

DYNAMIC Steward

living • submitting • abiding • giving

July-September, 2012

Called to Serve

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**Go Light
Your World!**

DYNAMIC Steward



My all in response to God's all!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The articles in this publication have been revised slightly or updated to conform to the intended audience and nature of the *Dynamic Steward*.

inside ds

How do we go about lighting our world? Can we really help shape its future? Some seem to think so. “The future is not about logic and reason. It’s about imagination, hope and belief” (Dee Hock, founder of *VISA*, in *Birth of the Chaordic Age*, p.152). These words did not come from a clergyperson. They came from the founder of the *VISA* card. Of course, he isn’t calling for us to be illogical but he does suggest that there is something more to being successful than simply having right answers. Is it possible that “hope, imagination and belief” is a combination we take too much for granted? As a people entrusted with sharing “the blessed hope” (Titus 2:13) how might we go about lighting our world? Recapturing “imagination, hope and belief” is a fruit of spiritual leadership. But how does this come about?



Larry R. Evans
Associate Director,
GC Stewardship Ministries

Robert K. Greenleaf in his classic essay on “servant leadership” suggests that before a great dream can be realized something else happens. He directs his readers to the oft quoted line of St. Francis: “Lord, grant that I may not seek so much to be understood as to understand.” Closed doors often open to a listening ear. Hearts respond to the touch of someone who understands. This is a hallmark of a servant-leader. It is also the mark of biblical stewardship. Stewardship is all about servant-leadership and as such does not begin by doing. It begins by listening to others, but especially to the Servant-Shepherd. Listening and becoming have everything to do with serving. If we don’t listen before trying to serve, our service may be like a “resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:2).

We have tried to model this approach in each issue of the *Dynamic Steward* by including an interview with a person leading out in a distinctive ministry. An interview provides each of us a chance to listen. This issue is no exception. Many have heard of **Dr. Ben Carson** but during the interview we were struck by the spiritual wisdom of this soft-spoken leader. Not all the gems of wisdom for this edition are, however, found in that interview. Other articles explore the theme of service further. **Erika Puni** issues a challenge to view service as an extension of God's own ministry. **Gaspar and May-Ellen Colon** will lead you to those who work in the “trenches” where service meets the real lives of men and women who have given up on hope. **Ivan Warden**, who is no stranger to inner-city ministries, will inspire you with the call to service. **Bob Kyte** introduces the concept of stewardship as seen in the service of an institution. It is gratifying to hear the invitation to serve from a young adult. **Amanda King**, draws some insightful parallels between learning to serve and learning a second language. **Daisy Orion** closes this issue about “service” with the reminder that good stewards are also good servants. Through the lens of each writer, we are drawn to a picture of stewardship as seen through the prism of service. Indeed, both stewardship and service are more than doing. Both begin and continue to be about becoming. By serving we become the change we hope to see in the world. With the heart, mind and hands of a servant, we can become the spark that God can fan to bring the bright light of His love to our corner of the world!

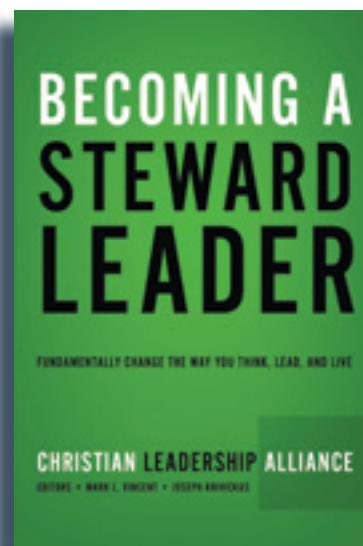
Larry R. Evans
Editor

resources

Money, stewardship, leadership: How do they fit together? This work explores what it means to go beyond prevailing paradigms on money and possessions to embrace a biblical view of stewardship. This book will fundamentally change the way you think, lead, and live. It will help leaders equip others to be rich towards God by living as biblical stewards.

The experienced thought leaders who contributed to this book reflect on their life's work in stewardship thinking and application. They share insights, counsel, concerns, and aspirations for the emerging generation of Christian leaders. You will discover the biblical understanding of a steward; apply insights to become a steward leader; overcome the god-like power of money; embrace giving as an essential Christian discipline; and more. This book advocates resource development as transformative ministry in the life of the giver. You will want to examine your heart motives and encourage others in their journey to become biblical steward leaders.

Becoming A Steward Leader, by Mark L. Vincent & Joseph Krivickas (Eds). Available at www.christianleadershipalliancestore.org/cia/

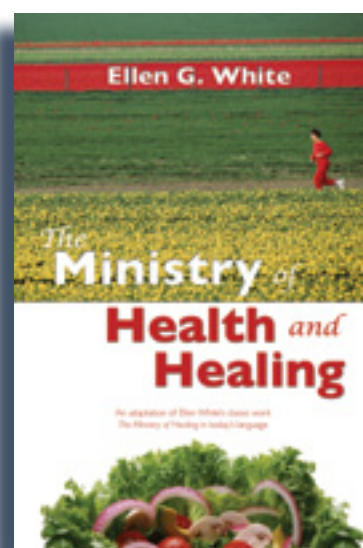


One of the best things you can do for yourself is to understand—and follow—the laws of health that govern body, mind, and spirit.

The Ministry of Healing, Ellen G. White's classic work on health and healing, has helped so many throughout the world find a better way and a simpler life filled with health, happiness, and service to others.

In the century that has passed since the book first appeared in 1905, the principles of health and service outlined in it have not changed. But the words we use and the way we express our thoughts have changed significantly. Thus, for the benefit of today's generation, the Ellen G. White Estate has produced the current volume, *The Ministry of Health and Healing*, an adaptation of *The Ministry of Healing*. The message of the original book has not been changed, but long sentences have been shortened, and outdated words have been replaced by today's vocabulary. The result is a fresh look at the principles that make up God's approach to the happy, healthy life He wants every person to enjoy. This book offers priceless insights into the many factors that contribute to a life filled with health and healing.

The Ministry of Health and Healing, by Ellen G. White (adapted). Available at www.adventistbookcenter.com/ or www.pacificpress.com/

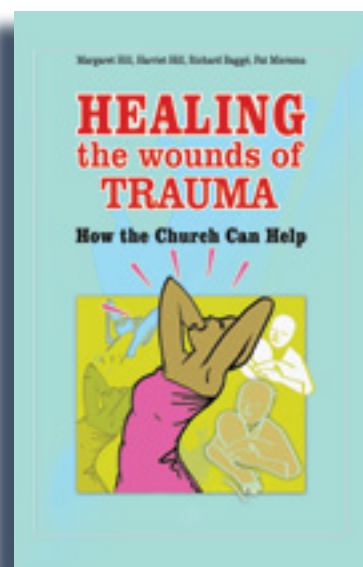


This book is addressed to people who have experienced some kind of trauma such as war, abuse, criminal activity or natural disasters. It particularly seeks to help church leaders who have members in their churches who have been traumatized. The chapters deal with different aspects of trauma, giving basic psychological teaching within a biblical framework.

The book was conceived and developed during a series of workshops for church leaders from countries with conflicts. It has been in use for more than a decade and has been translated into more than fifty languages.

The four authors met while working in Africa with faith-based, non-profit SIL (www.sil.org). Dr. Richard Baggé is a psychiatrist and Pat Miersma a professional counselor. Margaret Hill is a Scripture Use consultant. Dr. Harriet Hill is now the program director for the Trauma Healing Institute at American Bible Society. The Trauma Healing Institute uses the approach in this book to equip churches and organizations worldwide to reach hurting people with God's healing Word.

Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help, by Hill, Hill, Baggé & Miersma. Available at www.TraumaHealingInstitute.org. Learn about their program helping women in East Africa at CongoSister.org



The content or opinions expressed, implied or included in or with these resources are solely those of the authors and not those of the publishers of the Dynamic Steward. The publishers do however, advocate these resources on the basis of their rich contributions to the area of stewardship ministry, and assume that readers will apply their own critical evaluations as they make use of them.

Service is Heart-Commitment



Erika F. Puni
Director,
GC Stewardship Ministries

I had just returned from Reykjavik, Iceland, after attending the Trans-European Division stewardship advisory. I had chosen to fly with Icelandair, the Icelandic airline, on this trip. A few days later, I received an email message from the airline inviting my participation in their service-survey. The purpose of the survey is to discover ways of improving both the quality of service and the products offered to their passengers, in order to maintain and increase the loyalty of passengers to their airline. Airlines like this recognize that they exist to offer quality service and vie to better what other airlines may offer for the routes that they service. Indeed, the profitability of the company is dependent to a large extent upon their ability to offer the best service and products in their particular market niche. Service is the difference between a successful and profitable airline and a bankrupt, failed company.

Service and Quality

But what does service have to do with Christian stewardship? Everything! Both Christian stewardship and service begin with a theological understanding of Creation. True service is an awareness that I, as a created human being, was made after the “image” of the Creator God (Genesis 1:27) and that God makes everything beautiful (Psalms 139: 13,14). Service is an innate response to the invitation by God to extend His rule, creativity, and quality of workmanship to everything we are and do in this world (Genesis 1:28). As Christian stewards, God expects us to demonstrate and express this by the way we live. In doing so we will reflect in our daily lives His creatorship and His standard of being. The awareness of the brevity of life and the certainty of death brought the wise man in the Wisdom literature to this conclusion: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). The ultimate standard and goal for living is to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). In the corporate church, service may also mean our ability to represent God accurately by delivering top ministry products to the world in which we live.

Service and Witness

As in the instance of Icelandair, service is a call to stakeholders (members and employees) in the company to be committed to the mission of the organization. As Seventh-day Adventists, our mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ in this world, and to help people experience Him as their Savior and Lord. This call to be partners with God in mission includes living as faithful followers of Jesus in the home, the market place and the community. Jesus sums up this call with the following challenge to His disciples: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Witness is a person, and not a program.

Service and Worship

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) Jesus called His disciples and the multitude to worship the Creator God by saying, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24). While the illustration used here was financial wealth (actual money), Jesus was in fact calling His followers to a higher plane of living—it’s called worship. It is the kind of worship that focuses on the Giver, and not the gifts; a worship that dwells on eternal values and not on temporal benefits. The kind of worship advocated by Jesus is God-centered, and not works-oriented. This is the worship and service that is acceptable to God.

In Revelation 14:7 the first of three angels delivers an urgent cry for the times in which we live, answering any of our questions to do with the elements of worship, service and stewardship: “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

From the Director's Desk...

The number of attendees at the Sabbath worship service of the recent stewardship congress hosted by the Zimbabwe Union swelled to about 2000. This appreciation of the stewardship training event by local church members and by the 380 officially registered lay people, local pastors, personnel and officers from the union and the local conferences in Zimbabwe, was encouraging. The theme was Investing for Heaven, which included wholistic teaching on stewardship. Leaders and attendees alike took the appeal made by the visiting General Conference Stewardship Ministries Director, Erika Puni, and pledged their commitment to the rulership of Jesus Christ in every area of life, as well as to teaching these truths in their areas of influence. These strategies are aimed at raising levels of faithfulness to God and the church among the already thriving Adventist church membership in Zimbabwe.



In May 2012, Erika Puni, as well as Associate Director, Larry Evans, attended the Stewardship Summit held in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia hosted by the Northern-Asia Pacific Division. Leaders from the division and unions, as well as executive committee members and Stewardship Ministries departmental leaders attended, as did selected theologians from the region's Adventist universities and colleges, selected pastors and lay delegates. There were approximately 80 participants in all, including pastors from Mongolia where the Summit was being held. The aim was to provide specialized orientation in stewardship ministries. The emphasis was on a wholistic approach to stewardship and how biblical stewardship can serve the church's emphasis on world-wide revival and reformation, at both personal and corporate levels; and inform the practice of leadership, and encouraging members to be faithful to God by returning His tithe and giving freewill offerings. One of the outcomes of the



event was the voting of seven recommendations aimed at improving the strategies for stewardship ministries within the Northern-Asia Pacific Division.

interview

Let It Be About Somebody Else!



Benjamin S. Carson

Dr. Carson is known for making medical history in 1987 with the first successful separation of craniopagus twins, among many other magnificent achievements.

He is a full professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery, and pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, in Baltimore, Maryland, in the USA. In 1984, he was named Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Children's Center, a position he still holds today.

Dr. Carson has authored more than 100 neurosurgical publications, and has been awarded more than 60 honorary doctorate degrees and dozens of national merit citations, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George Bush in 2008.

Dr. Carson has written five best-selling books, including *Gifted Hands*, after which a film of his life has been named.

Larry Evans was privileged to speak with him about his views on success and service to others.

LRE: *In your book, Gifted Hands, you described some pretty difficult years you had as you were growing up. Yet, it seems these tough times developed a sense of resiliency instead of an attitude of giving up. Why?*

BSC: Well, I call it fire in the belly. As I read about people's accomplishments, it became very clear to me that you actually get to make a choice as to what your lifestyle is. And it's based on the amount of time and energy you're willing to put into the pursuit of your goal. Once I knew that, it was going to be pretty hard to stop me because I had the drive. I recognized that I was actually in more control of my future than anybody else. I also saw in my mother an example of someone willing to work hard. She felt that you could always influence what was happening in your life, and that you didn't have to be a victim. Seeing that in her over a long period of time had a profound influence on both my brother and me.

LRE: *You have acknowledged being very angry at a stage in your life. How would you encourage youth today who are angry about their circumstances?*

BSC: I would tell them this: "Let it be about somebody else." I realized that my anger came because I always thought it was about me—something done to me or taken from me. God gave me wisdom to see through that and when I did, I no longer allowed myself to be a puppet with many masters. It was no longer about me.

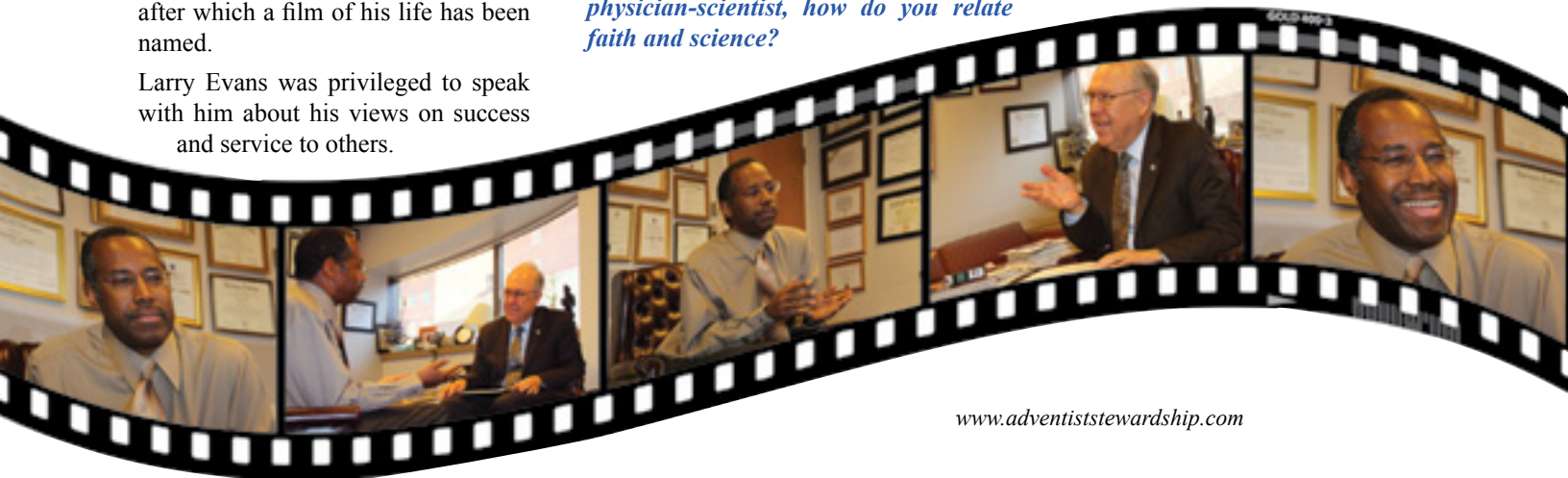
LRE: *You have received national and international recognition. Is there a danger in being so well known?*

BSC: There can be. It's easy to begin to believe that you're quite great. In my case, however, I've had so many incredible outcomes where I know that it just couldn't have been me. It's something I can't do. But I know Who can! Allowing yourself to be used by God opens up an enormous number of opportunities for you as well as for those being influenced by you. For people of achievement there's the natural tendency toward self-aggrandizement. Once you go down that path, then your usefulness to others is diminished.

LRE: *Are you saying that the amount of service can be limited by these personal detours?*

BSC: Exactly. And if we get in the way, we can block the channel from which blessings flow into our own lives and from us into the lives of others. Have there been times when I've struggled with it myself? Absolutely. And then I have to check myself. And I check myself on a daily basis and say, "Wait a minute. Is this about you, or is it about God?" And a lot of times that changes my course.

LRE: *Many scientists, struggle with the notion of faith and God. As a Christian physician-scientist, how do you relate faith and science?*



BSC: I want people to recognize that there are a lot of different ways to interpret data. The blatant statement that anyone who believes that God created us cannot be scientific really has no basis in fact. How do you look at the ability of the species to change within itself? Some say this is clear-cut evidence of evolution, and I would say it's clear-cut evidence of a Creator who gave His creatures the ability to adapt to the environment. Otherwise He'd have to start over every few weeks! It's not a problem, it's a sign of intelligence. Therefore, it depends on where you want to place your faith. I choose to place my faith in God as Creator. Some choose to place their faith in science, when sometimes that science has only progressed as far as the level of speculation and conjecture.

LRE: *So many of your accomplishments have come from rather unique perspectives about life and service. How would you describe success?*

BSC: I would describe it as taking the talents that God has given you, developing them, multiplying them, and using them to uplift others.

LRE: *Many seem to have talents but circumstances of life seem to hinder their development and therefore their influence.*

BSC: Absolutely. And one of the things that had a profound effect on me as a youngster was the story of Joseph in the Bible. Here was a young man, who had a fairly big ego, admittedly, but he ended up being sold into slavery by his own brothers. And he didn't allow that to make him bitter or to become a victim. He just said, "If I'm going to be a slave, I'll be the best slave there is!" And he ends up as the overseer of Potiphar's household, captain of the Egyptian guard, a very responsible position. And then Potiphar's wife says, "Wow, this is a good-looking guy. I'm going to deal with him!" But he has values. And because of his values and principles, he ends up in jail. He doesn't say, "Wait a minute. Here I am doing all the right stuff, and I end up in jail. Poor me. I'm a victim. This is not fair." No, he says, "If I'm going to be a prisoner, I'll be the best prisoner there is." And he ends up with a responsible position in the prison, interprets dreams, and ends up as the governor of the most powerful nation in the world. What an amazing story! What that said to me is this: "It really doesn't matter where you are or what your circumstances are, you need to make the best of that situation. And eventually you will benefit from that situation." You know, as the Bible says, "All things work together for the good for those who love God and are called for His purposes." I believe that.

LRE: *Where does God fit into your idea of service for others? Christians aren't the only ones who have talents. Atheists also have talents and do good. What makes your service different from theirs?*

BSC: Well, I'm not sure that in all cases the outcome is necessarily different. However, I will say that there have been numerous very difficult or virtually impossible situations when I have called upon God and He has responded in a way that would perhaps be difficult for an atheist to understand. I remember the case of a young girl who essentially died on the operating room table. Her brain herniated out, and she was fixed and dilated. Three days later the PICU staff (pediatric intensive care unit) said, "We need to turn off the ventilator. We need this bed." And I said, "Give it one more day." And I just prayed. I said, "Lord, You've got to understand. This is a child of an atheist woman and this child is the only thing in her life. If you could just somehow bring this child back, it could have a profound effect." The next morning, when we went to turn off the respirator, she moved her little finger. And that was the beginning of her recovery. She

eventually walked out of the hospital. I saw that mother years later. She said, "Do you remember me?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "Remember I was an atheist?" "I remember," I said. She continued, "I'm no longer an atheist. I'm a Christian, and I'm a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church."

LRE: *If you were to be remembered for one thing for your life, what would it be?*

BSC: I would hope that it would be that I was someone who got people to understand that the person who has most to do with what happens to them is them. They get to make choices. They don't have to be victims. Don't blame others. As my mother used to always say, "You have yourself to blame." She always quoted that poem when we came up with an excuse.

LRE: *How do you see stewardship impacting the life of a Christian?*

BSC: Well, I think it boils down to commitment. What are you committed to? And I would like to think that I'm committed to God. That is the primary thing in my life. As it says in Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." And I've found that exactly to be the case. You don't have to look for this prize, or this position, or whatever. All you have to do is make sure that your relationship with God is correct. Recognize that He loves you. I mean, look at what He was willing to do for us! So, needless to say, any good thing that He can do in your life, if you're committed to Him, He's going to do it.

LRE: *From what I can tell your influence and ministry are not confined to the surgical suite.*

BSC: Definitely not!



Where Will Servanthood Take You?



May-Ellen Colon (right)
Assistant Director, GC Sabbath School & Personal Ministries Dept., Director, Adventist Community Services Intl.

Gaspar Colon (left)
Professor of Religion, Washington Adventist University, Chair, Dept. of Christian Ministry, Director, Center for Metropolitan Ministry.

During their 40 years of marriage, Drs. Gaspar and May-Ellen Colon have served the Adventist Church in pastoral ministry, departmental leadership, and as missionaries in Africa and the former Soviet Union. They have two grown children.

A wise person has said, “Every Christian needs two conversions: One from the world to Christ, and another one back to the world with Christ.”¹¹ The twice-converted are to go into a broken, anxious, traumatized, and poverty-stricken world, recognizing that they have been sent as stewards and representatives of Jesus Himself (see John 17:18). As His stewards, we are sent into the world with the same words that Jesus breathed to His disciples, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you” (John 20:21, NIV). “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world” (Matt 28:20, KJV). In His conversation with Nicodemus in John 3, Jesus makes it clear that those who are born again will be led by the Wind (Spirit), which blows wherever

it (He) pleases (vs. 8). Where will He take you? Andrew and Minnie McNeil’s story reveals where He took them and their church:

In the winter of 1983, Elder W. W. Fordham, Pastor of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Coatesville, Pennsylvania, USA, challenged his church by asking why the doors were locked throughout the week except Wednesday nights and Sabbaths. He stated that the church is the best real estate in any community and should be open throughout the week to serve their community. Since, at this point, no one in the church knew what effectively serving their community should look like, they realized that they would have to go to the community and ask them.

After developing a prayer team to guide the church according to God’s will, a church assessment was completed. The intent was to know the interests and spiritual gifts of church members. Secondly, church members went in teams to ask the community about their needs, interests, and assets. Finally, a small committee was formed to assess the services of community providers. Members of this committee asked providers what service they provided and what were the unmet needs. The latter inquiry provided the church’s “niche” list.

The most valuable information came from city officials, local police officers, and the County Office of Housing and Community Development. Church members were surprised to learn that their city needed shelter for homeless men, women, and families. This illustrates the need to ask the community what their needs are—and not to try to guess. The homeless were invisible in their city; and no one knew that this was a problem in the county. After all, it ranked as the 26th most affluent county in North America.

To the credit of Coatesville Church leadership, within three weeks a 25-bed capacity shelter opened for men, women, children, and displaced youth in the Sabbath School rooms and in an open area where they usually held prayer meeting. Cots were set up in the open meeting area and families were placed in Sabbath School rooms. The church provided the residents with basic necessities and an address and telephone number. They changed the church’s usual greeting on the



Coatesville Church - location of first shelter.

answering machine so that people calling in wouldn't know it was a shelter: "Hello, we're not available. Please leave a message." People had no idea that they had just called a church. Residents would receive messages, for example, "Jim, you have a job interview on Tuesday."

Shelter volunteers observed a phenomenal trend. Men, especially, moved toward self-sufficiency with just their basic needs being met. This was an unexpected scenario. **Eliminating the concern about where they would sleep or find food, they could then focus on employment, benefits they may have been entitled to, and family.** Some said they were afforded time to simply "think," something that they were not able to do before. They found themselves hopeful for a brighter future.

The leaders of the shelter, Minnie McNeil and her team, began to wonder and dream about what would happen if they provided additional services with intentionality. They were soon to find out.

In September 1988 the Allegheny East Conference of Seventh-day Adventists bought a hospital building in Coatesville that had been dormant for 13 years. The intention was to support the Coatesville church in providing a variety of services that would respond to the needs of persons living in poverty in Coatesville and its surrounding communities. The purchased hospital was renamed the W. C. Atkinson Memorial Community Services and Resource Center—in honor of Dr. Whittier C. Atkinson, an African-American physician who built the first portion of the hospital in 1932.

In January of 1992, having sheltered men, women, families, and occasionally "run-away" or "throw-away" youth in the church for six years, the shelter relocated to the newly renovated former hospital where a 22-bed shelter was developed for homeless men. Nearly 200 men are sheltered here annually. Meanwhile, a shelter for single women and women with children was established in the city by another organization, negating the need to provide shelter for women and children.

The renovated hospital provided significant space for the development of additional services which the local church leadership discovered were needed. This would fulfill their goal of not only caring for God's people as good stewards, but also restoring 'broken' people to a point where they are able to be good stewards themselves, in turn.² Therefore, in addition to the men's shelter, two transitional houses adjacent to the Atkinson Center were procured and renovated. Men that are moving toward self-sufficiency, yet need additional support are invited to transfer from the shelter to the transitional homes. The men work, pay rent, and volunteer in the community. Three dilapidated townhouses a block away were rebuilt—



W.C. Atkinson Memorial Community Services and Resource Center

Andrew and Minnie McNeil



becoming beautiful, permanent housing for disabled men who work or are on permanent disability grants. Also, 18 apartments provided in the Atkinson Center are rented by persons with low to moderate income.

Through the years, on-going community assessment has generated a plethora of community programs and services at Atkinson to empower people in their personal lives, including diabetic support groups, grandparent support groups, computer literacy classes, English as a Second Language classes, piano and organ lessons with an annual recital, youth summer camp, community gardening, creative arts and photography, after-school homework assistance, weekly health seminars, and many more.

The influence at Atkinson has provided impetus for community-wide revitalization—not only in the Coatesville environment but in the lives of the people they have served. For example, one of the first permanent housing residents, who had previously been in the shelter for three years, found Jesus at the Atkinson and was baptized. He became the first facility manager, and was reunited with his wife after 15 years of separation. His wife has been taking Bible studies from the Coatesville church pastor (the vice president of Atkinson). They are preparing for their Heavenly Home.³

The Holy Spirit led the small Coatesville church to servanthood that was beyond their wildest dreams. Where will your Spirit-guided servanthood take you?

1. This statement has often been attributed to John Stott. It is quoted in several publications, such as in *Global Youth Ministry: Reaching Adolescents Around the World* by Terry Linhart, David Livermore, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011, p. 111. However, it is difficult to find this quote in any work of John Stott, even though various authors attribute it to him.

2. "Men and women must be awakened to the duty of self-mastery." *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 130.

3. For more information regarding this story, go to: <http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/site/1/icm/Community-ServicesCurriculum/CS%20CASE%20STUDY%20-%20ATKINSON%20CENTER%20HISTORY.pdf>

Vignettes from the Vineyard



Ivan L. Warden
Associate Director,
E.G. White Estate

Dr. Warden is a theologian and counselor. His dynamic career dedicated to God's church and its educational institutions has also found him well published and a well-known producer and host for both radio and television, including the Hope Channel. He has earned rewards and citations for his contributions in various areas. He is married to Jean Warden and they have two grown daughters.

The personhood of Jesus Christ reveals the very essence of stewardship and to obtain a clear, concise understanding of the two terms, one must look to the teachings of Jesus Christ. In the center of His teaching is a value placed on the dignity of humankind. This concept runs throughout the Bible. Note Leviticus 25; a theology of ecology and service is there. It shows proper use of the land, the proper conduct of relationships, proper banking procedures, and the list goes on. This is applied 'stewardship and service' theology. From Christ's example of stewardship and service, we see that the use of talents, gifts, and resources, if correctly understood, will lead to serving others. In Deuteronomy 15; 23:15, 16, the concept of human dignity continues. In the New Testament it is again established and undergirded by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The lost sheep, the lost coin, and

the certain man that had two sons; in these parables of Luke 15, the focus in each vignette is the value inherent in each individual who was 'once lost but now is found.' Every effort is made to find the missing one. The responsibility to find and restore was upon the shepherd, the woman, and the father respectively. All of humankind is represented at one time or another in this trilogy.

For example, the shepherd was personally responsible for the stewardship and service of the sheep. If a sheep was lost, the shepherd must at least bring home the fleece to show how it had died. The shepherds were experts at tracking and could follow the straying sheep's footprints for miles over the hills. Talk about forensics—, the shepherd was sharp.

The woman of the next story was also relentless in her search. With limited light she searched and searched until the coin was found and restored. The father's daily routine in the third story, included waiting and looking out for his son. Finally on that happy day he saw him, and restored him.

This searching for 'the lost' did not go over well with the strict Jews. The Pharisees termed people who did not keep the law the "People of the Land." One would imagine that these religious leaders did not sing the song about, "there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents," but that they rather enjoyed the thought of that one sinner being obliterated from the book of life. In many ways we do not use or apply our stewardship to servicing those living and dying in urban villages. Various structures and the lack of infrastructure keep people in poverty, born and dying in inhuman conditions, with no help. The theology of ecology, the theology of stewardship and service, if correctly understood and applied, would make major differences in our urban communities. Once again the applied theology of the stewardship of service is seen in the fact that every kind act done to the least of them, i.e. the widows, the fatherless, those without family, the poor, the hungry and the thirsty, the prisoners, the pimps and prostitutes, in the name of Jesus, is received by Him as if it were done to Himself, for He identifies His interest with that of suffering humanity. He has entrusted to His church the grand work of ministering to Jesus by helping and blessing the needy and suffering (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 164).

In Matthew 20:1-16 Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard. In Palestine the grapes ripen in late September. The harvest time calls for many workers to gather the grapes before the rain comes.

The pay in Christ's day was a denarius for a day's work. Not much money for the lowest of the working class. These men were waiting like men in the parking lot of Home Depot. In Palestine the market place was the equivalent of the labor exchange. A man came there first thing in the morning, carrying his tools, and waited until someone came and hired him. These 'men in the market-place' were not gossiping idlers, they were waiting for work, and the fact that some of them waited until five o'clock showed how desperately they wanted work.

In the parable, the householder went to this labor-exchange early morning and reached an agreement with the workers that they would work for nine pence a day. Into the vineyard they went and started to work. Around 9 a.m. he went back to the site and hired more workers. He returned around 12 noon to hire more, back again around 3 p.m. He made one more trip close to 5 p.m. He found still more workers. "Why are you still here?" he asked them. They replied, "No one has hired us." So he told them go to the vineyard.

When quitting time arrived, the paymaster began to pay them the nine pence, which was agreed upon. The workers who had started earlier grumbled when they saw that those who had come later and worked less, received the same pay. It was

explained to them that they agreed to the wage, and furthermore it was the right of the owner of the vineyard to do with his money whatever pleased him. He had not cheated or robbed them.

The original lesson of this parable may be this: Those who come to the Kingdom early in life, or those who come late, all humankind—no matter when they come, are equally precious and valuable to God. Some people think that because they have been members in the church for a long time, they practically own the church and they can dictate how it is run and control its policies. These members resent new members. The truth is, however, that in the church, seniority does not necessarily mean that greater honor is due. In this parable there is warning to the Pharisees as well as to us in the church today. The Jews looked down upon the Gentiles. They felt that they were the chosen people, not the Gentiles. If the Gentiles were to be allowed into the church, they must come in as inferiors. In God's social economy, there is no such thing as favoritism among nations. There is no master race.

The **vignettes of comfort from God** are that no matter when a person enters the church, whether it be late or early in life, even up until the shadows are lengthening, they are precious to God.

The **vignettes of the compassion of God** are that He cannot bear to see these workers in the market place with no work, no honest way to feed and care for their families.

This parable states implicitly two great truths foundational to the fabric of human dignity for the working man: The right of every man to work, and the right of every person to a living wage for his work.

The **vignettes of the generosity of God** are that just as the men did not all do the same work, but they did receive the same pay, we ought to find two great lessons. Firstly, all service ranks the same with God. It is not the amount of service given but the amount of love in which it is given which matters. The second lesson is that all which God gives is given as grace. We cannot earn what God gives us. It is given out of the goodness of His heart. What God gives is not payment but a gift, not a reward, but grace.

Finally, we need to clarify in what spirit is the work done? "God loveth a cheerful giver," (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Crushed spirits and broken wings exist in this world because the stewardship of service is not realized by God's people. Unfulfilled lives are wasted stewardship and service. The applied theology of the stewardship of service will stand strong on these quotations:

"God's word sanctions no policy that will enrich one class by the oppression and suffering of another. In all our business transactions it teaches us to put ourselves in the place of those with whom we are dealing, to look not only on our own things, but also on the things of others. He who would take advantage of another's misfortunes in order to benefit himself, or who seeks to profit himself through another's weakness or incompetence, is a transgressor both of the principles and of the precepts of the word of God" (*Ministry of Healing*, 187).

"In the kingdoms of the world, position meant self-aggrandizement. The people were supposed to exist for the benefit of the ruling classes. Influence, wealth, education, were so many means of gaining control of the masses for the use of the leaders. The higher classes were to think, decide, enjoy, and rule; the lower were to obey and serve. Religion, like all things else, was a matter of authority. The people were expected to believe and practice as their superiors directed. The right of man as man, to think and act for himself, was wholly unrecognized" (*The Desire of Ages*, 550).

These surely depict the true application of the principles of the stewardship of service. Amen!



comittment

Serving and Saving



Robert E. Kyte
President, ARM
(Adventist Risk Management)

Bob Kyte leads the risk management and insurance for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, handling the full range of risks for a global church. Kyte is an attorney with more than 20 years of legal experience; he previously served as general counsel for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

On April 27, 2011 an F5 category tornado tore through Alabama's Goshen Valley and completely destroyed the Piedmont Seventh-day Adventist church. The slab upon which the church stood was wiped clean. Even a heavy stone, erected as a memorial to noted charter member Desmond Doss, was transported by the storm to a nearby farmer's field. What a devastating day for the Piedmont church family!

In many ways the Piedmont church was blessed. There was no one on the property at the time of the tornado. No one was hurt. As Pastor Rick Blythe said, "Our church structure is gone but our church is alive and well."

The Piedmont church family was especially invested in their church. Members who are contractors, plumbers, and electricians built the church from the ground up. The construction was finished only four years before the tornado occurred and

through the grace of God they had just paid off their mortgage. The note burning ceremony took place the weekend after the building was destroyed.

In the midst of this setback the ministry of stewardship was clearly evident. These church members are wonderful examples of faithful stewards in the way they used their resources to construct their sanctuary, to pay off their mortgage and in the way safeguards were put in place to replace the building should a disaster like this tornado occur.

Pastor Blythe and the conference leadership were in contact with Adventist Risk Management (ARM) almost immediately after the tornado struck, sharing vital information. This would allow for a faster, more efficient recovery.

Within a week of the destructive event, ARM claims personnel were on site helping the local congregation chart their course to rebuild their church.

The ministry of ARM is based on three guiding principles: loss prevention, loss control and loss financing. Following these three guiding principles ARM and our church clients can collaborate to minimize the impact of unfortunate events, disasters and human error.

So what do these principles mean when it comes to stewardship?

For Adventist Risk Management, loss prevention is one of its ministries and usually takes the form of risk education. We have a team dedicated to educating churches, schools and denominational institutions about risks inherent in their ministry and how they can best avoid or minimize those risks. Most people take good care of their personal belongings. As good stewards shouldn't we take even better care of the resources God has entrusted to the community of faith?

Loss Prevention

Loss prevention also means faithful maintenance of property. In fact, faithful maintenance goes hand in hand with beautification. Keeping property clean and properly maintained will help save tens of thousands of dollars that can be used for ministry. The simple routine of walking around a property collecting trash can raise one's alertness to potential hazards that could turn into expensive liabilities.

Torn carpets, damaged floors and broken windows scream out "We don't care!" They could lead to liabilities such as hazardous slips and worse, provide easy access to property and invite vandalism and other such criminal behavior.

Regular maintenance and upkeep will not only keep the property looking its best but will help prevent costly repairs and liabilities.

The Risk Management Education team prepares printed resources, videos and travels around the world speaking at events and visiting church ministries to raise awareness about important issues—everything from simple maintenance, to how to better protect children from harm and abuse. Our risk management specialists also conduct inspections and teach ministry leaders how to do this themselves. Above all the ARM education team is ready to provide simple, practical solutions for the church.

Loss Control

Loss control is a subtler concept but is part of property stewardship. When a loss occurs, there are often many things we can do to minimize the impact of that loss. For example, if a building is located in an area that regularly experiences

hurricanes or other windstorms it is a good idea to keep extra tarps available should a bad storm come through and damage the roof. Having a tarp readily available (when many others are trying to buy them from the store) means that the roof can be covered immediately and avoid additional water damage, which can be quite costly.

Perhaps one of the most important ways to minimize loss is by reporting it immediately to ARM. It should be reported to the local insurance carrier if the loss is outside of a territory served by ARM. Waiting several days or even weeks before reporting losses can cost the local church, ARM, and even the Seventh-day Adventist Church more. Every day that an insured institution waits to report a claim the potential for greater loss increases and this can impact mission.

There is no better stewardship practice or easier way to control loss than to make timely insurance claims.

Risk Financing

Risk financing can take several forms; however, most know it as what is most commonly referred to as insurance. Sometimes a loss cannot be prevented. In the case of the Piedmont church, no amount of maintenance or loss control would have helped prevent the damage caused by the deadly tornado. They were blessed by the foresight of church leaders to partner with Adventist Risk Management to provide them with insurance. This helped them rebuild not just the building, but also their ministry. Their church was destroyed in April and they were meeting in their new building only four months later!

A commitment to safety and security

The idea of risk financing in the church is not a recent one. In 1935 a layman by the name of William Benjamin presented the General Conference with his idea for creating a fund that would be there to minimize the impact of any accidents or losses. In 1936 the General Conference set up the International Insurance Company of Takoma Park Maryland with US \$25,000. Over the years the church has created various organizations to serve their growing needs in a changing global marketplace. Today a family of companies is operated by Adventist Risk Management, Inc. to serve the church's risk management needs around the world.

The practice of stewardship in the form of risk management is not just the mission of ARM and its employees; the opportunity to participate in risk management is one that belongs to all of God's people. God asks all of us to use wisdom, prudence and to take good care of the property and lives that He has entrusted to our care. Being a wise steward in the field where we are can mean simple things like watching for tripping hazards and keeping the sanctuary clean. If we take care of our home to ensure that the utilities are well maintained, think also of how the Lord's property should be cared for with even more diligence. When we fail to care for those things that belong to God there is inevitably a cost that must be paid.

Let us all do our part to take care of the gifts that God has given us. At Adventist Risk Management we are here to support the church and its members and to help restore things when something has been lost.

ARM has resources such as an electronic newsletter that highlights common risk issues and provides solutions on how to prevent losses. Guides are available on our website that show how to draw up a risk management plan for your organization or facility. All of these and other resources prepared by ARM are available to you! We are your partners so that together we can keep the church's mission going forward until the day we hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:23).

The ministry of Adventist Risk Management is a ministry of practical stewardship; our ministry is to protect *your* ministry!



...our
ministry is
to protect
your
ministry!

young adult

Love in Any Language...



Amanda King

Amanda King is a 21-year old Canadian who is currently completing a Bachelors degree in International Studies.

She enjoys reading and traveling and is waiting in anticipation for Christ's soon return.



Random thought...

... Are a life of service and a successful career mutually exclusive?

Anxiety. Pain. Brokenness. These are just some results of sin that we see every day. Everyone experiences things that were not in the original plan for our lives. At times like these, doubt easily fills our minds as we look at the world, but what is our role, our mission, and most importantly, our responsibility here?

When Christ was on Earth, He made it clear that He was here to serve (See Mark 10:42-45). If He is to be our Great Example, should service not also be our purpose here on this planet? Is it not our duty to ease for others the results of sin?

Like a Second Language...

I recently returned from a two-year stay in the beautiful country of Austria. I figured it would be a good idea to go and learn German there - a language I've always wanted to learn. After arriving, and as time went by, I found that the best way to learn German was to fully immerse myself in the language by speaking with others around me, reading and writing for practice. At first it was difficult. There's only so much you can express in the beginning, but as time went on, it became much easier. I even started thinking in German! When it was time to go home and resume speaking and thinking in English, it was difficult!

That's how it should be with us and service. We cannot forget that we were placed here on this earth to serve, to be Christ's hands and feet. **To love Him is to love others, and to love others is to serve.**

What does it mean to serve? Does it simply mean going to the soup kitchen every week, singing at nursing homes, or going on annual mission trips? Well, sure, but it goes a lot deeper than that. Service is one way in which God reaches others through us. Service could be as simple as telling someone that Jesus loves them!

As stewards, we are the managers of what Christ has given us, and our service to others is part of our duty. To serve should be such a natural part of us, that we don't even have to think about it. Being fully immersed and engaged in acts of service is the best way for that to happen. We serve others not just physically, but spiritually and mentally as well.

Like Jesus...

"Christ gave no stinted service," writes Ellen White, "He did not measure His work by hours. His time, His heart, His soul and strength, were given to labor for the benefit of humanity. Through weary days He toiled, and through long nights He bent in prayer for grace and endurance that He might do a larger work. With strong crying and tears He sent His petitions to heaven, that His human nature might be strengthened, that He might be braced to meet the wily foe in all his deceptive workings, and fortified to fulfill His missions of uplifting humanity. To His workers He says, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." John 13:15." (*Ministry of Healing*, p.500)

It seems rather difficult at times, this idea of serving others, especially when we're not sure how, but it's important to remember the very root of it all. Christ bids us "serve," and when Christ is at the centre of our lives and all we do, there is nothing sweeter than heeding His words. **Only out of love for our Saviour can we truly serve others as He would want us to.** And only then will we hear His loving words, "Well done, good and faithful servant! (Matt. 25:13).

Steward • Master • Servant

The Scriptures affirm that you and I belong to God. “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1) “The LORD by wisdom has founded the earth; by understanding has he established the heavens” (Proverbs 3:19).

We are His creatures, and He has given us the responsibility to be good stewards of all His blessings, in all their abundance, that we receive from day to day. Being a good steward is acknowledging that God is the Creator of the universe, and you and me, and acknowledging that it is a blessing to be entrusted with these resources. Heavy, indeed, is our responsibility!

Being a steward can include a wide range of job descriptions. You can be a housekeeper, a chamberlain, a cabin boy, a superintendent, or a manager. In short, being a steward is being a servant, with the Creator of the universe being the ultimate Master. By being a steward, we acknowledge that we have a master, thereby we are a servant; by being a servant, we acknowledge that we have been entrusted with resources and that we have to manage those resources effectively—which, in turn, means that we are a steward. **Thus, stewardship and service are an inseparable duo.**

In most cases, stewardship is equated with money: tithes, offerings, contributions, donations, debt-free lifestyles, and so on. However, the real meaning of stewardship is more than finances. It is the giving of ourselves and our consideration of others. It can be giving funds, time, talent, or strength. Can we be good stewards and good servants if we are willing to give ourselves? The Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy reveal that good stewards and good servants:

- *Acknowledge that God is the Creator of the universe and all we have comes from Him.* “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, an all who live in it” (Ps. 24:1).
- *Acknowledge that we are entrusted “with means not to be hoarded but to be used in benefiting others”* (Counsels on Stewardship, p. 15). Similarly, “There are many people who complain of God because the world is so full of want and suffering. But the LORD is a God of benevolence, and through His representatives to whom He has entrusted His goods, He would have all the needs of His creatures supplied” (*Review & Herald*, June 20, 1903/CS 162.1. *Emphasis supplied*).
- *Allow God to use us to distribute the resources which He has entrusted to us to assist those in need.* Those resources may be money, time, talents, strength or other abilities. We may not have the funds or the property, but we have talents and abilities, good health and strength, which could be utilized in serving God through different ministries.
- *Acknowledge that in anything we do, we need to “do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor. 10:31). Donating funds to further God’s mission is not sufficient if it is not coupled with an acknowledgment that these funds are from God, and that we’re helping to bring glory to Him and not to ourselves. It isn’t sufficient for us to volunteer our talents, our time to serve the church and the community without acknowledging that these are God given talents entrusted to us, and acknowledge further that He has given us the strength, time, and good health with which to serve. In *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 111, Ellen White asks this question, “Do all church members realize that all they have is given them to be used and improved to God’s glory?” We cannot claim any credit for what we do for others. We probably would receive accolades, plaques of appreciation or good words of thanks from others but the ultimate receiver of these should be the God in heaven who has temporarily given these gifts and this generosity to us.
- *Are faithful:* “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy LORD” (Matt. 25:21). By being faithful in smaller things, more blessings will abound.
- *Pray for wisdom.* There are priorities that need to be considered, and there may be needs of which we are not aware. By praying for wisdom, we are at the same time asking for God’s direction in the distribution of these resources.



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Daisy Orion is from the Philippines. She holds a business degree from the Philippine Union College (now Adventist University of the Philippines) and a Master’s degree in Healthcare Administration from Loma Linda University. She has served as the CFO of the Adventist hospital in Manila and the Far Eastern Division’s Adventist Health Services/Asia in Singapore, and as Global Mission’s Director for Planning at the GC.

FIND YOUR NEIGHBOUR

*If I wish to succeed
in leading a human being
towards a specific goal,
I must first find her where she is
and begin there—nowhere else.*

*The one that cannot do that
cheats himself
when he thinks he can help others.*

*To help somebody
it is true that I must understand
more than he does
but first of all I must understand
what he understands.*

*If I cannot do that
it is pointless
that I can do more and know more.*

*Yet if I wish to demonstrate
how much I know,
it depends on the fact
that I am conceited and proud
and actually wish
to be admired by the other person
rather than to help him.*

*All genuine helpfulness
begins with humility
towards the one I wish to help,
and therefore I must understand
that this thing about helping others
is not a will to dominate
but a will to serve.*

*If I cannot do that,
then neither can I
help anybody.*