

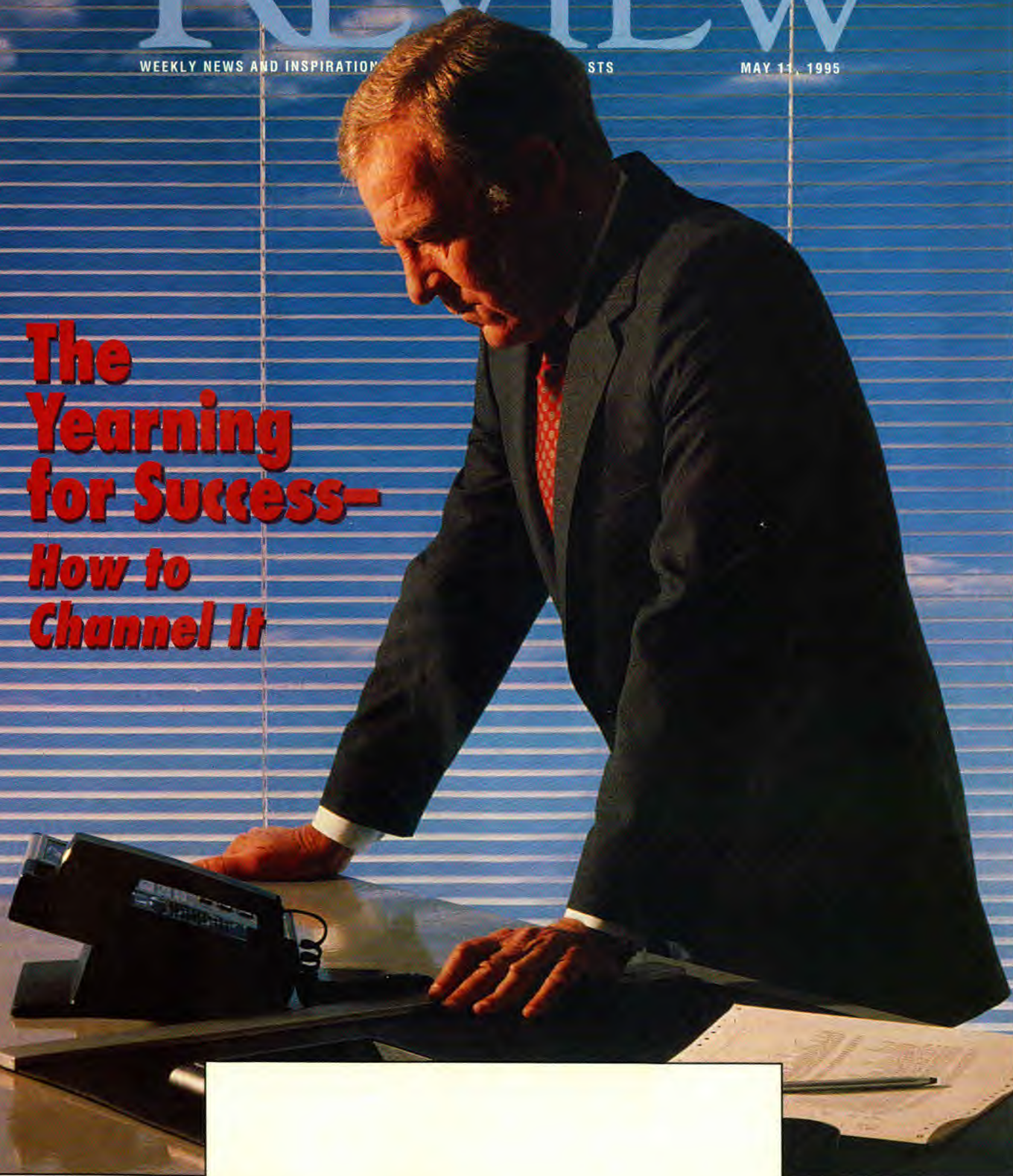
ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INSPIRATION

STS

MAY 11, 1995

**The
Yearning
for Success—
How to
Channel It**



One Soul Worth the Price

I think the conference should consider other ways to save money and close churches only as a very last resort—no matter what their size. I have heard many pastors say after a sermon that if they were able to touch the heart of one soul, it was worth all the preparation. If by keeping a small church open you can keep one more person close to God who may not be able to attend a larger church because of distance, etc., isn't that person worth the price of a church's upkeep?

*Debbie Sponsler
(FRYB93A)*

Wrong Direction

Closing small churches would be going in the wrong direction. In all probability we would risk the chance of losing funds rather than saving millions.

Jesus stated, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). The Lord never despised the five barley loaves because they were small, nor did He reject the fish because they were few in number. Jesus demonstrated the fact that soul winning and church growth are personal, individual.

During my travels for 35 years among our churches, I have seen some very productive people who trace their foundation back to small churches, small schools, and their Christian parents. Closing a small school is doing no more than taking the path of least resistance, while closing a small church most likely will not help the larger churches in the big cities.

*Bob Thrower
Director/Speaker
The Hour of Prophecy
Fort Worth, Texas*

Money or Souls?

Is our main aim to save money or to save souls? May God save us from materialism. He can and will provide if we have faith. I hope the devil does not find a way to close churches down with this lame excuse. America must awake from its slumber. We are Laodicea!

*David M. Onsongo
(donsinga@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu)*

Elders Do Well

Please do not close our small churches in the United States of America. My wife and I were raised in small churches—in Texas and Montana. Most of the local elders would be glad to give a talk during the 11:00 a.m. service, and believe me, they do well.

Yes, I believe in pastors! They can come around and visit us every two or three months. When they do, we can

To Close or Not to Close?

Richard Osborn's provocative article "Shall We Close *Small Schools and Churches?*" in our March 16 issue brought a lively response from readers. We also



uploaded the material to the Seventh-day Adventist Forum on CompuServe and released it on Prodigy and Internet. Responses from CompuServe alone totaled more than 100.

Herewith a sampling of reactions from both regular mail and electronic sources.

have an all-day Sabbath meeting, if the church so desires. We need pastors, but many of them talk a lot and say nothing.

*Henry and Pauline Knapp
Milwaukie, Oregon*

Make Teachers Conference Employees

We might very well be better off with many small schools than in consolidation. The junior academies place a tremendous subsidy load on the large churches in the sending district and still place a large financial load on the families of the students. Perhaps we need to make all teachers full-time employees of the conferences. Then the churches could be charged with operation and maintenance of the

school plant. Make the parents responsible for purchasing textbooks.

*Bernard M. Sievers
Williamstown, New Jersey*

No One Answer

There is no right answer for every congregation. It is something we must wrestle with before God, seeking His guidance. Certainly we need to provide for the spiritual needs of our church members as well as our schoolchildren. It's just that sometimes other circumstances prevail and God might lead a congregation to close.

*Ryan J. Bell
(74532,726)*

Sharing Finances

If we consider the young people truly the children of the church and feel the whole church has a responsibility for educating them, maybe we should put the financing into a pot and distribute it more or less equally to areas that can only partially support a school but have the interest and commitment to Christian education and want their children to be "taught of the Lord."

*Beverly J. Rumble
(74617,1231)*

Unique Identity

There are things that the institutions of the world cannot do for which we must have Adventist institutions. The very existence among us of institutions of unique purpose declares our high value for a unique identity. We can achieve many important objectives in our families and through personal relationships without unique institutions, but a unique identity is not one of them.

Thank you, Richard Osborn and the *Adventist Review*, for reminding us that our individual survival spiritually and our corporate survival as a movement demand a structure that supports a high value for "the unique and vital eschatological truths of God's remnant church."

*Robert Darnell
(GGFK55A @prodigy.com)*

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The Unstingy God

Recently my pastor dropped a seed thought—a bon mot—that got me to thinking in a new way about God and brought great blessing to me. Speaking of sibling rivalry, he observed that such problems often arise from a scarcity of love; where love abounds, every member of the family usually feels secure.

That led me to reflect on God—the abundant God, the unstingy God. I took down a concordance and began to look under “abundant,” “abundantly,” and “abundance.” I found these words occurring often in the King James Version, as well as in modern translations.

When Moses asked to see God’s glory, the Lord passed by and proclaimed His character: “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34:6, 7).

Another famous passage comes from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20, 21).

An interesting expression, that—“exceeding abundantly.” If we were editing Paul, we would drop out the “exceeding” as being redundant. But Paul knew what he was about: he piled on the adverbs because he was attempting to put into words something that cannot be reduced to words—the incredible ability of our God to supply all our needs, to do far more than we can not only request but imagine.

Sin, the insidious intruder in a perfect universe, did not take our God by sur-

prise. He who is abundant in knowledge and insight already had a plan to meet it. As fearful as the ravages of evil have been in human history, God’s answer—grace—has even more power to win back all that was lost and to restore the divine plan. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:20, 21). You can translate “did much more abound” as “superabounded.”

Jesus—in Him we see embodied the nature of our unstingy God. He who emptied Himself in order to truly become one with us (Phil. 2:5-8) spared nothing of Himself in living and dying for us.

Abundant in Love

The Father, abundant in love, unstingy, emptied heaven of its choicest Treasure, giving His only Son that we might have eternal life (John 3:16)—life more abundant now (John 10:10) and forever (1 John 5:11, 12). Jesus, who knew no sin, became a sin offering for us, that we might receive the righteousness that was His (2 Cor. 5:21). And the blessed Paraclete carries on the ministry of Jesus in the world, so that we may “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13, NIV).

The Bible consists largely of stories. On the surface these stories are about men and women, but they are really about God. Over and over they reveal to us the abundant God, the unstingy God.

No sin is too big for this unstingy God to forgive. Not even the sins of adultery, treachery, and murder found in one man—David. Where sin abounds, grace superabounds.

No situation is too desperate for the God of abundance to provide a solution. Famine? He has foreseen it and already stored up food in Egypt. The armies of Pharaoh? He holds the waters of the Red Sea, and they will overwhelm the adversaries. Sickness and wasting disease? He is the God who heals. Weakness and trembling in the face of temptation? His strength is made perfect in our weakness, making us more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

And yes, even death itself. “Do not be afraid,” He says. “I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades” (Rev. 1:17, 18, NIV).

Ellen White, whose ministry and writings continue to shape the Seventh-day Adventist Church, often spoke about Jesus. For her, God was the abundant one, the unstingy one.

“Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible,” she wrote, “than the soul that feels its nothingness, and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. God would send every angel in heaven to the aid of such a one, rather than allow him to be overcome” (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 17).

In her last written message, given the year before her death, we find this: “So strong is His love that it controls all His powers, and employs the vast resources of heaven in doing His people good. It is without variableness or shadow of turning—the same yesterday, today, and forever” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 519).

And we, beholding the God of abundance, the unstingy God, will be changed into His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18).

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON



Let's Not Increase Their Burden

In our current atmosphere of political incorrectness, at least three groups still remain fair game—politicians, lawyers, and parents. You can still make politicians the butt of jokes and get away with it. Same for lawyers. And as for parents—the subject of my editorial—you can still malign them with impunity. Even in church.

This came forcefully to me following a Wednesday evening prayer meeting service years ago when I was a young pastor. I had no children at the time, but I'd already sensed what I regarded as a gross misuse of Jeremiah 13:20. Remember the passage? "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?"

That question, as many interpret the text, will be posed by Jesus to those hapless parents who, at His coming, appear before Him without their children. How many well-meaning speakers among us have hurled that text into the face of parents with wayward children! That Wednesday evening, when I commented on the prevailing wrongful use of the passage, a mother came up to thank me for the comfort my message had brought her. (All her children had left the faith.)

Now, I don't believe in bringing comfort to people just to come across as compassionate. I genuinely felt (and still do) that we had too often misused the text in question, giving rise to needless guilt. We cannot assume ipso facto that parents are to blame for the waywardness of their children any more than we can hold God accountable for the tragic blunder of the first couple. This is an exceedingly complex business, and none of us can be sure how our children will eventually turn out. Often kids brought up in the same home will choose radically different paths.

There are bad parents, of course. Who has not been shocked again and again by news reports of child abuse—beatings, burnings, starvings, abandonment. Even murder! But these sick manifestations of human depravity are worlds removed from where the overwhelming number of parents live.

The Burden They Carry

Recently I read a tear-jerking story in my local union paper.¹ The father of Lloyd Hudson, of Point Marion, Pennsylvania, had died. With five boys and three girls to care for, his mother was forced onto welfare. In time gang fights, stealing, and robbery became part of Lloyd's life. "My mama, a Christian woman, did everything in her power to pass her God on to her children," Lloyd said. "But for some reason I was bent toward going my own way."

Notwithstanding her financial plight, that indomitable Christian woman found a way to put Lloyd and the others in church school. But nothing worked for Lloyd. Even the public schools—to which he subsequently transferred—couldn't put up with him. Eventually he ended up in jail.

As soon as he was released, he hit the streets again—until one fateful night. Hear it in his own words:

"I was . . . on my way out to hustle. My mama said, 'Don't go out. Don't you know what tonight is?' It was Friday, and my mother was a Seventh-day Adventist. Friday night was party-time for me. . . . I was both ungrateful and resentful.

"My mama stood there crying. 'Would you do one thing with me before you go?' she asked. 'What?' I replied. Mama said, 'Would you pray with me?' I did not want to say no, because I kinda respected my mother's

God. I saw Him answer so many of her prayers. So I got on my knees with my eyes open, watching her pray.

"'Father,' she prayed, 'You said You will be a husband to the widow. You said You'd be the father to the fatherless. You said You'll provide their needs, feed them, put clothes on their back, if I would bring them up right. Lord, I tried to train Lloyd, but he won't listen to me. . . . I don't know what to do with him. Take him off my hands. Just make my heart strong enough to bear it. In Jesus' name, amen.' 'You through?' I asked. She just stood there with her face soaked with tears flowing like a river. I got up . . . and walked out to meet my friend Charles.

"Something told me to go in another direction, so I stopped to get a sandwich. When I was about to eat, a fellow came inside with fear all over his face. He cried, 'Man, I'm off the streets tonight. Charles is dead.' I dropped my sandwich and ran outside and down the street, where I saw lights flashing. Charles was dead. I ran home and went to church the next morning. God answered Mama's prayer."

As I read that story in the quiet hours of a Sabbath afternoon, I had to hold back tears. Through the heart of that one broken, helpless mother I could see a hundred thousand others all around the world. Their burden is already heavy. Let's not increase it by our reckless application of Scripture. What they need is the comfort of Isaiah: "I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children."²

¹ Columbia Union Visitor, Feb. 15, 1995, p. 3. Used by permission.

² Isa. 49:25, NRSV.

■ OKLAHOMA CITY

Adventists Assist Bomb Survivors

Adventist Community Services jumped into action immediately after the terrorist bombing of the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19. Within hours a volunteer team of pastors was in place comforting and consoling survivors and also families of the victims.

As of presstime authorities have confirmed 136 deaths. Another 60 persons are still missing. The dead include children who attended two day-care centers—one located in the federal building, and one at a YMCA across the street.

Another 400-plus persons sustained major and minor injuries. And severe damage to other buildings and gas and water lines near the bombing site caused homelessness and unemployment among countless other persons. More than 200 persons who reside within the blast area have lost their homes.

Pastoral care has been the primary ministry provided by the initial Adventist Community Services (ACS) team, meeting emotional and spiritual needs. Jim Shires, an Oklahoma City Adventist pastor, is the team leader and one of three interfaith coordinators for the overall effort by clergy of all denominations. Other ACS pastoral-care workers include Craig Dossman, James Rainwater, John Neff, Victor Felipe, Mike McPeters, Bill Norman, Bill Boyd, and Jack Francisco—all pastors or conference staff in the Oklahoma and Southwest Region conferences.

Cooperating With the Red Cross

ACS Oklahoma disaster coordinator Stanley Buckmaster is helping as liaison officer with a desk at the Red Cross command post. He is also the current chair of the Oklahoma VOAD, the statewide interagency coordinating group.

Volunteers were lent to the Red Cross and other agencies. Heidi Thornton, a 17-year-old Adventist volunteer, organized the initial food service at the site, and Oklahoma Conference ACS director Vera Wolfe later directed the same operation.

ACS is also involved in the collection, distribution, and management of donated goods. The Federal Emergency Management Agency got chief North American Division dis-

aster consultant Larry Buckner out of bed at 1:00 a.m. on April 22 and insisted on flying him to Oklahoma City so that ACS expertise could be applied to the coordination of relief supplies already piling up from around the country.

A clearinghouse for donated goods and volunteers has been established by ACS at (800) 253-3000. A trust fund has also been set up by the North American Division's ACS office for Adventists who want to contribute to the relief needs in Oklahoma City. Donations can be made through your local church by marking the offering "NAD-ACS Oklahoma." Or you can use a credit card and call the 800 number above.

The Bowman Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cleveland,

Tennessee, initiated a plan that many Adventist congregations have joined—a pancake breakfast on May 14, Mother's Day, to raise funds for the relief effort. Adventist Youth Emergency Service (YES) teams have been formed at many Adventist colleges and academies to go to Oklahoma and help.

The three Adventist members known to be in the federal building and surrounding facilities when the bomb exploded all escaped serious injury.

Jaroy McGuirt, a member of the Tenth Street church, who works in the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office on the eighth floor of the federal building, had been called to the back of the ninth floor for a meeting with his supervisor. He watched in horror as some of his staff fell to their death.

Carol Dossman, the wife of the Tenth Street church pastor, works in a nearby building and was saved from injury by her boss, who was meeting with her when the bomb exploded. As the windows shattered, he pushed her to the floor, protecting her with his own body, and sustaining many cuts and bruises.

Central church member Bob Jones was sitting in a conference room four blocks from the blast. As the shock waves blew out the windows in the Kerr McGee Building, he and the others dove under the tables. They were not seriously injured, but one woman in the room had a 9-month-old baby in the day-care center at the federal building.

North American Division leaders continue to invite members everywhere to pray for the victims' families, and the continued efforts by church members to minister to those whose lives have been seriously impacted by the bombing.



Firefighters conduct rescue efforts at the Oklahoma City wreckage.

By Monte Sahlin, an assistant to the president, North American Division; and contributor Jean Thomas, Southwestern Union communication director.

■ GC SPRING MEETING—REPORT 2

Actions Voted—From Elections to World Mission

Byond the few items that generated more discussion at the General Conference Executive Committee's Spring Meeting April 4-5 (see Newsbreak, Apr. 20), members and invitees voted a host of other items that ranged from a strategy for worldwide communication to a Worldwide Day of Prayer. Here is a quick look at most of the other items voted:

■ **"Regular Standing" Membership.** An amendment to the *SDA Church Manual* would change, in regard to membership, all "good and regular standing" references to "regular standing." The church has found it too hard to define "good," so such wording will be dropped if this amendment is passed by the delegates to this summer's GC session—the only ones able to make changes to the *Church Manual*. In a second amendment to be voted, "regular standing" will be defined as any member not under church discipline.

■ **Commission on Human Sexuality.** A new World Commission on Human Sexuality will begin preparing a biblically based theology of human sexuality, identifying and prioritizing critical human sexuality issues that affect Adventists, and creating strategies to communicate and educate members regarding God's plan for human sexuality.

■ **Reaffirmation That Global Mission Will Receive 100 Percent of the Annual Sacrifice Offering.** When 1996 begins, 100 percent of the money given to the Annual Sacrifice Offering received during the church's annual Week of Prayer will go for Global Mission work. No longer will it be divided between Global Mission and the world mission fund. Because of the tight budget in 1995, full implementation of this 1994 action was delayed one year.

■ **A Worldwide Communication Strategy.** A document prepared by a GC-appointed Communication Strategy Commission and voted by the Spring Meeting outlines common goals for all communication by the church and its entities. It calls for the acceptance of an overall strategic statement to govern communication inside and outside the church—"Seventh-day Adventists will communicate hope by focusing on the quality of life that is complete in Christ."

The document also asks all entities to develop strategies for implementing these four guiding principles:

1. To make the local congregation the primary focus of internal communication, hope and whole-person development are essential parts of internal communication, and are best provided within the local church community.
2. To enable congregations and church members to be effective communicators within the context of their communities.
3. To present the Seventh-day Adventist Church to its

publics as the preferred source for whole-person development.

4. To improve the public perception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its members.

■ **Election of a Director-elect for Archives and Statistics.** R. William Cash, currently the director of Records, Research, and Assessment for Union College in Lincoln,



Nebraska, will become the next director of the GC's Office of Archives and Statistics. He will officially become director on October 1, 1995, when the current director, F. Donald Yost, retires.

■ **Incorporation of the Center for Global Leadership.** The work of developing, supporting, and facilitating excellence in leadership within the church was voted to become an official entity—the Center for Global Leadership, Inc. This action creates and formalizes an incorporated, nonstock corporation to help in the work that GC vice president Philip S. Follett is doing around the world in training leaders.

■ **Appointment of Editors.** If passed by the GC session delegates, a Constitution and Bylaws amendment would add that editors and associate editors for the principal denominational journals prepared at the General Conference will be among those appointed by the GC Executive Committee at the first Annual Council following the GC session. These would join a host of others—including all departmental associate leaders—to be appointed then. In the past, editors have not been subject to such review and reappointment every five years.

■ **Authorization of Meetings.** More than 300 meetings for the General Conference or its entities were authorized through 1997. Meetings range from institutional boards to the Biblical Research Institute Committee, and from the Christian View of Human Life Committee to the European World Mission Institute.

■ **A Message and Mission Commission.** This commission will choose the church's overall themes for the coming quinquennium, identify issues inherent within the church's message and mission, choose topics to be addressed each year, and will plan, coordinate, and monitor programs relating to the themes.

Spring Meeting members also voted the coming quinquennium's theme—"In the Beginning God." This theme will highlight next fall's Annual Council.



GC executive committee members study Spring Meeting proposals.

By Myron Widmer, an associate editor of the *Adventist Review*.

ACHIEVING Success

A five-point recipe

BY ALFRED Y. PALLA

How many young men would not trade their souls to become a National Football League star or a famous musician? How many young women would not simply love to win a beauty pageant or have their picture on a magazine cover?

What is success? And what can we do in order to achieve it?

Take a look at Hebrews 11—the great New Testament hall of fame. All of the people listed there began as common people. But they each ended up as heroes—not necessarily in human eyes, but in the eyes of God. Why? How did they achieve that status? What was their secret?

As our prime example let's focus on Moses—the great leader of the Exodus and to whom we are indebted for the first five books of the Bible. What was the secret of his success? Why could God use him so effectively?

The reason is that he had found the answer to five essential questions of human experience: 1. Who am I? 2. What is best for me? 3. What really counts? 4. What is priority? 5. How do I reach my goal?

1. Who Am I?

Moses was born during one of Israel's darkest hours—at a time when they'd become slaves to the Egyptians. Pharaoh, fearing the growth of the Hebrew people, gave orders to kill every Hebrew boy at birth. Moses' mother, risking her life to save her baby, put him in a basket and placed it in the Nile, near the place often visited by women from the palace. Pharaoh's daughter, down for her daily bath, heard the baby cry, opened the basket, felt compassion for the child, and decided to raise him as her own son.

Though born a Jew, Moses thus came to receive an Egyptian education. The aristocracy at the royal court accepted him as one of their own. When he grew up he faced the dilemma of his identity. He had to face the question *Who am I?*

The answer would decide his entire life. If Moses chose to ignore his heritage, a wonderful future awaited him in Egypt: a military career, riches, and a chance to succeed Pharaoh. On the other hand, if he decided to cling to his Jewish faith, he could expect only

ridicule and loss of privilege.

The Bible indicates his choice: "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, *refused* to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Heb. 11:24, NIV). The word "refused" (in Greek, *arneomai*) can also mean "renounce." Forsaking a promising career in Egypt, Moses decided to affirm his Hebrew identity and carry out God's specific plan for him.

The first step leading to an effective and satisfying life, then, is to *be yourself*. God made you for a specific purpose.

2. What's Best for Me?

We must choose what is the best for us from the standpoint of eternity. Jesus put it this way: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33, NIV). Moses "*chose* to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time" (Heb. 11:25, NIV).

A satisfying life requires taking responsibility for ourselves. We must not blame others for problems and failures. We must not think that if the road to school had not gone by that hill all would have been different. Every adult must learn to make decisions and take full responsibility for poor choices.

The consequences of today's decisions remain with us tomorrow—sometimes even forever. Ultimately no one can ruin your life except yourself. Even Satan cannot do it, unless you give him permission through your action or inaction. Your character being the sum of all your decisions, you yourself decide whether it improves or decays.

As He did in Moses' case, God has chosen every one of us before our birth (see Rom. 5:8; Titus 2:11). And each of us has received a life span to discover our goal and mission. Nothing else brings more lasting satisfaction.

Moses, declining a life of pleasure, riches, and fame, chose God and God's plan. And through a life of self-denial he became a powerful instrument in God's hand for the liberation of an entire nation.

Wise decisions have their foundation in the Word of God. But the decision to be guided by its principles lies in our hands. We constantly face decisions to

take the initiative or to remain passive. Moses did not simply reject the unfulfilling lifestyle of fame and pleasure at the Egyptian court, but positively committed himself to the call of God. That's the prescription for success.

3. What Really Counts?

Moses set his priorities straight. The Bible reads: "He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward" (Heb. 11:26, NIV). The Greek word for *regarded* (*hegeomai*) means "to turn over in one's mind," or "to give a matter careful consideration." When Moses looked at his choices from the perspective of eternity, he concluded that the value of living for God exceeded the treasures offered by Egypt. He chose Christ, who brings to those who choose Him more than treasures. For the one who accepts Him as Lord and Saviour receives nothing less than peace and salvation. And nothing can surpass such gifts.

Three values guide the lives of most people: (a) pleasure—feeling good; (b) possessions—being rich; and (c) power—being famous. What principles influence your decisions?

Most people devote their entire lives to pursuit of those values just mentioned. But though Moses had all three, he chose the life of a servant. Who in his or her right mind would make such a decision? Only a person guided by a different system of values.

In Egypt Moses could have had all the pleasure and power that there was. But he decided to stay with God. For he had discovered that money, sex, and power do not bring meaning, but in God he found peace, he found joy. He said

yes to God's offer of peace, forgiveness, and eternal life.

Who does not want these things? Yet not everyone realizes that to achieve them we must say yes to some things and no to others. When we say no to God, we are saying yes to the adversary. There is no third option. "No one can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and Money" (Matt. 6:24, NIV).

In itself, of course, affluence is nei-

head? But Moses sought after the real meaning of life. He sought a lasting mission. He went after things that cannot be bought or inherited: love, friendship, peace, salvation.

4. What Takes Priority?

Moses gave up things that most people spend their whole lives pursuing. Because "he was looking ahead to his reward" (Heb. 11:26, NIV).

"Looking ahead" (Greek, *apoblepo*) carries a sense of a "constant and continual looking" rather than a "temporary looking." Moses focused on the eternal kingdom and saw life on earth as simply a pilgrimage.

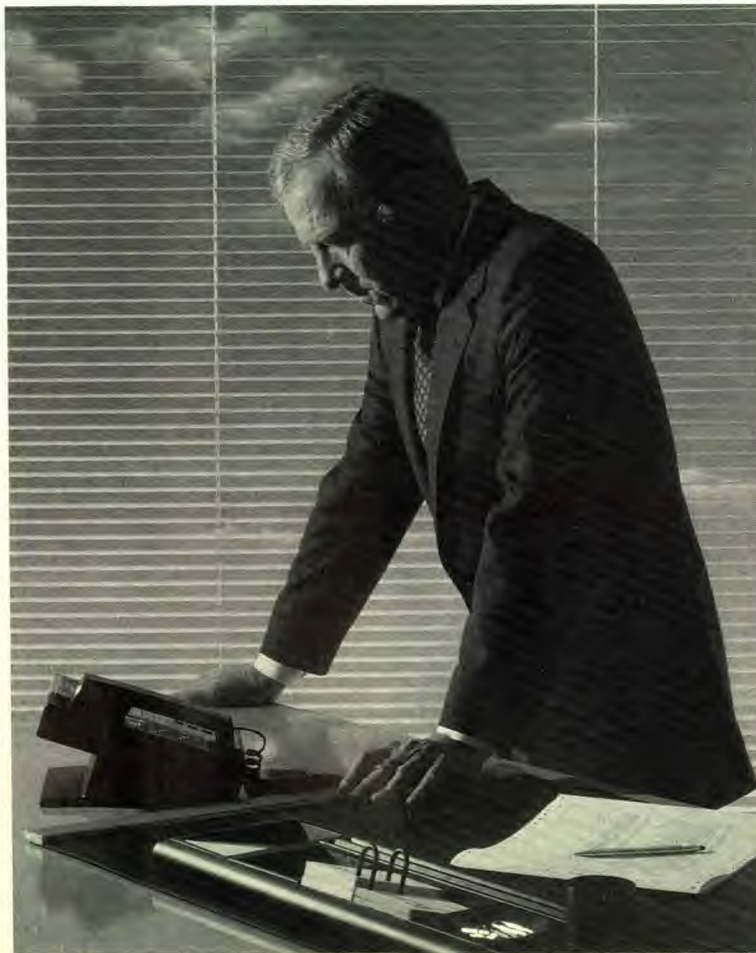
Having a worthy mission in life requires the establishing of priority. Guiding priority principles generate decisions, mold character, and ultimately make life a success or a failure. Moses fixed his eyes on a goal he could envision but could not yet see. He had faith, being "certain of what we do not [yet] see" (verse 1, NIV).

In a recent survey in the United States, 27 percent of the people questioned were on welfare, 60 percent barely made ends meet, 10 percent were moderately successful, and 3 percent were very successful. The same survey brought out the fact that 27

percent of the people had no plans for their future, 60 percent had only a general plan, 10 percent knew where they were going, and just 3 percent had fixed goals in mind or on paper. These figures indicate a correlation between success and awareness of one's goals.

By having his goals firmly in place, Moses was thereby enabled to overcome the problems that came his way. When we have no vision and no mission reaching beyond tomorrow, difficulties will discourage and conquer us.

Egypt was at its military height when



ther good nor bad. Whether it becomes harmful or beneficial depends on the value system by which we live. Principles determine the direction of our lives and our ultimate destination. Had Moses decided to go after money, pleasure, and fame, who today would know about him? At best his name would appear on a long list of Egyptian kings, and his mummy might be gathering dust in some museum. But we would hardly be talking about him today.

How many of us would do anything to become the chief, to become the

Moses led Israel out of bondage. Yet Scripture says that “by faith [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible” (verse 27, NIV).

Focusing on temporary setbacks leads to discouragement. But the presence of strong goals fends off temptation. Paul wrote, “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17, 18, NIV).

Where are you going with your life? What is your mission?

5. How Do I Reach My Goal?

Notice the verbs used in connection with Moses in Hebrews 11: “refused,” “chose,” “regarded,” “looked,” “persevered.” Yes, Moses *persevered*, “not fearing the king’s anger.” “He perse-

vered because he saw him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27, NIV).

Before Moses’ birth God had promised that he would lead Israel to the Promised Land. But Moses had to wait 80 years to begin this work and he endured an additional 40 years leading Israel through the wilderness amid constant complaints about water, food, and space. Many preferred the pleasures of Egypt rather than God’s plans for them.

Through it all Moses would learn to wait on God.

Waiting on God—for healing, for employment, for the conversion of someone close to us—can test our faith. How long is it before you give up on a job prospect, on school, on a broken relationship? Enthusiasm at the beginning of a new project, a new school year, a new job, comes easy. But to accomplish anything significant takes endurance, the ability to wait—patience.

How to overcome discouragement?

By renewing our vision and commitment to our life mission, to our goal. How? The book of Hebrews offers an answer. The lives of heroes of faith described in it ends with words encouraging us to look up to Jesus for the inspiration and power we need to dream and to achieve: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1, 2, NIV).



Alfred Y. Palla works as a lay pastor and colporteur for the Polish Seventh-day Adventist church in Chicago, Illinois.

The Frogs That Didn't Disappear

BY BONNIE MOYERS

If you like frog stories, there is one in the Bible. Look it up in Exodus 8. It happened while the Israelites were slaves in Egypt.

Now, frogs can be useful in the right place at the right time. They eat insect pests such as flies and mosquitoes.

In this story Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, was stubborn. He wouldn't let God's people leave the land because they were his slaves. Since frogs were one of the kinds of gods that the Egyptians prayed to, God sent them a plague of frogs.

Imagine what it must have been like. Who'd want to eat in a kitchen where frogs sat in the bread pans? Forget

about baking bread or making supper! A nice, warm, relaxing bath might feel good.

“Eek!” you shriek as a dozen or more frogs jump into the tub with you. There are too many creatures sharing your space. You grab a towel to dry off. Frogs are sitting on your clean clothes. You shoo them off and dress anyway.

You think you might sit down and play some music on your lyre (a kind of harp). Your favorite chair is full of frogs. So are all the other chairs. The only thing left is to go to bed. You pull back the spread and sheets. A bunch of

frogs have already tucked themselves in. They move over a little as you lie down. But you can't sleep with all those amphibians wiggling around you!

A servant comes and tells you, “Pharaoh has finally given in. He asked that the frogs leave tomorrow morning, and Moses says they will.”

You spend the night wondering why the king's magicians brought frogs up, just as Moses did. If they were such great magicians, why couldn't they make the frogs disappear? And why did Pharaoh say “Take the frogs away tomorrow”? Why didn't he say “Have them be gone this minute”?

Daylight can't come too soon! It finally dawns. Did the frogs just disappear? No, but they did leave. A lot of them went back to the rivers, ponds, and streams. But there were so many that others died and had to be carried out of the barns and houses. There were piles of frogs everywhere—so many that the Bible said the land stunk!

These frogs were just one of the plagues God sent to persuade Pharaoh that He said what He meant and meant what He said. God always does.



Concrete Love in an Abstract World

Sandra F. Doran

Words exist on two planes. As abstractions they can fly by for years, without really touching down. You skim over them in magazines. *Agoraphobia*. You listen halfheartedly to newscasters enunciating their syllables. *Lou Gehrig's disease*. You lend an inattentive ear to a friend who utters them. *Post-traumatic stress syndrome*.

Then a set of words removes itself from the realm of abstraction, acquires flesh, and takes up residence in your home. You become an expert on a topic not of your own choosing.

In 1964 my mother-in-law entered the hospital to follow up some initial testing that indicated Parkinson's disease. As she entered the building a woman was wheeled down the corridor, her limbs contorted, her mouth twisted. My mother-in-law, an accomplished pianist and registered nurse, recoiled in fear, pleading, "I'll never become like that, will I?"

As if living out a prophecy, she grew into a portrait of that woman. For the next 20 years of her life she became an expert on Parkinson's disease. She understood it. She lived it. She became it. The disease had disentangled itself from the level of abstraction and inhabited a home in Washington Mills, New York.

Real People, Real Problems

I thought about this as I read a letter from an 88-year-old woman who has become an expert on Huntington's disease. She didn't choose to know all of the nuances, variations, and manifestations of this neurologically based condition. The phrase simply disentangled itself from the world of abstractions and settled upon her husband, and then her daughter.

Prior to her letter I had not thought much about the disease. Consequently, I discovered that it was first described

by Dr. George Huntington in 1872. I know now that it is characterized by involuntary and jerking movements of the arms, legs, and face, and a decline in mental function.

But I do not, really, know anything about Huntington's disease at all. No more than I know about sleep disorders, bulimia, chronic fatigue syndrome, lymphoma, manic depression, mastectomies, or Alzheimer's.

Because I don't know, I am duty-bound to listen—to embrace those who have a burden to share. My 88-year-old friend writes of conversations dropped, faces averted, friendships aborted. Huntington's disease not only ravaged those she loved, but threw a mantle around the whole family that seemed to cry out, "Unclean!"

"I could have used some hugs through the years," she writes. "I know there is no way that Huntington's disease can be cured, but the caregiver needs love."

We sigh, sometimes, confronted by those in pain. It's almost as if, finding ourselves delayed in accident-backed-up traffic, we compare our own disenchantment at having our schedule disrupted with the anguish occurring on the side of the road. We don't want to see the accident victims. We don't want to be delayed. We have places to go, things to do. And if we think hard enough, it might occur to us that we too are fragile, vulnerable, ready targets for abstractions waiting to take on form and substance. And so we move on.

"I tried to mention my daughter's death in conversations," my correspondent writes, "but the topic was always changed, the subject dropped." I wonder how many similar conversations have been begun and left hanging somewhere in the air between those with a story to tell and those not inclined to listen.

My 88-year-old friend does not end her letter in despair, though. She tells me of renewed strength, courage, and hope based on a "spiritual foundation." "Ellen White's writings and the Holy Scriptures were my daily food and support," she says. "It was as if I had become a new convert."

Real Lives, Real Love

Reading her letter, I am struck with a thought. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, RSV). Just as abstract terms such as *Huntington's disease* can take on flesh and dwell within our very bodies, the Christ who traversed this earth underwent a similar transformation. He removed Himself from the world of abstractions and took up residence within humanity. That's what makes His connection with us so vital, His support so real.

But that doesn't absolve the rest of us from responsibility. Like words, Christianity, too, exists on two planes. Created in God's image, we can do no less than remove ourselves from the world of abstractions and become a concrete presence to those grappling with pain and sorrow. "I could have used some hugs through the years," she said.

In times of sorrow, it's the "word made flesh" that heals.

Do you have a concern? An issue that merits attention? Dialogues is *your* column. Send your letters to Sandra Doran, c/o the *Adventist Review*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Sandra Doran is a field supervision fellow and doctoral candidate in special education at Boston University. She is the author of three books and hundreds of articles. She also conducts seminars on writing, family issues, and raising "tough kids."

Kites, Kayaks, and Busy Moms

*The gift of play can lighten hearts—
both of children and adults.*

BY MARY ANDERSON

The winter of 1937-1938 was very hard, especially for Mama. She had her hands more than full with 3-year-old Annie and our new baby brother, Teddy. It just seemed she never had any time for me, the 7-year-old big sister.

Mama didn't have any modern conveniences, not even a washing machine or indoor plumbing. And since Daddy worked from before sunup until after sundown, she also cut most of the wood for our ever-hungry wood cookstove. Most of the time I tried to understand, but sometimes I just missed my mama terribly.

One night I got really mad and said

some very mean things to Annie when, while we were playing tea party, she broke a cup from the new china tea set Mama and Daddy had given me for Christmas. When I complained about it to Mama, she didn't even punish Annie. She just said Annie was little, and it had been an accident.

I got so upset I didn't sleep well that night, and things seemed to go all wrong at school the next day. By the time I got off the bus, I was looking at the ground and really feeling sorry for myself.

The Surprise

But then I looked up. There was Mama, and she was holding a little red kite she had made for me out of some fairly straight sticks, flour paste, and tissue gift wrap.

We never were able to get that little kite to fly. But that didn't really matter. What did matter was that Mama took time out of her very busy schedule to play with me! How we ran and laughed and played that afternoon. I knew then that Mama still loved me and I was very, very glad.

Nearly 25 years later I found myself newly married and, like my mother, more than busy with a blended family. This was the second marriage for both my husband and me. Just a year after our marriage I had our baby boy. When he was barely 2 months old, three of my husband's children came to live with us. Along with the three I brought into the marriage, we now had a total of seven children.

That fall I had four boys and two girls to get off to grade school each morning and a tiny newborn to care for—and, in



1961; no disposable diapers.

In order to make ends meet, my husband worked two jobs, and most of the care of the children fell to me, including making their clothes. I must have sewn dozens of boys' shirts and many dresses for our two girls. Although the children were good about helping me, it seemed the work was never done.

Fortunately, we lived in the country; there was plenty of room for the children to play. One day the boys decided to build a kayak. They scrounged around and found some boards for the frame and then covered this with very old strips of canvas that they sewed together with a couple of my darning needles and some heavy carpet thread.

We had read how the Native Americans used pitch to seal the seams, but we didn't have any of that, and there was nothing we could think of as a substitute.

The Adventure

Undaunted, the boys decided the kayak would probably float at least a little while even without pitch on the seams. They came begging me to take them to the ocean to try it out. We lived only 15 miles from a wide sandy beach.

I looked around at the piles of clothing that needed to be washed and folded and the girls' dresses I wanted to finish before the next Sabbath. I looked at all the everyday work that should be done in order to keep a family of nine running fairly smoothly in a very small house.


Then the picture of another very busy mother, a sad little girl, and a little red kite came to my mind.

"All right," I said, "as soon as you boys tie your kayak on the top of the station wagon and I bundle up the baby, we can go." We headed for the ocean.

When any of those kids get together today, both boys and girls, they don't mention the Sabbath dresses with the ruffles and bows, or the fact that they had to wear their underclothes an extra day because the wash didn't get done on time. But someone is almost sure to say something like "Do you remember when we made that kayak?"

Amid much happy laughter comes the retelling of how, when we stopped for gas on the way to the beach, the service station attendant walked slowly and very seriously around the "thing" on top of our car with a look that said plainly, *What is that?*

Then someone will pick up the story of our adventure at the beach. One of the kids would carry the kayak out into the water, then climb in and paddle really hard toward shore, but every time, he or she would get no more than halfway there before being almost completely submerged, with only head and arms sticking out!

Now as I contemplate these two stories—the kite that would not fly and the boat that would not float—I see a common thread of success, not failure, running through them. Both my mother and I were somehow inspired to take time from our overloaded schedules of babies, sewing, and housework to do something special with our older children. And every minute was more than worth it—both for now and, most likely, for all eternity. 



Mary Anderson considers herself a professional mother and grandmother—with a blended family of 10 children and more than 40 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She writes from Calistoga, California.

Team Ministry

The time is long gone when ministering to youth is "somebody else's job."

BY STEPHEN CHAVEZ

This is a test. For the next 60 seconds this magazine is conducting a test to find out how well you're plugged in to the Adventist youth you know. This is only a test.

True or False: I know the names of my child's/grandchild's best friends.

True or False: I know what kind of music my child/grandchild listens to on the radio.

True or False: I know the media personality (sports, television, music, or movie star) that my child/grandchild would most like to emulate.

True or False: My pastor knows my child/grandchild by name, and would be able to pick her or him out of a crowd.

True or False: My child/grandchild is needed and involved in the life of the local congregation. Someone besides me notices if he or she is not there.

Scoring: Give yourself one point for every true answer.

A score of 4 or 5 indicates you have an above-average relationship with your child/grandchild, and they with the church. Well done!

A score of 3 says that you're a typical parent/grandparent—involved, but detached. Better communication will improve that.

A score of 1 or 2 means that your

child/grandchild is at risk of leaving the church. Time to get serious about keeping them plugged in to your family and church life.

A score of 0 indicates that if your child/grandchild is still attending church, it's a miracle!

At the same time that the Adventist Church in North America is experiencing steady growth, an increasing number of people of all ages are dropping out. Every loss is a tragedy, but the groups particularly hard hit seem to be the so-called baby boomers (age 30-50) and generation X (age 14-30). Failing to reach and hold these generations jeopardizes the church's future in North America.

Generation X is the focus of this article, because these young people are still most likely to be influenced by the church's ministry to youth. This group can be further divided into two subgroups: those in high school and college (ages 14-22) and those just beginning their professional careers (ages 22-30).

Lost in a Crowd

For students in high school and college, our challenge is to keep them interested and involved in the life of the church. For students in Adventist schools, this is fairly easily done. There's always some activity or other that keeps kids involved.

But what happens to the nearly 70

percent of Adventist youth who don't attend Adventist schools? The Adventist grapevine is full of stories of youth who attend public schools and somehow become invisible to the local congregation. With other Adventist youth away at academy or college, there's suddenly less activity for young people their age. The people they work with at school or on the job are not likely to be Adventists and temptations to compromise their principles are always near.

It takes a conscious effort by the church to plan activities especially for them. Generally, only churches with a staff of two or more pastors intentionally try to keep in touch with this age group.

Talents to Spare

Ministering to young professionals is another challenge.

First, more people in this age group (both within and outside the church) are postponing plans for marriage and raising families. Consequently, this group is more independent and less willing to be "tied down" to regular, weekly activities at the church—or anywhere else.

They also have more education than many of the local people who lead Sabbath school and worship services. If these young professionals attended an Adventist college, they became accustomed to the denomination's best preaching, music, etc. To attend the traditional Sabbath school and worship service (opening song, opening prayer, scripture reading, special music, offering, sermon, closing song, etc.) is not just boring; it's painful!

Where to Begin?

Beyond the challenges posed by the youth themselves, the church faces its own issues in ministering to our young people. Funding for specialized youth ministry is steadily declining. Fewer churches have pastors that specifically focus on youth ministry. And small churches rarely have pastors who can devote more than a token amount of time ministering to youth.

Thus the gap is widening between the need for keeping our young people involved in the church and how successfully we are accomplishing that purpose.

Local members—whether lay or pro-

fessional—must accept the primary responsibility of ministering to our youth if we expect them to remain active and involved in the local congregation.

Forward Into the Flood

Ministering to youth—whether students in high school, college, or young professionals—is a little like working in a foreign country. They speak, dress, work, and play differently than any generation that preceded them. If you're serious about working with them (or even about learning what makes them tick), you should be ready to deal with the following issues.

Activity. Youth are, by nature, active. You can't expect them to "sit still and listen"—not for long, anyway. They thrive on creative activity. Worship services have to be more than spectator events. Congregational singing, responsive readings, drama, and different worship styles will characterize the worship services of congregations trying to hold on to their youth.

And speaking of activity, today's youth are looking for activity with a

purpose. Pool parties with pizza and soft drinks are fine as far as they go, but what youth really want is to be involved. Short-term mission trips, street ministries, Bible studies, and other community service projects are getting youth off the sidelines and into the front lines of church activity. Why? Because they're making a difference.

That's why congregations working to hold their youth are making efforts to *mentor* their youth. Not just teaching them how to take up the offering or set up tables for potluck, but teaching them how to live their faith out in the "real world."

Values. Most Adventist youth grow up hearing about tithing, keeping the Sabbath, the Second Coming, etc. But teenagers and young adults suddenly come to the realization that not all of society's ills are solved (or even addressed) by the teachings of the church.

Crime, ethnic prejudice, social injustice, and inequalities make the church seem distant and removed from reality. The Bible's admonition "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8, NIV) seems

to be ignored by adults who apparently care more about preserving the status quo than making a difference for Christ's kingdom. Adventist youth smell hypocrisy a mile away. And it always smells bad.


Acceptance. The fact that Jesus welcomed repentant sinners is well known. What many youth want to know is *Why can't the church be like that?* Calling the church a "hospital for sinners" is easy. What's hard (for many) is accepting youth in spite of their unusual clothing and unorthodox tastes in music, food, and entertainment, and other lifestyle issues. When members can extend the hand of fellowship to young people who are still sorting through the issues of adulthood, they have made the church a friendly place to go to integrate their faith with their everyday lives.

Construction Ahead

We're all saints "under construction." A construction site isn't a pretty place—it's not clean, quiet, and stressless.

It begins with a foundation that is often rough and ugly—just the promise of the building to come. Then comes the roughed-in construction. This too isn't much to look at. Next comes the covering—the wallboard, siding, and sheetrock. Finally come the finish carpenters, who hang the doors and fasten the moldings and decorative trim in place.

Building youth and young adults to be of service to Christ and His church is not always glamorous and exciting work. In fact, many people shy away from it, thinking it too perilous and difficult.

But it's also greatly rewarding, knowing that the future of the church belongs to those who are involved in it now. The Master Builder is looking for people who are willing to be involved as apprentices in this most important work—that of building a church for the twenty-first century. 

Here's Some Help

For those willing to accept the challenge, there's good news. There are places to turn for information, resources, encouragement, and inspiration in reaching out to our young members.

■ The Department of Youth Ministries at the North American Division has planned four training events for youth ministry volunteers and professionals throughout North America during 1995. (For information about the one closest to you, call 301-680-6434. You can also receive information about other training and activity resources by calling this number.)

■ The next place to turn is to your pastor. Virtually 100 percent of local church pastors were young once. It may be that they have a gift for working with youth—a secret desire for doing more with them and for them. But time constraints brought on by innumerable responsibilities prevent them from exercising that gift. Even if they don't have the time to become personally involved, they can give you some ideas about how to proceed.

■ Then turn to your conference youth director. When you contact this individual, be prepared to say more than "Why aren't you doing more for our youth?" Youth directors (and their associates) are responsible for ministries to all youth from fifth grade through graduate school. It keeps one person busier than a one-armed wallpaper hanger. These people need—in addition to our prayers—all the support you can give them in the form of volunteer activities.

Most likely they've already planned junior camps, Pathfinder Investitures, youth rallies, Bible camps, and other activities throughout your geographical area. Volunteering will ease their load and put you in touch with youth and their interests and concerns.



Stephen Chavez is an assistant editor at the Adventist Review.

Facing the Music in the South Pacific

An interview with division president Bryan Ball

BY ROY ADAMS

Last February, while participating (with five other facilitators) in three Bible conferences in the South Pacific Division, Roy Adams met with division president Bryan Ball for a brief interview on division affairs. Here is a summary. —Editors.

Q: Dr. Ball, this is a very difficult time to be a leader in the Adventist Church. How do you cope?

A: You are right; there are immense pressures on the church and its leaders. But I try to live a balanced lifestyle, to get some exercise and adequate rest. I cannot function otherwise. Equally important is the need to maintain one's spiritual life, and obviously, I try to do that through prayer and reading God's Word.

Q: In what way is the South Pacific Division different from other divisions?

A: Statistically it's a small division—only 275,000 members in a total population of 27 million. Our geographical area spans 10 time zones—a huge area of land and sea to cover. That's probably one major difference. I guess it may also differ in terms of stark cultural contrasts—from very high sophistication in some areas to extremely primitive in others. On the one hand, we have some of the most

sophisticated cities in the Western world, while at the other end of the spectrum it seems as though we are literally stepping back a thousand years in time.

Q: Of the current membership of the South Pacific Division, nearly 80 percent come from the island territories.¹



Dr. Bryan Ball

What's the reason for the comparatively slow growth in the homeland fields?

A: Probably the main reason is secularism. We face the challenge of communicating a very conservative biblical message to communities that are essentially uninterested in religious things, particularly in traditional Christianity.

Q: What's happening in Global

Mission here in the South Pacific?

A: Global Mission has caught the interest and attention of this division more than any other program the church has initiated in the past. It has already resulted in the message entering 200 of the small pockets of unentered areas still left in our division.

Q: The South Pacific has become known as a hotbed of theological controversy. Why is this so?

A: I have to concede that you are probably right! The division does have a reputation for theological inquiry, even divergence. In Australia, particularly, there is a strong spirit of independence—in thinking and action. The nation grew up in that kind of setting, in which people had to fend for themselves and think for themselves. And that, I think, has affected the way many Australians look at life in general. Inevitably, this is reflected in their theology. On the other hand, I can think of some other areas in the world that run a pretty close second!

Q: In your keynote address to the Bible conference, you mentioned that syncretism is creeping into the church. What do you mean?

A: In general I'm referring to the danger that strands of relativistic and humanistic thinking can infiltrate and change the essential nature of Christian thought—to the point that those who adopt it not only do not realize that it's happening but still believe they're thinking and representing authentic Christianity. Syncretism represents a mixture of truth and error that is very subtle and very delusive.

Q: The South Pacific Division leaders recently came out with a "statement of affirmation" in the Record.² What elicited that statement?

A: That came as a result of discussions we were having at the time with representatives of independent groups in regard to certain divisive theological emphases. And we felt that it was appropriate, because of the charges against church leadership, to affirm our support for the 27 fundamental beliefs of the church, and make it clear to our constituency that the

leadership is not in apostasy, as charged. The statement in the *Record* was signed by all the union and conference presidents and the division leadership.

Q: At the moment the local church has the final say in regard to membership and disfellowship. Would you like to see that continue, or would you advocate change?

A: In general terms, I think the local church needs to have that authority. But I do sympathize with the view that there could be certain instances in which a local church itself went off the rails, so to speak, and could need some kind of corrective action from the body as a whole. I do subscribe very much to the biblical teaching that the body of Christ is one. And that doesn't refer to the immediate local congregation, but to the whole church. So there is an organic and a structural relationship between the local congregation and the wider body. Maybe there could be times when a local congregation might need some help from the corporate body in such matters.

Q: A few pastors have described to me what they see as a liberalizing trend in the South Pacific—in terms of lifestyle and worship patterns. How would you comment on that?

A: From my own observations, I don't think this trend is much different here from that in the church in other parts of the world—particularly in what we often call the “first world countries.” I observe similar trends in North America and in certain parts of Europe. And to be quite honest, I do not see some attempts to brighten up our worship style as necessarily liberalizing or threatening. Christian lifestyle and worship should be firmly rooted in Scripture, and flow from a personal relationship to the Lord.

Q: In regard to certain lifestyle issues, do you think that we have passed the stage of corrective action?

A: I think there will always be those in the church with a stronger, more conservative heritage who will lament what they see as liberalizing trends. My own wish is that the church could be broad enough to recognize that people are at different stages in their personal journey, and that people whom we might label “liberal” today may, in fact, be at a certain stage on their journey that time will

further correct, and that they will grow in their own understandings. The church itself should always maintain a sound biblical basis for its teachings and lifestyle.

Q: Adventist education in Australia is government-supported on certain levels. Have you experienced any problems here?

A: No. The program began a number of years ago, and there were, understandably, some apprehensions at first. But by and large it has worked out very well. I am not aware of any concessions that the church has had to make as a result of such arrangements.

Q: The issue of women's ordination has been placed on the session agenda for Utrecht. How do you see it faring?

A: It's difficult to project. I think there will be some who will feel that the issue cannot be discussed apart from its theological base. There may be some who will not be happy about the fact that it's been brought from an administrative or ecclesiastical standpoint, divorced from theology. I see that as one possible difficulty. I also feel that there may possibly be resistance from the standpoint that some will be fearful of it being seen as a precedent to allow sections of the church in certain parts of the world to do other things differently from the body as a whole. So I feel there could be some animated discussion about the issue.

Q: The South Pacific Division has made a significant contribution to the church over the years. Is that tradition continuing?


A: Yes, I think it is. We have some very capable workers in many fields—in theology, in teaching, in the medical field, and in administrative and departmental leadership at all levels of the church. There is also a tradition of excellence in denominational service in this division that has strengthened the church immensely through the years, and continues to do so today.

Q: What do you see as the greatest challenge facing the South Pacific at the moment—either theologically or otherwise?

A: I think our greatest challenge is the successful communication of the gospel in what we call the homeland unions in Australia and New Zealand, where materialism and secularism are very dominant.



Q: As you think of the future of the work in the South Pacific—or even in the church at large, what gives you hope?

A: One of the things that give me hope has been reemphasized in these Bible conferences—the fact that the church is God's creation. The church was brought into existence by God, and we have the Lord's assurance that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. That gives me tremendous assurance. I draw hope also from the basic common sense of our people. We tend sometimes to overstate our problems and difficulties. But we need to remember that we have a large number of members in our church community who are not only theologically sound but who are also people with good sense and good judgment, committed to the mission of the church. After all, they are the church. I also see many evidences of the Spirit's moving, and if He continues to lead us and bless us, we can only move forward in hope. 

¹ Papua New Guinea and many of the islands of the South Pacific.

² See *South Pacific Record*, July 9, 1994, pp. 2, 3.

Roy Adams is an associate editor of the Adventist Review.

■ CALIFORNIA

Cruising the Avenue of Service

Another van ministry goes where the people are in Oxnard.

It had already seen 23 years of hard use on the streets of New York City. Its hoses leaked, and during the cross-country trip to a new home in Oxnard, California, it required daily rations of water, motor oil, power steering fluid, and transmission oil.

And although the crew of three who babied it cross-country last December nicknamed it "Big Beasty," the 30-foot motor home made the trip in four days

The Seventh-day Adventist Community Services volunteers were anxious to start a van ministry so that they could resume the Oxnard Food Share Program, which was put on hold in June of 1994. The van was put to use immediately when volunteers delivered Christmas presents and fresh fruit to the children of needy families who were living in temporary housing arranged by the welfare department.

them free literature to help them understand what lifestyle changes they needed to make. If their blood pressure was high, we referred them to their family physician."

Joyce Berg went on to explain that besides blood pressure screening, the van will be used for Food Share and clothing distribution to prescreened families and seniors as well as the distribution of food, water, blankets, and other necessities in emergency or disaster situations.

"Right now, while we're working on the van, we're using it twice a month," said Berg. "A lot of the elderly can't walk to a bus stop, or the buses don't go where they need to go. Now we can put the food and clothing on the van and take it to where people are rather than having them come to the warehouse."

In fact, finding a warehouse facility is the most pressing need of the Oxnard Community Services. They temporarily store used clothing and assemble newsletters in Mel Berg's business warehouse in Oxnard.

Joyce said she isn't as concerned about recruiting volunteers as she is about finding a warehouse. "The volunteers will come," she said. "What we need is a big warehouse to put all the supplies that people are donating. And if someone would donate refrigerators and freezers, I could accept fruits and vegetables. We have people willing to donate boxes of vegetables, but I have no place to store them."

Besides, a warehouse would also give Big Beasty a place to spend the night. It needs to be rested when it goes out in search of people to help.

By Lynn Weitzel, a freelance writer who lives in Ventura, California.



and became a lifeline for displaced families, low-income seniors, and the disabled.

Joyce Berg, who serves with Michael and Amber Harris as codirector of the Seventh-day Adventist Community Health Services at the Adventist church in Ventura, California, reported that while a van ministry has been established in New York for many years, this one and one in San Francisco are the first on the West coast.

"When the van ministry in New York decided to retire their largest and oldest van, we used the money from our Food Share Relocation Fund to purchase it," said Berg.

Before Berg's husband, Mel, got very far into refurbishing the van's interior, she and her helpers asked him to drive it to Ventura for a test run of the first free blood pressure screening. Mel drove Big Beasty to the parking lot of the Ventura church on February 1, their regular Food Share distribution day.

Longtime Community Services volunteer Dorothy Turner recalled, "We had the sign for free blood pressure testing out for just a few minutes before the van was filled with folks filling out questionnaires and wanting to have their blood pressure tested. Depending on the information provided on the questionnaires, we gave

■ RUSSIA

Freedom's Fragile Footing

Recent improvements in the former Soviet Union are still subject to change.

Cold is the most apt adjective to describe Moscow in January. Snow and ice don't melt. The people, though, are warmhearted and hopeful. But the worst chill of the 1990s is descending on the people of Russia. And it has nothing to do with the weather.

More than 80 people from around the world converged on Moscow's Congress Center last January. The subject of the conference was Legislation of Freedom of Conscience and Problems of Legal Regulation of the Activity of Religious Organizations. Simply put, the delegates were present

to debate just how much freedom Christians should have to proselytize in Russia—in the face of increasing pressure to the contrary by the Russian Orthodox Church.

When the law granting religious freedom passed in 1990—the first blush of many newly rediscovered freedoms—the Russian Orthodox Church had little political clout. However, five years of democracy and aggressive evangelism by Russian and foreign religious organizations have made deep inroads into the Orthodox faith. Orthodox efforts to protect its membership have resulted in the church asserting its political prowess. And that in turn is sending troubling signals to non-Orthodox believers.

A Different Concept of Church Growth

At issue is the Russian Orthodox stand against proselytizing. People are baptized into the faith at birth. So virtually every time an adult converts to another faith, the church experiences a net membership loss.

Some of the legislative proposals made initially by the Russian govern-

ment would relegate foreign religious organizations to a status inferior to that of the Orthodox Church. They would be permitted to function only within the framework of government accreditation and only as a Russian organization with a registered constitution.

Present at the January conference were representatives of the administrative, legislative, and judiciary branches of Russian government; representatives of the Russian Orthodox, Baptist, Pentecostal, Seventh-day Adventist, United Methodist, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, and other faiths; and scholars and members of the media. About a dozen presentations were made and discussed.

Three members of the Adventist sponsored Council on Religious Freedom—John V. Stevens, Lee Boothby, and Robert Nixon—gave formal presentations at the conference, as did the former president of the Euro-Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Mikhail Kulakov. Biblical views of religious freedom and constitutional issues were discussed extensively.

Other issues addressed by the conference were the secular nature of the state, the disestablishment of the church, parity of religions before the law, the state educational system, freedom of conscience in the armed forces, religious exemption from military service, and legal status and regulation of religious organizations.

The delegates representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church used the conference as an opportunity to renew and cultivate friendships with Russian Orthodox and government officials. Negotiations are under way between the Council on Religious Freedom and the Institute of Religion and Law in Moscow to publish jointly a book on religion and human rights.



Russian Orthodox priest Vyacheslar Polosin (left), chair of the Russian Duma Committee for Social and Religious Associations, comments on the issues during the conference on religious freedom in Russia.

By John V. Stevens, Sr., president of the Council of Religious Freedom, in Malibu, California.

■ BRAZIL

TV Tells the Good News

Brazilian Adventists time media campaign to coincide with Easter.



Billboards similar to this can be seen throughout the metropolitan areas of Brazil as part of a media campaign sponsored by the Adventist Church. This one reads (in Portuguese): "He Is Coming! In the voice of prophecy it is written. The Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Christianity revolves around two pivotal events: Jesus' birth, and His death and resurrection. Using this almost universal interest in Christ as a springboard, Adventists in Brazil have launched a major television campaign.

Coinciding with the season that focuses on Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, the 30-second ads feature the biblical message of the Second Coming "from the lips of Mary," according to Assad

Bechara, communication director for the South American Division.

"There are two primary messages in our spot," said Bechara. "By having a portrayal by M a r y — w h o recalls how her Son suffered, died, was resurrected, and promised to return—we are reiterating the most profound mission objective

of the Christian church: to proclaim the good news that Jesus is coming back. Also, Mary represents the women of the world, reflecting the Year of the Adventist Woman, launched worldwide by the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

The Adventist television spots have a 20-year track record in Brazil. "We first began to image our church through the most effective means in Brazil, that is, through billboards, radio, and TV ads. First, it was a message from Adventist young people to all Brazilian mothers on Mother's Day.

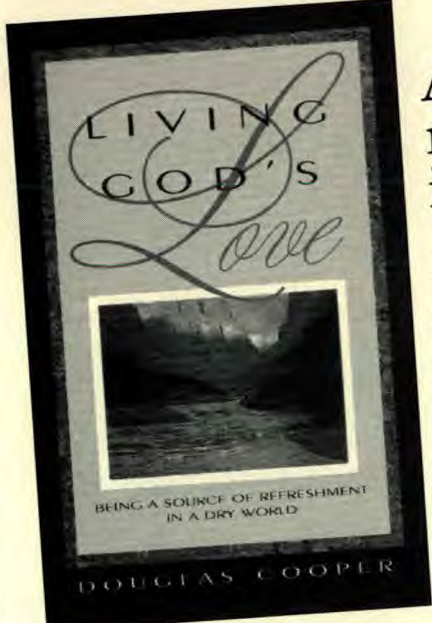
"For a number of years our public messages have coincided with Holy Week and Easter—which is an important time in the religious calendar in this part of the world. All we do is state that the message is from the Seventh-day Adventist Church," Bechara said.

This method has proved quite effective over the years in building public awareness about the church's mission and its presence in society. "Other churches respect us, and the public takes notice that we are not a sect," he said.

This public awareness campaign is connected with the church's sponsorship of the television program *It Is Written*. "Our people are prepared," said Bechara. "They can tell their neighbors or anyone else, 'Look, I belong to this church. We are a people of hope.'"

The television ads are shown on the Global TV Network, the largest network in the country—with more than 100 affiliated stations. Bechara explained that at first the spots were aired over one week. Then "our presence increased to 15 days. And now we are on television for 30 days a year and up to 10-12 times daily—even during prime time. What's miraculous is that these spots are shown without any cost. All we need to do is deliver a quality product, and our investment pays off."

By Ray Dabrowski, director of communication for the General Conference.



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■ ALBANIA

British Entertainer Present for ADRA Opening

Entertainment and service know no boundaries.

Norman Wisdom, a well-known British comedian, cut the ribbon to officially open a new warehouse for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Tiranë, Albania. Two plaques were unveiled at the ceremony: one to commemorate the inauguration of the much-needed facility, and the other to memorialize Cyril Willmott, an outstanding ADRA volunteer from Britain who worked in Albania prior to his death in October 1993.

Even during the dark days when Albania was wrapped in the cloak of dictatorship, Wisdom's films were allowed to be seen in their entirety. The people of



Norman Wisdom

Tiranë treated the 80-year-old entertainer as a conquering hero—seeking his autograph and asking to be photographed with him. Sali Berisha, Albania's president, granted Wisdom the "freedom of the city of Tiranë" (the equivalent of receiving the "key to the city").

During a short address John Arthur, director of ADRA/Trans-Europe, expressed appreciation to the Albanian authorities for making the land available to ADRA. "The next stage," he announced, "is to build a children's

medical clinic, a health education center, and a job training workshop to assist long-term self-reliance."

The event was attended by four members of the Albanian Cabinet, several officials from the city of Tiranë, the British charge d'affaires, and a host of other well-wishers. Reports were featured on Albanian television and the BBC television network and satellite news service (which repeated the coverage 17 times in one day). Several

Albanian and British newspapers also carried stories and pictures.

ADRA works with several charitable organizations in Albania. By combining their efforts, they hope to build a two-story health facility adjacent to the warehouse and a workshop building designed to teach job skills to formerly homeless children and youth.

By John Arthur, executive director of ADRA Trans-Europe.



Azores and Madeira Island Churches Meet

Leo Ranzolin, vice president of the General Conference, recently spent two weeks visiting the Azores and Madeira, island groups in the Atlantic that belong to Portugal.

During his visits he combined revival meetings in several churches on the islands with visits to local Adventists and one radio interview. There are five Adventist churches on the two island groups, with more than 350 members.

ACCUSED!

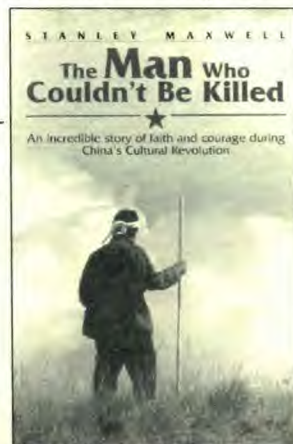
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by Stanley Maxwell

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To New Posts

REGULAR MISSIONARY SERVICE

The following individuals and their families left for mission service in the latter part of 1994. We wish to acknowledge their service. We regret that their names could not be published sooner because of lack of space. But their work does not go unnoticed, and they remain in our prayers.

Summer 1994

Leonard Atkins, with **Ann Atkins** and two children, returning as pastor/chaplain, Blantyre Adventist Hospital, Malawi, Africa.

Earle Atwood Brewer, with **Frances Naome Brewer** and one child, returning as teacher, Solusi College, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Africa.

Clyde Peter Cassimy, with **Barbara Elaine Cassimy**, returning as theology professor, University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Kenya, East Africa.

Gary Bruce DeBoer, with **Alma Elsie (Hoff) DeBoer**, returning as treasurer, Eastern Africa Division, Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa.

Alfred Milton Lee, with **Martha Alicia (Ferraез) Lee**, and children, returning as art teacher, Montemorelos University, Mexico.

Donald Harry Mayden, with **Joyce Adele (Christensen) Mayden**, returning as director of education, Euro-Asia Division, Moscow, Russia.

Leslie Charles Neal, III, with **Heidi Linette (Lee) Neal**, and two children, returning as art professor, Montemorelos University, Mexico.

Mark Pettibone, with **Marion Susan Pettibone**, and two children, returning as Southern Area director, GC Auditing Services, Highlands, Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa.

Denis Gerasimos Pollatos, with **Louise Alba Pollatos** and one child, returning as section leader, Gulf Section, Safat, Kuwait, Middle East.

Stanley Edward Ramley, with **Grace Fei Min (Wu) Ramley** and one child, returning as dentist, Community Hospital of SDAs, Port-of-Prince, Trinidad, West Indies.

Withfield Ray Ricketts, with **Joan Elizabeth Ricketts** and two children, returning as chaplain, East Africa Union, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa.

Donald Dean Sandquist, with **Esther Jane (Turner) Sandquist**, returning as director, SDA Dental Services, Pakistan Union, Lahore, Pakistan.

Larry Glendon Sibley, with **Lovice Irene Sibley**, returning as teacher, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa.

Gary Lyn Ver Steeg, with **Madianita Reyes Ver Steeg** and one child, to serve as boys' dean and business teacher, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa.

Ronald Von Gruesbeck, with **Paulina (Leppang) Gruesbeck** and three children, returning as lecturer, University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Kenya, East Africa.

George Winston Wheeler, with **Sandra Lee (Phillips) Wheeler** and one child, returning as treasurer, East Africa Union, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa.

Barry Lewis White, with **Breta Wolcott White**, returning as dental technician, Blantyre Adventist Hospital, Malawi.

Eugene Everel Witzel, with **Irene B. Witzel**, returning as builder/developer, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa.

Fall 1994

Modupe Ekundayo Aina, to serve as physician/general practice, Andrews Memorial Hospital, Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies.

Gary Lynn Benton, returning as assistant engineer, Adventist World Radio-Asia, Agat, Guam.

James Murdoch Campbell, with **Frances Lillian Campbell**, to serve as secretary, Southern Asia Division, Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India.

Mareus V. S. DePaula, with **Joan Marie DePaula** and two children, returning as president, Indian Ocean Union Mission, Madagascar.

Dee Eugene Golles, with **Sandi Lee (Chazotte) Golles** and three children, returning as dentist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam.

Johann Rudolf Arnold Haakmat, with **Olga Veronica Patricia (Hosin) Haakmat**, returning as associate professor of religion, West Indies College, Mandeville, Jamaica, West Indies.

Jon Michael Harris, with **Enid Christian (Pekeur) Harris** and two children, returning as director, Griggs University, Bethel College, Cape, South Africa.

Wayne Edmond Hazen, with **Maria Esther (Roybal) Hazen** and three children, returning as art teacher, Montemorelos University, Mexico.

Irving Leonardo Hertlein, with **Wilma E Hertlein**, returning as assistant treasurer, South American Division, Brasilia, Brazil.

Per Kenneth Houmann, with **Alice Kingsley Houmann** and two children, returning as dentist, SDA Health Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa.

William Edward Hughes, with **Edith Ruth Hughes**, returning as instructor of religion and theology, Tanzania Adventist Seminary and College, East Africa.

Elwin Roy Hutchins, with **Sandra Lynn (Nichols) Hutchins** and four children, returning as dentist, Bella Vista Polyclinic, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

Larry Robert Johnson, with **Sandra Marie Johnson**, to serve as general manager, Southern Publishing Association, Cape Town, South Africa.

Leonard Eugene Laabs, with **Mildred Mary (Jenny) Laabs**, returning as teacher, University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Kenya, East Africa.

Martha LaPierre, returning as office secretary, AID administration, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa.

James Jai Lee, with **Deloris Young Lee** and two children, returning as radiology technician, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam.

Joseph Liem, with **Margaret (Ned Poh Hoon) Liem**, returning as director of the Nuclear Medicine Department, Hongkong Adventist Hospital, Hong Kong.

Karl Oliver Lofton-Brook, with **Tasma Lorraine (Fowler) Lofton-Brook**, returning as director, ADRA/Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Harold Eugene Peters, with **Verna Ruth Peters**, returning as academic dean, Solusi University, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Paul Pichot, to serve as academic dean, Ethiopian Adventist College, Shashemene, Ethiopia, Africa.

Robert George Pierson, with **Barbara Phyllis (Short) Pierson**, returning as rector, Adventist University of Central Africa, Rwanda, Central Africa.

Edwin Earl Reynolds, with **Connie Lee (Tucker) Reynolds** and three children, returning as assistant professor, Adventist International Institute of Advance Studies, Metro Manila, Philippines.

Robert Lavern Robinson, with **Brenda Annette (Biegler) Robinson**, returning as treasurer, Sri Lanka Union of Churches, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Duane Clifton Rollins, with **Marilyn LaVonne Rollins**, to serve as treasurer, Guam-Micronesia Mission, Agana Heights, Guam.

Randell Slayton Skau, with **Melinda Kay Skau** and two children, to serve as physician/surgeon, SDA Hospital Ile-Ife, Nigeria, West Africa.

James LeVerne Smith, with **Ruth Joy (Cain) Smith**, returning as nurse anesthetologist, Bella Vista Hospital, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

William Paul Vercio, with **Betty Jo (Bishop) Vercio** and three children, returning as OB-gyn physician, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam.

Clinton Lloyd Wahlen, with **Gina Renee (Devine) Wahlen** and one child, returning as theology professor/librarian, Zaoski Theological Seminary, Tula, Russia.

Keith Martin Wallace, with **Joan Yvonne (Sutton) Wallace**, returning as audiovisual professor, University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Kenya.

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A Mother's Dilemma

Life can be hectic in a traveling music ministry. My husband and two little girls went with me on one trip, and we flew from one engagement to another, lived on peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, slept in strange beds, and spent many hours traveling by van.

Signs of Exhaustion

The children were beginning to show signs of exhaustion, such as sitting in the front row at my concerts and saying very audibly, "Mommeeeee! This is *borrrrring!*"

The last concert on the tour was in a large church that many professional people attended. I was asked to sing a song in which I would use hand motions.

Since I like my children to participate in my ministry when possible, I asked Kimmy, age 4, to hold the cordless microphone to my mouth so I could gesture freely with my hands.

Kimmy was the picture of cherubic innocence with her cascade of copper curls and ruffled dress. But she was also fed up with her mommy and all these *borrrrring* concerts.

At first she held the microphone close enough. But bit by bit she lowered the mike, and to remain amplified I had to bring my chin nearly down to the plush carpet.

"No, Kimmy, hold it up high for Mommy," I gently corrected in front of 600 saints.

Finally I had to pry the microphone from her angry grip and delegate the job to her 6-year-old sister.

The fires of revenge burned hot in the 4-year-old's heart; I could see a strange, mischievous passion in her slate-blue-eyes.

Then I felt a kick in my shins. Kimmy, whose name means "noble," was doing this most ignoble thing. With unabashed determination to embarrass me for every punishment she had received in the past four years and for taking her job away—kick, kick, kick, kick!

I managed to finish, but I wondered how many people had noticed the ballistic warfare and judged me an unfit mother. I didn't want to know. One goal now possessed my mind: to show that kid how I felt about her rebellious works.



My 4-year-old

decided to take

revenge on

me in front of

600 people.

The Memory

Suddenly a memory flashed into mind. I was a teenager being escorted home by the police for allegedly throwing an egg at a very mean woman's picture window.

To every accusation from the police I had answered a stout "NO." Now at home in my room I saw my mother come quietly in. Standing very close to me, she asked tenderly, "Did you do it?"

"Yes," I choked, unable to lie to her.


Although everyone knew I was guilty, only Mom was able, through her gentle, winning ways, to bring me to the point of honesty.

Now my parents faced a dilemma. Should they punish their daughter according to her actual guilt or according to the embarrassment and inconvenience she had caused them? Should they correct her for her own sake—or for theirs? Every parent faces these questions.

The Decision

In my heart I knew I should respond to my child's need to feel the balm of forgiveness before my own need for personal vindication. I knew the words of James: "Whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:20, NRSV).

I decided to treat Kimmy as I would have had she attacked me in the privacy of our home in front of no audience. Sometimes kisses and tickles are all it takes to soften the heart of a child. An "I'm sorry" can come freely rather than being forced through clenched teeth.

Children are ours only for a short time. And in that time it is our greatest challenge to show them God until they can find God for themselves. 



Jennifer J. Schwirzer writes from Putnam, Connecticut.

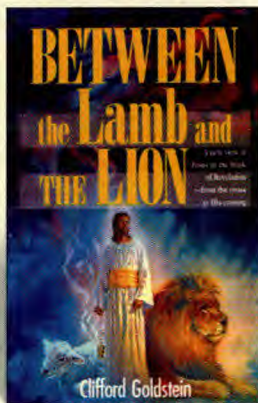
**BY JENNIFER J.
SCHWIRZER**

What does the sanctuary have to do with the cross?

Everything.

No Adventist belief has faced more attack—both from within and without the church—than the two-phase work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Especially the concept of a pre-advent judgment. What's the basis for this belief? Is it scriptural? Is it remotely important to salvation?

Between the Lamb and the Lion, by Clifford Goldstein, answers the question, *What is Jesus doing now?* It looks at Christ's high-priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary and proves that His ministry there—far from being in tension with the cross—is the means by which the Lamb applies salvation and prepares us to meet the Lion when He comes again.



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