research center, invited him to be a guest scientist in 1969, an affiliation that lasted 13 years and allowed him the use of their advanced facilities. Soon he was an acknowledged expert on radiohalos and was invited to write a review article, which the Annual Review of Nuclear Science published in 1973.

All this time, Gentry was finding other startling things among the radiohalos. Taken as a whole, his data provides strong evidence that something is seriously wrong with radiologic dating techniques, probably in the assumption of constant decay rates. The data implies that the earth is much younger than the billions of years commonly accepted for its age. This evidence attracted a lot of controversy, even though Gentry was not allowed to spell out the implications as bluntly as I have. Some could see that there were serious consequences for evolutionary theory. However, most experts accepted the data as valid, although they generally maintained silence over its interpretation. Gentry continued this kind of work through the 1970s, tunneling a mole beneath the house of evolution, yet without attracting the attention of the pest exterminators.

His lack of notoriety ended abruptly when Gentry accepted an invitation to testify at the famous Arkansas creationism trial in December 1981. Many creationists backed out when it became clear that the attorney general of Arkansas was unenthusiastic about defending the state's equal-treatment law (especially after he attended an ACLU dinner to raise funds against the very law he was sworn to uphold). Gentry, however, saw the trial as a chance to put his data to a public test. In several chapters about the trial, Gentry quotes extensively from the transcript, especially from the cross-examination of Dr. G. Brent Dalrymple, an evolutionist and a prominent expert of radiologic dating, concerning Gentry's work. Under oath, Dalrymple admitted that he had no explanation for Gentry's data;
then he tried to reduce the impact of his admission by calling the radiohalo evidence "a very tiny mystery," thus giving Gentry a nice book title.

Although media coverage of the trial was heavy, Gentry's four-hour testimony received almost no public attention. But it evidently was noticed in some high circles of science. Within months his 13-year association with the Oak Ridge National Laboratory was terminated. Since then he has found it difficult to get anything published, including letters defending his position. He describes his battle to get the journal Science to allow him to respond to several distortions they published concerning his Arkansas testimony. Thus far Science has suppressed his letters. He describes another battle with the National Academy of Sciences, which lately has tried to use its prestige to subdue creationism.

One might think that Gentry might be bitter about such a loss of academic freedom, but his book is ironic, logical, and persuasive. With high-quality illustrations and clear explanations, it communicates well with people from diverse backgrounds; you could lend it without apology to either a businessman or a scientist. The issues it raises are important to the pastor because they touch great depths in the twentieth-century soul, at the very roots of faith itself.

On the other hand, if I have misread you, I want to be corrected. I would hate to fail to cultivate a friendship simply because I misunderstood your cues. In any case, I'll remain a fan."

"I have been distant, Jack, but not because I have anything against you. I've had some personal difficulties that have made me distracted lately."

The next month Tom's wife left him for one of the doctors she worked with, a man 15 years her junior. Tom left the pastorate under pressure ("pushed out") would probably describe his feelings) and continued to work on a Ph.D. in adolescent psychology. I invited him to establish a tutoring/counseling service in my church. He welcomed the opportunity. The practice never really got started, but the joint effort gave me an excuse to cultivate his acquaintance. I continued to call him every week or two. At first I invented "business" to discuss. But when I noticed I wasn't the one prolonging the conversation, I eventually admitted I was calling just to see how he was doing.

Recently a conference official who had been a close friend of Tom's asked me how he was doing.

"Please, Stan," I replied, "don't ask me anything about Tom. I consider Tom my parishioner if not my friend. It would be unethical for me to talk about him at all. I will say that I think you should call him. I think he especially appreciates attention from old friends."

Just this past week, after being away for a couple of weeks, I called Tom again. We talked about the relative merits of using hardwood versus softwoods in a home heating stove. Since I hate cleaning the stovepipe and chimney, I asked what kind of damage a chimney fire could do (and decided to clean mine this week). In previous conversation Tom had mentioned his appreciation of my persistence in staying in touch with him. This time his words were especially revealing:

"I really appreciate your calls. Nobody else calls. The ministerial secretary never—Oh, yes, Bob [another pastor with whom he had been quite close] called. He sounded as though he was scolding me for not staying in touch."

I do not feel that Tom's complaint is entirely justified. Surely, as a former pastor and member of conference committees, he knows that administrators who have had to make hard decisions about a person's fitness for ministry are not going to know what to say to a pastor whom they have urged to quit. If he really desires the attention of fellow believers and other pastors, why doesn't he attend church—my church, any church? Why does he persist in behavior contrary to the gospel he preached—behavior that I have worked hard to cover lest he experience even greater rejection? Why does he do these things? I don't know. But he is part of my flock. And I must not let the storm or the dark or the 99 models of decency and propriety safe in the fold deter my stubborn care for the hurt and headstrong one outside.

I need a pastor

Recently I was at the conference office for an evaluation that I had requested. I am doing a specialized ministry that my congregation supports from a distance. For a long time I had felt the need for a critical evaluation of my ministry by someone acquainted with its unique circumstances.

I sat down with the ministerial secretary and a pastor whom I respect so highly that it borders on envy. They spent two hours discussing my prepared outlines along with the current crisis at the conference academy, possible personnel for a vacancy at the conference office, the most essential elements in good preaching, the current best book on exegesis, the role of preaching in city evangelism, and the value of Solzhenitsyn's writing for a doubting believer. After all this and more, we ended our meeting because I had to leave for another appointment.

The ministerial secretary asked, "What is our conclusion?"

"I hear you guys saying full speed ahead," I replied. "And that is what I plan to do."

I called the ministerial secretary later that day. "Jack, I want to thank you for today's session. Obviously nothing much in my plans was changed by our time together, but I feel as high as a kite. Do you know what it means to have two fellow whom you appreciate make your plans and dreams and frustrations the center of their attention for two hours? You didn't give me any marvelous new ideas or great new directions for my work, but you have given me new vision and energy as nothing else has in months. Thanks."

I guess I too need a shepherd's care. I too am part of the flock.
Open Your Doors to All God’s Children
Resources for Special Ministries

All God’s Children
Ministry to the Disabled
by Gene Newman and Joni Eareckson Tada

“Open Your Doors to God’s Children” the folk song tells us, “have a place in the choir.” But churches sometimes seem to have problems meeting the special physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who are disabled. This handbook for all concerned Christians offers both understanding and confidence, to ensure that no child of God is excluded from active participation in the fellowship of believers. Available, $7.95

Ministry to the Divorced
Guidance, Structure, and Organization That Promote Healing in the Church
by Stanley Hagermeyer and Sue Poorman Richards

Divorce isn’t supposed to happen to Christians...but it does. And when it happens, the church must be ready to respond not only sympathetically but redemptively. The authors of this guide have experienced both the pain of divorce and the healing the church can provide; their insights will help equip you for this important ministry. Available, $6.95

Helping Women in Crisis
A Handbook for People-Helpers
by Kay Marshall Strom

All too often, those who are called on to respond to crisis situations are caught unprepared. This essential resource is designed to help pastors, counselors and lay Christians know how to respond to such common crisis situations as alcoholism, child abuse, incest, infidelity and attempted suicide. Available, $7.95

Nursing Home Ministry
A Manual
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When was the last time you visited a nursing home? That long? Is it because you’re not sure what to expect, or say, or do? Nursing Home Ministry can help, with an orientation to the aging process, descriptions of symptoms and syndromes often found among the elderly, and practical suggestions for those who undertake this challenging—and rewarding—ministry. Available, $7.95

Strategy of Service
by June A. Williams

Churches are called to help those in need. But where do we start? How do we get organized? How can we get and motivate volunteers? Here’s a proven plan of action that will enable any church, large or small, better to serve the needs of the community in which it resides. Available, $5.95

Family Ministry
by Charles M. Sell

The American family is facing a crisis of survival. But a new-found hope is appearing in the renewal of family life through the church. This challenging and informative volume addresses the multi-faceted problems a church must face in developing a relevant ministry to the family. Available, $19.95

Hispanic Ministry in North America
by Alex D. Montoya

Hispanics. They’re one of the fastest growing segments of the American population. And to assist churches in developing an effective ministry among Hispanics, Alex Montoya here offers important insights, perspectives, and guidelines for various aspects of Hispanic ministry including worship, preaching, church organization and administration, evangelism, and leadership. October, $9.95

For a complete catalog of academic and professional books from Zondervan, write: Leonard G. Goss, Director of Marketing, Zondervan Publishing House, 1415 Lake Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
Crisis hotline available

Anyone having difficulty coping with problems caused by alcohol or other drugs may find help through a new referral service available 24 hours a day. The number to call from anywhere in the United States or Canada is 1-800-253-3000. (In Alaska, call 1-800-253-3002.)

This is not a crisis intervention hotline. The operators are trained to put callers in touch with professionals or other resource persons who can be of assistance. Appropriate materials will be sent on request.

The hotline, operated in cooperation with the Seventh-day Adventist Information Ministries at Andrews University, is sponsored by the Association of Adventist Parents for Drug-free Youth (AAP), an organization set up to help meet the growing drug and alcohol problems in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (Though the hotline was set up to meet the needs of Adventists, it is available to nonmembers as well.)

The AAP's goals include informing church members and leaders about the drug problems confronting the church, assisting in the formation of parent groups within the church, and providing resources for parents and youth in their efforts to prevent, reduce, or eliminate drug use.

The AAP is also developing a list of resource people who are available for hurting families or young people and a list of approved treatment facilities, both those operated by Seventh-day Adventists and by others. Suggestions for additions to these lists would be welcome.

The AAP is a membership organization open to anyone desiring to benefit from its services or contribute to its program. All members receive a quarterly bulletin. Because the drug problem is of concern to the church worldwide, the AAP intends to extend its ministry outside of North America as well.

Pastors can help publicize this ministry not only by making personal referrals to the hotline and the AAP, but by seeing that this information is made available in church bulletins, on church and school bulletin boards, and in church and school newsletters.—Submitted by Francis A. Soper, president, AAP.

Devotional book at a discount

Harold L. Calkins' recently reprinted book, Master Preachers: Their Study and Devotional Habits, which retails for $6.95, is available from Ministry Services for $4.95.

Those who work within the church—and especially pastors—will find in this book a stimulus to a deepening spiritual life and a more effective ministry. Calkins has gathered from the biographies of great preachers and evangelists such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Graham, J. N. Andrews, and H. M. S. Richards a wealth of anecdotes and personal testimonies that point to the secret of the power that characterized these men.

You can obtain a copy of this paperback book by sending US$4.95 to Master Preachers, Ministry Services, Box 217, Burtonsville, MD 20866. Price includes postage.

Continuing ministry to the grieving

Good pastoral care for the grieving often involves a number of visits during the weeks following a death. However, as the grieving adjust to their loss, busy pastors may turn their attention to other pressing matters.

We can be of both continuing support and help to mourners if we visit or send a note to them on the anniversary of a death. In so doing, we have the opportunity to help them work through their grief, which such anniversaries bring to the surface again.

I keep a small desk calendar on which I record the date of the death of a parishioner. As the day and month are all that matters, any such calendar can be used for many years. I review it once a month and note the names of those for whom particular dates might be especially difficult, and I schedule my visits accordingly. These visits open many avenues for ministry, as well as opportunities for people to become more involved in the life of the church once more.—William R. Wolfe

Computer information retrieval

The information retrieval system mentioned in Computer Corner in January 1986 is now available for MS-DOS (IBM-PC compatible) based computers as well as CPM-based.

A plan for a cooperative pastors' database is also in the works. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (39 cents U.S. postage) to Ken Wade, MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

$10 for your ideas

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