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**Last letters on abortion**

We concluded our series on abortion with Ardy's Sweem's article in the July issue of Ministry. We believe the discussion in this Letters column has also continued long enough, and so these letters will end for now our publishing on that topic. — Editors.

- The article "Abortion and Christian Principles," by Gerald Winslow (May 1988), was very cleverly written to play on emotions—e.g., "poor Joan." The truth is that on the whole, abortion is now used as a form of contraception.

- Mr. Winslow states that "to have real freedom means to have real alternatives." This is a humanistic viewpoint; God is a God or absolutes.

- I have in my possession a videotape of a baby being taken out of the protection of the womb "piece by piece"—torn apart before your eyes. Not a "product of conception," but a living baby.

- You do the body of Christ a disservice with your sidestepping approach to abortion (Prov. 14:12). —Jim Fielding, assistant pastor, Christian Outreach Centre, Maryborough, Queensland, Australia.

- Here is a response letter to one of the finest Ministries you have published (July 1988). I certainly was impressed with the page of letters concerning the abortion issue, particularly the encouragement from our non-Adventist minister friends that it is time for our church to stand up and be counted.

- In her article on abortion, Ardy's Sweem documented her points extremely well and presented spiritual and emotional angles on the issue that are most compelling.

- I do hope and pray that the Lord will help our church leaders to realize that it is time for God's people to be "the repairer of the breach" and hold up all ten commandments in a new and living way. —Richard A. Hansen, M.D., Poland Spring Health Institute, Poland Spring, Maine.

- As a physician who has been (I am sorry to say) actively involved on both sides of the abortion question, I am puzzled, baffled, and finally incensed about our church's unwillingness to come to grips with the abortion question and take a stand. What is produced when the sperm has met the ovum and is embedded in the wall of the uterus is a human being, and to destroy it thereafter is murder.

- Why do we quibble? Calling abortion murder would leave us with no options—we would have to counsel our unwed mothers to carry their pregnancies to term. And when we insist on that, it will fall upon us as a church to establish a whole new support system. We have not been willing to come to grips with that.

- What must we do? Let me point out the most obvious:

1. Our entire educational system must make accommodations to keep these girls in school as uninterruptedly as possible. We can no longer say, "Go murder your child, and we will consider your reaplication to school next year."

2. We must establish a means of placing these innocent children into thehomes of Seventh-day Adventist Christian families. It is our duty as a church to place these innocent "products of conception" in the best possible setting for eternal life. Also, let's stop the punitive attitude toward our pregnant daughters and establish a context of life that will keep them in the church.

3. We must establish a support system of compassion and love for those church families who suddenly find that they have an unwed pregnant daughter in their midst. Further, families in that situation must change their own attitude toward their daughters—they must love them and support them. But they will be able to provide this support only when we as a church support those families.

- What about the pregnancies that result from rape and incest? It makes more sense to kill the perpetrator of the rape or incest than the innocent child. We live in an imperfect world, but we must not let that fact give us an excuse to become murderers.

- Once we as a church have the fortitude and discipline to call abortion murder and therefore sin, our duties will fall into place. —Willard D. Regester, M.D., Mountain View, California.

- As a chaplain in a large hospital, I have heard "after the abortion" lament's, and have been asked for answers as to the right and wrong of such a practice.

- I dare not offer a personal opinion, as I hold the law of God to be my standard of conduct—the law that was in Eden and will remain forever; the law God wrote with His own finger in granite. I reply, "The word of God condemns it" and "Read Exodus 20:13, 14." How simply stated, yet how comprehensive. —Ruth G. Alr, Loveland, Colorado.

- We, as a church, take the stand that it is wrong to take another's life. For this reason we strongly urge our young people to stay out of the military. We base this position on the commandment that states "Thou shalt not kill." Yet we don't seem to apply this same commandment when it comes to abortion. Isn't it strange that we can see clearly the application of this commandment to those already born but not see how it could possibly apply to the unborn?

- It is clear from Mr. Pearson's article (January 1988) that he takes this position (Continued on page 30)
First Glance

The scores of people who wrote us concerning our articles on abortion will be interested to learn that the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has appointed a committee to study and make recommendations concerning the many issues surrounding human life. (See page 20 for a full report on this committee, its terms of reference, and its membership.)

Seventh-day Adventists have always been known as temperence advocates, so it has been hard for us to acknowledge that some among us might have a drinking problem. Hal Gates, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, in "Alcoholism: What Pastors Can Do," describes his experience from alcoholism to recovery and the role pastors can play in this recovery. He then describes how his church has begun a program for people recovering from addiction, a program developed particularly for Seventh-day Adventists. He calls it "SDAXA Regeneration."

Bob Spangler, our editor, tells us about his favorite devotional books in "Books That Have Enriched My Devotional Life."

With its baboon heart and other infant heart transplants, Loma Linda University, while not exactly a household name, has been featured in the weekly news magazines and on the major television networks. Few people are aware of its Ethics Center, which helps clarify the issues and guide in the decision-making at the hospital. Ella Rydzewski, who works for Ministry, recently spent some time in California and interviewed the center's ethicists. In "Ethics Center—New Resource for Pastors" you will discover how this center not only helps Loma Linda University and Hospital but is also a resource for pastors.

Kinesthetic advocates will love Cathy McBride's article on "Touch: The Forgotten Sense," while those of us who have difficulty following Paul's counsel to "greet one another with a holy kiss" (2 Cor. 13:12, NIV) will learn a little more about this most important part of ourselves.

We hope that this issue will also touch your lives not just for today but for eternity. Happy reading.

J. David Newman

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VOLUME 61 NUMBER 11
Books that have enriched my devotional life

J. Robert Spangler

The books recommended here are not directly devotional in nature. But learning the lessons they offer will strengthen your spiritual life.


A.A.: The Story is a thoroughly documented history of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). Although I knew something of A.A.'s Twelve Steps, before I read this book I knew little of the fascinating roots of that organization.

"Ebby," the man who sparked in Bill Wilson's alcohol-numbed brain the idea that led to this ministry, had found temporary deliverance from alcoholism through religion, receiving help from the evangelical, nondenominational Oxford group (today known as Moral Re-Armament). He testified of his conversion while seated at Bill's kitchen table and later planted a fundamental concept in Bill's mind while Bill was lying in a drunken stupor on a hospital bed: "Realize you are licked, admit it, and... turn your life over to the care of God." 1

That principle, basic to A.A.'s program, helps explain how a book dealing with the history of the A.A. phenomenon enriched my devotional life. The principles that organization espouses apply to all who are willing to admit they are sinners and in need of God's grace.

A corollary principle A.A. teaches its members is that "they are not infinite, not absolute, not God." 2 My own heart needed to be reminded of this principle. As preachers, we too often play God. Doing so has borne tragic fruit in the lives of some very popular ministers in the last couple of years.

A.A. teaches alcoholics that they must admit at the very start that they are not in control, even of themselves. This admission of their total powerlessness over alcohol and that their lives had become unmanageable is a pivotal point in A.A.'s Twelve Steps. In Christianity, a similar admission is a pivotal point in becoming and staying a true follower of Jesus Christ. Christians cannot smugly sit back and condemn the alcoholic when they realize that every person with an obsessive/compulsive behavioral problem needs help—whether it involves eating, criticizing, sexual indulgence, exaggeration, or love of ease.

When Bill Wilson reached this point of total self-surrender, something happened. In describing it, he said, "Suddenly the room lit up with a great white light. I was caught up into an ecstasy which there are no words to describe. It seemed to me, in the mind's eye, that I was on a mountain and that a wind not of air but of spirit was blowing. And then it burst upon me that I was a free man. Slowly the ecstasy subsided. I lay on the bed, but now for a time I was in another world, a new world of consciousness. All about me and through me there was a wonderful feeling of Presence, and I thought to myself, So this is the God of the preachers! A great peace stole over me and I thought, No matter how wrong things seem to be, they are all right. Things are all right with God and His world." 3

I am convinced that the A.A. group has a better understanding of the role and importance of witnessing than do most Christians. When Wilson first shared his story with Dr. Bob Smith, cofounder of A.A., Smith identified an important secret in helping an alcoholic overcome...
drinking. Although both men were involved with the Oxford group, Smith had failed to gain the victory over alcohol, and he wondered what made the difference between himself and Bill. It was the act of sharing. When Smith finally realized the difference, he stated, "The spiritual approach was as useless as any other if you soaked it up like a sponge and kept it to yourself." It is in the process of giving that alcoholics get the blessing of victory over drinking.

I immediately thought of Revelation 12:11, which declares that God's followers conquer the enemy "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

Restitution, which is one of the Twelve Steps, is little talked about in Christian circles today. When Smith finally came to grips with his problem, he began making visits to his creditors and those whom he had harmed by his behavior. According to Kurtz, Smith made his confession to each one and planned a practical program of restitution.

Weaned from human support

In the A.A. program, the total dependence on a Higher Power is developed from various angles. In the early beginnings of A.A., Wilson and his wife, Lois, took in problem drinkers in an attempt to salvage them. They met with little success. They reached an important conclusion that Wilson stated succinctly: "Lois and I continued to find that if we permitted alcoholics to become too dependent on us they were apt to stay drunk." 5

This insight struck me with tremendous force. I recently read a review of Jeffrey Masson's controversial book Against Therapy. The reviewer quoted Masson as saying, "The therapeutic relationship always involves an imbalance of power. One person pays; the other receives. Vacations, time, duration of the sessions are all in the hands of one party. Only one person is thought to be an 'expert' in human relations and feelings. Only one person is thought to be in trouble." 6

Could it be that one of the reasons we see so little progress in the lives of the individuals who seek counsel regarding their problems from ministers, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists is that they become too dependent upon their helpers?

Chapter 7 of the book Alcoholics Anonymous emphasizes several times the principle of depending upon God and not on anyone else. "Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house."

In response to the claims of some alcoholics that they cannot master their problem until their material needs are cared for, A.A. directs the following answer: "Nonsense. Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: job or no job—wife or no wife—we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God." And again: "Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God."

The forthright statement of this concept of dependence upon God encouraged me to trust my Lord more fully and would help every reader who will practice it daily.

Another insight reinforced a discovery I had also made—that of the one-day-at-a-time principle. A.A. encourages its members to think in terms of victory for the moment, for today. Overcoming is not for next month, next week, or tomorrow, but for now!

This concept applies to all phases of living. It relates not only to overcoming temptation but to the joy of living, the joy of interacting with spouse, children, neighbors, and friends. In the Christian experience, it is what we do today in terms of Bible study, prayer, and witnessing that puts muscle into the character.

I like the idea that the only prerequisite for membership in A.A. is a desire to stop drinking. What would happen if the only prerequisite for membership in a Christian church was a desire to stop sinning! What a power the Christian faith would become if, by the grace of God, victory over sin through surrender and a relationship with Jesus Christ became a reality! Seeing that we have something that works, the non-Christian masses around us would flock to our churches.

The insights this book provides into Bill Wilson's character are heartwarming. He was a man who was always reaching out for unattainable goals. Like all of us, he had times of depression and discouragement as well as times of joy and victory. Although he faced seemingly impossible odds, he fought through to victory, developing a program that has helped millions who were among the most hopeless of earth's population.

As I read about the difficulties Wilson encountered as he struggled to create a program to help alcoholics, I began to appreciate deeply his dedication. He spent his whole life exploring every possible avenue to helping an alcoholic overcome. Every Christian ought to emulate the intensity of spirituality and commitment revealed in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous!

For me, this book brought spiritual renewal, and I recommend it to my readers.

Learning from a divorce


It was only a 170-page paperback found in a stack of discarded reading material in an apartment house. If I had ever heard of the book, I had forgotten about it. My wife read most of this little book to me while we were traveling via automobile to several speaking appointments.

In the book Patti Roberts tells the story of her divorce from Richard Roberts, Oral Roberts' son. Every couple planning to get married—and especially those who are entering a religious ministry—ought to read its tragic, gripping message. In a world where divorce has become epidemic the same forces that destroyed Patti's marriage threaten every other marriage. Patti's insights, not only on married life but on life in general, brought my wife and me to a renewed determination to have the closer relationship with our Lord that will bring us closer to each other.

The following statement, taken from the book, sums up quite well the thrust of Patti's story: "I'm not just divorcing Richard, but a whole realm that puts re-
I’m divorcing the mentality that caused the last act of this marriage to be handled with the publicity value in mind.”

Religious achievement and lifestyle above sanctity of life. I’m divorcing the end-justifies-the-means theory. I’m divorcing the belief that products are more important than people. I’m divorcing the god of family image. . . . I’m divorcing the preference for public prayers over private penitence. I’m divorcing the person who had never learned that ‘a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one.’ . . . I’m divorcing the mentality that caused the last act of this marriage to be handled with the publicity value in mind. Oh, dear God, help me to the other side.”

Most of the rest of the book details the various points made in this paragraph. The book’s insights could be summarized as follows:

1. Naively, Patti assumed that since Richard was close to the Oral Roberts University, to Oral himself, and to Jesus, therefore everything would be fine, and both of them would do wonderful things for God. She found out that position, power, and being related to a religious institution does not guarantee a happy marriage.

2. Patti learned that if service for God preempts knowing Him on a personal basis, problems will result. God is more interested in our relationship with Him than in our position. Patti sums up this idea in the words “a person could do all of the right things and still have a heart far removed from God.”

Patti’s book makes it clear that Richard and she depended on their ministry to sustain their spiritual life. They spent eight to ten hours every day in a thoroughly Christian environment. They sang and prayed together on TV. She concludes, “It was easy for us to be lulled into believing that we didn’t need to spend time together in private devotions. It was a subtle trap and one that all those who work in full-time, paid ministry have to guard against.”

3. Patti unfortunately assumed that if Richard and she loved each other enough and both of them loved the Lord enough, their marriage would automatically be protected and their happiness ensured. She found out it doesn’t work that way. Love certainly is of primary importance, but maintaining a successful marriage requires planning and work. As ministers, we should use premarital counseling to help those we wed avoid this pitfall.

4. From her experience Patti concludes that when we don’t know what to do, it is better to wait on the Lord than to try to do something. The promise of James 1:5 eventually became a reality in her experience: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him.” Her ringing testimony is that God is faithful and He will direct us in no uncertain terms.

5. Another insight, one that is obvious but that bears repeating, is that major problems begin with minor irritations. If these irritations are not dealt with quickly and constructively, they bring unnecessary pain. Patti says, “That is so obvious that it seems incredible that we could not have seen it. But it is the obvious things in life that we most often overlook.”

Second place in your life

6. Closely related to the idea of working at a marriage is the matter of where a couple places the family in their list of priorities. All couples who are involved in fishbowl-type jobs need to note this point carefully. Patti writes, “Neither of us was mature enough to see that we needed some time just for ourselves, and neither of us had a clear biblical understanding of the importance God places on family relationships. We sincerely, but wrongly, believed that ministry was the most important thing. So we built our marriage on the sand of wrong teaching. We created a public image and then worked very hard to make our private lives match it. But, unfortunately, . . . our relationship never grew beyond what we presented to the public.”

Patti’s experience is not unique. In how many cases do ministers and others in public service injure or destroy their marriages by putting their work before their families. At the moment, I can think of several ministerial families that have been shattered because of failure to understand this point. God must have first place in the hearts of the minister and spouse, but the organization or structure for which we work must not take the second place—we must reserve that place for our families! If the family constitutes the most important unit in a church, how important it is for the minister to have a family life that is worthy of emulation by the members he or she serves.

Listen to Patti’s powerful description of this concept: “If Satan can attack the relationship between men and women in marriage, he can attack one of the most important laboratories for Christ’s relationship to the church. That is why it is so vital for the church to understand the importance of the commitment involved in the sacrament of marriage.

“IT is one of Satan’s foundational battle plans to keep these issues shrouded. If he can keep us locked into ego battles, simmering over women’s rights versus men’s rights, confused by tributary social issues, then he can keep us from pulling ourselves and our mates upright and seeing the bigger issues. If I cannot bear true submission to my spouse and if he cannot reconcile himself to losing himself and all that he has for my benefit, how can we hope to actually bow in submission, loyalty, and love before Jesus. (I do not mean to imply that marriage is the only way to accomplish this. Certainly God can and does make provision for the single believer, but marriage is the norm for most people.)

“Any person who places ministry above marriage has, at best, an incomplete understanding of the significance of marriage in God’s eternal plans. When this flip-flop of priorities occurs it is a wonder that the skies don’t thunder, ‘Let not man put asunder . . .’ ”

The final chapter in Patti’s book, “The True Christian Marriage,” brought tremendous conviction to our hearts and lives. This is a book worth reading carefully.
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Task force recommends pay hike

J. David Newman

Report of a recent meeting of the North American Division Church Finance and Employee Remuneration Task Force.

Rumors abound concerning the crisis that is emptying the pockets of Adventist workers in North America. Working spouses are now the norm. Some pastors hold down a second job; others are supported by relatives. Some are leaving the ministry, and many are considering it (40 percent of the ministers in one conference, according to a survey).

Housing has become the Achilles' heel of Adventist workers. When the average price of a house in Peoria, Illinois, is $51,000 and the same house is $250,000 in New York City, something has to give. It is true that there is a spread between categories A and E (see box), but the difference is small.

When our family moved from Mt. Vernon, Ohio, to the Washington, D.C., area, our mortgage, insurance, and taxes increased from $325 to $1,210 a month. My salary percentage did not change, but to compensate for the difference, I did move from category A to category C—an increase of $95 a month! Many are turning down calls because of the high cost of housing.

Task force voted

At its 1988 spring meeting the North American Division established a task force of 65 persons "to make a comprehensive review of the church's philosophy and provision for financing the world outreach of the church and the total remuneration (salary, allowances, and benefits) of denominational employees in the North American Division."

Some of the items on the agenda included a review of the philosophy of tithe sharing, a report on how local churches benefit from the tithe, a review of the church's philosophy of remuneration, possible additional remuneration for pastors of large churches, requests from ministers for assistance on Social Security tax, additional remuneration for employees living in high-cost areas, and the problem of wives with small children having to work outside the home.

Task force meets

People do not normally campaign for committee appointments; however, when the committee deals with finances —especially tithe and workers' pay—it is another matter. By the time the task force met in July, another 10 people had managed to obtain appointments to it.

Bill Murrill, undertreasurer for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, presented a sample budget for the typical pastor living in a category A area. This budget was based on the spouse not working outside the home. When he had finished his calculations, the pastor needed 19 percent more than his current salary to balance his budget, and that budget did not even include such items as recreation, vacations, furniture purchases, car payments, or paying off student loans.

The leaders of the General Conference and the North American Division recognize that the present wage scale is inadequate and that the system, which has not been overhauled for many years, needs attention. The problem is finding the extra funds. Three options emerged: reductions in staff, more stewardship education to in-
crease giving, and reprioritizing the distribution of church resources.

**Recommendations to year-end meeting**

Members of the task force reported that debate was lively and sometimes hot. Everyone had an opinion. Though the committee met for a week, there was not enough time to cover everything on the agenda. Some recommendations did emerge that are due to be presented at the North American Division year-end meeting in Minneapolis October 30 to November 2.

Among the key recommendations:

1. The task force recommended that the remuneration factor (see box) be adjusted by 6 percent over the next three years (2 percent per year) in addition to the regular remuneration factor increase, which follows the consumer price index.  
2. Probably the most controversial item concerned how to deal with the wildly varying costs of housing. The first suggestion called for the employing organization to assist the worker by lending the balance of what he or she could not afford. There would be no repayment until the house was sold, and then the worker and the institution would share in the profits according to the percentage each had contributed at the beginning. Some did not like this because they felt it was too complicated. If the person retired in the community and did not sell the house, how would the conference get its money? What if the person resigned? Instead, a more generous policy was recommended: "Employees will be responsible for the equivalent of 30 percent of their remuneration at the category A level for housing, either as a renter or as a homeowner. The employing organization may provide assistance on the difference between the 30 percent of remuneration and the rent or house payment up to the ceiling established by the employing organization."

*Example: Remuneration Factor*  
$1440 \times 150\% = \$2,160  
30\% = \$648  
House or rent payments $1,200  
Less employee's share $648  
Special housing assistance $552

"When employees are required to move to a new location and sell their home, a minimum of 90 percent of the net proceeds from the sale of the home must be reinvested in the new home. If the employee does not put the full 90 percent in the new home, the assistance will be calculated on this basis."

"The special housing assistance shall be recalculated each year at the time the remuneration factor is increased. This will result in an annual reduction in the special assistance until it is totally phased out."

"Only one special housing assistance will be granted to a family. Employing organizations shall be authorized to determine whether or not this new policy shall apply to employees who have previously moved to a high-cost area."

"If this system is adopted, it is recommended that the term 'cost of living factors' (categories B, C, D, E) be changed to 'cost of housing factors.'"

3. The task force recommended that conferences employ pastors' spouses who want to work as church secretaries, Bible workers, etc., rather than have them seek other types of employment.

This recommendation is a key concern of Shepherd's International, which believes that the church has long delayed in implementing Ellen White's counsel: "Let none feel that these women, who understand the Word, and who have ability to teach, should not receive remuneration for their labors. They should be paid as verily as are their husbands" (Evangelism, p. 491).

The carrying out of this recommendation will encourage those who are eager to work with their husbands in advancing the mission of the church.

4. It was recommended that "no assistance for Social Security taxes be granted at this time. If, in the future, the parsonage allowance no longer offsets the Social Security tax, study will be given to granting some assistance."  

**Pilot program**

The task force proposed a five-year pilot program reflecting a different philosophy of employee remuneration than does the present system. This pilot program, which may involve up to three conferences and one General Conference institution, is to be based on the following concepts:

1. Employees' salaries to reflect the true cost of living within each local conference chosen for the pilot.

2. Recognition be given to increasing levels of experience and responsibility.

3. A 'cafeteria plan' benefits package, including tuition assistance, be adopted, replacing the existing benefits package.

4. Funding for the increased cost to the conference to come from various sources, such as:

   a. A conference-wide, vigorous stewardship program in each local church.

   b. Various experimental incentive plans to increase percentage of tithe-paying members.

   c. Reduction of conference office and/or pastoral staff and programs equal to 1 or 2 percent of net tithe.

   d. A special assistance fund to be established on the union and division levels to equal 3 percent of gross tithe of the conferences selected."

**Local church growth fund**

The task force recommended that a special local church growth fund be provided from the tithes received by the conferences, unions, and division. The main debate concerned where to find the funds. It was recommended that local conferences, unions, division, and General Conference set a limit for administrative expenses. This would then allow excess tithe to be allocated for local use.

Each conference would appoint a special committee (composed of a majority of laypersons) that would decide the distribution of these funds. For churches to qualify to receive them, they would have to meet certain criteria in membership, attendance, baptisms, tithes and offerings, and commitment to Christian education. This special committee could vote up to half of these funds for Christian education.

The task force also recommended much greater disclosure to members concerning the finances of the church and that an extensive stewardship education program be implemented.

**Fairness and diversity**

The leaders of the church are struggling to find ways to be as fair as possible in the distribution of funds and the setting of salaries. The immense diversity in costs throughout North America is only compounding the problem.

Maybe this is where each of us workers must exercise some faith. We have always said that the ministry is not a profession but a calling; that we did not enter it for the money. If God has called us to a particular place, will He not provide the financial resources for us to accomplish His work there? Maybe the church should pay us more, but what if it does not have the money? Should that deficiency limit where we can serve Him?  
When my wife and I entered the min-
isty in 1969, our salary was $157 a month. True, we were in Scotland, but just to put costs into perspective, saving up to buy a towel rail for the bathroom took us six months. We had no car and no car allowance, and had to do all our shopping and visiting by bus. Our house did not have central heating, and we had a new baby on the way.

But our God, who has promised “to meet all [our] needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19, NIV), did not forsake us. Just when we needed it most, someone gave us an electric central heating system. The Lord provided a car, and the conference graciously allowed me to use my bus allowance to gas the car.

When writing to the Philippians from his Roman jail, Paul reminded them that he had learned to be “content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want” (Phil. 4:12, NIV). Can we who, despite the seeming hardships, have it far better than the apostle Paul ever did be less content?

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### How the church determines its employees’ salaries

The lowest annual salary the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America pays is $13,478.40 (a beginning receptionist), and the highest is $30,945.60 (president of the General Conference). How does the church determine who gets what?

The North American Division is divided into six cost-of-living categories. Each July a basic monthly figure is set for each category, changes usually being based on the consumer price index. The current figures for each category are:

- A: $1,440 USA; $1,740 Canada
- B: $1,485 USA; $1,785 Canada
- C: $1,535 USA; $1,835 Canada
- D: $1,650 USA; $1,950 Canada
- E: $1,650 USA; $1,950 Canada
- F: As may be approved.

Salaries are based on percentages of these categories, a minimum and maximum percentage being set for each position in the church. For example, let’s say you live in a category A area and you are an ordained, licensed minister. Your monthly salary will be anywhere from 113 to 143 percent of $1,440. The range for ordained ministers is 130 to 150 percent. So the most an ordained minister in pastoral duties can earn in a category A area in the United States is $2,160 a month (150 percent of $1,440).

The actual percentage between the minimum and maximum assigned to a worker’s salary depends on three factors: (a) preparation, education, and dedication; (b) previous experience and achievement; and (c) years of service. In practice, most workers will reach the maximum in their category within six to eight years of beginning employment.

In addition to the basic salary, pastors receive four benefits: (1) health-care assistance; (2) tuition assistance for dependent children; (3) auto insurance help; and (4) auto mileage allowance. Health-care assistance is 90 percent of hospitalization up to 10 times the category he or she is in and 100 percent above that. In addition, the pastor receives 75 percent of all physician, dental, optical, and drug costs. Tuition assistance is 35 percent for nondormitory students and 70 percent for dormitory students. Automobile mileage varies greatly, but is based on 16 cents (17 cents in California) a mile, usually with a monthly cap.

While the church allows for some difference in salary level according to the type and position of work, the spread is quite small when compared with industry or with other denominations. Here is a sampling of the percentages assigned some of the other denominational positions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Department</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bible instructor</td>
<td>113%</td>
<td>143%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate pastoral care licensed</td>
<td>113%</td>
<td>143%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van driver</td>
<td>117%</td>
<td>147%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate pastoral care credentialed</td>
<td>130%</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference department director</td>
<td>130%</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference vice president</td>
<td>133%</td>
<td>153%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference secretary/treasurer</td>
<td>134%</td>
<td>154%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference president</td>
<td>138%</td>
<td>158%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union department director</td>
<td>135%</td>
<td>155%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union vice president</td>
<td>137%</td>
<td>157%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union secretary/treasurer</td>
<td>138%</td>
<td>158%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union president</td>
<td>142%</td>
<td>162%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference assoc. dept. dir.</td>
<td>140%</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference dept. director</td>
<td>142%</td>
<td>162%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference assoc. secretary/treasurer</td>
<td>142%</td>
<td>162%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference secretary/treasurer</td>
<td>145%</td>
<td>165%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference vice president</td>
<td>165%</td>
<td>165%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference president</td>
<td>168%</td>
<td>168%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the levels in the educational system:

- Assistant professor: 134 to 148%
- Associate professor: 139 to 153%
- Professor: 144 to 158%
- President of a college: 162%
- President of a university: 163%

### Nondenominational salaries

It is very difficult to compare salaries outside the denomination, but we decided to take the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area as an example of one high-cost area and find what other professionals are making here. The salaries are annual figures, and we give in parenthesis the latest year for which figures are available. In most cases these salaries would be considerably higher in 1988.

- Adventist pastor at 150% (category C—1988) $27,630
- Chaplain in the federal government (1983) 33,888
- Chaplain, House of Representatives (1984) 69,600
- Director of Senate parking (1984) 48,904
- Teacher with M.A. plus 10 years' experience (1988) 36,357
- Professor, Georgetown University (1985) 53,000
- High school principal (1984) 48,657
- Librarian, federal government (1983) 30,333
- Psychologist, federal government (1983) 37,992
- Editor, federal government (1983) 28,087
Ethics Center—new resource for pastors

Ministry: Not everyone is familiar with the Ethics Center at Loma Linda University. Would you tell us how and why it began?

Larson: We started writing proposals for the center in the summer of 1982, and one year later the university board approved the final draft. The center was created to provide a place where specialists from various professions can meet to explore current ethical problems.

Ministry: Was the center established because of the recent well-publicized bioethical cases that involve the university?

Walters: Some thought that the Baby Fae case was the impetus for the center since it emerged at about the same time, but plans for the center had been laid more than a year earlier.

Ministry: Whom do you see the Ethics Center serving?

Walters: We see ourselves serving not only the university and the church but society. Insights from the Adventist tradition are of significance to ethical issues currently being discussed in the country and the church.

Ministry: You see the center as part of the church's outreach?

Walters: Outreach in that we believe there are aspects of our tradition that can add important nuances to the larger discussion in Christian ethics.

Ministry: Can you give us some examples?

Larson: The Adventist belief about human nature—the body and soul as one—projects a conceptual foundation for solving a lot of issues in medical ethics.

Teel: Most of the time this doctrine has been referred to as the “state of the dead,” but we feel that the idea that the human body, soul, and spirit are so inextricably bound together has an abundance of implications for the state of the living.

Ministry: In other words, you might see this doctrine as having implications for an issue like abortion?

Teel: When you talk about the state of the living, I think there is very little you can't apply it to.

Walters: Another example is that Adventists encourage vegetarianism. We can contribute more on this subject than we generally do. There are many who are vegetarians for moral reasons other than health. They connect it with the value of animal and human life.

Ministry: The church hasn’t spoken to that angle very much, has it?

Walters: Not as much as it could, for Ellen White was very pointed in this regard. As evidenced by our work through ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency International) the church also has a concern for the Third World and its starving millions. We have learned from other vegetarians that it
takes 10 pounds of grain protein to make 1 pound of animal protein. We could contribute more by emphasizing these broader implications of vegetarianism.

Ministry: Do you see the Ethics Center not only as a resource center but as reviving the church’s interest in some issues that perhaps have been forgotten or ignored? Ecology, for example?

Teel: It is difficult to divide the human organism into small parts. For example, concerning vegetarianism and world hunger, I take School of Health students to projects in Mexico and Central America. We are faced with the stark reality that the health of the Third World peasant is described in terms of malnutrition. Hunger is a health issue. But it can also be an economic one dealing with the exporting of crops. It can be a political one, for who determines what crops will be produced? Does the government have farmers plant the more elite crops for export or the serviceable ones that will feed the masses? It is hard to say we will look at this only as a health issue.

Larson: May I go back to the question of purpose as noted in our charter? In August 1983, the board was given a document that specified that matter quite clearly. In terms of audience we are playing to three groups: (1) the university—to do things in ways that will make it a spiritually alive place for our students; (2) the church, particularly its medical dimensions; and (3) the larger bioethics and moral community of the world. The Ethics Center has a forum for sharing with that third group that no other institution in the church has. When scholars from other universities visit, we find we make many friends. And we send our newsletter to members of the Society of Christian Ethics, which includes professors of Christian ethics across the country. We have received encouraging responses from many of them about the work we are doing here at Loma Linda University.

The charter specifies that the center is “focus primarily, but not exclusively, on issues in medical ethics.” Some have wondered if looking at issues like apartheid and nuclear war is deviating from our original purpose. No! First of all, our original purpose specifies that we are to look at a number of issues. Second, as Charles has indicated, these issues do have medical ramifications. If people don’t have jobs or enough food to eat or are eradicated by nuclear bombs, they are not in good health! We feel there is a clear medical connection. Third, the Encyclopedia of Bioethics itself—the standard work in the field—includes material on racism. So the notion that medical ethics should be narrowly construed and not consider these other problems is not sound.

Teel: As an illustration I picture an agronomist teaching Third World farmers to produce 20 percent more food. This change has ramifications beyond helping hungry families. Periodically, these farmers had found it necessary to work down on the plains as migrant laborers to make ends meet. Now they become independent and do not have to go down to the plains for work. The landowners lose their supply of cheap labor and must raise the pay they give other workers. So by teaching people to become independent, the agronomist has engaged in a risky political act that can endanger his or her life. This situation illustrates the integral nature of the whole process.

Larson: We try to be balanced when we hold a conference on a controversial issue. We get the best Christian spokespersons we can find representing an array of convictions. The Ethics Center avoids taking a stand on any of these issues. An example is the nuclear war conference last fall in which we provided different viewpoints.

Ministry: Why do you follow this approach?

Larson: We have a lot of confidence in the Holy Spirit. We believe that as we speak openly out of honest Christian conviction we learn from each other. Then consensus can come about instead of being imposed on us by someone other than the Holy Spirit.

Ministry: Does the fact that you are not giving any ready answers indicate that the center is a kind of think tank?

Larson: Precisely. The upcoming abortion conference (November 15-17) will bring together people from all points of view in Adventism. They will present the best papers they can so that out of that prayerful interaction a consensus can eventually be reached. That is the contribution of the center. We have no authority in the church whatsoever.

Walters: The officers of the church wanted us to have it clearly in mind that we were not to speak for the church on ethical matters. We had no idea of ever doing that—it would be antithetical to our mission, which is to bring together the most articulate and thoughtful spokespersons on every side of an issue. The final answer is with God, but His Spirit can work through our communicating with one another.

Ministry: Did you help with the most recent church guidelines on abortion?

Larson: No, none of us were involved with that.

Ministry: Then preparing such guidelines isn’t part of what the Ethics Center would do?

Larson: No. The role of the center in such issues is to present papers, place the material in books, and have them circulated for people to read so that they can make up their own minds. We are a resource—not policymakers.

Ministry: How can you help the local pastor?

Larson: Pastors can get on our mailing list. They can read Update (our newsletter), attend conferences, and read the books we publish. One of us or some other representative of the center can visit the church as a guest speaker.

Ministry: If a pastor has a special ethical problem he is facing, say in counseling a family that has a member in the hospital in a coma, can he call you?

Larson: Yes, a pastor can call us for individual consultation in difficult cases.

Ministry: Tell us about your books.

Teel: One project that pastors would be interested in is a yearlong series on ethics in Adventism that studied each of Adventism’s cardinal doctrines—Creation, Sabbath, wholeness, etc.—for its personal and social ethical value. We asked What do these doctrines tell us? What ethical resources do we have in terms of them? I’m optimistic this book will be extremely helpful as a pastoral resource. Other books forthcoming will be on general medical ethics, Christian
views on nuclear war, and Adventism and abortion.

Ministry: Is the center considered liberal or conservative on issues?

Walters: I lament the labels of conservative and liberal because they are limited in how they can represent some issues. Who is liberal and who isn’t? One may be somewhat theologically liberal but more conservative on abortion than the statement the church has put out.

Larson: In Update we have placed articles taking two different stands on an issue back-to-back. Sometimes someone will read the first one and conclude that that is our stand and label us accordingly and not read the other one. My plea to those who feel we are not even-handed is to read the whole issue or to attend an entire conference or read the whole book—because we make a genuine effort to have all sides represented.

Sometimes a person published in Update may be known as a liberal and may even be someone who has left the church. Yet on the issue at hand that person may be very conservative and may be the best spokesperson espousing a particular viewpoint. One author we used was associated with a very liberal theological position, yet we couldn’t find anyone in southern California who could articulate better a conservative political view that we needed on a particular subject. We hope that people won’t judge in superficial ways.

The Ethics Center is not trying to serve all persons. It is trying to do a limited thing—that is, be academically responsible. We don’t go into Sabbath school classes for children and present a variety of ideas. We deal with responsible adults, and in that setting it is appropriate to present more than one perspective.

Ministry: You are saying that you want to present both sides of an issue, yet you say that you want to present Adventist ideas on these ethical issues. How can you do both?

Walters: In our individual writing we can present our positions from our own context. Then the Adventist position is not coming on as a doctrinal overlay, but is being projected out of our own rootedness in the tradition.

Larson: I think it is just more honest and Christian to present both sides of an issue.

There are things in our Adventist heritage that are worth exploring for their moral relevance. I have been pleased to note a parallel between what some very sophisticated philosophers are saying about what it means to be a person and Ellen White’s simple definition that humans created in the image of God possess the “power to think and to do.” That is a marvelous definition of personhood. That phrase contains much philosophical richness that we need to explore.

Teel: There is one thing I find myself wrestling with as an Adventist. In my younger days it seemed easy to distinguish between what was religion and what was politics. Now I am finding that total separation difficult, although I still consider the concept of separation of church and state vital. But to say that they have nothing to do with each other is questionable. Life does not work that way. My religious beliefs strongly influence my values and ethics. The ethics we share shape how we want to run our life together as a community, and this evolves into practices, traditions, and laws.

So I find it difficult to understand persons who say we should not write about politics. I can’t think of anything that doesn’t have political implications. I define politics in this case as how we decide to cooperate and shape the life we share. In that broad sense, our deliberations will often have political ramifications, whether we are talking about abortion, women’s rights, or when life begins and ends. They all tie to public policy and how we agree to live as a community.

Ministry: Give us an illustration.

Teel: One of my favorite editorials was in an early Adventist Review [the Seventh-day Adventist Church paper]. I believe it was by John N. Andrews, on the sin of slavery. He said that some suppose that when they get to the gates of the New Jerusalem and are dragging behind them a trunk labeled “Politics,” and they are asked to explain their pro-slavery stance, they will respond, “I’m not at all censorable for my attitude on slavery, for that was a part of my politics.” The editor asks, “Will such an answer be advanced by any reader of this article?” That is a precious illustration of how our moral and ethical value systems affect how we define our corporate life together—in other words, our politics.

Larson: Some of our friends say we should not discuss “political” issues such as apartheid, but stay with “nonpolitical” issues like abortion. Can you think of a more “political” issue than abortion? Apartheid involves us because our church can be part of a solution or part of the problem. To discriminate arbitrarily on the basis of race, gender, age, or any other morally irrelevant issue is unjust from a Christian point of view.

Walters: I have a problem with our going into politics only when our own interests are at stake. For instance, we feel it is all right to go into politics to protect our interests concerning tobacco- and alcohol-related issues or religious liberty. But are these the only issues that adversely affect God’s children? There are others that are equally important to God and what He is doing in this world.

Ministry: Can you tell us more about your plans?

Larson: The rhythm of our year goes like this. Monthly we have a medicine and society conference in the hospital. Quarterly we try to have something of interest for people in this region. Annually we have a national conference of importance—the next one will be the one on abortion.

In January of 1989 we will offer, for the first time, a fellowship in clinical biomedical ethics. We envision a dozen ministers, teachers, and medical professionals spending 12 weeks studying medical ethics here under the leadership of Dr. Gerald Winslow,* who will be the newest member of our team. Not only the university medical center but the Veterans Administration hospital and Riverside General will provide clinical opportunities. Nowhere else is there quite the same opportunity to study Christian medical ethics in a clinical setting. We look forward to having interested Ministry readers contact us about this unique learning experience.

Readers of Ministry who would like more information about the new learning opportunities being provided by the Ethics Center may contact Dr. Winslow at (714) 824-4956.

*Besides his work at the Ethics Center, Winslow, who holds a doctorate in Christian Ethics from the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, also serves as professor of Christian Ethics at Loma Linda University, specializing in biomedical ethics and ethical theory.
Where there’s smoke there should be ire

Is smoking a moral issue? Can the church continue to ignore it?

While public figures, health associations, and the official organization of physicians in America have spoken out against cigarette smoking, one powerful community has remained strangely silent.

Religion.

Because it is a primary teacher of values and morality in our society, the silence of our major religions and religious leaders about this issue is incomprehensible—even reprehensible.

Here and there a denominational journal may speak to the problem, but the major nondenominational journals have been largely mute. To its credit, Christianity Today, the leading evangelical journal, attacked smoking in a December 1986 editorial. Unfortunately, it did so on strictly health grounds, avoiding the moral questions by hoping this would not be seen as a sin-and-righteousness issue.

In a February 9, 1984, editorial, the Christian Century went a step further. Reporting on what it called the “tobacco wars,” it argued that smokers and nonsmokers should not be treated as “separate but equal” with respect to smoking in public places. “One willfully pollutes the air and harms both individuals and society. The other is the victim of that harm.” The editorial went on to say that smokers should be “made to pay for their vice.” The word vice is the closest the editorial got to making a moral judgment on smoking.

Not satisfied with religion’s simple silence regarding its products, the tobacco industry has used its financial resources to procure religion’s implicit endorsement. Citing an article in the New York State Journal of Medicine entitled “How Tobacco Companies Have Found Religion,” the Christian Century reported that Philip Morris, Inc., “the nation’s largest cigarette manufacturer, ‘attached itself to the prestige and influence of the Vatican’ when it sponsored the first United States tour of the Vatican art collections in 1983.” Sometime later Philip Morris also sponsored the national tour of The Precious Legacy, an exhibit of Jewish artwork confiscated from individuals killed in the Holocaust. In addition, in recent years notable religious organizations, such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, have hosted dinners honoring tobacco executives.

This coziness with the tobacco industry is going on at the same time that the Catholic Press will not advertise cigarettes, the North Carolina Council of Churches wants the state’s tobacco farmers to switch to other crops for “moral reasons,” and the Southern Baptist Convention urges Baptists who grow tobacco to develop alternative crops.

More than a decade ago I read an article by a Roman Catholic priest who asked whether the time had come for the church to acknowledge that smoking is a critical moral issue. After all, he reasoned, the ignoring of preventable conditions that cause suffering and death must be regarded as inherently unprincipled. He wanted to use the force of moral obligation to dissuade people—especially believers—from smoking.

It seems to me he was right. Think about it.
To begin with, the doctrines of creation and resurrection make it clear that the body is good, a gift from God that is necessary to conscious existence. We are psychophysical unities whose mental, emotional, and spiritual health depends in part on the health of our bodies.

Second, as John Donne said, we are not islands to ourselves. Each of us exists within a network of people who count on our being there for them. I heard a radio spot in which a lung cancer victim broke down when he mentioned the fact that because he would not quit smoking his two packs a day, his wife and children will be prematurely denied his emotional and financial support for the rest of their lives. In his own way he was saying that he had been selfish all those years, that if he had truly loved his family and friends, he would have stayed healthy as long as possible.

When we assume responsibility for the health of our bodies, we are being loving spouses, parents, children, and even friends. This is so because we are, as the philosophers are fond of putting it, beings-in-relation.

Third, religion’s failure to be more vocal about smoking opens religiously motivated prolife groups and their leaders to charges of hypocrisy. We now know that women who smoke during pregnancy not only risk their own health but also that of their babies. Maternal smoking during pregnancy decreases fetal growth rate, causes pregnancy complications (including those that contribute to premature delivery), and increases the incidence of spontaneous abortion (estimated at 50,000 per year), fetal death, and neonatal death. How then can believers shout about abortion and be silent about smoking?

Is it not time, then, to oppose both the growing of tobacco and the act of smoking on moral grounds? To declare that it is against the will of God? To urge clergy who smoke to stop modeling this behavior before their congregations, especially the young people?

Is it not also time for the religious community to support changes in our national policies on smoking by calling for a ban on all tobacco advertising and a national law prohibiting smoking in public places?

In recent times religion has been courageous about social reforms. Given the dangers smoking imposes on so many —each year 350,000 Americans die from it, seven times the number of Americans who died in the whole Vietnam War—does not religion need to be courageous again?

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Do you want to communicate more effectively with others? Do you want to bring healing to them? To communicate acceptance and love? Then use the art of touching.

Cathy McBride

It was a Monday, and the shopping center was half empty. Seated next to a large fountain in the middle of the mall, I drank in the sounds around me—clicking heels, the hum of voices, the steady rush of the spraying fountain. I watched as an elderly janitor wearing faded blue jeans and a black T-shirt mechanically swept up dirt that wasn't there. Shoppers without expressions strolled in and out of stores. Two men, one Black, one White, sat at opposite ends of a bench, watching the high-lights of a football game on a mall monitor. Everyone kept a respectable distance. No one let anyone else come close.

Why do we regard touching others so negatively? If we accidentally brush against a stranger, most of us apologize—as if we've insulted or stolen something from him.

Dr. Sidney Jourard sat in coffee shops all over the world and counted the times he saw one person touch another. His results were startling. In Puerto Rico he counted 180 touches an hour; in France, 110; and in the United States, only two. England did even worse—there he saw none.

How long has it been since some of our church members have been touched, really touched, with hands of gentleness? When was the last time you or I touched a fellow church member? I am afraid to answer that question.

But do our fellow church members really want to be touched? Or do they consider it an intrusion? Some may argue with me, but I believe many church members are hungry for our gentle touch of concern and comfort.

In reporting on Prince Charles and Princess Diana's visit to America, *Newsweek* said, "Diana . . . is an instinctive toucher, and people love her for it. Whether she's visiting old-age pensioners in a nursing home, children at a school, or even severely disabled spastics in a hospital ward, she will give everyone a pat, a caress, or a handshake—sometimes even a hug."

Recently I read about some intriguing studies on touching. One revealed that waitresses who touch their patrons receive larger tips than those who don't. That study also showed that libraries receive more positive evaluations if patrons are touched when they check out their books. Do our church members differ from these restaurant or library patrons? I think not.

Do you enjoy being touched? Most of us must admit that we do. We feel good when someone we admire gives us a kiss, a hug, or a pat on the back.

I remember one morning when I came face-to-face with the power of touch. That Sabbath we had a visiting speaker in our church, and my husband, LeBron, sat next to me in the pew. A hectic week had left me physically and emotionally exhausted, and I felt about as significant as a discarded cigarette butt. Though I blinked hard and tried to concentrate on the speaker, tears of discouragement burned my nostrils and threatened to overflow. Then, out of the blue, LeBron reached across the back of the pew, placed his arm around my shoulder, and squeezed me to him. His touch transformed my attitude. Instead of feeling
When she began attending our church, she came alone. A slow learner, she obviously came from a poverty-stricken home. Black roots stared brazenly from oily bleached hair; her clothes smelled of week-old body odors. One could easily miss the penetrating blue eyes in the flesh of her overly padded face.

Carol told me that she had been repeatedly abused sexually by her uncle. Understandably, she had little self-esteem. She was forever wanting to touch me or to be touched. If I was engaged in a conversation, she would come up beside me and clasp her arms around me. There she would remain until I finally shimmied out of her grasp.

Realizing Carol’s need, I made an effort to touch her on the arm in a casual manner when we talked. She drew emotional strength from touching and being touched. Because of her poor self-image, she desperately needed to feel touchable.

Professionals in the fields of medicine and psychiatry know the healing value of touching. At New York University therapeutic touch is part of the master’s curriculum in nursing. And one study reveals that 93 percent of doctors believe that touch helps relieve a patient’s fear of treatment.

**Touch communicates**

Touch can also enhance our rapport with our fellow church members or even visitors to our church. For instance, imagine yourself talking with a church member. The crowd is crowded and busy, and instead of focusing her eyes on you, the church member’s vision darts around the room to everyone and everything else. Communication wanes, and you might as well stop talking to the person. But if you casually touch the arm of that member as you talk, you will almost always draw her full attention and increase the level of communication.

At times, touching may also possess practical power for reconciliation with a church member or even your spouse. For instance, there are times when I feel distant from my husband, either because of an argument or because our lives have become too busy. Whenever this happens, all I need to do is reach out and embrace LeBron or just gently take his hand in mine. Suddenly the wall that was between us is shattered. I’ve found that it’s almost impossible to feel distant from or at odds with someone you are touching. Not surprisingly, professional marriage counselors have found that the happiest couples touch each other often.

Sometimes touching expresses more than words can. After the horrendous Mexican earthquake that killed 4,200 people, some continued their rescue attempts when officially all hope had ended. I watched as the news showed two dust-caked men who had refused to give up stepping out of the rubble that had once been a hospital maternity ward. In their arms were three screaming infants. These macho men, beaming their delight, giggled like little boys. After giving the babies to the doctors, the two heroes clasped hands, grinned—and then embraced. And their embrace was not restrained, but vigorous and robust.

The touch of these two men throbbed with so much emotion that tears sprang to my eyes. Never could words have conveyed their feelings as well as that embrace.

Touch is such a potent force in our modern world that we shouldn’t be surprised to find that it was an important part of Christ’s ministry as well.

The Scriptures reveal a sort of touch-magnetism going on between Christ and the people. In fact, our Lord seems to have relished touching and being touched. In the vast majority of His healings, Christ either touched the sick or was touched by them. Matthew 14:35, 36 says, “People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed” (NIV).

Sometimes we’re afraid to reach out to our fellow church members. Perhaps we fear rejection. But Christ loved the world too much to worry about getting burned. He chose instead to be completely open and vulnerable to others.

Sometimes we tend to recoil from unattractive people, but Christ was so accepting and loving that He willingly touched the unattractive—even those covered with leprosy. Considering the intensity of His love, it’s no wonder that “all who touched him were healed.”

Doesn’t it make you wonder what Christ’s touch would have felt like? Was it warm? Soft? Firm? Fierce? Gentle? It must have been quite an experience to have been touched by the hand of God. I’m reminded of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel masterpiece, which portrays God as giving life to Adam through the touch of His finger.

**It’s almost impossible to feel at odds with someone you are touching.**

Is touch always a pleasure for our fellow church members? Should we ever avoid touching them? All of us will admit that there are certain times when touch is unwelcome, possibly even irritating. I once attended a church where each week the same three women would greet me at the door with hugs. The ladies were certainly well-meaning, and many people relished their sincere desire to make the congregation feel welcome; but I knew the ladies only casually and was less than comfortable with their routine embraces. It seemed somewhat superficial, and I would have preferred a handshake at least some of the time.

Often when church members or visitors do not wish to be touched, they give off visual clues. They may stand stiffly or back away slightly. Generally I prefer for touching to occur spontaneously, when I am engaged in a significant conversation with someone. In this atmosphere I have never withdrawn or felt the other individual withdraw from a touch.

As important as touching our fellow church members is, we slight ourselves if we limit our tactile experiences to fulfilling our needs. For touch can soothe our overworked nerves and draw us closer to our Creator God. Imagine for a moment the feel of a cold slushy snowball as it’s pressed against your lips and nose. Next, caress your face with the lush velvet dress of a red rose. Last, walk through freshly mown grass and let the cool blades tickle your naked feet. Feel relaxing? Now think of the Creator who filled that rose, or blade of grass, or snowball, with such intricate wonder. Touch is indeed a special way to appreciate God’s creation and to realize His love for us.

In touch—whether it involves nature or a church member—our Creator offers refreshment. Pope John XXIII once said, “Never hesitate to hold out your hand. . . . Never hesitate to accept the outstretched hand of another.” By appropriating this advice, we can ensure that touch will not remain our forgotten sense.
The Christian teenager and the shotgun wedding

Anne Elver

What do you do when an unwed teenager who is a member of your church becomes pregnant?

Hello, Anne. This is Marjorie Biggs.* Can Harry do a wedding in 10 days?"

"Marge, I can ask him. He likes to have several counseling
sessions with the couple, but the decision is his. Can I have him call you when he
gets home from his hospital calls?"

"Yes, get him to telephone me. Tell him Kathy and Tim want to get married a
week from Saturday, on March 22. She’s making me a granny in September."

While I assured Marge that Harry would call her back, I dreaded telling
him Kathy and Tim want to get married a
week from Saturday, on March 22. She’s making me a granny in September."

Marge’s request would put Harry on
the spot too. He would have to conduct
his routine premarital counseling ses-
sions hurriedly or forgo them entirely.
He faced a dilemma—should he perform
a wedding that might not be right for the
couple, or should he insist on delaying
the wedding while the couple (and fam-
ily) obtained counseling? Unfortunately, none of the parties involved
sought anything except a wedding cere-
mony.

When pregnancy happens to a Chris-
tian teenage couple, special stress is
brought on all involved: the couple
themselves, their families, and the min-
ister. In the family it triggers strong and
conflicting emotions, and demands deci-
sions from everyone involved. Because of
the false impression that marriage some-
how rights the situation, the pressure is
on for a hasty wedding. However a pastor
handles the situation, there is the poten-
tial of much heartache afterward.

In addition, a teenage pregnancy is of-
ten a turning point. At this time some
teens drop out of church either tempo-
rarily or forever. Pregnancy and a quick
marriage disturbs the couple’s niche in
the congregation. They don’t quite fit
into either the adult activities or the
youth programs. Some church members
aren’t as understanding or forgiving as
they could be, and there might be an
unspoken prejudice against the teen
newlyweds. Parents of other teens often
aren’t comfortable when the couple asso-
ciates with their youngsters, and this
alienates the parents-to-be even further.

If it is handled well, a pregnancy can
draw teenagers closer to the church, the
Lord, and each other; but it can also do
just the opposite. It poses the potential
for continuing guilt, lifelong regret, and
alienation from the congregation.

Seek available resources

What can you, as a pastor, do to make
the best of it when the pregnancy of a
Christian teenager results in a request for
a shotgun wedding? You can best handle
such a situation when you have prepared
for it before facing it. Find out what the
rate of teen pregnancy in your area is.
Learn what aid is available to families
and teens facing this problem. When the
family knows that their pastor has access
to practical help, they are more likely to
call him for counsel before they make

Anne Elver, whose husband is a pastor, writes from Yukon, Oklahoma.

* Marjorie Biggs is the author of "Depression: A birds-eye view for ministers" (Thomas Nelson, 1987), and is a frequent contributor to "Ministry."
decisions that have lifelong consequences. Families tend to be emotionally upset at the news of teen pregnancies anyway, and under the duress of the moment may well handle the situation in a manner they will later regret. If you can spare them this additional grief, they will appreciate it.

Educate your church leaders as to the scope of the problem, and let them know you have literature and telephone numbers available should a teen pregnancy occur within a church family. Often another church leader learns of the pregnancy before you do, and thus is in a position to steer the family to you or another source of support and counseling quickly.

If there is a teen pregnancy support system in your area, invite a speaker to tell your congregation about it. Such a speaker can raise the issue in a nonthreatening way, and can start your congregation thinking of ways to handle this problem. Then should one occur, it is more likely to be handled constructively.

Take your normal policy on conducting weddings into account when you get a request to marry a teen couple because of pregnancy. Counsel them not to rush into the wedding. In the meantime, get the couple to consider other options. Make sure they know you will support them in whatever decisions they make.

Spend as much time with the couple as you can; try to determine whether they would have married at this time if the pregnancy had not happened. Ask, "If you should miscarry tomorrow, would you still get married?" Inquire about their plans. Teens tend to look at the immediate crisis instead of the future, and these two questions can show them they do need to consider the future, too.

Ask how they intend to relate to the future, avoiding situations in which temptation beckons. Should they end their relationship altogether?

A friend who pastors in another denomination says, "Since few teens understand the difficulty of resisting sexual temptation, I suggest regular meetings with a respected Christian adult to discuss their spiritual needs and their relationship, and to have prayer. If the couple will voluntarily agree to be honest with this person regarding their relationship (including sexual temptation), they are more likely to resist intimacy."

After the pregnancy has become known, to provide the couple with further support and to tie them to the church, go to a few of your key church leaders who know them and suggest they...
General Conference appoints committee on human life

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has appointed a committee (Christian View of Human Life) to study and make recommendations concerning the sociological, moral, ethical, and technical problems relating to abortion, euthanasia, heroic medicine, surrogate parenting, and other issues.

The responsibilities of this committee are to:

1. Identify social and technological issues that impinge upon the dignity and value of human life.
2. Study, from a biblical base, moral and ethical implications of defined issues as they may relate to the choices of individuals and stance of the corporate church and its institutions.
3. Provide information that will assist in making choices that affect the dignity and value of human life.
4. Make recommendations concerning a corporate stance or policy concerning issues relating to the Christian view of human life.

All those who have suggestions for this committee should direct them to the chairman, Albert S. Whiting, M.D., associate director for medical affairs, Health and Temperance Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D. C. 20012 U. S. A.

Members of the Christian View of Human Life Committee

Adams, Elvin E., associate director, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (henceforth abbreviated as GC) Department of Health and Temperance (physician).

Akers, George H., director, GC Department of Education

Banfield, Warren S., director, GC Office of Human Relations

Behrens, Lyn, dean, School of Medicine, Loma Linda University (physician)

*The names of the parishioners involved have been changed.

Together They Found

H.O.P.E.

Since high school, Cindy was slowly killing herself. She suffered from Bulimia Nervosa, an eating disorder, known as binging and purging. Cindy secretly ate large amounts of food, then made herself vomit. During the next 10 years, she and her family struggled with her disorder. They went to many non-christian counselors and therapies without any success.

There seemed to be no hope for Cindy and her family. Then their pastor, Bob Silver, and his wife, noticed an ad on H.O.P.E. (Helping Overcome Eating Disorders) in the March '88 issue of Ministry Magazine. They called Park Ridge Hospital and were immediately impressed with the compassion, family support and spiritual emphasis of the H.O.P.E. program.

Since that time, Cindy has successfully completed the program and is well on her way to recovery.

H.O.P.E., at Park Ridge Hospital, tackles the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa and compulsive eating. If you know someone with an eating disorder, H.O.P.E. can help you to help them professionally.

Call collect! (704) 684-1115.

A program of Park Ridge Hospital, P.O. Box 1569, Fletcher, NC 28732. Affiliated with Adventist Health Systems/Sunbelt.

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Computer Corner

Control Z

by Kenneth R. Wade

Computer Corner began as a regular feature in Ministry in 1985. It has now run its course. Our purpose in starting the column was to help pastors become aware of computers and their potential for helping with pastoral tasks. I know, based on the volume of mail I receive from pastors wondering about computer use, that it has served this purpose well. But now we have decided to move on to another way of addressing computer issues as related to the church. So this is my Z (end of file) column.

While Computer Corner will no longer be run as a regular feature in Ministry, this does not mean that the editors are turning their backs on computers. Actually the elimination of the column will in some ways help us to cover the field of computers in the church better because we will be able to do more full-length articles dealing with specific computer applications. An article early in 1989 will deal with the latest ideas on how to put together a good church computer system for a price almost every church can afford with a little planning and budgeting.

In this last column, let me review some of the points I believe are most important for pastors as they decide how to relate to computers.

1. Desire and facility for learning to use new equipment are key factors that you must consider before deciding that you need a computer. If you know you’ll regard the machine as a crazy newfangled contraption that only makes your work harder, don’t even consider becoming involved with one yourself. The investment will be wasted unless you have a secretary who will learn to use it. And if you love to fiddle and fool with programming and other technical applications more than you love to be with people, that should throw caution flags in front of you too—some pastors become too machine-centered and neglect their ministry to people.

2. For most churches and pastors, an IBM PC-compatible computer will prove the most useful because of compatibility of programs and data with so many other computer users, and because of the wide variety of software available at reasonable prices. However, for graphics-intensive work such as desktop publishing, the Apple Macintosh is ahead of any other popular personal computer.

3. The primary applications for a computer in the church are in keeping membership, interest, and visiting lists up-to-date, printing directories, and working with the financial records. In these applications a computer can save hours every month, but one must also be aware of the temptation to try to do too much—to make reports with unnecessary details—and thus to waste time.

4. After a word processor, the most useful program a pastor can buy for himself or herself is an outline processor such as PCOutline by Brown Bag Software, 2155 S. Bascom Ave., Suite 114, Campbell, CA 95008. You’ll find it useful for sermon preparation and for keeping notes organized.

5. A computer concordance can be a great help in doing research and preparing materials. See the November 1987 issue for our review of various programs, and watch for an article next year updating our research.

I will continue to be interested in hearing from you regarding computer applications and how computers can help in doing the work of God, so drop me a line here at Ministry.
From the Editors

More than a god of the gaps

David C. Jarnes

A
t times I have wond-
ered about the role
God plays in the
world—where can
we see Him at work?
People have viewed
Him—some still do—as what J. B. Phillips called the "god of
the gaps." When you don't know about
evaporation and condensation, then
God's direct action seems the best expla-
nation of how water comes from the sky.
But with this approach the greater your
ignorance, the more you think you see
God at work around you; while, on the
other hand, the more you learn about
nature, the smaller your God becomes.

Deists hold another view of God's re-
lation to His creation. They suggest that
He created it all and then stepped back to
let it run on its own. But such a lack of
involvement hardly fits the biblical pic-
ture of God—in whom "we live, and
move, and have our being."

But if we can find natural explana-
tions—in the physical and social sci-
cences—for most of what we see around
us, then where does God fit in?

I think creationists and evolutionists
alike would agree that our world is as it
is because matter and energy—and ani-
mate creatures—are governed by natural
law. It is the consistency and universality
of the laws of nature that make our uni-
verse knowable and habitable. And per-
haps it is here that we see God's continu-
ing presence in His creation. Without
the laws He established and continues to
maintain, the universe would be chaos,
"without form, and void."

A wise father whose infant, while
learning to walk, is suffering because of
the law of gravity wouldn't have that law
annulled even if he could. The act of
walking and even their very lives depend
on the continued functioning of that
law. Instead, the father will help his
child learn to use that law, learn to do
what it makes possible. Working with
benefiting by all the laws of nature—
allows us to live, work, and play.

This insight gives us a new perspective
on God's moral law, the Ten Command-
ments. That law is not a collection of
arbitrary demands laid upon us to test the
depths of our submission to God, nor is it
a set of divinely ordained bootstraps by
which we can attain righteousness—and
thus eternal life. Rather, God's moral
law makes possible our continuing exist-
ence as spiritual beings in relation to Him
and to our fellow beings.

Christian freedom, then, does not
mean release from obligation to that
law—we would be the poorer if it did. It
is true that conformity with God's law is
not the means of salvation. Only Christ's
sacrifice on our behalf could atone for our
sins and bring to us justification. But
having miraculously preserved us from
the natural results of our transgression of
that law, Christ will also bring us into
harmony with it. Like the child whose
freedom to move depends on learning to
function in relation to the laws of phys-
ics, our freedom as moral agents depends
on our learning to function in relation to
God's moral law—a process we know as
sanctification.

Note these two powerful paragraphs
from a book on Christian education:
"Christ came to the world with the ac-
mulated love of eternity. Sweeping away
the exactions which had encumbered the
law of God, He showed that the law is a
law of love, an expression of the Divine
Goodness. He showed that in obedience
to its principles is involved the happiness
of mankind, and with it the stability, the
very foundation and framework, of hu-
man society."

"So far from making arbitrary require-
ments, God's law is given to men as a
hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its
principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity
to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the
law guards the rights, the individuality,
of every human being. . . . It ensures
man's well-being, both for this world and
for the world to come. To the obedient it
is the pledge of eternal life, for it ex-
presses the principles that endure fore-
ever."

Too often, in our concern to preserve
the truth that we obtain righteousness by
faith alone, we have tended toward anti-
nomianism. Christ came to reform a reli-
gion that for many had degenerated into
legalism. But He did not teach that God's
moral code had no place in the kingdom
of grace. In fact, in His sermon on the
mount He protested against the sugges-
tion that He had come to abolish the law
(Matt. 5:17).

Revelation goes so far as to indicate
that those Christians who live in the
troubled times just before Christ's second
advent will be identifiable, in part, by
their faithfulness to God's law. The rem-
nant, the saints, are "those who obey
God's commandments" (Rev. 12:17,
NIV; see also Rev. 14:12).

As ministers, our task of preparing
people to meet God involves in part call-
ing them to faithfulness to His com-
mandments. And here we can contribute
to our world as well; God's law offers a
foundation on which we can build a soci-
ety characterized by stability, justice, and
peace.

*Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, Calif.
Pastor’s Pastor

With Jesus comes joy

Floyd Bresee

Christmas sermon seeds

Jesus and joy are inseparable. You can’t have either without the other. We waste our time, some of us a lifetime, trying to find joy without Jesus. On the other hand, if you claim to have Jesus and are not joyful, then what you have isn’t the real thing.

In Luke 2:10 an angel announces Jesus’ birth to the shepherds: “And the angel said unto them, (1) Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of (2) great joy, which shall be to (3) all people.” Note three lessons from this birth announcement:

1. Don’t be afraid of Jesus’ coming—it’s good news.

The New English Bible says it this way: “They were terror-stricken, but the angel said, ‘Do not be afraid; I have good news for you.’”

Seeing Jesus, man lost his fear of God. The Old Testament tends to picture a God who is more judgmental and harsh than does the New Testament. Why? Because God has changed? No. Humans dread the unseen. The Old Testament writers had never seen God and thus wrote of Him with a sense of fear and foreboding. Seeing God in Jesus dissipated the dread.

Don’t be afraid of Christ’s first coming, that is, conversion. At some time in life almost everyone wonders about the wisdom of giving his life to Christ. Might not such a decision kind of drain the fun out of life?

My country neighbor put out some steel traps one winter. I don’t know what he hoped to catch. I do know what he did catch—the neighborhood dogs. Three times I heard the loud yelping or the soft crying of a dog in pain. Three times I worked with a trap to open it carefully so as to free the animal’s crushed leg without causing more pain. One victim was so frightened and so frustrated with pain that he tried to bite me all the time I was attempting to free him.

How like the human predicament. Trapped by sin, we beg for release. Yet when Christ comes to help, we resist. Like the dog, we fail to understand that all He wants to do is set us free.

Don’t be afraid of Christ’s second coming, either at death or the Second Advent. Some approach the end of life on earth with fear and foreboding. They believe in God. They mean to be saved. But they look at themselves and come away thinking that it’s impossible. Speaking of Jesus, the angel promised, “He shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). If we had to manage and maneuver our own salvation, there would be great reason for fear. But that’s not how it works. Our business is to be His, and His business is to do the saving.

2. Jesus brings joy.

“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.” Why is Jesus’ joy such good news? Because it lasts. We understand this better by comparing three words: pleasure, happiness, and joy.

“Pleasure” is temporary. Let’s define pleasure as that feeling of delight we receive from a stimulation of our senses. I love pecan pie. Rolling a bite of succulent pecan pie around on the tongue is, for me, pure pleasure. The trouble is that eventually you do have to swallow. Moments later the sensation is gone. In fact, if you eat too much pie, that delicious taste in your mouth becomes a knot in your stomach. Pleasure is temporary.

“Happiness” depends on circumstances. We’ll define happiness in its most literal sense. The root word is hap, meaning luck, or chance. Enjoying robust health, you’re happy, favored by hap. But what if circumstances change and you contract cancer? Jesus must have an answer to life when circumstances go against us.

“Joy” lasts. On His way to Gethsemane, Jesus spoke of a “joy [that] no man taketh from you” (John 16:22). Early Christians found an internal peace that was impervious to external pressures (Acts 5:40, 41).

The joy that Jesus brings is a deep-down exuberance resulting from a love relationship with a Christ who will never fail to understand and will never leave you alone. Other relationships can end in death, or even divorce or some other form of rejection. Your relationship with Christ can never be severed by anything other than your own choice.

3. Jesus’ joy is available to all.

In our text, the angel promises this joy “shall be to all people.” There is no one so irreligious or so melancholy that Jesus’ joy is outside his or her grasp. Where do you get joy? Joy is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). When does this joy become ours? When the Holy Spirit brings Jesus within us.

Christmas is such a busy season. Have we become so busy with Christmas presents that we have neglected Christ’s presence? Nineteen hundred years ago Jesus looked for a place to be born. He’s still looking today. Offer Him your heart. With Jesus comes joy.
Alcoholism: what pastors can do

Hal Gates

entered the ministry after many years of alcohol and drug misuse. At the age of 43 I was destitute and nearly dead. I was able only to get out a faint plea of “God help me.” But by the time this article is read I will have had eight years free from alcohol and seven and a half years free from drugs. Like the Gadarene demoniac, I sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed, in my right mind, healed. To God be the glory!

My story illustrates the progression of the disease of alcoholism and drug addiction. E. M. Jellinek developed a curve that is the standard for plotting the course of the disease of alcoholism (see figure). Starting with occasional or experimental use, the user progresses into the early stages of alcoholism, then into the crucial phase, then the chronic phase, and finally into the obsessive-compulsive squirrel cage of drinking away the symptoms of drinking too much.

I started experimenting with alcohol when I was in the sixth grade. As I grew older my desire to be accepted by the older crowd kept me drinking. At this point alcohol use was a sin and not a sickness. But continued use soon led to psychological as well as physical addiction.

During my high school years I attended a Christian boarding school for part of a year, but my behavior led to expulsion. Back at public high school the sin and physical dependence took control again.

I attended a Christian college with the intention of becoming a medical doctor. With much prayer and determination I began to get my spiritual house back in order. The goal of becoming a doctor took precedence over my drinking, until one day when I went on an outing with a group of “good” students. I was surprised when some drinking occurred. That time I had only a swallow or two, but I soon found myself drinking more and more often. I ended up back in public college and fell back into my old pattern.

When I married, my wife and I went into business, and our social life soon began to revolve around alcohol. Over-indulgence in alcohol was not only accepted but encouraged by my peers. When our daughter was born, we tried to provide her with a good home, but the relationship ended in divorce just a couple of years later.

Alcohol helped me to deal with the loneliness, insecurity, guilt, and doubt. I continued to work hard at the business, and my staff covered up for me, “enabling” me. At this point sin was ripening into a chronic, habitual, and personally unmanageable condition.

I had an opportunity to enter law school at the age of 27, and I commuted a long distance so that I could continue to run my business and attend classes. I thought this might be the opportunity to get myself back together since I would be too busy for continual drinking. I rigidly controlled my drinking during the week and got drunk only on weekends.

When I finished law school, I sold my business and joined an established law firm. My law partner and I enjoyed the “good life”—which included abuse of alcohol and other drugs. After five years of this lifestyle, I found myself out of control.

I felt that I needed to get away from those people and that place, because I thought they were causing my problem. Actually I was lying to myself, because I was unwilling to admit that alcohol and drug use had anything to do with my problem. My life was unmanageable, but I was not willing to turn my will or problems over to God.

By this time sin had ripened into the full-fledged, medically defined physical, mental, and spiritual disease of chronic alcoholism. On the Jellinek curve, I was at the bottom. I dropped out of society and escaped to the San Juan Islands of Washington to live aboard a boat.

In the film The Disease Concept of Alcoholism II, Dr. David Ohlms states that 96 percent of alcoholics either die or go insane; few make it into recovery. But God was with me when, with a weak and quivering cry, I asked for His help. He heard me and, by His grace, ministered to me—in large part through the understanding and compassion of the members of a small church. I thus began the long process of recovery.

Understanding addiction

The Jellinek curve is a valuable tool for the pastor who needs to understand more about alcoholism and addiction. The facts, circumstances, and time stages may vary from person to person, but the curve of descent into and ascent out of alcoholism is quite predictable. The earlier in the downward spiral of the Jellinek curve the user is confronted with his or her addictive behavior, the better the prognosis for recovery.

As I look back on my addiction, the
course can be plotted step by step on the curve, the sin leading to a diseased condition of the mind and body. I wish someone, anyone, would have recognized my plight and intervened. As with many addicts, the "I can" syndrome reigned in my life: "I can do it myself," "I can quit any time I want." We deny our inability to control our lives, the shame and guilt become unbearable, and the spiral continues downward until it is interrupted.

There are an estimated 10 to 15 million alcoholics in the United States and nearly that many addicted abusers of illegal drugs. Young people comprise the fastest growing group. Many have multiple addictions, generally to alcohol and another drug. Figures show that substance abuse is a problem for all ages, races, socioeconomic strata, and religions.

Each of us has in our congregation substance abusers who, because they are afraid to admit they have a problem, end up denying it. Denial is often fueled by the addict's perception of other members of the congregation. Fear of rejection is a strong adjunct to denial. We need to foster an attitude of mutual trust so that people are able to communicate their needs and still find acceptance. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). It is often said that a church is a hospital for sinners. People expect us to be able to help them find solutions to substance abuse problems.

Assuming the ostrich posture does not help. Too often I have heard substance abusers say, "I went to my pastor, and he didn't even know what I was talking about. He said I needed to trust Jesus more and said a little prayer; that was all." We must be prepared to put community and church resources to work to help substance abusers.

**How to help**

In order to help, pastors must avail themselves of all the tools available. Our congregations need to be giant support groups, reaching out in love, compassion, and understanding to the hurting ones. This can be done successfully if the people are informed about such things as alcoholism's effects on users and their families.

The relationship between evangelism and substance abuse also needs to be understood. Christ's commission to go into all the world, preaching, teaching, and baptizing, is the essence of evangelism. As we go forth into our communities to lead people to Christ, we encounter substance abusers and individuals who live with substance abusers.

Those who have lived for years with substance abusers have felt inadequate or have feelings of incompleteness in comparison with other people. This feeling is amplified when they come into close communion with "good" church members.

Those who come from homes in which there is a substance abuse problem are often found to be as sick as the abusing family member. The ideal is, of course, for the family to recover together. However, the family can recover even if the addicted person does not seek recovery. Care must be taken with these families because often they are similar to battlefield casualties, the shell-shocked walking wounded. To help them requires...
honest, up-front compassion and concern, coupled with a knowledge of the burdens the family bears.

One of the most damaging misconceptions about addiction holds that if the substance abuse stops, the problems will go away. The divorce rate actually is higher for recovering addicts than for those making no attempt at recovery. Longstanding problems and behavioral patterns do not just suddenly disappear. Unresolved problems, guilt, anger, depression, hatred, fear, mistrust, and denial that have not been dealt with are all manifestations of the past. These not only threaten the marital relationship and the relationship with other family members, but also contribute to the relapse of the person trying to recover from substance abuse.

Not only is the recovering person or family self-conscious in the midst of the congregation, but uninformed people in the congregation may unconsciously react negatively to the recovering person.

This happens in a screening process we call the "leprosy syndrome," or "unclean, don't touch." Only by patient education of the body of Christ will the congregation be able to break this pattern and allow the recovering families to be nurtured and assimilated into the congregation.

This also holds true for backslidden members who wish to return to the church. Guilt and shame are even more menacing to Christian alcoholics than to their secular counterparts. In addition, the recovering alcoholic may return with a chip on the shoulder. Even a slight misunderstanding may lead the alcoholic to accuse church members of hypocrisy.

The SDAXA program

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have started a Christ-centered support network for people recovering from addiction. The group is called SDAXA Regeneration and includes people with substance use/abuse backgrounds as well as family members. There are now 44 such groups operating in eight states. The support group is open to all who wish to accept Jesus Christ as the highest power and to work the 12 steps, as we have adapted them to Scripture, together with claiming the Bible promises for victory in their lives. The group serves as a bridge between the substance abuser and the church, and works as an adjunct to, not a replacement of, other treatment programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon.

The support group starts out with a program of information and education for the whole church. Later the leaders of the group are brought together for training. The entire church must be educated so that the congregation can assist the group.

As church members learn about substance use/abuse, they can be of real help to one another. They can also reach out to their neighbors and friends with the loving hand of Jesus. Often backsliders can be reunited with their church family through this kind of understanding ministry.

Some people who are currently in one of the 12-step programs are looking for more understanding of spiritual issues. This Christ-centered support group supplies what they have been seeking. Then if the people want to learn more specific information about Scripture, Bible studies can be arranged on an individual basis. Discussion of Bible issues is not encouraged during the support group sessions. A separate Bible study group is the place for that type of discussion. The support group is a place for people to talk about their Highest Power, Jesus Christ, and to claim Bible promises.

Victory is the name of ministry for alcoholics; victory for the church body over their narrow and often cutting view of the dependent person is necessary if the church is to assimilate him or her into a strong, lasting, and eternal fellowship in the love of Jesus Christ. Through loving acceptance and nurture, the church can help the dependent person gain the victory over feelings of inadequacy, shame, guilt, anger, and frustration. The family members also need to sense victory in being assimilated into a sharing, caring, giving, and loving family.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). We need to see the victory of Christ over Satan in this great controversy over the souls of men and women, and the victory of Jesus Christ is in healing the disease of addiction.
Educational materials to prevent or deal with chemical dependency

All the materials listed below are available from Narcotics Education, Inc., 6830 Laurel Street NW., Washington, D.C. 20012-9979. Call toll free 1-800-548-8700 to receive a catalog or to order any of these items.

Drug Prevention Magazines
The Winner and Listen
Every Christian home should have The Winner for ages 9 through 12 and Listen for teens. Both publications are also ideal for use in parochial schools. Teaching guides are available for classroom use. Single subscription to The Winner is $7.95 and to Listen, $13.95. In classroom quantities, nine-month subscriptions to The Winner are $5.95 and to Listen, $8.95. Free samples are available upon request.

The Winner Vacation Bible School Special Issue
A free promotional kit explains how your church can include anti-drug education in its Vacation Bible School. A sample of the Vacation Bible School special issue of The Winner is included in the kit.

The Winner Halloween Issue
Church members can give trick-or-treaters a special Halloween issue of The Winner and promote wholesome drug-free living through its stories, games, and puzzles. Free information and sample copy upon request.

Pamphlets
Sample Pamphlet Collection
There's a wealth of material in this collection of 17 pamphlets, including: How to Stop Smoking and Breathe Free, Twenty-one Reasons to Say No to Alcohol, Cocaine—Drug of Illusion. $3.50.

Parents' Guide to Drug Abuse
This pamphlet outlines the steps parents can take when they think their child may be using drugs. It also emphasizes the important role of the church in preventing drug use. 30 cents.

Books and Booklets
Alcoholism in the Family and Cocaine in the Family
These booklets explain the harmful effects of each drug and how family members can be part of the solution. 16-page paperbacks, $1.10 each title.

Dying for a Drink
Anderson Spickard, M.D., Presbyterian minister, uses case histories to help answer such questions as: Why do people become alcoholics? Is addiction a disease or a sin? How can families, churches, and ministers help? What about Alcoholics Anonymous? 211-page paperback, $6.95.

Getting Them Sober, volumes 1 and 2, and an action guide
These definitive books, by Toby Rice Drews, help those who live with addicted persons promote family healing. 490 pages in three-paperback set, $10.50 per set.

How to Save the Children You Love From Drugs
Author Ken Barun is a former director of Nancy Reagan's drug awareness campaign. His comprehensive guide covers prevention, intervention, and treatment of drug use by children of all ages. 276-page hardcover, $12.95.

Peer Pressure Reversal
This excellent guide by Sharon Scott helps parents and teachers learn how to teach children to reverse negative peer pressure. 185-page paperback, $9.95.

How to Say No and Keep Your Friends
Sharon Scott offers preteens and teens help with the difficult decisions they face about drug use and sexuality. She outlines step-by-step methods for dealing with peer pressure without putting friendships in jeopardy. 100-page paperback, $4.95.

Positive Prevention—Putting the Pieces Together
Parents, teachers, and community leaders will find many valuable ideas for motivating teens to stay free of alcohol and other drugs in this resource manual. 65-page paperback, $19.95.

Celebrate With Others the Drug-free Choice
A how-to handbook for teens on organizing prevention programs. 54-page paperback, $8.95.

Marijuana Alert
Peggy Mann's monumental report of current scientific research and up-to-date resources is a classic reference book on marijuana. 526-page paperback, $10.95.

The Sad Story of Mary Wanna
This excellent coloring and activity book by Peggy Mann introduces scientific anti-marijuana education to children ages 6 through 11. 40-page paperback, $2.95.

Safety Kids Play It Smart, Stay Safe From Drugs
Eight upbeat sing-along songs interspersed with a dramatic story on audio-cassette teach the dangers of alcohol and drugs in an entertaining way. Comes with an activity book for children to color as they listen to the story and sing along. Enjoyed by ages 6 through 12. 36-page paperback, $9.95.

Do It With Skits
Here are 15 skits proven to be easy for teens to learn and perform. Also explains how to organize, recruit, and train participants to present a program of anti-drug skits. 46-page paperback, $5.95.

Videos
The Twelve Steps
A 35-minute video for adults. Stirring insights into the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and how they can be applied to drug addiction, overeating, and gambling. $39.95.

High on Life, Not on Drugs
A 35-minute video for teens. Police Sergeant Bud Hulsey combines humor with straight talk to analyze why people use drugs and to show better ways to find satisfaction in life. His formula for happiness and drug-free living presents the role of spirituality in a way that is acceptable even in public schools. $29.95.

Three Ways to Keep Your Kids Off Drugs
A 46-minute video for parents and teachers. Presents Bud Hulsey's commonsense approach to keeping kids off drugs through character-building techniques as taught at the FBI National Academy. $29.95.
Did Jesus Rise From the Dead? The Resurrection Debate

On May 2, 1985, Gary R. Habermas and Antony Flew participated in a public debate at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, entitled “The Historicity of the Resurrection: Did Jesus Rise From the Dead?” This book includes the substance of that debate, continuing discussions among the philosophy faculty, and reactions from noted scholars Wolfhart Pannenberg, Charles Hartshorne, and J. I. Packer.

Antony Flew will be familiar to first-year philosophy students because of his sharp critiques of religion in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, God and Philosophy, and other works. He is an able advocate of the skeptic’s position on the existence of God. Habermas is less well known, although he has written four books on the Resurrection. His control of the evidence is powerful; the evidence itself is compelling; and Flew is never able to come up with a convincing rejoinder.

There are a couple of minor weaknesses in the debate. First, Flew was not as prepared as one would have expected on questions about the dating and authorship of portions of the New Testament. While he has some acquaintance with this intricate scholarship, he is not at home with it. Habermas, however, shows clear mastery of the material. Flew’s frequent rebuttal is “Well, we just don’t know what happened.” I wished Flew had done more homework so he could have based his argument more on knowledge than ignorance.

Those who have felt the discomfort of being labeled “fundamentalist” and “obscuratorist” will recognize the temptation of self-righteousness to which Habermas occasionally falls prey. There are times when his response to Flew’s critiques leaves us with the impression that he is defending his presentation rather than his ideas.

This is an excellent book in which a learned skeptical philosopher and able apologist go head-to-head. The participants state their positions clearly, and the debate format makes the opposing viewpoints accessible to the reader.

While not in the sort of thing you would use as an evangelistic book, it provides pastors with historical evidence of Christ’s resurrection. The Christian position not only holds its own, it carries the day.

The Biblical View of Self-esteem, Self-love, Self-image

In this book the author refutes Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs” and examines the tenets of the evolving self-esteem movement. He sees this movement as threatening the basic Christian concepts of sin, guilt, and the Protestant understanding of grace. He frequently quotes from television pastor and author Robert Schuller, who calls for a “new reformation” and a “swiping change in theology.”

In quoting large segments of his opponents’ writings, Adams is in danger of converting the questioning reader to the philosophy he is disputing. Besides rejecting what he terms a “false belief that borders on heresy,” the writer also disagrees with the commonly held view of the value of sinful man in God’s eyes. He regards free grace and love as contradictory to Paul’s statement in Romans 5:6, 8, and 10. He expounds on the sinful state of man in enmity with God.

The book is not convincing to this reviewer, lacking good journalistic quality and credibility. It is valuable for the warning it gives about accepting easy solutions for the human dilemma as often expressed by advocates of the self-esteem movement. For this reason the book can make a positive contribution to the library of a minister or educator. However, fundamentalists should beware of accepting the author’s interpretations unquestioningly and would do well to use Adams’ work as a basis for their own research.

Preach For a Year

This volume offers 104 brief sermon outlines (two for each week) grouped according to seasons and topics. Each outline has an introduction, body, and conclusion, but the divisions appear arbitrary. The pattern of outlines does not make use of recent developments in homiletical theory or the current emphasis on “telling our story.”

Biblical texts and illustrations are scattered randomly throughout the outlines in a way that exhibits more biblicism than responsible use of the material.

A compilation such as this can be helpful to the preacher as a means of “priming the pump” or suggesting development of a sermon. It can say “here is something to begin with” or “here is a possible way of dealing with this text.” But used in entirety, or depended upon regularly, it can destroy a preaching ministry. Phillips Brooks called a sermon “truth through personality.” It must be the preacher’s witness to the truth—modest, or even poor, as the sermon may be. No one can fulfill the calling for him or her. The preacher who is too busy to make the sermon a personal witness to the gospel is too busy.

Twelve Keys to an Effective Church
Kennon L. Callahan, Harper & Row, New York, 1987, guidebook, 126 pages, $11.95, workbook, 46 pages, $4.95, paper. Reviewed by Chad McComas, pastor, Corvallis Seventh-day Adventist Church, Corvallis, Oregon.

The thought of long-range planning with my church has never been a pleasant one. When I have felt the urge to do systematic planning, the reality of the horrendous process comes to mind. It takes so long to get anything done, and often I haven’t been sure what we did after we had done it.
With this experience behind me I started reading Callahan’s book with apprehension. Expecting to be lost in planning process jargon, I was pleasantly surprised to find his process simple. Long-range planning is divided into six easy and fun sessions.

The Leaders’ Guide explains the six sessions and their rationale. The author suggests that grass roots leaders read this guide with the pastor and staff members. With the reading as a basis, the planning committee can make quick work of the actual sessions.

The Planning Workbook includes exercises to use during the sessions. As your planning committee works through the book, they discover their church’s strengths compared with the 12 central characteristics of an effective church. Then they decide what four areas they want to improve and develop, how to plan a timeline, and how to determine key objectives.

As you read through these companion books, you will soon develop an excitement for planning again. As I read them, I could hardly wait to try the ideas in my own church. With Callahan’s help, we may become an effective, long-range planning church after all.

As the year draws to a close and you plan for 1989 and beyond, get these two books, you will soon develop an excitement for planning again. As I read them, I could hardly wait to try the ideas in my own church. With Callahan’s help, we may become an effective, long-range planning church after all.

Books on C. S. Lewis
On the 25th anniversary of the death of C. S. Lewis, we include several books published in recent years about this famous writer who has greatly influenced contemporary Christian thought.

This biography of C. S. Lewis and Joy Davidman tells how two people seemingly unalike, yet very much alike in their faith, meet, and what happens to them. Their life together is an intense mingling of joy, pathos, and tragedy. It pictures what real love looks like.

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Williams being moved by his deep caring for people (he answered every letter he received). We are saddened by his lack of understanding about how to care for his own health. Sayer recalls minor details of Lewis’s life, even what he ate for breakfast! His is a fascinating story for Lewis admirers and scholars, and a well-documented one.


Much biographical information is packed into this small volume that includes intimate and beautiful insights into the relationships five well-known Christians had with their spouses. Besides Lewis, they are John Knox, Hudson Taylor, Billy Sunday, and Grace Livingston Hill. The stories provide excellent sermon material.

To study the life of C. S. Lewis is also to study that of his creative, uninhibited, and totally liberated wife, Joy Davidman. This book is a biography of her life.


Christopher has written this introduction to the writings and life of C. S. Lewis for the college-age reader.


This is a revised edition of an earlier work by the same author. Lindskoog is a capable scholar who has also studied and written on Lewis’s theology as expressed in his children’s books.
Letters
From page 2

tion. He states that “the major sources to which they [Adventists] normally turn for direction in matters of faith and practice—the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White—are silent, or at least less than unequivocal about abortion.” Since when has the argument from silence taken priority over principle in the Adventist Church?

I believe it’s time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to take a stand against the evils of our day in the same way it has stood against the doctrines that are not biblical.

I hear some people in our church say that we ought to support capital punishment, but when I ask them if they would pull the switch and take another person’s life, they are suddenly silent. Could it be that the same is true when it comes to abortion? If those who make the policies regarding abortion were to be asked to actually perform one, what would their position be?

Maybe we ought to stop asking the mother or the father or the doctor what they think and start asking the Lord what He thinks. Isn’t it time we started being consistent when it comes to the Word of God and the authority it ought to have in matters of faith and practice? If I read the Word of God correctly, I find that part of the reason the Lord rebuked Israel so many times was because Israel failed to meet and deal with the social ills of the day. We are in danger of doing the same. —Terry C. Grimm, pastor, Ashland Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ashland, Kentucky.

The General Conference has established a committee to develop a policy regarding abortion. Ministry will report the conclusions of that committee. See page 20 for further information. —Editors.

Focus on God, not audience
First, many thanks for your magazine. Glad to see your attention given to abortion again.

I would like to comment on the article about reading the Scripture in church (July 1988). Point 9 suggests, “Look at the congregation frequently.” Just the opposite is better. Look at them as you begin to read and as you finish, but in between read with transfixed attention, since God is speaking to you first, and you never take your eyes off Him. I find it distracting to have someone who is reading to me always pausing to look at me. After all, you are reading, not declaring. —F. A. Hertwig, Lincoln, Missouri.

Not the only Adventists
This is not the first time that I have written to you to express my continuing dissatisfaction with the usage of language that I find more than mildly offensive in this fine publication. I refer specifically to your frequent use of the word Adventist—often coupled with the innocent-looking article the—to refer to your denomination. For example, in the article “Seventh-day Adventists Believe...” (July 1988), the first 20 lines alone contain no fewer than four such usages.

If there were such a thing as the “Adventist Church,” both Seventh-day Adventists and all other Adventists would belong to it, and believe me, there would be considerably more diversity of opinion in such a church than would be implied in the publication of the book (correctly) entitled Seventh-day Adventists Believe...!

Since there isn’t such a church, some of the rest of us would really appreciate it if you would at least imply your acknowledgment of our existence by refraining from referring to yourselves as if you were indeed the only Adventists on the planet. —Your fellow Adventist, John H. Roller, First Advent Christian Church, Charleston, West Virginia.

We recognize that we are not the only Adventists—that we do not have exclusive claim to that name. But to use the full name of our church in every reference to it or its components would be awkward and tiresome. And we know of no other suitable abbreviation. We find a precedent in the fact that citizens of the United States are called Americans when citizens of the other countries of North or South America could properly claim that name also. —Editors.

Thanks for sending Ministry
Thank you very much for sending me your magazine Ministry regularly, even though you recognize I am not committed to the Seventh-day Adventist theological position. The July (1988) issue reached me this morning, and I want to thank you particularly for the articles on preaching it contains. Also, I enjoyed reading the article “How to Stay Fit While You Travel,” by Betty Gibb. I am considering writing on the challenge of physical fitness and how to maintain it in the busy pastorate, and I found some seed thoughts in this article quite helpful. —Terry McNulty, Hornsey, London, England.

As one who has received your magazine since requesting it in 1986, I am writing to say a word of thanks. I really appreciate the fact that this excellent magazine comes to me free of charge. I must say that while there are, at times, items with which I might take issue, the challenge that I get is very helpful.

When the new issue arrives, I usually read it through in a short time and always find articles that speak to something that is relevant in my own life or ministry. Some ideas that are well suited to America are impossible for us, yet they give food for thought. —D. H. Allen, New Row Presbyterian Church, Coleraine, Northern Ireland.
Utah seminar

A Ministry Professional Growth Seminar will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, November 2, 1988. Mervyn G. Hardinge, M.D., D.P.H., Ph.D., former professor in and chairman of the departments of preventive medicine and public health at Loma Linda University Medical School, will speak on "Are Your Defenses Down?", "The Secrets of Endurance," and "Preacher Burnout."

Ministry Professional Growth Seminars provide 0.5 hours of continuing education credit and are open to clergy of all faiths. For further information, contact John Eagan, telephone (801) 484-4331.

A gift for your givers

Looking for a way to say thanks to those who donate time or money to you or your organization? Give them a 1989 page-a-day calendar.

Each page contains an inspirational quotation on giving, providing an everyday reminder of your appreciation for their gift. You may personalize the calendar with a sticker on the back above the calendar pad.

You can obtain a single copy of the calendar for US$6.50, plus $1.50 for shipping. Quantity orders receive discounts: 2-24 calendars are $6.00 each, plus 15 percent for shipping; 25-99 are $5.60 each, plus $7.00 per 25 for shipping; 100-499 (in lots of 25) are $5.55 each, plus $6.00 per 25; and 500+ (in lots of 25) are $4.35 each, plus $5.00 per 25.

All orders include individual mailers for distribution. A check payable to "Giving Calendar—PSI" must accompany your order.

For more information, or to order, write Pearly David, Giving Calendar—PSI, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012; or phone (202) 722-6132.

Expanding the church’s outreach

The Annual Sacrifice Offering will be taken on November 12, the concluding Sabbath of the Week of Prayer. Church members could hardly hope to find a more fitting way to express their renewed commitment to Christ than by giving sacrificially so that others may also share the spiritual privileges that are theirs.

The church’s world budget receives support through the Sabbath school missions and the regular world budget offerings. The money the annual sacrifice offering brings in gives an extra boost to this fund, furthering the advancement of God’s work on the frontiers of faith. Funds intended for this offering should be placed in an offering envelope and designated “Annual Sacrifice Offering—Extra Gift.”

$10 for your ideas

We’ll pay you $10 for each publishable Shop Talk item that you submit that is not selling a product or service. We’re looking for practical ideas for making ministry easier and more effective. Send your ideas to Ministry, Attn. Shop Talk editor, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

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