LINKING LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESSFUL PASTORING
First Glance

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THE WRITER ACCUSED EDWARDS OF POOR SCHOLARSHIP BECAUSE HE MADE REFERENCES TO AUTHORS PUBLISHED TOO MANY YEARS AGO.

I n the April 2003 edition of Ministry, a letter to the editor appeared objecting to Rex Edwards’s article “Spiritual Leadership or Baptized Secularism,” which appeared in the September 2002 issue.

The writer accused Edwards of poor scholarship because he made references to authors published too many years ago. I carefully looked at Edwards’s 17 references [a number of other similar references were excluded in the editing process, to conserve space] and found one from 1987, five from 1993, and one from 1997. The writer quoted an author by the name of Bartol, but didn’t mention the title of the book or the publisher, so I was unable to check the context from which the quotation was drawn.

I’m not sure that the three styles of leadership, autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic, are from the dinosaur age, even though they originated in 1938, as the letter writer claimed. One has only to visit churches and speak to pastors to discover that all three styles of leadership are still being practiced.

The letter writer’s quotation listed cooperation, partnership, and consensus as more contemporary views of leadership. When I read Edwards’s article I noticed that he advocates all three as more contemporary views of leadership. Pastors from many faiths expressed great appreciation for his current scholarship and practical material. It would seem to me that along with this negative letter to the editor Rex Edwards should have the opportunity to reply. [See below.] This practice is very noticeable in Adventist journals such as Adventist Review and Signs. Such a reply could very well clear the air for the letter writer.

—Larry Yeagley, Charlotte, Michigan.

T hanks for the great job you are doing with Ministry!

Having been in leadership training on six continents for a number of years, I can’t help but respond to Rex Edwards’s article, “Spiritual Leadership or Baptized Secularism,” and particularly to Keith Howson’s response.

“A rose by any other name smells as sweet.” That famous line by Shakespeare can well apply to Rex’s article. Sure it’s always good to use current authors as Edwards does (Kouzes and Posner, Shawchuck and Heuser and Mullins), but to blast the whole article on the basis of older quotes seems unfair, and I’ll tell you why. Incidentally, I have even quoted Socrates and Plato on a couple of good points.

The oldest quote of all was from Scripture. Yes, of course, inspired men wrote those words, but the principles hold no matter the date of writing. Take a look at Nehemiah, Peter, and Edwards—they all described the detrimental effects of leadership by lordship. Nehemiah said, “Out of reverence for God, I did not act like that” (Neh. 5:15, NIV). That’s what Peter and Edwards did.

Isn’t it true that the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles of leadership still exist today in the church, no matter when the terms were first used? Edwards expounds on the democratic, developmental style that he espouses. He bridges the gap between the past and the present in understandable language that shapes his underlying thesis. Howson’s quote (2001 by Bartol) about “cooperation, partnership, and consensus” is up-to-date, but no more valid than the comparable words of John Stott or my friend Ted Engstrom. So, let’s be careful about our judgment of others.

Right, “a rose by any other name smells as sweet.”

—Donald G. Reynolds, Mount Vernon, Ohio.

Rex Edwards replies: As I read Mr. Howson’s critique of my article “Spiritual Leadership or Baptized Secularism,” I thought of a line that Shakespeare put into the mouth of Julius Caesar, to wit: “What you have said, I will consider; what you have to say, I will with patience hear; and find a time both meet to hear and answer.”

Let me preface my response by saying that I was motivated to write “Spiritual Leadership or Baptized Secularism” because leadership malpractice is unfortunately still widespread continued on page 8
Along with Christians since the first century, Seventh-day Adventists have had their struggles with the question of what kind of nature Jesus took when He, “the Word,” became “flesh” (John 1:14). Our question has been, To what extent and in which ways did Jesus possess a sinful human nature versus a sinless divine nature, and how do these two natures meet in Him and relate to human salvation?

The soul mate of the “nature-of-Christ” issue (at least when it comes to the Adventist dialogue over these things) is the question, of course, of the role of Christ’s imparted sinless perfection, worked out in the heart and behavior of the Christian believer by faith, versus the role of Jesus’ own personal perfection, “credited to the account” of the Christian by faith (imputed), through an outright gift of God’s grace. These particular issues and the way they relate to one another, are particularly potent in the Adventist mind and heart when coupled with the close of “probation,” the final judgment, and the second coming of Christ.

Seventh-day Adventists, many at least, are divided when it comes to these things. While there is a profound fatigue within the Adventist soul when it comes to such discussions and the tensions and divisions they tend to bring, there is also a compelling significance to aspects of the dialogue. The publication of two divisions they tend to bring, there is also to such discussions and the tensions and within the Adventist soul when it comes things. While there is a profound fatigue

Given these articles, we felt it would be both helpful and interesting to republish an insert (found at the center of this issue) that Ministry first presented 33 years ago in its October 1970 issue.

While volumes of water have passed under the theological bridge of our Church since 1970, we at Ministry find ourselves in basic agreement with the positions that were taken on the issues discussed by the three essayists in this insert. For instance, both the collection and especially the correlation of Ellen White citations found on and around page 12 of the insert are some of the most well-balanced and revealing that could be presented.

Even when these are carefully placed next to similar statements that emphasize other important aspects of these matters, they stand as sentinels unabashedly affirming the absolute sinlessness of the human nature of Jesus Christ, who as such is both qualified and entitled to stand before God in our behalf, so that in Him we may have a well founded confidence before God (1 John 2:28), even after the close of “probation” and at the moment of final judgment.

On the other hand, in this insert there is much to substantiate the superb truth that Jesus, as a thoroughly human being, facing all the temptations common to humans, and living each day with our fallen human nature upon Him, demonstrated that through faith in His Father, sin could by all means be overcome, and so verified that, through the inner work of the Holy Spirit, every struggling Christian may do as He did, in the way He did it.

Yet it is important to clarify that when all this has been done in the life of the Christian, the resulting goodness, having passed through a defective human channel, can be acceptable only when hidden by faith in the absolute perfection of Jesus Himself (see, for example, Selected Messages, Book 1, p. 344). This is and indeed must be, because His nature is and was completely sinless.

It seems to me that one of the greatest challenges in all this is to embrace the fact that, regardless of where we stand in any dialogue, there is a defiantly frustrating mystery to Jesus’ nature. This is especially so when we seek to understand its finer implications.

For example, none of us has had, and therefore cannot know what it really means to have a divine side, as such, to our natures, whether quiescent or not. Further, it is clear that Jesus was born and came to this earth under entirely unique circumstances, different from ours, and therefore received a one-of-a-kind nature, the Holy Spirit being as literally His progenitor for His human incarnational sojourn as human words could ever describe such a reality (Luke 1:35).

But when all is said and done, the evidence, experience, and also the quality of the Seventh-day Adventists that form the ecclesiastical fault lines composing the sides in our struggle over these questions, are such that it is crucial for us to cease considering someone less than authentically Christian or Adventist if they take a position different from the one we take.
Linking leadership and successful pastoring: An investigation

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Do leadership practices correlate with successful pastoral ministry? We ask this question because we frequently notice that, while programs and resources vary and change, progress seems to be a constant with certain pastors.

What empowers these church leaders to continue with unusual success, even when their ministry context or emphasis changes? The question becomes more complex when we consider that people equally devoted to Jesus seem to experience differing levels of success; thus suggesting that it is difficult to conclude that spiritual commitment alone is the factor that predicts pastoral success as we customarily define it.

Is leadership practice, rather than particular programs or resources, the “constant” that accompanies pastoral success?

Success criteria for pastoral ministry

Such questions require agreement regarding the criteria composing pastoral success. Achieving such agreement is an ambitious pursuit. The conversations and perspectives of varied constituencies of the church must be assimilated, objective analysis provided, and a set of criteria put forward.

We have identified a set of criteria for qualifying success in pastoral ministry through interviews with pastors, members, and church administrators, a focus group composed of ministerial secretaries, a survey of 62 members of eight conference executive committees in various regions of the North American Division, and a review of church-growth literature. Thirty-four of the respondents to the aforementioned 62-person conference executive committee survey, were not church employees or ministry professionals, 11 were pastors, 17 were administrators.

Analysis of the above-mentioned research steps led us to establish the following set of criteria for measuring pastoral success:

1. The growth of the church.
2. The motivation and development of members in ministry.
3. Effective communication of the Word of God.
4. Effective soul-winning ministry.
5. A compelling, well-communicated, inspiring vision for growth.
6. Inspiring worship services.
7. Spiritual strength in personal and family life.
8. A ministry that contributes to unity in the church.
10. A ministry that multiplies loving relationships in the church.
11. Attendance increases.
12. Giving patterns that are improving.
13. The ability of the church to sustain healthy growth.

A framework of leadership practices

The opening questions, identified above, also require that a cluster, or “framework,” of leadership practices be defined. A practice is a recurring pattern of behavior predictable within a person in response to a certain environment. In the case of pastoral leadership practices, it is the dominant way a person thinks, feels, or acts in an environment that evokes pastoral leadership behaviors.

Innumerable systems exist for the construction of a leadership practice framework. We referenced a framework with five practices applicable to church leadership—the research from TGP/Learning Systems founded by Jim Kouzes and Tom Peters.

Five key leadership practices make up the Kouzes-Posner leadership framework: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. This leadership frame-
TABLE 1: Comparisons of “Average” and “Successful” Pastors on Five Leadership Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practice</th>
<th>Mean of “Average” Pastors</th>
<th>Mean of “Successful” Pastors</th>
<th>*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging the Process</td>
<td>35.4 (59%)</td>
<td>43.0 (72%)</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring a Shared Vision</td>
<td>37.7 (63%)</td>
<td>45.1 (75%)</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling Others to Act</td>
<td>41.5 (69%)</td>
<td>47.5 (79%)</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling the Way</td>
<td>39.7 (66%)</td>
<td>45.5 (76%)</td>
<td>.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>38.7 (65%)</td>
<td>45.7 (76%)</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Leadership Practices</td>
<td>190.3</td>
<td>228.0</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Probability that the differences in the two samples result from chance. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point.

Work has been assessed in numerous studies with an instrument known as the Leadership Practices Inventory, which has been used in several studies of church organizations.

The research samples

To investigate possible correlation between leadership practices and successful pastoral ministry, we had to secure two sample groups of pastors distinguished by this set of criteria, one group representing distinctive success and the other a more average norm. To achieve this in our study, we selected a purposive sample of 23 conferences in the NAD. We sent a list of the pastoral success criteria to the ministerial secretary of each of these conferences. Each of them was asked to list five pastors in that conference who significantly fitted the success criteria, and randomly select five pastors who would represent an average performance under this standard.

Sixteen conferences responded, sending 66 names for those recommended as meeting the success criteria, and 56 as representing the average. We then examined conference directories and identified congregational leadership lists for each congregation served by a pastor named on either list. From these we selected three lay leaders from each congregation. We mailed the assessment tool, the 30-item Leadership Practices Inventory for “Observers,” to each lay leader along with a letter including these instructions: “Your pastor has been selected to be part of a research project of leadership practices among Seventh-day Adventist pastors across North America.

“As a leader in your local congregation, your help is needed for this project. Included in this envelope you will find a Leadership Practices Inventory survey called ‘Observer’ with instructions on the front cover . . . as well as a self-addressed, postage-paid, return envelope. We are asking that you simply fill out the survey according to the instructions and return it in the envelope provided.”

The lay member was also informed that “all responses are anonymous and highly confidential, so please do not discuss this survey with anyone.” Thus, the pastors were not aware that lay leaders were rating them.

Analysis

We received 199 usable surveys, evaluating 109 pastors. These data consist of 120 responses on 62 pastors from the “success” group, and 79 responses on 47 in the “average” group. Each pastor received a score on the five leadership practices, with a maximum score of 60. These data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program for the difference between two independent means. An average score for each group of pastors on each of the five leadership practices is shown in Table 1. The percentage
next to the average score is that of the average score compared to the total possible score of 60. The average scores for the combined five practices are also shown.

In every case the mean score of the "successful" pastors is significantly higher than the mean score of the "average" group. Statisticians generally accept the .05 level or lower as indicating a significant difference between two groups. This indicates that there are fewer than five chances in a hundred that these differences could be obtained if there were no real differences in the population group (all NAD pastors) from which these samples were drawn.

In four of the five differences the level is .001. This indicates that only one chance in a thousand exists that these groups are not really different. The one exception is in the "Modeling the Way" category. Even here the .013 level indicates that only about thirteen chances in a thousand could yield these results if no difference actually existed.

Furthermore, if we combine all the practices into one super-leadership scale, we find an average mean of about 228 for the "success" group of pastors and only about 190 for the "average" group. Adventist pastors who meet the success criteria adopted are significantly more likely (.001 level) to be rated higher on leadership skills than pastors whose performance is considered average.

On each of the five leadership practices (Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart) the pastors who qualified under the "success" criteria were significantly higher than the pastors who formed the "average" group. This was also true when all five practices were combined into a "super-leadership-practice" scale.

While this relationship does not prove that one causes the other, it seems that applying superior leadership practices enables pastors to be more successful. This study has
demonstrated a strong correlation between the two.

The priority of leadership development

One subjective observation seems evident: Investment in leadership development must become a priority. Leadership development itself is frequently misunderstood. While it is beyond the limitation of this report to prescribe a leadership development process, we must define the terms of this observation.

While there are by all means indefinable, subjective elements that underlie the persona of successful leaders, professionals who devote their careers to adult professional education in the field of leadership describe the process on at least three levels: (1) personal identification and formation, which certainly incorporates spiritual formation; (2) understanding and developing leadership practices, often cast as traits; and (3) skill formation, including administrative competencies.

Leadership development is an ongoing, intentional, and enduring process. It is not communicated in seminars alone, nor in occasional inspirational messages. The encouraging reality is that leadership practices can be developed and can grow out of significant personal and spiritual transformation.

Thus, it would not only be wise but imperative to devote considerable attention in graduate ministerial education and in lifelong continuing education to develop and inculcate effective leadership practices within the members of our pastoral family at large.

1 See Andrews University Seminary Studies, Volume 40, number 2, Fall 2002, for a technical report and complete data.
2 The framework, published in The Leadership Challenge, has been validated consistently in over ten years of research (James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995]).
4 In addition to the 199 “usable” surveys, we also received eight that were discarded due to various problems, three that were returned with a refusal to participate, 14 that were returned as undeliverable, and two that arrived after the cut-off date. There were 122 congregations identified, with the survey being sent to three lay members per church—or 366 total surveys. If we eliminate the 14 “undeliverables,” 352 are presumed to have reached their destination. If we add the 199 usable surveys, the eight with problems, and the two that were late, the total of returned surveys equals 209. This represents 59 percent of the 352 that were presumably delivered.

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today in our churches, far more than we are willing to admit. We might complain at times about church leadership and its shortcomings, but have we developed a theology of leadership for ourselves? Can we as the people of God establish a common understanding of leadership in spite of our theological and philosophical differences?

My specific response to Howson is threefold:

First, integrity: In my article, 17 quotations were cited, of which 9 are from the pen of contemporary authors, of whom Shawchuck, Kouzes, and Posner are internationally recognized leadership authorities. An honest critique would not have been unfairly selective by ignoring the latest contemporary citations quoted. Howson’s approach is either willful misrepresentation or shabbish scholarship.

Second, objectivity: Admittedly, I was using a dated construct, but that is not a sound enough reason to dismiss it. The three models are still relevant. Howson’s preoccupation with citation dates is to the neglect of evaluating the stated descriptors. We all might have benefited if he had set forth an alternate leadership model.

Third, continuity: The threefold model I cited and which was categorized by Howson as imprecise and dinosaurial, is expanded in a precise sixfold model by a “contemporary” writer and professor at Rutgers University, Dr. Daniel Goleman, in an article entitled “Leadership That Gets Results,” in Harvard Business Review (March-April 2000). Summarily:

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(1) There are coercive leaders who demand immediate compliance. (2) There is authoritative leadership, which tends to mobilize people toward a vision, especially when confusion and insecurity prevail. If this style is too defensive, it tends to become coercive in practice. (3) There is affiliative leadership, which does not say, “Do what I say!” but rather “People come first.” This leader places priority on the values and feelings of others rather than on tasks and goals. (4) There is the democratic style of leadership, which is an excellent approach when there is time for consensus building, and to discuss the options before a decision needs to be made. This type, however, can be abused by endless meetings and leaders who defer to crucial decision making. (5) There is also the pacesetting style of leadership, whereby the head of the organization expects excellence and self-direction that points to high standards. (6) The coaching style, within which one acts as a counselor more than a professor or administrator, listening carefully and with a sense of genuine concern to help others see change as an opportunity for growth.

Goleman carefully elaborates the strengths and shortcomings of each of these styles. Has Goleman resurrected the “dinosaur” with this precise categorization of leadership styles?

If the Harvard Business Review article had been available at the time of my submission, it would have been referenced along with an elaboration of the valuable lessons to be learned from each style. Notwithstanding, it is clear that while we can learn from secular leadership models, as spiritual leaders we need to switch flexibly among and practice those leadership styles that are in keeping with our faith principles and informed by the Holy Spirit. Christian leadership is complex, and there is no single theological formula or infallible guru we can study and emulate as we navigate through the leadership challenges. We should wrestle honestly with the question of effective and ineffective leadership, to dig more deeply into our traditions for examples, and through a process of dialog to shape new paradigms of leadership to empower the people of God into a renewed partnership with God. Clergy and laity need a shared vision, a common apostolate—that is to say, a common calling and commissioning to go forth together as God’s people who are interdependent.

I regard feedback as a gift from which I can learn. But I would remind Howson that articles are not submitted to Ministry as class assignments or exercises, and the magazine is not a refereed journal. I was offering only one perspective on spiritual leadership. However, his critique will serve a useful purpose if it motivates Ministry readers to re-read my article, judge its fairness and objectivity—or lack of it—re-evaluate their own leadership style, and develop a viable theology of leadership themselves.

—Rex Edwards, associate vice president and director of religious studies, Griggs University, Silver Spring, Maryland.
Salvation in Jesus

Ivan T. Blazan

The good news of Scripture centers in the reality that “God is love” (1 John 4:16). Because of “the great love with which he loved us” (Eph. 2:4, NRSV) He has become “the God of our salvation” (1 Chr. 16:35; Ps. 79:9). As the Savior He calls all humanity to turn to Him and be saved (Isa. 45:22). In response we can affirm: “But as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me” (Mic. 7:7, RSV).

When the budding Israelite nation was in slavery in Egypt, God heard their cry (Exod. 2:23, 24) and, with a mighty hand, brought them out to freedom (Deut. 26:8). The Exodus was the greatest salvation event prior to the coming of Christ as Messiah. Its themes are woven into the description of salvation history throughout the Old Testament. It explained Israel’s past, gave meaning to its present, and inspired hope for its future.

What the Exodus was to the Old Testament, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are to the New. These interrelated events cast their salvific radiance over all time. In Jesus a new exodus occurs. An exodus from sin and guilt, evil and suffering, the demonic, and even death itself.

The expression “God our Saviour,” found in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10) is an appropriate title for God since it sums up the whole history of His saving activity in behalf of His people. Significantly, a parallel to this phrase in the Pastoral Epistles is the expression “Jesus our Saviour” (Titus 1:4). This juxtaposition reveals that what God does redemptively, He does primarily in Jesus. Jesus embodies God’s saving purpose.

Jesus: the divine and the human

Jesus’ earthly life is framed on both sides by divine events and meanings. Mark begins the story of Jesus with His baptism, when He was empowered by God’s Spirit and identified as God’s Son. Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus’ virgin birth by the action of the Spirit. John traces Jesus’ origin to His preexistence as the Word in the eternal realm of God. On the other side of Jesus’ earthly life is His resurrection from the dead and ascent to the Father.

It is clear that while Jesus was a real human being, He was no ordinary person. The one who walked the hills of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem, who healed the sick and challenged religious authority and imperial power by giving new status to the oppressed, and who was crucified by Pontius Pilate and died as a criminal—this was the Son of God who stood in a special relation to both God and humanity.

He was the eternal Word made flesh, the supreme revelation of the nature and purpose, love and grace of God. When He spoke, He spoke with divine authority. When He acted, He brought divine intervention in behalf of a lost and struggling humanity.

He died as a result of religious politics and Roman power, but it was no ordinary death. In the biblical witness, He died for our sins as our Representative and Substitute and as an atoning Sacrifice through which forgiveness of sin and newness of life are granted.

In His death and resurrection He was victor over the forces of evil and the dominion of death. Through union with Him as the resurrected Lord, this victory is ours. Until the day He comes again, when every knee bows and confesses Him as Lord to the glory of God the Father, it is our privilege to already call Him Savior and Lord, and to accept His gift and receive His summons, “Come and follow Me.”

The invitation of Jesus

In a pithy summary of the essence of Jesus’ teaching ministry, Mark 1:14, 15 says that Jesus entered Galilee with a threefold announcement.

First, “the time is fulfilled.” This statement must have sent shivers up the spiritual spines of His hearers, for they
had waited long for the fulfillment of their messianic, eschatological hope of redemption. Jesus announces here that their wait is over. Something of greatest magnitude, to which the Old Testament gave witness, is about to be disclosed and revealed.

Second, Jesus gives specific form to the time of fulfillment by declaring that “the kingdom of God is at hand.” To speak of God’s kingdom is to refer to the reign, or rule, of God. In other words, God, as Creator, is about to assert His power to rule by intervening in human history to deliver His people.

This kingdom is both present and future. In the Lord’s Prayer we are to pray, “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10), and when it does come at the return of the Son of man in glory, we are to enter it (Matt. 25:31-34).

And yet, the kingdom is present, for Jesus declared that it had drawn near (Mark 1:15), could be entered now (Luke 16:16; Matt. 21:31), and was present to His contemporaries in His presence, words, and deeds (Luke 17:21) as witnessed, for example, by His exorcism of demons by the power of God (Luke 11:20).

The third element of Jesus’ proclamation was “Repent and believe the gospel.” The right response to the good news of what God offers through Jesus is faith and repentance. God’s kingdom does not come upon us by force but as an appeal to make a decision for God, to say Yes to Him, receive what He has for us, and allow His rule to be manifested in our lives.

Repentance has various connotations, depending on whether it is understood in terms of Greek or Hebrew thought patterns. The basic meaning of the Greek word metanoeo, which is used in Mark 1:15, is to change one’s mind. This fits well with the Greek emphasis on intellect.

While this idea is a component of repentance, it does not do justice to the dynamic Hebrew concept that lies behind the Greek form of the word. In Hebrew the concept of repentance comes from a term that means “to turn,” and hence “to return.” In this...
arena, “to repent” means to do an about face in the way one has been walking through life and to come back to God and His will. It is a complete redirection of one’s life in which the will and way of God become paramount and determinative. It is synonymous with conversion.

The idea is well represented in the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. We are told that when he had wasted his inheritance on immoral living and found himself feeding pigs and hungering for their food, he came to his wits (verse 17) and said, “I will get up and go to my father” (verse 18). This is the same as saying, “I will go back to my father.”

Sorrow and confession are part of this movement back as illustrated by the prodigal’s words to his father, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son” (verse 21). With such a repentance, the outcome is certain.

Compassion and restoration by the father take place. So with the heavenly Father, who calls to us in the words of Joel: “Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing” (Joel 2:12, 13, NRSV).

When Jesus summons people to turn back to God and His rulership, the certainty of God’s compassion and forgiveness is inherent in the call.

The character of Jesus’ ministry

The character of Jesus’ ministry and the practical significance of the kingdom of God are enhanced in His Nazareth sermon in Luke 4:16-21. Jesus takes on Himself the mantle of the Servant of God in Isaiah 61:1, 2. As the Servant, and in fulfillment of the Isaiah passage, He says that the Spirit of God anointed Him to bring good news to the poor and to proclaim release to the captives and oppressed, renewed sight to the blind, and the year of the Lord’s favor.

The two main themes involved in this mission are freedom and grace—freedom from whatever holds us in its thrall, and the grace of God’s acceptance, for which the time is entirely open with the present arrival of Jesus. It is significant that Jesus did not continue the quotation from Isaiah with the words that immediately follow: “and the day of vengeance of our God.” Jesus throws all His emphasis onto grace. Vengeance is not the point for now. Acceptance alone is in His mind. He wants every bonded soul to know that he or she can be a part of God’s kingdom and have a new, grace-filled relationship with God.

There are seven “Jesus came” statements in the gospels, which indicate what the purpose of Jesus’ mission was. Nearly all these are in line with Jesus’ emphasis on God’s favor and acceptance in His Nazareth sermon. The gospels declare that Jesus came to:

1. Expound God’s law more fully (Matt. 5:17, a verse that is expounded more fully in 5:21-48);
2. Seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10);
3. Call sinners rather than the righteous (Matt. 9:13);
4. Be a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matt. 11:19);
5. Save rather than condemn the world (John 3:17);
6. Give life more abundantly (John 10:10);
7. Minister, rather than to be ministered to, and to give His life a ransom for people (Mark 10:45).

Jesus’ death and resurrection

The last statement brings us to the point of Jesus’ death. It was a death expressing self-giving love. Jesus’ intent was not to have others serve Him but to serve them.

In this, one is reminded of the moving statement of American President John F. Kennedy 2,000 years later, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” The same principle is involved but, in Jesus’ case, He was not talking about
others giving themselves, but about offering Himself. And it was not a general statement about a life of service, but a focused statement about giving Himself up to death for others.

What His death would do for others is indicated by the word ransom, which is a reference to giving that which frees others who cannot free themselves. In this case, by giving His life, Jesus liberates others to live. This is not cheap grace, for “You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18, 19, RSV).

The same emphasis is found in the scene of the Last Supper where, in reference to the bread and wine, Jesus states: “This is my body which is given for you . . . my blood which is poured out for you” (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).

Thinking of death as bringing life, I cannot forget the words of a now aged survivor of the Holocaust during World War II. He described how, as a young boy, he was fortuitously quartered in the same barracks as his father. The ration of bread was pitifully meager—hardly enough for one to survive, but day by day his father gave his bread to his son. As a result, the father grew weaker and finally died. In his lecture the son tearfully explained, “My father gave his life for me.”

The ransom theme of Mark 10:45 and the body and blood motifs of the Last Supper are developed in other New Testament writings. In Romans 3:24, Paul declares that our justification takes place through an act of redemption, a term in the same word family as ransom.

This means that we are put right with God through a divine act of liberation from sin. This occurred when God set forth Christ as an atoning Sacrifice, through which our sin was purged and God’s holy wrath and universal justice were obviated, it being initiated by God Himself as an act of His own redemptive, merciful, and inexpressibly loving nature.

All this had as its purpose to exhibit God’s saving righteousness, by which He restores us to a right relationship with Himself. Indeed, in an act of ultimate identification (3:25), God “for our sake, made [Christ] to be sin [the sin bearer] for us, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21, RSV).

This is the great exchange; He takes our sin and we receive His righteousness. This righteousness involves our reconciliation to God, for, as the same context makes clear, “In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them” (2 Cor. 5:19, RSV).

The Christ who was put to death to deal with our sins was raised in order to effect our justification (Rom. 4:25). A dead Savior cannot save. As His resurrection vindicated Him, so it justifies us. Without the Resurrection, the apostolic proclamation and our faith would be in vain, we would remain in our sins, and the dead would have forever perished (1 Cor. 15:17, 18).

**The significance of Christ’s resurrection**

However, if Christ be risen, the results are of an altogether different kind. Because Jesus lives, all who belong to Him will be made alive (1 Cor. 15:20-23), and the universal dominion of God will be realized (24-29). God’s people will be transformed into the image of the resurrected Christ (42-50), and immortality will be granted (51-55). In view of this, it can be readily seen why the resurrection of Christ, along with His death, is called a matter of “first importance” (3).

But it is not alone for the future that Jesus’ resurrection has consummate significance. It has profound ramifications for the present as well. In contrast to the preaching and faith that become vain if the Resurrection is not true (1 Cor. 15:14), Paul asserts that the continuing life of Jesus guarantees that “in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (58). In other words, abounding in the work of Christ will find fruition instead of futility. What we do for Him counts permanently.

Furthermore, when we not only work for Christ but suffer for Him, we learn that we are not to “rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9). Our confidence is that by the power of His resurrection He will carry us through. This is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 4:8-11, where the Cross stands for the negative side of life, and the Resurrection represents the power of God, which carries us through darkness.

The Cross—the Resurrection. We are afflicted in every way—but not crushed. Perplexed—but not driven to despair. Persecuted—but not forsaken. Struck down—but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus—so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake—so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

Thus the power of the Resurrection is operative not only at the end of time but in the midst of time. We can know that “he who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again” (2 Cor 1:10, RSV).

Furthermore, the resurrection of Jesus makes possible in the present the ethical renewal of the believer. For as those baptized into Christ, we were baptized into His death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory (power) of God, we too might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4). The same power that raised Christ is operative in the moral life of those who are in union with Him.

In view of all that the death and resurrection of Jesus means and brings, and in view of so great a salvation, we can exclaim with Peter, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (Peter 1:3-5, NRSV).
Questions on Doctrine:
Then and now

Woodrow W. Whidden

Andrews University Press recently released a new edition of the groundbreaking 1957 book, Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine. While the original turned out to be a watershed factor when it came to Seventh-day Adventist/Evangelical relations, it also proved to be one of the most controversial publishing events in the history of Adventism.

Before we further describe the background events and controversies surrounding QOD's original publication, and assess the ongoing impact of the publication, prospective readers will be interested in a number of the helpful features included in the new edition.

Features in the new edition

First, the original text is retained. However, the book has been editorially supplemented with an introduction, annotated footnotes, and an updated bibliography by well-known Adventist historian and writer George R. Knight.

Drawing on the latest QOD research, the introduction and footnotes provide background on the central theological issues, key conferences, and serious reactions provoked by the book from within both the evangelical and the Adventist communities.

Second, Knight has sought to honestly and fairly review the controversial charges and countercharges the book generated between leading Adventist QOD contributors and those who took strong exception to their "answers" (especially on the atonement and the humanity of Christ).

The traditional critics of QOD will be gratified to know that Knight has pulled no punches, especially when it comes to exposing the way L. E. Froom and his colleagues were "less than transparent" about the denomination's long-held (since the 1890s) consensus on the "post-Fall" humanity of Christ. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Knight also suggests that Froom and his colleagues gave a false impression as they developed the notorious "Appendix B," entitled "Christ's Nature During the Incarnation," which consists of Ellen White statements.

Knight claims that the controversial heading, which says Christ "Took Sinless Human Nature," was "problematic in that it implied that this was Ellen White's idea when in fact she was quite emphatic in repeatedly stating that Christ took 'our sinful nature' and that 'He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin.'"

Key background issues and personalities

The publication of QOD in 1957 was the culmination of a series of conversations held between conservative evangelicals and SDA leaders from March 1955 into 1956. The main evangelicals were Donald Grey Barnhouse, radio preacher and editor of Eternity, and Walter Martin, a young researcher. The Adventist conferees included noted historical theologian Leroy Edwin Froom, W. E. Read (a General Conference Field Secretary), and Roy Allan Anderson, prominent evangelist and editor of Ministry.

One of the positive results of the dialogue was that Barnhouse and Martin declared Seventh-day Adventists to be bona fide Christians who should not be considered to be cultish. This affirmative reassessment of Adventism came after these leaders became satisfied with the Adventist answers given to questions that addressed four key perceptions of Adventist teaching:

1. That Adventists did not believe that the atonement was completed at the cross;
2. That salvation is gained by faith through grace, plus works of the law;
3. That Jesus was a created being and did
not co-exist with the Father from all eternity past;

4. And that Christ partook of humanity's sinful, fallen nature at the Incarnation.

The forthright answers given by the Adventist conferees on the Trinity and salvation were some of the most positive accomplishments of the dialogue. However, the QOD answers, especially those regarding Christ's human nature and atonement, proved to be seriously disturbing for many Seventh-day Adventists.

The Adventist dissent and M. L. Andreasen

The reasons for the heated reactions within the Seventh-day Adventist Church are somewhat complex, but one thing stands out clearly: the main voice of dissent belonged to M. L. Andreasen, one of Adventism's most respected theology professors and writers of the 1930s and 1940s. His distinctive views on the atonement and the humanity of Christ did seem to represent a certain consensus within Adventist thinking, as the church moved into the dialogue with the evangelicals. While Andreasen's teachings on both these issues (atonement and the human nature of Christ) had never become official, many considered his views to be solid Adventist orthodoxy.

The core of Andreasen's theology is that the atonement involved three essential phases.

The first consisted of Christ's sinless life of perfect obedience to God's law; the second was His death on the cross where "Christ finished His work as victim and sacrifice." 4

While these first two atonement phases were certainly foundational to Andreasen's teaching on the atonement, it was the third that contained the essential focus of his theology, and Andreasen had laid it out in clear and unmistakable language: "In the third phase Christ demonstrates that man can do what He did, with the same help He had. This phase includes His session at the right hand of God, His high priestly ministry, and the final exhibition of His saints in their last struggle with Satan, and their glorious victory."

This third phase, Andreasen said, is now in progress in the sanctuary above and in the church below. Christ broke the power of sin in His lifework on earth. He destroyed sin and Satan by His death. He is now eliminating and destroying sin in His saints on earth. This is a part of the cleansing of the true sanctuary. 4

The key theological principle that undergirded this Most Holy Place phase of the atonement was Andreasen's Christology. He firmly held that Christ had taken a sinful human nature, just like Adam's after the Fall (in other words, a sinful nature with tendencies to sin). Thus with the empowering Christ as an example to His last-generation followers, the final atonement could be effected from the heavenly sanctuary as it played out through the sinless perfected characters of the embattled saints on earth. This final atonement, final generation theology, was most clearly set forth in the chapter "The Last Generation" in Andreasen's well-known book The Sanctuary Service. 4

In this chapter Andreasen stated that Satan was not definitively and conclusively defeated at the Cross. Satan's ultimate defeat would be effected through the sinless, perfect histories of the final generation. Andreasen was quick to claim that such a final victory would be achieved only through grace, which would be imparted to the saints from the Great Exemplar in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

In other words, this faithful remnant would develop sinless characters that would replicate the sinless perfect life that Christ had wrought out in the very same fallen, sinful human nature. It is this nature that the final generation would overcome. Thus Christ, through the remnant's victory, will defeat Satan, vindicate God's demand for perfect obedience, and this vindication of God will finally support projects that build up communities—here in our own neighborhoods, throughout our region and nation, and around the world. 50% of the money raised by Ingathering: Hope For Humanity is used locally and for local conference humanitarian and community service projects. About 10% is used for national programs carried out through Adventist Community Services and other organizations. About 40% is used for international humanitarian projects. The help received from you and your congregation is needed and appreciated.

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What is to be made of this understanding of the atonement in relationship to the answers given by the Seventh-day Adventist respondents in QOD?

Where are we now?

When all the dust has settled, we can clearly affirm the following. Neither the authors of QOD nor Andreasen really disagreed about Phases One and Two. There were, however, two disagreements over Phase Three:

The first disagreement had more to do with terminology than substance: The term “completed atonement” that QOD used was fully consistent with Andreasen in the following sense: The atoning work of Christ on the cross was completed in that full provision had been made there to save all. But it was not complete in that the “completed act of atonement on the cross is valueless to any soul unless, and until, it is applied by Christ our High Priest to, and appropriated by, the individual recipient.”

It is clear that Froom and Roy Allan Anderson were not doing away with a Most Holy Place phase of atonement. They consistently used the language of “atonement provided” at the Cross and “atonement applied” in Christ’s heavenly ministry during the day of atonement antitypes in the Most Holy Place.

However, the second disagreement over Phase Three was much more substantive and significant: The QOD respondents were not enthused about Andreasen’s vision of the people of the “final generation” being the agents through which Christ would effect the final atonement. While it appears that they did not directly attack Andreasen’s final-generation atonement, they did disagree with the Christology that undergirded it.

Therefore, it is safe to say that the two most controversial and ongoing legacies of QOD are that it sparked new discussions of what Adventists mean by the following:

1. The expressions “final atonement,” and
2. The “fallen, sinful human nature of Christ.”

While the purpose of this article is not to enter into a debate over these contentious issues, I would like to close with some perspective and suggestions for further study.

Perspectives for further study

“Final Atonement.” While there are still those who advocate Andreasen’s last-generation version of “final atonement” (through the sinless perfection of the remnant), I would like to raise the following questions:

Where in Scripture or in the writings of Ellen White do we find this theology explicitly laid out?

Do Scripture and Ellen White clearly teach that God has made the ultimate success of Christ’s atoning work dependent upon the perfecting experience of the “remnant”?

Is there not solid Bible and Ellen White evidence for the claim that Christ has fully vindicated God’s demand for perfect obedience by His own life and work?

Would it not be more appropriate to suggest that Christ vindicates His Father in the Most Holy Place phase of the “great controversy” by demonstrating that the Trinity has been completely consistent with its nature of infinite love in the disposition of the cases of every human being?

Furthermore, could it be that we are all wrestling with a more foundational issue:

What is the role of human effort and accomplishment in the great plan of salvation? How dependent is God on the successes of His professed followers for His own vindication?

In the final analysis, the most controversial outcome of the QOD debates flows from the issues surrounding “The Humanity of Christ.” Without Andreasen’s undergirding “post-Fall” view of Christ’s human nature, Andreasen’s version of the perfecting of the final generation and its role in God’s vindication is called into
serious question. Here too is the most important legacy of QOD.

While there is hardly anyone today who would agree with the particular version of “pre-Fall” Christology that the QOD authors put forth (that Christ did not take a “fallen, sinful nature,” but only had it “imputed” to Him), they did spark further reflection, which has spawned two clearly articulated interpretations of what is meant by the expression “sinful human nature of Christ.”

These positions are:
1. The classic “post-Fall” position of Andreasen, and
2. The “alternative Christology,” which was pioneered by the late Edward Heppenstall and propounded by his successors at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary to this day.

The “alternative Christology” acknowledges Ellen White’s “post-Fall” statements, but suggests that these refer not to any “infection” of sin in Christ’s humanity but only to the way that sin “affected” Him.

Where do we go from here? Hopefully, the publication of this new edition of QOD will contribute to further clarification of these important questions.

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1 Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine (Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1957), hereafter referred to as QOD.
2 The expressions in quotation are Knight’s taken from his “Introduction” to the new edition of QOD.
4 Ibid., 59, 60.
6 Ibid., 299-301.
9 For an excellent review of the Adventist debate over the humanity of Christ and a classic defense of the traditional “post-Fall” view, see J. R. Zurcher, Touched With Our Feelings (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1999). For a defense of the “alternative” or the “pre-Fall” position, see Seventh-day Adventists Believe (Hagerstown, Md.: Andrews University Press, 1992), 396-413; and Woodrow Wilson, Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1997).
Handling extremism and fanaticism in the local church

John E. Tumpkin

Extremism and fanaticism are not uncommon in the local church. Left untreated, they can quickly spread in the body of Christ and destroy that body’s vision, mission, and unity. I suggest a threefold redemptive approach: Recognize, Rectify, and Reclaim.

Recognize the particular ingredients

Dealing with spiritual imbalance in a congregation requires recognizing certain basic ingredients that are at the core of such imbalance. These include the causes, the groups at risk, the signs, the methods, and the results of the extremism.

A major cause of extremism is a major cause! That is to say, the most fertile breeding ground for extremism is what is perceived as a worthy and important cause. Extremism implies the carrying to extremes of something that in itself may be good, important, and exciting. Thus a cause that seeks to acquaint humankind with vital, unusual truths that are largely unknown or neglected, offers a superb setting for the development of extremism.

As important as recognizing the causes of extremism is identifying the groups at risk. It is tempting for a frustrated pastor to think of extremists as loony crackpots with as much sense as a saltshaker. The opposite is often true! Some of our most dedicated and earnest members are in danger of being deluded by the counterfeit righteousness of extremism.

One of the signs of extremism may well be fervent study of “spiritual” material. However, the extremist revival always contains the double-edged sword of exhortation taken to the extreme.

When God used Martin Luther to spearhead the Protestant Reformation, the movement was hindered and hounded by extreme elements: “A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received special revelations from Heaven, and claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward to its completion the Reformation which, they declared, had been but feebly begun by Luther. In truth, they were undoing the very work which he had accomplished.” Then, as in our day, some felt that the mainstream reform had not gone far or fast enough.

When such extremism afflicts a movement, many within and without have their faith shaken. Insiders tend to wonder whether their cause is correct, while onlookers may be discouraged from taking any interest at all in the cause. It is helpful to recognize that extremism does not imply that the cause is corrupt.

On a personal level, extremism may result from an imbalanced preoccupation with a particular aspect of Christian belief or lifestyle. Surface or careless reading of spiritual writings may result in the tendency to force texts or passages to suit a “pet” belief. Sometimes a clash with church authority and an unwillingness to persuade patiently may lead to a persecution, prophet, or martyr complex, and a spirit of independent assertiveness.

As important as recognizing the causes of extremism is identifying the groups at risk. It is tempting for a frustrated pastor to think of extremists as loony crackpots with as much sense as a saltshaker. The opposite is often true! Some of our most dedicated and earnest members are in danger of being deluded by the counterfeit righteousness of extremism.

Many younger and older people with a sincere desire to prepare others and themselves for the coming of our Lord are disheartened and distressed by worldliness and the lack of consecration within the church. When people or documents come, deploring these conditions and upholding the “faithful few,” it is hard for them to discern the subtle denigration of leadership, cohesiveness, and authentic spirituality that accompany such pleas, pushing them over the line into extremism.

One of the signs of extremism may well be fervent study of “spiritual” material. However, the extremist revival always contains the double-edged sword of exhortation.
to more serious Christianity on the one hand, and negative, destructive criticism of the church on the other.

A related sign of extremism is the sudden “resurrection” of skillfully and dishonestly selected Spirit of Prophecy quotations, accompanied by the suggestion that there is a conspiracy of some kind in the church, seeking to do away with the work and the authority of Ellen G. White.

This leads us to look at the methods extremists use as they seek to spread their teachings in our churches.

While these vary according to the groups and individuals involved, they all utilize the well-known psychological principle of moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar; from the accepted to the new; from the established to the speculative.

Often, pastors who attempt to deprive their congregations of material emanating from independent movements fall in their quest because there is nothing wrong with the material—that is, with much of it.

Sometimes, the suspicions of members are allayed by the presentation of material by Ellen White. However, this material is all too often filled with out-of-context quotations, and mingled with supplemental writing containing more fanciful creations.

A survey of some of these fanciful materials may well lead a pastor to underestimate the allure of particular extremist information. The pastor may see what appears to be unbridled absurdity that would influence no one. This may not be the case. To dismiss extremists as empty and “crackpot” could be a great mistake.

Extremists succeed in deluding people precisely because they move from the real to the surreal. They gain the confidence and allegiance of their adherents by first convincing them of their loyalty to the Christian truths we all believe in; and once this is achieved, they intermingle their more esoteric and peculiar beliefs.

The extremist has the ability to move from the real to the quasi-real to the unreal through their powerful videos. The electronic and film media are highly persuasive when presented in well-modulated tones by an urbane and venerable presenter, in the absence of an opposing view.

How to rectify the problem

A problem recognized is a problem on the way to being solved. Again, extremism implies taking a good cause to excess, whereas fanaticism usually merely implies “violent, unreasoning enthusiasm.” While extremism includes fanaticism, it is the more pervasive and basic of the two problems. Extremism unchecked breeds fanaticism. Here are some ways we can deal with extremism.

1. When the writings of Ellen G. White are, for instance, used without properly considering the context, the best remedy is simply to put them back into proper context. Nothing

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will so clearly rebut the abusers of Mrs. White's writings as a wholesome study of one or more of her works as a whole.

If documents that abuse the Spirit of Prophecy begin to seep into a congregation, perhaps it is time to initiate a prayer meeting series on *Steps to Christ, The Desire of Ages*, or some other work by Mrs. White. Balance and perspective need no better defender than Mrs. White's own pen.

2. Abuse of the Spirit of Prophecy often arises from unclear views of inspiration and canon. When we ask the average Seventh-day Adventist which is greater, the Bible or the writings of Ellen White, we are likely to encounter hesitation. Mrs. White would not have hesitated. She knew the value of her gift, but she very aptly and unequivocally pictured her role as that of a lesser light reflecting the greater light.

Recognizing that the Bible is the only rule of faith does not diminish the authority of Mrs. White's writings, but enhances it by focusing on the "great light" to which she pointed. To say that the Bible is greater than Mrs. White's writings does not imply grades of inspiration. What it does mean is that the works of Mrs. White are to be tested by the Bible. Even the most extreme adherent of Ellen White would never overtly propose the reverse.

It is very important for a minister to understand and teach a sound doctrine of inspiration and biblical canon so as to minimize the abuse of the Spirit of Prophecy. Extremists will not welcome this approach because it defeats them most effectively. Emphasizing the primacy of the Bible is, therefore, the best and most practical starting point for checking abuse of the Spirit of Prophecy. Sometimes we seem to be strong on rectifying, but weak on reclaiming. Without reclaiming, our effort to rectify may indeed turn to be a means of wreck-tifying. To reclaim requires a positive approach. Extend the hand of love to those caught in the trap of extremism. Assure them of God's love and intense care for them. Appeal to them to look at the issues with an open mind, letting the Holy Spirit provide the needed illumination. When people sense our genuine interest in them and our sincere Christian love for them, reclaiming them for Christ becomes altogether possible.

3 White, 245.
4 Ibid., 88, 89.
5 Ibid., 216.
6 Ibid., 245.
Prostitution is part of the sad side of the Old Testament story. But what is sadder is that it has often been associated with the history of religion and with its places of worship. The Bible speaks of prostitution even in Israel, at times practiced in the surroundings of the Jerusalem temple. One has to wonder how prostitution could have been tolerated so close to a temple that, among other things, contained in its holiest sanctum the divinely inscribed code, “Do not commit adultery.”

Of course, no one could claim that temple prostitution is a central theme in the Old Testament. However, prostitution, as we encounter it in the Bible, is a disturbing complexity. Close to one hundred biblical references speak about prostitutes or prostitution. In many instances the word is used metaphorically to refer to idol worship or the practice of false belief and worship. Some texts refer to prostitution without any link to religion. About a dozen biblical passages clearly refer to sexual prostitution connected to the temple—what the New International Version translates as “shrine prostitution.”

Shrine prostitution and Israel

All these references are in the earliest parts of Old Testament history—in patriarchal narratives, in the law formulated in the Pentateuch, in the book of Job, and in texts dealing with the first temple era (the histori-
shrine prostitutes—a people without understanding will come to ruin” (Hosea 4:14, NIV; cf. 4:10-13). Not that the prophet approves adultery and general prostitution, but he expresses God’s horror at the prospect of mixing worship with prostitution.

According to Micah, the general situation in Jerusalem itself was not that different. “All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images. Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes, as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used” (Micah 1:7).

**Why did temple prostitution prevail?**

Why did this religiously sanctioned practice of lust prevail when both the heart of the law and the messages of the prophets denounced it?

An answer seems to be contained in the well-documented fact that Israel simply followed the practices common among the religion and fertility cults of her neighbors. Their so-called *hieros gamos* or holy wedding rituals mutated what was sexual into the supposedly sacred sexual and fertility themes of fruitfulness that were, for instance, related to Baal, Seth, or Tammuz. The worship of Moloch also included sexual myths and practices (Isa. 57:1-13).

However, Israel’s emulation of its neighbors’ customs is not the underlying reason for the popularity in Israel of combining such sexual practices with its religious faith. The seminal reason is less obvious and overt: the practice of using the temple as a place of entertainment, albeit entertainment with “religious” overtones.

Two biblical examples illustrate how easy it was to turn religion into a pursuit of amusement:

At Mount Sinai, Israel eagerly swore that all that the Lord had said they would do (Exod. 19:8; 24:3, 7), but a few days later a bawdy party was thrown, with a golden bull at the center, and “nakedness” as part of what was in fact a religious celebration (Exod. 32:17-26).

Some years later pretty girls from Baal-worshiping Moab invited the Israelites to a semi-religious gathering where “the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab” and where they “called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods” (Num. 25:1-9, KJV).

These two almost random examples indicate that in those days some forms of pagan worship included sexual features that easily escalated into orgies. Such religion provided a way, for the Israelite, at least to legitimize illicit sexual practice, placing it under the guise of religious faith.

It is reasonable to conclude that religious centers, high places, and temples, were, in some Old Testament times, the best places of entertainment (in the “worldly” sense of the word). The journey from forms of entertainment with sexual overtones to orgies was not a long one to take.

**The practice at Baalbek**

The same point can be easily illustrated by a tour around the temple of Baalbek. This is the largest temple ruin in the Middle East and the best representation of what Canaanite religion really was, and what Israel was dealing with and influenced by. This is true, even though the present ruins stem from the Roman era.

Baalbek was located in Lebanon’s present southern Bekaa valley. Visitors would enter the temple through a massive staircase leading to the gate complex. As they approached the gate they would see booths where priests or priestesses advised the “worshippers” on what was being offered in the temple area. The first concern was the choice of sacrifices that was available for the arriving worshiper.

After the order had been placed for a goat, lamb, chicken, or bull, the visitors stepped through the gate into the main courtyard where the animal was brought up from huge stables below for their inspection. After appropriate rituals the animal was slaughtered on one of the two giant.
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altars that still dominate today’s ruins of the main courtyard.

As in the high places of Israel and at the temple of Jerusalem major portions of the meat were then given to the worshipers for their personal use (Lev. 7:16-18; Deut. 12:27; cf. 1 Sam. 2:13ff.). In Baalbek the visitors could have their meal prepared in the temple kitchens and have an enjoyable lunch or dinner with their friends and/or priestesses or priests in one of the niches of the great courtyard of the temple. A good meal was part of a good worship experience.

This kind of arrangement is not entirely absent in Old Testament descriptions. Saul is said to have enjoyed a sumptuous meal when meeting Samuel at one of the high places (1 Sam. 9:14-24). Also Ezekiel’s vision of the temple included four kitchens for the preparation of sacrifices (Ezek. 46:21-24).

In Baalbek the visitors moved on to the second courtyard after the meal. Again impressive wide stairs led to the area of the main temple of Baal or Jupiter. This temple may have included holy or most holy places, as Phoenician temples usually did. The wide flat floor next to the stairs, and the colonnade, provided a good setting for theatrical displays, choirs, and other performances.

Modern imagery may not do full justice of the actual facts, but it makes the experience easier to understand. The visitors move from the “restaurant” to the “theater.” After watching the show to their satisfaction, it was time to move on. Some may have continued to smaller specialized structures for fortune-telling, healing, or other purposes.

The stage was now set for the final part of the visit. On the way out the visitors would pass the temple of Venus with room for hundreds of temple prostitutes, who might have served as escorts and companions throughout the worshipers’ visit to the temple.

The temples of Baalbek were bigger and more comprehensive than any other temple in the area. In some ways every Canaanite high place or shrine had parts of Baalbek in it. To complete the picture one needs to mention that this worship with entertainment was not free. Visitors had to pay for their pleasure (see Deut. 23:17, 18; Hosea 2:5, 8; Micah 1:7). If in no other way, this was done through their purchase of the “sacrifices” they chose as they entered. All this is only one aspect of what went on in the temples and the minds of the people.

Worship or entertainment?

The relatively small number of biblical passages that connect prostitution to the temple in Jerusalem do not warrant a conclusion that this was a permanent part of worship there. However, with Israel’s neighbors these kinds of practices were relatively permanent. They practiced their “worship” before the conquest of the land by Israel and kept it up for centuries after the latest Old Testament reference to it.

Within Judah and Israel shrine prostitution may have been fixed more at the high places or the temples of the Northern Kingdom at Bethel, Dan, or Samaria. It may be that in Jerusalem there were only short spells of these kinds of practices.

One may still want to ask: But how could Israel let any of this come into the temple of the Yahweh? Maybe, as we’ve suggested, they were enticed by the ways of the ancient Canaanites. Maybe they wanted their religion to be continued on page 31
Listen and love: How do you treat gay people?

Until 15 years ago, I had never walked in the shoes of a homosexual. I never even gave the topic much attention because it never concerned me. Then I learned that our youngest son is gay. That knowledge gave me a new perspective. I was asked to place my feet in my son’s shoes and walk with him.

How our family coped with the experience turned into a book. Since writing that book, I have become involved in ministering to other families going through similar things. I have come to know and love many gay sons and daughters and to appreciate their sensitive and caring nature, their artistic talents, their struggles, and the penetrating depths of their spiritual longings.

I have also learned in talking to pastors that homosexuality is an issue in many congregations—an issue they are all too often unprepared to deal with.

How would you respond?

Pastor Wilcox glanced at his watch. It was almost time for his appointment with Paul, the talented college-age son of the head elder. He had revitalized the Sabbath School’s junior department during the recent summer months.

“Good to see you, Paul,” the pastor said, smiling, as the slim, dark-haired young man sat down. “It’s great when you students come home for the summer and add your gifts and talents. The junior kids follow you around as if you were the Pied Piper! And it’s so good to have you playing the organ for church again. We’ve missed you and your musical talents around here.”

Paul was silent as he stared down at his hands, and Pastor Wilcox began to wonder just what Paul had on his mind.

At last Paul drew a resolute breath and looked up. “Pastor Wilcox,” he blurted out, “I’m gay, and I don’t know what to do about it.”

Few pastors really know how, or feel confident enough to handle a situation such as this constructively and redemptively. How would you respond?

Some pastors might reach for their Bibles and turn to Genesis 19, Leviticus 18, or Romans 1. Would you tell Paul that he just needed to find a nice girl, get married, and his “problem” would go away? Or would you express sympathy for his “handicap” and tell him you would pray for God to give him the strength to remain celibate the rest of his life? Should a pastor do?

Damaging approaches

When one young man came in confidence to ask his pastor for help, the pastor announced his “problem” to the whole congregation at the next week’s worship service and asked the assembled church to pray for him.

In another case an outgoing pastor told his replacement what he alone knew—that the church’s popular and enthusiastic young music director was gay (but celibate). The new pastor decided it was his responsibility to exercise the “demon of homosexuality” from the young man and told the church board about his plans. As a result, the church was split, and the music director left the church.

If a pastor is unprepared to deal with such situations, his or her tentative ineptness can drive a wedge between young homosexuals and the church. This, along with church members’ prejudices and ignorance about the reality of homosexuality, has driven many gay young people from the church and from Christ.

Sometimes parents, distressed by the alienating way the church has treated their children, follow them out of the church. Other parents, taking their cue from the harsh, condemning remarks they have heard ministers make, feel they must reject and condemn their children too.

Some pastors are so repulsed by the thought of homosexuality that they react with visceral antipathy. Others have heard so many different theories about homosexuality that they aren’t sure what to believe, say, or do. Many simply feel extremely uncomfortable with this sensitive issue. Their first instinct is to offer some platitude or a quick solution and move on to another topic as soon as possible.

The problem is that when a gay person brings their concern to the pastor, they are like any other parishioner who needs the same listening ear, the same pastoral concern.
Fears of homosexual people

The fear of “what others would think if they knew” keeps many young people in the “closet.” But the burden of living a lie and pretending to be something they are not finally builds to unbearable pressure.

“I’m terrified of what coming out will mean to my life, my future, my friends,” laments Jeff* from Canada. “I’ve always known that I could never really be myself lest others hate me. Most of my friendships are based on a fundamental lie about myself, so I can’t accept the affirmations and encouragement of my friends. Someone tells me they think I’m wise or a good Christian or a valued friend, and a door slams shut inside of me telling me that they would never say that if they really knew me. I’m starving for affection and acceptance, but can’t seem to accept what I receive because I know it’s based on a lie.”

Rogelio writes from the Philippines, “The sufferings of a homosexual person are immense and at times almost beyond consolation. As [a] hidden or closet homosexual, I have so many times experienced the despair of life. It’s so painful to have no one to talk to.”

“Every church member I knew was heterosexual and wouldn’t understand how I felt,” remembers Dwight from England. “There was absolutely no one to befriend me or to talk confidentially. Who could I turn to for genuine helpful support and understanding? I didn’t know of anyone at all. I was going through a kind of personal hell!”

The first thing a pastor needs to recognize is how enormously difficult it is for a young man or woman to find the courage to talk to him or her in the first place—what an emotion-laden moment this is and what far-reaching results the pastor’s reaction will have. The pastor needs to respond with utmost tact, warmth, and understanding.

Hearing the loneliness and confusion

Loneliness, isolation, and confusion are felt by young people as they come to recognize that their feelings of emotional and sexual attraction are different and unacceptable.

“Loneliness? It’s my daily bread. Sometimes it feels like hell,” writes Jonathan, an Indonesian student.

“I honestly feel that the sexual temptations are easy to bear compared to the consuming loneliness that so often threatens to devour me. Some days I ache inside for relationship,” shares Peter from California.

Rogelio further expresses the confusion of many homosexuals as they try to reconcile the reality of their feelings with the expectations of church and society. “I do not know where to put myself. I am disturbed by my feelings [about a] life that is a lie. I pretend to be a man, but deep inside me is another being crying for help.”

Just be willing to listen

Immediately finding a way to “fix it” is an almost automatic reaction when we are confronted with a problem. This is especially true of the male in contemporary Western culture. Because of the nature and values that are a part of the image of today’s pastor, this tendency may be even more prominent in pastors. Thus it is not strange that this is just what the average pastor wants to do when a young person shares his or her devastation because of homosexuality—fix it!

But this is the very thing he cannot do. There is no good, easy answer that is simply going to fix things for this young person. Besides, this is not really what the homosexual person is actually looking for, anyway. Instead, his desperate need is for someone to listen, lovingly and non-judgmentally, as he finally pours out all the pent-up feelings.

Homosexuals need someone to come alongside to understand the fear and the pain. They need to feel permission to express their desires and longings, even though they may not be approved of. Perhaps this is why most female pastors intuitively know better how to handle this kind of situation.

“I feel like all I’ve ever found in the church is self-hatred, loneliness, pain and a sense of failure,” says Jeff, ques-
Every Sabbath morning your Sabbath School helps members know about the worldwide work of the Adventist Church. Your congregation’s support of Adventist Mission makes possible the daily work of Adventist missionaries at the forefront of telling the story of Jesus.

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**Pray.** Include missionaries and the church’s worldwide mission work in the prayer ministry of your Sabbath School and its classes.

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**Give.** Your congregation’s financial support makes possible the funding of the church’s mission work. Some of that comes through World Budget giving, but much of it is given during the Sabbath School offering each week. Please remember this important offering in your program each week.

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Making a world of difference.
Three Angels Global Networking (TAGnet) was literally started on a wing and a prayer. It began when Sean Carney, a computer geek from Canada, asked God what he could do to further the gospel. During a prayer at the 1993 ASI (Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries) national convention in Toronto, Canada, God answered with an idea that would help Seventh-day Adventists tie worldwide ministries together through a global network.

Upon his return to British Columbia, Sean got involved in online conversations with other Adventists, sharing his ideas to organize an Internet-based outreach ministry. Little did he realize that he was not alone in his thoughts. Gary Regan, a computer network engineer in Silicon Valley, California, invited Sean to the Bay Area to discuss the idea further. Sean moved out to the heart of the technology industry—where inspiration is a prerequisite for innovation. With the help of Gordon Harty, TAGnet was born. "Once I stepped out in faith, God opened all the doors," explains Carney.

TAGnet gets started and moves on
TAGnet was officially launched in July 1995. Their initial goal was to provide an efficient and cost-effective way for Adventist ministry organizations to get online. Within six months, ten groups had Web sites up and running with more than 3,800 hits per week.

Today, TAGnet has contributed to helping thousands of churches, schools, ministries, and conference-based organizations reach out using the Internet as their main tool. TAGnet currently gets over 130,000 unique visitors and 4.5 million hits per week. These numbers are on the increase.

Last summer, the Central California Conference broadcast live every meeting from their Soquel Camp Meeting. Hundreds viewed the powerful testimonies and messages via the Internet, thanks to TAGnet’s services.

Helping congregations develop and maintain Web sites
Recently, TAGnet introduced “WebSite Builder.” This Web-based software allows any church, school, organization, or conference the opportunity to use a standard framework to create a Web site. This plug-and-play environment means that you can design your own Web site with minimal computer knowledge.

Research tells us that successful Web sites refresh their content on a regular basis. TAGnet just launched its new service, “News and Events” (www.tagnet.org). Using this service, members can upload information regularly into a central database. News and calendar pages are dynamically created and organized by location and topic. For example, news and events from your church will be shown within the local conference section. Maintaining a fresh and timely Web site will be a tremendous resource for a church’s members.

Developing a North American Division Web site directory
Every North American Division...
The NAD Church Directory was created in partnership with the Adventist Directory at the request of Kermit Netteburg, assistant to the president for communication of the North American Division. Advanced Content Management Services are also available to larger organizations such as unions, conferences, departments, and publishers.

TAGnet receives support through membership fees, generous donors, and tireless volunteers. TAGnet is also a member of ASI. As a service provider and supporter of the many ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, TAGnet welcomes you to the digital age.

To learn more about TAGnet, please visit their Web site at http://www.tagnet.org/.

Sean Carney is president of TAGnet and lives in Mountain View, California.

Tamara Shelter, a media/public relations consultant, lives in Sherman Oaks, California.

Listen and love

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tioning religion’s ability to meet him where he is. “I keep hearing evangelists talking about the emptiness inside that Christ can fill, but I follow Him and I’m still painfully empty inside. So if I’m going to have the pain and loneliness and emptiness, doesn’t it make sense that I might as well go for the ‘fun’ part of the equation too? I mean, if you’re going to get the stomachache, you might as well have the pie that supposedly causes it.”

Dwight frankly admits his longings. “I know for sure that total absence of any gay affection is slowly but surely destroying me as a human being, who has much to give another. I so very much need the understanding dialogue and gentle touch of a sympathetic, compatible friendship that only another homosexual Adventist in my life can satisfy.”

Could not at least some of this kind of innate longing be met by a pastor who simply meets it with deep, genuine love and understanding? Surely this is how Jesus would meet such a yearning.

Don’t add to their feelings of isolation

Many homosexuals have deep spiritual longings. This is amazing when we consider how difficult so many Christians have made it for them to feel part of the church.

“At one stage,” says Dwight, “I investigated the possibility of other Christian groups where homosexuals receive love and understanding fellowship. But deep down I knew that such a compromise would ultimately not satisfy.”

To meet a homosexual’s tentative reaching out for help with a reminder of biblical proscriptions and church standards is the approach most likely to snuff out the flickering flame of a struggling faith. Instead, we need to draw him or her into the church’s warm, supporting embrace.

We need to change our focus from pointing out and condemning sin to sharing the unconditional love God has lavished on us. We need to provide an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit can convict in the way and at the time He knows is most appropriate.

Most homosexuals eventually leave the church in despair because they find no hope there. But we can change that if we are willing to walk in their shoes; if we can just listen—and love.

* Names have been changed.

Carrol Grady, a freelance writer, lives in Snohomish, Washington.

Honoring pastors

When Pastor Tercio Sarli, president of the mega-size Central Brazil Union, writes me twice about the same issue, the matter is clearly important. When this twice-scribed topic is expressing appreciation for pastors, the matter is clearly important to each of us, and its significance provokes us to publish this article simultaneously in Ministry, Elders Digest, and Shepherdess Journal, along with my personal request that every reader copy and distribute a copy to all church officers.

Why express appreciation to pastors? Note the Bible command: “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other” (1 Thess. 5:12, 13, NIV). “Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7, NIV).

Today’s increased societal suspicion of all leaders has combined with clergy scandals, occasional mediocre performance by some pastors, and unrealistic expectations from some members to reduce the levels of high esteem with which professional ministers have traditionally been viewed.

Too often it seems easier to criticize than to affirm and express appreciation for the outstanding service that pastors give. For example, one member recently wrote to complain that his pastor does not spend sufficient time preparing sermons, while someone from a different church, griped that all their pastor does is study to prepare sermons. One complains that pastors never visit, while another opines that the pastor only goes from house to house. Why can’t we get more letters like the elder who recently said, “I have no other reason to write except to say how wonderfully our pastor serves.” Believe me, I answered that letter and sent a copy to the pastor and the conference president.

What the denomination can do. Pastor Sarli encourages the entire church to adopt an annual Pastor’s Day in which we affirm the role of ministry in general and express appreciation for our local pastors particularly. And he puts his energies and money alongside his opinion. Recently he sent every pastor a letter of commendation with a special gift. Plus, pastoral families in his union are regularly affirmed in special conventions designed for their spiritual growth and continuing education.

General Conference Ministerial Association requests every reader to duplicate and distribute this article to your local church board.

Various denominations have emphasized one weekend in October. My own congregation commemorates the anniversary of the date when our pastor first came to serve our church. While it may be impossible to select the same day throughout the world, surely every field can schedule a Pastor’s and Ministerial Vocations day upon which currently-serving pastors are honored and young people are invited to prayerfully consider whether God is calling them to ministry.

What unions or conferences can do. Uplift the role of ministry, value pastors, and ask each local congregation to plan something special which will honor their pastor. Perhaps designate a specific date for your territory and request that each church plan accordingly. Follow Pastor Sarli’s example by writing each minister to express your personal appreciation for the valuable contribution they bring to God’s work.

Charles Heskey, Ministerial Secretary of the North Caribbean Conference, sent a bookmark to every church member in the conference. Titled, “Pray for Your Pastor,” it listed specific prayer objectives for the minister’s personal life and family needs (you can view a sample at www.ministerialassociation.com).

What the local church can do. Host a special Sabbath that celebrates the blessings your congregation receives from the pastor. Even weak performers might respond to you affirming higher expectations. Plan a fellowship meal, provide flowers or a cake, and present your pastor with a plaque, a new Bible, or a useful book (better yet, a gift certificate so they can select their own). Volunteer for a specific task that will lighten your pastor’s work load; offer to visit or give Bible studies with your pastor; establish a pastoral resource fund from which your pastor can purchase useful ministry tools. Invite your pastoral family to lunch, or send them to dinner or a useful book (better yet, a gift certificate so they can select their own). Volunteer for a specific task that will lighten your pastor’s work load; offer to visit or give Bible studies with your pastor; establish a pastoral resource fund from which your pastor can purchase useful ministry tools. Invite your pastoral family to lunch, or send them to dinner or a useful book (better yet, a gift certificate so they can select their own).
Entertainment . . . continued from page 24

relevant and meaningful. Perhaps they wanted, or felt they needed, to have their temple and its services compete with the beauty and allure of the Baal temples that surrounded them.

A more fundamental reason, however, was their estrangement from God and thus their lack of heartfelt commitment to Him. This led to meaninglessness and emptiness in their understanding of the true faith of Yahweh, and thus to neglect and apparently urgently needed compromises with all that surrounded them; and thus finally to the adoption of practices diametrically opposed to the essence of the true faith, despite the divine warnings presented in the law and by the prophets.

What of today?

As part of the contemporary world, where the “religions” of increasingly promiscuous entertainment, Holly-

wood, nightclubs, or rave parties make converts much faster than the church of God, we cannot afford to compromise the essential aspects of our heartfelt devotion to our Lord. We cannot allow commercial entertainment to dictate the agenda of Christian worship. The church must not, indeed, by the nature of things, it cannot compete with the world on its turf.

This is not in fact an issue of cultural contextualization, as it may seem to be. It is not about rhythms or music or art forms or even particular forms of worship, per se. It is rather about blatantly crossing a line that God has drawn through Jesus Christ in the very nature of what is of His kingdom and what is of the kingdoms of this present age.

True worship has no room, that is, it cannot by its very nature make room for compromise with something as foreign to the essence of God’s kingdom as is so much at the heart of contemporary entertainment. Christian worship cannot make these accommodations and maintain the life and nature given it by God.

Instead Christian worship must truly and actually uplift God and Him alone. It has to be done not only in spirit but in truth, and not only in truth, but in spirit (John 4:23). This does not, of course, mean that genuine Christian worship should not, or cannot, be animated and enjoyable and even “fun.” Indeed, it can be in the best and purest sense of the word—in the sense of the abject joy that is found in loving commitment to Him who promised life, and that “to the full” (John 10:10).  

* All passages, except as otherwise stated, are from the New International Version.

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