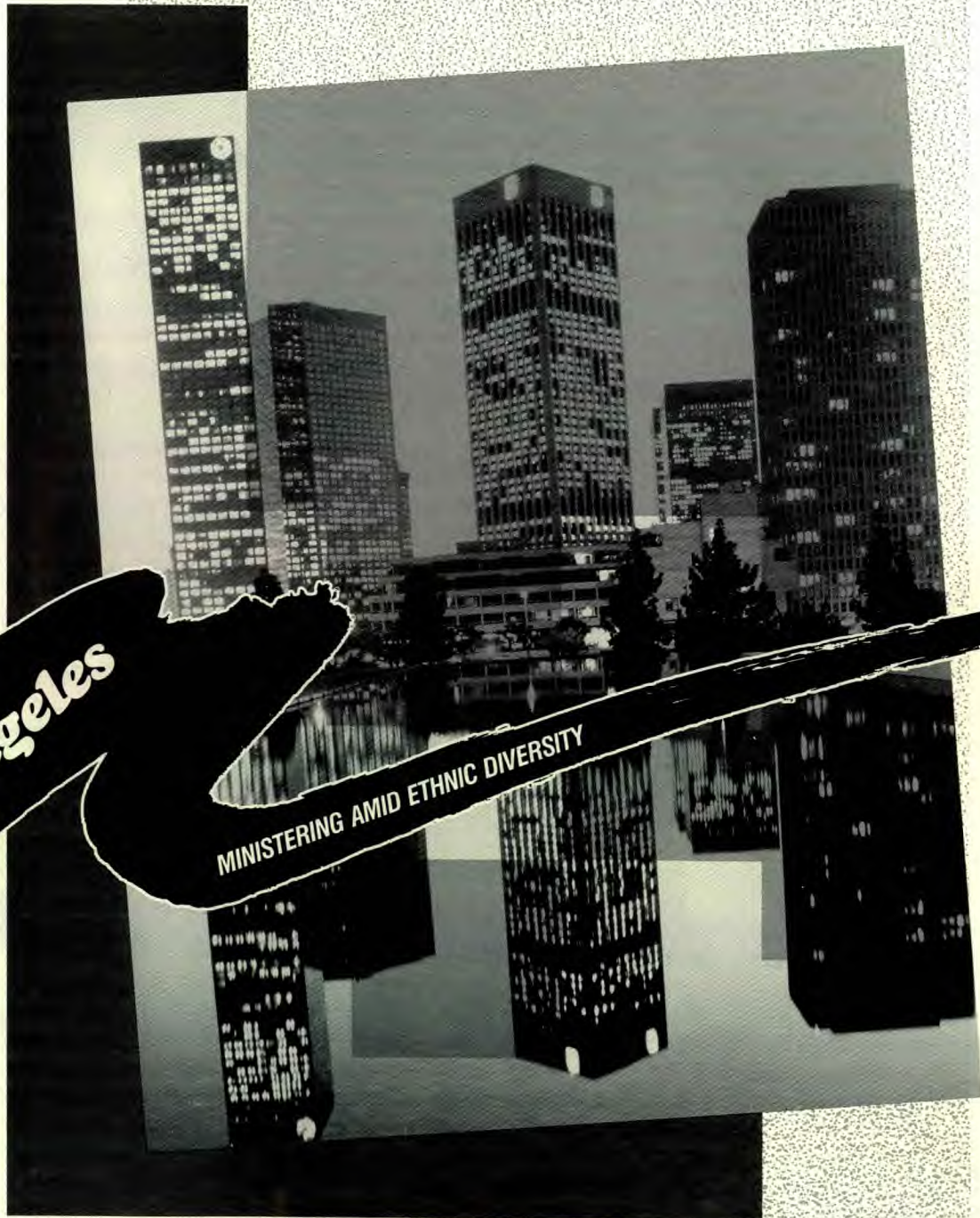


# ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INSPIRATION FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

MARCH 12, 1992



FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN, 8

POISON IN THE MAIL, 14



**Prophetic Overzeal**

At the point where it brings Vatican diplomatic recognition by the United States into its litany of prophetic overzeal, Roy Adams' very welcomed appeal for balance ("An Appeal for Caution," Jan. 16) becomes itself unbalanced.

As a participant in this protracted episode, I can attest that church leaders and laypeople resisted the temptation to sensationalize and were commended even by Catholics for doing so. Proclamation of the gospel was never said to be at stake. Rather, we foresaw a violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the First Amendment. This, we warned, would edge America toward a prophetically expected erosion of church-state separation not only by permitting the funding of a church connection with public money but also by augmenting Catholic influence in the United States. That the latter has occurred cannot be denied.

The writer's more general concern with "clutching the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other" also troubles me. It may, if understood in a certain way, describe precisely the Christian citizenship that I aspire to. Indifference to current events is no more virtuous than the misuse of them. I must understand the world in which I live and assess it from the vantage point of Scripture—though, to be sure, through questions and conjectures rather than categorical assertions.

Gary M. Ross  
Public Affairs and Religious  
Liberty Department  
General Conference

A big thank-you for the editorial "An Appeal for Caution." Adams has hit the nail squarely on the head. It isn't too hard to discard the paranoid drivel that comes in the mail from those who are myopically focused on their version of the threat of the week. It is harder to ignore when published in the church's own organs.

The church has enough trouble attracting educated and intelligent folks—those who are aware of world events. It serves no useful purpose to give ink or encouragement to those who fear and twist any change in any government or competing

church anywhere in the world, or, as Adams said, those who pontificate on things we do not really know.

Bob Patchin  
Villa Park, California

Remembering the temporary swell in prayer meeting attendance following the Kennedy election and, more recently, the booming business in paperbacks showing Saddam's picture and boasting prophetic interpretations of a sort, I agree it's risky to take the "newspaper approach" in plotting last-day events. But are there indications—more than usual—that Jesus is about to return? I think so.

I see them mostly in the overall state of earth and its people. While my half century or so is short compared with 2,000 years of waiting, in my lifetime I've seen major change. All things do not continue as they were.

Although from the beginning (or nearly so) murder, sexual promiscuity and perversion, child and spouse abuse, escape into entertainment, aversion to authority, financial instability, and environmental destruction have existed, they're now with us big-time. I think that is significant. And it's at the very least interesting to observe religious coalitions seeking "freedom" to turn things around.

Figuratively I think we can lift up our heads. Our redemption draws near.

Mrs. Ann Burke  
Yucaipa, California

I can so too "have it both ways"! The same Bible that lists wars and rumors of wars and a multitude of other disasters as signs of the coming of Christ also says that when they say peace and safety, sudden destruction comes upon them.

Both war and peace fit closely together in the Bible's dramatic end-time description of a world (and church) in major chaos, bordering on collapse from not one but a multitude of crises. As the four-wind angels do their balancing act with a world teetering on its foundations, the gospel makes its final appeal and the work of grace in the hearts of God's people is completed. While we are warned away from time setting, ex-

pectancy is enjoined.

Judy Wright  
Concord, California

Amen to Roy Adams' editorial! Jesus says, "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

Prophecy was not given to make us prophets. It was given so that we may be encouraged as we review our past, "the way the Lord has led us," and thus our faith is strengthened for the future.

Marguerite L. Flemming  
Paradise, California

Readers should note that Dr. Adams' editorial of January 16 was followed by the two-part series "Making Sense of Current Events" (Jan. 30, Feb. 13). These three editorials should be read together to understand his position with regard to current events and prophetic fulfillment.—Editors.

**Saving Teeth (cont.)**

The name of the endocrinologist who worked with R. R. Steinman ("Heaven's Plan for Saving Teeth," Dec. 26) is John Leonora. Dr. Leonora has a Ph.D. in physiology and is presently professor and cochairman of the Department of Physiology in the Loma Linda University School of Medicine. His name was misspelled both in the text and in the reference to his work.

A correction should also be made in the way the references are listed. The first number in each case is not a page number, but a volume number. That number is usually either underlined, italicized, or bold-faced. The second number refers to the first page of the article, which may be several pages long. Also, I believe the second reference has only one author, R. R. Steinman, and was published in the *Journal of the Southern California Dental Association*, abbreviated as *J. South. California Dental Association*.

Charles W. Slattery, Ph.D.  
Professor and Chairman  
School of Medicine  
Loma Linda University



# ADVENTIST REVIEW

MARCH 12, 1992

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Letters
- 6 Newsbreak
- 10 Children's Corner
- 19 World Report
- 22 Bulletin Board
- 23 Reflections

## EDITORIALS

- 4 Since You Asked
- 5 The Challenge of the Cities

## NEXT WEEK

### "The Elijah Message and the New Age"

A new deception has arrived. It is time to engage and confront it.

### "Invisible Members"

How we relate to the 5,000-plus Adventist students at public universities.

Cover photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

## ARTICLES

### DEVOTIONAL

## 8 Recapturing the First Glow

When you find that that initial spark has fizzled out, how do you fall in love with God again? *by Chad McComas*

### COVER STORY

## 11 The Challenge of the Cities—Los Angeles

A look at ministry in possibly the most ethnically diverse Seventh-day Adventist conference in the world.

*by Marilyn Thomsen*

### CHURCH

## 14 Poison in the Mail

It took a strong dose of reality to make one Adventist question his diet of controversy and condemnation.

*by Francis S. Green*

### LIFESTYLE

## 16 Hyperactive!

Ten ideas about how to relate to a child who acts as if he doesn't have good Christian parents. *by Sandra Doran*



8 To be in love again!



16 When your child drives you to distraction

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Vol. 169, No. 11





## Since You Asked . . .

As we meet people in the churches and as we open the mail each week, some questions keep coming up. So since you asked, here are our answers.

### **Does the *Adventist Review* sell its list of subscribers?**

No. We get plenty of requests from people who are ready to put down good money, but our answer is a categorical no. No exceptions—not for Adventists, not for church agencies, not for leaders. The *Adventist Review* does not let its list get out.

Why not? As a protection for you: when you subscribe to the *Review* you want to get the *Review*, not advertising or appeals for money.

### **Do you still have the booster plan?**

Yes. Two years ago we set out on a quest for 4,444—a person in each church in North America who would promote the *Adventist Review*. We're still looking: we have several hundred boosters, but we'd be happy for many more.

Boosters receive periodic mailings from our office, plus little tokens of recognition. If you want to join their ranks, write: Ginger Church, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

### **What are these *Adventist Review* Sabbath Celebrations? Are they celebration-style worship?**

An *Adventist Review* Sabbath Celebration is a rally, a revival program, sponsored by the *Review* staff. The term *Sabbath celebration* was around long before celebration became a word to debate. At these rallies the *Review* staff leads out in the preaching, music, and discussions. The program takes in Sabbath school, the divine worship service, and an editors' roundtable discussion Sabbath afternoon. Sometimes we have a Friday evening testimony meeting as well.

We have had three *Review* rallies so

far, with excellent attendance (several churches combine) and response. Scheduled already for 1992 is a May rally requested by the Illinois Conference; we have requests also from four other conferences.

### **And the *Review* Bible Study Conference?**

That will be a first for us. We accepted the invitation of the Cohutta Springs Adventist Center to lead out in a Bible study retreat March 25-29. As you have seen from the ads, *Review* editors will conduct Bible seminars and give devotional presentations.

### **How is *OnLine Edition* being received?**

Very well. The mailing list for each quarter's program now stands at about 3,300 for North America. Several hundred copies go to Europe, while the South Pacific Division has recently begun selling *OnLine* through its ABCs.

The main problem seems to lie in giving members an opportunity to view *OnLine*. Many churches don't have video equipment or don't know how to use *OnLine* in their Sabbath services. But more and more congregations are working these matters out—from the largest congregations in North America to very small churches. We intend to gather information about how others are using *OnLine* and share it with our people everywhere.

### **Do the changes in the *Review* mean you are abandoning open reporting of the news and issues?**

Not at all; we aren't abandoning, but building. We want to retain the openness to people of different ethnic backgrounds, age, gender, and social status; we want the *Review* to continue to give the news of the worldwide church and discussion of topics of widespread concern.

What we are doing is refocusing the

*Review* so that our core message, mission, hope, and lifestyle come through positively and clearly. We believe that the great ideas that brought our movement into being nearly 150 years ago can impact our living today, and we want to show how.

One of the main ways we are refocusing is through AnchorPoints, major treatments that will run once or twice each month. We have sought out the best Adventist writers to present these Christ-centered, Bible-based, practical topics. Many of the writers are young. The first AnchorPoints appeared March 5.

### **AnchorPoints—where did you get that name?**

Not from Webster's! After nearly three months of cracking their brains the *Review* editors hit upon that term. It suggests assurance and certainty; and of course, the anchor symbol is rooted in biblical (Heb. 6:19, 20) and Christian history. We like the ring of AnchorPoints. Note also the words that accompany the AnchorPoints logo—Exploring Our Faith. We want to show that the great ideas of Adventism have contemporary value and richness.

### **How do you enjoy living at Hagerstown?**

If we lived at Hagerstown, I expect we would like it. But we don't; the *Adventist Review* editorial office is in Silver Spring, Maryland. We are part of the General Conference staff. The *Review* and Herald Publishing Association, where the *Adventist Review* is printed and marketed, is some 70 miles away.

So when you write us, don't write to Hagerstown unless you want your letter delayed. Our address is: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600.

**WILLIAM G. JOHNSON**





# The Challenge of the Cities

In 1906 Ellen White emphatically declared that the time had come for Adventists to leave the cities: "Out of the cities; out of the cities!"—this is the message the Lord has been giving me. The earthquakes will come; the floods will come; and we are not to establish ourselves in the wicked cities, where the enemy is served in every way, and where God is so often forgotten."<sup>1</sup>

This decisive counsel was not the first word of warning that had come from Ellen White's pen, nor would it be the last. For example, in a 1905 appeal she spoke of the cities as "hotbeds of vice," "false and artificial," full of "the love of pleasure," and with physical surroundings "often a peril to health." She suggested that "it was not God's purpose that people should be crowded into cities, huddled together in terraces and tenements."<sup>2</sup>

And in a letter in 1907 Mrs. White again sounded her earlier warning: "The instruction is still being given, Move out of the cities. Establish your sanitariums, your schools, and offices away from the centers of population. . . . For wickedness and corruption will increase to such a degree that the very atmosphere of the cities will seem to be polluted."<sup>3</sup>

## Indisputable Counsel

Few would challenge the counsel of Mrs. White concerning the vice, corruption, and unhealthfulness of the cities; and that life outside the cities would be more favorable for us, particularly for the rearing of our children.

But the unwelcome fallout from such counsel has been the not-so-subtle adoption of an anti-city mind-set by many Seventh-day Adventists. They see the large cities of the world as evil, morally bankrupt, dirty, poor, and no place for Christians.

But such a view is wrong. Ellen White

was never anti-city. And her writings should not be misconstrued to bolster the opinion that cities are evil and no place for Christians.

Yes, she is clear that cities are not desirable places to live. But even a casual perusal of her writings would pick up on her deep burden for the people in the great cities and of our responsibility to share with them the good news of the coming of Christ.

Listen to her words of 1902: "Though our large cities are fast reaching a condition similar to the condition of the world before the Flood, . . . there are in them many honest souls, who, as they listen to the startling truths of the Advent message, will feel the conviction of the Spirit. New York is ready to be worked. In that great city the message of truth will be given with the power of God. . . . [The Lord] calls upon those who have gained an experience in the cause to take up and carry forward in His fear the work to be done in New York and in other large cities of America. He also calls for means to be used in this work."<sup>4</sup>

## An Unpublished Compilation

In 1946 our church leaders felt compelled to publish a compilation of Mrs. White's counsels on the advantages of country living. The introduction to the booklet, *Country Living: An Aid to Moral and Social Security*, declares that "the gathering storm clouds signalize the appropriateness of re-sounding the call to leave the cities." And in 1978 the General Conference Annual Council attendees reiterated the call and asked for the republishing of the 32-page booklet.

Yet the church has never yet published a 300-page compilation (created in 1960) of Mrs. White's counsels on the church's responsibility to work in the cities.

And while quantity cannot always be

taken as a reliable indicator of relative importance, the volume and content of Mrs. White's writings on city work should at least show her deep concern, if not her enormous burden, for reaching the millions of people living there. And indeed there are millions. In America alone, the U.S. Census Bureau says 77 percent of the population lives in metropolitan areas.

And where do U.S. Adventists live? Exactly 50 percent live in metropolitan areas, and 50 percent in small towns and rural areas.<sup>5</sup>

## The Appeal

What does all this say to us? It says we must put aside any anti-city attitudes and begin to support greater outreach to the great metropolises of North America and the world.

With this in mind, the *Adventist Review* is publishing an ongoing series called *The Challenge of the Cities*, which takes an analytical look at our church's work in the major cities of North America (see "Seattle," Jan. 9; and "Los Angeles," this issue, p. 11). The series highlights the joys, the sorrows, and the challenges of such ministry. And we hope it will heighten each Adventist's awareness and support of city ministry.

As Ellen White wrote in 1909: "The men [and women] in the business houses of New York and other large cities, as verily as the heathen in foreign lands, must be reached with the message."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Review and Herald*, July 5, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 363-365.

<sup>3</sup> Letter 26, 1907.

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> North American Division Church Information System (Monte Sahlin, project coordinator), *Report 1, Adventist Family Opinion: Demographic Profile*, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> *Evangelism*, p. 388.



## Loma Linda Medical Center Delays Salary Increases

Officials at Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC) decided to delay across-the-board salary increases until late spring or early summer. The temporary freeze is being enacted while the administrators launch a comprehensive operations review and restructuring effort.

One reason for the review is that—while the Adventist Church's third-largest hospital has operated in the black for the past five years, with gains of \$7.7 million, \$13.9 million, \$12.3 million, \$13.1 million, and \$5.2 million in 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1991 respectively—operating expenses are increasing significantly and management sees the need to become more cost-efficient.

LLUMC has made the gains during a tumultuous period in the health-care industry at a time when other hospitals in the United States are going out of business. Still the travails of the industry are affecting the hospital.

LLUMC senior vice president and chief operating officer Ron Anderson says that shrinking health-care reimbursements for Medicare and other U.S. government programs have contributed to lower income. The prescribed length of

stay for patients has dropped significantly, impacting hospital revenues.

In the restructuring process, administrators may strengthen, merge, downsize, or eliminate various departments and functions. "We have to change the fundamental way the hospital operates," Anderson says. "We need to bring down the cost of patient care while keeping our quality of care consistent."

LLUMC officials are looking to implement changes by the end of 1992 that would bring annual savings of \$10-15 million. The changes will not only shore up the hospital's bottom line but should make operations more cost-efficient. Greater cost efficiency is a major priority for the hospital because it stands at the threshold of several expansion projects. Currently LLUMC is completing its proton beam accelerator, constructing a children's hospital, and planning a new research center.

When asked about these plans, Anderson commented, "The demand for health care is substantial, and if we can decrease our cost per patient, we can successfully tap the enormous market potential."

### NORTH AMERICA

#### California Measure Protects Church Schools.

New legislation signed by California governor Pete Wilson protects the property rights of all California schools that are owned and operated by religious and charitable organizations.

The measure was first conceived by Dr. Jerry Wiley, vice dean of the University of Southern California Law Center, who defended Lynwood Academy in an eminent domain proceeding. The General Conference became involved because of the serious ramifications for all Adventist Church schools in the United States. That litigation is still pending, says Warren L. Johns, chief counsel for the General Conference.

*The Adventist Review*

will publish a further report on the legislation and the Lynwood Academy case in an upcoming issue.

#### SDA Editor Contributes to *The Youth Bible*.

Gary B. Swanson, editor of *Cornerstone Connections*, the Sabbath school quarterly for Adventist youth, recently contributed to the production of *The Youth Bible*, a study Bible for teenagers published by Group Publishing of Loveland, Colorado.

Swanson has written for more than 100 Christian periodicals, including *Our Sunday Visitor*, *Lutheran Digest*, and *Focus on the Family*. "I saw this as an opportunity to share Adventism's unique perspective with the wider world of Christian journalism," Swanson says.

#### Southern College Completes \$3.8 Million Expansion.

As part of Southern College's year-long centennial celebration, the Collegedale Adventist Church on Southern's campus officially opened its new \$3.8 million educational wing.

Connected to the main sanctuary by an atrium, the 42,000-square-foot addition includes a fellowship hall, small chapel, classrooms, seminar room, and activity center, says Doris Burdick, college spokesperson.

### WORLD CHURCH

#### Youth and Immigrant Center in Stockholm.

Division and local leaders in the Trans-European Division recently inaugurated a new youth and immigrant center in Stockholm, Sweden, that will serve the Adventist Church there.

The center was made possible by the Thirteenth Sabbath Overflow Offering for the fourth quarter of 1986. TED president Jan Paulsen (right) cut the traditional ribbon. The center will be used for outreach activities of the Spanish, Swedish, and Finnish congregations, says Ray





Dabrowski, TED communication director.

**Baptisms Up in Hungary and Poland.** The Trans-European Division reports that Adventist churches in central and eastern Europe are experiencing unprecedented growth.

According to recent division statistics, accessions in Hungary in 1991 totaled 355, up 167 (89 percent) over 1990. In Poland, accessions were the highest in the church's history—468, up 124 (36 percent) over the previous year.

The record number of accessions came as result of a comprehensive evangelistic program that involves every local church. Each pastor is involved in outreach programs during the year. Many public evangelistic meetings conducted by full-time evangelists are being held.

**Finland Union Elects New Officers.** Delegates at the Finland Union Conference constituency session elected **Pekka Pohjola**, editor of the Finnish church magazines and former Trans-European Division secretary, as union president. Pohjola replaces Olavi Rouhe, who became an editor at the Finland Publishing House.

The delegates also elected **Reijo Olin**, administrator and business manager of Hopeaniemi Sanitarium, as treasurer. Olin replaces former union secretary-treasurer **Joel Niininen**, who became secretary and communication director.

## Ontario Reverses Layoff Decision

In a specially called meeting on February 23, members of the Ontario Conference executive committee reversed the committee's January 26 decision to reduce its staff by 16 full time workers.

The new vote came after many churches pledged to increase financial support of the conference and pastors agreed to substantial salary cuts. Under the new austerity measure, salaries will be reduced by 4.7 percent, representing reductions of US\$120 to US\$150 per month for pastors.

Other expenses will be reduced by US\$420,000 this year. The committee also declared March 28 as a day of prayer, fasting, and sacrificial giving. Officials are hoping to raise \$500,000 on this day.

**European Publishers Launch Olympic Project.** Adventist publishing houses in Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia recently published a common issue of *Signs of the Times* and *Life and Health* magazines in their different languages for distribution at the Olympic Games in Albertville, France.

As many as 320,000 copies of the journals were printed, says John Graz, Euro-Africa Division communication director. Teams of pastors and young people distributed the magazines to Olympic participants and spectators in Albertville. They will also be handed out during the summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain.

## FOR YOUR INTEREST

**Volunteer Hospital Administrator Needed.** A retired volunteer hospital administrator is needed in the Southern Asia Division to counsel and assist in management training and evaluation of health care institutions, says Ted N. C.

Wilson, an associate secretary in the General Conference.

The volunteer position is for up to one year or as negotiated. Travel, housing, and a small monthly stipend will be provided. For more information, write Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference Secretariat, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; or call (301) 680-6662.

**Seventh-day Adventure.** In February the Office of General Counsel at the General Conference received a Federal Express envelope addressed to the "7th Day Adventure." The workers in the office are wondering if there is a hidden meaning in this terminology.

## CHURCH CALENDAR

- Mar. 14** Adventist World Radio Offering
- Mar. 21** Adventist Youth Day
- Mar. 21** Adventist Youth Week of Prayer begins
- Mar. 21** Sabbath School Community Relations Day
- Mar. 25** *Adventist Review* Adult Bible Study Conference begins in Crandall, Georgia
- Mar. 28** Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Euro-Africa Division

**Correction.** For those interested in getting more information about Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries, the correct telephone number is (301) 680-6450.

## ALSO IN THE NEWS

### Ancient City Discovered.

Guided by ancient maps and sharp-eyed survey from space, archaeologists have discovered a lost city deep in the sands of Arabia, and they are virtually sure it is Ubar



(above), reports Religious News Service.

Ubar is described as the City of Towers in the Koran, sacred book of Islam. With the help of images produced by the space shuttle *Challenger*, scientists see evidence of ancient caravan routes. They could even be the tracks followed by the Wise Men on their way to the manger in Bethlehem with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



# Recapturing the First Glow

*How to fall in love again*

BY CHAD MC COMAS

I can still remember the sweet experience of first love with my wife, Debi. We had met through her sister at youth camp. She told me she was coming to Walla Walla College that fall to begin classes. I volunteered to get her acquainted with the campus and show her the "ropes."

Since we had mutual friends, we'd end up spending time together going places and doing things that our friends were involved with. I'd give her rides back to Portland on the weekends to visit her family. We'd talk on the phone, meet at

meals, and share our dreams of life. Slowly over the fall months our friendship deepened.

Christmas break came. I went to Chicago to be with my family, and she went to Portland. It was then that we both knew—we were in love! I could hardly wait to get back on the plane to be with her again. I wasn't sure if she felt the same way, but sure enough, she had missed me too! Our first official date came soon after the holidays.

I can still remember the excitement we felt admitting our love for each other and

committing our time to each other. She could do no wrong, in my eyes. She was the most beautiful girl in the world, and I excitedly told everyone that she was my girlfriend. I longed to be with her all the time. We'd talk for hours on the phone. Soon our hearts were bonded together.

## Keeping the Flame Alive

First love. How great it is! There is an excitement that can't be explained. But through the years, first love can wear away as the reality of life takes over. My first love and I just celebrated our fifteenth anniversary. We are still very much in love, but we have also realized that keeping the intensity of our first love going doesn't happen by accident. In marriage we need to continue to spend time together (date) and talk (as we used to—for hours—on the phone). It takes effort to juggle a busy schedule and a growing family. But to allow the coals of first love to go out means death to the relationship.

Scripture talks about losing our first love for Jesus:

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: . . . I hold this against you: *You have forsaken your first love*. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first" (Rev. 2:1-5).\*

We can all remember the excitement we felt when we decided to accept Jesus Christ as our special friend. We spent quality time getting to know Him. We took Him everywhere we went. We made sure we spent time with His other friends, and we went to the places He wanted us to. Each day was a new adventure in our walk with Jesus. Our Bibles were worn out as daily we searched the Scriptures. The communication lines with heaven were filled with our prayers.

## Succumbing to Life's Pressures

Unfortunately, it is easy to allow the stress of life to rob us of our relationship with Jesus. Before we know it, we wake up one day to find that the love we'd known for Jesus has disappeared, the candle gone out.

Jesus is asking us to pay attention to the fact that we have allowed our first love to burn out.

In a relationship between two people, first love is unselfish love. We make sure





we do only what the other person wants. But as that loves grows cold, we become selfish, in love with ourselves. Hear Paul:

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. *People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*—having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

No wonder one church growth expert calls the nineties the decade of noncommitment in the church. People are more concerned about themselves than they are about working in or supporting the church. It is hard to get people to volunteer to take church positions, become involved in evangelism, or be consistent in their giving.

We also see a tolerance for sin in the church that surprises us.

Sometime ago I confronted one of our single members for living with his girlfriend. He accepted the confrontation well. But I was criticized by others in that particular church for even suggesting that this wasn't acceptable for a Christian. Compromising with sin is a sign that we are losing our first love with Jesus.

When Joshua was nearing the end of his life, he encouraged the people to make a strong commitment to the Lord. It was their only safeguard against apostasy. In Joshua 22:5 he warned:

“Be very careful to . . . *love the Lord your God*, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”

### Unfaithful Love

But the people turned aside. They did not serve the Lord. Their love for God was not faithful, was not strong enough to deter idolatry. Instead, they went searching after other gods to satisfy their passions. And Scripture records the sad state of affairs that followed Joshua's passing:

“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (Judges 21:25).

It was a dark time for Israel. They had stopped loving God. They had “divorced” Him.

When we stop loving God, dark times come upon us.

According to Scripture, the only kind of love acceptable to God is that which Jesus speaks about in Matthew 22:37:

“Love the Lord your God with all

your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

This all-out love puts God ahead of self. This love seeks to please God and serve Him. And it manifests itself in our actions:

“If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).

So how do I regain this love? I know that I've had that love for the Lord before, but what can be done to rekindle it? Is it too late?

No! It is possible—through faith.

The Bible indicates that everyone has been given a measure of faith. Why? Because it is through faith that we be-

*We wake up to find that  
the spark of love we'd  
known has disappeared,  
the candle gone out.*

lieve in God. And if we are to love God, we first have to believe in Him.

And faith, like a muscle, grows stronger with exercise. Faith is the foundation of our Christian growth in all areas—especially in the area of love.

When we are first in love we believe in our lover. We have total faith in the other person. Unfortunately, after a while many lose faith in their lover, and doubt creeps in. When a couple in a marriage relationship begin to fall out of love, they see only the negative aspects of each other. They forget all the good times. They forget the love they once shared together.

What can we do to fall back into love again? How can we rekindle the flame? How can we keep growing in faith and love? A great passage in the second Epistle of Peter can help us:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. . . . For this very reason, make every effort to *add to your faith* goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance;

and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:3-8).

The program outlined by the apostle calls for our conscious active participation. We rekindle and sustain our first love by spending quality time with God. People who have lost their first love have stopped practicing devotion to God. He is no longer the apple of their eye. But if we are in love with Him, God must be first in our lives. He must reign over everything else that threatens to become an idol in our lives. We will hunger for communion, eager to listen to His Word.

And we will have a passion for prayer. As one great Christian author suggested, prayer does not so much seek to get things from God as to allow one to get to know God.

Finally, we must be willing to surrender those cherished sins of ours that hurt God. Sin hinders and breaks our relationship with God.

In my marriage I must be willing to give up anything that will push my wife away from me. In my relationship with God I must be willing to give up anything that will push me away from God. And whatever sin stands in the way, God can solve the problem:

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12).

It's time we fall in love with God again. It's time we rekindle that first love. Remember again Jesus' message to the church at Ephesus and to us:

“I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! *Repent and do the things you did at first*” (Rev. 2:4, 5).

Our challenge is to rekindle our first love with God before the flame expires.



*Chad McComas is the pastor of the Corvallis and Philomath churches in Oregon.*



## Memories of Elmshaven—2

# How God Said “Thank You”

BY MABEL R. MILLER

*Note: This is the second in a series of four articles on Ellen White as seen through the eyes and memory of her great-granddaughter, Mabel Miller.—Editors.*

Before I was born, my great-grandmother Ellen White had lived in Australia nine years. She loved the Australian people and enjoyed the beautiful country. One night the Lord impressed her to return to America.

“Oh, please, Lord,” she prayed, “let me stay. I am almost 73 years old.”

Her answer came: “No, Ellen. I need you in America.”

Tearfully she agreed, and quickly sold her home. Soon her son Willie and his wife, May, sold their home across the road.

Ella (my mother) and Mabel were the only grandchildren Ellen White had when she went to Australia. When she came back to America, she had five grandchildren: 10-week-old baby Grace, 13-year-old Mabel, 18-year-old Ella, and 4-year-old twins, Henry and Herbert.

On a Monday morning after the White family had arrived in Oakland, California, they started hunting for a home. They looked here and there. The houses either were too small or cost too much money. No places were empty to rent. All day Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday they searched. Nothing fit their needs. That evening Grandma White said, “Somewhere the Lord has the right place for us to buy. I shall wait for Him to show us.”

Willie could see that his mother was tired.

“Mother,” he suggested, “while I keep hunting for a house, why don’t you and Sara [her nurse] take the train to the

St. Helena Sanitarium in the beautiful Napa Valley? It’s only a 60-mile trip. You can rest there while I continue searching.”

“Good idea,” Grandma smiled. And so she and Sara went.

The next day, Friday, at the St. Helena Sanitarium, Grandma met a dear friend who took her a half-mile down the hill to see the big Pratt house, which was for sale. “Oh, I could never afford such a beautiful, expensive home,” Grandma exclaimed, “but we can look at it.”

She was shown through the large two-story house. Carpets were on the floors; drapes at the windows. Every room was completely furnished. In the closets were sheets, pillows, quilts, and towels—even tablecloths. Dishes, silverware, pots, and pans were on the shelves, ready to use. Wood was cut, ready to burn in the big black kitchen stove or in the three fireplaces.

That wasn’t all. They went outdoors. Vegetables were ready to pick in the garden. Grapes ripe and sweet. Hundreds of olive and fruit trees—peach, pear, cherry, and apple. Grandma saw an orchard of 2,000 prune trees.

Next they went to the huge barn. Grandma heard the chickens cackle. A cow was giving milk to her baby calf. She walked over and patted two beautiful horses. She had always loved horses. In the barn she saw a farm wagon, four carriages, and plenty of hay for the animals.

To Grandma White, the thought of ever living in such a home in the country was like a wonderful, impossible dream. Finally she gained enough courage to ask, “What is the selling price of this

property?” The answer was God’s exciting surprise for Grandma. She could buy this home, with everything in it, and 60 acres of land for less than she had sold her home for in Australia.

When Grandma heard that, she knew instantly that her precious Jesus had this home saved and waiting for her, so she offered to buy it. That was exactly one week after the White family had landed in San Francisco. I can only imagine what fun Grandma had sending word to her family in Oakland, “I’ve found a home and am buying it! Quit your hunting. Pack your things and come up!”

That evening Grandma wrote in her diary: “I never dreamed of ever owning such a perfect home on this earth. We can move in right away, without the worry of buying furniture or needed housewares. I can begin at once on the books God has asked me to write.”

Grandma White thanked her heavenly Father again and again for such a quiet, beautiful place to write and work for Him. She named her new home Elmshaven, and lived there 15 years until her death in 1915.

Wasn’t that a loving, kind way for God to say “Thank you, Ellen, for the many years you kept working for Me when you didn’t even have a home, for the 55 years you have sacrificed for Me, and for being willing to be My messenger to earth’s people”?



*Mabel R. Miller writes from National City, California.*



With a territory of 10 million people encompassing more than 80 languages and cultures, the Southern California Conference is one of the most diverse and challenging mission fields in the Adventist Church today.

Organized in 1901, the conference includes all of the Los Angeles basin and neighboring Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. And membership has risen to 48,614 in 148 churches, companies, and groups, making it the second-largest conference in North America—second only to neighboring Southeastern California Conference, with its 53,000-plus members.

Yet the desire of Southern California to win its sprawling metropolis for Christ faces two critical challenges—a heavily multicultural context and an eroding tithe base. These two have forced the conference to create innovative models of ministry that could be the wave of the future for urban ministry.

### Southern's "Golden" History

Twenty-five years ago it was humorously said that "a call to California is a call from the Lord." Congregations sprang up as fast as the new suburbs along the freeways. Church coffers were filled with the contributions of members holding steady jobs in aerospace, petroleum, and other seemingly recession-proof industries.

Considered the wealthiest conference—and for years the



The Southern California Conference administrative committee includes persons of the four major ethnic groups—Anglo, Asian, Black, and Hispanic. From left: Lorenzo Paytee, vice president for administration; John Todorovich, vice president for area 1; Miguel Cerna, vice president for area 4; G. Charles Dart, president; Dan Robles, vice president for special ministries; John Gutierrez, vice president for area 2; Don Sullivan, vice president for finance. Not pictured: John Nixon, vice president for area 3.

largest—in North America, it passed along millions of dollars in tithe to the Pacific Union and on to the General Conference, which used part of it to help smaller, less generously endowed conferences.

But today Southern California's financial base continues to erode. While its 3,245 baptisms in 1991—600 more than in 1990 and the highest in its history—outpaced every other conference in North America, its financial base is not keeping up with its membership increase.

Last year, for the first time in history, Southern California received help from the North American Division Special Assistance Fund, formerly known as the Small Conference Fund. Such help came not because Southern California is small, but because its per capita tithe fell below the division average. In 1992, as in 1987, the conference must significantly reduce its paid work force as it adjusts to the changing paradigms of ministry in southern California.

Those paradigms involve far more than money; though the economic downturn that began in 1990 painfully showed that southern California—heavily involved in defense contracting—is no longer immune to recession.

Many of these changes revolve around language and culture. In some parts of Los Angeles the predominant language at the corner grocery store may be Spanish, while at the gas station it is Korean. The doughnut shop may be run by a Cambodian family.



# LOS ANGELES

—Innovation Engendered  
by Ethnic Diversity

BY MARILYN THOMSEN



The teller at the bank may be from Lebanon or Iran. And historically Black Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is more and more populated by people from El Salvador and Guatemala.

### Cultural Diversity

The challenges of this modern-day melting pot are daunting. The 800,000-student Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, serves children speaking 80 different languages and is required by California law to provide bilingual education in Spanish, Korean, Armenian, and Chinese.

The Adventist churches in the Southern California Conference also reflect this cultural richness. Services are conducted weekly in Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, sign language for the deaf, German, Hmong, Hungarian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Tongan, and Vietnamese—as well as English.

“By the year 2000, no group will be a majority in southern California,” says Dr. Jim Zackrison, Southern California’s director of church growth ministries. North America in general will still have an Anglo majority, he projects, but a small one. “Ethnic pluralism is now the basis of North American society.”

Zackrison notes that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States today, with Buddhism second-fastest in southern California. Glendale, site of the conference headquarters, is the center of a growing Armenian population—one of the largest in the world. Indeed, it can be said, only partly in jest, that southern California is home to thousands of people from every nation on earth!

Consequently, conference leaders have recognized that the conference can no longer be run as a single-cell unit, says Zackrison. “It is a microcosm of North American society and what it will become. The conference will always have to have language modules to serve those who don’t



The annual Middle East convocation, held this year on the campus of Glendale Adventist Academy, brings together people whose country of origin may be Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, or another Middle Eastern nation.

speak English. But it does not have to be ethnically separated.”

Church growth experts have long known that people in a life transition, such as new immigrants, are receptive to evangelism. They also tend to join churches

worshiping in their mother tongue. Southern California’s efforts to evangelize its large immigrant population have led to many new churches. But it has also meant an increase in the number of pastors, as ministers have been recruited to serve specific language groups. Most recently, Southern California organized the first Cambodian group in North American Adventism and hired a Cambodian pastor.

The new immigrants who make up a large number of the accessions to the church do not at first have the income level they may later achieve. This means that for a number of years the congregation usually does not generate enough tithe to support its own pastor. Thus the tithe of such long-established churches as White Memorial, Glendale City, and Vallejo Drive helps support new congregations while they too become established.

But the crucial question facing the conference today is how large a work force the conference can afford as its tithe base grows more slowly than its numbers. Even though all conference workers did without the usual cost-of-living increase in 1991, and they will receive just a slight increase in 1992, the conference still faces serious difficulties in keeping salaries in line with North American Division standards. “This is all the more difficult because we live in one of the highest cost areas of the division,” says conference president G. Charles Dart. “We’re having to make hard choices in our budget, including the reduction of staff, particularly pastors.”

### Experiments in Church Life

Such financial need, coupled with the changing ethnic diversity of southern California society, is forcing creative experiments in church life. Not always do ethnic groups split off from Anglo-culture congregations, though that often happens as they grow. Sometimes they conduct Sabbath school or church services in their mother tongue while maintaining membership in the Anglo congregation. And in an increasing number of cases, two smaller churches,

## Los Angeles— A Quick Look

- ▶ Population: 10 million
- ▶ Adventist membership: 48,614
- ▶ One Adventist for every 200 residents
- ▶ Second-largest metropolitan area in North America.
- ▶ Population growth rate: 2% a year
- ▶ Church growth rate: 0.6% a year
- ▶ Households: 3.4 million
- ▶ Adventist congregations: 148
- ▶ One Adventist church per 23,000 households
- ▶ Annual births: 20 per 1,000 population
- ▶ Annual deaths: 8 per 1,000
- ▶ Religious Profile
  - 61% unchurched
  - 21% Roman Catholic
  - 8% Mainstream Protestant
  - 6% Conservative Evangelical
  - 4% Other

*Information supplied by the Global Center for Urban Mission at Columbia Union College.*



such as the El Monte (English) and San Gabriel Valley (Filipino) congregations, are merging into one stronger, unified church.

Uniting people of widely different backgrounds into one congregation requires sensitivity and spiritual commitment, but the results can be beneficial to the entire membership. The Pasadena church, for example, had hovered between 200 and 300 members for decades until it fostered a ministry to the large Filipino community. Membership is now 437 and growing.

The Glendale City church—one of the oldest in the conference—contains Romanian and Armenian congregations as part of the church whole. “The biggest question these groups have to grapple with is whether their goal is to assimilate into the American culture or to resist assimilation and carry on their traditions through religion,” says Mitch Henson, senior pastor of the Glendale City church.

### Moving Toward Assimilation

The Armenian group at the church, says Henson, is moving toward assimilation. Services held in the Armenian language every other week in the church’s chapel attract mainly older people, while younger people frequently attend an English service.

The Romanian group, says Henson, includes many younger people who have recently come to the United States. For them the question as to whether their long-term good is to become fully a part of the English language culture or to retain their identity as Romanian Adventists is largely unanswered. “We as a church won’t answer that for them,” says Henson, “because it’s really a part of coming out of a Communist government. They are used to an authoritarian system, and in some ways they look at the church as a kind of government. They have to learn to handle self-determination.”

Throughout the conference, other churches are also experimenting with new ministries across cultural lines. The University church, the leading Black



Mrs. Dorothy Hofmann's third-grade classroom at Glendale Adventist Elementary School is truly multicultural.

church in the conference, with a proud 84-year history, is now launching a ministry to the large Spanish-speaking population in its locale. The Lancaster church, situated in the affordable Los Angeles County high desert, has spawned a Spanish language congregation that has grown to 180 members.

Such cultural cooperation does not come without planning and constant effort. The Long Beach church is fostering ministry to the 55,000 Cambodians in its area. A group of 40 to 50 Cambodians meets in the church chapel weekly, and the Cambodian pastor is part of the Long Beach church staff. “I want to see as much contact between the two groups as possible,” says senior pastor Howard Flynn, “because aloofness breeds misunderstanding.”

### Many Forms of Evangelism

Evangelism planning in such an ethnically rich environment must of course take many forms. Conference evangelists John Van Denburgh and John Carter frequently team up with Spanish pastors who can translate and follow up Spanish-speaking interests. The methods of outreach range from traditional tent meetings to evenings of traditional Thai or Cambodian culture, music, and food.

Diverse approaches to a common goal lie at the heart of the current Mega-LA effort, Southern California’s broadest evangelism effort in more than a decade. Mega-LA has three objectives:

1. Baptize and disciple 5,000 new converts between August 1991 and November 1992.
2. Train 2,000 laypeople as frontline

soul winners.

3. Plant new churches as needed and feasible.

Within that framework, each church is invited to develop evangelistic strategies suited to its target populations. All the Spanish language churches, along with some English-speaking churches, will conduct simultaneous public evangelism. All Korean churches will hold Revelation seminars. The White Memorial church plans to hold seminars

to attract professionals. And the University church plans to enhance its Hispanic ministry by sponsoring simultaneous evangelistic campaigns in Spanish and English—one in a tent, the other in the church.

As it moves through the nineties, the Southern California Conference is pioneering new models of church life and ministry in a multicultural context. It is succeeding admirably in reaching new immigrant populations through outreaches in their mother tongues. It is struggling with ministries to established populations. And it is on the leading edge of experimentation in church life to bridge cultural differences and unify the family of God.

And, says conference president Dart, “change and diversity are always challenging. Unity doesn’t come without struggle and sacrifice. But diversity is spiritually enriching. And I firmly believe that the God who made each race and culture will enable us to minister and worship together in growing harmony.”

Southern California’s experience will no doubt provide valuable lessons for other conferences throughout North America as pluralism becomes both a way of life here and a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven. “We’re talking not just about the ideal [of unity] but the pursuit of it in this conference,” says David Taylor, secretary of the Pacific Union.



*Marilyn Thomsen is the director of communication for the Southern California Conference.*



# Poison in the Mail



*It took a strong dose of reality  
to make one Adventist question his diet of  
controversy and condemnation.*

By Francis S. Green

**N**early four years ago, during a peaceful board meeting at our little church in New England, I stood up and offered the members my resignation as head elder. "Any resemblance between this corrupt church and Christianity is purely coincidental," I told my shocked listeners. When I had finished my bitter speech, one offended elder suggested they take my name off the church books as well. I quickly agreed.

How does a once-loyal Seventh-day Adventist reach such a low point in his Christian experience? In my case it was primarily through the printed word. I had read every far-left and far-right Adventist-oriented publication I could find. Our denomination has a number of supportive ministries whose written materials serve the Lord's church loyally. I do not refer to these, but to their toxic imitators who mix a seemingly pious message with the seeds of discord and disunion.

In the beginning my rationale for such reading was a need to stay informed. But the end result was a fascination with

scandal and controversy. The spirit of the publications I was ingesting was one of continual criticism and condemnation, encouraging a "them against us" attitude between liberal and conservative elements in the pews. The underlying message was always "We've got to save the church for God."

## A Raging Addiction

Over a period of years my need to be informed had become a raging addiction; I asked to get on any mailing list that had missed my name. Religious discussions that didn't involve theological argument or church scandal became dull and uninteresting for me. Controversial meetings and speakers became a favorite activity. I began to hang on the words of people living on the fringes of the church, who were drawing away its membership or solemnly admonishing the faithful to "stay with the ship" while their own "ministry" steadily eroded church members' confidence in both captain and crew.

Still I continued to accept church re-

sponsibilities, serving as head elder, teaching Sabbath school, and exhorting the faithful to stay in God's church while my own faith kept sinking lower and lower.

Two months before my resignation, some of my best friends began publishing a "Come out of her, My people" message. Their newsletter, once heralding "victory over sin" seminars, had evolved into an anti-Adventist cult. Hoping to convince them of their error during a business trip to California, I became the houseguest of one of the separatist leaders, a longtime personal friend.

My host began almost at once to pressure me to leave "the corruption of Adventism" and cast my lot with the new group he and others were forming. Controversy and scandal in the church were presented to me as proof that the Lord was no longer with the denomination. I was besieged by the avalanche of inspired quotations warning that the church cannot allow corruption in its midst without becoming corrupt itself.

## A False Impression

The statements used were rebukes, admonitions, and warnings from the Lord—given in love over a period of years—addressing a variety of problems and situations in the remnant church. But gathered together as they were, the testimonies created the impression that the Lord had given up on the denomination. The qualifying or softer portions of the original quotations were either unknown or ignored, and the repeated warnings *against* identifying Adventism as Babylon and calling people out of her were explained away as applying to the church before her probation had supposedly closed.

After a few days of agonizing struggle, I accepted my friend's earnest arguments—not because they were biblical, airtight, or even logical, but because I had conditioned my own mind to embrace this deception by constant exposure to separatists, offshoots, and so-called reform movements.

About a year after my separation from the church, I came across a copy of a popular "Adventist" scandal sheet containing a discussion of the separatist group of which I was now a part. The article was filled with inaccuracies, even



incorporating outright lies. This exposé went so far as to accuse us of undressing at meetings and our leaders of carrying guns and trying to change the weather! The testimony of the most bitter of our former members was accepted as gospel. I was appalled.

### Questioning the Exposés

But as I read I began to remember that I had accepted this publication's attacks upon denominational leaders and institutions for years, assuming the detailed information given to be wholly accurate. In fact, this particular paper had been the first to begin undermining my confidence in the final triumph of the church. I now began to question how true all the previous exposés were if the things written about our own group were so inaccurate.

Through the mercy of the Lord, today I am once more a member in good and regular standing in God's remnant church. I write this for others who may be as heedless as I was of the Lord's admonition to seek things that are pure

and true (Phil. 4:8). Today I see that I created my own disaster, in large measure, through what I chose to read, the meetings I chose to attend, and the speakers I chose to hear.

*When I saw the testimony*

*of a bitter former member*


*of our group accepted as*

*gospel, I began to have*

*second thoughts.*

I would counsel others to consider the spirit of what you read. Everything does not have to come from denominational

presses to have value, but what is the burden of the message presented? Is the material heavy with unrelenting criticism and condemnation? Are "itching ears" appealed to with tales of new "prophets" or strange new interpretations of time prophecies? Is Jesus the center of the ministry's presentations? Or is the center actually "reform" or "perfection"?

Muckraking and scandal should be avoided like the plague. Such reading can be lethal. I speak as one who knows, one who almost lost his spiritual life to poison in the mail. 

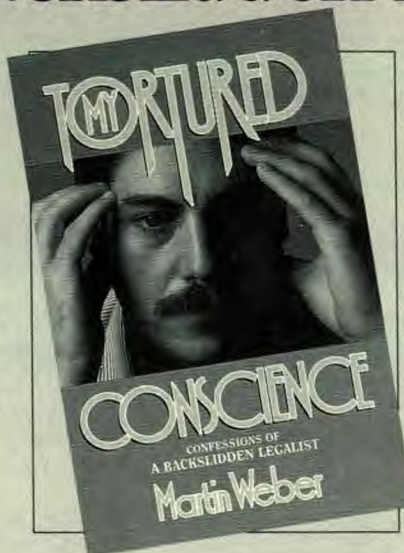


*Francis S. Green is a literature evangelist working in the high desert area of southern California.*

# From the author of *Hot Potatoes* comes the confessions of a backslidden legalist.

"I stopped at nothing in my quest for a Christlike character," says Martin Weber in his compelling book *My Tortured Conscience*. "My motive in self-denial was getting rid of anything that would deter me from depending on Jesus. But it was Christ-centered legalism. My hyperactive conscience robbed me of my friends, family, scholarships, dreams, and nearly life itself."

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efforts to silence his conscience and brought him to the Source of peace. Share in the exciting discoveries that brought him joy and assurance in Jesus.

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*My Tortured Conscience* is available at your local Adventist Book Center now.

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**1-800-765-6955.**





*What can you do when children  
don't act like they have good Christian parents?*

# Hyperactive!

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BY SANDRA DORAN

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I've always enjoyed the bumper sticker that reads "My other car is a Porsche." Affixed smugly to the rusted rear bumper of a 15-year-old Ford, it sends its message clearly: "Although this vehicle doesn't give me much status, it doesn't tell my whole story."

I'm thinking of a bumper sticker I'd like to paste onto my own back whenever I enter a shopping mall with my son. The message would be simple: "My other child is under control."

## **The Challenging Child**

Throwing together all the feisty genetic materials of long-forgotten ancestors, nature seems to produce, every so often, a little human being with a spark in his eyes and fire in his soul that is enough to make two grown adults quake. Sandwiched between placid siblings, born before brainy brothers or after sanguine sisters, he enters the world with such a strong identity that one almost wonders how Planet Earth

ever turned on its axis before he arrived to tell it what to do. Christian parents of such children often wonder how they have failed to apply biblical counsel in raising such a child. So do the teachers who find these children in their classrooms!

Having fought the good fight with a hyperactive child for the past eight years, I have emerged battle-scarred and weary, but infinitely wiser. From my repertoire of trial-and-error experiences, I offer the following advice to parents who traverse this earth with a challenging child.

**1. Don't pin all your hopes on some magic age when your child will be "like everyone else."**

From the time my son was an infant, I looked at placid children a few months older than he and told myself it was just a matter of 60 days before he would calm down. As months melted into years, I began to hold out for the wonderful age of 5. When he finally reached the first half decade of his life and still





jarred the universe with each step he took, I had to face a rather serious reality. My son did not enter the world as a placid child, he was not now a placid child, and he never would be. I could either accept that fact or set myself up for future disappointment and frustration.

## **2. Don't hold out for an easy cure.**

When a problem is complex, simple answers allure us wistfully with their promised solutions. I sat on a park bench recently with a woman who assured me that her child was hyperactive but "cured." I strained to see the child in question, and found the object of our discussion to be calmly waiting in line to use the slide.

"When I suspected he was hyper," his mother said, turning to me, "I went to visit my herb doctor, and he provided me with a number of natural remedies."

Her son mounted the steps slowly, while my own restlessly wove his way in and out of the waiting children.

Consulting a registered dietitian later, I discovered that my son could chew dandelion greens from now until childhood's end, and his energy level still would be enough to light up half of Long Island.

## **3. Don't expect parents of placid children to understand.**

I have never met a parent of a placid child yet who doesn't believe that his offspring actually started out with a "strong will" that was effectively modified by superior parenting skills. Smiling smugly while I do battle with my independent thinker, such parents toss out such remarks as: "My Johnny used to be like that, but I spanked him hard once when he was 2, and we never had any trouble with him since. You just have to let kids know who's boss."

In the face of such comments all you can do is nod outwardly while



inwardly hoping that someday a truly challenging child with a spark in his eyes and fire in his soul will enter the orderly world of such a perfect parent.

#### **4. Don't expect the conventional to work.**

As one mother of a spirited daughter told me: "With my first child, all the rules in the child-raising books worked like a charm. My second, however, presented a challenge unlike anything I had ever experienced. When I disciplined her, all I could do was dig into my soul and shoot from the hip."

I too have found myself abandoning the conventional. From holding a jar of caterpillars hostage to having "Sabbath dinner guests" over after the boys have gone to bed for the evening, we parents of challenging children do what we have to do.

#### **5. Don't listen to what everyone tells you.**

As human beings we have a natural desire to put our environment into balance. Often that includes doling out one-liners to "solve the problems" of those around us who are struggling. I will never forget the man who assessed my family after one brief visit, calling into question all of my child-raising attempts with one sweep of his hand.

It took three well-placed phone calls to my sympathetic mother, an incensed older sister, and a practical younger one to put me back on track.

#### **6. Don't stop searching for answers.**

While you can't always take the advice of others at face value, you can continue to read and check out the leads you do get. I have found two books to be of immense help in the search for understanding: *Parenting the Difficult Child*, by Florence

Rogers; and *The Hyperactive Child and the Family*, by John F. Taylor, Ph.D.

#### **7. Don't neglect your own needs in the overwhelming task of attempting to meet the demands of a challenging little person.**

When you deal with a demanding child, it is crucial to get out of the house once in a while, to create some space between your identity as a parent and your identity as a person in your own right. My husband finally arranged for me to get away for a few days when he realized that the highlight of my day had been going to the doctor's office and having blood drawn for a routine physical—away from the kids!

#### **8. Don't feel that you are alone.**

It is amazing when and where you will stumble across a kindred spirit. At a ministers' retreat recently, I found myself comparing notes in a canoe in the middle of a lake with a woman whose son sounded a lot like my own. Deeply engrossed in conversation, we looked up to discover we had drifted into the path of the camp speedboat. Our conversation was interrupted as we hastily paddled shoreward, but we rapidly resumed talking once our feet touched terra firma.

#### **9. Don't be totally shocked when you do see glimmers of hope and progress.**

After a particularly bad day with my son I began to dread our family's evening dinner appointment at a church member's home. As the evening progressed, however, I was amazed and pleased to discover both of my children on their best behavior. Not a trinket was touched in the museum-like living room, table conversation was graced by "Thank you"s; and we left with the smiles and blessings of all.

*When you deal with a demanding child, it is crucial to create space between your identity as a parent and your identity as a person in your own right.*

#### **10. No matter what happens, don't ever abandon pride in your child.**

Last year at camp meeting I found myself stationed for two hours in a playground as part of the privilege of being married to a man of the cloth. The sun was hot, and as I wistfully consulted my watch for the hundredth time, a man approached me, dragging my sweaty, red-cheeked son. "I don't know whose boy this is," he began, "but he's a troublemaker. I chased him off the slide, and he got into trouble on the swings. I sent him to the monkey bars, and he caused trouble there. I don't know what to do with him now."

"I'll take him, thank you," I said, and sent my boy over to the bench to cool off. When my stint in the playground was finally over, I escorted my son back to our room with the promise of a nap. For the quarter-mile walk he howled, red-faced, at the injustice of it all. Then he fell into bed and slept for three hours.

The next day found us back at the playground with some business to finish up. Approaching the man who had found my child to be the cause of so much trouble, I motioned for him to step aside for a minute.

"I just wanted you to know," I began, "that this is my son. I didn't want you to see us together and feel that you had put your foot in your mouth. I am aware of the fact that he can cause trouble at times, but he is my boy, and I'm proud of him."

Then I turned and took my son's hand, and together we resumed our common journey.

*Next week: "Yes, There's Help for Active Children."*



*Sandra Doran is a free-lance writer living in Lincoln, Rhode Island.*



## WORLD FIELD

# Global Center Promotes Outreach to Islam

*Director gathers, shares information on religion of 20 percent of world's people.*

For the past decade one world religion has taken more front-page space in the world's press than any other. Saddam Hussein and the Gulf war, Ayatollah Khomeini and the American hostages, and the Salman Rushdie affair have all been long-running sagas elevating the faith of Islam to a dominant place. Besides these media dramas, we have seen a steady immigration of Muslim believers from the Islamic heartlands into Europe and America. This tide of Muslim students, laborers, businessmen, and refugees has brought about a mushrooming of mosques across both hemispheres.

Spectacular evidence of the proselytizing zeal of modern Islam appears in the conversion of colorful personalities such as pop stars and giants of sport. Evidence has come from several countries that even some former Adventists are embracing Islam.

What is our church doing to evangelize the one fifth of the world's population that is Muslim, to compete with the dynamic religious rival among the principal targets of Islamic missions?

## Strategic Location

The 1986 Annual Council in Rio set up the Global Mission project to study approaches to such world religions as Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam. Establishment of the Global Center for Islamic Studies, on the campus of Newbold College in England, in 1989 resulted from this planning. Strategically placed near Heathrow, one of the world's busiest airports, with direct routes to all the Islamic heartlands, the center, in its almost three years, has demonstrated its worth.

Center director Borge Schantz,

*By Jack Mahon, public-relations director, Islamic Center, Newbold College, England.*

former Middle East and Africa missionary, set out to forge links between the center and every senior college and field administration in lands having a predominantly Islamic population. The operation included searching out all Adventist pastors, professors, broadcasters, and laypersons having knowledge, experience, or background in Islam as a forum for consultation. At the same time, the research facilities of the center expanded to include resource materials on the history, theology, and sociology of Islam as a section of the Newbold College library.

## Courses in Islamics

The director has taken the center overseas by visiting each of the six divisions where Muslim believers abound. Postgraduate courses in Islamics, developed at Newbold College and Andrews University, have been presented at Spicer College in India, Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria, and Solusi College in Zimbabwe.

The center's *Newsletter* carries 10 pages of instruction; news of current outreach; and available materials, literature, and study courses.

Four degrees of religious toleration in predominately Muslim lands have been identified, ranging from "wide open" to "fully closed." For each sector Schantz has recommended specific strategies, including countries with Muslim minorities. In Zimbabwe he counseled 200 undergraduates and pastors to concentrate their evangelistic efforts on the followers of traditional religions and for the time being to make no approach to the Muslims. Of the 10 million population, about 6 million are Christian and 4 million are followers of traditional religions. The Muslim minority represents a mere .9 percent of the population.

It is, however, a very vociferous mi-

nority that has established powerful and well-equipped Islamic propagation centers, which present that faith as an "African" religion with only a few simple requirements, which makes a strong appeal to 40 percent of the nation. The Muslims themselves are mainly of Indian and Arab stock and have proved gospel resistant.

"While you are working hard to win some of the Muslims on the fringe, they are making many converts among the followers of traditional religions. Neglect no gospel-hungry Muslim," Schantz told them, "but recognize that once they accept Islam, or even some kind of folk Islam, it will be exceedingly difficult for Adventist evangelism to make headway. Concentrate on the winnable people while they are winnable."

## MEXICO

# Lay Worker Shows Courage in Crisis

*Death threat fails to intimidate faithful soul winner.*

For many years lay worker Lorenzo Hernández has hiked the mountains of Chiapas in south Mexico, planting churches in unentered areas.

Early one spring morning in 1991 as Lorenzo walked a densely forested trail, he met three men carrying machetes red with blood. One of the men spoke. "This is as far as you are going, friend. There is no way you can escape from us."

Lorenzo replied, "If it is God's will that I lose my life here, I am willing. But before you kill me, I would like to say something."



They answered, "We do not want to hear anything from you."

"At least give me a chance to pray one last time," he said.

Lorenzo knelt and prayed, "Lord, I am ready to accept Your will. I need Your help at this very moment. I pray that You will forgive the sin of these men, and when You come in Your glory and majesty, I ask that these, my brothers, be with You in Your kingdom." Instantly Lorenzo felt the presence of God in a very special way.



Lorenzo Hernández carries a car battery to power a portable filmstrip projector in remote mountain villages.

## It's time we knew the truth!

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As he stood up, the bandits told Lorenzo that they had just killed two men on the trail, taking all their money. "Now we have to kill you too, for if we don't, you will accuse us before the authorities."

Lorenzo replied, "I am a missionary of the gospel, and I want to assure you that if you repent, God is willing to forgive you, and you will have the opportunity of being saved."

One man stated that Lorenzo should be allowed to go free, because he had given them words of eternal hope. The others agreed, then asked him to visit them in their homes so they could learn more about God's message of hope.

Breathing a prayer of thanks to God, Lorenzo continued down the trail. Within two minutes he came upon the bodies of the two slain men. As he continued down the trail, Lorenzo was suddenly struck with another fear. If anyone else saw him on this trail, he could be required to testify against the bandits or even be accused of murdering the two men. Usually at that early-morning hour, the trail was full of people walking to their fields. However, during the rest of the entire walk to his destination he

didn't meet a single person.

On several occasions Lorenzo stopped by the homes of the bandits, but they were not at home. One of them was murdered a few months later. Lorenzo prays that the remaining two may find salvation before it is too late.

After several months of work in La Florida, Lorenzo had 15 people meeting each Sabbath, preparing for baptism.

During the past two years Lorenzo led 52 people to baptism and organized two groups of new believers in unentered areas.

*By Fred Adams, Adventist Volunteer Service worker at Linda Vista Academy in Chiapas, Mexico. For his story, see Adventist Review, March 22, 1990.*

■ NEW YORK

## Book Workers Try New Approaches

*Street stands prove popular.*

The 18 literature evangelists (LEs) who have been setting up book tables on New York City streets have met with a good response in on-the-spot sales and making evening appointments, according to publishing director Nahor Muchiutti.

The book workers alternate their daytime table ministry with evening canvassing or follow-up calls. In bad weather, neighborhoods are canvassed. Along with dispensing books and literature and enrolling people in Bible studies, the workers are meeting former members at the tables. One Hispanic woman said she had been an Adventist in her country, but not since coming to the U.S. After a Bible study, she began attending church. At least one table-setter tailors her hours to her daughter's school days, choosing a busy location in Queens from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. two or three days a week, and scheduling the rest of her week for follow-up or neighborhood work.



Seven full- and part-time departmental assistant directors and 36 full- and part-time LEs minister to English, Hispanic, French, and Portuguese communities in Greater New York. Josué Jara, an assistant publishing director, cites the cash basis of the work as one reason for its progress there. "With C.O.D. and straight cash orders, we are able to have more personal contact with the people, without the cancellations that become a problem with time-payment programs," he says.

A training program brings LEs together for a one-day session every four to six weeks, at which Ellen White's *Colporteur Ministry* serves as the textbook. New books and methods are also introduced at the sessions. Personal testimonies shared by workers give encouragement and provide insights into dealing with common situations.

Publishing Department outreach in the area has included some innovations. A summer training program for 14 students from Montemorelos, Atlantic Union College, and Andrews University resulted in



Literature evangelists meet with good response from book displays on New York streets.

scholarships averaging \$3,000 per student. A center-spread color ad for books and videos in a Spanish weekly paper led to 43 responses. A three-day retreat was held for assistant publishing directors in an upstate motel to give leadership training in recruiting, training, and retaining LEs.

Says Pastor Muchiutti, "We're also praying about the possibility of getting some radio and TV time so our books can be read over the air, as is being done in the Philippines now. We're aiming high for the Lord!"

## ■ MICHIGAN

# Newsletter Offers Help to Harried Parents

*SDA group publishes ideas from professionals and peers.*

**A**t a time when occupational, church, and community responsibilities increasingly compete for parents' time, worldly values exert an ever stronger influence upon their children. Violence, drug abuse, premature concerns with sexuality, peer pressure, academic and social problems at school, and family brokenness all confront today's youth at levels unknown to previous generations. As the world around us becomes ever more decadent, parents need help to withstand the downward pull on their families.

One response to this need is *Creative Parenting*, a newsletter begun by a group of concerned Seventh-day Adventist parents in Cedar Lake, Michigan. Begun in 1989, the newsletter shares ideas and encouragement for the delightful yet difficult task of Christian parenting. Subscriptions now stand at a little more than 1,500.

*Creative Parenting* covers a variety of topics such as early-childhood education, handling money responsibly, physical fitness, psychological problems, and teen guidance. Well-known Adventist family-life professionals, such as Kay Kuzma, June Strong, Ruth Murdoch, and Len McMillan, contribute articles or columns. Many articles come from parents who through experience can share valuable insights with others. Regular features include Especially for Fathers, Family Finance, and a column of family worship ideas based on the current *Adult Sabbath School Lessons*.

An editorial board based at Andrews University provides valuable guidance as well as promotion at camp meetings and seminars.

The Church Ministries Department of the North American Division has provided another source of support, through the involvement of Noeline Johnsson, children's ministries coordinator. It has supplied partial funding for professional layout, helps distribute sample copies, and supplies family worship ideas written by RosAnne Tetz.

Besides the support and encouragement of local conferences (especially Michigan), *Creative Parenting* received an Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) grant of \$30,000 for further development and increased circulation.

## 10,000 Offers

Eric Mattson of Framingham, Massachusetts, believes in *Creative Parenting*. Mattson printed and mailed, at his own expense, 10,000 cards offering free subscriptions to members of his community. He has received nearly 100 responses and plans to invite subscribers to programs for parents at his church. He has also shared copies with parents at day-care centers.

"*Creative Parenting* is a resource for Christians wanting to incorporate the Adventist lifestyle into their parenting practices," says Kay Kuzma. "It's informative, practical, and easy to read. Plus it serves as a forum for Adventist parents to share insights and solutions that can help make parenting the creative experience God intended. Parenting is the most important career in the world, and *Creative Parenting* will help mothers and fathers tackle the job with spiritual insight and creativity."

Churches, schools, and conferences have purchased club subscriptions to distribute. Concerned Communications will be distributing a sample copy with its Positive Parenting Seminar packets.

The staff of *Creative Parenting* believes that God is guiding this ministry. The many people who have helped, the professionals who have given their services at or below cost, and the response



from grateful readers all confirm this belief. Editor Haus, board member Gerard, and Pastor Fred Earles (For Fathers Only columnist) were interviewed recently in a one-hour 3-ABN Presents feature on the Three Angels Broadcasting Network.

*Creative Parenting* is published six times a year at an annual subscription rate of \$9.95. For further subscription

information, call 1-800-253-3000, or write *Creative Parenting*, P.O. Box 126, Cedar Lake, MI 48812.

By Madeline S. Johnston, a secretary at the SDA Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### To New Posts

#### Regular Missionary Service

**Lynn Alan Boyd**, returning to serve as lecturer, Helderberg College, Cape, South Africa, left August 26. **Evelyn Barbara (Grellman) Boyd** and two children followed September 22.

**Felipe Briones Caballero**, to serve as assistant director, ADRA-Mozambique, and **Patria T (Osorio) Caballero** of Loma Linda, California, left October 27.

**Samuel Roy Atiga Catalan**, returning to serve as pediatrician, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, **Mary Ann (Torres) Catalan**, and two children left October 3.

**Conrad Duane Clausen**, returning to serve as associate professor, University of Eastern Africa, Eldoret, Kenya, and **Venus Clausen** left September 1.

**Peter Cooper**, returning to serve as coordinator, Health Education Program, Sri Lanka Union of Churches, Colombo, Sri Lanka, and **Betty (Campion) Cooper** left September 10.

**Eloy Dante del Pozo**, to serve as pediatrician, Scheer Memorial Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal, of Glendale, California, left October 7. **Magdalena (Wiesner) del Pozo** followed October 28.

**Rodger Lee Dunder**, returning to serve as teacher, Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College, Usa River, Tanzania, **Licia Anne (McNeil) Dunder**, and two children left September 5.

**Robert Fullerton Dunlop**, returning to serve as surgeon, Hongkong Adventist Hospital, Hong Kong, and **Elizabeth Ann (Canaday) Dunlop** left October 11.

**Jerrell Newton Fink**, returning to serve as principal, Ethiopian Adventist College, Shashamane, Ethiopia, and **Regina Esther (Little) Fink** left September 10.

**Jacob Jake Fortney**, returning to serve as teacher, Adventist University of Central Africa, Gisenyi, Rwanda, and **Joan Clarissa (Anderson) Fortney** left September 8.

**David Charles Grellmann**, returning to serve as physician, Masanga Leprosy Hospital, Freetown, Sierra Leone, **Carrie Lynn (St. Clair) Grellmann**, and two children left September 22.

**Glenn Alexander Gryte**, returning to serve as physician, Taiwan Adventist Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan, and **Silva Louise (Woosley) Gryte** left September 2.

**Philip Mastick Hayden**, returning to serve as Music Department chairman, Taiwan Adventist College, Yu Chih, Taiwan, **Jane Carol (Acker) Hayden**, and four children left September 2.

**Otinel Cornel Iancu**, returning to serve as pastor, Haifa church, Israel Field, Jerusalem, Israel, **Denisia (Dedanca) Iancu**, and one child left September 25.

**William Leroy Laspe**, returning to serve as president, Penang Adventist Hospital, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, left September 1. **Marlys Jean (Williams) Laspe** and two children followed later in the month.

**Benjamin Arthur LeDuc**, returning to serve as medical director, Bella Vista Hospital, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and **Mona Rhae (Slaybaugh) LeDuc** left September 24.

**Mike Mile Lekic**, returning to serve as principal, Haitian Adventist College's English Junior Academy, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, **Nada (Svircev) Lekic**, and two children left September 1.

**Sosamma Phoebe (Zachariah) Lindsay**, returning to serve as associate professor, University of Eastern Africa, School of Nursing, Eldoret, Kenya, left September 25.

**Marlin Gene Meharry**, returning to serve as dentist, SDA Health Services, Nairobi, Kenya, **Janette Louise (Latscha) Meharry**, and four children left September 18.

**Thomas Patrick Miller**, returning to serve as auditing director, Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and **Vera (Watson) Miller** left September 16.

**James Otin Neergaard**, returning to serve as ADRA and ministerial director, Middle East Union, Nicosia, Cyprus, and **Joyce Adele (Beam) Neergaard** left October 31.

**Johannes Gerardus Nikkels**, returning to serve as ADRA and associate church ministries director, Central American Union, Alajuela, Costa Rica, and **Esther Ruth (Weber) Nikkels** left September 10.

**Albert Floyd Penstock**, returning to serve as pastor/teacher, The Gambia, West Africa, and **Fern Mae (Sandness) Penstock** left September 15.

**Robert Franklin Roberts**, returning to serve as pilot/mechanic, Zaire Union, Lubumbashi, Zaire Republic, **Janice Erlene (Parker) Roberts**, and three children left October 22.

**Steven Grover Rose**, returning to serve as staff auditor, Far Eastern Division, Singapore, **Suzann (Kamp) Rose**, and one child left September 1.

**Glenn Walter St. Clair**, returning to serve as administrator, Masanga Leprosy Hospital, Freetown, Sierra Leone, and **Geraldine (Bicknell) St. Clair** left September 11.

**Clarence Richard Sletwick**, to serve as librarian, West Indies College, Mandeville, Jamaica, of St. Helena, California, left October 24.

**Albert Dwight Smith**, to serve as biology teacher, West Indies College, Mandeville, Jamaica, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, left February 11. **Ruth Ellen (Schwartz) Smith** followed September 1.

**Berthold Herbert Stickle, Jr.**, returning to serve as treasurer, South-East Africa Union Mission, Blantyre, Malawi, and **Rosabel Eileen (Reimche) Stickle** left October 8.

**Arlyn Carlyle Sundsted**, returning to serve as president, Burkina Faso Mission, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, West Africa, and **Judith Lucille (Wade) Sundsted** left August 28.

**Dale LeRay Thomas**, returning to serve as publishing director, Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Abidjan, Côte

d'Ivoire, and **Joy Annette (Vetter) Thomas** left September 24.

**Carmelita Janene Troy**, returning to serve as lecturer, Newbold College, Bracknell, Berkshire, England, left September 17.

**Harry Vega**, returning to serve as director, Dental Clinic and Lab School, Montemorelos University, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, Mexico, and **Joanne LaVonne (Bennett) Vega** left October 28.

**Gary Lyn Ver Steeg**, returning to serve as English teacher, Nile Union Academy, Heliopolis, Egypt, **Mediana (Reyes) Ver Steeg**, and one child left September 3.

**Georgia Mae Watson**, returning to serve as chairman, Humanities Department, Solusi College, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, left September 8.

#### Adventist Volunteer Service

**Marion Elvina Sletwick**, to serve as library adviser, West Indies College, Mandeville, Jamaica, of St. Helena, California, left October 24.

**Jeffrey Donald Wesslen**, to serve as computer technician, Bulgarian Union of Churches, Sofia, Bulgaria, left October 13.

#### Adventist Youth Service

**Melody Mi-Jin Bak (PUC)**, of Angwin, California, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, left May 2.

**Eric Jay Bautista (LSU)**, of Riverside, California, to serve as teacher, Marshall Islands Mission Academy, Majuro, Marshall Islands, left June 15.

**Juan Carlos Belliard (SC)**, of Collegedale, Tennessee, to serve as English teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, left May 22.

**Darin Alan Chadwick (WWC)**, of College Place, Washington, to serve as teacher, Marshall Islands Mission Academy, Majuro, Marshall Islands, left August 7.

**James Alexander Choi** (Denver Korean church), of Aurora, Colorado, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, left April 17.

**Chandra Danielle Cooke (CUC)**, of Takoma Park, Maryland, to serve as English teacher, Thailand English Language Centers, Bangkok, Thailand, left August 12.

**April Michelle Daniell (SAC)**, of Keene, Texas, to serve as elementary teacher, Marshall Islands Mission Academy, Majuro, Marshall Islands, left August 7.

**Eileen Joy Foliente (PUC)**, of Angwin, California, to serve as teacher, Japan SDA English Schools, Yokohama, Japan, left June 20.

**Reyes Froyland (AU)**, of Westmont, Illinois, to serve as teacher, Thailand English Language Centers, Bangkok, Thailand, left June 17.

**Jonathan Leslie Funkhouser (PUC)**, of Deer Park, California, to serve as teacher, Pakistan Adventist Seminary, Sheikhupura, Pakistan, left August 4.

**John Peter Geli (PUC)**, of Angwin, California, to serve as secretary/receptionist, Guam-Micronesia Mission, Agaña Heights, Guam, left August 7.

**Kelly Marc Groger (PUC)**, of Angwin, California, to serve as radio technician/operator, Adventist World Radio-Asia, Agat, Guam, left June 5.

**Christopher James Guadiz (LSU)**, of Riverside, California, to serve as teacher, Marshall Islands Mission Academy, Majuro, Marshall Islands, left June 17.

**Jeffrey James Henneberg (LSU)**, of Riverside, California, to serve as teacher, Marshall Islands Mission Academy, Majuro, Marshall Islands, left June 17.

**Darlene Kay Hintz (WWC)**, of College Place, Washington, to serve as elementary teacher, Yap SDA Elementary School, Colonia, Yap, Caroline Islands, left August 7.

**Chadwick Todd Johnson (CaUC)**, of College Heights, Alberta, Canada, to serve as construction worker, Guam-Micronesia Mission, Agaña Heights, Guam, left August 7.

**Deborah Christine Kontra** (Celebration Center church), of Soquel, California, to serve as teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, left June 30.

**Kevin Shige Kuniyoshi (PUC)**, of Angwin, California, to serve as teacher, Japan SDA English Schools, Yokohama, Japan, left June 14.



# Love in the Blood

Once upon a time I knew a Christian girl in love whose fiancé stuck a pistol in his mouth and splattered blood on her dreams. About a year later, in an apartment in Manhattan, she told her sad tale, and I, Mr. Adventist, “witnessed” to her about hell and the end of the world. With a wave of her arm she knocked my words out of the air. “When Rory died,” she uttered, interrupting my eschatological eloquence, “my life was shattered, everything fell apart, I had nothing. All I knew—the *only* thing I knew—was *that God loves me.*”

## The Bottom Line

Poor Babylonian girl. Never read *The Desire of Ages*, didn't know the state of the dead, walked only in shadows of what blazes around us—yet when stripped bare, when fate took a hammer to her faith, she could still cry out, “God loves me!”

How many Adventists, even with *Steps to Christ* on our shelves, could say the same? We have doctrine, we keep the correct day, we eat the right foods—but do we know God's love so well? Is our experience with Jesus so sound that no matter how wretchedly clobbered, we could still say, as did this girl, “God loves me”?

You might give a good homily on soteriology, or explain justification and sanctification, or discern the difference between imputed and imparted righteousness. But all this wisdom means nothing if you don't know, for yourself, Christ's love. It is like a grand wedding suffused with white lace, long gowns, flowers, and violins—and no love between the bride and groom.

God's love flows out in numerous ways, but the greatest expression remains in Jesus Christ, and the fundamental means to know this love is to *experience* His saving grace for yourself, as revealed by the blood of the cross. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

These words are not just theology, but a vibrant, living encounter with the reality that Jesus Christ shed His blood for your sins. Christ's death needs to be internalized until it becomes the central focus of your life. Only then can you know the love that He has for you individually. Without the experience of the cross and the pardon it has accom-



*Having your  
theology right  
isn't the same  
as knowing God  
loves you.*

plished for us, you can never know the love of God.

“Here is where thousands fail,” writes Ellen White. “They do not believe that Jesus pardons them individually. They do not take God at His word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to *know for themselves* that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not for you. They are for every repentant transgressor” (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 52, 53).

## Take God's Word for It

How precious the moments when, painfully aware of what lurks within, you brush the dust off your knees, knowing that you have been pardoned by the blood of Christ. How sweet to realize that the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” takes away yours as well (John 1:29). How happy to be one “whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Ps. 32:1). Only by this experience can you know the love of God, because in the death of Jesus, God's love reached its apogee. Every other expression of His love, no matter how tender, is covered by Christ's blood. No wonder the apostle Paul, despite all his theological, philosophical, and eschatological training, exclaimed: “For I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

Do you know Christ and Him crucified? Have you shared in His death and resurrection? Only by an unconditional surrender of your will to His, only by death to self and a rebirth borne from above, can the love of God as expressed on Golgotha become a personal experience. Once the reality of what the cross means pierces the soul, only then can you grasp for yourself that God is love. And then, no matter your suffering, no matter how much blood might splatter on your dreams, your hold on God will never fail, for you will have known the love of the only blood that matters.



*Clifford Goldstein is editor of Shabbat Shalom, the church's outreach magazine for the Jews.*

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GOLDSTEIN**



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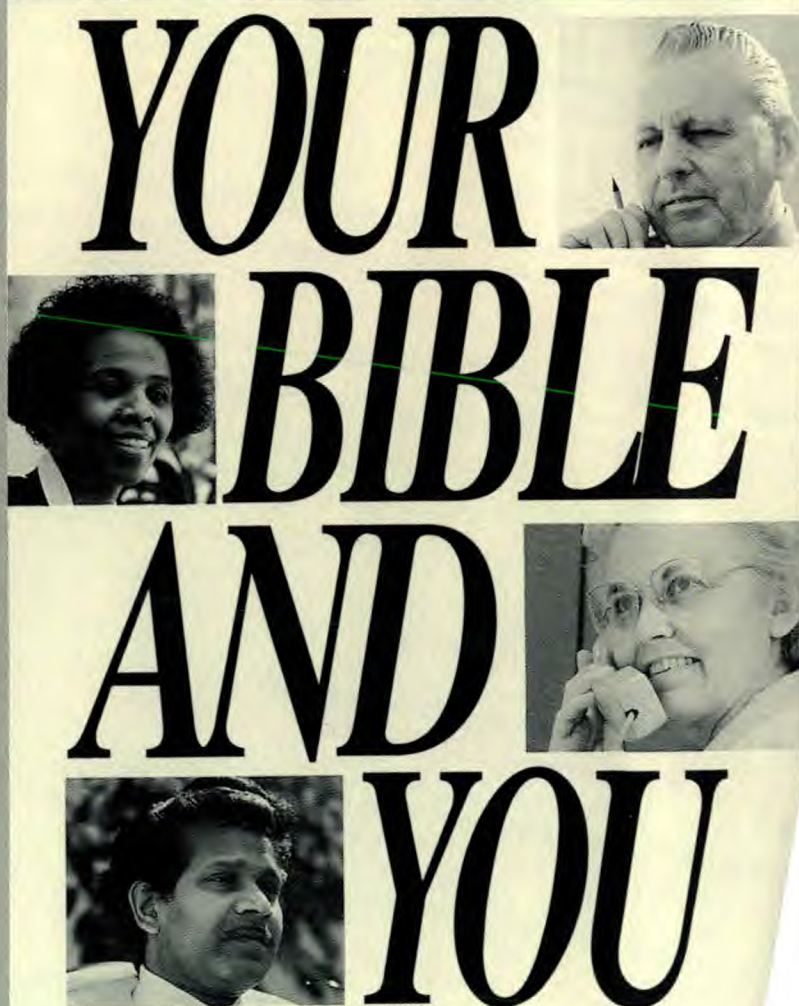
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