

Hurricane Gilbert  
challenges Adventists, p. 6

# ADVENTIST REVIEW

Weekly News and Inspiration for Seventh-day Adventists

October 13, 1988



## SHOULD INTERSCHOOL SPORTS BE ALLOWED?

**Adventist educators  
debate the pros and cons**

**A Petit Parable**

**Will Diversity Divide Us?**



## How Often Should the Review Be Published?

In the August 4 issue, the editor invited readers to share their convictions on the frequency of publication of the *Adventist Review*. So far, responses favor continuing the weekly by a 2 to 1 margin over all other options combined. Selections from the mail:

### Sabbath Reading

My vote is for every week. The *Review* is my Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon reading, and is very enjoyable, certainly in keeping with the Sabbath spirit.

R. J. ROY  
Mesa, Arizona

### Can't Save for Sabbath

The *Review* does not come too often for me. I pass it on to a member who doesn't receive it. I do not subscribe to a daily newspaper; feel I can do without it. I never seem able to save the *Review* for Sabbath afternoon reading.

JENNY H. BURTON  
Lynch Station, Virginia

### Alternate Weeks

Could all the union papers print their journals on the same dates every other week, and the *Review* be printed on the alternate weeks? Then we could have a church paper every week.

VIRGINIA COLLIER  
Cloverdale, California

### Monthly

Your idea for a monthly *Review* sounds good. I think we would have time to read it more from cover to cover if it were to come once a month. Might save on postage, too.

B. R. SHAVER  
Ithaca, Michigan

### Every Two Months

If the most important items were put into the *Review*, I think maybe more people could handle it, like a *Review* every two months. Of course, it would cost less, too.

ILA LOPEZ  
Everett, Washington

### Counteract Error

Back in our early days when it was published monthly, Ellen White said that there was a need to publish weekly to counteract the influences of all the weekly journals

that spread error. If it was so back then, it is even more important in these last days.

DEBORAH DONNELLY  
San Marcos, Texas

### Pressure

Yes, I would prefer to have the *Review* come monthly. I get so far behind in reading it that I finally have to skip some, which makes me feel guilty. Sometimes I just race through an issue to get done. I would enjoy the *Review* much more without this pressure.

MRS. HENRY L. RUPE  
Ukiah, California

### Last Support

Here is my vote: weekly, YES.

We have been warned that the time will come when every earthly support will be cut off. I hope the *Review* will be the last of these supports to be cut.

DOROTHY SACKETT  
Boise, Idaho

### Can Hardly Wait

Please never even think of giving us a *Review* only once a month! We can hardly wait for our weekly *Review* to show up. It has become a part of our Sabbath reading. We would rather cut back on our food than go without it.

WES AND ORPHA RIISE  
Oakdale, California

### Not Always Read

When we received the *Adventist Review* more than monthly, it did not always get read. We missed many good articles. Receiving the *Adventist Review* monthly in our home is adequate.

VIRGINIA PATTERSON  
Edina, Minnesota

### Lifestyle of the Eighties

While the *Review* has taken some tremendous steps toward addressing the needs and interests of the younger and growing segment of the church, the weekly format does not meet the lifestyle of the eighties. The average on-the-go young adult finds it difficult to spend quality time with family in recreation, in devotions, etc. What I hear my members saying is that there simply is not enough time to peruse the *Review* adequately each week. Simply said, for many once a week is too

often, and the result is that the *Reviews* begin to pile up quickly without being read. Naturally, people will not subscribe to the magazine unless they're finding time to read it. Unfortunately, many are not finding the time, so they're not subscribing, or not renewing.

PASTOR STEVE HALEY  
Waycross, Georgia

### Frightened

It frightened me even to think of the *Review* issues being cut to bi-weekly. Your paragraph starting with "The *Review* is the church's 'family letter'" states it perfectly. I can't add to that.

Please don't let anyone remove our only contact with any warmth or friendliness in our church government.

MARILYN CARPENTER  
Chicago, Illinois

### News and Inspiration

"Weekly News and Inspiration for Seventh-day Adventists"—news is not news if it arrives as infrequently as monthly or biweekly. Inspiration is needed weekly.

FERN LANE  
Cleveland, Tennessee

### Anticipates

My whole family, including children and grandchildren, look forward to the Sabbath with great anticipation. It would not seem like Sabbath without this very important periodical to look forward to also: indeed, it would be like going a whole week without experiencing the warm rays of the sun. We have received the *Review* regularly for almost 50 years. We depend on it. We can do without *Time* and *Newsweek*, we can do without TV, but please do not cut off our lifeline to vital information about "the work," and the inspiration and stimulation we depend on receiving from "D.C." regularly.

G. EDWARD ZERNE, M.D.  
West Chester, Pennsylvania

### Learning

We learned to live with the *Columbia Union Visitor* coming twice a month, and we could do the same with the wonderful *Adventist Review*.

MRS. GEORGE R. GITTINS  
Biglerville, Pennsylvania



# ADVENTIST REVIEW

October 13, 1988

General paper of the  
Seventh-day Adventist Church

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## COMING NEXT WEEK



◀ "The Incomparable Christ: the Heart of the 1888 Message," readings for the 1988 Week of Prayer, including:

- "Legalism, License, or Liberty?" by W. Duncan Eva. The law and gospel in Galatians.
- "Justified and Sanctified:

God's Goal for Us," by Clifford Goldstein. The balance between what God has done for us and what He is doing in us.

- "From Laodicea to Triumph," by Carl Coffman. Christ is knocking upon our heart's door.





# WILL DIVERSITY DIVIDE US?

I am sensing these days a greater willingness among Adventists to differ openly with one another and with the church—especially on the topic of what we think the church should or should not do.

How many times I have heard individuals exclaim, “I sure wish the church would . . .,” or “How can the church do that!” or “When will the church ever . . .?”

Our diverse opinions *generally* revolve around topics outside the realm of Adventism’s 27 fundamental beliefs, *but not always*. We express varying views on a wide range of issues from abortion to the role of sports, from lifestyle standards to church management procedures and policies, from Sabbathkeeping to the consumption of meat.

And as our church’s membership continues to explode worldwide—projected to rise from 5.4 million members to 12.1 million by the year 2000—we face the likelihood of even greater diversity, born—as with all diversity—out of dissimilarities in age, race, country, heritage, sex, marital status, education, and financial resources.<sup>1</sup>

Thus an increasingly important concern for the church is how to maintain unity in the midst of diversity. For some members, diversity strikes fear deep into their hearts. Others revel in it. History tells us that the Adventist Church has never been afraid of diversity, but has welcomed it—to a point, that is. Consider these concepts:

■ **Diversity defeats boredom.** If you and I thought, looked, and acted alike, at least one of us would be bored—certainly I, and probably you. Diversity adds spice to life, and

creativity to the thrust of the church.

■ **Diversity helps us grow.** Consider the plight of the Amish people, who have chosen a particularly simple and similar lifestyle. Such a distinct stand has brought them national recognition, but it hasn’t helped their church grow. Adventism’s acceptance of diversity is what has allowed us to embrace people worldwide.

■ **Diversity is God’s desire.** To the fledgling Christian church God gave a variety of helpful gifts—given with the intent of making the body of Christ on earth *whole*. To some He gave wisdom, knowledge, faith; to others healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, disingenuism between spirits. And He appointed apostles, prophets, teachers, helpers, administrators. (See 1 Cor. 12.) Certainly God was not afraid of diversity; He seemed to cherish it.

## Diversity and Unity

Then why does diversity within the Adventist Church strike fear into the hearts of so many?

Some of the fear lies within our natural tendency to equate *diversity* with *conflict* and *disunity*. But if we believed that to be true, we would ultimately begin to believe that *uniformity* is synonymous with *unity*. Both are equally false assertions.

Yet some fear rightly comes from the fact that diversity can bring disunity and division. History testifies to this truth. Unreconcilable differences in beliefs have led to countless new churches—even ours years ago.

Critical for any church is its ability to sense when diversity among

its members threatens the church’s core distinctiveness, and its ability to sense when to change and when to stand firm. The church must collectively set forth its belief parameters and protect them against all odds until the time when—through its continual listening to the Spirit—it is led to restudy, to rethink, and to hold fast or change those parameters of beliefs and practices. *A church can exist long with diversity, but never long without unity.*

“In unity there is strength; in division there is weakness,” comments Ellen White.<sup>2</sup> “Christ is leading out a people, and bringing them into the unity of the faith, that they may be one, as He is one with the Father.”<sup>3</sup> “Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.”<sup>4</sup>

Such unity, adds Ellen White, “is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin.”<sup>5</sup>

## Varying Views

Without the diversity of our God-given gifts, we might never change. We might become a church fixated in time and culture, unchangeable, unteachable, tradition-bound. Maybe even resistant to the Spirit’s movings.

But in expressing individual views about our church’s beliefs and practices, may we be ever mindful and careful of our words and actions, to make sure they work toward unity in the faith, not division.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> This is the latest projection of Don Yost, director of the General Conference Department of Archives and Statistics, based upon growth rates of the respective areas from 1960 to March 31, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 324.

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 286.

MYRON WIDMER





# GENDER GAP

American politicians are doing backbends this year to bridge the gender gap. Pollsters are not greatly troubled by the "nature" versus "nurture" battle—whether the source of male and female differences is biology or culture. But they know winning candidates must reckon with women's concerns.

While Adventists do not mirror society in every respect, I think there's also a gender gap in the church. How shall we begin to bridge it?

## Historical Baggage

First we must understand that the gender gap is complicated and staggers under tons of historical baggage. Ever since Eden it's been obvious that men and women are different. But how different? And what do the differences mean?

The debate has been lively, and it has often gone badly for women. In a recent cover story *U.S. News and World Report* summed it up this way: "Applied to the female of the species the word 'different' has, for centuries, been read to mean 'inferior.'"<sup>1</sup>

A few churchmen in the sixth century, for example, and again in the 1500s, considered women so different from men that they doubted they were fully human!<sup>2</sup>

Some nineteenth-century scientists proclaimed that women were so different that they should not exercise or think much because it would divert needed blood from their reproductive systems.

Like the corsets that bound a woman's body, these views constricted her life. She could not vote. Most universities and professions barred their doors to her. Legally

she had no right to wages she earned or to custody of her own children.

## Revised Versions

Today researchers know that men and women are *more alike* than they are different.<sup>3</sup> As a result, laws, lifestyle, and language are gradually changing for women.

Scientists even admit that women are superior to men in some ways. On the average they live seven years longer than men (except in countries where childbirth is still a hazard). And they are much less susceptible to killer diseases.<sup>4</sup>

Certain experiences rooted in our differences, however, remain almost unique to women and foreign to men. And the tide of these experiences washes deep, sometimes leaving us marooned on gender islands.

Women bear 100 percent of the world's children. They probably do 90 percent of all housework and child care. Women are the victims of nearly all rapes. At least 60 percent of sexually molested children are female. In the United States women earn only 66 cents for every dollar earned by men. They head most single-parent families.

By necessity, women may be preoccupied with obtaining very basic things. Food. Shelter. Personal safety. Health. Children's tuition. Coping skills. New opportunities. Spiritual assurance.

In addition, church and society traditionally place higher expectations on women than men to make home *ideal*. They also rely on women to form the backbone of the volunteer force—in hospitals, community services, Sabbath schools, church potlucks, etc.

One facet of the gender gap issue is this: If we value care-givers and their contributions, we *must care for them*—and let it show in our plans, our policies, our programs.

At present, the church's attention to the gender gap lacks conviction. Adventist women are pretty much going it alone.

I recently attended the sixth national conference of the Association of Adventist Women (AAW) in Portland, Oregon. Their theme was "The Adventist Woman and Health: A Search for Balance." The nine workshops were right on target, covering such topics as "Caring for the Care-giver," "Support for the Abused Child," and "The Superwoman Syndrome."

AAW also initiated a dialogue among Adventist women's groups by inviting representatives to attend and speak. Some organize luncheons, prayer groups, and retreats. Others focus on issues, policy, and research. Still others concentrate on specific needs or projects. A few are church-sponsored; many are independent. But they met together in a Christian spirit to listen, learn, and support.

## Women's Ministries

Fostering this kind of dialogue is a role the church could well join in—and by so doing lay a few planks in the bridge across the gender gap.

Right now the only conference in our division to establish a Women's Ministries Department is Oregon. I believe the world church will gain much when it places full-time, paid leaders for women's ministries in the GC, divisions, unions, and conferences. We will gain much because women make up 60 percent of our members; they are crucial to the church's mission today. And they carry the key to the future. For they are discipling the next generation.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Aug. 8, 1988, p. 56.
- <sup>2</sup> See Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Women, Freedom, and Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 71-73; Manford Sleisher, "'Are Women Human?' Debate," *Sixteenth Century Journal* (1981): 118, 119.
- <sup>3</sup> *U.S. News and World Report*, Aug. 8, 1988, p. 55.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

KIT WATTS



# Hurricane Relief Efforts Moving at Full Speed

**T**he rash of emergencies caused by Hurricane Gilbert and recent catastrophic flooding in Bangladesh has prompted a wide range of Adventist relief efforts. The hurricane, Jamaica's worst natural disaster ever, left at least 23 dead, 60,000 homeless, the entire island without electricity, and most homes and public buildings damaged.

The Adventist church, through its Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), utilized its emergency reserves of medicine, food, and clothing in Jamaica to provide an immediate response. Within two days of the storm, 4,000 ADRA volunteers had helped more than 20,000 people with rescue operations and distribution of aid, reports ADRA spokesperson Evert McDowell. Also, Adventist halls and churches were used for shelters.

According to Sidney Cole, ADRA director for Inter-America, the primary short-term concerns were food supply and getting houses covered before the next rain. Westico Foods, an Adventist factory at West Indies College in Mandeville, distributed staples such as flour, cornmeal, and oil. When Kingston International Airport reopened September 18, ADRA began airlifting in more supplies—food, clothing, water purification tablets, and temporary shelters.



KENNETH A. JOHNS

Thus far ADRA has sent US\$400,000 in relief aid to Jamaica, says McDowell. Plans are now being made for participation in the long-term reconstruction effort. The agency is also rushing emergency supplies and funds to areas of Mexico struck by flooding from the hurricane and its remnants.

Damage to Adventist institutions in Jamaica reflects the general devastation wreaked on the island by high winds, flooding, and mudslides. According to Jose Figueroa, secretary of the Inter-American Division, approximately 70 percent of Jamaican Adventist churches incurred roof and water damage; 12 were completely destroyed. Two high schools will be unable to open for the fall term, and possibly not for months. The Theology Department at West Indies College lost its roof, resulting in extensive damage to books.

Heavy water damage to its top floor forced Adventist-

owned Andrews Memorial Hospital in Kingston to send some patients away. However, ADRA transported a portable field hospital to Kingston on September 17 to operate under the auspices of Andrews Memorial. The U.S. State Department and the state of North Carolina donated the \$1 million MASH facility and authorized the U.S. Coast Guard to airlift it from Charlotte, North Carolina.

More aid came to the 45-bed hospital the following week when Florida Hospital in Orlando shipped a 100-kilowatt emergency generator and three pallets of medical and surgical supplies. Also, Florida Hospital personnel, working with a local Rotary Club, arranged for 18,000 water purifying tablets to be hand-carried to the island.

Several churches in the Florida Conference have joined in the relief efforts. Orlando Central church coordinated a collection of food and clothing donations in conjunction with the Red Cross. Other churches are raising relief funds.

**In Bangladesh** (left), the heaviest rains in 70 years flooded three quarters of the nation in early September, leaving an estimated 30 million people homeless and leading to hundreds of deaths from diarrhea, exposure, drowning, and snakebites. ADRA sent \$70,000 in immediate relief in the form of food, clothing, blankets, medicine, water purification tablets, and emergency shelters near the capital city of Dhaka, according to McDowell.

The major short-term problem was lack of pure water, but the greatest challenge will be in the reconstruction needed to help people return to normal life, says Jerald Whitehouse, ADRA director for Bangladesh. ADRA hopes to rebuild houses, dig new wells, provide seed rice to farmers, and repair roads and bridges.

According to ADRA officials on the scene, 2,000 of the 5,000 Adventists in Bangladesh lost all their crops, as did Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College and two secondary schools. The homes of 500 members were damaged, 150 destroyed. With no harvest in November now possible, and the next planting not until January, these members face grave short-term needs.

Member donations make the church's response to such disasters possible. In 1987, North American Division members gave nearly \$1.3 million to disaster and famine relief, 90 percent of which was appropriated to ADRA for international use. The recent emergencies underscore the vastness of the need. Both ADRA and the Florida Conference are seeking special donations to meet the crises in Jamaica, Mexico, and Bangladesh.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE

**E. G. White Writings to Be Computerized.** White Estate representatives signed an agreement September 13 with a data conversion company initiating a project to place all the published writings of Ellen White onto a single computer-searchable compact disk (CD). Similar in appearance to audio CDs, the one disk will





contain all current and out-of-print books, periodical articles, pamphlets, and manuscript releases — more than 50,000 pages of text.

The disk, projected to be available early next year, will include a software retrieval package, enabling one to locate individual words, phrases, or word combinations instantly. More than a concordance, it will allow the user to browse within the textual material itself and print out desired portions. It will also contain the six-volume E. G. White biography and the King James Version of the Bible, making comparative study possible. A CD-ROM player connected to an IBM-compatible computer will be necessary to access the disk. A version for Apple Macintosh computers is also planned.

## WORLD CHURCH

**Large Land Gift Launches Brazilian School.** A donation of 1,230 acres of land has opened the way for a new secondary school in central Brazil's Mato Grosso Mission, according to Victor Griffiths, GC associate education director. A São Paulo City land developer, Dr. Ribeiro, made the donation, finalized with church officials in mid-September.

The rural site, well suited for the new school's needs, adjoins a paved highway and has good sources of non-polluted water. The donation also includes land for an elementary school and church in a new city being developed about 15 miles away.

**Rossi Addresses U.N. Group.** In a speech before the United Nations Subcommission on Human Rights in Geneva August 17, Gianfranco Rossi appealed for religious liberty in Saudi Arabia, reports Euro-Africa Division communication director John Graz.

In calling for an end to current restrictions on Christians, Dr. Rossi, general secretary of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, urged Saudi leaders to recognize that "Islam is also a religion of tolerance and liberty."

## NORTH AMERICA

### Londis Hosts Ethics Talk Show.

*Londis on Line: Speaking of Ethics*, a weekly call-in talk show hosted by James Londis (right), president of the Washington Institute of Contemporary Issues, began airing weekly in August over WNTR, a commercial news/talk radio station in Washing-



ton, D.C. The program addresses a wide spectrum of current ethical dilemmas like tobacco advertising, separation of church and state, date rape, and health care for the poor.

### VOP Brings Stop-smoking Clinic to Airwaves.

The Voice of Prophecy radiobroadcast will air the Breathe-Free Plan to Stop Smoking in a series of 10 programs beginning November 7. The series of 15-minute broadcasts will lead up to the Great American Smokeout on November 17, the day designated by the American Cancer Society to challenge smokers all over the world to stop.

## ALSO IN THE NEWS

**Cashing in on "Olliemania"?** As Oliver North prepares to face trial sometime after the November elections for his role in the unauthorized operation to fund the contra rebels in Nicaragua, conservative Christian organizations such as Jerry Falwell's ministries are rallying to his support. Critics charge that they are using North's popularity to reap a financial bonanza through direct-mail appeals, reports Religious News Service. The pro-North groups hope to convince President Reagan to pardon North by getting millions of Americans to support a national petition.



RNS/Wide World

**Religious Network Premieres.** VISN, the new cable television network operated by mainline faith groups, made its debut September 19, reports Religious News Service. It will be available to about 6 million households during its first few weeks, but network officials have signed agreements with several of the largest cable TV operators and expect the potential audience ultimately to expand to 18.4 million homes.

A coalition of 20 Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant groups operates the network. Dissatisfaction with existing religious networks, which peaked with the PTL scandal in 1987, led cable TV industry leaders to take an instrumental role in the creation of VISN.

## CHURCH CALENDAR

- Oct. 30 NAD year-end meeting begins in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Nov. 2 Celebration '88 begins in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Nov. 5 Personal Ministries Day
- Nov. 5 Week of Prayer begins
- Nov. 12 Annual Sacrifice Offering
- Nov. 12 Ingathering Emphasis



# Building on the Pillars—5

The role  
of the  
prophet and  
the Bible  
—last in a series



## How We Survived 1888

B Y M A R T I N W E B E R

If you want to get a good Adventist discussion going, just mention 1888. Few subjects get our adrenalin pumping like the General Conference session of that year.

What really happened during those 19 days of meetings in a little wooden church? A century later we still scratch our heads over the meaning of Minneapolis. One fact, however, nobody disputes: Ellen White held our church together during that turbulent session. Some observers suggest that without her ministry of reconciliation, our denomination would not have survived the 1888 crisis intact.

While Adventists agree about Ellen White's importance in our history, convictions vary about the value of her spiritual gift today. You can find two extremes in the church: those who ignore or downplay her counsels, and those who (unintentionally) make her lord of the Scriptures.

According to the church's official statements of belief, both positions are unacceptable. In this fifth article of a series on understanding the message of 1888, let's search for a balanced attitude toward our prophet.

Ellen White herself had no doubt about her calling. Fearlessly and faithfully she rebuked, comforted, and counseled. But she refused the role of a theological referee, reminding church leaders that the Bible constitutes our final authority, not her writings. "We should make the Bible its own expositor" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 106). Yet some Adventists find it difficult to accept what the Bible says until they hear an amen from Ellen White.

I remember an experience I had conducting a witnessing seminar in the Chicago area. I explained that Jesus must be the center of every Bible study, lest we err like the

Pharisees whom Christ accused of searching the Scriptures to find eternal life while refusing to come to Him, the object of the Scriptures, in order to receive that life. I noted that the King James Version doesn't accurately represent the meaning of John 5:39, because it says Jesus told the Pharisees to "search the scriptures," when obviously they already were searching the Scriptures while rejecting Christ.

Right away a man's hand went up. "Pastor, the Spirit of Prophecy used that text in the way you say it shouldn't be used. She quotes John 5:39 when exhorting someone to read the Bible, to 'search the scriptures.' Do you think you know more about that text than the servant of the Lord does?"

Well, it was an awkward moment for me. Fortunately, I had been reading *The Desire of Ages*, where Ellen White quotes John 5:39 the opposite way, making the very point I was trying to get across. I identified the chapter where our brother could look it up and see for himself. I'm sure he finally accepted the true meaning of the text when he realized Ellen White endorsed it. But the Bible by itself wasn't good enough for him. He rejected the principle of *sola scriptura*—the Bible and the Bible only.

### Our Only Rule?

But some would ask, "In what sense is the Bible our only rule of faith and practice? The laws of the land, employee handbooks, the *Church Manual*, and countless other documents serve as rules of practice." True, but only in a limited sense. Corporate policies and even civil laws are not eternal absolutes. The Bible stands unique as a law unto itself, the standard by which all lesser authorities must be tested.



At this point you may be thinking: *If the Bible can be understood without the gift of prophecy, why do we need the red books at all?* Notice this inspired answer: "The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellowman has been distinctly specified in God's Word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 665). "Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (*Review and Herald*, Jan. 20, 1903, p. 15).

Whatever we need to live for God we can find, explicitly or implicitly, in the Bible itself. For example, God's Word doesn't specifically condemn tobacco, but it does teach the "body temple" principle. You wouldn't need Ellen White attending your church business meeting in order to disfellowship the Marlboro man. And how about cocaine? Do we need yet another prophet to tell us we must "just say no"? Not when we have biblical principles to guide us.

Does a prophet, then, have merely pastoral authority? No. Pastors and teachers receive indirect inspiration from the Spirit outside the

As you can imagine, the will of the Lord became confusing. Those people needed a final authority beyond their spiritual gifts. No wonder the New Testament encourages us to put latter-day prophets to the test: "Do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully: hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:20, 21, NASB).

Consider the Bereans. Paul was a prophet, yet the people of Berea did not accept anything he said without proving it for themselves by Scripture. Paul did not consider this doubting, but called them noble.

Many seem reluctant to act the part of good Bereans by testing prophetic messages. It's hard to examine truth for oneself. Human nature finds it is so much easier to default on our responsibility and simply take everything the preacher or the prophet teaches as gospel. But the Word of God is clear regarding "prophetic utterances": we must "examine everything *carefully*," considering time and place.

### Picking and Choosing

But isn't this testing process mere presumption? Can we pick and choose what is inspired and what isn't? Certainly we ought not to pick and choose what we want. When the Bible validates the instruction of

If we fail to test Ellen White's messages by the Bible, what could prevent some new prophet from joining her in that sacred circle of supreme authority?

Back in the 1890s, Anna Phillips Rice rose up claiming the same prophetic gift Ellen White had and won the confidence of some of our most influential church leaders, such as A. T. Jones. Fortunately Ellen White, in Australia at the time, caught wind of the crisis and put a damper on Anna's self-appointed ministry.

More than a dozen members claim to have inherited Ellen White's mantle of prophetic authority. Last summer on the camp meeting circuit I was confronted with several of them. In Maryland, someone reverently handed me a thick manila folder full of "prophetic counsels" that she valued on a par with Ellen White's books and the Bible.

Can you imagine the crisis in the church if large numbers of our members welcomed another prophet as having equal authority with Ellen White or the Bible, thus forcing both of them to be interpreted by new revelations?

Many of our fellow Christians resist the Adventist message because they can't accept some members' unauthorized claims about Ellen White. We need to meet our friends on the solid rock of *sola scriptura*.

As long as Ellen White lived, she remained on the forward edge of marching truth. Faithfully she submitted her writings to the Bible, keeping her mind open to new insights.

God constantly works to reveal new light through His Word. He intends that our proclamation of truth be based upon research, not rehash. The grand old pillars remain the same, certainly, but we must grow in our understanding of them. □



*Martin Weber is director of prayer ministries for the It Is Written television program, Thousand Oaks, California.*

**S**ome Adventists find it difficult to accept what the Bible says until they hear an amen from Ellen White.

Written Word. One would expect a direct revelation from God via a vision to be more reliable and authoritative than an indirect revelation received through personal study. Even so, prophetic messages must still be tested by the Bible.

An acquaintance once invited me to attend a nondenominational prayer meeting, which turned out to be a charismatic service. I sat there amazed as person after person jumped up with a prophetic message to bind the conscience of different ones in the audience, such as "Thus saith the Lord, 'I want John to sell his new car and be satisfied with a used one.'"

a preacher or prophet, we must pick up the cross even if it has splinters. We test by the Word and not by the flesh.

Anything that defines Scripture replaces it as the ultimate authority. That's why the Protestant Reformation taught that the Bible alone can rule our faith. "The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the end of all controversy and the foundation of all faith" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 39, 40). Here once again Ellen White places her writings beneath the greater light of God's Word. What else could we expect from a true prophet?





By Myron Widmer

For decades Seventh-day Adventist academies, colleges, and universities have supported carefully organized student intramural sports programs on campus.

In recent years, though, many Adventist academies and colleges have gone beyond the church's historic position and have begun fielding teams from basketball to ice hockey, for occasional games or for regular league play with other Adventist or non-Adventist schools and community teams.

For instance, one Adventist college is booked to play 21 games this year in a local league, and another awards more than \$70,000 yearly in athletic scholarships. One college supports a varsity team as an academy recruitment tool, and another blends competition and Christian witnessing through its elite athletic teams. Numerous academies support teams for play in local leagues.

Beyond schools, many local churches and denominational institutions historically have sponsored teams in local leagues or have created their own leagues, both for adults and children.

### Reaffirmation of the Church's Stance

In 1976 the church's Annual Council of the General Conference felt compelled to reaffirm the church's traditional stance on competition and sports and voted an 11-page document of guidelines. The document set forth the church's philosophy on competition and rivalry (in any event or arena, even academics), its objectives in sup-

porting organized physical activities, and its disdain of interorganizational sports.

The guidelines listed six reasons for opposing an organized program of interschool athletics for Adventist schools: (1) additional effort and attention would be required by the school's leaders; (2) coaches and leaders would spend a great amount of time on a few; (3) school facilities would be monopolized by a few; (4) educational outcomes may become secondary to the emphasis on winning; (5) Adventist objectives can be achieved more effectively through other approaches; (6) the inherent hazards of competitive rivalry may become exaggerated in interorganizational events.

Yet these 1976 guidelines have been only *guidelines*, not denominational *policy*. As a consequence, disparity has arisen between the guidelines, which oppose interorganizational sports, and the practice of many Seventh-day Adventist academies, colleges, churches, and institutions.

To resolve the disparity, members of the Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, Recreation Association—primarily North

American health and physical education teachers—requested in April 1986 that the church carefully examine the role of sports in the Adventist Church.

Their request stated: "Historically, the policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding interschool sports has been one of nonparticipation. However, there are presently a number of schools engaged in inter-

school sport programs, and we see a double standard.

"As professional educators, we see a need to study prayerfully whether or not sport can be used as a tool for personal growth and Christian witness. If, as a result of this study, we conclude that sport can be a positive influence, we would recommend that guidelines be established to aid in the development and control of such programs."

Their request ultimately reached the 1986 General Conference Annual Council. It approved the request and asked the GC officers to appoint a committee to study interschool sports. Soon after the GC Interschool Sports Study Committee was created, church leaders recognized that the sports issue was an international issue, and invited each division to create its own study committee.

Individual division reports, including North America's, were synthesized this summer into a policy statement to be voted upon at the 1988 GC Annual Council being held this month in Nairobi, Kenya.

Although similar in principle to the 1976 guidelines, the new docu-

**YES** **Inter-scholastic Sports and Competition** **NO**



# YES

BY WALT  
HAMERSLOUGH

For 28 years I supported, promoted, and taught the Seventh-day Adventist Church's traditional position of not participating in interorganizational sports (interschool and interchurch).

This, of course, resulted in numerous discussions with students, teachers, parents, and clergy. My stance was not a popular one, but I felt obligated to support the church's sentiments.

I cited the typical points of excessive time and money devoted to interorganizational activities, the possibility of self-glorification, and the evils of competition, and quoted from the Spirit of Prophecy.

I was always at a loss when individuals cited academies and colleges who supported such programs (we did not permit them at Loma Linda University, nor were they permitted at other General Conference institutions). Why could they go home on weekends and play with the home church team in a city league? And why did many of the

ment recommends a significant change: Though still formally opposed to interschool sports, the document would allow exceptions to the policy and outlines the process for approval—with final approval given by the respective divisions.

Backing the inclusion of the "exception" section are the majority of North America's health and physical education teachers who voted 52 to 6 in April 1988 that interschool sports are acceptable, as a tool for personal growth and Christian witness.

When the GC officers discussed the recommendation in August 1988, they disagreed with the "exception" provision and voted to prepare an alternative report to be given alongside the Interschool Sports Study Committee's report when it comes up for discussion and voting at this year's Annual Council. (The *Adventist Review* will report in its October 27 issue the action voted by Annual Council regarding interorganizational sports.)

In light of the continuing debate, strong emotions expressed, and disparity of present practice by numerous denominational entities, we asked two individuals with extensive knowledge and experience in the teaching of physical education and known for their strong stands on the role of interschool sports to respond to this question: Should the Seventh-day Adventist Church encourage and support interschool or interorganizational sporting events?

We encourage our readers to consider carefully the points and principles given by our writers, and we invite your comments.

*Myron Widmer is associate editor of the Adventist Review.*

# NO

BY JIM ROY

The cover photograph of the July 27, 1988, *Sports Illustrated* grabs you and won't let go. Trying to jump off the page at you is a pit bull terrier with fangs bared. The feature article suggests the growing pit bull dilemma is more an *owner* problem than a *dog* problem.

The author reminds readers that such dogs reflect traits our society actually admires—toughness, aggressiveness, and essentially, the will to win. The author says it simply: "The American pit bull terrier has become a reflection of ourselves that no one cares very much to see."<sup>1</sup>

Interschool sports has become to the Adventist Church what pit bulls are to society—not so much the problem, as a revelation of it; not so much the issue, as a reflection of you and me and the values we hold dear and admire.

Could it be that the question of interschool sports, like a nimble fly buzzing around our heads, continues on decade after decade because

people who spoke of the evils of sports watch baseball and football on TV, spend hours on the tennis court, play in golf tournaments, or play on a team in a bowling league? Why indeed?

My metamorphosis has taken place over the past few years as I have been unable to answer the above questions adequately, and have witnessed the positive contributions that sports programs have made on young people in schools and churches. The fact is that such activities have been a part of school and church curricula for more than 25 years. More than 80 percent of the Adventist colleges in North America and at least 25 academies have some kind of sports program.<sup>1</sup> In addition, numerous churches have teams in softball, basketball, and bowling leagues.

It appears, then, that a significant number of the Adventists in North America have accepted sports as an acceptable activity and feel it does not negatively affect their Christian experience. How can this be when many of us have grown up with the counsel that

we as a church have never seen it for what it really is? Could it be that we are more competitive than we want to admit? Is it fair to expect our schools to enforce a policy that we as individuals neglect?

## Sports and Competition

The lure of competition, like any lure, is deceptive. Though seemingly attractive, competition, I believe, ultimately leaves its participants with a fragile self-esteem and an inability to care about others.

Interschool sports are one form of competition. The question is not Should we let our students play, but rather Should we create opportunities for them to *compete* against each other? The element of competition is the whole reason for this discussion, for no one would question our students' getting together and enjoying noncompetitive activities.

Thus it becomes clear that one must see value in *competition* itself to encourage interschool sports. Since competition then is the real issue, "a precision definition is



# YES

we should view sports as anti-Christian and avoid activities that lead to rivalrous competition?

## Competition

Within the Adventist subculture, when the terms *competition* and *rivalry* are used, they are almost universally used in reference to sports. It is interesting that Mrs. White never used these words when she wrote on games and sports but rather when she gave counsel regarding competition and rivalry among physicians,<sup>2</sup> among gospel workers,<sup>3</sup> in household expenditures,<sup>4</sup> and in dress.<sup>5</sup>

We should also note that competition does not automatically lead to rivalry and bad feelings. The individual determines whether he will relate in a positive or negative manner just as he must choose to relate to scores of events in his life each day. It is imperative that Christians learn to make mature and proper choices as we experience such things as games, television, literature, leisure time,

food. The choice is ours.

## The Counsel of Ellen White

Inevitably the question must be asked, "What do we do with the counsel that has come from the Lord's messenger?" To answer this question, we must first look at the times in which she wrote. What was happening with regard to sports in the United States?

To put it succinctly, sport was receiving the most negative press it's ever had to handle, and was being condemned by a vast number of leaders of our nation. And justly so. Baseball was growing in popularity, and so were the problems of gambling and brawls between players and spectators. Gamblers reportedly controlled players.<sup>6</sup>

Football was becoming a national concern and its future questionable because of its brutality and numerous

deaths. Editors, legislators, ministers, and educators attacked it as corrupting American youth and ruining the goals of academic life. Critics said it fostered loafing, gambling, and drinking. Finally, the president of the United States threatened to ban the sport.<sup>7</sup> Horse racing and boxing, in which fighters pounded each other senseless with bare knuckles, were also under the influence and control of gamblers. The billiard room and bowling alley became hangouts for criminals and gangs. They too were associated with gambling, liquor, smoking, and profane language.<sup>8</sup>

Little wonder, then, that Ellen White joined many others in recommending that upstanding citizens avoid these activities and the inevitable consequences of cheating, drinking, game fixing, riotous behavior, and the strong criminal influence.

It is important to rec-

**Competition  
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and bad  
feelings**

# NO

essential to what follows," says Dick Winn, professor of the Religion Department of Pacific Union College, writing for that school's *Campus Chronicle*. "When speaking of competition, I am not talking about striving for excellence. I am not speaking of an inner quest to be one's best. . . . Rather, we will define competition as any goal-oriented situation in which the motivation for an action comes from the desire to exalt one's self above another. Thus we are speaking not of an event as such, but of a mental attitude."<sup>2</sup>

This definition cautions us against the tendency to think that "it's only a game," and it expands competition's influence to a much larger arena than just athletics. As the second most powerful force in the universe (second only to compassion), competition permeates everything it touches, including our games, marriages, highways, and workplaces.

That the question of the acceptability of interschool sports continues to be debated says something for

its mysterious staying power. Mysterious because the evidence against interschool sports is so overwhelming. The Scriptures, the Spirit of Prophecy, and even secular sources tip the scales heavily in favor of a cooperative approach to life. Let's look at each of these sources for their counsel.

## The Scriptures

The 66 books of the Bible reveal a God of unconditional love, whose Son modeled the principles of true greatness—humility and the ability to care about and serve someone else. In a word, compassion.

Scripture describes the great war in heaven and how a powerful angel, Lucifer, competed with God and how his attitude of rivalry continues on earth. The Bible also shares the tremendous story of John the Baptist and his ability to say of Christ—whom John's disciples said was his competitor—"He must increase and I must decrease."

During three and a half years of schooling, the most important les-

son the disciples learned from their Master was "how not to compete." We too must learn this lesson.

Indeed, Paul reminds us to "be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor" (Rom. 12:10, NASB). He adds a commonsense warning: "For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves . . . ; but when they . . . compare themselves . . . they are without understanding" (2 Cor. 10:12, NASB).

The Bible tells us we can do nothing to make God love us more. Competition encourages us to believe that we are accepted by others and by God because of *our* performance. God says ever so patiently, *I am your only dependable source of self-esteem*. Interschool sports particularly places their participants' self-esteem at the mercy of the outcome of the event. Those who push for interschool sports say that others can be won to Christ by being good at basketball. Christ encourages us to win others to Him through the beauty



ognize that some of Ellen White's counsel is time-, place-, and/or person-specific. For example: In the late 1890s she wrote that ministers should not spend their money on bicycles<sup>9</sup> and that "the exhibitions in the bicycle craze are an offense to God."<sup>10</sup> This was a time in our history when the nation was headed into a serious financial crisis. Writers were suggesting that bicycles led women and innocent girls into ruin and disgrace and caused women to assume an immodest posture. And bicycle costumes invited improper remarks.<sup>11</sup>

Ellen White also gave advice concerning politics. "His children are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers." "God calls upon the teachers in our schools not to become interested in the study of political questions" (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 483, 484). Today we teach political science in our academies and colleges and have numerous individuals serving their country at many levels of city, state, and federal

government. Would she recommend that they not do so today?

It is important that we read the prophet's writings, analyze the texts according to the conditions of the day in which the counsel was given, and then make a modern-day application of the principles.

### Times Are Different in 1988

I am the first to agree that ideally our schools should be located in a rural setting where the student's academic, social, and religious life, as well as a manual work program, can be carefully planned.

Such was the situation in the early days of Adventist education. Life was simple, and people worked hard to make ends meet. Farming, which was carried on in many of our schools, was hard work, and manual labor was the order of the day. Exercise was provided through work. Little leisure time existed as the few hours that remained in a day after classes and work and before the lights went out were devoted to studying.

Rural life did not provide much in

the way of amusement, and with little information of the "outside world" furnished through the media, it was not difficult to remain relatively isolated from temptation. The counsel given by Ellen White was wise and promoted the simple life that was conducive to the Adventist philosophy of education.

The typical educational program in 1988 is vastly different from that during the time in which Ellen White wrote. Students live at home and ride the bus to school, or are driven to school, or drive their own automobiles to schools located in either a large metropolitan area or town of substantial size.

Fewer and fewer students work, and those who do usually are not involved in manual labor. Home chores are few and leisure time abounds. Opportunities for amusement in cities are legion. Students attend movie theaters and popular concerts regularly, frequent amusement parks, bowl, roller-skate, party, and cruise the streets. They are constantly exposed to and en-

and simplicity of the truth.

### Spirit of Prophecy

Ellen White is no less clear in her counsel. She gives us wise insights into the difference between re-creative play and destructive play.

The issue of interschool sports was a relevant topic in the Adventist Church at the turn of the century. Ellen White's writings reveal a deep understanding of the issues and provide specific counsels—counsels too clear to be misunderstood—rather than generalized counsel.

When Battle Creek College became involved in sports, she pleaded, "For Christ's sake call a halt at the Battle Creek College, and consider the after-workings upon the heart and the character and principles, of these amusements copied after the fashion of other

schools."<sup>3</sup> Later she continued, "They act as if the school were a place where they were to perfect themselves in sports, as if this were an important branch of their education, and they come armed and equipped for this kind of training. This is all wrong, from beginning to end."<sup>4</sup>

The expense of the ventures also drew her attention<sup>5</sup>—a factor just as serious and relevant today, as teams need coaches, facilities, equipment, uniforms, transportation, and insurance.

In 1974, *Ministry* magazine published Ron Graybill's article entitled "Ellen G. White and Competitive Sports." After citing clear guidelines from the pen of inspiration against competitive sports, he shares, "I am well aware that such counsel falls on our ears with a dull thud. But we must try to resist the

temptation to tune these counsels out. When we examine the dangers of athletic sports, many of us, if we are candid about it, will discover that we ourselves are the victims of many of the dangers from which we so nobly seek to shield the youth."<sup>6</sup> Further evidence of Ellen White's counsel regarding interschool sports and competition is found in a consistent thread running through all of her writings. She consistently and lovingly reminds us to accept, as our own, the servanthood of Jesus and to be on guard against anything that would lead us away from His example.

### Secular Research

While a biblical/prophetic basis should be enough to steer away from interschool sports, secular writers too are pumping out research data that recommends the same shift. The contents and volume of the research data are exciting and embarrassing at the same time. Exciting in that research is proving the biblical tenets of unselfishness and cooperation to be more

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**YES** encouraged to participate in experimenting with cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. They are bombarded by the media. Newspapers, magazines, radios in every room and car, and TV and videos are available even in the most humble homes. The challenge of being a Seventh-day Adventist teenager in 1988 is indeed a difficult one.

## SDA Sports

While some suggest that sports promote false idols, it is interesting that church publications frequently feature sports personalities and report the way in which they have witnessed for their church or a lifestyle that the church promotes.

We are certainly sending out a message that there are positive lessons that can be learned from these individuals and from their activities.

There are also a number of academies and colleges in the United States that have interorganizational

sports programs as part of their curriculum, including Portland Adventist, Takoma, Shenandoah Valley, and La Sierra academies, as well as Walla Walla, Union, Southwestern Adventist, Atlantic Union, and Columbia Union colleges.<sup>12</sup> Testimonies abound concerning the witness opportunities as well as nonchurch members getting to know something about "that school down the street."

We have modernized the church's approach to presenting the gospel so as to appeal to our youth. The ministry has changed over the years with regard to preaching style, music, activities, and the use of the media. This is not to the satisfaction of all church members, but each generation is different. Change must take place so that our schools and churches will be places where our youth want to be.

Our approach to sports has also changed. It is time to recognize that we are living in a different era and we need to keep pace. Our goals are the same—preparing our youth for

service in this life and for life in the hereafter. We want to do nothing that will detract from these goals.

It is important that individuals who question the place of sports in SDA schools recognize that sports programs at Notre Dame and UCLA are not the same as those offered in a small Christian school. The majority of the Adventist population know only sports as they learn about them from the media, and the media does not portray *Christian* sports. In Christian sports there is no unethical recruiting, no drug-taking, no "do anything to win" philosophy, no cheating so that players can remain eligible, no glorification of individuals or the team. Sports is part of the curriculum just as are band, choir, orchestra, gymnastics, the newspaper, and student government. We are not competing for national championships or recognition.

Possibly the question is not Should we? but How should we? The key to a successful sports program is competent leadership. We must have coaches who emphasize

**NO** effective in the classroom and workplace; and embarrassing in that our church seems headed in the opposite direction.

Alfie Kohn, in his well-documented book *No Contest: The Case Against Competition*, presents compelling evidence that competition's role in society is that of culprit rather than helper. Kohn sweeps away some of the myths that surround it. While some people assume competition is necessary and indeed improves achievement, Kohn plainly says, "Superior performance not only does not require competition; it usually seems to require its absence."<sup>7</sup>

This statement, shocking to some, is based on the weight of evidence produced by such people as David Johnson and Roger Johnson from the University of Minnesota. They undertook the task of reviewing 122 studies of classroom achievement conducted from 1924 through 1980. Their findings: "Sixty-five found that cooperation promotes higher achievement than competition,

eight found the reverse, and 36 found no significant difference. Children simply do not learn better when education is transformed into a competitive struggle."<sup>8</sup>

The Cooperative Learning Center, of which the Johnsons are codirectors, has started a small revolution in the educational and business world and has public school teachers and business professionals alike flocking to attend one of their seminars in hopes of learning the secrets of cooperative interaction. Others are attending public universities and receiving training through the master's degree level in noncompetitive activities. The popular book *Getting to Yes* is but another reminder that even our communication is more effective when we struggle to arrive at goals that are mutually attainable, rather than entering negotiations with a win/

lose frame of mind.<sup>9</sup>

## Practical Considerations

Beyond the studies that show competition to be an inhibiting factor in performance, I would point out that public schools and colleges are up to their eyebrows in trouble because of interschool sports programs.

The media constantly reports new problems of corruption, improper funding, low athlete matriculation rates, lowered academic standards, improper athlete or fan behavior, and school budgets stretched to the breaking point. Maybe that is why one public school superintendent from a nearby county expressed to an Adventist colleague of mine, "If you don't have a sports program, why in the world would you want to start one?"

From a practical point of view, enough positives just don't exist to con-

**Our hearts  
weren't designed  
to accommodate  
the spirit of  
rivalry and  
the spirit of  
servanthood  
at the  
same time.**



the thrill of participation, the challenge of doing one's best. We should be known because we are Christians in our play as well as in our religion. We help a player when he has fallen; we do not heckle officials or opposing players. We applaud good play—ours and theirs. Our players, and spectators, should exhibit the best sportsmanship of any school or church. We must educate church members concerning the proper role of sports in one's life. We need to have a Christian model of sports. If this is not part of our curriculum, where will our youth learn it?

Yes, we can have sports in our schools and churches. But not in every location. It should be an alternative that is available after it can be demonstrated that a need exists and

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that proper leadership is available to keep the program in proper perspective. The program must be reviewed periodically to see if the established goals and objectives are being met and if the program should continue.

It is imperative that we teach our young people how to relate to sports in a Christian way, and that they learn that sports are only a small part of their life and not an all-consuming force. We must proceed slowly and carefully, ever keeping before us the goals of Christian education.

With constant and fervent prayer, we can keep Christ foremost in inter-organizational sports and provide another avenue that will lead many into a Spirit-filled life and ultimately into the kingdom. □

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sider interschool sports; from a spiritual perspective, the issue takes on eternal implications.

The proponents of interschool sports for Adventist schools believe that Adventist coaches can guide our students and use competition as a learning tool, thus preventing its ill effects. They point to the innocence of the games and describe their intentions and abilities to control the outcomes. To a microscopic degree they are correct, but I'd say it is impossible to influence to any significant extent the hearts of those participating.

Competition might concede the good behavior of its participants during games, even with prayer beforehand and Bible studies afterward. Ultimately such competition will squeeze the life out of the soul until only a wisp of spiritual breath remains. Our hearts weren't designed to accommodate the spirit of rivalry and the spirit of servanthood at the same time. I am convinced our sincerity cannot overrule this law any more than the law of gravity.

## Competitive Behaviors

The issue involving interschool sports doesn't require a correct committee decision as much as a thorough soul-searching by each member of the church. If we as individuals cling to competitive behaviors, it won't matter what a far-away committee decides.

On the other hand, a proper committee decision, combined with our understanding support, will encourage our educators as they put their minds to the task of teaching cooperation rather than competition. Cooperation can be taught, and those learning it are finding the process more enjoyable and the results more productive.

Dr. George Akers, General Conference director of the church's worldwide educational system, summarizes it well. "We as God's children are in a dress rehearsal preparing for the society of the universe, which is based on the law of cooperation; Satan's substitute is competition."<sup>10</sup>

Let's stop the fly buzzing around

our heads and focus on the work of service and compassion we have been called to do. □

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# A Petit Parable

What to do when the casserole flops

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲  
BY BILL ILES

**H**ear now the parable of the burned casserole. You've been invited to a potluck occasion. Knowing it will be delightful, you decide to go. You accept the invitation. You plan and do some preparing. When the time comes, however, your casserole is a complete failure. Beyond hope. Unusable. Unacceptable.

Do you:

- (a) stay away?
- (b) try to slip in with your unworthy casserole and hope no one identifies it as yours?
- (c) go, feel guilty, make excuses, and think that your host and everyone else is looking at you disapprovingly?
- (d) go, feel welcome, and have a good time?

Answer for yourself before reading on; your answer may tell you something about yourself.

The interpretation of the parable is both heavenly and eternal.

The action words are *invited, decide, accept, plan, prepare, fail*.

It turns out that Jesus is the host. He meets you at the door and says, "What a coincidence! Everyone's casserole failed. But not to worry; I've enough casseroles for everyone—even for people who did not accept or who did not come."

Wouldn't it have been sad if your flawed casserole had discouraged you and kept you away?

Christian friend, let every casserole in your future remind you that the heavenly invitation depends on your decision and acceptance. But your welcome is not a quid pro quo—a swap, an earned reward. It is an undeserved benefit because Jesus has enough casseroles for us all. □

*Bill Iles is assistant to the president at Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.*



# Librarians Host First Dialogue on Adventist Writing, Publishing

*Oakwood session brings attendees from five countries to discuss mutual concerns.*

In a historic first meeting, Adventist librarians, journalists, writers, and editors talked about what they hold in common—the printed word.

The Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL) hosted the panel dialogue on July 8 as the culmination of their four-day annual conference at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama, July 5-8. The conference attracted 42 librarians from the United States, Mexico, Canada, West Indies, and the Bahamas.

"How do you see your mission and how does that relate to the mission of the church? What do we have in common?" asked Kit Watts, assistant editor of the *Adventist Review* and former librarian at Andrews University.

The panel included Penny Estes Wheeler, acquisitions editor of the *Review and Herald* Publishing Association; Kyna Hinson, journalism teacher at Oakwood College and formerly on the editorial staff of *Message* magazine; and Ken Greenman, teacher at Takoma Academy in Maryland and a prize-winning writer of short stories, plays, and poetry.

## Lively Discussion

In lively give-and-take, the librarians pressed home some of their concerns—the use of acid-free paper for publications, accurate information on the title page of books, and the need for better-written Adventist books and magazines.

While no resolutions were adopted, the panel sparked several ideas for future discussion, including the need for a journal to provide

*By Taylor Ruhl, 1987-1988 ASDAL president, and library director, Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.*

an outlet for Adventists in the creative arts; the possibility that librarians might publish reviews of Adventist books; and that ASDAL consider presenting awards for authors of SDA books and articles of outstanding quality.

Earlier in the ASDAL conference, Don Yost, General Conference archivist, organized a one-day session devoted to locating, using, and preserving Adventist materials. Topics ranged from "Sources for SDA Black History," by Dr. Jannith Lewis, to "Disaster Preparedness," by Dr. Randall Butler, outlining how librarians can help avert destruction of valuable materials by fire, water, or other disasters.

## Cooperative Efforts

One of the major cooperative efforts that have drawn Adventist librarians together for the past 15 years is the production of the *SDA Periodical Index*, which gives fingertip access to more than 30 of the church's major magazines, including *Advent-*

*ist Review*, *Ministry*, *Signs of the Times*, *Journal of Adventist Education*, and *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. Newly appointed editor Ed Collins announced that the indexing covering 1987 is off the press, available to institutions for \$40, and to individuals for \$15. (For information, write SDA Periodical Index, Webb Memorial Library, Loma Linda, CA 92354-9989).

The obituary file constitutes another of ASDAL's massive efforts. Harvey Brenneise, of Andrews University, reported that in addition to the computerized index to all obituaries appearing in the *Adventist Review* and its predecessor, the *Review and Herald*, the file now includes the complete run of the *Lake Union Herald* and the *Pacific Union Recorder*. The file is widely recognized as an invaluable resource in Adventist history, boasting nearly 125,000 entries.

## New Officers

New ASDAL officers elected for 1988-1989 include: Keith Clouten, (Canadian Union College), president; Margaret von Hake (Columbia Union College), president-elect; Alberta Holmon (Oakwood College), secretary; Chloe Foutz (Union College), treasurer; and Taylor Ruhl (Pacific Union College), ASDAL *Action* editor.

## Burundi Returns Church Properties

The Lord has done marvelously," declared J. J. Nortey, Africa-Indian Ocean Division president, as he broke the news that the properties of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Burundi, confiscated by the former military government, will be given back to the church. Governors and the director for religious affairs have been charged to execute the government order immediately.

The announcement, published in a government decree signed by Lt. Col. Aloys Kadoyi, Burundi minister of the interior, states that the government "recognizes the

right of ownership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church over all the items—furnishings and buildings—found on the Buganda property."

The military decree invited the Adventist Church to contact the Ministry of Education to negotiate for taking over the Kivoga educational facilities belonging to the church. This facility has been under government control since 1979, long before the four-year ban on Sabbath worship and seizure of Adventist properties. Silas Senkoma, president of the Burundi association, and his team of elders are still negotiating for Kivoga.



# Investment Continues to Report Miracles

**A**lthough Sabbath school Investment started as an insignificant experiment 83 years ago by a teacher with her class of five children, it has turned into a significant contribution to Adventist world missions. An increase of \$555,000 over the previous year made 1987, with a total of \$4,205,240, the best year ever for this program.

In May 1986 a California couple accepted a unique Investment challenge. They selected their best previous month for their business as a basis for their Investment goal. If the Lord provided an increase over that month, they would give the first \$7,500 for missions. By the middle of the month the manager of their business, who knew nothing of the commitment, exclaimed, "I don't understand what's going on, but sales have increased dramatically this month!" Their previous best month had been May 1985, with a profit of \$66,000, much of which went back into expanding the business. Profits for May 1986 came to \$99,000. The couple gave a check for \$7,500 to Investment. The rest was a Godsend, as they needed the funds to pay for a new branch office.

Inspired by this story, an accountant and a dentist in Maryland decided to get involved in Sabbath school Investment. The accountant said, "I will give the money budgeted for promotion this year to Sabbath school Investment and ask the Lord to bring me the business." His normal increase of clients in a year was 8 to 10. In the first quarter of his experiment the Lord gave him 13 new clients, with two more coming shortly. These new accounts would bring in more than \$30,000.

The dentist pledged 25 percent of the increase for each month that showed a gain over the same month the year before. Although the January 1988 receipts proved slightly lower than the previous year, February's receipts showed a 40 percent gain and March a 50 percent gain. Each month since has shown a

substantial gain. The dentist commented, "I have had an unusual month now and then when receipts would be substantially higher, but never have I experienced anything like this!"

These business and professional

people all stated that they wanted to be used by God to do something special for missions, especially now with the work growing so rapidly around the world and funds so desperately needed. They felt they were partners with God.

## ANNOUNCING THE NEW

# Friendship

## ISSUE

### From the Adventist Review

The next time someone asks you, "Who are Adventists?" hand them this friendly answer from the editors of the *Review*.

It introduces them to 25 church members from the prime minister of Uganda to the conductor of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. In a few words, they each express their personal faith.

In addition, some of the church's best communicators tell why they embrace our fundamental beliefs. Richard Duerksen, Pacific Union College,

shares the joys of the Sabbath, and Dr. Richard L. Neil, Loma Linda University, reveals the benefits of our lifestyle.

The *Review* "Friends" issue introduces Adventists as people who find happiness in their convictions. Make it your witnessing tool at county fairs, evangelistic meetings, seminars, and in personal contacts.

Color, 32 pages. US\$2.00 each; 2-5 copies, US\$1.75 each; 6-99 copies, US\$1.10 each; 100-999 copies, US\$.90 each; 1,000+ copies, US\$.60 each.



**This is the way  
you want people  
to learn about  
Adventists.**

**Call your ABC to order.**



# Baptisms Reward Book Worker

Many people in Syracuse, New York, know something about Seventh-day Adventists because of a literature evangelist who strongly believes in her work.

Rosetta B. Harris, a mother and homemaker, began working part-time as a literature evangelist in the South Atlantic Conference. She says, "Prayer is the main source of strength in my life. Through prayer and hard work, I've found there's nothing the Lord won't do when we ask Him."

In 1987 Rosetta asked God to give her 20 baptisms as a result of her



Rosetta B. Harris

work. She reports, "I asked Him for 20 souls and He blessed me with 63!"

Explaining how she works, Rosetta states that she first sells the books, then returns to the homes to invite her customers to Revelation seminars. Bible studies follow the seminars to prepare

the people for baptism.

This past year her sales amounted to \$15,750. But her souls won to the church cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Rosetta will be happy with whatever God gives her. She says she is just glad to be a frontline soldier for her Lord.

## German Youth Hold First Camp Meeting

About 1,100 young Adventists from all parts of Germany gathered June 16-19 for the first youth camp meeting, organized by the West and South German Union conferences. The meeting took place on the Waldenbuch campground near Stuttgart.

"To Win Life" was the theme for the meetings. John Graz, youth director of the Euro-Africa Division, delivered messages designed to motivate the young people to make decisions for Christ.

While games, fun, and sports played a part in the schedule, the Bible served as the center of interest. Radio and newspaper correspondents came on Friday, June 17, to see the young people set a world record for copying the Bible by hand. They accomplished the task in one hour.

Fifteen young people were baptized Friday evening before 1,500 guests. At the end of the baptismal service they all broke bread in the shape of a fish, as a

sign of Christian fellowship.

On Sabbath the tent was overcrowded with more guests, many of whom assisted in workshops during the afternoon. Well-known lecturers spoke on such topics as the New Age movement, life without alcohol, Christians and sex, and faith and science. The lectures sparked lively discussions.

The Sabbath evening program offered a variety of presentations. In one of the more memorable programs, young people from Essen put on a portrayal of a chess game between *mors et vita* (death and life).

Sunday morning featured more music and a last message by John Graz, who appealed to his young listeners to make a personal decision for Christ. Many accepted his invitation. At the end of the meeting, hundreds of balloons drifted into the countryside carrying red cards bearing a message of the good news of Jesus.

## BROWN RICE JUBILEE

According to Webster's Dictionary, a jubilee is a special celebration, especially a 50th anniversary. At Lundberg Family Farms we are celebrating our 50th year of rice farming in California.

To celebrate, we've created a very special blend of seven different rice varieties grown on our farm. It's called Lundberg Jubilee.



Jubilee showcases the exotic fragrance and color of our russet-red Wehani,

the rich ebony of Black Japonica, and our golden long grain. It features the tasty, nut-like flavor of short grain, and the chewy texture of mochi sweet rice.

Add to that our short and medium grain red rices, and the sum is exciting dining, excellent nutrition and good taste!



We also offer fragrant Wehani, and four other exciting blends: Country-wild, Sweet

Wehani, Wild Blend, and Short and Sweet. Try these blends and find out why East West magazine calls Lundberg rices "The Best."

For free information on these and other brown rice products, please write to: Lundberg Family Farms, P.O. Box 369, Dept. D2, Richvale, CA 95974.





# Safari Leads Student to Sobering Conclusions on Poverty and Injustice

**L**ife isn't fair! At least for many citizens of this world it isn't. Many children are born in areas where cruel injustices ensure lives of malnutrition, hunger, disease, and indescribable poverty.

Born in Africa but having lived in the United States for several years, I am encouraged to see a concern among some fellow Adventists to remedy some of these injustices. Although there are Adventists who give only tax-deductible contributions to the mission fund and donate cast-off clothes to Dorcas, many committed members generously and unselfishly give to others. This latter group demonstrates a disinterested love that influences me and many other young people in the church. It took a safari of 2,800 miles (4,500 kilometers) across western Africa to enable me to fully grasp some implications for us in the affluent world today.

The contrast between the two worlds is immense. While we enjoy and fellowship over large, well-prepared Sabbath potlucks with a good assortment of rich desserts, fellow human beings are surviving on just one meal every other day! As we sit on our cushioned pews listening to melodies on organs costing thousands of dollars and reflecting upon beautiful stained-glass windows, fellow Christians—Seventh-day Adventists—worship in members' homes, in open fields, or if fortunate, in simple one-room churches.

We must ask, What do our luxurious "representative" institutional buildings and expensive lifestyle represent to the poor? When I look at the affluent lives of so many SDAs, I sense an inconsistency in many of our lives. We pray for the poor and

give our contributions without disrupting our fast-paced, smooth-flowing lives. We preach the love of Christ, yet how much love do we show those financially and socially below us? How much is required of us? How much are we expected to become personally involved?

One particular incident on my trip across West Africa stands out clearly in my mind. After spending a memorable night in a small village, we packed up to leave. As the villagers gathered around to say goodbye I slipped off to wander around one last time. I came across a dear old lady—old to look at, owing to poor nutrition and a life of toil. However, she had a baby and was probably only around 35. She had ground up maize and was cooking it for herself and her child. Her tiny baby appeared sick and malnourished, desperately in need of even the small nourishment the meager meal would provide. Despite this, the woman shared with

me all that she had. I couldn't help remembering Christ's parable of the widow who gave what she couldn't afford, who willingly gave all.

We have so much to offer, yet how often we let our opportunities pass. I ask myself, When was the last time I gave all that I had? Before spending to enlarge or beautify our buildings and churches, we could remember the simple, modest standards we as a church claim to uphold. If less of our abundant wealth and resources went toward outward appearances, imagine the benefits we could provide to others whose only misfortune in life was being born into the wrong circumstances.

The readiness to share I found in the rural African villages touched me deeply. If we could remember the African woman who offered the little food that she so desperately needed, perhaps we would also give according to our wealth. By living simpler lives with only what we really need, we could put all our excess wealth to such great use in aiding others.

Life isn't always fair. But it is the duty of those of us who have so much to make life a little fairer for others.

## Heart Team Patients Well One Year Later

**O**ne year after Sydney Adventist Hospital's most recent volunteer heart team visit to Tonga, all patients operated on in 1986 and 1987 continue to do well, reports team coordinator Dr. John Wallace. Wallace visited Tongan and Fijian doctors and Ministry of Health officials as a follow-up to last year's visit to Tonga by the team.

"Emaloni, a 14-year-old whose plight was featured on TV's *Mike Willessee Show* last year, is doing so well I found it difficult to believe it was the same boy," said Wallace. "Before the operation Emaloni was extremely sick and emaciated. Now he looks like a normal well-built Tongan lad." Another very sick patient the team treated was Makeleta, a mother of

five who could not care for her family. The doctor reported, "When I visited Makeleta in her home last week she looked very well. She can now do everything she needs to."

All six children sponsored by the team to Sydney's Prince of Wales Children's Hospital at the end of last year are also doing well. Dr. Alan Farnsworth performed the operations for complex congenital abnormalities that were too difficult to treat in Tonga.

Discussions with doctors at Vaiola Hospital in Tonga revealed seven more patients on the waiting list for heart surgery sometime in the next two years. Although these do not make a sufficient number for a team visit this year, a visit may be needed sometime in 1989.

*By Margaret Syme, Newbold College freshman, who went on safari with her father, the Africa-Indian Ocean Division ADRA director, and gained new insights on life.*



## Prayer Circle for Evangelism

The following pastor-evangelists in the North American Division would appreciate the prayers of *Adventist Review* readers as they conduct evangelistic meetings during Harvest 90.

Information to be included in this listing, including opening and closing dates, should be sent to your union Ministerial Association secretary or local conference Ministerial Association secretary three months in advance of the opening date.—W. C. Scales, Jr., NAD Ministerial Association Secretary, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

### ATLANTIC UNION

Dell/Speilman/Robinson, through November 9, Elmira, New York  
Ramos/Martinez/Riveira, through November 12, Brooklyn, New York  
Robert and Pat Manning, through November 4, Farmingdale, Maine  
Ken Blake, through December 8, Portsmouth, New Hampshire  
Michael Sady, through November 14, Central Square, New York  
Abel Rosario, through November 17, Bronx, New York

### CANADIAN UNION

E. Brake, through October 31, Glovertown, Newfoundland  
Dan Dupuis, through October 26, North Sydney, Nova Scotia

### COLUMBIA UNION

J. Wayne Coulter, through October 15, West Wilmington, Delaware  
Les Osborn, through November 6, Glen Campbell, Pennsylvania  
J. Sarli/R. De Oliveira, through October 29, Newark, New Jersey  
Richard Byrd, through November 5, Johnstown, Pennsylvania

### LAKE UNION

Dan Collins, through November 5, Jackson, Michigan  
David Gotshall, through November 7, Mio, Michigan  
R. Peterson/Mark Fox, through November 4, Alton, Illinois  
Phil Colburn, through October 31, Delton, Michigan  
J. Gallimore/D. Chong, through November 19, Holland, Michigan  
Jan Follett, through December 14, Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Chico Rivera, through October 15, Vincennes, Indiana

### MID-AMERICA UNION

Don Shelton/M. Kurtz, through October 15, Bismarck, North Dakota  
Rich Todden/Jim Hornung, through December, Dickinson, North Dakota  
Dan McGee, through November 12, Hannibal, Missouri  
Chester Schurch, through November 3, Burlington, Iowa  
Neal Dye, through November 11, Poplar Bluff, Missouri  
M. Luckiesh, through November 17, Thief River Falls, Minnesota  
M. L. Atwood, through November 18, Yankton, South Dakota  
Donovan Kurtz, through November 20, Bowman, North Dakota

Sylvester Case, through November 5, Farmington, New Mexico

### NORTH PACIFIC UNION

Arnold Scherencel, through October 15, Grants Pass, Oregon  
Suk Bai Kong, through October 15, Portland, Oregon  
Ernest Wheeler, through November 2, Toledo, Oregon  
Phil Dunham, through October 23, Canyonville, Oregon

### SOUTHERN UNION

George Harsha, through November 19, Lake City, Florida  
Dave Weigley, through October 15, St. Petersburg, Florida  
Ben Wheeler, through November 4, Westminster, South Carolina

### SOUTHWESTERN UNION

David Moench, through October 30, Magnolia, Arkansas

## NEW SERIES FOR TEENS



### A Horse for Pat

Pat wants a horse . . . but his stepdad can't afford one. Especially one like the \$6,000 thoroughbred that belongs to Hank, the sharp-tongued neighbor girl. So Pat saves up just enough money for an old swayback horse named Fred. He's determined to get Fred, but you'll be surprised at what happens next.

### Give Me a Break

Angie thinks she's a jinx . . . Does she really bring people bad luck? A series of wild events convince her that it's true. She decides that the best way to keep from hurting others is to avoid getting close to anyone. Then she makes a friend who might change her mind.

### Escape From Fear

Jeff wants to be brave . . . A camping trip meets with disaster. Jeff must leave his injured father alone in a mountain snowstorm and find his way down a poorly marked trail in the dark. Where will he find the courage he needs?



Paperback. US\$6.95, Cdn\$9.40 each.



# THE SHARING BOX

BY BONNIE MOYERS

In the living room of the Moyers' home sits a cardboard box called the Sharing Box. In it goes outgrown clothes and toys. When the box is full, the things in it are given to poor people.

One afternoon Mother came away from the telephone looking very sad.

"What's wrong, Mama?" four-year-old Ricky asked as he saw tears in her eyes.

"The Nichols family, who lives down the road, just had their house burn down. They lost all they had—all their food, clothes, tools, and furniture. I feel so sorry for them. I wish we had some clothes their size, but I think we can find some things for them from our welfare center."

Mother went to the kitchen and started looking for food and dishes

she could spare for the Nichols family. Ricky sat, thinking. Wayne, the youngest Nichols child, was just two years older than him. Ricky went to his room and came out with a rubber ball in one hand and his favorite dump truck in the other.

"That's nice," Mother said when she saw what Ricky was giving. "But are you sure you want to give away that truck? Isn't that your favorite dump truck?"

"Yes," Ricky admitted. "But I want Wayne to have it."

"Jesus is especially happy when we give nice things to others. It's like giving nice things to Him," agreed Mother.

Ricky went to Grandma's while Mother drove to the welfare center. Then she took the clothes and

things from the Sharing Box and went to see the Nichols family at Mr. Nichols' parents' house.

"Here are some things you might be able to use," Mother said. "And Ricky sent these toys to Wayne."

"Thank you!" replied Mrs. Nichols. "We appreciate your help."

"Oh, boy!" cried Wayne. "Something to play with. Thanks!" He took the ball and orange plastic dump truck eagerly. Soon he was bouncing the ball on the sidewalk and playing with the dump truck.

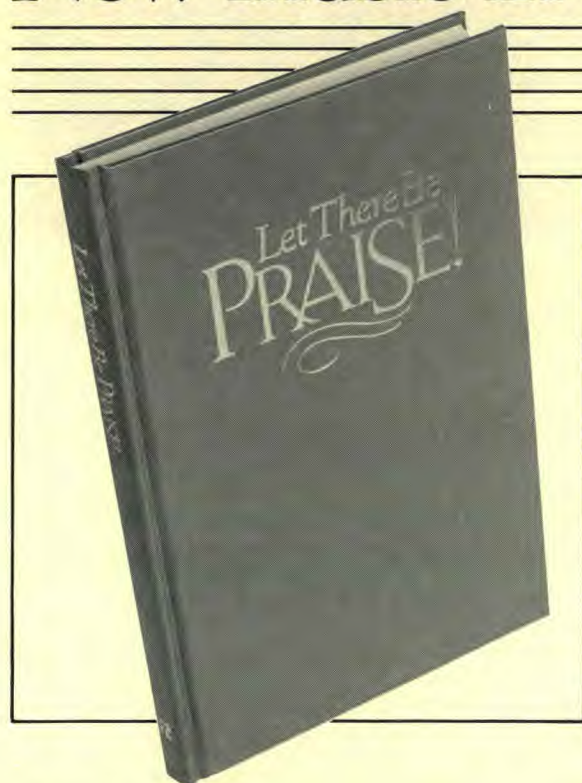
Mother visited for a while, then drove back to Grandma's. "Did Wayne like the toys?" Ricky asked.

"He certainly did!" Mother told him. "He thanked me for them and said those toys would always be special to him."

Ricky looked at the empty box. "I like the Sharing Box!" he smiled.

"So do I," Mother answered as she gave Ricky a hug.

## New music in a low-cost songbook



A new songbook is off the presses of the Review and Herald.

*Let There Be Praise!* has songs that have touched your heart in recent years, but are impossible to find in old "auditorium songbooks." It has sweeter choruses.

More spirituals. Scripture songs. And compositions by contemporary artists arranged for group singing.

It also keeps 95 old favorites—many with new arrangements that reduce sharps and flats. Lowering the key takes the squeak out of songs like "We Are Nearing



Home."

The entire songbook is organized by themes, so that you can quickly find songs that match a worship talk or evangelistic sermon. And when you turn to the chosen verses, you'll be happy to see large,

easy-to-read type.

If you're ready for a new low-cost songbook for singing bands, worships, or camp meetings, take a look at *Let There Be Praise!*

Available at Adventist Book Centers.

Hardcover, 175 songs. US\$7.95, Cdn\$10.75.





# HEALTHY TENSIONS

BY ANDREA LUXTON

I grew up in a rural area of England where to be a practicing Christian was strange, and to be an Adventist was rather like having a disease.

I remember walking down the street in the age of miniskirts with my Adventist "regulation length" skirt, hearing peers taunt, "Why don't you wear it down to your ankles!" Earlier I recall how with all the obstinacy a 6-year-old could muster, I refused to draw pictures of "going shopping" next to the word "Saturday" and "going to church" next to the word "Sunday" (my first rebellion against academic authority). I was proud (if sometimes embarrassed) to be an Adventist. And I was not afraid to say what my church was all about.

Now, years later, I am still proud to be an Adventist, but my definitions of the church come less easily. Perhaps that is because my ideals for the church do not always coincide with the reality of the church as I perceive it. Yet my ideals for the church have sprung from my experience within that system. Maybe my dreams for the church are best expressed in the coexistence of a series of tensions I already see operating within Adventism.

## I. Inward/Outward

I see the first tension as one between the inward-looking church and the outward-looking church. As a teacher, some of my greatest professional growth has come through honestly examining student evaluations or asking myself why class X is going badly. Unless we can look at ourselves (preferably through the eyes of other people) and even laugh at ourselves, we will not grow.

Some of the individuals in the church who have most positively influenced my Christian experience have been those who first identified themselves with the church and then looked openly at its mistakes, with the intention of being part of the solution.

Yet this view inward must be balanced with a view outward. Until we walk in another person's shoes, we do not begin to understand that person. Are we willing to learn how a person feels who cannot "believe" because tragedy has left him or her without a belief in anything? Will we take time to listen to the person whose life choices we find unacceptable? Only as we look inward to examine ourselves honestly and then outward to see how others are feeling will we be the growing, caring church we can be.

## II. Striving/Tolerance

The second tension is the tension between striving for excellence, and tolerance for individual weakness. I believe God asks for the best and deserves the best—in everything. The theology of creation implies that our creativity, intelligence, and physical prowess are all gifts to be used with excellence for God. "As I run I feel God's pleasure," said missionary and Olympic medalist Eric Liddell. Whether we are athletes, scholars, writers, musicians, carpenters, doctors, or mechanics, excellence is what God asks of us individually and corporately.

Yet this demand of excellence from ourselves and our hope for excellence in the church must be balanced with tolerance for the weakness and failures of individuals

(ourselves and others). I remember with gratitude those who have not rubbed my nose in the mud when I have failed, but have continued to show me that vision of excellence they believe I can reach.

## III. Identity/Inclusiveness

This third and final tension is specifically Adventist. I dream that our church might have a strong sense of identity and, at the same time, be as inclusive as it can be. I would like to see our church become relaxed and confident in itself, with members who see the Christ-centered nature of our doctrines and appreciate the church's striving after truth.

And I would expect to see that relaxed confidence evidenced in our willingness as a body and as individual members to examine new ideas and not be threatened by the thoughts of those inside and outside the church who are themselves striving for a greater knowledge of God's "truth." If the church's sense of identity is strong, no tension will exist between its sense of identity and its ability to be inclusive. Our church will draw all who want to be involved in a dynamic search for truth, even if honest conclusions may differ.

These are not impossible dreams. To a greater or lesser degree, I have seen all these tensions operating together within the church. Other individuals have shown me their dreams. Through them I have seen that although the corporate church may never completely fulfill every member's dreams, it is finally the dreams of these individuals that make Adventism what it is and what it will be.

*Andrea Luxton is chair of the Department of English, Journalism, and Communication at Newbold College in England. My Church is a column written by young adult Adventists for young adults. If you wish to contribute to this column, send your submission to Editor, Adventist Review, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20012.*



# CHANGE AND RENEWAL

For 38 years I have figuratively taken off my shoes as the sumacs along the Dowagiac River by my home turn into burning bushes. It is truly holy ground where the Creator, season after season, adds new beauty even to things that appear to be victims of death and decay.

Year after year I have watched the tulip trees and cottonwoods turn each to its own shade of gold and follow the wind to join their kind in a whirl of activity on the ground. Watched the walnut trees yield their fruit to the squirrels that winter in hollows of trees about these wooded acres or build scraggly shelters high in wintry branches. Listened to the beechnut burs fall like the sound of rain under the assaulting flocks of migrant birds.

Year after year I have enjoyed the October blue of skies spread above the rich reds of my sugar maples, reveled in the sun splashing down on the yellow of the softwood maples. I have lighted the candle of my spirit from the flame of the scarlet maples. I have been fascinated by the sunlight sifting through the bronze and copper of beech leaves and turning to satin the red-brown leather hues of the oaks.

To be sure, the trees have grown taller; branches of the giant-girthed old-timers have grown brittle and wait for the pruning of winter winds. Small evergreens I planted "only yesterday" now stretch upward through the high trees for their

share of sun. Old oaks converse with the sky.

But there is a sweet and peaceful permanency about this change that repeats itself from year to year. We know the routine; there is no surprise or shock. We live in expectation of falling leaves and in anticipation of new buds and springing

**The cycle  
of the seasons  
helps us believe  
the promise  
that we too  
shall be  
renewed.**

green when winter ends. It is a familiar renewal of beauty.

With the people in our lives, it is not so. The deciduous years bring changes that remain. Age accumulates. Renewal does not come with another spring. We grow old on a faster cycle than the sentinel trees that have stood watch over our comings and goings.

Some of the people we have loved have let go of life like a sere leaf that

has finished its cycle; others have gone in the glory of mature achievement; a few, like buds blasted by late frost, with unfulfilled expectations.

## The Promise

Renewal? Not yet. But sometime. "Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . who redeemeth thy life from destruction . . . so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Ps. 103:2-5).

It's a promise. And we await its fulfillment. The seasonal changes and renewals about us help us to believe and so to hope.

But every autumn, as the magic kaleidoscopic color calls forth thanks and praise for the beauty of creation, I wonder:

Bright leaf, did you flame in Eden  
Before death entered there?  
Or were all leaves eternal green  
In that ancient garden fair?

Are you but compensation  
For a glory that is past?  
Or will your colors burn again  
When new Eden comes at last?



*Opal Hoover-Young, a writer and long-time faculty member of Andrews University, is retired in Niles, Michigan.*

BY OPAL HOOVER-YOUNG