CURRENT
FAITH MEETS LIFE AND CULTURE
FALL 2017—Vol. 5

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Seventh-day Adventist
Theological Seminary
Andrews University
Ministry is about service, and pedagogy is defined as a study of ways of teaching. Service may be performed in a variety of ways and forms and in many different places. Multiple opportunities provide specific reasons for ministry. One may serve in diverse ways in unique situations and use divergent capacities as well as outstanding skills in order to apply an innumerable number of techniques. However, we need to remember that before we serve or say something, we already minister by who we are. Our personality, attitudes, integrity and influence speak louder than our words. Pedagogy deals with different approaches and methods of presenting truth to people or students in particular. It deals with the question of how we say, present, write or do things. What can we detect in that regard about Ezekiel?

Ezekiel was a master presenter and preacher and very innovative. His role was very crucial in the history of God’s people because his message was the last divine ultimatum to return unconditionally to God in order to prevent the most tragic event in Old Testament history: deportation into Babylonian exile, the devastation of Jerusalem, loss of national autonomy, and the destruction of the Temple of God that King Solomon had built.

Ezekiel acted like a new Moses. The similarities between these two giant leaders are obvious:

1. Ezekiel and Moses were called to ministry by seeing the Majesty of God during special times of deep crises (Egyptian exile; Babylonian exile) and hopes for a new beginning (exodus from Egypt—Exodus 3:2–14; Deuteronomy 5:24; return from Babylon—Ezekiel 1:22–28).
2. God spoke to both of them out of fire (Exodus 3:2–4; Ezekiel 1:27–2:2).
3. God opened their mouth and gave to both of them His Word which they needed to proclaim (Exodus 3–4; Ezekiel 3:24–27).
4. Right after calling them to ministry, God performed miracles on or through them (Exodus 4; 7; Ezekiel 3).
5. Moses communicated with God and was given directions on how to build the Tabernacle (Exodus 25–40). Ezekiel, after the destruction of the Temple, received instructions in a vision about the new Temple and the restoration of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40–48).
6. The Law of the Temple was given only to Moses and Ezekiel (Exodus 25–40; Ezekiel 43:12).
7. Both spoke about a mountain “experience” (high mountain—Ezekiel 40:2; Sinai—Exodus 19–20, 24).

Their ministries were similar and marked by a close encounter with the Holy Lord that gave them power as well as meaning for their ministry. Both were to call people to follow God. Moses appealed to Israel to get rid of foreign gods and choose life (Deuteronomy 30), and Ezekiel called people to renounce idolatry and faithfully obey the Lord (Ezekiel 20). These were uncompromising invitations to return to the Lord and follow Him with an undivided heart. They preached and performed God’s Word; but in the time of deepest crisis, they showed pastoral hearts and comforted and encouraged God’s people.

Of course, Jesus is the real new Moses, as well as the new Ezekiel in a typological sense. Christ is the ultimate and original Moses and Ezekiel because He has surpassed them both. He leads from sin’s captivity into the heavenly Promised Land and directs our minds to enter the heavenly sanctuary.

Ezekiel and Jesus have surprisingly many things in common. As for the pedagogy, there are at least seven striking elements that may connect both of them together:

1. Ezekiel and Jesus proclaimed the Word of God (Ezekiel 1:3; 2:4; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). For example, the phrase “this is what the Sovereign God says” occurs 126 times in the book of Ezekiel. Jesus proclaimed that He did not say things on His own but only declared the things that He received from His Father (John 1:18; 5:19–20).
2. Both used the recognition formula “you/they shall know ...” many times (over 75 times in Ezekiel; John 8:28; 14:29, 31; 17:3).
3. Both employed parables as a method of communication (Ezekiel 20:49; Matthew 13:10). Ezekiel pronounced 10 parables,² or in some cases allegories or extended metaphors (15; 16; 17; 19; 23; 24:3–5; 27; 29:1–6; 31; 32:1-16), and, according to The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Jesus pronounced 40 different parables.²
4. Both used the title “son of man” (Ezekiel 93 times; Jesus 83 times).
5. Ezekiel and Jesus began their ministry by calling people to repentance (Ezekiel has seven statements on repentance—3:19–21; 14:6; 18:30; 20:43; 33:11–12; 36:31–32; 43:9–10). Jesus emphasized a return to God from the beginning of His ministry (Mark 1:15).
6. Both emphasized the resurrection and the eschatological new age. Ezekiel had a vision regarding dry bones that were made alive by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Only this combination produces real spiritual life (Ezekiel 37; 40–48). Jesus emphasized that He will resurrect to new life even those who sleep in the grave (John 5:24–30; 11:25).
7. Both were encouraging people to trust God and do what was right (Ezekiel 18:5, 30–32; 33:13; John 14:1–3; 17:3).

A good amount of similarities exist between Jesus's and Ezekiel’s pedagogical approach. They are models of how we should teach others: both taught in parables, and pointed to the principles of God's kingdom. Both used literary devices and examples from real life so people could remember their messages.

There are also several dissimilarities in their ministry and pedagogical approach which are instructive:
1. Ezekiel performed 12 symbolic or sign-actions on different occasions as an actor who acts out the Word of God: (1) Ezekiel 3:24–27: God's sign on Ezekiel of being unable to speak except for the Word of God; (2) 4:1–3: siege of Jerusalem demonstrated with a clay tablet and an iron pan; (3) 4:4–5: lying on the left side for 390 days; (4) 4:6–8: lying on the right side for 40 days; (5) 4:9–17: preparing rationed food over cow manure; (6) 5:1–4: a sharp sword used as a barber's razor; (7) 12:1–11: packing his belongings for exile; (8) 12:17–20: trembling and fearing while eating and drinking; (9) 21:6–7: groaning with a broken heart and bitter grief; (10) 21:18–24: marking out two roads with a signpost; (11) 24:15–24: death of Ezekiel’s wife; and (12) 37:15–23: two sticks put together. On the other hand, Jesus did not perform messages from God, but He lived the message. Christ's life was the message. Every act, thought, teaching, reaction and expression reflected who God is. Jesus was the Message (not only a Messenger). Only He could say: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6 NIV). His entire life was the message. To know and accept Him as Savior means to be saved and receive eternal life (John 5:24; 14:1; 17:3).
2. The book of Ezekiel contains three main visions (see chapters 1:1–3:15; 8–11; 40–48; to them could be added the fourth vision of 37:1–14, even though the technical word for vision mar’ot is not used there), but there is no record that Jesus had visions. He studied the Holy Scriptures to know the truth.
3. Ezekiel expressed seven oracles against foreign nations (Ammon, 25:1–7; Moab, 25:8–11; Edom, 25:12–14; Philistia, 25:15–17; Tyre, 26:1–28:19; Sidon, 28:20–29; and Egypt [seven oracles], 29–32). Jesus was not talking so much about foreign countries or cities as about Israel; but when He mentioned foreign cities, He stressed that they would receive a lighter punishment than God’s people because they were not as stubborn. “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Matthew 11:21 NIV).
4. Ezekiel pointed to Christ: (1) 17:22–24—a Shoot from the very top of a Cedar; (2) 21:27—until He comes to whom it rightfully belongs; (3) 29:21—a Horn will grow for the house of Israel; (4) 34:23–24—Davidic Shepherd and Prince; and (5) 37:24–25—Davidic King, Prince, and Shepherd. However, Jesus, on the other hand, was pointing to Himself (John 5:39–40).
5. Ezekiel first expressed a straight and strong message, warning his people, because of an impending tragedy (Ezekiel 1–24). However, when Jerusalem was destroyed in 587/586 BC, he acted like a pastor (Ezekiel 33–48) by comforting God’s people, helping them to cope with the greatest catastrophe to strike them in Old Testament times. In comparison, Jesus's ministry was full of compassion, understanding and love. Only in the last week did He speak about seven woes (see Matthew 23:1–9). Nevertheless, even on the cross, He showed His love and prayed for forgiveness for those who were crucifying Him and demonstrated His sympathy for His mother. In all this, He showed His concern for the salvation of us all (Isaiah 53:3–9; John 3:17).

In addition, Ezekiel typifies Jesus. It is striking that both:
1. Were called to their prophetic ministry at the age of 30, by a river, along with an opened heavens, a voice and the Spirit (1:1–2, 28; Luke 3:21–23).
2. Occupied a priestly office (Ezekiel 1:3; Hebrews 7–10) with zeal for a purified temple (Ezekiel 8:1–8; 40–48; Matthew 21:12–16; John 2:13–22).
3. Performed an intercessory ministry (Ezekiel 3:17–22;
12:1–16; 24:15–24; 33:7–9; John 17; Hebrews 7:25).

4. Bore the punishment of Israel: Ezekiel in a representative way, but Jesus, as our Substitute, bore our sins (Ezekiel 4:4–8; Isaiah 53:3–6; Mark 10:45; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24–25).

5. Went directly from commission to mission without a period of transition (Ezekiel 3–4; Luke 4; Mark 1).

6. Sent to the people (house) of Israel (Ezekiel uses that term 83 times; Matthew 10:5–6, Jesus works first for the “lost sheep of Israel”).

7. Were led by the Spirit (Ezekiel 2:2; 3:24; Isaiah 61:1–2; Matthew 4:1).

Praise the Lord for these great examples of loving and unselfish ministry that teach us a variety of ways to approach people and teach them about the God of truth, love and justice.

Endnotes


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Discussing subjects of clergy, laity and women’s ordination

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Thoughts on Tuesday worship service in the Seminary

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COMING and GOING

TOM EVANS

GERARD DAMSTEEGT

DONALD JAMES

PETER SWANSON
OUTGOING

Tom Evans, DMin, has served six years as associate director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI). He has made a significant contribution in the area of church planting, Natural Church Development (NCD) and coaching for pastors and churches. His leadership has produced over 100 SEEDS Church Planting Conferences and his Seminary teaching has directly impacted over 500 Master of Divinity students. We are thankful for these vital contributions that have helped to emphasize the significance of evangelism and growth through church planting. Evans and his family leave the United States to serve the North New South Wales Conference as president. Gerard Damsteegt came to teach at the Andrews University Theological Seminary in 1988, where he focused on Adventist Studies for 29 years. Before coming to the Seminary, he worked as a pastor, administrator of chaplains, a health educator, and as author and editor. Damsteegt obtained his BA from Newbold College, his MDiv from Andrews University, his ThD from the Free University Amsterdam, and his MPH from Loma Linda University. His dissertation, first issued by Eerdmans in 1977 under the title "Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission," is still in print from Andrews University Press. This book, his substantial contributions to Seventh-day Adventist Believe: An Exposition for the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and his influence through his students remain Gerard’s academic legacy. Also, he will be well remembered for his Great Controversy history tours and materials. He will be missed by the Department of Church History. Donald James, DMin, has given 27 years of valued service to the NADEI, as associate director. He has made a significant contribution in the area of small groups for pastors and churches. Over the years, with the help and support of his wife, Ruth, who served as secretary, they have taught and mentored well over 2,000 Master of Divinity students. Countless lay people have also benefited from their small group trainings presented at sites all around the North American Division, and at various international locations. We are thankful for the many hours Don has dedicated to writing books and materials to enhance the experience of pastors and lay people who are involved in or want to initiate small group ministries in their churches. These vital contributions have helped to emphasize the significance of small groups as an evangelistic tool for the Division. As Don and Ruth retire from full-time service, we pray for God’s generous blessing on the next phase of their life and ministry for Him. Peter Swanson has served as associate professor of pastoral care, as well as chair and member of the Department of Christian Ministry. His service includes four years as department chair while serving as director of counseling services and teacher of pastoral counseling and human relationships. Prior to joining the Christian ministry department in July 1988, he served as a broadcaster with WAUS radio, broadcast from the campus of Andrews University. His wisdom has earned him the distinction of serving as dean in the absence of former dean, Denis Fortin, and current dean, Jifi Moskala. Swanson has guided the Seminary in the past and continues to be a blessing to the mission and ministry of Andrews University as professor emeritus. He is loved by faculty, staff, and students and will be sorely missed as a daily go-to member of the Christian ministry team. W. Larry Richards, New Testament professor emeritus, passed away March 18, 2017. Richards taught at the Seminary from 1966–1977, and 1994–2003 during which tenure he taught Beginning and Intermediate Greek, Formation and History of the New Testament (Textual Criticism) and 1–2 Corinthians. He was emeritus from 2003 until his death.

INCOMING

Edyta Jankiewicz is joining us as assistant professor in the Department of Discipleship & Religious Education (DSRE) starting fall semester, 2017. Eduard Schmidt was appointed director of NADEI, October 2016. He serves as director of the Seminary’s Theological Field Education (TFE) and coordinator of the Leading for Growth and Church Multiplication concentration for the Doctor of Ministry program. His wife, Sonia, has also served as administrative assistant at NADEI since 1993 and has worked with Ed throughout his tenure. Lester P. Merklin was recently appointed to a dual position as professor of world missions (Seminary), and special assistant at the Institute of World Missions and Global Missions at the General Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland. Anthony WagenerSmith will join the faculty of NADEI during the fall 2017 semester as associate director. A 2006 graduate of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, in 2016 he received a Doctor of Ministry in Missional Church Planting from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. Scott R. Ward, Doctor of Ministry in Discipleship and Biblical Spirituality will join our Seminary faculty this fall as professor in DSRE. An ordained pastor and executive director of High School Gospel Evangelism Initiative (www.angelProject.com), Dr. Ward, a native Californian, served for more than a decade as Youth and Senior Pastor in Fresno, California. He is the father of three young adults, a prolific author with a variety of articles in Adventist publications such as AdventSource, Insight and Adventist Review.

On July 6, 2017, President Andrea Luxton announced that Michael Nixon has accepted the invitation to serve as Andrews University’s first vice president for Diversity & Inclusion. He will begin in this position on August 1, 2017. Nixon is an Andrews alumnus and graduate of The John Marshall Law School in Chicago.
# Reaching Millennial Generations

April 12-14, 2018

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

With James Emery White

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“...part of the learning experience... a burning bush-type of moment...”
Here I am... to Worship!

By Murvin Camatchee

It is 11:20 a.m.! This we know by the chime that resonates throughout the entire building. Students are leaving their classrooms and faculty and staff their offices, while some are entering the building, but all converging toward the chapel. From there, we can already hear a harmonious melody being played on the organ as prelude for our weekly rendezvous. It is Tuesday and worship will begin in ten minutes, the time for the worship team to complete its briefing. Tuesday worship is an integral part of the life of the Seminary and cannot be detached from the journey of seminarians. It is a vast variety of experiences at the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

It is undeniable that life at the Seminary is “busy.” Moses was also a busy man when he was tending the flock of his father-in-law (Exodus 3:1). The desert and Mount Horeb were the places where Moses was being trained and educated for the future. Most of his time was spent leading Jethro’s sheep, which was part of this learning process as he was being prepared to become the leader of God’s people (Isaiah 53:6). But that was not enough! God had something special for Moses during this time of apprenticeship. God wanted a personal encounter, an unforgettable experience, a dedicated time, where Moses had to cease his activity, remove his sandals and give all his attention to Him. It was the time when the Lord came down to meet Moses in his workplace (Exodus 3:5–6).

God’s presence was manifested in the form of a bush burning with fire that provides both light and warmth. As seminarians, we constantly need our path to be enlightened by the Word of God (Psalm 119:105), as well as our hearts warmed by His presence. The Tuesday worship is a time where we are reminded that we only need to obey and follow the Word of God. When we meet in the chapel, we can feel God’s presence, as well as the warmth of being surrounded by our fellow seminarians, and members of the faculty and staff coming from different backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities. We know that we are not alone.

Tuesday worship being an integral part of the learning experience, a “burning bush-type” of moment, is affirmed by the following students through their testimonies:

Maureen Hamblin: “Tuesday worship is an oasis of calm and peace for me in the midst of a very busy week as I balance motherhood, school, work, and many other things. For that hour, I can relax and enjoy time with God, with my fellow seminarians, and with my professors! It shows unity and love while providing spiritual rest. I love it!”
**Gregory Brooks:** “The worship experience allows me to keep the purpose of being here at the Seminary in the forefront of my mind. It reminds me that at the heart of my ministry is worship. If I am too busy with schoolwork and other things and fail to find time for worship, then I have missed the point. It provides a safe collaborative space to engage our Maker and Friend and to be refreshed again.”

**Carlon Nyack:** “The Tuesday Seminary Worship experience has been a tremendous blessing to my spiritual walk and development with Christ! It has not only given me more insight and knowledge through the many powerful messages from the speakers, but it also has allowed me to grow in terms of being intentional on planning well-structured, rich, diverse, creative, Spirit-filled worship services that embrace praise, prayer, the Word and action!”

**David Clark:** “It gives students the opportunity to use their gifts to edify each other and affirm each other in ministry. It also gives a venue where professors and guests can share the insights they have been given by God to challenge and equip the Seminary family.”

**Carlos Sotomayor:** “The Tuesday worship experiences in the seminary are great opportunities to just worship God and refocus as to why we are in the Seminary in the first place. It is a time in which we are able to hear great preachers who share the word of God from varying perspectives. It’s an enriching experience.”

These meetings are not only for students, but also for faculty and staff. **David Penno**, associate professor of Christian ministry, testifies:

“The Tuesday worship is a time for everyone in the Seminary, students, staff, and faculty, to come together as equals before God, and to worship together from the heart and mind. It is also a time to demonstrate, as a professor, that the business of life does not supersede God’s top priority in my life. No project or task is more important than my public witness of worship and praise to my Creator.”

We praise God for all those who work hard to make this “burning bush” moment a reality every Tuesday.

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**Murvin Camatchee**, earned an MBA in England and is currently in the MDiv program at Andrews University. He was previously the treasurer of the Mauritius Conference. He wants to work as a local church pastor.

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**Pastor David Williams**, adjunct professor, said,  
"I have had the privilege of experiencing Seminary Tuesday Worship for going on eight years now, both as a PhD student and Christian Ministry professor. God continues to pour out His blessings. I have personally witnessed countless miracles of God’s leading, and I marvel at the myriad ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests His will, His love, and His power. I thank God for teaching me every Tuesday how to worship Him. Seminary Tuesday Worship is the highlight of my week.”
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MINISTRY WITHOUT BORDERS: INSIGHTS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Katelyn Campbell, Boubakar Sanou, and Hyveth Williams

Introduction

The subjects of clergy, laity and women’s ordination to pastoral ministry are receiving a great deal of attention in many Christian circles. On one hand, there is a sharp but speculative distinction between clergy and laity. Often, the laity are expected to give allegiance to the clergy and also to depend on them for spiritual guidance and help.1 Although the New Testament teaches the concepts of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9–10) and the priestly ministry of the church as the function of the total church membership,2 there is still a persistent tendency to create a dichotomy between clergy and laity.3

On the other hand, the subject of women’s ordination is a hot-button issue. Although this subject is germane to this discussion, we defer to Jiří Moskala’s statement that “the ministry of these committed and seminary educated women is truly needed in our church and those women who are our graduates already have played and will continue to play a vital role in fulfilling the mission of the church in proclaiming the everlasting Gospel to the world.”6

A Brief Word Study

In the time of the New Testament writers, there were four possible Greek terms for official ministry: telos (office),3 time (task, with emphasis on the dignity—Hebrews 5:4), arche (magistrate—Jude 1:6) and leitourgia (public service or priestly cultic service—Hebrews 9:6). However, with the exception of telos, these words appear in the New Testament referring to Jewish priests, to Moses, to pagan civil officers, to good or bad angels, and sometimes to Jesus, but not to Christian ministry (Luke 12:11; John 16:2; Hebrews 8:6).8 Several terms are used in the New Testament to express the concept of Christian ministry. Some of these terms are doulos (Colossians 2:7; Revelation 22:9), leitourgos (Luke 1:23; Philippians 2:30), and diakonia (1 Corinthians 16:15; Revelation 2:9). In the early church understanding, every believer was a slave (doulos) of the Lord Jesus. This was also one of Paul’s favorite descriptions of himself. If, in the ancient world, slaves were despised because it meant living without freedom under the authority of another, the early church believers rejoiced in the dignity of being the Lord’s slaves. The early church found it a fitting term to express the spiritual reality that a believer belongs wholly to God and consequently must obey Him in total submission.9 They considered it a privilege to be the Lord’s

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8 Stevens, The Abolition of the Laity, 140.
“slaves,” living to please Him (Galatians 1:10) and to serve one another. The term leitourgos was used most often to describe cultic priests as ministers in temple practices. In Hebrews, angels are given this title, as they minister to God Himself (Hebrews 1:7), bridging the gap between earthly temple practices and heavenly ministers. Paul also takes this term and uses it to describe himself as he ministers on Christ’s behalf as he spreads the Gospel message (Romans 15:16). Therefore, the deed of declaring the Gospel is likened to priestly ministry.10

A full New Testament philosophy of ministry is enriched by each of these terms, but the most comprehensive biblical word for ministry is diakonia. Some related words are diakonos (servant, minister, deacon—Romans 15:8; 1 Timothy 3:8) and diakoneo (to serve—Matthew 27:55; Mark 10:45).11 These words are distinctive in that their focus is squarely on loving actions on behalf of a brother, sister or neighbor.12 Diakonia refers to a service that arises from the right attitude of love. It never implies any association with a particular status or class.13 Contrary to doulos, which carries a sense of compulsion, diakonia implies the thought of voluntary service (Romans 15:25; Revelation 2:19).14

**Jesus and Ministry**

Ministry in the New Testament finds its source and focus in Jesus Christ. Jesus set the tone and example for Christian ministry by calling His disciples to find greatness through servanthood by pointing to the fact that He Himself came not to receive service but to give it (Matthew 20:28).15 Based on Jesus’ example, ministry in the apostolic age was always viewed as a position of service (diakonia) to the community of the people of God (1 Corinthians 16:15–16; 2 Corinthians 3:7–9; 4:1; 5:18; 2 Timothy 4:5; Ephesians 4:11–12). It was not the activity of a lesser to a greater, but the lifestyle of a follower of the Lord Jesus. It was modeled on the pattern and command of the Savior and represented the practical outworking of God’s love, especially toward fellow believers. Ministry is therefore not the activity of an elite class, but the mutual caring of a group of believers.16 It is not confined to any one class of believers; rather it is the privilege and duty of all. There are assuredly diversities of gifts in that ministry, but ministry generally and of some kind is for all.17

**Ministry as Priesthood of All Believers**

1 Peter 2:9, 10 and Revelation 1:5, 6 are two of the important texts that helped shape the New Testament perspective on the priesthood of all believers. Peter’s application of the priesthood terminology to the church points to the fact that it is the entire church membership that is now called, commissioned and enabled to perform the task of priests. This image intentionally connects the church with the Old Testament story by picturing the church both as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophetic expectations regarding the people of Israel, as well as the fulfillment of the Levitical priesthood. For John, the eligibility in this new priestly order is no longer determined by gender or ethnicity, but exclusively determined by faith in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Thus, the new priestly order established by Christ is, on the one hand, all-inclusive, i.e., totally devoid of any gender and ethnic specificities, and unstratified, on the other hand, i.e., nonhierarchical, as it is for the sole purpose of declaring the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9, 10; Revelation 1:5, 6). Paul emphasizes the new understanding of this priesthood without borders by pointing out that in Christ there is neither Jew or Greek, male nor female (Galatians 3:28).

While we observe in the church today two classes of people separated by education, gender specific ordination, status, hierarchy and other criteria, we discover in the New Testament one ministering people with leaders, also members of the laos (people of God), serving them to equip the people for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11–12).18 One does not readily find an essential distinction between clergy and laity in the New Testament. Ministry was not seen as a status, but as a function—the function of service in bearing witness to the Gospel to the community of the people of God.19

Alan Richardson sees the priesthood, about which the New Testament speaks, as a corporate priesthood of the whole Christian community. For him, the word hiereros (sacerdos, priest—Hebrews 10:11) is never used with respect to any priestly order or caste within the priestly community. All the members of the church, men and women, are priests fulfilling their individual and corporate responsibilities of witnessing and serving, whatever their secular profession or trade.20 For this reason, “the members of the church should individually feel that the life and prosperity of the church are affected by their course of action.”21

In this community, though, there were functional differences because of differences in spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:7–13). Power structures prevailing in the world were broken down. Ephesians 4:7–13 stresses that the variety of gifts which came from the Holy Spirit were for the building up of the one body of Christ, and no one function could claim precedence over any other. According to Paul’s understanding of the body of Christ in Ephesians 4, the gift of an office or leadership does not create any theological status among the believers. Leaders in the Christian community,

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12 *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (1885), s.v. “Ministry.”
13 Christian A. Schwarz, *Paradigm Shift in the Church: How Natural Church Development Can Transform Theological Thinking* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999), 173.
just as all other members, remained members of the one body. They did not go beyond the status of members, despite their functional differences. All were equal.

The apostolic Christian community knew that, in terms of service, there was no passive membership in the body of Christ. They understood that ministry refers to the work both of those commissioned to leadership and of the whole body of believers. All baptized members, male and female, were called to share in this service in accord with their state of life, special gifts and role within the structure of the Christian community (1 Peter 2:9; 4:10). This was true for the early church, and it can still be true today if “those who put their names on the church book should do so with a full and intelligent understanding of what this action involves. It means that you have solemnly pledged yourself to serve God.” Therefore, today’s church also needs to act upon the fact that, regardless of one’s job or career, he or she is “called to full-time Christian service. A ‘non-serving Christian’ is a contradiction in terms.” Because “ministry means service, and to this ministry we are all called,” every church member is therefore to engage in active service for God.

In his letter to the sponsors of the Atlanta “Clergy Conference” in February 1996, Jon Zens pointed out that “these kinds of events, though undoubtedly well-intended, nevertheless serve to perpetuate what I believe to be an unhealthy distinction between the ‘clergy’ and the ‘laity’—a distinction that is totally without biblical justification.” According to him, the clergy/laity distinction is more of a hindrance than a help to ministry in the body of Christ.

The New Testament clearly teaches leadership among the people of God, but not in a way that leads to the clergy/laity conclusion. Although the root words for the English words clergy and laity are found in the New Testament, the contemporary usage of these words is far removed from their New Testament usage. To oversimplify this would be “to say not that they had no clergy but that they had no laity.” Diakonia in the New Testament does not refer to a particular class of people set apart from the rest of the church, but to the entire church membership. Unfortunately, the church continues to make a false distinction between clergy and laity. Those who continue to hold fast to that false distinction seem to ignore the fact that “we are all laity: laymen and women, because we are all part of the people of God.”

### Spiritual Gifts, Leadership, and Ministry in the New Testament

God bestows upon all members of His church spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and humanity. The fact that each believer receives at least one gift from the Spirit (1 Peter 4:10) is an indication that each member of the body of Christ has a ministry. The gifts provide abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its functions. Spiritual gifts are for a common ministry (Romans 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Corinthians 12). Paul believed and taught that the gifts of the Spirit were to be exercised by Christians of both genders and from all walks of life.

Scripture does not support the view that the clergy should minister while the laity merely warm the pews and wait to be fed. Both clergy and laity make up the church. Although both kleros and laos appear in the New Testament, they denote the same people, not different people (2 Corinthians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:3). Clergy and laity are both responsible for the well-being of the church and its prosperity. They are both called to work together, complementing each other, everyone according to his or her special gift(s). According to Paul F. Bradshaw, the fundamental division in the New Testament was not between ministers and laity but between the church and the world, and it was the privilege and responsibility of every baptized Christian to be a minister of Christ according to their spiritual gifts. Liturgical participation in the ministry of word and prayer would have been open to all whose gifts were recognized by the community of believers.

Preaching and teaching in the apostolic church were not confined to a particular class, but every convert was to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers, and every Christian who had the gift could pray, teach and exhort in the congregation. The difference in gifts resulted in a variety of ministries.

There were certainly leaders in the early churches (1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Corinthians 16:15, 18; Philippians 1:1), but the way the Bible addresses “those who are over you” or “who care for you,” was a way to qualify their functions, not as titles. Being an overseer or servant is related to one gift among many, not qualitatively different from other gifts. Roles as determined by a spiritual gift do not lead to any fixed hierarchy which

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23 Schwarz, Paradigm Shift in the Church, 173.
28 Ibid., 204.
33 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists Believe... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, 1988), 211.
34 Rex D. Edwards, Every Believer a Minister (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 67.
would distinguish members with a special quality from other members without it. Leadership in the Jerusalem church was originally in the hands of the 12 apostles. But certainly Jesus does not seem to have appointed any of His disciples to any permanent post. In Acts 2:37; 5:3, 29; 8:14, Peter is seen assuming leadership, but in Galatians 2:1–10 and Acts 15:13–21, James appears as the undisputable leader of the church. Nevertheless, in the early Christian community, there was no hierarchical distinction between leaders and the rest of the people. Service was the sole principle of greatness.38

The charge of Christ in Matthew 28:18–20 and in Acts 1:8, and the subsequent gifts of the Holy Spirit, were not confined to the 12 apostles (Acts 1:15), the ordained ministry of that time and context (Matthew 10:1-4), but were given to all the members of the infant church (1 Peter 4:10). Thus, upon the church of Christ, clergy and laity alike, the duty to witness is equally laid and the power to witness is equally bestowed.39 Every believer, man and woman, by the ordination of baptism was understood as being called to serve because “every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a giver.”40

The Emergence of the Clergy and Laity Distinction

The situation of every believer’s active involvement in ministry in the New Testament was not destined to last. By the end of the first century, the beginnings of one of the most significant developments in the history of ministry in the church, the movement from spiritual giftedness to office, could already be detected. Ministries that members of the Christian community once performed without official appointment started to be clericalized, and liturgical actions were turned into permanent offices. As a direct result, the possibility of lay people exercising individual ministries sharply declined, even to the point of extinction.41 While the first-century church was marked by a people without the hierarchical distinction between clergy and laity, in the second and third centuries a definite clergy/laity distinction arose, largely from the following influences:42

First, the imitation of the secular structures of the Greek-Roman world.43 Status distinction present in the cultural context of Greco-Roman society between the magistrate (kleros) and the people who were ruled (laos) was infused into the Christian community. As the gulf between kleros and laos grew in the society, the kleros in the church became associated with the sacred and the laos with the secular.

Secondly, the transference of the Old Testament priesthood model to the leadership of the church. The theological justification for going back to the Levitical order was the conviction that the church was the new Israel, therefore it was also natural to look to the Old Testament for the form, the function being already embraced.44 The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, passed imperceptibly from Jewish analogies into the Christian church. Thus, “the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high-priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it.”45

Thirdly, the popular piety that elevated the Lord’s Supper to a mystery that required priestly administration. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, is said to have insisted that it was not lawful to baptize or to celebrate the Lord’s Supper without the bishop or his representative.46 The bishops, priests and deacons thus became very essential to the existence of the church.

Fourthly, an elaborate clerical hierarchy emerged in order to fight heresy, provide order, and maintain orthodoxy in the church.47

The term kleros (lot, portion, inheritance), which originally referred to the whole body of the people of God, started to be applied to those primarily or exclusively entrusted with church functions. Thus laos and kleros, two words originally referring to the same reality, came to designate two distinct realities. As early as the beginning of the second century, a distinct cleavage had begun to appear between clergy and laity, in spite of the fact that in the first century every believer was held to be a priest unto God.48 The term “lay” in Clement of Rome’s letter to the church in Corinth around 95 AD, in reference to the people of the church, indicated that the division between the ordained clergy and the rest of the congregation was already being made.49 The rite of laying on of hands, originally used as a sign of setting apart persons for particular functions within the Christian community, became viewed in the second century as a sign of status as the church became identified with the bishop. Ordination was thus establishing a clear division between clergy

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39 Edwards, Every Believer a Minister, 21.
41 Bradshaw, “Patterns of Ministry,” 52.
42 Stevens, The Abolition of the Laity, 39.
43 Ogden, The New Reformation, 66.
47 Ibid., 556.
and laity and even between clergy and clergy. Through ordination, it was thought that clergy became dispensers and guardians of salvation. They differed essentially and not just functionally from the laity. This gave them an awesome authority over the believers. After the time of Constantine, the clericalization of the ministry had begun. The clergy were seen as a more exalted class in the church. Bishops began to wear a distinctive dress of office and in some places they shared titles and honors that were previously reserved for emperors and their high officials. By the fifth and sixth centuries, the cleavage between clergy and laity had become entrenched. In the Middle Ages, with the establishment of a sacerdotal system of mediated grace, the laity became a submissive, docile part of the church with the priest holding authority over souls. A sharp differentiation between clergy and laity had thus developed, degrading the ministries of the lay people and emphasizing the special function of the clergy. During this period, the laity became dependent upon clergy for access to God's favor. Although at the Reformation some Protestants recovered much of the New Testament teaching (e.g., Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists), nevertheless, the laity were still normally expected to help clergy in church work rather than to develop their own ministries in their occupations. The laity were still often considered, and even considered themselves, a lower grade of Christians than the ordained ministers. Despite their strong emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, the Reformers maintained a clear and rigid distinction between the role of the ordained ministers and that of the rest of the believers in congregational involvement in worship. The ordained ministers were there to minister and the congregation was ministered unto. However, great importance was laid on the right and duty of the head of each household to conduct regular family prayers at home. With few exceptions, the Reformation did not really fundamentally alter the way in which the relationship between clergy and laity was perceived. It was only in the Radical Reformation that the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was once more carried to its logical conclusion. The radical reformers highlighted the equality of all believers. They emphasized that, by the ordination of baptism, every Christian man and woman was called to serve and witness.

While one does not find an essential distinction between clergy and laity in the New Testament writings, one does view a dichotomy between clergy and laity in the patristic period. As the church moved from the apostolic age to the patristic period and began to be both influenced and an influence in the known world, it also began to shift from its roots. This shift led to the existence of two classes of people in the church—the laity who pay to receive the ministry and the clergy who are paid to give ministry, whereas in the New Testament we find only one people with leaders among it.

**Our Perspective**

Despite all the teaching of the New Testament on ministry as the function of the total church membership, there is still a persistent tendency to make a dichotomy between clergy and laity. The biblical content and intent of the concepts laos and kleros is essentially different from the meaning laity and clergy have historically acquired. The whole church is both the laos (the people of God) and the kleros (God’s heritage). The mission which Christ has committed to His church constitutes a great enterprise with which the whole membership of the church can be identified. Its effective implementation calls for the total and equal mobilization of all God-given resources. It is unfortunate that many people define ministry by what they see pastors do—preaching, administering the sacraments, and caring for the spiritual needs of church members—and, as a result, limit ministry mostly to a place (the church) and titles (Pastor, Reverend, Bishop, etc.). But a survey of New Testament passages using the diakoneo word group reveals what ministry involves. It involves the following activities: caring for those in prisons (Matthew 25:44); serving tables (meeting physical needs, e.g., Acts 6:2); teaching the word of God (Acts 6:4), and all other services offered by Christians to others to build them up in faith (1 Corinthians 12:5; Ephesians 4:12). In short, full ministry calls for a complete exercise of all spiritual gifts (Romans 12:1; Corinthians 12–14; Ephesians 4), thus for all church membership. “Christian ministry is any general service rendered to others in Christ and because of Christ in the name of the Church and for the sake of helping the Church fulfill its mission.”

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54. Bradshaw, “Patterns of Ministry,” 56.
55. Ibid., 57.
58. L. O. Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, 443.
If the Church is to attain its full potential as the body of Christ, we must divest it of such unscriptural hierarchical structures and return to its intended “one-another” relationships and ministries. It strikes at the heart of the priesthood of all believers advocated in 1 Peter 2:5, 9–10, thus hindering church growth because the majority (the laity) pays the very few (the clergy) to do the work of the whole and still expect the Great Commission to be accomplished. The church must, if at all possible, get rid of this hierarchical system in order for the Word of God to have free course.

Ministry needs to be redefined by who is served rather than by the location and titles for the simple fact that it is “service to God and on behalf of God in the church and in the world.” Ministries are all those who put themselves at the disposal of God for the benefit of His cause. It should not be limited by the place where service is rendered, the function, the need met, by titles borne, or the gender of the one who ministers. Because the decisive thing about being a disciple of Jesus is service; ministry should not be seen as an exceptional optional activity for the people of God, but rather part of its essence.

Although trying to literally apply the New Testament model of ministry could be considered a utopia in the 21st century, there is great need for applying its principles even today for the spiritual wellbeing of the church and its members. Michael Green summarizes some of such principles as follows: in the New Testament, (1) all Christians were called to ministry, not some; (2) ministry was a function, not a status; (3) ministry was something corporate and shared; (4) character, not intellect, was the most important condition; (5) leaders were selected from men of experience, and; (6) these leaders’ ministry was one of enabling others for ministry.

The clergy/laity distinction strikes at the heart of the priesthood of all believers. In no situation do the apostles use these terms to describe appointment to an ecclesiastical office, as was the case much later. When we enter the church today, there are two people—the laity, who receive the ministry, and the clergy who give it. But when we enter the world of the New Testament, we find only one people, the true λαός of God, with leaders among the people.

The New Testament knows no spiritual aristocracy or nobility, nor does it recognize a special priesthood in distinction from the people, as mediating between God and the laity. It rather knows only one High Priest, Jesus Christ, and clearly teaches the universal priesthood, as well as the universal kingship of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

Conclusion

On the basis of the evidences surveyed above, although there is functional distinction among the λαός of God, if we consider the body imagery given to the church and the variety of spiritual gifts (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12–14 and Ephesians 4), there should be no status, gender, class or hierarchical distinction, because all believers and ministries are equal before God (Acts 10:34; Galatians 3:26–28). While the clergy/laity hierarchical distinction is embedded and assumed in religious circles, it cannot be found in the New Testament. Rather than being the activity of a spiritual aristocracy or the work of a professional class, ministry in all its aspects should be the lifestyle, responsibility and privilege of every believer.

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“The most difficult and most pointless classes one can take are Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Greek.” This is a rumor that can be heard whenever pastors come together and speak about their seminary days.

Why are they the most difficult? It is always difficult to learn something that is very foreign to one’s own repertoire of knowledge. Learning words in letters that have hardly any similarity to the Latin characters we are used to is a challenge. And this is just one of the difficulties.

Why is it pointless? Because—so goes the rumor—everything you have learned in your Hebrew and Greek classes will be forgotten once you graduate from seminary. Hardly any pastor consults the Hebrew Old Testament (OT) or the Greek New Testament (NT) when he/she enters the ministry. At least that’s what the rumor says.

The Biblical Language Pedagogy Committee at the seminary wanted to understand this rumor better. Thus, in 2016, we conducted a robust survey that we sent to all seminary graduates from 1980 on. We wanted to know how the pastors in the field look back to their Biblical Language courses, and whether they think that we should indeed no longer require Biblical Languages (BL) from Master of Divinity students. Many other questions were asked to find out how pastors in the field see the Biblical Languages (BL). The results were surprising!

The vast majority of graduates regard BLs as “crucial,” “important,” and “very relevant.” But it got even more surprising: 55.6 percent of all survey participants wanted BLs integrated in as many seminary courses as possible (not just in Hebrew, Greek and exegesis courses). And further, 62 percent wanted to have BLs integrated into continuing education for ministers. Most survey participants expressed that BLs should be better integrated in the overall theological education, so that they can be used in a more relevant way in ministry.

It is indeed important for pastors and religion teachers to know Biblical Hebrew and Greek. These languages provide access to the source texts and to readings and understandings that got lost in the process of translation. It is a central part of the Protestant identity to get back to the sources (ad fontes!) and become independent of tradition.

The advances in technology and computer science in the last 50+ years are amazing. This has not just influenced research, economy and communication. Biblical studies, and with it theological education, have received many tools that help improve learning and teaching in a seminary context. The rise of Bible-software, in which the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT (and many other texts, for that matter) are linguistically prepared for the user, have appeared on the commercial market since the beginning of the 1990s. However, even after 25+ years, most seminaries in the world have still not integrated these sophisticated tools in the classroom. There are several reasons, but here at our seminary we made the active choice in 2016 to integrate these modern tools in order to assist students in learning BLs, in studying the primary sources of the Bible, and in preparing powerful sermons that are directly inspired by the original sources.

We want to help each student use Bible-software efficiently, so that even when he/she becomes a pastor and forgets the meaning of some Hebrew or Greek words or a specific grammatical detail, he/she can find...
powerful assistance in Bible-software and therefore still work with the biblical source texts. To accomplish this, each student is required to purchase Logos or Accordance Bible-software. The seminary has negotiated excellent prices for selected products of Accordance and Logos. But owning Bible-software does not yet mean that one knows how to use it. Therefore, students will take a total of nine Bible-software labs during their seminary experience. In each of these labs they learn how to use Bible-software for doing exegetical work, developing Bible studies, and preparing sermons. In addition, professors will learn how to integrate Bible-software in their classes so that students are even more exposed to these electronic tools. So far, the response of students has been very positive. As we are at the very beginning of implementing Bible-software as an integral part of learning and teaching, there are, of course, still challenges to overcome.

We are curious about what the rumors relating to biblical languages will sound like in a couple of years! Perhaps it will go something like this: “The most practical and most useful classes one can take at the seminary are Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Greek. In conjunction with Bible-software, it has changed the quality of my preaching and teaching.” Whatever the rumor will be, we all hope, faculty, students and pastors, that by integrating Bible-software into our pedagogy at the seminary, we will help the mission of the church: to preach the gospel of the Bible more and the teaching of tradition less.

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“It is always difficult to learn something that is very foreign to one’s own repertoire of knowledge.”
One of the most beautiful things about Andrews University is the sheer diversity one can find on its campus. There are so many people and so many different cultures represented. The Seminary is no different, and to be a part of it is to belong to one big family made up of smaller families. Everyone has a story of the mountains that God moved to bring them here. Amidst the hustle and bustle of student life, it can be difficult to take the time to listen to these stories. Through this article, it is my hope to shed some light on what it is like for families to attend the Seminary.

What Is Family Life Like at the Seminary?

A typical schedule at the Seminary includes classes from Monday through Thursday, giving students a three-day weekend to spend as they see fit. During the week, classes can start as early as 7:30 a.m. and run until about 6:30 p.m. or even later, depending on the class. There is no summer break except for one week in between each of the summer sessions. Winters can be a harsh time for students who, on top of battling the stress of assignments, are also forced to confront the elements. However, the summers are beautiful at Andrews and after classes are over it is common to see couples taking walks in their neighborhood or around the school. Most students also look forward to Saturdays, as the Sabbath activities give a welcome respite from the week's schedule.

To gain a little more perspective into the life of a seminarian, consider Kevin, who is in his first year at the Seminary. He is a good husband and the proud father to a beautiful daughter. He enjoys all he has learned at the Seminary so far. He schedules his time so that he is available to pick up his daughter from school in the afternoon. When he brings her home, all the time he has is dedicated to his family. He helps his daughter with her homework until his wife gets home in the evening, after which they prepare dinner together and have worship before getting ready for bed. He then proceeds to wake up every morning between 2 and 3 a.m. to tackle the day’s load of homework and projects.

“My wife and I have been married for three years, and before we came to Seminary we had a friend who told my wife, ‘Get used to never seeing your husband.’ This troubled us both and so one of the things that we decided upon arrival at the Seminary was that the norm of our relationship would be that we spend time together every day.

Fridays became our family day and it is time dedicated solely to each other. On those days, we go into town, shop for groceries, have a nice lunch together, and return home in time to receive the Sabbath.”
How Does a Family Survive Seminary Life?

This is just one example of how a family has adjusted to life at the Seminary. The biggest challenge seminarians face is that of time. There just never seems to be enough time to accomplish all that we would like. For this reason, families have learned to be very intentional in how they manage their time to ensure their marriages or relationships with their kids are not one of the things sacrificed on the altar of academic success.

The common sentiment around the Seminary is that everyone would like to do well in their classes, but not at the expense of their marriages. Clear priorities and strong boundaries are required to accomplish this.

The Seminary is also blessed with a compassionate staff, who care about the students and genuinely want to see them succeed. Though they are not required to do so, some professors enjoy engaging their students in conversation to figure out what their lives are like. For this reason, it is the professors who are usually the first ones who will notice if a family is struggling or if a student needs help. The Seminary does as much as it can to aid families. There is an incredible ministry called First the Blade. Professor Sedlacek is the faculty advisor for this ministry and has commented that the goal of this ministry is to connect families with resources that they need, no matter what it may be. They even host events like Parent’s Night, offering babysitting so that parents can socialize with each other. These are a great help, but the Seminary is still not where it would like to be. Sedlacek expressed his dream of the Seminary offering daycare for the children of seminarians. More than that, he longs to see emotionally healthy families.

One piece of advice Sedlacek offers about surviving Seminary is, “Treat each other with understanding and love, especially in the moments when you might feel like your needs are not being met.”

In conclusion, even though we may come from different backgrounds or cultures, we are each on the same journey here at Andrews University. No matter the stresses a family may face, and no matter the challenges that come, we are all part of this journey together. Though Seminary life is not simple, it is worth it to honor the call of the King of Kings. We should never forget that He is a loving God who promised, in Isaiah 41:10, ”I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

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As someone who teaches in the area of faith and culture, I often speak about how movies change the way we see the world. But what if I told you that a movie could alter your physical sight? It happened to Bruce Bridgeman. In 2012, the BBC reported that Bruce went to the theater with his wife to see the 3D film, Hugo. He paid for a pair of glasses, thinking that for him they would be useless. That’s because Bruce grew up stereo blind. He saw the world as flat, without true depth perception. All that changed when the lights went down and the movie began. Things leapt off the screen. It was like a whole new dimension of sight. Not only that, but when he stepped out of the cinema, people and objects continued to stand out from the background. The world looked more vivid than ever before. Remarkably, Bruce has seen in 3D ever since.

Seeing in 3D

Unlike Bruce, most of us take our 3D vision for granted. Yet it’s the result of a complex process. When our eyes focus on an object, they see it from slightly different angles, due to the distance between the eyes. This is called “retinal disparity.” We see two different views of the same thing. The brain then fuses these disparate views together, with the help of binocular neurons located in the visual cortex. This creates a sense of depth, allowing us to live in a three-dimensional world.

Visual Experiment #1

You can experience the magic of stereoscopy by obtaining an inexpensive pair of red and blue anaglyph glasses. Anaglyphs are created from two slightly different images. These are color converted and then layered on top of each other. Your left eye sees one image through the red lens, while your right eye sees the other image through the blue lens. Your brain does the rest, rendering a 3D image. A quick search on the Internet for “anaglyphs” will yield plenty of eye-popping results.

Stereo Blindness

So what causes stereo blindness? Most of the five to 10 percent of the population affected by this condition see perfectly well out of both eyes. Their eyes just don’t coordinate well enough to converge on a single location. One eye may wander outward or cross inward, resulting in visual confusion. This causes the brain to shut down input from one eye so that it can pay attention to the other.

Persons who are stereo blind do have some understanding of depth though. They learn to read monocular cues, such as layering and perspective, in order to judge relative distance. In fact, many who live with stereo blindness don’t even realize they lack a greater sense of depth at all.
One of the best known cases is that of Sue Barry, nicknamed “Stereo Sue.” She explains in her book “Fixing My Gaze” how she was able to regain her stereo vision, something most physicians thought impossible beyond the age of 2. Sue was in her 40s when she met an optometrist who believed she could learn to see in greater depth. Sue spent hours each day in vision therapy, training her eyes to converge on single objects.

As a neurobiologist, Sue thought she had a pretty good idea of what stereo vision was like. She often explained the science behind it to others. Still, nothing could prepare her for the time when she would actually see in 3D.

That experience was unbelievably joyful. It was like this revelation. It was a late winter day, you know, when the snowflakes are really big and gloppy. I could see the palpable pockets of space between the different snowflakes. And it was like this beautiful three-dimensional dance… I could see space between leaves on a tree, and I would go inside these spaces just to experience that sense of immersion. And this was among the most empowering, liberating experiences of my life.

**John’s Theology of Seeing**

Hearing Sue speak in almost religious terms about her new visual capacities reminds me of John’s theology of seeing. There are over 100 references to seeing in the Gospel of John. In the opening chapter Jesus invites his followers, “Come, and you will see” (1:39). A few verses later he promises them, “You will see greater things” (1:50). John’s account seeks to bring readers into a deeper perception of Jesus. In fact, you might say that he wrote his Gospel in 3D—in stereo vision.

Two lines of sight run through the Gospel, a view “from below” and a view “from above.” These two perspectives converge and are fused in the cosmic Word made flesh. It is by Him, the Maker of all creation (1:3), that heavenly realities “from above” are revealed in and through earthly things “from below.” As one scholar puts it, the purpose of the gospel narrative is “to alter irrevocably the reader’s perception of the real world.”

Even so, the disciples begin their journey with a flattened perspective. While they see the cues of something greater in Jesus—such as His miraculous signs—they don’t yet see Him with any real depth. This becomes the cause for much misunderstanding and irony along the way.

In John’s Gospel, then, discipleship consists of visual training—learning to see in stereo. Yet, as Sue would attest, fixing one’s gaze can be a long and difficult process. After three years of observation, Philip—the one who invited others to “come and see” (1:46)—still does not truly see Jesus. “Show us the Father,” he demands. Jesus replies, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (14:8–9).

It is not until after the resurrection, when Jesus breathes the Spirit on His disciples, that they begin to perceive Him in a much deeper way. It is the Spirit who reminds them of what they have heard (14:26) and reveals to them the truth of what they have seen (16:12–14). Only those born from above—those born again of the Spirit—can testify, “We have seen his glory” (1:14).

**John’s Theology of Worship**

John’s theology of seeing is closely tied to his theology of worship. When John wrote his Gospel toward the end of the first century, Judaism was still reeling from the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Its center of worship had been decimated, leaving a gaping visual and symbolic hole in the Jewish landscape. The question was: Where was God to be located now? Where was He to be worshiped?

John responds to this liturgical loss by presenting Jesus as the new center of worship. Jesus is the climactic fulfillment of all previous manifestations of God’s presence.

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**The New Sanctuary**

In the prologue, John introduces Jesus as the New Sanctuary. During the Israelite’s wilderness sojourn, God had dwelled with them in the Tent of Meeting, appearing as a glorious pillar of light. As the Word made flesh, Jesus now dwells with humanity, becoming the “light of all mankind” (1:4). He “pitches his tent” among His own, displaying the glory of God (1:14).

**The New House of God**

Later in the chapter, John presents Jesus as the New House of God. Fleeing his home, Jacob had dreamed of a dream heaven and earth converged and God spoke to him of greater things to come. Awakening to a new reality, Jacob exclaimed, “Surely, the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it…This is none other than the house of God.” (Gen. 28:16–17). As one greater than Jacob (4:12), Jesus now opens heaven to earth, and promises His disciples that they “will see greater things” (1:50–51). He will reveal to them their true home (14:2, 23).

**The New Temple**

Finally, in chapter two Jesus is announced as the New Temple. Finding His Father’s house overrun by money changers, Jesus drives them out. When asked to produce a sign that would demonstrate His right to do such a thing, Jesus offers a preview of coming events. “Tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up again,” He says, referring to the temple of His body (2:19–21).

Three times in the opening chapters, then, John presents Jesus as the new center of worship. What emerges is a visible, embodied form of worship that cannot be contained within a building but focuses, instead, on the person of Jesus as He moves and acts within the world.

Curiously, John’s Gospel does not contain a transfiguration story. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of Jesus and a few close disciples ascending into a mountain, where Peter...
proposes to erect three tents, in order to linger on the summit. John turns this story upside down, focusing not on a mountaintop experience but on Jesus descending from heaven to pitch His tent among humanity. While the Synoptic authors capture a fleeting glimpse of glory, John turns his entire Gospel into an account of Jesus revealing God’s glory in the midst of peoples’ lives. His doxology is democratized. A shaft of light, a loaf of bread, an empty water jar, a debilitating illness, or a putrid corpse—all become images and “signs” through which Jesus manifests His Father’s glory.

This is possible because Jesus is working with more than one perspective. As Creator, He is acutely aware of the brokenness of the world and its inhabitants. But He is equally mindful of the goodness of creation and the image of God that remains in each person. It’s that stereo vision that allows Him to see things in greater depth and to open up spaces for newness and worship never thought possible.

**The Man Born Blind**

At this intersection of seeing and worship, two stories are worth recounting. The story of the man born blind is one of several “coming to see” accounts in the Gospel. Jesus puts mud on the man’s eyes, tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam—which means “Sent”—and he comes back seeing (9:6–7).

The blind man becomes part of a pattern of sending and seeing in the Gospel. The Father sends the Son, the Son sends the Spirit, and the Spirit-filled disciples are sent by the Son in order that all who see the glory of God might worship Him. The Father seeks not only believers (20:31) but witnesses (15:27) and worshipers (4:23), as well.

In sharing the man’s story, John echoes the account of the fall in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve were told by the tempter that their “eyes would be opened,” only to reveal shame and result in separation. Here, in a reversal of the fall, John repeats seven times that the blind man’s “eyes were opened.”

The man not only gains his physical sight but gradually recovers his spiritual sight, as well. At first, he sees Jesus as only a man, then as a prophet, then as a man from God. Finally Jesus asks, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” “Who is he?” the man replies. “You have now seen him,” declares Jesus. At that, the man worships him (9:35–38).

For John, coming to see is synonymous with coming to worship. Worship is the result of a deeper revelation of Jesus. It is not dependent on a temple. In fact, the man is thrown out of the temple before coming to worship Jesus (9:34).

The Pharisees ironically retort, “What? Are we blind, too?” They see Jesus—but not with the depth the man now does. In fact, they had scoffed at the otherworldly claims of Jesus: “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’” (6:42). The Pharisees look at Jesus only “from below,” and that renders them stereotypical. The blind man, who sees Jesus with both eyes, can do nothing but worship.

**The Samaritan Woman**

The story of the Samaritan woman is another of John’s “coming to see” accounts. The woman gradually comes to recognize Jesus, and He—in turn—comes to reveal everything about her. At the center of this narrative is a conversation about true worship. In fact, most of John’s use of the word “worship” occurs in this story. Again, this encounter takes place outside the temple—well beyond the borders of Judaism.

This time, however, the convergence of perspectives from “above” and “below” is complicated by divisions between he-and-she and here-and-there. Before the woman can even begin to grapple with the heavenly language of Jesus (4:13–14), she has to work through the earthly facts that He is a Jewish man and she is a Samaritan woman (4:9).

There is no need to rehearse the gender and ethnic disparities between these two strangers. Similar differences exist today. As the woman observes, Samaritans worship on one mountain and Jews on another (4:20). Theologically and liturgically they are miles apart. Certainly, all of us can relate to the distance between worshipers—to the amassing of beliefs, practices and preferences that define our “holy hill” over and against that of someone else.

Worship as Territory. This story highlights the human tendency to treat worship as territory. As one scholar observes, all worship spaces become “claimed spaces.” A space becomes territory when ownership happens, when borders are established, and when the dynamics of power and control begin to form. Within a worship territory, there are rules and expectations about things like dress, language, musical style and bodily movements. There are insiders and outsiders, those on the platform and those in the pews. All of this comes with territory.

In one of the churches I pastored, I thought it might be a good idea to remove the pews from the youth chapel and replace them with more flexible seating. Little did I know that the “youth” chapel was, in fact, a “memorial” chapel, built in honor of a prominent church member’s late wife. What to me was just a space in need of updating, was actually sacred territory. Needless to say, the pews remained.

**In Spirit and Truth.** In chapter 2, Jesus gave a clear signal that the temple belonged to no one, except His Father. Here in Samaria, while He acknowledges differences between Jewish and Samaritan worship, He goes on to say that among true worshipers territorial distinctions will soon vanish. “A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth” (4:23).

The phrase “a time is coming and has now come” is an eschatological marker. It is John’s way of saying that God’s future has broken into the present but is not yet fully realized. The new has arrived, but the old has not yet passed away. Therefore, worship on this earth is caught between the old realities of territorial worship and the call to true worship, which reaches its fullness in the age to come.

What does it mean to “worship in Spirit and truth?” Some have taken this as a reference to an authentic, inner experience of worship. But in the context of John’s Gospel, it more likely refers to the work of the Spirit of Truth (15:26), who comes to reveal the deep things of Jesus, which then elicits worship wherever the Spirit blows. Based on this, I would suggest that true worship has two qualities.

**Revelatory Space.** First, true worship is a revelatory space where we continually come to see Jesus and our fellow worshipers in deeper and more profound ways, under the teaching of the Spirit. Nathaniel might not
have overcome his prejudice against residents of Nazareth had Philip not invited him to “come and see” (1:46). The worship of Jesus invites us to leave behind our preconceived notions and to be open to seeing greater things—things which only the Spirit can show us.

But worship is also revelatory in the sense that it reveals who we are and what we believe as worshipers. For example, when you compare the optics of worship at two popular Adventist conventions, they convey very different ideas about what an encounter with God looks like. At Generation Youth for Christ you will see suits and ties and dresses, chairs in rows, uplifted Bibles, kneeling prayers, and fresh-faced choirs. All part of the territory. At The One Project you’ll encounter casual dress, conversational seating, cutting-edge graphics, contemporary music, and TED Talk-like sermons. Also, part of the territory. These are not just stylistic differences, they are also enacted theological perspectives worthy of consideration.

**Truthful Space.** Second, true worship creates a truthful space, where we can have open and honest conversations about our differences. While we are called to worship in Spirit, we still have bodies. Worship will always have to be negotiated through our various cultural backgrounds, musical preferences, political leanings and family standings. There is no such a thing as a “pure” or “disinterested” worship of God—completely detached from human experience. When we believe that our worship is “pure,” we risk being blinded to our territorial tendencies and imposing them on others.

I recently came across a study of multiracial congregations, which indicated that, while such churches have the potential for bridging differences and promoting unity, many still leave the dominant, White racial frame unchallenged. The lesson may be that if we want to address social inequalities in worship, offering a display of diversity on our praise team or delivering a “one in Christ” message from the pulpit may not be enough. We need to approach gender, race and class more critically and allow that thinking to interrogate our liturgy and its theology. Do we welcome diversity, but only so long as it doesn’t disturb the status quo? Or are we willing to make some fundamental changes in order to be more inclusive? Just as Jesus cleared and reclaimed the temple, we must confront injustices and reclaim the church as “a house of prayer for all people” (Isaiah 56:7). Short of this, our worship territory is likely to remain in dominant hands.

**Liminal Space.** That being said, perhaps it may be helpful to consider the value of “the well” as a place to prepare hearts and minds for true worship. The well is located in what anthropologists would call a liminal space. It is neither in the “here” of the Jerusalem temple nor in the “there” of a Samaritan town. It is a “third space,” away from the gaze of disciples and townspeople alike, where social barriers can be crossed, desires can be expressed, the truth can be spoken, and identities can be revealed and renegotiated. As we think of our mountains of worship and how to transcend them, we may want to consider where we might find spaces—like the well—where members of diverse groups can converse “off-stage” and come to see each other in new ways.

**The Gaze**

As I reflect on the story of the Samaritan woman—with its territories, border crossings and revealing moments—I think about my two decades of leading short-term mission trips. More often than not, volunteers arrived in-country with cameras, eager to capture their adventure. Over time, I learned about something social theorists call “the gaze.” It refers to who is looking, how they are looking, and what that point of view reveals.

**The Worshiper Gaze.** I’ve come to believe that there is also something called the “worshiper gaze.” This gaze comes loaded with expectations that worshipers place on local congregations in their search for having an “authentic” or “relevant” encounter with God. In the worshiper gaze, God—as mediated through the sights and sounds of the worship “experience”—is represented as the fulfillment of the worshiper’s wants and needs.

Congregations, fearing the loss of their young people and facing an uncertain future, learn to cater to the gaze of the worshiper, turning worship styles and services into commodities to be marketed and consumed by eager spiritual tourists. This market-place mentality is how today’s mountains of worship are built. You could argue that it is also one of the reasons why worship is more polarized than ever. Each of us “gaze” upon our own preferred “peak” experiences, which have become reflections of us just as much as they are of God.

Yet, in the end, our gaze is not reliable. It devours, it dominates, it distorts, and it divides. John says in chapter two that “many people saw the signs Jesus was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people” (2:24). He knew how self-centered and self-seeking the human gaze can be.
The Gaze of Jesus. The only path to fixing our gaze is found in the gaze of Jesus. The gaze that looked into the Samaritan woman’s life and saw her history of broken desire. The gaze that saw Nathaniel in secret from afar and read his honest heart. The gaze that looked down from the cross at Mary and the beloved disciple and said, “Look, here is your son! Look, here is your mother!” (19:26–27). It is the gaze of Jesus—the Savior of the World—that transforms our own seeing and asks us to look upon one another as members of the same spiritual family.

Visual Experiment #2

Let me suggest one more visual experiment. This exercise was first proposed by the late medieval theologian, philosopher and mathematician Nicholas of Cusa. Nicholas was a man of deep devotion and wrote a little book titled “The Vision of God.” His purpose was not only to write about seeing God but to explore how God Himself sees. In his book, Nicholas addresses a group of monks to whom he has sent a painting, which he calls the “Icon of God.”

“Hang this icon somewhere,” he instructs, “and you brothers stand around it, at a short distance from it, and observe it. Regardless of the place from which each of you looks at it, each will have the impression that he alone is being looked at by it.”16 This is called omnivoyance, the artistic impression that a face looks at everything around it.

To replicate Nicholas’ experiment, ask two people to join you in front of this picture of Christ. Place yourself in the center, with one person to your far right and the other to your far left. Have everyone look into the eyes of Jesus. Is He looking at you?

As you remain in the center gazing at Jesus, ask those on either side of you to slowly trade places.

Have them to keep their eyes fixed on those of Jesus. Then compare notes. Did the eyes of Jesus follow the person moving to the left? What about the person moving to the right? Did Jesus ever take His eyes off of you in the center? How can the gaze of Jesus follow people moving simultaneously in opposite directions, while remaining fixed on you standing still in the center? This is what Nicholas called the impossibility of God’s sight.

What does this exercise teach us?

The Power of a Gaze. First, we learn about the power of a gaze—not ours but that of Jesus. He looks continually upon us, at all times and in all circumstances. Jesus tells His disciples, “I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you” (16:22). Here, worship is not initiated by the disciples’ gaze nor by any spectacle they might manufacture; rather, it is elicited by the loving and attentive gaze of Christ, which instills in them lasting joy.

God’s Line of Sight. Second, this exercise suggests that two opposing things can be true at the same time. Not because we can reconcile them from our point of view, but because they are unified within God’s line of sight. In my way of worship, God may appear to be looking only at me. While in your way of worship, His eyes may seem to be fixed only on you. Our ways of worship may be moving in different directions or may even be planted on two separate mountains. Yet, if we could see as God sees, we would know that He is looking fully and equally upon all of us. He sees all of our seeing and longs to draw us more deeply into a true worship of Him.

It Takes a Village. Third, this exercise raises the question: “How can we come to see as God sees?” The answer lies in our fellow worshipers. Acquiring God’s vision requires the eyes of the whole community and a willingness to testify to others. We must see together—not as like-minded groups—but across lines of difference, as people walking in different directions, each sharing with the others what he or she has seen of Jesus. Only then can we appreciate the breadth and depth of God’s sight.

At the well, the woman has her own private moment of seeing and being seen, but then she runs to the village and invites her neighbors to come and see. While it takes only one woman to ask, “Could this be the Messiah?” (4:29) it takes a village to recognize Him as “Savior of the World” (4:42). Together, the villagers see in Jesus one whose gaze encompasses all boundaries, all differences and all peoples.

Conclusion

The optics of worship for a polarized age might be summarized with this formula: disparity plus convergence equals depth.

A deeper experience of seeing and worship begins with disparity—the distance between one person’s point of view and that of another. We must not shrink from our differences in the community of faith or segment ourselves because of them. We should value our different perspectives as the precursors to true worship.

The convergence of our differences may seem like an impossibility, and perhaps that is why we so often divide ourselves in worship. Nevertheless, a fusion of diverse worshipers is possible when the Spirit is breathed into the liturgical community. When we collectively fix our gaze on Christ, the Spirit can bring a new dimension of sight out of our disparity.

When our limited gazes merge with the all-encompassing gaze of Jesus—in whose eyes all creation is precious and redeemable—we will see greater things than we ever imagined possible. Heaven will open, flattened perspectives will vanish, and a deeper experience of others and the worship of the Other will occur. From week to week we will say with Jacob, “What an awesome place this is! This is nothing else than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!” (Genesis 28:17)

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Endnotes


3 *“Susan Barry: Learning to see in 3-D”* (October 15, 2012). NOVA’s Secret Life of Scientists and Engineers (1:42–2:22).


6 Kostenberger, 231–236, outlines the following three ways in which Jesus fulfills the Old Testament manifestations of God’s presence.

7 The word σκηνεῖον, often translated “dwelled” in Jn. 1:14, is more literally translated “tabernacled” or “tented.” It comes from the root σκηναί (“tent”) used in the LXX for the Israelite Tent of Meeting (Ex. 33:7).


11 The narrative structure of John 4 can be represented: (a) Samaritan woman meets Jesus (5–9), (b) dialogue on thirst and living water (10–15), (c) dialogue on true worship (16–26), (b’) dialogue on hunger and true food (27–38), (a’) Samaritan villagers meet Jesus (39–42).


13 Carvalhaes, 122.


The year was 1999. The average price of a gallon of gasoline was $1.30 ($1.91 in 2017 dollars). The Dallas Stars won the National Hockey League’s Stanley Cup. Serena Williams won her first Grand Slam tournament singles title, The U.S. Open. President Bill Clinton was acquitted by the U.S. Senate, having been charged on counts of perjury and obstruction of justice.

It was also the last year I pastored a congregational district.

Fast forward to 2016. Seventeen years after last pastoring a church, and 10 years after last teaching on the university level, I was granted the opportunity to return to my two greatest professional loves: teaching on the university level, and pastoral ministry. Combining these two provides a laboratory for me—and all other professors who serve as active pastors in churches—to mentor the next generation of pastors in ways that carry the potential to be quite impactful.

The Criticality of Pastoral Mentoring

The previous statement by no means serves as an indictment against professors who do not currently pastor churches. But for those who teach the more foundational practic courses, such hands-on experience proves invaluable. My daughter, who just completed her first year at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, has professors who still practice medicine. Should it be any different in seminary hallways?

Over the years, several professors have assumed the same privilege that many pastors from Southwestern Lower Michigan to Indiana and the Chicagoland area also have. They serve as church pastors who have the opportunity to work with theological field education (TFE) students. Although the program had a different name when I matriculated at the seminary, my first recollection of a professor who also served as a mentoring professor was Walter Douglas, who served as professor of church history as well as pastor of the All Nations SDA Church.

According to the TFE syllabus (CHMN 560), the primary objectives for this practicum are to 1) provide the student with the opportunity to gain competency and expertise while involved in practical field activities, 2) implement the theoretical learning in a specific area of field ministry experience, and 3) engage in evangelistic contact with the unchurched. Undoubtedly, such is best accomplished through pastoral mentoring of the students while being appropriately supervised. According to Scott M. Douglas, such mentoring must emphasize character development, prioritize family, build a friendship that extends outside of the office setting, and grant the freedom and flexibility to accomplish a task without fear of being micromanaged. While any pastor can provide mentoring in these three areas, the pastoring professor occupies a unique position when it comes to such guidance that he or she can offer.

The Advantages of the Pastoring Professor

All professors bring a wealth of experience to the classroom that transcends book knowledge. Such is the case with me from several perspectives. I have seen the theological pendulum swing over the generations from my childhood. Parenting young children who have grown into adults has provided ever-expanding views of how God relates to me, and how I should relate to others. Seeing church life and worship styles in more than 60 countries has created a theological flexibility that I can instill in those whom I mentor.

However, the itinerant life that I lived for those 17 years prior to coming to the Seminary to teach developed within me a blindness to the realities of life in the congregation. Guest
speaking appointments led to plaudits. It also led to detachment that
times produced seminar pre-
sentations born out of the abstract,
as well as safe and sanitary solutions
that did not address concrete con-
gregational conundrums—whether
within the church or in the community.

Taking on the responsibility of serv-
ing as pastor of the Niles Philadelphia
SDA Church has served as a necessary
corrective, for it has provided an ave-
num for me to stay connected to real
members with real issues. I was famil-
liar with the Niles Philadelphia Church
and its excellent worship experience. I
even knew some of its members. But
serving as their pastor provides a clear
window into every aspect of each indi-
vidual life.

That is significant, because pasto-
ral trainers can talk about the need to
employ spiritual gifts, or the criticality
of financial stewardship, or the vitality
that understanding Old Testament,
New Testament, and biblical lan-
guages brings to the preaching event.
But while all of these must be empha-
sized, the church members process
these and other things through the
lenses of having to care for aging
parents, having to make ends meet
while paying the church school bill for
their children to receive an Adventist
education, dealing with significant
health challenges, etc. The pastoring
professor has a clear understanding
that theory is tested in the crucible of
reality.

Another advantage that the pasto-
ring professor brings to the table is the
ability to bring more practicality and
passion into the classroom. This does
not render as ineffective the profes-
sor who does not pastor a church. It
does, however, lend greater credibility
to the professor whose primary teach-
ing function lies within the realm of
congregational practices. The dangers
have always existed not only for the
professor who has been out of dis-
trict ministry to grow more stale with
each passing year, but for the students
to see that professor’s teaching as
scratching where one does not itch.

But how does all this impact the
mentoring relationship? I return to the
TFE model. According to the TFE syl-
labus class description, “TFE is built
around the mentoring relationship
between a ministry context mentor
or seminary faculty and an individual
seminarian in area churches or com-
community ministry settings.” Arguably,
the most logical connection between
the seminary and congregation, as it
relates to a mentoring relationship
that prepares the student for his or
her future ministry, would be a pas-
toring professor. On the one hand,
that professor has, on a regular basis,
addressed theory in the classroom;
but now places his or her student pas-
tors in situations that prove to be real
life case studies, creating the need to
answer the questions, “What would
you do?” “How would you handle this
situation?”

Hyveth Williams, professor
and director of homiletics in the
Department of Christian Ministry, as
well as senior pastor of The Grace
Place in South Bend, Indiana since
2013, has combined her professorial
and pastoral roles in ways that attract
students to want to be mentored by
her. She has intentionally positioned
them so their gifts can be maximized
and the community can be benefited.
She states, “I see my church as a liv-
ing lab for seminarians. It is most
rewarding when even some seasoned
participants exclaim excitement over
learning innovative practices in what
can become routine ministry.”

I had two TFE pastors during the
spring 2017 semester. One of them,
Carvil Richards, speaking of his expe-
rience as my mentee, reflected upon
the belief that some hold. “There is
a distance between academics and
the church in terms of the execution
of ministry and strategy, and that the
church is behind in principle and prac-
tice when compared to the academy.
However, I find it different in my TFE
setting.”

Conclusion
Serving as a pastoral professor is
not for everyone; not even for every-
one who teaches in the Department
of Christian Ministry. What becomes
more important is for the professor—
regardless of his or her department—
to maintain a heart for congregational
ministry and portray the credibility
and authenticity that elicit the trust
of those who seek our mentorship as
they prepare for a lifetime of minis-
try. And in the long run, both they and
their congregations will experience
the blessings that academia wishes
through our teaching and mentoring.

"I see my church
as a living lab for
seminarians."

Endnotes
2  She now is the record holder for most tennis Grand Slam singles tournaments won by a woman, with 23 titles, establishing that record
in January 2017, when she won the Australian Open.
84–89.
4  From an interview conducted by the author, dated 22 May 2017
5  From an interview conducted by the author, dated 12 May 2017
“...we bring healing, restoration, life and hope to those who are suffering.”

Deslynne Roberts is currently pursuing her Master of Social Work and Master of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. She hopes to serve children, young people, and families as a Christian clinical social worker or youth ministry professional.

Michelet William, (MSA, MDiv) is currently pursuing his PhD in Mission and Ministry. He has 20 years of experience working with ADRA, World Vision and Plan International, and is the founder of Team in Action to Save Kids, a non-profit helping children in Haiti and Mali. He is committed to preaching, teaching, and social advocacy.
Experience the Best of Both Worlds in Theology and Social Work

By Deslynne Roberts and Michelet William

The Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary has recognized the value and importance of integrating teaching and learning practice and principles of theology and social work in three dual degree programs. The Department of Social Work, in collaboration with the Master of Divinity program and the Department of Discipleship & Religious Education, has produced a unique pedagogical approach to your theological studies at the seminary that is relevant for ministry today.

The integration of these two distinct, yet relatable disciplines allows for greater scope for aspiring pastors and ministry professionals to provide a Christ-centered, relationship-based ministry to their congregations. With a combination of academic knowledge and research through the lens of Christian service, this pedagogical approach creates an intersection between theology and social work that increases classroom discussion about theoretical approaches to family systems, family dynamics, lifespan development, social justice and sociocultural context for all students. Some of the topics discussed include social issues such as divorce, LGBT, race and social justice, and abuse. The benefits of exploring these topics create more opportunity for deeper theological discussions, innovative ideas for the development of programs, and outreach to the wider community.

Invariably, this pedagogical approach to theological education lends a richer holistic ministry perspective to most stand-alone ministry degrees offered, which is why it has become a popular choice for many seminary students. It has become an asset to the skill set of many pastors within the North American Division, and, in some respects, this becomes an added bonus for conferences looking to hire pastors to preach the Gospel.

Intersection Between Social Work and Theology

In some respects, social work and theology fit like a hand in a glove! There are several reasons for the use of this phrase.
First, social work practice and principles are based on service. As a profession, it seeks to serve the vulnerable and less advantaged members of society, as well as equipping individuals and community with the resources they need to thrive and flourish in society. This mirrors many of the key values of Christian service that seeks to reach the unreachable, to respond to the needs of the wider society.

Another benefit of intersection is that pastors become equipped with counseling skills, having been exposed to therapeutic modalities geared to empower individuals and assist with behavior modification strategies. A key aspect of social work practice teaches theology students to see the person in the context of their environment, while recognizing the influence of external stressors on the individual and the family. This exposes one to an understanding of systems theory and the strength–based perspective often used more in direct client–based work with individuals and families.

The future of Christian ministry is complex, therefore, pastors and ministry professionals need to be better equipped to respond holistically and spiritually to the growing, complex congregational needs within their immediate church community. In addition, the way the church intersects with society presents even greater opportunities to harness ways to use community resources for targeted programs in urban areas, and other innovative community–focused approaches to ministry.

**Biblical Perspective (Old and New Testament)**

We can see examples throughout the Bible that remind us about service to others. The salient truth that stands out is the compassionate love of God. He cares for people and provides for their needs. Eden was the perfect environment God created in order for men to thrive physically, mentally and spiritually (Genesis 1–2). After the Fall, God revealed His plan to redeem man eternally in His appointed time (Genesis 3:15). But, ever since, He has been active in providing food, shelter, protection, healing, comfort and guidance to His children in a fallen world where nature has become hostile to them. The study of God (theology) is intricately linked to the study of His compassionate work among men (social work).

In both the Old and New Testament, Scripture highlights God’s two greatest commandments, which go hand in hand: to love God and to love our neighbors (Mark 12:31–32; Leviticus 19:18), thus tying together theology and social work with the glue of love.

In addition, in the Old Testament God gave special instructions to the Israelites regarding orphans, widows, the elderly and strangers. Isaiah 58 shows the irrelevance of theology without social work. Israel apparently was seeking God daily, was delighted in knowing His ways and in approaching Him (verse 2), which sounds like theology to me. Yet, the Lord was displeased with them because there was a hole in their theology. They were transgressing God’s commandments, especially those related to the treatment of the poor and the foreigner. God’s recommendation in verse 7 was to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to share your bread with the hungry, to bring into your house the poor who are cast out, and to cover the naked. In verse 8, the Lord gives a wonderful promise to those who care for the less advantaged: “Then your light shall break forth like the morning.” “Light” here could figuratively mean the sum of knowledge one has about God (2 Corinthians 4:6). Accordingly, a great theologian/scholar may be assumed to possess a greater light than an ordinary man. However, such a light may be veiled (therefore useless) by the thick clouds of social injustice. It will “break forth like morning” when we bring healing, restoration, life and hope to those who are suffering.

The message in the New Testament is the same: good works indicate the presence and brightness of light. Jesus gave this order to His disciples, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). James adds, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27 NKJV). In other words, social work reveals the authenticity of our theology. According to Richard Stearns, president of World Vision International, “Being a Christian, or a follower of Jesus Christ, requires much more than just a personal and transforming relationship with God. It is also entails a public and transforming relationship with the world.” (Richard Stearns, “The Hole in the Gospel,” page 2)

**The Dual Degree Programs in Theory and Practice**

Currently, graduating students who have obtained a dual MSW/Master of Youth and Young Adult Ministry with Family Life emphasis, have integrated the knowledge gained into ministry roles and are in a good position to secure positions as chaplains, youth pastors, Christian social workers, campus ministry and family intervention workers. The range of careers provides greater scope to combine both disciplines for career opportunities. We currently have three dual degree programs in collaboration with the Department of Social Work. These are:

- Master of Social Work/Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Master of Social Work/Divinity
- Master of Social Work/Religious Education with an emphasis in Family Life
SEMINARY STUDENT FORUM 2017–18
“The Faith-Effect: Faithful to God. Faithful to the Call. Faithful to Each Other.”

Co-Presidents
Coordinate the activities of the Seminary Student Forum (SSF) and represent students’ interests to the Seminary and school administration

KAROL MOSEBAY

Co-Secretaries
Coordinate with the co-presidents in team administration and archive all information vital to the organization

ADERLINE BREDY

Co-Academic Coordinators
Coordinate convocations, publications, programs, and activities of an academic nature, in accordance with the objectives of the SSF team

FABIAN TAFFE

Communication Coordinator
Coordinate between SSF and other student organizations and disseminate essential information regarding activities and programs

FEMI FABIYI

International Coordinator
Represent the special needs and sensitivities of the international community within the Seminary

ELMER GUZMAN

Co-Social Coordinators
Coordinate all social programs and activities, in accordance with the objectives of the SSF team

KEANE ADAMS

Spiritual Coordinator
Coordinate all religious convocations, programs and activities, in accordance with the objectives of the SSF team

JOSE N. BRIONES

Co-Treasurers
Disburses, accounts for, and informs necessary groups regarding SSF funds and takes responsibility for the task of fund-raising

LEE EUN SUP

Co-Health Coordinators
Coordinate and initiate all health programs and activities, in accordance with the objectives of the SSF team

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Cover image, page 30,
pages 22–23
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“True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”

E. G. White
(Education, p13)
Matthew W. Gamble, DMin, grew up in a nominal Catholic home. By the time he hit his teenage years he was a professed atheist. In his early 20s he experienced an awakening which resulted in exploring Rastafarianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. Landing on the latter, he has degrees in Theology, a Master of Divinity, and a Doctor of Ministry.

An internationally renowned speaker, he has taught on six continents to countless thousands of people. An active seeker, he remains open to learning through various experiences such as attending and facilitating retreats.

Pastor Gamble presently serves as the Lead Pastor and Spiritual Life Coach at The Haven Adventist Church on the campus of St. Helena Hospital, where he is also the hospital’s Mission Strategist. He is passionate about the life and teachings of Jesus. Married to his college sweetheart, Susan, together they have two children, Julia Marie (5) and Noah William (2). Susan is a physician on staff at the Lifestyle Medicine Institute at St. Helena Hospital.