“No one wanted to be considered the least. Then Jesus took a towel and a basin and so redefined greatness.”
Children of immorality?

I was happily surprised to see part of my letter in your magazine (November 1990), until I realized that you may have misunderstood me (and edited me) to imply that I am the father of two children by an immoral woman. That added poignancy to the letter, but, alas, is wrong.

Meanwhile, I’m still trying to figure out how to explain this one to my faithful wife! — James L. Swindle, Glendale, California.

We’re sorry for any misleading implications our editing brought about. Please assure your wife that we don’t know anything about you that she doesn’t already know! — Editors.

Beneficial insights

I received the November 1990 issue of Ministry just this afternoon. I am a retired Methodist minister who has been richly blessed in receiving complimentary copies of this publication for a number of years. I immediately opened this issue to the article by Dr. Alden Thompson, “What Kind of Prayers Would You Publish if You were God?” This is perhaps the most enlightening analysis I have been privileged to peruse relating to those psalms that speak with such a cruel attitude of vengeance and violence! I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Thompson for the very beneficial insights he has shared with us in this “enunciation of inspiration!” — Charles Rhinehart, Casselberry, Florida.

Cleanse the inside of the cup

The articles on divorce in your November 1990 issue arrested my attention. Adventist Christians have done and are doing a lot of good in furthering the gospel of Christ, but like other reformation movements we have somehow lost sight of the weightier matters of the law along the way. The divorce rate is clear evidence of the collapse of our values.

It is so easy for people to be converted to the outside trappings of a religious faith and still have nothing of real value. Jesus warned the religious leaders of His day not only to make white the outside of the cup but to be sure to cleanse the inside, also. And that’s the hard part.

Jesus also said a small portion of leaven would permeate the entire loaf. And divorce has been by far the worst leaven ever to enter the witness of our faith. It has without a doubt done more to destroy our witness before the world than anything else.

We have shared with the world for years that there were only two institutions that Adam and Eve brought forth from the Garden of Eden: the Sabbath and marriage. And we made the fatal mistake of completely forgetting the second institution while working diligently to preserve the first. That mistake has cost us our witness before the world as a people who have the answer for what is ailing this planet. If we had only sensed that the strongest witness we can muster about doctrinal truth is worthless unless it is borne out by stable marriages in which these truths find their most elevated form of expression.

We have been placed in the agonizing position of having to give an answer to a world that is asking: If the three angels’ messages hold the secret to life’s problems, then why are so many Adventist families sinking in the quagmire of dissolution? What an irony. If we knew the answer to that, we would not only have the three angels’ messages to the dying world, we would be a complete, living embodiment of that message. And divorce would never have become our leaven. — William L. Fulton, Owensboro, Kentucky.

Consult Scripture, not emotions

Most of the angry respondents to Tim Crosby’s article “Does God Get Angry?” (see Letters, November 1990) were consulting their emotions, not Scripture. A God who didn’t get angry at sin would no longer be God. Did God just shrug the Holocaust off with no intent to bring retribution on such monstrous criminals? God’s love is as surely revealed in His justice as in His mercy.

The lost will readily perceive God’s justice as anger when the angel casts them into “the great winepress of God’s wrath” (Rev. 14:19, NIV). And as the Lamb opens the scroll in Revelation 5, an agonizing cry goes up from humanity, “Hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath [anger?] of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath [anger?] has come, and who can stand?” (Rev. 6:16, NIV).

The hallmark of Adventism, the third angel’s message, warns that “if anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury [anger], which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath [anger?]”. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:9, 10). Do words have meaning? Are we reading them?

The attempt to make palatable to proud, sin-laden twenty-first-century people God’s anger toward sin deprives God of His most admirable (and costly) attribute: His justice.

Wrath without mercy falls only twice in human history: on God’s Son, at the
How does one portray an abstract idea visually? Two of this issue's articles discuss servant leadership. Ministry's editors and designers wrestled hard with the question of how we could best convey this theme on the cover. Then we thought of the example Jesus set in washing His disciples' feet. Of this act someone said, "He took the towel and basin and therein redefined greatness." In serving His disciples, Jesus made the abstract concrete. May we do as well for those in our congregation.

David C. James

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Letters

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Pulling up roots
Ellen Bresee

The flowers had to be moved. I pulled up whole clumps by their roots. Carefully I separated them and set them in the soil in a new place. Yet the next day they looked wilted and almost dead. Only through daily watering and weeks of special nurturing did they finally establish new roots and bloom again.

Ministerial families are like my flowers. They often find themselves being uprooted and moved. And when they are, it takes time for them to establish new roots and come to full bloom again.

As a rule, men make this transition more easily than do their wives. Their conquering spirit thrives on new challenges. Women prefer security and the support of old friends. They fear change and find it painful to pull up roots and establish new relationships. Some ministers' wives have told me they actually grieve for at least a year after moving.

The minister also finds it easier to be accepted by the new congregation. The minister is, after all, the "holy person" who just preached the Word of God up front. Parishioners are eager to gain the minister's favor. They usually shoulder the heaviest burden of helping the children readjust. Their attitude about the move will affect the children. They may have to act positive when in reality they are feeling quite negative.

Finding the positive

As is true of most other undertakings in life that have their bad points, if we look a little harder we can find positive aspects to moving. For one thing, moving gives us an opportunity for a fresh start—smarter because we've learned from our mistakes. Staying in one place too long can produce a sluggish, passive attitude and stunt intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth.

Paul spoke of the most helpful attitude when he wrote, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

Moving also helps free us from the tyranny of possessions. It keeps us from being preoccupied with material objects.

There are a number of ways those of you who are ministers can make the uprooting process less painful. Let me share a few.

1. Introduce your family on their first Sabbath in your new church. Let the congregation know that your family is a unit, that you are not some kind of separate entity. Prearrange with the family to sit on the aisle so that as you exit the church service you can pause and take them along with you. Husband and wife, and children if they choose, can greet the parishioners as they leave the sanctuary.

2. As you introduce your family, you might add a few words about your spouse. Tell the congregation that your spouse is interested in them, but ask them to allow your spouse freedom to work for the church in the areas where he or she feels qualified.

3. You might, as some pastors do, invite the church board to appoint a support group for the pastoral family.

4. Pastors have a way of jumping into their new challenges with both feet. They get too busy too fast and neglect the family. Take special measures to see that this doesn't happen. After a move your family needs your support more than ever.

Either or both pastor and spouse may take responsibility for the last four items:

5. Try to settle the house quickly. It will give you a more settled, at-home feeling.

6. Help your children feel a spirit of adventure by going with them to find the parks, the ice-cream shop, etc. If you move during the school year, write to the new teachers before you move and let them know your children are coming. Perhaps they will even have the children in the class write a welcome note to your children. Keep your conversations about the move positive.

7. Make up a "moving list." Include changes of address, what goes in your "Urgent Box"—items that you will need on arrival, etc.

8. When you find yourself—or other members of your family—feeling distraught and lonely, or frustrated because

Ellen Bresee is the director of Shepherdess International.
you can’t even find the grocery store, lift up your heart and voice in that old, well-known hymn: “Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go. . . . Anywhere with Jesus will be home sweet home.”

Goodbye again

Carrol Grady

A familiar ache twists her heart.

Half-full boxes wait to receive
The chipped wedding dishes,
Rows of well-read books,
A chubby handprint, preserved in plaster of Paris,
A pillow made by a friend in California,
The Chinese abacus, the llama rug from Peru, the brass lamp from India.

While she stands at the open window,
She gazes at the weeping willow
that was planted two years ago,
The azaleas that will bloom rose and purple next spring,
The picnic table under the tall tulip tree,
The sunny spot where she had dreamed
of a bed of blue iris.

And she remembers
A lifetime of goodbyes,
A lifetime of painful uprootings,
A lifetime of unfinished dreams,
A lifetime of severed friendships,
A lifetime of hopeful new beginnings.

“And they shall build houses,
and inhabit them;
And they shall plant vineyards,
and eat the fruit of them.

“They shall not build,
and another inhabit;
They shall not plant,
and another eat:

“For as the days of a tree
are the days of my people,
And mine elect shall long enjoy
the work of their hands.”

Then she returns to the boxes,
a wistful smile curving her lips.

Being my brother’s keeper

(Continued on page 24)
An early-morning call pierced the chaplain’s consciousness like a dentist’s needle finding a nerve...
Does God still love me?

As I enter Miss Dreyton's room, I see that she lies weeping in her hospital bed. It is 2:00 a.m.; her nurse called me. The nurse hurts for Miss Dreyton—I sense it in her voice.

"Miss Dreyton? My name is Ed. I'm a chaplain. Can I talk with you for a little while?"

"Yes, please talk with me."

"Your nurse tells me you are very ill. I'm sorry to hear that."

"Can you tell me, Chaplain, does God still love me?"

I am not prepared for the question. She continues. "I've been a teacher all my life. I've never been married or had any family. My whole life has been with the children in school. Chaplain, I have really loved them! But now I'm sick; I can't move or read or look after myself, and the doctor says it may be a very long time before I'm well. I've always tried to live a good life, and I've always believed in God, in Jesus Christ. But now I'm not sure. . . . I wish I knew whether God still loves me."

This hospital is one of hundreds in the United States run by Christian organizations. Many of our patients are from Christian backgrounds; others are Jewish, some Muslim, and some claim no religious faith or interest. Chaplains must be responsive to all: they can't help letting their own faith guide them, but they cannot be proselytizers.

I take Miss Dreyton's hand in mine. She does not know it, but in my helplessness I visualize placing my hand in God's.

"Do you remember reading about the crucifixion of Jesus? I'm not sure I fully understand what happened there, but the thing that stands out most for me is when Jesus said, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" Do you think God had forsaken Him?"

Miss Dreyton's eyes glisten in the dim, reflected light.

"No, I don't think God had forsaken Him—but I'm sure He felt like it."

"You know, I have a feeling that God might have been closer to His Son right then than He had ever been before. What do you think?"

"I think He was."

"If that had been the last thing Jesus said on the cross, I'd be very unhappy, wouldn't you?"

Miss Dreyton smiles, a lovely smile that children would like.

"Do you remember what He said last of all on the cross?"

"I think it was, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.'"

"That was it. Miss Dreyton, I think you have every right to feel as though God has forsaken you. I would probably feel the same way if I were in your place right now. The important thing is, God feels for us when we feel that way; He feels with us when we hurt. He hates the hurt as much as we do, just as He hated it when His Son hurt. For some reason He can't take away all the hurt just now, but He hurts right along with us, and loves us just as much as He loved His own Son. If we remember that, we might be able to say not just 'Why have You forsaken me?' but also 'Father, I commit myself into Your hands.'"

Miss Dreyton is quiet for a few moments.

"Chaplain, would you say the twenty-third psalm for me?"

"'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. . . .'"

CPE, books on grief, seminars on pain—all are valuable resources for a chaplain. But when a call comes, you feel naked, unqualified. If there is such a thing as a textbook case, I don't know a chaplain who's met it. With every call I must consciously replace a moment of panic with a self-reassuring "I'll play it by ear" and a prayer for the assisting Presence so often felt. When one walks into a room knowing nothing but the bare facts of the situation, and sometimes only the family's name, one must trust that one's intuition will do its work.

How is my baby?

"Chaplain, call extension 5666—stat."

That's my summons to the emergency room. It's early evening; I inquire at the ER station.

The charge nurse looks unsettled.

"We have a baby in number 2. The mother is in the waiting room. She doesn't want to talk with a chaplain."

I look into room number 2 and see a baby boy who is dead. Oh, he hasn't been declared dead yet. A half dozen professionals are working on him. But they know, as I know, that there's little hope.

Chaplains are not medically trained; they can't make diagnoses. But with experience they can make pretty good guesses as to what looks relatively good and what looks bad. They keep their guesses to themselves, but their guesses help prepare them for what needs to be done.

She said she doesn't want to talk with a chaplain . . .

I stop at the door of the small, private waiting room. "Are you Mrs. Jonston? My name is Ed. I'm a chaplain. I just want you to know that I'm here if you need me. Can I get you some coffee?"

The lady is agitated. "No, I don't want anything. How is my baby?"

The doctor enters.

"Ms. Jonston, when did you notice your baby was having trouble?"

"After supper I put him down. Then about a half hour later I went into the room and he looked blue. I didn't think he was breathing."

"What did you do then?"

"I didn't know what to do. I don't have any money or any insurance, so I didn't know what to do. I'm just on welfare. I ran over to my next-door neighbors', and they came over. We had an argument about whether to call an ambulance. Then we called one."

"We're still working on him, but it's not looking good. We may not be able to save him."

"I can't lose my baby! He's all I have. I don't have a husband. I just had the baby because I needed someone. Please bring him back to me . . ."

The doctor motions for me to follow him out of the room.

"This baby is not responding. We're going to stop." He speaks matter-of-factly, but not without feeling. I've heard people say emergency and critical-care doctors becomecalloused about death. Believe me, it's a necessary facade, and often a thin one.

We tell her together.

I suspect the mother's anger at her loss, at herself, and at God will be directed at me. There is nothing to say, little to do but let the emotions take their course.

I lead her to room number 2. She holds the baby, rocking back and forth with silent sobs. I leave her alone with the child until a nurse says, "The body is cold. I think it's time."
Ms. Jonston wants to leave the hospital now; she does not wish to speak with me. But there is a paper to sign, arrangements to be made. She is angry again.

There is no perfect way to introduce that paper. "Death Discharge Report," it's called. It intrudes into the pathos like a joke in a funeral parlor.

"Ms. Jonston, what has happened here is a tragedy. I do not want to take anything away from your feelings. But the nurses and I need to know how to proceed. Your baby deserves a proper burial, proper arrangements. If you will cooperate with me, I will try to help you."

I find a funeral home that will accept the case as a SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) death and bury the child free. The mother is grateful; for the first time I can talk with her about her needs. A neighbor arrives to take Ms. Jonston home. Before she leaves, we hug.

Amid the traumatic and tragic, chaplains have bright times. They see full recoveries follow critical moments. They see families brought together with tears and hugs for the first time in years. They see patients laugh or smile when there seems little reason for joy. They see nurses, doctors, therapists, and volunteers give personal touches that go far beyond job descriptions: a nurse uses her day off to take a discharged patient on business errands; a doctor spends hours of unbilled time helping an emphysema patient prepare for death; a therapist brings a child a new toy; a volunteer makes several difficult phone calls for a distressed patient; a nurse who has a pilot's license flies a terminal cancer patient to her home in another state so she can die among family and friends.

But there are always the question marks, large and small. Why is this patient impossibly angry at every nurse who enters the room? Why did the brothers and sisters of this AIDS patient refuse to visit him on his last Christmas? Where is this inebriated patient's wallet? Why are this patient's 27 relatives crowding the hallway and disturbing the nurses on my shift? Why is this man's estranged twin brother ignoring his deathbed plea for reconciliation? Which one of these "Mrs. Smiths" is the patient's current wife? And why, oh, why did I say "Hang in there" to the girl who tried to take her life by... you guessed it.

I return to the chaplains' office, images of Ms. Jonston's fury and of her hug pounding in my mind.

Servant leader: the model and the method

Joel N. Musvosvi

True leadership is servanthood. Its strength comes, not from manifestations of outer power, but from an inner determination to so live as to be of service to God and man.

Joel N. Musvosvi, Ph.D., served as pastor for several years. He is now associate professor of New Testament studies at Solusi College, Zimbabwe. In a significant study done some 35 years ago, Samuel Blizzard showed that if there was one role that pastors valued the least and felt least effective and satisfying in their work, it was the role of leadership and administration. At about the same time Richard Niebuhr spoke of the emerging image of the pastor as "pastoral director." Therein lies a great irony of ministry in our times: leadership is thrust on the pastor even as he struggles to project himself as a servant-pastor. How can one be a servant and a leader at the same time? The leadership style of Jesus sets forth some possible answers.

Jesus exemplified a new leadership style in the way He organized and trained His disciples for the ministry. Luke 6:12, 13 points out that Jesus' selection of disciples was no arbitrary guesswork: "Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles." Prayer and much thought preceded the calling of His team members. Herbert Lockyer observes that "to the outward eye it seemed as if the Divine Potter had chosen very common clay indeed out of which to fashion His witnesses and mighty workmen." With little learning and a lot less to commend themselves, they stood as common men but with an uncommon task. "To all appearances, no mission seemed more hopeless than theirs. Were they not facing an enterprise doomed to failure, seeing they had no social status,
no organization behind them, no wealth of their own or wealthy backers?" 4 In His choice, Jesus was not guided by any outward stamp of success, but by the great potential He could read in their unassuming and teachable simplicity.

Having selected these individuals, Jesus invited them to be with Him and share His life (Mark 3:14). Their first assignment was to spend time with Jesus. This was to be a time of intensive, life-changing relationships. God was and is in the people-making business. And He uses people to make other people. Jesus was the method God used for transforming common people into dynamic leaders for the church. "The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" 5 Identification and fellowship were part of His leadership method. Leaders must identify with their followers if they are to succeed in motivating them for sacrificial service.

Faced with a world that was opposed to His mission, He had a vision of God's kingdom already superseding the old order. From this unique vantage point, Jesus constantly set before the disciples a vision of a tomorrow that would be greater than today: "You will do greater works than I have done if you believe in Me." "You will see the Son of Man coming in power and great glory." "You will sit on the 12 thrones judging the tribes of Israel."

By communicating His vision, Jesus gave the disciples a sense of being the foundation of a greater unfolding future. He said that the grandest era of history was just dawning, and those 12 men had the distinctive opportunity of making it happen. What an inspiring and motivating challenge! It made them feel a sense of mission and meaning in their sacrificial service for their master. If people feel a sense of purpose and meaning arising from what they are called upon to do, they are likely to exert more energy doing it. Most people like to identify with success and to contribute toward success.

Jesus, a people leader

Jesus was a people leader, not merely a program leader. At least two points deserve special note. First, He invested Himself in His disciples. He ate with them; He worked with them; He traveled with them; He planned with them. Jesus identified with His team and shared His total life with them. He met their human needs.

Is there a relationship between meeting human needs and developing leadership? The need theory of Abraham Maslow, so helpful in understanding psychological issues, may give us a clue. The famous psychologist articulated the hypothesis of "increased frustration tolerance through early gratification." 6 This thesis simply suggests that people who have consistently had their needs met early in their experience seem to develop superior abilities to withstand deprivation of those needs while striving to teach ideals they believe in.

So, as Jesus lived with His disciples He met their needs for association and identity. By giving them unconditional love He met their love needs. The miracles He performed met their safety and security needs. Hence, the disciples could be deprived of a lot, but yet could go on to spread the good news of the kingdom. Leaders who are going to succeed in motivating their members must identify with them and meet their needs. They must have a genuine love and interest in their members as persons. Only then can they call on them to follow their lead. This is relational leadership. The members gladly follow because they are related meaningfully to the leader.

Second, Jesus offered the best to His team, and He expected the best from them. He believed in them. Listen to Him as He commands them to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20), or commissions them to be witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:6-8). This was believing leadership at its very best.

While Jesus expected the best of each of His followers, He did not assume a watchdog mentality, for this would have encouraged an adversarial relationship. Such a relationship would, in turn, have destroyed the commitment and inhibited the motivation of the followers. The human spirit bursts into bloom under an atmosphere of appreciation and trust. As a result of this "I am trusted and counted on" awareness, the apostles were able to communicate the gospel to their whole world despite painful difficulties, unflagging opposition, and minimal material benefits.

Three steps may be noted in the development of their motivation. First, the disciples developed a loving identity with Jesus. Second, they experienced a growing appreciation of and commitment to His cause. Third, they adopted His program in the world as their life purpose. So, the progression in leadership motivation begins with the winsome qualities of the leader, progresses to an internalization of the leader's values and cause, and culminates in sacrificial commitment to the program that is necessitated by that cause. Every leader brings about this motivational progression among his or her team.

Jesus, a servant leader

The mother of James and John came to Jesus with the request that her two sons be granted the top two positions in His kingdom. Jesus promised them instead the cup of personal sacrifice that accompanies all true leadership. Then He added: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28). While the world's model of leadership espouses love of power, Christ's model operates on the power of selfless love.

Robert K. Greenleaf, former management research director for American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), once said that ruthless, self-serving, manipulative leadership never resulted in long-term success. Greenleaf pointed out that "to be a lone chief atop a pyramid is abnormal and corrupting." With perception developed through experiments, he concluded that "when someone is moved atop a pyramid, that person no longer has..."
It took Woolman 30 years to persuade all of them, but in the end not one Quaker owned a slave.

colleagues, only subordinates." He urged leaders to adopt the attitude of a servant.

The ideal leader is one who is first regarded by his or her followers as the greatest servant. Followers gladly give such leaders the authority to lead them because they see them as unselfish and other-oriented. Such leaders never feel threatened. They know that the power and authority of their position do not reside in outward tokens of greatness but in the ability to inspire their team.

Christian leadership should be rooted in the servant leader model Jesus set forth, a model in which the leader asks "How can I help my people?" not "What can my people do for me?" This is not a popular model, for it calls for humility and personal sacrifice on the part of the leader. Furthermore, this model of leadership is not likely to be hailed and welcomed as what is needed in our times, because we are so accustomed to pomp and circumstance as the external tokens of greatness. But after a while this model will yield the fruit of loving commitment and self-generating motivation. Significantly, Jesus did not merely propose this model; He lived it. He is the greatest leader the world has ever known, but how unassuming He was in terms of outward greatness.

Acceptance was a great factor in His leadership style. Acceptance is the art of communicating to people our recognition and appreciation of their value as persons quite apart from their performance. Those so accepted will find invigorating release and freedom to grow as persons.

Jesus’ team members knew that they did not have to be “successful” to be accepted. When they made mistakes or failed, Jesus did not distance Himself from them or publicly castigate them. He freely and fully forgave them and preserved their self-respect. He continued to treat them as if they deserved His total love. In this way, Jesus communicated acceptance to them. Because of this the disciples were willing to serve Him with love and loyalty at any cost.

Sustaining a servant-leadership model

The pastoral calling involves the roles of both leadership and servanthood. The two functions are not contradictory. Both can be performed adequately if we keep in perspective the One who calls and the task to which we are called. I have found the following 10 principles helpful in sustaining a servant-leadership model in my ministry.

1. Focus on transforming people. In handling sensitive issues or in proposing change, servant leaders often have to accomplish their tasks one at a time. John Woolman, an eighteenth-century Quaker, was concerned that some Quakers held slaves. To change this state of affairs, Woolman did not censure the slaveholders. Rather, he traveled on horseback, visiting each slaveholder individually and sharing with each one his concern. It took him 30 years to persuade all of them, but in the end not one Quaker owned a slave. It can be argued that passing laws would have brought about faster results. Maybe so, but not without pain and lingering bitterness. Servant leaders are not overly concerned with quick results; rather, they want to generate self-perpetuating change. As servant leaders, their task is to change people, not just to formulate and enforce rules.

2. Implement one change at a time. Some great things can only be done one small step at a time. Often leaders try to impress people by outlining a series of changes to be made. Instead of impressing them, they succeed only in overwhelming them with fear. Change tends to breed insecurity in some. In a small church we wanted to have married couples serve each other in the ordinance of humility during a special Friday evening Communion. At first there was opposition: many were not prepared to accept the new idea, different timing, and special Communion. But long before the day of the service, we contacted the church members and explained to them what the service was all about. We let them question us and verbalize their fears. We made it clear that having couples wash each other's feet was only an option, and we described some of the possible relational benefits couples might derive. We also emphasized that this was just a one-time experiment. The service went beautifully. When the time for next Communion service came around, the members requested that the option for couples to wash each other's feet be made available again, and the request came from those who had opposed the idea the first time. Taking people along is more important than implementing programs.

3. Develop positive group dynamics. People thrive in community. We are creatures of community. Servant leaders realize that people are our single most important asset in the church. Despite big institutions, money, a great organization, and efficient policies, people are our main business. Servant leaders develop meaningful relationships with members of their team, and facilitate nourishing interpersonal relationships among their followers. Within such a setting there is a group chemistry that comes into operation. A certain amount of commitment and enthusiasm for a common goal is generated. If the leader keeps this at a high level, the momentum will grow until it reaches a level called "critical mass"—a stage within an interacting group at which the enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment to a common cause becomes self-generating and self-perpetuating. When the disciples reached such a "critical mass," neither emperors nor armies could stop their mission. Energized by the Holy Spirit, they accomplished their task.

4. Use the power of love to impart new values. The trouble with coercive and manipulative leadership is that it breeds and strengthens resistance. J. S. Knox said, "You cannot antagonize and influence at the same time." Ideally, leaders will first win the love and confidence of their followers, and then proceed to lead them in a new direction. Persuasive leadership results in organic change. When leaders have changed their people by introducing and instilling new values in them and not just by changing laws, growth and development continue even after the leader is gone.

When Jesus detected self-centered tendencies among the disciples—"Who will be the greatest among us?"—He was concerned. But He did not scold and
shame them. Rather, He loved them. By treating them with respect, He helped them to discover their self-worth. This discovery of self-worth led them to see intrinsic value in their companions. In this way He instilled in them a selfless love for one another. Those who have not discovered their self-worth will be dominated by an inferiority or a superiority complex.

5. Develop openness with your team. People often go through life wearing "masks" in an attempt to project a certain image of themselves to those about them. Many fear to be known for who they really are. A low self-image leads some to fear rejection by those who are related to them in significant ways, so they wear masks that present modified and often unreal images of themselves to others. It is important for leaders to develop and project an attitude of openness with members of their teams. This involves letting the teams see not only the leaders' strengths but also their weaknesses. We are not suggesting psychological nudity—the baring of our inmost selves—but a healthy sharing of genuine humanity.

6. Delegate responsibility. "I need you." These are among the most powerful words in interpersonal relationships. Human beings have a great longing for being needed. We feel worthwhile as persons when we perceive ourselves needed by someone. This helps to boost our self-image. One way in which leaders can communicate to members of their teams that they do need them is by delegating responsibility to them. Jesus delegated the responsibility of making preparations for the Lord's supper (Luke 22:8-13), preaching the good news (Luke 9:1-6), and teaching and baptizing new converts (John 4:1, 2).

As another way of communicating His sense of need Jesus asked for favors—for instance, asking the Samaritan woman for a cup of water (John 4:7). In the Garden of Gethsemane He shared with the disciples His deep and awful sorrow, and asked them to watch and pray with Him (Matt. 26:37, 38). A leader who projects an image of self-sufficiency misses an opportunity for drawing the team closer to himself or herself. The strength that chooses to stand alone insulates itself from meaningful relationships, and to that extent it remains weak.

7. Set a high standard for your team. Leaders without high standards cannot expect loyalty and commitment from those they lead. Teams derive much of their emotional cohesiveness, organizational purpose, and directional unity from the standards their leaders set and follow. By setting high personal and corporate standards, leaders communicate to their team members that they have faith in their capabilities. This in itself brings them satisfaction and motivates them to reach their potential. Humans, made in God's image, operate at their best when they are challenged to reach out to the great beyond in any line of service.

8. Be liberal with praise. "I can live for two months on one good compliment," said Mark Twain. The eminent psychologist William James concurs: "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." The consciousness of being appreciated is a great satisfaction and a wonderful stimulus for trying our very best. Leaders must know how to give genuine praise. Often a compliment makes a deeper impression on the recipient when it comes at an unexpected time. The idea is not to withhold a compliment when it is due, but to express it for qualities that are generally overlooked. The good leader looks for the good in his or her team and affirms it. This encourages the team members to rally behind their leader and attempt their best.

9. Focus on people's needs and goals. Jesus identified Himself with people, helped to meet their needs, and won their confidence. After that He could expect them to respond to His call, "Follow Me." Because each person is unique, the needs of people vary. The wise leader will therefore seek to become acquainted personally with each team member in order to discover each one's needs, desires, and abilities. With this knowledge in hand, the leader will better know how to motivate the team to achieve its goals.

10. Build a team spirit. Jesus built a team spirit among His disciples by eating with them, sharing life with them, assigning them team projects (such as witnessing by twos), and setting up a new culture among them. At times Jesus took His disciples on a retreat so that dynamic fellowship could take place. From these moments of togetherness, they emerged to face the world as a united team. Leaders need to spend time with their people. This time may be spent in planning recreation, in evaluation, in potlucks, and in other forms of fellowship. In moments of genuine fellowship human hearts tend to bond together.

Admittedly, mere techniques do not make one a leader. The leader must be committed to the team, to the growth of each person in the team, and to the primary objective of the team. With church leadership, the supreme reference point is our Lord and His kingdom. Doing His will, hastening the establishment of His kingdom, modeling its precepts is what pastoral leadership is all about. To accomplish these ends, self must get off the stage—leaving it open for Christ. When we do that, we will naturally become servant leaders.

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3 Herbert Lockyer, All the Apostles of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p. 11.
4 Ibid., p. 7.
10 White, op. cit., p. 361.

*Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.
What is servant leadership? How does it differ from other styles of leadership?

Back in 1978 I was given a book that profoundly influenced my life. The book, Servant Leadership, was written by Robert Greenleaf. Throughout his writings Greenleaf’s burden is to demonstrate the clear superiority of servant leadership in contradistinction to the more self-serving forms of leadership. (See the sidebar for a biographical sketch of Greenleaf. This article is based on the whole corpus of his writings.)

How do you tell if you are a servant leader? The answer lies in whether you give highest priority to meeting your own needs or the needs of other people. Greenleaf asks: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will he/she benefit, or, at least, will he/she not be further deprived?”

Greenleaf believes that when Jethro advised Moses on how to organize the Israelites, he led him down the wrong track. The hierarchical principle that places a single individual on top of a pyramid contains within it the seeds of corruption and misuse. It is very lonely sitting on top of the pyramid. Those who do so no longer have colleagues, only subordinates. They are no longer plugged into the grapevine. As a result they tend—as would any other human being—to reach for more and more power.

To replace the pyramid structure, Greenleaf proposes a Roman model—primus inter pares. (The diagrams on the opposite page compare these two models.) Instead of a team with one chief, this structure comprises a team of equals with a primus, a first among equals. Leadership is by persuasion rather than coercion. In the pyramid structure, on the other hand, since the chief holds much of the power, he or she finds it difficult to use persuasion. Those who work with the chief tend to regard what he or she says as an order rather than as an attempt to persuade.

Religious leaders

The piece of Greenleaf’s writing that I found most influential appeared in 1982 under the title The Servant as Religious Leader. I have read this piece over and over again. While Greenleaf says that he writes as a student of organizations rather than as a theologian, his insights are thoroughly biblical.

He defines religious leadership by posing a series of questions: What are the consequences of this person’s leadership? Does it have a healing or civilizing influence? Does it encourage people to serve others, favor their growth as persons, and help them distinguish those who serve from those who destroy? Does this leadership effectively build faith even in the face of the powerful forces that work to destroy it?

The goal of religious leaders is to recover alienated people and to build institutions that serve; such a goal gives purpose and meaning to life. Those whose leadership follows some other model than servant leadership often aspire to the position out of a desire for power or to acquire material possessions.
Greenleaf suggests three key characteristics strong servant leaders have: they have a sense of the unknowable, they are prepared for the unexpected, and they can foresee the unforeseeable. Servant leaders who are good leaders have an intuitive sense of where to go and what decision needs to be made. Their followers have confidence in them because they believe that such leaders will not be surprised by the unusual and will act promptly in response to it. This kind of leader senses what is about to happen before it happens, and controls the events rather than letting the events control her or him.

Greenleaf speaks highly of John Woolman, an American Quaker who lived during the eighteenth century. Woolman spent 30 of his adult years traveling from one Quaker farm to another raising questions about the morality of slavery. He did not argue or storm about. He did not confront or censure the farmers. He simply asked such questions as What does the owning of slaves do to you as a moral person? and What kind of an institution are you leaving for your children? Because of his gentle persuasion Quakers became the first religious group to forbid the holding of slaves by its members—this some 100 years before the civil war.

Greenleaf wonders what America would have been like if there had been 50, or even five, John Woolmans presenting their gentle, nonjudgmental arguments. A few such people might have brought an end to slavery without the Civil War. Leadership by persuasion has the virtue of depending upon conviction rather than coercion. Its advantages are obvious.

**Failure’s virtue**

Greenleaf studied the top 12 leaders of American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T). He found that each of them could look back to a significant mentor who influenced his growth. Four of the 12 were influenced by the same middle manager—one among 900 who held such a position!

What made this middle manager so influential? He had a passionate interest in young people. He was a good judge of potential—he did not waste his time on people who stood little chance of learning from him. He was friendly and always available for consultation. And perhaps his most unusual characteristic, he firmly believed in the importance of error in the learning experience.

**About Robert K. Greenleaf**

Robert K. Greenleaf, 1904-1990, a graduate of Carleton College in Minnesota, spent most of his working life in the field of management, research, development, and education at American Telephone and Telegraph. Just before his retirement as director of management research there, he held a joint appointment as visiting lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management and at Harvard Business School. In addition, he held teaching positions at both Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia. His consultancies included Ohio University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ford Foundation, R. K. Mellon Foundation, Lilly Endowment, and the American Foundation for Management Research.

As a consultant to universities, businesses, foundations, and churches during the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s, his eclectic and wide-ranging curiosity, reading, and contemplation provided an unusual background for observing these institutions. A lifelong student of organizational life (i.e., how things get done), he distilled his observations in a series of essays, books, and videotapes on the theme of the servant as leader. His objective was to stimulate thought and action toward building a better, more caring society.
believe that if God has called a person to a position of leadership, then God will take care of the situation. But a monitoring group is necessary because of the humanity of the leader, not because the leader is untrustworthy.

Finally, the servant leader must have a dream and must have the ability to portray it in vivid language. For anything to happen there must be a dream, and for great things to happen there must be a great dream. Dreams are what lift people. The greatest leaders are those who can so describe the dream that it becomes crystal clear to the listeners.

Not only must the servant leader paint a great dream, but the institution, the church, must be living out a great dream. Greenleaf describes how, near the end of his career, he and a group of other individuals tried unsuccessfully to convince AT&T's top leaders that their organization needed a new goal. The great dream on which it had been built had lost its force, and, as seems the plight of so many contemporary institutions, it was struggling to survive.

Greenleaf said that these leaders were honest, dedicated, and caring. But they were no longer guided by a great dream; they had no dream to convey to those who followed. There was no powerful goal to inspire and unify. The leader was no longer seen as the servant of the dream; consequently, the constituents' trust in the institution diminished.

By way of summary, Greenleaf says that great institutions, whether religious, business, or educational, are a fusion of great ideas and great people. Neither will suffice without the other.

Every pastor, every church leader, likes to think that he or she is a servant leader. It may just be that the true servant leader is a rare species. Let's decide to make it a common species as we look forward to Christ's return.

"You can’t teach an egg to fly before it’s hatched!"

James R. Cress

Evangelism and discipling do not constitute an either-or issue in Christian calling. We need both in order to fulfill our Lord’s commission.

Public evangelism is under attack. Too often we hear the same cry: “New members don’t stick—they’re here today, gone tomorrow.” “Schedule that crusade in some other church.” “Most baptisms are hurried.” “We are spending more and getting less.” “Evangelism? No thanks. We want to concentrate on nurture.”

This seeming dissatisfaction is not unique to Seventh-day Adventists. Dr. Win Arn, president of the Institute for American Church Growth at Pasadena, California, finds “that the very word ‘evangelism’ is so closely associated with many ineffective and unproductive activities intended to Christianize the unconverted that even the use of the word created obstacles in the minds of laity in most local churches.” “Perhaps a few generations from now,” he adds, “the word can be reintroduced, when the inaccurate stigmas and stereotypes are gone. But for now, even the word is getting in the way of the process.”

But why this dissatisfaction when all along public evangelism has been the most successful method of adding new members?

Too often we attempt to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission by outreach activities alone, and therefore we tend to measure our achievement by the number of baptisms we get rather than by the number of disciples we make. As a result, great attention and effort are expended to gain new members, but little nurture or follow-up occurs to keep those persons within the fold. So the real problem is not what we have done in evangelism, but what we have ignored in assimilation. Too often we act as if our responsibility ends when a person comes to Christ. We are content with evangelism when we really should move on to discipling.

Evangelism and disciple-making

A fundamental distinction exists between evangelism and disciple-making. In evangelism, success is achieved when a non-believer responds to and endorses personally a new set of convictions reflective of the Christian faith. That success is measured by an event—call it baptism—at a particular point in time. In disciple-making, success is achieved when that believer moves forward to adopt a change in lifestyle and behavior so that the new set of convictions reflective of the Christian faith obtained in evangelism becomes integrated into personal life and interpersonal relations.

Although we have experienced great success in evangelism, it is the kind of success that could destroy the very thing it intends to support. Unless we find effective ways to keep new members within the church and to assimilate them into the life of the congregation, evangelism is doomed. As Dr. Peter Wagner, a
church growth specialist, argues, evangelism is a means to disciple-making. If that end result is not there, "it is hard to justify continuing it [evangelism]. Why? Because only accomplishing the end—making disciples—can justify the means." 2

When Jesus presented the gospel message to Nicodemus, He talked about Christian life in terms of birth (John 3:1-7). The Scriptures clearly demonstrate that being born "of water" refers to baptism (Rom. 6:3) and that being born "of the Spirit" involves walking "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4-8:1). Both experiences—being born of water and being born of the Spirit—are essential components of Christian life.

While these two experiences are inseparable, it is necessary to mark their distinct differences. Failure to keep this distinction leads many to the assumption that discipleship automatically follows baptism. Birth is a joyous event, complete in itself—but it is not sufficient. If a child were to remain a newborn, its birth would not long remain a happy one. We expect growth—sustained, meaningful, expressive growth. At the same time we are also aware that no one is born an adult. Adulthood is achieved by nurture and growth over time.

The analogy of birth offers many lessons regarding the life of newborn Christians:

1. A baby's arrival completely upsets the status quo for the family. Established patterns of "how things ought to be" are quickly discarded.

2. Newborns are totally dependent. Left alone, without parental support, the infant would quickly find itself in difficulties.

3. Babies, being totally self-centered and unaware of the fact that anyone else has needs, expect that family members will fully meet their needs.

4. Babies usually express their demands in socially unacceptable methods—crying, kicking, screaming—because these are their only communication options. Growth brings about a change.

5. Newborns need consistent monitoring of growth so that corrective measures may be taken if and when necessary.

6. Newborns are incapable of discernment and may readily ingest something that could cause harm.

7. Although infants will quickly recognize their own caregivers, they are just as likely to accept nurture—or to receive abuse—from others.

8. When a baby is born premature, efforts must be redoubled and heroic measures taken to save its life. Failure to do so may lead to serious consequences.

9. Steady and consistent growth requires appropriate nourishment and nurture. The responsibility for providing these belongs to the parents, not to the infant.

10. Maturity takes time, but it does not automatically occur with the passing of time. Parents must repeatedly teach children simple tasks in order to help them eventually make their own decisions.

Likewise in spiritual life: baptism is only the moment of birth; a time to rejoice, yes, but not to rest and relax. Like a newborn coming into a family, new members joining a church may upset our status quo; may require constant support; may call for the monitoring and fostering of their growth process; may be premature, needing special care and lots of time and attention. A church cannot escape its responsibility of caring to assure sustained growth and health of the new believers.

Carl Wilson argues that Satan has tricked the church into divorcing evangelism from disciple building. "Where in the Scriptures do Jesus or the apostles separate the two ideas or debate one against the other? Evangelism is the process of winning men, enabling them to enter the kingdom of God. Disciple building is the process of teaching the new citizen how to obey the laws of the King and how to win and train others to do the same." 3

In a way, therefore, it is our ecclesiology—the way we look at the nature and mission of the church—that will determine the growth and transformation of the church. If the church remains only an evangelistic agency, we will have baptisms, but no guarantee of sustained discipling; on the other hand, if the church accepts along with its evangelistic mission the full responsibility of pastoral care and church growth, we will be on the march to disciple making. 4

Spiritual pediatrics

Henrichsen uses this parental motif to emphasize postevangelistic nurture: "Follow-up, then, is spiritual pediatrics. It has to do with the care and protection of the spiritual infant. It deals with the development of new babes in Christ from the time of their new birth until they grow and provide for themselves." 5

How, then, shall we focus on this spiritual pediatrics? How do we ensure that new believers get a fair deal in church nurture and assimilation? I suggest five principles.

1. To an evangelism-oriented church, nurture is a necessity, not an option. Indeed nurture is an integral part of the whole process of evangelism and pastoral care. Anything less than an all-out effort to conserve the harvest of souls that the Holy Spirit gives is spiritual child abuse!

Evangelism to which the church is called is never complete until the new believers are actualizing the will of God in their choices and actions. Equipping newborn Christians for this task and guiding them in the process is disciple-making.

This is the task of the church. Unfortunately, it is a task we often fail to accomplish. We have a tendency to dip and drop. The New Testament, however, clearly teaches that development of the Christian walk occurs within the church. Making disciples and baptizing believers is followed by "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded" (Matt. 28:19, 20, RSV). Those who turned to Christ on the day of Pentecost "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42, RSV). Apollos had ardently accepted Christ, but he greatly needed Priscilla and Aquila to take him aside and expound to him the way (Acts 18:26).

"The transformation of life into the image of Christ is personal, but not private. It is individual, but always in the context of a community of faith (I John 1:3). . . . The individual requires the nurture of the church, and the church for its completeness requires the gifts of all the members. Transformation occurs in individuals, but in the context of community (1 Cor. 12:12-26)." 6

2. Incorporate new members into the full spectrum of church fellowship and activities. Studying our own denomination, Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., wrote: "Of what use is it to baptize new converts if we fail to incorporate them into responsible membership and they soon slip out 'the back door'? Is not a member preserved as valuable as a convert won? If we do not promote a strong spiritual internal growth within our congregations, we will soon find that we are working against ourselves. We may slip back faster than we progress forward. In the end we find that we have not only nor grown inter-
nally, but even the numerical growth that we so eagerly sought has eluded us. We have lost everything." 7

We need an ongoing rethinking of the processes by which we help new members assimilate into the life of the church. Personally, I’m encouraged to see a great step forward with the new seven-session orientation course, “Welcome to the Family,” that Home Study International has produced. The course is an introduction to the Adventist world—its history, traditions, culture, hope, and demands. It talks about how we keep Sabbath, why we have schools, how our stewardship system works, and what the church is all about. It attempts to assimilate the new member into the entire life of the church. The point is not more information but the sense of an open door that conveys the urge to get in and stay in. That is nurture.

3. Recognize that knowledge alone is not sufficient for nurture. When we are disappointed at the lack of maturity in the lives of new believers, it is tempting to interpret their spiritual inadequacy and struggles as evidence that they were not sufficiently instructed prior to baptism. We reason that if appropriate instruction had been given, the new members would “fit into our church.” Such an assumption equates knowledge with spiritual development, and struggle and failure with spiritual poverty. When the new members see such an equation in the church, they get discouraged and drop out of fellowship even before they understand their newfound hope.

While I would not want to defend shoddy preparation of baptismal candidates or encourage less instruction than is currently given, it is important to realize that knowledge alone will never produce the desired fruit of the Spirit.

Engel and Norton also underscore this struggle of new believers as they attempt to apply the biblical norm to problems of everyday life. “This struggle is a natural but tortuous process in which the believer is conformed by the Holy Spirit to the image of Christ. The point is that the believer must be helped in this struggle. This is the true meaning of cultivation (follow-up). At times it will be necessary to prune and admonish. At other times the need is for fertilization—encouragement, guidance, and teaching.” 9

5. Nurture takes time. Hurry is often the hallmark of our expectation of maturity in new believers. In our eagerness to see quick results we would even glue wax fruit onto the tree rather than wait for the genuine to appear. Speaking of the church’s role in the process of Christian maturity, Richard Neuhaus says: “The impulse to impose the Christian lifestyle or the model of ministry is wrong-headed. Unless it is restrained, it inevitably results in the ‘unchurching’ of Christians.” 11

To conclude: Evangelism and discipleship do not constitute an either-or issue. We need both good baptismal preparation as well as thorough follow-up. New believers who struggle spiritually need our acceptance and love as well as a specific process designed to assist them in developing spiritual maturity. We must match well-prepared candidates with congregations who are well-prepared to accept and nurture them even when they struggle in spiritual warfare.

But some long-established members might ask, “Why can’t this happen prior to baptism? Why can’t we have maturity right from the moment they are added to the books?” George Sweazey appeals to the apostle for an answer: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” It must all start with receiving Christ Jesus as Lord. No amount of teaching or training can make a Christian out of someone who has not done that. ‘You can’t teach an egg to fly before it’s hatched.’” 12

Walking in Christ follows receiving Christ. Both are vital. Both are necessary. But the order is important. “Evangelism must not only bring people to look to Christ as Lord; it must also start them on their Christian walk.” 13 Sweazey charges that the church’s neglect of this is the great scandal of evangelism. When the church overlooks its duty to nurture the new believers, it fails in its responsibility to Jesus, who says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

10. Engel, p. 54.
13. Ibid.
Where’s the fire?

Jesus set the world aflame. Where’s that fire today?

Jesus said, “I came to cast fire upon the earth” (Luke 12:49, RSV). And He did. Every time He healed, every time He taught, every time He cast out a demon, He cast fire upon the earth. He kindled fires in villages and in hearts. It was dangerous to meet Jesus; He was incendiary.

The work of casting fire is intimately bound up with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize “with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matt. 3:11, RSV). This promise was literally fulfilled at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples: “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:3, 4, RSV).

When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, the fire that Jesus had come to cast upon the earth was ignited. The book of Acts seems to portray the entire New Testament church ablaze, each Christian witnessing to the saving lordship of Christ, the church growing by leaps and bounds, signs and wonders everywhere, the holy fire spreading from person to person. “The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (verse 47, NKJV), and the world was turned upside down.

And now a question: Where’s the fire? Jesus was afire; the apostles were ablaze at Pentecost; the early church burned brightly. Where is the fire today?

It seems to me that the church of Jesus Christ needs a renewal. Few congregations, big or small, in any denomination, could easily substantiate a claim to be on fire. In the present climate, glowing coals pass for bonfires, wisps of smoke for conflagrations. And when we listen to God we hear Him weeping—weeping that the fire kindled by His blood has been smothered by indifference.

“I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:15-17, RSV).

Surely those of us who are Seventh-day Adventists should not be surprised by a call for revival. A hundred years ago Ellen White wrote: “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.”

The church: obstacle to faith?

Sad to say, I can’t see that we have heeded the advice; we haven’t made the seeking of revival our first work. Evangelism might be our first work, or institutional maintenance perhaps, but not the pursuit of revival. It shows. We are many things, but we are not a “spiritual” people. We are not “natural” people either—unconverted, unregenerate. The designation that seems to fit best is “carnal.” Paul says carnal people need milk rather than solid food, for they are immature. They are not “natural,” yet they live like ordinary people (1 Cor. 2:14-3:4).

I believe that the church, instead of
being the instrument of salvation God intended it to be, has become the greatest obstacle to faith. Non-Christians are heard to say (in different ways), “Jesus, yes; the church, no.” G. K. Chesterton, on being told that Christianity doesn’t work, disagreed. He said, “It hasn’t yet been tried.” A Hindu was heard to say, “I would become a Christian if I could see a Hindu.”

Instead of “Onward, Christian Soldiers!” we ought to sing:

Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God.

Brothers, we are treading where we’ve always trod.

We are all divided, many bodies we.

Very strong on doctrine, weak in charity.

We do well at feeding people husks—the husks of theology and morality—but we are not very good at giving them food for their souls. Preaching has reached a low estate. We are no longer a people of the Book. Real prayer is almost unknown among us. The joy of the Lord is seldom to be found.

We have confused religiosity with spirituality, not realizing that religiosity is but a poor, superficial, pale, and round-shouldered parody of spirituality.

“Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3, RSV). In Paul’s day, the question was whether the Galatians, rather than continuing to depend on Christ alone for salvation, would try to add their accomplishments in the vain hope that by doing so they could make their salvation more secure. It was a move from God-centeredness to man-centeredness.

In our day, a new danger grows with the old one—the temptation to substitute dependence on human effort and skill for dependence on the Holy Spirit, to leave our faith that the church is Christ’s and to look to human efforts to run it. No one who reads about the beginnings of either the New Testament church or the Seventh-day Adventist Church will doubt that they began with the Spirit. Shall we end with the flesh?

We must remember that the Holy Spirit doesn’t indwell plans, programs, projects, or promotions; He indwells people. He doesn’t anoint machinery, but people.

Carl Bates once said, “If the Holy Spirit were suddenly withdrawn from the earth, 90 percent of what the church does would go right on.” I am afraid he is right. I am afraid that we are no longer a spiritual people. We would rather plan than pray. We would rather work than wait on the Lord. We would rather be managers than ministers. We view the church as a business more than as a fellowship. We see the pastor more as a chief executive officer than as a shepherd. (Why is it that pastors become administrators, but administrators seldom become pastors?) We think of the organization as a hierarchy of authority rather than as a community of fellow servants all of whom are brothers and sisters.

Once our institutions were tools to accomplish our mission in the world, but now the maintaining of our institutions is our mission in the world. They have become the tail that wags the dog. To maintain our institutions we are bleeding our local congregations dry, and we have difficulty conceiving of any ministry apart from institutions.

There is very little trust among us. We are afraid to speak our minds. Because we don’t trust each other, we construct elaborate systems of checks and balances to make sure that no one can run away with the church. Many of us strongly suspect that the church operates on the “good ole boy” system. When the church gathers to do business, Machiavellian techniques are used to ensure the previously determined outcome. Leadership is not listening to the people it is supposed to serve. Servanthood has mutated into authoritarianism. We know very little about “strength in weakness” and “death to self.”

I’m afraid that having begun with the Spirit we are ending with the flesh.

What can we do?

What can we do? We can repent, and we can pray. Ellen White said: “Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.”

We spend so much time trying to be strong and in control that we can’t fathom His strength being “made perfect in weakness.” We are so busy fighting for ourselves, our views, our plans—so busy proving that we know what is right for the church—that we can’t value brokenness. Confession and repentance don’t sound like much fun to us. Humiliation is the last thing we want. Yet we can’t experience revival without them.

We must be determined above all else that we shall be spiritual leaders. We must make space for God in our lives, as He has made space for us in His covenant family. We must quiet ourselves before Him and listen for His still, small voice. We must give first place on our agendas to the practice of the spiritual disciplines that for 20 centuries were the backbone of church leadership.

We must remind ourselves—frequently—that this is Christ’s church and that He doesn’t need us. We must remind ourselves that He has not called us to be successful but to be faithful. We must remember to pray that the fire that Jesus cast upon the earth might be rekindled? Let us pray for one another, to be spiritual people. Let us pray that the fire that Jesus cast upon the earth might burn again—within us.

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2 Ibid.
Recovered: a lost portion of the book of Samuel

Paul Lippi

The discovery of a couple lost paragraphs explains a problematic passage in 1 Samuel.

For the student of the Bible, the story of Saul’s first victory has always been problematic. A Dead Sea scroll of Samuel, released in the past decade, clears up the problem—and shows that at least some of the textual emendations of the critical scholars are correct.

According to the received Hebrew text, which almost all English Bibles follow in translating this passage, 1 Samuel 10:24-11:2 reads: “And Saul also went to his house in Giva, and the mighty whom God had touched in their hearts went with him. But the sons of no account said, ‘How will this one deliver us?’ And they despised him and didn’t bring him a present. And he was as one dumb. And Nachash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Yavesh Gilad. And all the men of Yavesh said to Nachash, ‘Cut a covenant with us and we will serve you.’ But Nachash the Ammonite said to them, ‘By this I will cut with you, by gouging every right eye, and I will make it shame on all Israel.’”

The first problem with this passage is the way it introduces Nachash. When a biblical writer first makes reference to a king, the convention is that the writer introduces him by his name, his title, and the name of his territory or subjects. Subsequently, the writer can refer to him by his name alone or by his title alone or by a pronoun. The books of Samuel and Kings contain 20 examples of this practice.

Since this passage introduces Nachash, we would expect it to say something like “And Nachash, king of the children of Ammon, went up,” instead of “And Nachash the Ammonite went up.” The Targum, the ancient Aramaic translation, does in fact say “And Nachash, king of the children of Ammon, went up,” but almost certainly this is owing to the translator’s familiarity with the conventions of biblical storytelling and not to his familiarity with a Hebrew text that differs from ours.

Unprecedented severity

The second problem with this passage involves the situation described by the plot: Nachash suddenly goes up and lays siege to a town outside his domain. (Yavesh-Gilad was in Israelite territory.) The men of Yavesh offer to cut a covenant with Nachash and to serve him. But instead of accepting their surrender and lifting the siege, Nachash imposes additional terms: “By this I will cut with you, by gouging every right eye.”

Here’s where the problem lies. The severity of the terms of surrender that Nachash imposes on the newly conquered town is unprecedented. Bodily mutilation was a common enough practice in the ancient Middle East, but this punishment was reserved for covenant breakers and rebels. (Nebuchadnezzar, for instance, had King Zedekiah’s eyes put out when Zedekiah’s rebellion failed and he was apprehended.) Nachash is apparently so barbaric that even before making the covenant he wishes to inflict the punishment for breaking it. Such an action goes beyond all norms of behavior in the ancient world.

But as the biblical story continues, we find the writer depicting Nachash as hav-
The translation of the received copy of the Hebrew Bible was that the surrender terms Nachash demanded violated the international law of the time as we know it. But the scroll reveals that King Nachash did not pounce on Yavesh-Gilad out of the blue. He had ruled the tribes of Gad and Reuben, which resided in Ammonite territory. They had rebelled, and when he subdued them, he had the right eyes of the rebels put out. He had laid siege to Yavesh-Gilad because this town was harboring 7,000 of his rebellious subjects.

Admittedly, Yavesh-Gilad was outside Nachash’s territorial boundaries—but he was chasing down runaways. Nachash insists on mutilating the citizens of Yavesh-Gilad because they have abetted the rebels. As accessories to the crime they deserve equal punishment. So, while gouging out the right eye seems to us excessive punishment, under the circumstances described in the omission, Nachash’s surrender terms make sense. They were well within the legal framework of his time.

In addition to clearing up the above problems in the received text of the Bible, 4QSam* offers an improvement where most readers did not suspect a problem. The scroll shows that our Bible’s expression “as one dumb” is the product of a couple of errors. The first was the confusion of the letter dalet for the letter resh, and the second, the running together of what originally were two words. Instead of the received text’s kmbryš, 4QSam* reads kmw ḫds—“after about a month.”

As a matter of fact, the Greek translation of the Bible (the Septuagint) also says “after about a month” (ḥds meta mēn), as does Josephus’ paraphrase (mēn d’ husteron).

On the basis of these Greek texts certain nineteenth-century critics correctly deduced that the Hebrew Bible the ancient Greek translator used must have read kmw ḫds—“after about a month.” But, without 4QSam* to confirm their intuition about kmbryš and to supply the subsequent omission (of which they were not aware), their claim to have reconstructed the original reading was rejected by some as a contrivance of corrupt reason. They were told to take the Bible’s “as one dumb” just as it reads.

So once again the Dead Sea scrolls have contributed to our understanding of what the original text of the Old Testament of our Bible must have read. And, incidentally, they have made it clear that in at least this instance, the critics’ conjectural emendation was correct after all.

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1 The translation is the author’s own.


4 Before its publication as cited in note 1, Cross’s article appeared in E. Tov, ed., The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Samuel (Jerusalem, 1980)—but this publication is less accessible.

5 The translators of the New American Bible and the Anchor Bible were privy to this information prior to the date of publication. 4QSam* is to be published in full in the series Discoveries in the Judean Desert.

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A paragraph was omitted from the book of Samuel.
In the process of time

Kris Lee

Is four years too long for a pastor and his family to get adjusted to their new church? Not necessarily, if you take into account that the ministry performed and friends formed are meant for eternity.

One week. My bulging diaper bag snags on the crash bar of the first set of double doors. I adjust my clinging baby on my hip, catch my slipping purse, and lunge to maneuver my family through the second set of double doors. The bag jerks free and, like a flying tetherball, slams against the back of my 3-year-old, propelling him into the silent church foyer with a heartbreaking wail.

It is a magnificent entry for the new pastor's family. I know it as soon as my eyes become accustomed to the shadowy foyer. The greeter freezes her gaze on us. A huddle of whispering women monitor our progress with curious glances.

I lower my head and shove my whimpering child a little faster past my audience. But I would rather have dropped my gear, interrupted their whispers, and explained myself: "You don't seem to understand. I know you know who I am, and I'm not a spectacle to watch. I'm a mother trying to get my kids to Sabbath school. I'm someone's daughter with no grandma nearby. I'm like anyone else. I need your kindness more than I need your stares."

One month. So why should I fault the church members when they try to be kind? A prominent elder and his wife stop by today with a pint of fresh peach jam. We have been aching for someone to share the burden of this hurting church. I thought they might carry the weight with us. But they just talk about boating and banking and old college friends. They assure us they are available anytime we need them. But I am not sure what for—a boat ride, a donation?

Six months. We are beginning to piece together what this church family think of themselves. Their conversation often begins or ends with one-liners: "Don't get discouraged." "We are a tough bunch." "Hope you can take it here!" Sometimes they apologize for their conduct, but they seem unable to do anything about it. I don't think they have a good self-image, and I wonder if God provides psychological services. We have so much to figure out—and so much church "baggage" to work around.

One year. The honeymoon's over. We return from vacation to face 17 grievances against our ministry and the prospect of a petition to have us moved. The elder with the peach jam isn't pleased. People use words like "manipulative," "political," "power-hungry," "insensitive," "immature," and "underhanded" to describe their new pastor. Why are they so insensitive? Why so distrustful? Are they turning on us the negative feelings they have about themselves?

Eighteen months. At last we move into permanent housing. A miracle home, by God's grace. But not all of them understand. They say, How can the pastor be so rich? I say, How can God be so good? I guess they don't know yet that the beautiful setting God has given us is not for interior decorating or luxury living. It is for potlucks and committees and lots of fellowship and noisy families. It is for quiet time and privacy.

Two years. Pressures keep building. We are getting tired of tension. But these people need someone to stay by them to weather the storms of all their feelings. They need someone committed enough.
to be misunderstood—and still able to love. They need someone patient enough to be misread—and still to care. I am tired of being that someone. I want to be liked and appreciated. I want to feel that we are serving with friends, and serving our Lord together. But maybe our ministry here won’t include that luxury.

**Three years.** It’s good to be liked. It’s better to be loved. The strongest bonds grow out of tough experiences that severely test love. Perhaps that’s what has happened to us and our church. Trust is slowly taking hold; understanding is beginning to take shape; love is starting to shine. Sometimes we even detect respect. To my surprise, occasionally I even feel joy that God has brought us to this church family.

**Four years.** Our hearts—theirs as well as ours—are wrapped around each other now. When love takes charge, there is joy and fulfillment.

God has brought it all about. It just has taken time: time to become known, to understand, to share, to work together, and to grow.

**Time to become known**

Regardless of the age of the pastor or the makeup of the pastor’s family, on that first crucial day the only thing the congregation usually know about their new leader is surname and some faces to put with it. It’s scant information on which to begin a relationship; it makes for a slow beginning. What’s more, in the pressure of figuring out how to relate to a new leader, most members proceed from stereotypical pictures formed out of expectations and memories: expectations, highly exaggerated sometimes, of what a pastor should be, and memories of experiences with previous pastors. Consequently, personal hurts, negative attitudes about church life, skepticism toward leadership, and a pessimistic view on future relationships enter into the atmosphere in which a new pastor may have to begin ministering.

Though I didn’t realize it then, our members needed my permission to hold mistaken assumptions about us, to jump to wrong conclusions, even to misread our honorable motives. They wanted me to have faith that, given our commitment to this new church and my acceptance of myself and my family as God would choose to use us, someday their assumptions would vanish in friendships.

In the meantime, though, they needed time; we needed time. Only time would give us the experience of growing together, of understanding each other, and of moving beyond the past to see our togetherness in God’s future.

Giving members time to know the pastor’s family assumes that we are willing to give them time to see us as ordinary as we are. Sabbath clothes and Sabbath roles are expressions of a profession, a loving ministry. So is striking out in a baseball game, sharing cold sandwiches, sweating over a broken-down car, sneezing in the dust of a church work bee, and living alongside those we’ve chosen to lead toward eternity.

**Time to understand**

If it takes a while for a church to get to know a new pastoral family, it takes longer for a pastor’s family to get to know a church that has suddenly become a major part of their lives.

For us, getting acquainted meant studying address lists and old pictorial directories, reviewing the names of church officers, reading maps of the town where our members lived, and even casually perusing the giving records. If we felt snooty at times, we also felt the reserve we had met in our new church family. We had never envisioned ourselves in an anonymous ministry, and the prospect of spending years living alongside strangers unwittingly moved us beyond the basic information.

We needed to understand this church family more than any we had ever served before. But we soon realized that understanding meant searching beyond membership lists, occupations, and family connections. It meant looking for information that is rarely found in board minutes and almost never in church histories. It meant observing people. It meant listening.

It meant reflection. How did members actually relate to one another? On what level did they function most frequently together? Who made up the social circles in the church? The thought groups? The working groups? How did they deal with their educational and social differences? How did they relate to strangers or newcomers? How did members function on committees? What topics created the most discussion? How did they arrive at decisions? How did they respond to conflict? What kind of spiritual exchange took place between members? How responsive were they to our spiritual leadership?

Listening and observing may seem to be elements of a passive ministry, but they are what provides the critical background for accepting people where they are and ministering to them knowledgeably. Such understanding builds the foundation for a ministry that considers the underlying needs of the church and puts into perspective the challenges that might come in the way of meeting those needs.

Which all takes time. One church board, one conversation with the head elder, one visit with old Mrs. Buford doesn’t reveal the pulse of a church family. The full history is a composite of all the individual histories. The real pattern of relating is made up of all the relationships. Only as stories accumulated and meshed with our firsthand experiences, as people’s comments became defined by their behavior, as time and hard experiences unfolded to show the deeper layers of our church’s life, did our new church family become “someone” we knew. Slowly we began to understand where they were coming from; prayerfully we tried to meet them where they were.

**Time to share**

I didn’t like the way dear Mrs. Ludraff said it, but she must have understood the connection between time and ministry. My husband, just out of college, had committed two years of service to the little Appalachian church where we were interning. But two years to a 73-year-old widow meant very little. “Look here, you young’uns. I seen many o’ them pastors come an’ go in my day, and ya’ll be gone from these parts soon too. So don’t be a-thinkin’ y’ar gonna do much fer me.”

Her point? Don’t make a big thing of what you are going to do. Life consists of events—births and deaths, marriages and funerals, baptisms and graduations, homecomings and separations, farms and chores, crises and celebrations. You weren’t there for all that went before, and you won’t be there for all that is still to come. “So don’t be a-thinkin’ y’ar gonna do much fer me.”

Many of these events are often considered formal duties of the clergy. But beyond formality, they provide occasions for human warmth: to rejoice, to meet a need, to share what is most meaningful to people. To be a part of such events means to pass landmarks together with them, to create memories with each other, and to be bound forever with their lives.

Facing a congregation that was skepti-
cal of “pastors passing through,” we sensed that our new church family needed someone to stay beside them long enough to do more than cross paths with them at isolated church intersections. They needed someone that they knew would accompany them down the road, someone familiar and trusted to be involved in the part of their lives that would never come in contact with church politics, religious activity, or spiritual programming. That was the only way we could come close enough to them to influence their personal lives and to address their spiritual needs.

**Time to work together**

But the relationship we wanted to build with our church family couldn’t be based simply on the fact that we were assigned to their church. Or that we shared Sabbath morning with them—however high the quality of that sharing was. It couldn’t even be based on a congenial understanding we might arrive at as we became better acquainted.

The real foundation of our relationship needed to be in our calling to do the Lord’s work together. To say this is to acknowledge that there’s Someone above us who brings us together. We’re not serving in order to become popular. We’re not trying to build a track record for bigger things. We’re not seeking to create a model ministry or a pastoral showcase. We’re not even attempting to set the church straight. We’re here for God’s glory. And only He knows how that’s defined—day by day, task by task.

Given time, the Spirit will create between us and His people the understanding and unity that will give the world a profound witness. As we work with God’s family, we claim the promise that we will grow close to them. Not because they finally come to like us or recognize us as good leaders. Not because they grow out of their idiosyncrasies. But because God’s Spirit helps us see each other for the sake of His glory. Which, because of the nature we all share, takes time.

**No time left**

Working with people demands patience and endurance; it cannot be accomplished in 30-minute segments. Attitudes aren’t modeled, lessons can’t be taught, friendships aren’t formed, people don’t change, hurts don’t heal, and growth rarely comes in compressed time capsules.

For some of us, the wait can become a test of faith or a catalyst for endurance. We may question our usefulness and God’s involvement. We may become impatient, self-righteous, and judgmental.

That’s when God reminds us of the divine factor in time: His power to change. Time itself heals nothing. Time itself solves few problems. Time alone doesn’t build relationships or accomplish God’s work. Only the Spirit can convict, reshape people’s thinking, soften hearts toward one another, lead people to Himself, and accomplish His work in harmony.

Meanwhile He expects us to invest our time in His ministry. Be it a day, a week, a month, or several years, ministering to God’s people is an occasion to cooperate with the divine process of reconciliation and restoration in time, in order to work for the end of time that eternity will bring, and with it its perfect understanding and fellowship.

**Being my brother’s keeper**

*From page 5*

Men and women stand as one without any walls of separation in between.

Says the apostle Paul: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26-28).

The same apostle uses the word “mystery” to describe this unity of the human family that the gospel aims to bring about (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:1-6). Before Christ there was division, hostility, and alienation; but in Christ the walls of hostility are removed, the barriers have been torn down, the two have become one. Of this mystery Paul was made a minister “according to the gift of the grace of God” (verse 7). And what’s more, when this mystery is fully realized, “principalities and powers” will stand in awe and wonder at what great things the wisdom of God could accomplish (verses 9, 10). Paul indeed put a high premium on Christian brotherhood!

If brotherhood is so crucial to the understanding of what Christ has accomplished on earth, being our brother’s keeper naturally becomes important to Christian ministry. When Jesus commanded us to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22:39), He was affirming an eternal principle in human relationships: the existence of self is meaningful only when the existence of the other is recognized and appreciated. In fact, the Scriptures measure a person’s spiritual maturity and responsibility by that person’s unselfish, loving, and serving relationship with others. Is this not why the ministry of the despised Samaritan exceeded in righteousness all the sacrifices and the priestly performances of the Temple?

Jesus insists that what is done to the other is in fact done to Him. The parable of the last judgment (Matt. 25) indicates that we better be our “brother’s keeper” if we wish to meet judgment in peace. The question of the Lord of judgment pertains not to theological expertise or doctrinal fundamentalism but to faithfulness to issues of being a brother’s keeper: What have you done to the least of these? Did you sit at the table of bounty and let a poverty-stricken child go to bed hungry? Were you wearing a custom-made three-piece suit while the beggar down the street shivered and struggled in the biting cold? Were you having a glittering party while all along you knew very well that a child across the road was crying for a cup of milk? Were you preparing a great philanthropic oration while someone you knew was hurting with simple issues of dignity and self-worth? Where is that drink you could have given? Where is that clothing that could have covered someone’s nakedness? Where is that smile that could have cheered a weary one? Where is that visit that could have comforted a grieving widow? Where is that call or that handshake or that tap on the shoulder that would have conveyed to the other that he or she is indeed a child of God?

So to be a minister is to be God’s spokesperson: to speak clearly for Him, to convey eloquently His life, His love, and His grace, and to mediate His meaning to those who need it the most—and to do it all in the context of being a brother’s keeper.
Sermon length—1

Floyd Bresee

You've heard the story before, haven't you? A preacher with a bandage on his face is standing before his congregation. "Excuse my appearance," he says. "I was thinking about my sermon while I was shaving, and I cut my face." After hearing the sermon, a listener advises, "Next time, why not think about your face and cut your sermon?"

Then there's this warning: "It's not too serious if people look at their watches while you preach. But if they shake them, watch out!"

Unfortunately, to many of our congregations, our need to cut our sermons is no laughing matter.

Long sermons hurt

It is practically impossible to end a long sermon with an effective conclusion and action step. By the time the preacher reaches the climax of such a sermon—when it's time to "take the order," or get the decision—people have quit listening.

Whatever portion of the sermon makes it too long detracts from the effectiveness of what went before. There is a listening curve. Benefit builds until the sermon gets to the top of that curve. Then benefit begins to fall. We can actually preach until worshipers go away from church worse off than when they came—even angry.

How long is too long?

When is a sermon too long? That's a tough question, because sermons can be lengthy without being long. Sermons that seem long are too long—even if they're short.

Shallow, dawdling sermons seem long. Four minutes of the trite and obvious may seem to the audience like 40 minutes. Sermons seem short that vary from reason to emotion, argument to illustration, and, in delivery, from intimate to enthusiastic.

All things considered, the old rule of thumb still applies in most congregations and cultures: "If you don't strike oil in 30 minutes, stop boring."

Three ways to control length

To control the length of your sermon:
1. Prepare ruthlessly. The problem is not so much one of long-winded preachers who don't know they're taking too much into the pulpit. We soon learn that a particular amount of material will fill a particular number of minutes in the pulpit.

The problem is that we cheat as we prepare. "This is too important to leave out. Besides, it won't take long." And so we put things in, knowing full well we shouldn't. Deleting is difficult, especially if the ideas are our own. It's hard mental work deciding which is an A idea and which is a B. The excellent preacher is ruthless in preparation, putting a knife to the sermon's throat, eliminating every excess idea.

2. Preach empathically. The workday here at the office always starts with morning worship. When I was chairman of the worship committee, we got complaints that too many speakers were going overtime. Everyone seemed to agree that everybody ought to cut back. Yet even some of the complainers went overtime when they spoke. Someone offered a simple yet profound analysis: "They all think they're exceptions."

Lengthy sermons usually evidence a subconscious ego problem. It's embarrassing to admit, but we presume that listening to us is more important than whatever else people might do.

Empathy means "feeling with." An empathic preacher realizes that although the sermon is the most important thing in the world to the preacher just now, he or she might feel very differently if someone else were preaching—and the erstwhile preacher were in the audience trying to quiet a wet baby or worrying that a non-Christian husband was waiting impatiently in the car.

3. Conclude precisely. As an old Vermonter advised, "When you're done pumpin', let loose of the handle." Our sermons sometimes go on and on because we haven't thought through just how we're going to stop. A precisely prepared conclusion protects you and your people from the frustration of a Magellan sermon—one that keeps circling the earth while people pray for land.

The final rule in sermon length must always be Stop while your listeners wish there were more, rather than after they wish there had been less. Stop preaching before your people stop listening.
Frank Holbrook holds a M.Th. from Andrews University and is an apologist for the Biblical Research Institute. He has edited *The Sanctuary and the Atonement, Doctrine of the Sanctuary, Issues on the book of Hebrews*, and other theological works.

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Hans K. LaRonde, Ph.D., is Professor of Systematic Theology at Andrews University Theological Seminary. He studied under G. C. Berkouwer at the Reformed Free University in Amsterdam and is author of *Deliverances in the Psalms and Christ Our Salvation* besides the two listed in this ad.

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Letters

From page 2

cross, and then on the rejecters of His mercy, in the lake of fire. Only the cross enables God to be at once both just and merciful. This is His agape, His redemption of the repentant enemy. — Norman L. Meager, Sonora, California.

Some of the letters (November 1990) disagreeing with Tim Crosby's article "Does God Get Angry?" (July 1990) suggested that in Crosby's viewpoint God and the saints will gladly watch divinely inflicted pain. In reading these letters I sense a certain frustration that might be countered by other considerations.

First, as much as I applaud the passionate undertaking to understand the ways of God, after all the argument and all the efforts to pierce the fog of our own ignorance and frustration, let us recognize that Yahweh says "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9, RSV).

Second, we and all heaven will watch the destruction of the enemy with pain and sorrow, not joy. Will not the promise that God will wipe away all tears from our eyes (Rev. 21:4) come true only after the destruction of the wicked and the start of our new age on this renewed planet?

Divine providence has arranged a 1,000-year question-and-answer session to bring us to the point where we will gladly declare, "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!" (Rev. 15:3, NKJV). — J.R.L. Astleford, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Theological diversity unacceptable

Jan Johnson's "Church Brawls" (November 1990) illustrates one of the great tragedies of the contemporary Adventist Church.

Certainly the Lord accepts cultural and racial diversity (Acts 17:26; Gal. 3:26), but ethical and theological diversity are quite another matter. Johnson's references to the Corinthian church are incredible. Paul did not condone the doctrinal and moral diversity found at Corinth; he condemned it.

The present pluralism of belief and practice in Anglo-Saxon Adventism reminds us of the days of the judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). As we recall, that was a time not of national honor, but of national disgrace.

Paul speaks against theological pluralism in any number of his Epistles (Gal. 1:8; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 1:3, 4). Those who advocate the uncurtailed tolerance of ideas within the church have not a biblical leg to stand on. The protest of faithful Adventists against this unholy confusion is honorable and necessary.

Johnson's remarks about "fringe movements" and "independent publications" are most unhelpful. When a majority abandon truth on any given topic, they are likely to view those still holding to the truth as a fringe element. Seventh-day Adventists as a whole have been viewed in this light regarding the Sabbath and other doctrines. If sacred history is any clue, people thought to be on the fringe tend to be right. Regarding independent publications: they, like church publications, contain both good and bad. We would do well not to portray current issues in terms of organizational sponsorship or ideological balance. Issues are to be defined strictly in terms of "thus saith the Lord." Where Inspiration speaks, we should be decisive. Where Inspiration is silent, tolerance is best. — Kevin D. Paulson, Loma Linda, California.

Secularly oriented article?

I've appreciated Ministry so very much over the years because it has remained God-focused and Christ-centered. But the article "Are You Living a Double Life?" (November 1990) could just as well have appeared in any secular publication, and for that reason I wondered why you published it. God does not wish us to repent because of the loss of self-esteem or the like. When we have sinned, our primary consideration should follow along the lines of the psalmist: "I acknowledge my transgressions . . . Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:3, 4).

I continue to appreciate your publication and look forward to your steadfastness in Him who was, is, and ever will be. — Shirley Dean, Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania.

It is true that our primary consideration regarding our sins should be how they affect our relationship with God. The author alluded to this in the concluding paragraph of her article. But further in her defense (and ours), note in 2 Samuel 12 the story that the prophet Nathan told to draw from David the confession from which you quote. Nathan's story focuses solely on the human aspect of David's sin, the injustice done to another human being. Jesus also pointed out that it is how we treat other people that reveals the vitality of our relationship with God (Matt. 25:40, 45).

—Editors.

Endorses Maxson's practice

Ben Maxson's devotional practice ("Are You a Day's Journey From God?" January 1991) is a most interesting and effectual means of becoming well instructed in the Bible. Being retired, I make bold to relate my experience as an endorsement of his practice. Five o'clock in the morning finds me at my desk with my books and Bibles for an extended devotional session. More follows later in the day. I recommend this routine to all, but especially to those who find in retirement a boredom that comes from the lack of doing something. What better way could a Christian employ the first hours of the day?

Thank you, Ministry, for asking Ben to describe his devotional life! — William Ritz, Santa Cruz, California.


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How do churches successfully assimilate new members into their fellowship? Oswald and Leas have researched 16 churches in Atlanta and Philadelphia, among them Lutheran, United Methodist, Unitarian, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian congregations.

The researchers discovered that influences most significantly affecting church growth are outside the direct control of the congregation. These include the church’s regional location in the country, trends in particular denominations, and neighborhood demographics.

Those factors within the church’s control that make it attractive to potential members include: (1) a positive congregational image evidenced by their corporate energy, belief in inclusion, and sense of mission; (2) congregational harmony; (3) pastoral ability to generate enthusiasm; (4) congregational involvement in social action or services; and (5) small group programs.

The research survey revealed that more than 60 percent of the respondents mentioned the pastor as the most important factor in attracting them to a church. The next most mentioned items had to do with worship; they were the quality of the preaching and the liturgy. These also relate to the style, presence, and person of the pastor.

When new members were asked, “What almost kept you from joining the congregation?” most responses centered on three factors: (1) feeling the pastor ignored them, (2) poor sermons, and (3) hard-to-follow services.

Interestingly, these 16 successful churches had almost no formal assimilation program. The churches attracted people because of the congregations’ warmth, friendliness, and genuine concern, not because of some special technique to capture new members.

The book discusses the stages of experience individuals and families go through as they become interested in joining a church. What happens to persons during their initial visit is crucial to whether or not they will return. At that tentative point they feel no commitment to the members and church programs. The authors note that “the assimilation process functions smoothest when the stranger is recognized as needing to be helped into the congregation.”

The book includes a helpful New Member Assimilation Rating Scale in the appendix. Every minister who wants to keep new members from going out the back door of the church needs to read this book.

In 1990 Oswald produced a workshop video as a companion to The Inviting Church. Taped in VHS format and priced at $29.95, it runs about four hours. Along with the book this can be used very well by a church study group or evangelism committee. It is also available from the Alban Institute.

Daniel on Solid Ground

This small but scholarly volume discusses “several of the issues that have contributed to the radical change in our modern understanding of the book of Daniel.” Ferch considers the academic discussion of the past 20 years concerning issues of text, canon, authorship, unity, and date of writing; and he evaluates the evidence that allegedly points to the second century B.C. as the time of the book’s composition.

Ferch insists that a sixth-century B.C. date for Daniel is validated by the fact that the book was placed among the prophets by the Qumran community, the Septuagint, Theodotion, Christ, and Josephus.

The longer version of Daniel, accepted by Catholics as deutero-canonical and by historico-critical scholars as representative of the latest stage in the book’s development, is found to be apocalyptic and without acceptance in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is not cited by any New Testament authors, and is rejected by later Jewish tradition (as seen in the Masoretic text).

For centuries Jewish and Christian scholars agreed on a sixth-century B.C. date for the writing of Daniel. Most of the questions concerning authorship and literary unity did not come about until recent times; they come through historical rather than literary criticism. The narrative prophecy sequence and the chiastic structure of the 12 chapters shows an inner coherence (see also the horizontal-vertical activity of the little horn in Daniel 8:9-12 and 9:24-27).

As to the dating problem, Ferch indicates the merits of the Exilic thesis over the Maccabean thesis. He notes that the Persian vocabulary in Daniel speaks for an earlier rather than a later date, while pointing out that other evidence, discovered in this century, supports the later date. Ferch shows that the dating of Daniel cannot be decided on linguistic grounds alone, nor from the lack of reference to it in earlier extrabiblical literature. Today a majority of scholars concur that the Babylonian and Persian empires provide the ideal settings for the stories of Daniel 1-6.

But most scholars place the prophetic section (chapters 7-12) in the Maccabean period. Rather than admitting the possibility of true prophecy, they consider this material nonpredictive and assume that it was written after the events described. The evidence Ferch uses in disputing the Maccabean thesis includes: (1) the sparsity of primary contemporary sources depicting historical events from 167-164 B.C.; (2) disagreement in the sources, including the cause of the religious persecution of the Jews; (3) the fact that the so-called similarities between the little horn and Antiochus do not outweigh the far more numerous dissimilarities, such as the far greater magnitude of the little horn and king of the north compared to Antiochus IV Epiphanes; (4) the absence in Daniel of the call to arms the Maccabees contain; and (5) the fact that the heroes of the Maccabees (Mattathias and Judas Maccabeus) of the Maccabees are unnamed in Daniel.

Ferch evaluates Daniel as an apocalyptic book (chapters 7-12), and concludes...
by showing that “once we accept the unity, exilic origin, and apocalyptic nature of the book of Daniel, the only consistent method of interpreting the prophetic chapters is that suggested by the historicist school.”

I find this a well-thought-out presentation that gives a scholarly, systematic, and convincing defense of the traditional position on Daniel.

Debt-free Living

“How we handle money reveals where we are spiritually,” declares this author. Founder and director of Christian Financial Concepts, Gainesville, Georgia, Burkett shares the experiences of couples heavily in debt and how they were able to climb out of debt.

With 80 percent of divorced couples between the ages of 20 and 30 listing financial problems as the primary reason for their divorces, the matter of finances is one the church needs to listen to. Pre-marital counseling must cover financial planning. Pastors need to know bankruptcy laws and be able to give practical suggestions and workable solutions to financial stresses.

I found this to be an informative volume and the author’s philosophy biblically based. Burkett believes that “no one who is financially bound can be spiritually free.” To help people establish financial discipline he provides seminars and audio-video materials for teaching in churches.

Spiritual Ecology

It is time that churches took more interest in what is happening to God’s creation. This book is for every citizen of our ecosystem and especially for Christians who claim to witness for its Creator. It contains sufficient information and anecdotal material to challenge every spiritually sensitive reader.

Nollman believes in the interdependence of creation. Spiritual ecology posits three laws: (1) in a connected world, the whole is no longer the whole when it is a part, (2) no person or group is the enemy, and (3) human beings do not own the Earth.

Nollman proposes to change our perception of nature and our relationship to it. In doing so he uses a vocabulary that will be new to most readers. He masterfully utilizes personal experiences to draw the reader into caring more about the land and its creatures.

He insists that we lost our sense of responsibility when we began to make decisions in terms of our imminent needs and pleasures. Even the non-Christian Iroquois tribe of generations ago considered the impact of their decisions on the next seven generations. We need to practice this kind of social responsibility.

The author reminds us of the more obvious abuses humans practice, such as raping the forests, slaughtering whales, glutonomously using petroleum, wasting water and electricity, creating a greenhouse effect, and gushing pesticides over our crops. We are all culpable.

Although Nollman sometimes exaggerates his point concerning the ability of plants to perceive and even relate to humankind, he does raise the reader’s consciousness of selfish human dominance over the environment. He maintains a healthy balance between idealism and realism. His practical suggestions for our personal lives are not impossible tasks, and he shares his own struggles to comply with a simpler lifestyle.

Nollman concludes his book with a plea to get connected to the environment by acting responsibly. That could mean buying a car that gets better mileage or ridding meat from your diet. It will mean different things to different people. Nollman practices what he espouses—his book is printed on recycled paper. I recommend this book. It will help you gain a new perception of the incredible problem of cleaning up our environment.

Living With Your Conscience Without Going Crazy

Pop psychology is the brand that veers the understanding of human nature with cute phrases and clever analyses with the hope of making your life a veritable nirvana on earth. Insights perceived. Challenges accepted. Problems sublimated. All in two-word sentences.

Make no mistake; this is good pop psychology. Freeman has 20 years pastoral experience and a master’s in counseling. He knows his stuff. And his writing style reads good like pop psych style should.

Chapter titles like “Another Day Shot to Heaven” and “Rock of Jell-O” beg the reader to dive into the contents. Stretching the concept of Integrity to Outegrity and Upegrity provides insight into human and divine nature.

Because pop psychology makes for fun reading, the book could make a useful study guide for a series of midweek meetings—a series that would be open to nonmembers as well as members.

Such a series might bring the yuppies back to church, because they are enamored with self-help books. Freeman enhances this prospect by putting two or three discussion-stimulating questions at the end of each chapter.

The book does have drawbacks. The author uses trite phrases a good writer wouldn’t touch with a 10-foot pole. Do you like rhetorical questions? Would you like a book filled with them? And, in a method very unusual for pop psychology, Freeman performs exegesis on Greek words in almost every chapter.

He also occasionally wanders the waterfront. For example, in chapter 5 (“Weasel Clauses”), on how we bargain with God, Freeman uses the following analogies: Lawyers, who create fine print in contracts; Film Editors, who rearrange the pictures in order to create a new reality; Yabbit Club Members, who use the phrase “Yeah, but . . .” to excuse their actions; Naval Navigators, who measure their progress against the constant stars; Fruit Farmers, who graft branches from one variety of apple tree onto the trunk of another variety; and Divorced. (The blizzard of metaphors blinded me to the purpose of including Divorced.)

But despite these few drawbacks, the book is valuable. It can help the pastor personally. It can be a valuable tool for use in the midweek service.

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The Portland, Oregon-based organization acts as a clearinghouse for copyrighted contemporary religious music issued by more than 200 publishers. Subscribers find easy access to more than 100,000 songs. "The service could be of value to churches that regularly use worship aids such as overhead projectors and song sheets," according to Howard Rachinski, president of CCLI.

Adds Rachinski: "Churches who subscribe to CCLI receive a 'copyright license' that gives them rights to use any of the authorized publishers' songs. These include the right to print local church songbooks, song sheets, bulletins, and liturgies compiled for congregational use. Churches also receive the right to make slides and transparencies, as well as the right to make special musical arrangements for instruments or voices." For more information, contact Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc., 6130 NE 78th Ct., Suite C-11, Portland, Oregon 97218. Phone: 1-800-234-2446; in Oregon, 503-257-2230.

Preach without notes

But not without preparation. In fact, preaching without notes in my style requires just as much or more preparation than does preaching with a full manuscript or notes. I call it the acrostic technique. I write out my sermon in full. Then I select a key word for each major point I wish to emphasize. I arrange the beginning letter of each key word into a vertical acrostic, familiarizing myself with the content carried by each letter. I use the same system to remember my minor points as well. I go over this several times before it's time to preach, until I am satisfied with the smooth flow of the sermon. For emergency use I do carry a card containing the acrostics in my Bible or coat pocket.

Such preaching has many advantages: freedom from constant reference to notes, better eye contact with the audience, and a confidence-filled delivery. —Robert W. Rae, Mesa, Arizona.

Simple studies for great living

In a recipe-oriented age that demands how-to answers for great issues of peace and war as well as for minor nuisances like leaking faucets, here is a little volume, How to Succeed, that presumes to tell you just that. Perhaps "presumes" is not the right word; make it "dares." The author, Steve Cook, is pastor of the Germantown Seventh-day Adventist Church, Wisconsin, and has chosen the title well, because his 18 studies on life's pressing problems are based on Scripture and tested out in small study groups in his church and community.

The book is not a doctrinal or theological exposition; nor is it parochial. It is a simple study guide, with a question-and-answer format, useful in personal or group study. Each study has 9 or 10 questions with direct Scripture answers. Topics covered include: knowing God's will, overcoming adversity, having a happy home, having a prayer life, managing time, loving one's adversaries, dealing with stress, and more. Price: US$3.00 each; five or more copies, US$2.00 each. Proceeds go for local church building projects. Write: Village Seventh-day Adventist Church, Post Office Box 32, Germantown, Wisconsin 53022.

New CPE program

Just before publication of this issue of Ministry we received a fax announcing the establishment of a Clinical Pastoral Education program at Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.

The accreditation site team of the Southeast Region of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education made its visit in December 1990, and is recommending Florida Hospital for candidacy for accreditation. The hospital has received verbal approval to announce the following programs: an 11-week intensive unit beginning June 10, 1991; a 28-week part-time unit and a one-year full-time residency program with four stipends—these latter two both beginning September 16, 1991.

Applications for these 1991 programs will be considered until March 4, 1991. Applications for 1992 programs may also be submitted now. For information, contact: Darrell Nicola, CPE Supervisor, Pastoral Care Department, Florida Hospital, 601 East Rollins Street, Orlando, FL 32803; telephone (407) 897-1553.

Ministry professional growth seminar convenes in southern California

Tuesday, March 12, 1991, Dr. Richard A. Blackmon will present a seminar entitled "Role Conflict in Ministry" at the Glendale Medical Center, Glendale, California. Dr. Blackmon is a founding partner of Pacific Psychological Resources and an adjunct professor at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Registration costs $10 (spouse $5) and covers seminar materials and the noon meal. Continuing education credit is available. To preregister, contact the Chaplains Department, Glendale Adventist Medical Center, 1509 Wilson Terrace, Glendale, CA 91206; telephone (818) 409-8008.
**10-DAY ITINERARY**

July 2-13, 1991

- **ACCOMMODATIONS:** 10 days in Jerusalem, staying at the Jerusalem Center Hotel.
- **INCLUSIONS:** Breakfast, dinner, and some lunches.
- **ACTIVITIES:** Visit the Old City, Mount of Olives, Church of the Redeemer, Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- **FEE:** $645

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**18-DAY ITINERARY**

September 9-26, 1991

- **ACCOMMODATIONS:** 18 days in Jerusalem, staying at the Jerusalem Center Hotel.
- **INCLUSIONS:** Breakfast, dinner, and some lunches.
- **ACTIVITIES:** Visit the Old City, Mount of Olives, Church of the Redeemer, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Mount Nebo, Mount Carmel.
- **FEE:** $975

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