Cocaine

In “Len Bias’s Final Game” (July 31) Eugene Durand asks if Adventists are safe from the threat of cocaine-induced death. The erroneous but widely accepted belief that cocaine is nonaddictive has contributed to the willingness of all age groups, Christian and non-Christian, to experiment with this drug.

The cocaine addicts I am presently working with in a substance abuse agency were unaffected by Len Bias’s death or other cocaine-related deaths. Their addiction has lulled them into a carefree state of mind, convincing them that they are safe and in control. Once people start with cocaine, most think of any possible way to get the drug and of the euphoric high they got with the first use. They often get into street crime to be able to continue their use.

As responsible church members, with our mission of prevention and health education, let us not sit apathetically while our vulnerable members consider their first cocaine experience. Let’s take a stand against cocaine and other drugs in our local congregation.

LAURIE SNYMAN
Battle Creek, Michigan

Too Frank?

“A Frank Look at Ellen White” (July 10) was just that, and probably too frank. Comparing Ellen White to your expert music teacher, or to a parent who disciplines but eventually turns you loose to your own devisings, is not uplifting the magnificent gift of prophecy for the remnant people.

DAVID MILLER
Marion, North Carolina

Some in the Seventh-day Adventist Church regard Ellen White as equal to or above the Bible. Others wish to separate her completely from SDA theology. Fritz Guy’s concise, articulate article reminds us that the truth lies in the middle. While never supplanting the supremacy of the Scriptures, we can rediscover the deep, spiritual value of Ellen White’s divinely inspired counsel.

GARY R. GRAY
Worcester, Massachusetts

To Own or Not to Own

It appears that the writer of “We Said Yes to a TV” (July 24) considered only two alternatives—isolation or TV purchase. Being in a similar situation I would like to suggest another alternative. First, learn everything possible about the effects of TV on preschool children. Second, find out what programs other parents allow their children to watch, and discuss any concerns they have about controlling TV or its effects on their children. Third, plan get-togethers when favorite TV programs aren’t on or volunteer to plan other activities for the children so the adults can visit.

Many parents are concerned about their children’s TV viewing but don’t know what to do about it. By sharing their concerns and offering helpful suggestions, they can remain “salt” in their neighborhood with or without a TV.

JEANETTE TELLER
Toronto, Ontario

People say that they control the programs that they watch on TV, but it is difficult to turn off an objectionable commercial. That is why we choose not to own a TV.

ANN DAVID
Fort Myers, Florida

Healthy Fish

Re “Holey Nets” (July 17). What is wrong with seeing to it that the fish are in healthy condition before they are assimilated? Most apostasies occur because people are permitted and urged to join the church when they aren’t properly instructed and grounded.

HILDA WYNN
Hendersonville, North Carolina

Breakthrough

“Breakthrough in the U.S.S.R.” (Aug. 7) not only reminds me of the commitment of our fellow believers in that country, but causes me to thank the Lord for the diplomatic gifts and the perseverance our General Conference leaders have shown as they pursue opportunities for nurturing our church in that part of the world.

DwIGHT E. LEHNOFF
Roseburg, Oregon

Unappealing

I find the new ADVENTIST REVIEW layout unappealing. What is more boring than a black-and-white photo of the author’s head? It is not important what the author looks like, but rather what he is saying. To enhance readership, these photos should be replaced with eye-catching photographs or illustrations that are related to the author’s topic.

MARY CHRISTENSEN, M.D.
Centerville, Iowa

Dead or Alive?

“Wanted: Dead, Not Alive” (July 17) would read better: “Wanted: Dead or Alive.” The Father wants us prodigals just as we are! God wanted Paul “alive” in his self-righteousness (Rom. 7:9).

LAURI ONJUKKA
Gold Hill, Oregon

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should carry the writer’s name, address, and telephone number. All will be edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author’s meaning will not be changed. Views expressed in the letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or of the denomination. Address letters for this column to Editor, ADVENTIST REVIEW, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.
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COMING NEXT WEEK:

■ “A Bit of Summer,” by Ellen Goodman. Reflections on “that most humane of the old religious injunctions”—a day of rest.
I can already hear someone saying, “What a dumb question! Of course we have personal fellowship at church! Don’t you see all the people standing around talking every Sabbath? Our church service can hardly get started because of all the people still in the lobby! What do you mean by asking such a ridiculous question?”

Oh, I’m just trying to sort things out, I’d reply. Just trying to understand the concept of biblical fellowship. That’s all. I didn’t mean to offend you or raise your ire.

Take last week, for instance. A friend of mine was being transferred by his company to another city because they felt he was the best person for the job. He didn’t want to go and had made it a matter of earnest prayer.

After three months of making arrangements to move, he was told, unexpectedly, that he didn’t have to move. It was one of the happiest answers to prayer he and his family had ever experienced. He could hardly wait until church to tell everyone how thankful he was to God!

But you know, he went home after church a little disappointed. He came with such a desire to tell his church family how good God had been to him. He kept his hand readied to be raised, his words of gratitude well chosen, in case someone asked during the services if anyone had something to be thankful for.

But no one ever asked.

Not even before the prayer time. Oh yes, the pastor took some time to recite a long list of prayer requests and items the church wanted God to supply, but no time was allowed for members to tell how God had specifically blessed them during the week.

As I said, I’m just trying to sort things out. Trying to put concepts of biblical fellowship in proper perspective for Christian worship services today.

The conclusion I am reaching is this: as the Adventist Church has grown and its services have become more formalized, the only personal fellowship that occurs on Sabbath mornings often occurs by default in the hallways and lobbies—before, between, and after services.

Why?

Because the personal fellowship practiced by early Christian church members has been left out (inadvertently or on purpose) of Sabbath morning services in most Adventist churches.

Why? Maybe...

■ Because we often base our worship practices on Old Testament concepts rather than adding in the early Christian church practices. The Old Testament brings forth the worship concepts of awe, reverence, majesty. The New adds to that the practice of witnessing and fellowship—where new Christians gathered day by day, week by week, to share their joys and concerns and pray with one another in unity.

■ Because many churches have abandoned midweek prayer meetings and have failed to incorporate the personal fellowship of these midweek meetings into the only services some churches hold, Sabbath morning services.

■ Because leaders often feel uncomfortable with something so unstructured as a time of sharing before praying. “What if no one talks? What do I say then?”

■ Because if no one talks, leaders think themselves to blame. (Maybe they forget that it is the Holy Spirit who leads someone, even the most bashful, to speak about God’s goodness and blessings.)

■ Because some look upon the old-type “testimonials” as boring, especially if several do all the talking, talk for a long time, or speak about blessings of long ago.

■ Because we’re afraid to find out if one in the congregation feels blessed or has had specific answers to prayer.

■ Because we don’t think we can spare the time. “What would we leave out to make room? We can hardly get through all the things we have to do now.” (Yet who says worship must include so many structured elements? The New Testament? Traditional?)

Whatever the causes, we need change. We need to rethink the “why” of worship, and create worship services so that sharing our joys and burdens with one another and with God not only becomes an integral part of our worship, but becomes our worship.

Rightly directed, a regular time of sharing will bring personal fellowship out of the lobbies of our churches and back into the sanctuary and worship services—where it belongs.

—MYRON WIDMER
We sometimes speak of “beating people over the head with the Bible.” It finally happened—literally.

A student at Kilgore College in Texas claims to have suffered a concussion when beaten over the head with a Bible by five men. The men were upset with him because he defended an abstract sculpture on campus that their pastor had condemned as a “pile of junk” representing “the threat . . . [of] mind control and Communism.” School officials removed the sculpture to calm dispute over its artistic merits.

Though Scripture calls itself “the sword of the Spirit,” it seems unlikely that it was ever intended to be used as a material weapon. The young man with the gigantic headache probably had no higher opinion of the Bible and Christianity as a result of his encounter with its representatives. While we would not be guilty of bashing a person over the head with even a paperback Bible, how often we have done so figuratively! “My way is the right way, and I can prove it,” we say in essence.

What does God’s Word say about the artistic merits of abstract sculpture? Nothing, of course. And yet some people try to find in its pages a defense for their views on almost any topic. They leave no room for differing opinion, personal conscience, or individual liberty.

Adventists who follow this course have fallen out of step with their church. For while we take a definite stand on 27 fundamental beliefs (see the current REVIEW series), in other areas of faith and conduct we allow room for individual differences.

In some cases the church seeks to educate and make recommendations, but does not disfellowship members who choose otherwise. We teach vegetarianism, for example, but allow “clean” meats to those who feel free to eat them. Nor do we censure members who drink coffee or tea, in spite of our arguments against such beverages.

Adventists educate their young people to opt for noncombatancy in the armed services. Yet since an argument can be made from the Bible for armed combat, we allow our youth to hold church membership if they choose to bear arms. We tell parents and children that church schools are best for spiritual and social life, but do not (I hope) berate those who elect a public school education.

Likewise the church has upheld a standard of marrying within the Adventist faith. But it continues to love and accept those who choose a spiritually divided home, or at least it should!

And in this area we might mention the wedding ring—a fruitful field for argument. We have asked our members in the United States not to wear the ring, at the same time allowing it in other countries where it seemed obligatory. Recently the custom has come into acceptance more and more in our American churches. But the denomination has not called for discipline against those who decide to wear a wedding band, feeling that if it were a sin, it would not have been allowed in any country. In areas where there seem to be good arguments on both sides, we choose to “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Rom. 14:5).

In other cases the Adventist Church has not spoken definitely but has left members even freer to choose. Some believers would ban holiday observances at Christmas and Easter, but they speak without General Conference backing. Many Adventists vote; many do not. There are Adventists who would forbid all abortions and Adventists who would allow them in at least certain cases. Neither are any less Adventist for their convictions. We also have left the matter of birth control up to the individual husband and wife.

When it comes to proper Sabbath activities, again one can find a considerable spectrum of opinion and practice among us. Heaven forbid that we should ever imitate the Pharisees here!

We have members who feel very strongly on one side or the other of every question mentioned here. All the more reason for avoiding dogmatism on these points, for honoring honest convictions, for refraining from judging our brothers and sisters. That which unites us is far greater than that which divides us.

Whose side shall we take in these matters? It depends on whose “Bible” we use. Please don’t beat me with your Bible!

______________________________
EUGENE F. DURAND

Outside of the 27 fundamental beliefs we allow room for differences.
**NEWSBREAK**

**WORLD CHURCH**

**Six Angolans Killed in Ambush.** Six Angolans were killed on July 6 when an incendiary missile struck a truck from the Bongo Adventist Seminary and Bongo Mission Hospital. Among the victims were a 25-year-old seminary student, a child, a lady and her daughter, and two sons of a male nurse who worked at the hospital. The truck was about seven kilometers from the Adventist Mission when the incident occurred.

**South Pacific—Making Waves for Harvest 90.** The South Pacific Division reported nearly 9,100 baptisms for the first 12-month period of Harvest 90, ending June 30. The annual goal is 10,200. Roy Clifford, division statistician, noted that two unions have not reported.

**Brazil Baptism Brings 500.** About 500 people were baptized as a result of an evangelistic series in the Jacuí district. Temperance and cooking programs preceded the effort, and 2,800 people completed the Bible studies.

**New Church, New School in Australia.** An Aboriginal church was recently organized in the Meekatharra district, in Western Australia. Also the Karalundi Aboriginal School will soon be reopened, the South Pacific Division reports.

**Foreigners Flocking to Brazil College.** The 1986 school year brought 61 international students from 17 countries to the campus, the largest foreign enrollment in the history of the college. Total enrollment was 2,327.

**NORTH AMERICA**

**Some 100 Accept Real Truth in Washington.** More than 100 persons were baptized August 23 during the Real Truth Crusade, an evangelistic effort at the D.C. Armory, Washington, D.C. A second baptism was held on August 30.

**California Couple Keeps Company for 76 Years.** Leslie and Mae Brauer, the Adventist couple pictured below, recently celebrated their seventy-sixth wedding anniversary in Eureka, California. The celebration, on July 26, was also Mr. Brauer’s one hundredth birthday.

**Enrollment Mounts at Mount Vernon.** Enrollment at Mount Vernon Academy, Mount Vernon, Ohio, totaled 154 students for the 1986 school year, as compared with 105 students in 1985.

**Monte Sahlin, Ohio Conference communication director, said the increase came with the hiring of a recruiter last spring. Conference constituents had considered closing the school. A fund-raising program is now under way for student scholarships.**

**South Carolina Community Center Gets Grant.** The “I Care Center,” a Community Services center operated by the Orangeburg, South Carolina, church, recently received a $5,000 grant from Orangeburg County to purchase emergency-care items for local residents.

The center was also approved as a food distribution agency by the South Carolina Department of Social Services. In the past four years the center has given away more than 46,000 items of clothing.

**Drug Hotline—On Line.** A 24-hour referral service for drug and alcohol problems is now available for families across North America. The hotline, sponsored by the Association of Adventist Parents for Drug-Free Youth, offers Christian counsel to aid parents and young people who are concerned about chemical dependency.

Callers will be put in touch with someone who is experienced in dealing with substance abuse. The hotline numbers are (800) 253-3000, United States; Michigan, (616) 472-3522; Alaska, (800) 253-3002; and Canada, (800) 327-1300. Confidentiality is assured.

**Philadelphia Church Launches Health Fair.** The Southwest church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, recently transformed their front yard into a fairground when the community services department hosted its first health fair.

Representatives from the American Heart and Lung Association and the Volunteers in Aid of Sickle Cell Anemia participated by taking blood pressure readings and tests for the presence of sickle-cell anemia.

**Some 1,500 Pathfinders Beat Path to La Sierra.** Pathfinder clubs from five southern California counties gathered at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus, recently for the annual Pathfinder Fair.

Activities included a parade and exhibits of arts and crafts. Visiting the fair were Riverside mayor A. Brown, chief of police S. Richardson, and a club from Mexico.

**Loma Linda Studies Consolidation.** During their August 25 meeting, Loma Linda University Board of Trustees appointed a study commission to examine the advantages and disadvantages of consolidating the university on one campus. Currently the university operates in Loma Linda and La Sierra, California. The commission will present its findings in January 1987.
**Signs Campaign Completed.** Subscriptions for the 1986 Signs of the Times campaign totaled 364,403. This represents an increase of 49,000, or 13 percent, more than the same period in 1985. For the first time in several years the Signs campaign reached its North American circulation goal, said Bob Gorton, public relations and advertising director for Pacific Press Publishing Association.

**White Gravesite Makes History.** The grave plots of James S. and Ellen G. White were recently designated as a registered Michigan historical site. A plaque commemorating the cofounders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be dedicated at the Oak Hill Cemetery, 255 South Avenue, Battle Creek, Michigan, at 3:30 p.m., Saturday, September 20.

**New Computer Group Emerges.** The Adventist Computer Association, a nonprofit organization that helps church members in church administration, education, and personal uses, was recently formed. ACA offers a newsletter, On Line, that addresses these issues.

**GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**Contractors Needed for New GC Headquarters.** General Conference officials are inviting Adventist contractors to participate in building the new world headquarters building. A general contractor and several sub-contractors are needed.

Prospective contractors must have experience in construction of buildings with at least 285,000 square feet, provide performance bonds, be willing to bid on projects, and be available to begin construction in late 1986 for a completion date in early to mid-1988.


**Bascom Gets New Assignment.** Maurice Bascom, associate director of the Church Ministries Department, was recently named World Community Service director. The new assignment follows the retirement of Perry Pedersen, who held the post for nine years.

**White Manuscripts on Microfiche.** About 6,000 pages of Ellen G. White letters and manuscripts released from 1957 to 1986 are now available on 140 microfiche. These fiche, with accompanying index, may be purchased for $60 from the Ellen G. White Estate, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

**New Revelations on Daniel.** The Biblical Research Institute recently issued a three-volume set of studies on Daniel. The volumes contain more than 1,000 pages and provide pastors with an exegetical resource on the major prophecies of the Old Testament book. The books cost $22.85 and are available at local Adventist Book Centers or by contacting the Biblical Research Institute, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

**ALSO IN THE NEWS**

**Curran Studies Appeal Options.** Dr. Charles Curran, speaking out for the first time since the Vatican announced it had revoked his authorization to teach as a Catholic theologian, said he may seek reversal of the decision through the American courts, according to Religious News Service.

At an August 20 news conference Curran said his lawyers are examining several options, including an appeal under statutes of the Catholic University of America and a civil lawsuit.

**Familiarity Breeds Contempt.** Familiarity can breed contempt between liberal and conservative Christians, a Gallup poll has found.

Analytical summaries of the survey examining hostility between liberal and conservative Christians in America— termed the most serious division of this century by one sociologist—indicate that contact and communication usually heighten disagreements rather than easing tensions, the Religious News Service reported.

**Sight to the Blind, Sound to the Deaf.** Luke's Gospel in braille, published recently in East Germany, is believed to be the first Bible portion produced essentially for people who are deaf as well as blind, the American Bible Society reports.

The text of the Gospel is very simplified because people who lack both hearing and vision—and are often mute too—generally do not acquire large vocabularies.

**CHURCH CALENDAR**

- **Sept. 13** | Missions Extension Offering
- **Sept. 13** | Adventist Review, Guide, Insight promotion
- **Sept. 15** | Chemical Dependency Study Commission starts, Berrien Springs, Michigan
- **Sept. 20** | Bible Emphasis Day
- **Sept. 27** | Pathfinder Day
- **Sept. 29** | 125th anniversary of the birth of Mary Andrews, daughter of J. N. Andrews and teenage Adventist pioneer
- **Oct. 4** | Health Emphasis Week begins
- **Oct. 6** | Twentieth National Religious Liberty Conference starts in Washington, D.C.
GRANDPARENTS 
RENEWING THE VITAL CONNECTION

Too many people are missing out on a grand relationship. They don’t have to.

Despite pictures I have seen, mention “grandmother,” and I remember only a braid on a white nightgown. The hair is auburn, fading to roan, and as thick as a 3-year-old’s leg. Or say “grandfather,” and I recall only a tuft of blue-white hair seated in a long, soft ear. I didn’t see my grandparents very often before they were all gone when I was 8.

Actually, there’s one more memory: As we come out of church on Sabbath Mother glances over at our house and sees Grandpa’s enema bag drying on the porch railing. The memorable part is the way she legged it across the street in heels and a straight skirt.

I never knew my grandparents, really. I will have to recognize them in heaven from their photos. Sometimes that feels like a loss, so I’m giving my children a little more intensive dose of their grandparents.

Tom and I are showing them around in New York, for instance. We say, “This building was the tallest building in the world when it was built. Gramps was only 26 years old.” In the subway I say, “This was built before Gramps was even born!”

My father is carbon-14 for our children. They date history Before or After Gramps was alive. In their five- and eight-year-old historical view, there were Bible times and then there was the time when Gramps was little. There was a world war when he was 9, and another one when he was 36. That Plymouth convertible was new when he was 24, and he bought one used for $300.

All four of our parents live 2,500 miles away. Our kids see them once a year. Yet figuring out the order of the evening ahead, Levi asks when each person will be coming home and says, “At six o’clock we’ll all be together—except for Gramps and Nana and Grandma and Papa.”

My children know about their grandparents and revere them. They are icons in the family. That would seem about right—except for a book that has got me thinking about grandparents and grandchildren, about what’s lost when the first generation is thousands of miles away.

Those four older people and my two children naturally have a “Vital Connection.” * Their relationship is of growing interest to psychologists. Although grandparents may appear to be in the background of children’s lives, they are “very much in the foreground of their emotional concerns.” The grandparent relationship is second in importance only to that of the parent and child.

Researchers in this field identify a profound need on the part of each age for the other. They have discovered—as many people already sense—that certain needs of both are wonderfully suited to talents and resources of the other.

The first and third generation have a grand relationship because they are both outside of their competitively productive years. Both can be heedless of the daily protocol. They can make time for things that aren’t productive in a material way. They are nurtured by the attention they get from each other.
Why, then, in my children’s time, has that segment of children who really know their grandparents shrunk to a tiny, perhaps 15 percent, minority? The near loss of this relationship needs to be remedied now while there are still people around who know or knew their own grandparents well enough to remember what’s important here.

**Hard Times for This Notion**

Being a grandparent contradicts a lot of current robust ideas: retirement free of obligation, independent old age, unrestrained mobility—all of which are based on complete individuation. Relationships, however, are not solo matters. Grandchildren and grandparents need time and proximity to develop deep friendship.

And what benefits for the time and proximity! “I think of my grandparents a lot. I talk to them in my head, especially when I have a problem... They are so proud and enthusiastic about us... I don’t know what I did to have them love me and make such a fuss about me. It’s almost embarrassing... but I really love it,” says a 12-year-old girl.

That child’s grandmother is unusual. Most older folks have signed on to a “new social contract,” which, simply put, says, “Grandparents today have the means of escaping the tortures of family life. They have the right to live without sticky, demanding, messy families. In seizing their opportunity for independence, they may shuck their grandchildren.”

Looking around, you get the impression that if the grand link is strong, that’s nice. If not, OK. It’s an option for the lucky—like having a swimming pool. The important thing, I gather, is to avoid a miserable grandparent/child association: the old folks so controlling; the young, demanding, performing hollow gestures in a bogus relationship. Better to have no connection at all. (I think that a person who buys into this new “contract” can relax with the prospect of nuclear obliteration. For him the ensuing generations are already dead.)

**Setting It Right**

The new social contract can be reconsidered. But it’s not easy. Those who have studied dedicated grandparents say that in order to counter prevailing trends, a person must act on intuition, value emotions, be immune to social trends, and be available to the family. Involved grandparents are usually “active” and altruistic people in their circle of friends, they relate well to all ages, and they tend to defend young people.

Concerned as they are with relationships, I would expect religious people in particular to be on hand for their grandchildren. But religious motivation cuts two ways. First of all, if I want to think well of myself, it would be hard to be in a daily struggle with my grandchildren’s parents. It really is much easier to sigh, “We never did get along,” than to slug it out day after day for the sake of the grandchildren.

Then there is the further complication of Adventist grandparents who want the progeny to be raised in The Truth. Sometimes their children don’t interpret The Truth as they do. When the grandchildren’s very souls are at stake, it’s hard to trust the influence of friendship on parochial concerns. It takes grace to invest one’s personal feelings in a child without trying to establish control. And it can be surprisingly difficult to choose between love and truth.

A friend of mine married a Catholic man, and the man’s Catholic mother was afraid that, as her grandchildren were not baptized in infancy, they would be lost if they died prematurely. After the woman died, one of her daughters confided to my friend that when each of the babies was still in arms, the grandma privately baptized them herself—baptism being a rite that a Catholic layperson can perform.

If only today’s three generations of Adventists could settle matters of church school, music, diet, and dress as peacefully—and be friends.

**What the Pictures Say**

Children’s drawings are supposed to reveal a lot about their thoughts, so I asked my kids to draw pictures of my parents, whom they see maybe once a
year and talk to on the phone sometimes. Levi drew stick figures—"Nana riding on Gramps’ shoulders." Gramps wore a sash on his chest covered with what looked like medallions. "That is one of those things that important men wear," he said.

Chloe drew more complete pictures, including an elaborate hairdo on Nana, and showed her grandparents talking. "Nana says, ‘Floyd!’ and Gramps says, ‘Yes, dear.’"

We were amused to see that even from this distance the kids observe the relationship between my folks with considerable perception. Those pictures would reassure me, except that children who enjoy close friendship with their grandparents have so much more to reveal: "[Grandma] was always wondering how I was doing. Always concerned for me . . . I talked to her most out of all the people in my family. . . . When she died, things were never the same. I’d look at her old rocking chair and make believe that she was in it," says a boy, 16.

Chloe and Levi deserve more of their grandparents than they are getting. They are aware of them; they like their grandparents more to reveal:

Yet many factors are on the side of a deeper friendship. For one thing, the heated emotional intensity between parent and child is usually absent between grandparents and grandchild. That relationship, free of ego and demand, is more relaxed.

My children and my parents don’t view each other with the critical lens that I look through. They enjoy characteristics in each other that drive me nuts. And they’re sort of allies in resisting my improvements, even at this distance. The intergenerational tension is muted through an emotional buffer (I’m the buffer). Their mutual tolerance suggests I would have been a better granddaughter than daughter; and will be a better grandmother (please, God) than mother.

That assumes I’ll learn as I grow older. (I might be overly optimistic. Some people are miserable and mean沃克伍德 hand responsibility to the grandparents.

If the grand relationship didn’t begin at birth, grandparents will have to overcome some inertia to get it started. There may be awkwardness, distance, fear of flying, hard feelings toward their own children, stunned expressions from onlookers.

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**Recommended Reading**


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Judy Rittenhouse is a writer and editor from Allentown, Pennsylvania.
THE LONG WALK

There is no feat too great for a well-loved grandpa

For many years William E. Barton delighted readers of The Christian Century with his parables of Safed (presumably Barton himself) and Keturah ("the charming and practical wife of the genial philosopher"). The following selection will cheer anyone who has ever had an adoring grandchild.

The daughter of the daughter of Keturah hath a little friend who cometh to see her, and playeth with her in the Yard, hard by the Window, where their voices may be heard inside the House. And mostly they play very Happily; but now and then for the sake of Variety they indulge in Argument and Comparison like grown Folk. And it was upon a day that they got thus into a Friendly Scrap, the first part of which I heard not. But the Argument had reached a stage where the daughter of the daughter of Keturah was advancing and backing the other little damsel off the Map, and the other little girl could only answer, I did not, or You can not, or It is not.

And the daughter of the daughter of Keturah said, I can walk Fifty-nine miles.

And the other little girl said, You can not.

And the daughter of the daughter of Keturah said, I can take my Grandpa's hand and keep up with him, and he can walk Fifty-nine miles, and I can walk Fifty-nine miles with him if I hold his hand.

And the other little damsel said, You can not.

Then did the daughter of the daughter of Keturah tell unto the other little girl how great and good a Grandpa she had. And I am too modest a man to write down what she said; but if George Washington and Solomon and a few others were to live in one, peradventure he might be a Second-cousin or a Remote Acquaintance of a man such as the daughter of the daughter of Keturah described.

And the other little girl was speechless; for she could not say, Thy Grandpa is not the only Pebble on the Beach; I also have a Grandpa whose hair is fully as Gray and whose Bald Spot is larger than thy Grandpa's; for the daughter of the daughter of Keturah had carried the matter beyond all comparison. And the other little girl could only change the subject, and say,

I can kick your whole house down and all your trees.

And the daughter of the daughter of Keturah, knowing that she had won out, said sweetly,

Go ahead.

Now there is no man who knoweth so well as I how far from right is the estimate of the little maiden concerning the goodness and the greatness of her Grandpa. Nevertheless it pleased me more than any man can understand who is not a Grandpa; for unto none others hath the Lord given wisdom to know of such matters. And the next time a man goeth by and bloweth a small whistle, she shall have a Red Balloon.

And apart from her beautiful delusion concerning the poor man concerning whom I pray my God that she may be never undeceived, the little maiden is not wholly wrong. For when she holdeth my hand she can do things which otherwise she could not do.

And I prayed unto my God a prayer, and I said,

O my God, Thou hast permitted us through the gift of little lives such as these to discern spiritual truths which Thou hast hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, that so we might enter into the Kingdom of Heaven as little children. Grant unto me this, O my Father, that I shall hold so fast to Thine Hand that the journey that would otherwise be impossible shall be possible for me, and the task that would have been too great may be accomplished through Thy strength. For I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me, and if I hold Thy Hand I can run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.

The Trinity. There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Peter 1:2; Rev. 14:7.)

Does God have a name? This may seem like an odd question, but it deserves to be taken seriously. One answer might be “Of course God has a name. God’s name is just God, that’s all.” But this answer won’t do. In the first place, the word God is, strictly speaking, a title, not a name. It is a word like governor or doctor or professor. We sometimes use these words in place of names, but in fact they are not true names. In the second place, the word God can refer to many different gods: to Allah, the god of the Muslims; to Siva and Vishnu, gods of the Hindus; to Zeus, the chief god of the Greeks; and to the first cause, the god of the philosophers.

So the question remains: Does our On the Christian name of God

God, the God of the biblical revelation, have a name? The answer is yes.

In the Old Testament, God is identified by the name Yahweh (which is often translated as “the Lord” in English versions of the Bible, and which is the source of the English word Jehovah). This name is related to a Hebrew verb meaning “is” or “to be,” so the meaning of Yahweh is something like “eternal.” If someone were to ask, “Who is the God of the Hebrews?” the answer would be “Yahweh, the eternal.” That is, the God of the Hebrews is not Ra or Bel or Molech or any of the other gods of the ancient world.

In the New Testament the same God is identified by a different sort of name. It is not just one word (like Yahweh), but a group of words together, giving us a new name for God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We don’t often think of these words as the Christian name of God, but that is really what they are, for they are the distinctively Christian identification of God. If someone were to ask, “Who is the God of the Christians?” the proper answer would be “The God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

No Ordinary Name

Jesus challenged his disciples to “Go therefore and make disciples . . . , baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).* One of the most familiar New Testament benedictions is a request for “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God [the Father] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14). The apostle also prays that “the Father . . . may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit . . . , and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:14-17). And we are reminded that “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord [Jesus Christ]; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one” (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

So we can properly think of this threefold designation—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as the Christian name of God. It is not, to be sure, an ordinary kind of name, like Karen or Marianne or Bill or James. Nor is it a

BY FRITZ GUY

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name like Siva, Zeus, or Ra. But this designation of God does function as the New Testament equivalent of the name Yahweh.

The meaning of the threefold name of God has, however, been the subject of theological debate through the centuries. The principal question has been the way in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different from and related to each other. Are they all the same reality, or different realities, or different kinds of reality?

In A.D. 325 the Council of Nicaea issued a statement that affirmed belief (a) in God the Father; (b) in the Son of God, who is "of the essence of the Father"; and (c) in the Holy Spirit. This statement is known as the Creed of Nicaea, and its idea of the Trinity has been reaffirmed often throughout the history of Christianity. It gave its name to the hymn tune to which we sing "Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!" (The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 73).

But in spite of a broad traditional consensus, theological discussion has continued. Even in the comparatively brief history of modern Adventism there has been some disagreement. A hundred years ago many Adventists thought that the idea of a Trinity was simply illogical and that the very word was a relic of Roman Catholicism. And some Adventists believed that the Son was created by the Father. When "Holy, Holy, Holy" was printed in Hymns and Tunes in 1886, the words "God in three persons, blessed Trinity" were changed to "God over all, who rules eternity." (Richard Rice, The Reign of God, p. 89).

Yet there is something much more important than knowing the theological questions and answers about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that is that I experience the reality of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The people who knew Jesus best recognized that when they were with Him they were in the personal presence of God and that God was personally present to them. For them He was, as Peter said, "the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). To say that Jesus was the Son of God was not to suggest that He was someone other than God. Rather, it was to indicate that He was the same as God. "Jesus was not simply a messenger from God. He was God. There was no other way to say it and do justice to their experience" (Richard Rice, The Reign of God, p. 89).

For in Jesus Christ—that is, Jesus the Messiah—God became human. God "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) in concrete, visible form. So what this Person did, God did: His actions were the actions of God, and His attitudes were the attitudes of God. His forgiveness was God's forgiveness. And what happened to Jesus happened to God: when Jesus was rejected by His own people, God experienced the rejection; and when Jesus died on the cross, God experienced human death.

Beyond all the theological arguments about the eternal existence of the Son and about His precise status in relation to the Father, what is crucial is the fact that Jesus was and is God.

**More Than Son**

Yet God is more than the Son. That is why the name Jesus is not the whole name of God. We must speak of God also in terms of the Father and the Holy Spirit. For the reality of God is not limited to the reality of the Person who was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, preached "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; etc.) in Galilee and Judea, and died on a Roman cross outside Jerusalem.

Jesus the Messiah is truly God, but He is not the whole of God. When Jesus was in Capernaum, He was not in Jerusalem. But when God is in Capernaum, He is also in Jerusalem, and Athens, and London, and Washington. God is the Son who prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and God is also the Father to whom the Son prayed.

**Much more important than knowing the theological answers about the Trinity is experiencing the reality of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

The words Son and Father are correlative terms: they belong to each other. To refer to a son is to suppose that there is a parent, and to refer to a father is to suppose that there is a child. When we refer to God as "the Father," we mean first of all that He is the Father of the "only Son" (John 3:16). We also mean, of course, that He is the Father of all humanity and that we are all his sons and daughters. But I know Him as Father mainly because I learn from Jesus that His Father is my Father, too.

God is the Father who remained in charge of things when Jesus was in the tomb. He continued to be God, doing...
those things that the Father always does. He continued to be the source of reality. He continued to maintain the created universe, from the minutest subatomic particle to the most massive galaxy. He continued to love the human family, which had been created “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27). He also experienced the pain of separation in the death of His Son.

God is the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. This means that besides being visible in concrete human form, and besides being the “Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign” of the whole universe (Fundamental Beliefs, par. 3), God is immediately present with us.

God is available and accessible to us. God is not far away from us spatially, somewhere off in heaven; God is here. God is not far away from us chronologically, somewhere back in history; God is here now. God is not far away from us spiritually, as a detached observer of our lives; God is here now to be actively involved.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. That is to say, the Spirit is the presence of the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the presence of the creative power that transforms and renews. The Spirit is the presence of the concrete existence of Jesus, not only showing me the character of God but also inviting me to make Him the Lord of my life.

We sometimes speak of the Holy Spirit as the “third person” of the reality of God. This is appropriate if we understand it correctly. The Holy Spirit is third only because there is a Christian theological custom of speaking of the Father and the Son before speaking of the Spirit. The Spirit is not third chronologically, as a more recent reality of God. The Son and the Father are not prior to the Spirit. The Spirit is not third organizationally, as if there were some sort of hierarchical order within the reality of God. The Son and the Father are not essentially superior to the Spirit in the quality of their Godness.

The Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are all different from each other. But They are not independent of each other, for They are all God and They all belong to the reality of God. So They are all involved in God’s extravagant, self-giving love. The gift of salvation is the gift of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**The Activity of God**

When I experience the activity of the Holy Spirit, I am experiencing the activity of God. The reality of the Spirit is part of the reality of God. The Spirit is truly God, not merely an authorized agent telling me about God. There is an important difference between hearing about someone and directly meeting that person. No matter how much I might be told about the person’s background, career, interests, and temperament, I don’t really know the person until I have some direct experience. Because God is the Holy Spirit, I can experience the reality of God directly. I don’t have to depend on the reports of someone else. For the Holy Spirit isn’t someone else; the Holy Spirit is God.

As the Holy Spirit, God is personally present in us. This is why our lives can yield the “fruit of the Spirit”—that is, the fruit of the presence of God: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23). When we see a person who truly loves, we are seeing the presence and activity of God. When we know that we are being called to live more faithfully, we are hearing the voice of God. This does not mean, of course, that people are (or become) God. What it means is that the Holy Spirit is God present to us and active for us through others. It also means that the Holy Spirit is God present in us and active through us for others.

As we exist by the creative and sustaining power of God in the Father and as we are saved by the liberating love of God in the Son, so we may enjoy the transforming presence of God in the Holy Spirit. This is what the Christian name of God means in personal religious experience.

* Scriptural quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Fritz Guy is associate pastor of the Loma Linda University church.
LET'S USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Inclusive language uses words that include all human beings without distinctions based on gender, race, or age. We have become accustomed to hearing “firefighter” rather than “fireman,” “chairperson,” in place of “chairman,” and “newscaster” rather than “newsman.”

Why use inclusive language? Many women no longer look on themselves as less than men and therefore are unwilling to accept the male experience as universal or the female experience as marginal. These women take themselves seriously and expect the church to take them seriously also. They want dignity, a sense of being themselves seriously and expect the church to take them seriously also. They want dignity, a sense of being serious and expect the church to take them seriously also.

For many women this becomes very meaningful, but if you do this in a mixed group, you will likely receive a strong negative reaction against the second reading from some men and women. Yet these words are directed to all people, not just males.

Second, male gender language is ambiguous. Sometimes we find difficulty in determining whether “he” or “man” means to include or exclude women. By the context and through experience, women learn to make the required mental somersault. However, growing awareness of inclusive language today makes it more and more difficult for them to relate to male gender language.

Third, it is exclusive. Generic masculine usage gives the impression that all people are male. This attitude has become deeply ingrained in English and other languages.

People frequently object that inclusive language seems a trivial, unimportant issue. The falsity of this objection can be shown by the opposition aroused by attempts to change our speech and writing into language meaningful to women.

Jesus, our example, showed extreme sensitivity toward including women in His parables. Matthew and Luke record an interesting literary device in the parables of Jesus. The Master used two illustrations to make the same point in order that it might be clearly understood by both men and women. For example, in Luke 15 the story of the lost sheep is followed immediately by the story of the lost coin. The shepherd searches for his lost sheep, and the woman seeks her lost coin, both making the same point about God’s care and concern for lost human beings. Another set of parables in Matthew 13 couples the story of the “leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal” with the story of a farmer who took mustard seed and “sowed in his field.”

We need to use terms that include all—women, children, and men—when we mean all people. This requires thought and planning, but the results reward the effort.

Here are some suggestions. As an alternative to men, man, or mankind, try humanity, people, folk, humankind, we, ourselves, yourselves, one, or ones, persons, or everyone. Instead of brothers or brethren, use sisters and brothers, community, kinship, neighbors, family, or communion. Rather than sons of God, use as an option children of God, people of God, or family of God. Our language is rich with creative possibilities.

Language has power; it is not unimportant. It does more than reflect our values—it helps to create and shape them. Let’s form those values in the direction of a community of all people by including everyone in the language we use.

Bertha Ann Dasher writes from Battle Ground, Washington.
On the evening of February 17, 1941, thunderous blows fell on the door of Maximillian Kolbe's residence. The Gestapo broke down the door, entered, and dragged Max away to the central prison in Warsaw. There they singled him out for "special" treatment because he was a Christian.

The guards came to his cell daily—usually several times a day—asking Max the same question: "Are you a Christian?"

Always he responded with a smile, "Yes, I am." Always their brutal fists struck that smile as they began to beat...
didn't even know that God existed. But Max did. God filled his whole being, and it just spilled out.

prisoners stained his hands—Max worked like a beast.

As the prison expanded, there were trees to cut down, root systems to dig out. It took 25 to 40 men, driven with whips, to pick up the huge pine root systems. Many men slipped in the mud, the stump falling upon and frequently crushing them. Krott always laughed.

One day Krott ordered Max to a pile of huge timbers, each measuring about 10 feet (3 meters) long, 12 inches (30 centimeters) wide, and at least 3 inches (8 centimeters) thick. He stood next to the pile while Krott commanded two other prisoners to place, one at a time, planks from the pile onto Max's bony shoulder.

Max's thin legs sagged under the load of the first plank. As they laid on a second plank, he sank a little lower. Finally, after the fourth or fifth plank, Krott ordered the wobbling skeleton of a man to run with his load of wood.

Max tried, because he always tried to obey. He took a few steps, slipped in the mud, and the timbers crashed down on him, as did Krott's whip.

Instantly Max stepped out, stood before the commandant, and said, "Please, sir, may I take his place? I have no wife; I have no children."

Completely dumbfounded, the commandant just stared at Max. Finally recovering his voice, he ordered Gajowniczek back into the ranks. Max joined the other nine prisoners on their way to cell block 13, where they were to be starved to death. In a few minutes the rest of the camp could hear songs of praise to God coming from the cell.

The next day the songs were a little more faint, the prayers less audible. By the third or fourth day the camp couldn't hear anything, and the
guards carried the first body out. After two weeks, nine of the men had died. But when the commandant walked through cell block 13 he saw that Max was still living.

"Kill him!" he ordered Bock, one of the cruel guards. "Kill him! We need the cell for other prisoners. It is taking him too long to die."

Amazingly Max was still able to stand, though not by himself. As Max leaned against the cell's cold stone wall Bock went to a medicine chest in another room, where he filled a syringe with carbolic acid.

A janitor witnessed the smile on Max's face, the prayer on his lips, and his greeting to Bock as the guard opened the cell door and walked in. Voluntarily Max extended his arm to Bock, who did his lethal work. In a few moments the deadly effect of the carbolic acid invaded Max's body, and he slipped down the wall into a sitting position. His head fell over onto his right shoulder, and he closed his eyes. He died with a smile on his face.

Today Francizek Gajowniczek is, I believe, 86 years old. He is because of the miracle of Max.

James H. Harris is the personnel director at the General Conference.

The indigo bunting has many names. He is also called indigo bluebird, indigo finch, and blue canary. He has two lovely cousins. One is a bright-blue bird called the lazuli bunting. The other is a pretty white bird with black markings called the snow bunting.

Father bunting measures about five inches long from head to tail. His colorful bright blue feathers flash boldly as he darts here and there after grasshoppers, caterpillars, and beetles. Mother bunting wears a dull brown coat of feathers. She is more difficult to see, for her feathers blend well with the nest she sits upon.

Why has God made the male bird so bright in color and the female so dull in color? It is so that the bright-colored male can attract enemies away from the mother bird and the nest, while her dull colors keep her well hidden. However, after the young birds are raised, father bird sheds his bright coat for a dull-colored one much like his mate's.

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DEAR MIRIAM

SOME PEOPLE HAVE COME INTO OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY WHO ARE TRULY BEAUTIFUL IN EVERY WAY. THEIR ONLY INTEREST SEEMS TO BE IN TELLING THE WORLD OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING. THEY ARE SELF-SUPPORTING IN THEIR EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND DO WITHOUT MANY PERSONAL NEEDS. THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES 100 PERCENT ADVENTIST DOCTRINALLY, AND I BELIEVE THAT TO BE TRUE. BUT HERE IS MY PROBLEM: THEY ARE IN SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT WITH SOME DECISIONS MADE BY CHURCH LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY IN THE WAY FUNDS ARE USED. THEY BELIEVE AND TEACH THAT WE, AS INTELLIGENT BEINGS, SHOULD USE THE TITHE OURSELVES TO HASTEN THE COMING OF THE LORD IN WAYS THAT SEEM TO US MOST EFFECTIVE. WHEN I HEAR THEM EXPLAIN THEIR POSITION, IT SEEMS VERY LOGICAL. BUT SOMEHOW I AM TROUBLED, AND NOW OUR CHURCH IS SERIOUSLY DIVIDED. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS? DO YOU ALWAYS AGREE WITH THE WAY FUNDS ARE SPENT AND WITH OTHER DECISIONS MADE BY LEADERS?

No, I don't always agree, and I probably have just as many conflicts as the next person. But let me make it clear that I would never support any person or group recommending that the tithe not be paid into the regular channel of our organized church. God has clearly instructed us to "bring the tithes to the storehouse" (the church), and my agreement or disagreement with church leadership has nothing to do with it. I owe God this money channeled through His church.

Stop and think of what would happen to this church, to which some of us have devoted our whole lives, if everyone became a law unto himself on the question of tithing. This would mean that at the slightest ripple of even mild disagreement, tithe would be withheld, splinter groups would spring up all over the world, and God's work would come to a grinding halt.

Let me call your attention to a statement that you have probably heard many times; it applies here with great force. Ellen White, in Testimonies to Ministers, page 15, says, "The church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard." This would seem compelling proof that we are to support the church financially with our tithes and offerings, though obviously there is more flexibility in the latter. God is watching over the organized church; if mistakes of judgment are made on the part of leadership, He will forgive; if deliberate, calculated mishandling should take place, those involved will have to meet their actions in the judgment.

I do not doubt the sincerity of the people you describe. I along with you believe that they are good people, but they are setting themselves above the organization and urging others to do so. Paradoxically, the most harm can be done by misguided, sincere people. In this situation, where there is bound to be serious disagreement among members, I would spend more time in prayer for my church, claim God's promises, and would not argue with those who take a different position. I would state my beliefs quietly and firmly. I would continue my giving plan as always, and ask the Lord's blessing on both the money and the church leadership.

WHY DON'T OUR PASTORS HOLD REGULAR SUNDAY NIGHT EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS IN OUR CHURCHES ANYMORE? THIS WAS ALWAYS THE RULE IN MY YOUTH, AND I KEENLY REGRET THAT IT IS NO LONGER THE CASE.

First of all, I am not sure this custom has been discontinued all over the world, or even through the North American Division. Perhaps in some areas it is still the plan. However, I will admit that I have not been aware of very much of that sort of thing in the past 10 years. Perhaps it is felt that it would be too difficult to pry people away from their television sets, from getting out of town for the weekend, or from participation in sports.

In an affluent society there are many things in the recreational area vying for people's attention. It isn't the way it used to be when Sunday night religious meetings in churches were salvational, informative, and also recreational for those who attended. (And they were free!) But I would really like to see all our pastors at least make an attempt, possibly from September through November, to conduct a rousing soul-winning crusade. This certainly could, with the blessing of God, be a great boost toward the goal of Harvest 90.

Miriam Wood, author of 16 books, is a retired English teacher whose lifelong hobby has been "observing human nature in all its complexity."
A deliberate error appears in the following well-known quotation. It's more than a spelling mistake, and you won't find it easily: "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you healed me, I was in prison and you came to me'" (Matt. 25:34-36, RSV).

Was the ringing of a dissonant bell loud enough to point out the wrong word in this familiar passage? Jesus
Jesus placed physical and social welfare at the center of His attention.

The consequences of Jesus’ priorities puts the world in a different light. Meeting the needs of others becomes more important than looking for opportunities to get ahead. Giving time to others may be more rewarding than vested interest. The personal touch assumes at least equal status with professional skill. Human expertise acknowledges its limitations and reliance on divine power.

The bottom line of the story of the sheep and the goats and the issues of the judgment is not to present a new agenda for good works. In fact, there is the look of deep surprise on the faces of both the saved and the lost. Interestingly, their astonishment has the same focus. Even the righteous exclaim, “Lord, when did we see thee hungry . . .?” (Matt. 25:37, RSV).

Neither group had seen Jesus in the faces of the world’s starving ones or its strangers. Not even those who had been moved to respond to others’ needs had realized that Jesus had so many brothers and sisters or that He identified Himself with them to such an extent.

Sigve Tongstad is a physician in Hvalstad, Norway. This article is provided by the Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference.
COMPROMISE OR EXCLUSIVENESS?

How to find a middle road between two extremes

Does compromise play too big a part in your life? Has the Christian character of today, like an old sword, lost its keen temper, so that its edge no longer cuts?

Present conditions remind me of the view from a window of our old homestead on New Zealand’s South Island. Wrapped in their mantle of snow, the tops of the hills merge into the fleecy clouds until the eye fails to detect the line that separates earth from sky. So in this age, when convention and customs have painted life in cosmopolitan hues, the Christian to some extent becomes lost in the citizen.

I find two reasons for this. First, Christ’s influence has passed beyond the narrow circle of His disciples and touched with its light the dark environment of unbelief. As Christ begins to rise above the world’s horizon, chasing away the shadows of night, modern civilization has become like the glow that precedes the dawn. The Spirit of God is working in the world as well as within the church. Sentiments distinctly Christian have come to dictate customs and opinions to the whole world, which thus borrows the outward garb, if not the real spirit, of Christianity.

Second, the Christian carries religion into business and social relationships more than before. He is no ascetic. Medieval saints drew apart from the world, seeking the seclusion of cell and retreat. Had those saints instead become tradesmen or shopkeepers, frequenting the markets and homes of the people, perhaps Christianity would not have remained so superficial. Today Christians mix with the crowd. Their integrity and lofty ideals have raised the commerce of Christian countries to a higher level, and through them the Spirit of Christ is leavening all departments of life. Thus we see a converging, until the outline of Christian character on the background of present-day civilization has lost its sharpness, and it becomes natural to ask, How and where should the line be drawn?

The Spiritual Difficulty

For many moderns, faith seems too frail a link on which to hang one’s moral destiny.

Picture a person who has read widely, storing his mind with the latest scientific facts. He has developed a reverence for truth, which unfortunately he limits to the physical and mental realms. In his estimation, the powers of observation and reason come first; faith is of little account. He cannot imagine the Creator, in so important a matter as the salvation of the soul, appealing to only one faculty—and that, in his opinion, the least—and ignoring the greater agencies of thought. He demands that the process be rational, not unintelligible and mysterious.

Although this view is distorted, it occurs only too often today. Perhaps the Christian bears some responsibility for this. An exclusive emphasis on one phase of faith has sometimes cast distrust on truths revealed in other ways.

This antagonism between faith and reason, religion and science, is now happily becoming a thing of the past. The mistaken attempt to exalt religion by treating it as something entirely apart has ended; yet its aftermath leads to misconceptions.

God comes into the heart not by one door merely, but by every entrance. He touches and quickens every part of life. Faith is not simple, narrow; it is comprehensive, complex. To the cry “Lord, I believe,” the intellect contributes its reasoning, the will subordinates self to Christ, and the heart hands over its sacred treasure, resulting in the greatest act of which the human soul is capable.

Here we find no emotional sentiment—a caricature of faith. True, faith pulsates with feeling, but it also imparts insight to the mind, emanci-
The Spirit of Christ in the heart should enlarge the interests to which we respond, deepening our power of appreciation, widening the circumference of life.

pates the spirit, links life to the real and lasting.

Many think the Christian ideal beyond them. To become a member of the church would be for them an act of hypocrisy. They quickly detect faults in those who profess religion and salve their consciences with the Pharisee’s boast: They are not as bad as those hypocrites.

Furthermore, the Christian life appears too rigid for them. They could not thus be confined, and so they spurn the appeal of Christ.

This common view of Christians frightens people. They see them living like an animal on a tether. They forget that Christ has fulfilled the law. Believing in His atoning sacrifice for our sins, we stand justified by faith; the law no longer condemns (Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 6:14). The “thou shalt not” becomes invisible to the true disciple.

Instead, he sees the beatitudes. The command he hears is not negative but positive: “Thou shalt.” The gospel proclaims not servitude but liberty, filling the soul with a passion to do.

When the disciple becomes absorbed with his commission, he has no time to concern himself with the forbidden. His attention and energies concentrated on Heaven’s commands, he finds such joy in their performance that he becomes unconscious of any loss of worldly pleasure.

The Practical Difficulty

What makes up the exclusiveness of Christianity—that indefinable something, that air of other-worldliness—that, despite the uniformity of today, distinguishes believers from others? Surely not a lack of care for the body. At one time saints mortified the flesh hoping to weaken its desires and strengthen the soul.

Today we are wiser. Fasting may have its place in curbing indulgence, but to disregard the laws of health results in disobedience to God as much as does moral willfulness. Because physical and spiritual are connected, the Christian seeks to bring the powers of body, mind, and soul to a perfection that will exalt “the temple of God.”

Nor does Christian exclusiveness mean an exclusiveness of interest. In times past, Christians have attempted to ban all outside interests as worldly, to concentrate all thought and energy on the one great purpose, demonstrating a narrowness that repelled people of education and culture.

But the Spirit of Christ in the heart should enlarge the interests to which we respond, deepening our power of appreciation, widening the circumference of life. His Spirit gives us an influence, an ability to enter into the experiences of others, to see things from their viewpoint. Christ alone can grant us true insight into deep interests of the human race, and thus impart that sympathetic understanding that widens rather than narrows life.

Christian exclusiveness does not exclude pleasures either. To keep mind, soul, and body fit, we must have recreation. In a recent antarctic expedition the man of widest education kept the healthiest because he had a wider choice of interests and did not feel as keenly the monotony of long wintry nights. Moral victory demands the power to attend to something other than the temptation that assails. Many a saint has gone down before some sin because he has not been able to divert his mind quickly enough to other things.

Practical Guidelines

Three rules should guide us in drawing the line between what is expedient and what is not. We must avoid anything that blinds spiritual sensitivity or injures the soul. We must be careful not to offend our neighbor. And we must maintain a sense of the honor due to God. No longer our own but “bought with a price,” we dare not by our acts reflect discredit on His name.

In what, then, does our exclusiveness consist? It resides in the ultimate purpose that brings all our interests, all our acts, into one great unity. Christianity is exclusive only in that it divides us from people of sordid and selfish aims. It is inclusive because it unites us to God as sons and daughters, heirs with Christ, fellow workers with the angels, and sharers in an everlasting joy.

To draw up hard and fast rules regarding the limits of Christian compromise would be impossible. Yet one guide never fails: a keen sense of honor toward God. Along with this, let us develop a consciousness of the stewardship of life, remembering that we dwell on this planet as tenants on a limited lease, and not as proprietors. Such a realization will check the lawless extravagance of sin.

“For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). Honor to God should become our motto. If we were more sensitive to this feeling our lives would be invested with a new dignity and encased in a protective armor that would resist the entrance of sin.

Rex D. Edwards is coordinator of continuing education for the Ministerial Association of the General Conference.
Fish are hard to see... Although I spend most of the summer stalking muskrats, I think it is fish even more than muskrats that by their very mystery and hiddenness crystallize the quality of my summer life at the creek.

A thick spawning of fish, a bedful of fish, is too much, horror; but I walk out of my way in hopes of glimpsing three bluegills, bewitched in a poise of death or rising to floating petals or bubbles.

The very act of trying to see fish makes them almost impossible to see. My eyes are awkward instruments, whose casing is clumsily out of phase the sun along a bank and into the water; instead, to fish I see water striders, the reflected undersides of leaves, birds' bellies, clouds, and blue sky. So I cross to the opposite bank and put the sun on back. Then I can see the fish within it, bluegreen, / by body length/... that shadom/... looms... varnish in a / furry ring... Occasionally, I catch one on a hook, and the / into the water/... the fish becomes... hand/... framed... Each one/... the sky's and all... as tapered as tears. Or I see them suspended in a line in deep pools, parallel to the living current, literally streamlined. Because fish have swim bladders filled with gas that balances their weight in the water, they are actually hanging from their own bodies, as it were, as gondolas have from balloons. They are suspended and seemingly motionless in the water, look dead, under a layer of amber. They look like a school of fish, when there is a school of fish, apparently suspended by invisible designers. Fish! and I want to be so water-colored.

There's not the color of the bottom but the color of the light itself, the light dissolved like a powder in the water.

They disappear and reappear as if by spontaneous generation: speck of light, coming around to fish a cricket. Their iridescence for some of the fish is a survival妙 for Christ and the soul.

Occasionally, I see a school of fish deep below the surface, /... flower/... a school/... framed... Each one/... the sky's and all... as tapered as tears. Or I see them suspended in a line in deep pools, parallel to the living current, literally streamlined. Because fish have swim bladders filled with gas that balances their weight in the water, they are actually hanging from their own bodies, as it were, as gondolas have from balloons. They are suspended and seemingly motionless in the water, look dead, under a layer of amber. They look like a school of fish, when there is a school of fish, apparently suspended by invisible designers. Fish! and I want to be so water-colored.

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How to build a bridge

GEORGE E. VANDEMAN

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WORLDVIEW

Videos, Letters, Bring Gospel to Prisoners

Soledad chaplains innovate

The inmates at Soledad Correctional Institution, the largest prison in the United States, call them “the God squad.” Don and Yvonne McClure, full-time lay chaplains at the California prison, coordinate a multifaceted, rapidly expanding prison ministry that reaches 156 prisons in 38 states.

In addition to their counseling and teaching work among Soledad’s 7,000 inmates, the McClures’ Prison Ministry includes video evangelism, a pen pal club, Bible classes for both prisoners and their families, and a “dress out” program that provides newly released prisoners with street clothing.

Seeking to meet the prisoners’ needs in a wholistic way, the ministry claims an impressive success rate—90 percent of the prisoners they’ve worked with have stayed out of jail after being released, according to Don. Though endorsed by the Central California Conference, Prison Ministry receives no funding from either the church or the state. It is supported by donations channeled through the conference.

Eleven volunteers work with the McClures, conducting Bible classes for the inmates. Recently Prison Ministry extended the Bible instruction ministry to the families of prisoners. Approximately 500 families are enrolled in lessons, and 200 are visited regularly in their homes.

The Adventist Media Center in Thousand Oaks, California, provides videotapes of Adventist television programming for the McClures. The McClures have developed a video lending library involving five different chapels in three prisons. Recent donations of more TV sets are enabling them to expand.

At Soledad the videotapes are played 30 hours a week on closed-circuit television, reaching even inmates confined to their cells. In addition to programs such as It Is Written, Breath of Life, Amazing Facts, and Faith for Today’s Christian Lifestyle Magazine, Don recently arranged to have Christian films added. After praying for ways to expand the video programming, he contacted Evangelical Films, a leading distributor, and requested the use of some films. The Evangelical Films executive responded, “I talk to the same God you do, and I believe He’s leading me to give you those films.”

The pen pal club involves about 1,500 Adventists writing to some 2,500 prisoners in 156 prisons throughout the United States. In addition to corresponding with their pen pals about each other’s interests and daily activities, many prisoners seek advice on Christian growth so that when they get out of prison they can stay out. The club is organized in such a way that there is no risk to those who write to the prisoners. Prison Ministry provides those wanting to write to a prisoner with personal information about the prisoner and a set of instructions. Letters to inmates are mailed to the McClures, who forward them to the prison. Return letters from the prisoners are also sent to the McClures, who screen them to prevent problems from developing.

Children, even entire elementary school classes, are getting involved in the pen pal club. One inmate commented, “I signed up for a pen pal to see what I could get out of someone. What I got was a whole fifth-grade class writing; they really care about me.”

Yvonne directs the “dress out” program, which receives support from Adventist Development and Relief Agency and local Community Services organizations. Released prisoners are given several outfits of clothing. Such aspects of Prison Ministry work is not limited to those who have become Christians or are studying the Bible. “Because of this, even the gangs in the prison accept our presence,” Don says.

Continuing Contact

Prison Ministry also stays in contact with as many prisoners as possible after their release. It has current records on about 200.

Don sees that work with prisoners is bringing blessings to the church as well as to the prisoners. The fervor of newly converted prisoners has helped revive the flagging Christian commitment of their pen pals.

Some ex-prisoners, such as Carlos Hernandez, are now counseling Adventist young people. “We found Carlos buried in the pits of San Quentin. They had to pipe in air to

By Doug Morgan, a graduate student at the University of Chicago.
reach him. But he came to the Lord.”

Carlos was later transferred to Soledad and then baptized in the Watsonville church.

Himself an ex-convict, Don became interested in prison ministry in 1975, soon after becoming a Seventh-day Adventist. Manager of a car dealership at the time, he attended a Full Gospel Businessmen’s luncheon where a charismatic preacher talked about his prison work. The presentation inspired him to share the gospel with the prisoners of Soledad. He began giving Bible studies at the prison one night a week, then two nights, then five. Eventually he and his wife devoted themselves to full-time volunteer prison ministry.

As Don puts it, “It’s a ministry very much based on Matthew 25”—a ministry immersed in the needs of those shunned by most of society.

positions of public responsibility and political importance,” said Ray Coombe, director of public affairs and communications for the South Pacific Division. “These Seventh-day Adventist public servants are an important group of people who face unique challenges, and the church needs to minister to them,” he added. Walter Scragg, division president, conceived the idea of seminars for the government officials.

The seminars were held in Suva, Fiji (June 6-8); Honiara in the Solomon Islands (June 13-15); and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (June 20-22). Local radio stations and newspapers gave the seminars and Beach’s visit considerable coverage.

Seminar for Adventist Public Officials a First

The Public Affairs Department of the South Pacific Division broke new ground in June by presenting three seminars for Seventh-day Adventists in government. Nearly 30 persons attended each, including national MPs, cabinet ministers, parliamentary secretaries, provincial government ministers, and other senior public servants.

Bert Beach, director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference, spoke to each group about Adventism and politics, church-state relations around the world, and his recent visit to the Soviet Union. South Pacific Division health director Don Bain presented a series on stress management.

“With the growing presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Pacific nations, an increasing number of church laypersons are in
Munich Responds to Public Evangelism

A secular city receives the gospel

When the Euro-Africa Division proposed that Munich, West Germany, be the center of a major evangelistic thrust in 1986, area pastors and laypersons were understandably skeptical.

Munich, with its thriving economy, rich cultural heritage, party-like atmosphere, and ideal climate, is overwhelmingly secularized, though most citizens overtly espouse Catholicism. Adventism has enjoyed little numerical growth in this milieu. In fact, membership declined 20 percent between 1965 and 1985. The seven Adventist churches in Munich baptized nine people in 1985.

Nevertheless, the German Adventist leadership, pastors, and members in Munich moved forward with the effort, which culminated with a five-month series of public meetings begun March 7. The campaign, led by Mark Finley, ministerial director, Trans-European Division, demonstrated that public proclamation of the gospel can be effective in Europe's secular society. Approximately 400 non-members attended at least one meeting; 40 were baptized and many others are preparing for this step.

The Munich campaign inspired new enthusiasm for evangelism in Germany, reports Carlos Aeschlimann, associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association. According to Finley, the success of the effort was in large part due to extensive preparatory work, including an array of seminars designed to arouse interest in the Adventist message among different types of people.

Euro-Africa Division and South German Union leadership began planning for the effort in November 1984. In June 1985 Pastor Finley conducted revival meetings in the Munich churches on the theme “Knowing Christ and Sharing Christ.” At that time a 40-member evangelistic coordinating committee was formed, with representation from the South Bavarian Conference office, Munich pastors, and church members.

Preparation in the churches continued in the autumn when Pastor Helmut Mayer, South Bavarian Conference evangelist, conducted two Weeks of Prayer in separate sections of Munich. Twenty-seven small prayer groups formed to meet in homes and pray for the campaign. Literature evangelists from throughout the Euro-Africa Division sold books and contacted interested persons in Munich. The interest list grew to 1,200 names by January.

Field School

A field school of evangelism, held from January to May, involved 23 pastors from throughout the German-speaking areas of Europe in the Munich campaign and provided training for evangelism in the pastors' home fields. Field school students spent mornings in classes on church growth, health evangelism, the book of Daniel, lay motivation and training, personal and public evangelism, and contemporary denominations and doctrinal trends. They spent the remaining time giving home Bible studies and conducting seminars for the public.

About 300 non-Adventists participated in precampaign seminars on Daniel, stress, and nutrition and a Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking. The seminar attracted citywide interest. More than 140 attended the sessions held in the Kunstlerhaus, a downtown auditorium. One TV station and two radio stations gave news reports on the seminar.

Both the home visitation and the seminars fed directly into the evangelistic meetings. One hundred of the non-Adventist seminar participants also attended the meetings and 50 of those with whom the pastors were studying at home attended.

As the March 7 opening for the meetings neared, Adventists throughout Munich fasted, prayed, and worked. Church members distributed more than 100,000 handbills. Attendance peaked at 780 on the second night of the series and averaged 425 throughout.

A Teacher Learns

Among those who responded to the gospel proclamation was a teacher seeking comfort and deeper meaning in life following the death of her mother. Discovery of the scriptural teaching about death and resurrection opened her mind to a fuller understanding of the Adventist message. An engineer who had been married to an Adventist for 28 years and had himself attended church for several years felt conviction from the Holy Spirit to end his long resistance to baptism.

Another young woman whose search for purpose in life had taken her throughout the world, visiting Hindus, Muslims in the Sahara, and the Bali people of Indonesia, found a new sense of peace and joy through Jesus Christ. Her husband, though initially resistant, began attending the meetings and was baptized with her.

Pastor Finley believes that the Munich campaign underscores four principles for reaching people in a secular, urban society:

“First, we must believe that hundreds of people throughout our secular communities are winnable. To believe they are unwinnable is to repudiate our task as proclaimers of stress management workshop.
the gospel of Christ to this generation. Even secular people have innate spiritual longings. Many are looking for deeper meaning and purpose in life.

“Second, we must employ a multidimensional approach appealing to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of people. A single-track approach appealing only to people who are overtly spiritual will miss scores in secular society who would be receptive to the gospel.

“Third, direct evangelism plays a vital part in reaching secular people today. Munich surprised us. A significant number responded to the direct proclamation of the gospel.

“Fourth, no approach will be effective without the Spirit of God, who brings unity and purpose among those who spread the message and openness and conviction to the hearts of those who hear.”

Though the crusade is now over, evangelistic activity in Munich is not. Pastor Helmut Mayer is following up the crusade with meetings two nights each week, and many are continuing to study the Bible in preparation for baptism.

Adapted from a report submitted by Carlos Aeschlimann, associate secretary, General Conference Ministerial Association.

Spreading Truth in New York City

Victor Zaric, a member of the Yugoslavian church in Queens, New York, has found a silent yet powerful way to witness. Every month Zaric spends between $400 and $500 for books and magazines to be given away. Systematically he selects different areas of the city and puts Happiness Digest, The Signs of the Times, and other publications in supermarkets, laundromats, telephone booths, and many other public places.

After supplying a particular area for a while, he then moves on to another area. He believes in being systematic and consistent. He places publications with a well-marked local church address and telephone number, so that an interested person can call. He feels this gives a local congregation a good opportunity to benefit.

Knowing that most individuals cannot afford to spend the same amount of money he does each month for literature, Brother Zaric suggests that if a church would develop a literature fund and organize a distribution system, such work could be accomplished effectively in the church territory.

With each church member doing a little in his or her neighborhood, seeds might be sown and many led to Christ. Baptized only one year ago, Brother Zaric fasts and prays regularly for his literature distribution. He feels there is no waiting period in doing God’s work. He requests readers’ prayers that God will send him to the right places.

Adapted with permission, from the Atlantic Union Gleaner, July 8, 1986.

New Clinic for Rome

Mission offering promotes health

Meeting the needs of the poorest—that’s how Italian Adventists are planning to spread the gospel among the 3 million inhabitants of Rome. They are building the Adventist Center of Social Medicine (Centre Adventista di Medicina Sociale, or CAMS) to provide free medical services to those without means to pay.

A primary group to benefit from the services will be the approximately 500,000 Third World immigrants in Rome who are not covered by the Italian form of social security.

Church officials also hope to improve the public image of Adventists and thus prepare the way for the Adventist message. An element in the Italian Adventists’ Harvest 90 goal is the establishment of a fifth church in Rome. The CAMS established in the small city of Campobello di Mazara, Sicily, in 1979, provides a model for the Rome project.

As a result of the CAMS there, Campobello di Mazara now has a flourishing and expanding Adventist community.

Dr. Giacomo Mangiaracina, who founded CAMS in Sicily, will direct the Rome project for at least five years.

Along with free medical counsel CAMS will offer preventive care and health education. CAMS will receive funds from the Mission Extension Offering to be received on September 13.

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Eugene F. Carter, executive secretary, Central States Conference, formerly Sabbath school and lay activities director, Central States Conference.

Regular Missionary Service

Ralph P. Bailey, returning to serve as secretary, Eastern Africa Division, Harare, Zimbabwe, and Dorothy E. (Patterson) Bailey left July 29.

Alfred de la Torre, returning to serve as physician, Bella Vista Hospital, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and Juvenilda (Muniz) de la Torre left July 27.

Elwin Roy Hutchins, returning to serve as dentist, Bella Vista Hospital, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Sandra Lynn (Nichols) Hutchins, and four children left July 17.

Calvin John Rick, returning to serve as physician, Guam Seventh-day Adventist Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, Laura (Lee) Rick, and two children left June 24.

Nationals Returning

Fitzclarence Griffith, to serve as surgeon, Port-of-Spain Adventist Hospital, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Bernice Elizabeth (Seecharan) Griffith, and three children arrived in Trinidad May 4.

Augustine Baldwin Noel, to serve as pastor/evangelist, South Caribbean Conference, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Alma Ruth Charlene Noel, and one child arrived in Trinidad in July.

Volunteer Service

Steve Mark Blech (Senior Dental Clerkship), to serve as dentist, Emkhuzweni Health Center, Manzini-Piggs Peak, Swaziland, of Loma Linda, California, left July 19.

Wallace Woo-Shang Chan (SOS), to serve as acting secretary, Eastern Asia Committee, Tseun Wan Adventist Hospital, Tseun Wan, Kowloon, Hong Kong, and Minnie Lai-Wah Chan, of Daly City, California, left July 27.

Nora Martha Thompson Dietrich (SOS), to serve as teacher, Bella Vista School, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, of Ukiah, California, left August 2.

Vincent Ellsworth Gardner (Special Service), to serve as physician, Adventist Medical Center, Nishihara, Okinawa, and Marilynn (Smith) Gardner, of New Hyde Park, New York, left July 13.

Jill Donette Hines (Special Service), to serve as teacher, Cayman Islands Mission, Grand Cayman, West Indies, of Rapidan, Virginia, left July 31.

Elizabeth Marie Holland (Special Service), to serve as teacher, Cayman Islands Mission, Grand Cayman, West Indies, of Rapidan, Virginia, left July 31.

Carolyn Harley Shobe (SOS), to serve as teacher, Tseun Wan Adventist Hospital Overseas School, Tseun Wan, Kowloon, Hong Kong, of Madison, Tennessee, left July 27.

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Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name" (Ps. 29:1, 2). David's words find echo in one of Adventists' favorite texts: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7).

What imagery flashes onto the video screen of your mind when you read these injunctions containing the word glory? Do you envision God's splendor radiating from His person like the searing burst of white light from a thermonuclear explosion? Certain Scripture writers do associate God's glory with incandescence. Ezekiel, for instance, wrote: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: . . . and the earth shined with his glory" (Eze. 43:2).

However, the Hebrew word kabod, translated glory, does not refer primarily to radiance. It comes from a root word meaning heavy or weighty. So when the Old Testament authors spoke of God's glory, they did not always refer to the brilliance of His person. Often they meant the "weight" of His presence demanding admiration.

In my imagination I used to see a blazing searchlight when I read about God's glory. Now that I know the Hebrew word kabod may denote heaviness or weightiness, new imagery comes to mind. Immediately the picture of King Henry VIII flashes into my imagination. I see his heavy-set frame, his jauntily plumed hat, his neatly coiffed beard, his elegant ermine-trimmed clothing, his dazzling jewelry, and his piercing eyes.

King Henry VIII cut an imposing figure. Surely he was the type of person whose very demeanor demanded deference. When King Henry VIII entered a room, no one could remain oblivious to his presence. And when he took to his feet to make a point, everyone upon whom his gaze fell lapsed into awed silence.

Some people today cut a similarly imposing figure. Their very carriage elicits attentiveness. Wherever they go they evoke admiring glances from all around them. Something about their person demands respect.

Sometimes I wish my frame were not so slight, that extra pounds would help me look dignified—instead of paunchy. That my countenance glowed with a bearing of noble dignity. That a white mane of hair crowned my head. That my voice resonated in clear, stentorian, baritone notes. That my height were truly majestic. But alas! . . .

In more reflective moments I tell myself that I must not be so inflated. Were my wish to come true, I would undoubtedly end up like some people I've met who closely resemble my dream image—more pompous than majestic! Yet the Hebrew term kabod does not signify pomposity. Its connotations are positive, not negative.

Pious Jews have viewed themselves as existing for one purpose—to give glory to God. History has not borne out that they have always—or even usually—achieved that goal. Nonetheless, the goal is noble, having its roots in Scripture itself. God said of Israel, "I have created him for my glory" (Isa. 43:7). And the New Testament reiterates the same objective for Christians: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Whenever people meet a follower of Christ, they should burst forth in praise of God. If instead they sing the praises of the individual disciple, then something is wrong. Of God's crowning creation the confession of the Free Will Baptists declares, "He was made in the image of God to glorify His Maker" (Chapter IV, Section I, article 3).

My fondest ambition should not be to look more imposing. My flights of fancy should not produce daydreams in which others whom I encounter kowtow to me because they feel overpowered by my stately decorum. Instead, as a result of meeting me, they should stand spellbound before God and give glory to Him. He—and He alone—is worthy of such deference and reverential awe. That should constitute my highest goal.

Richard Coffen is vice president for editorial at the Review and Herald Publishing Association.
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Impressed

Impressed with the Adventist approach to health care in Kansas City.

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