

STEPS ALONG THE WAY

• WHERE DOES IT ALL GO?

ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INSPIRATION FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

NOVEMBER 1995

Jesus demonstrated **SACRIFICE** as He, the King of the universe, taught, preached, and lived out its meaning for 33 years. Then He made the ultimate **SACRIFICE**, hanging between heaven and earth for everyone on earth. Down through the ages this concept of **SACRIFICE** has worked in harmony with the Holy Spirit, spreading to people all around the world the good news of Jesus' return. Today **SACRIFICE** is taking this message to its ultimate conclusion. Because of Jesus' **SACRIFICE**, the world has hope. Because of our commitment to **SACRIFICE**, thousands will hear about God's precious **GIFT!**



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Reflections on Utrecht

What a thrill to read in the August 17, 1995, *Adventist Review* about 22-year-old Nikolina Mustapić, recent convert in Sarajevo ("Behind the Headlines"). I have been upset by the vote of the delegates in Utrecht on the issue of women's ordination, but I have changed my mind.

Had the vote gone narrowly in favor of women's ordination, the polarization between the two views, both sincerely held, would have become even more intense. But Nikolina showed us that God has a way of anointing His "servants, both men and women," when the need arises. When the wave of battle left the little church family of 25 members without a pastor, God used Nikolina to rally the dispirited members and build up the church attendance until they had to hold two services to accommodate the crowds of members and visitors. Instead of conflict, there was rejoicing and harmony among God's people.

All we need to do now is follow the advice Moses gave to the Israelites waiting in terror on the shores of the Red Sea: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." What God wants He can accomplish, with or without our votes.

*Bob E. Edwards
Malibu, California*

Please consider the fact that Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany were as close to Jesus as several of His first disciples were, yet He never called those two women to join the twelve whom He did call.

*Mary Egbert White
Lopez, Washington*

When my grandmother was a young lady, she was told she couldn't vote because she was a woman. Seventy-five years ago that was changed.

When my father attended college, he was told Blacks and Whites couldn't sit together in the cafeteria. Thirty years ago that was changed.

When my daughter was growing up, she knew that if she worked for her

church, a man would receive more pay for the same work. Twenty years ago that was changed.

When my granddaughter is born, I'll have to tell her that if she remains an Adventist, she can't be called by the Holy Spirit to be a gospel minister. Maybe someday that too will change.

*Michael Deming
Portland, Tennessee*

On the Cutting Edge

Test your knowledge of religious magazines:

1. Which Adventist magazine during the past 10 years *twice* received the Associated Church Press's annual award for best editorial in the religious press in North America?

2. Which journal was the first to discuss the topic of AIDS among Adventists?

3. Which Adventist journal first alerted readers to the dangers of the New Age?

4. Which magazine received the Associated Church Press's award for best cover design in the religious press during 1994 and also for best article design?

If you answered "*Adventist Review*" to all four questions, you're right!

The *Adventist Review*—on the cutting edge!

Spiritual Heroes

Thank you for running Douglas Morgan's sensitive and balanced review of Bryan Ball's *The Seventh-day Men* (Sept. 21). It is a book I shall obtain and examine with interest.

I have an interest in the subject of the book, but in the context of the *Adventist Review* I particularly appreciated Morgan's cautions. The Fifth Monarchy movement is colorful and interesting, but it is not one to turn to for our spiritual heroes. Adventists too often take pride in the strangest figures. People who took a stand against the mainline church are candidates for sainthood, no matter how ignorant, crude, and ill-tempered.

The older I get, the more I perceive

my indebtedness to a whole host of men and women. Some, of course, are not giants as the world judges, but the spiritually minded appreciate them. On the other hand, there are others who have received good press from their contemporaries and from history. The Radical Reformers frequently were not well educated, did not possess a broad understanding of life or religion, and lacked the social graces. Optimistically, perhaps 10 percent of my faith can be traced to mainline Evangelical and Reformed, Anglican, Catholic, and ultimately Jewish antecedents.

*Robert P. Dunn
Riverside, California*

Outrage

I appreciate Roy Adams' sense of outrage at the moral tragedy occurring in Bosnia ("Where Is Our Outrage?" Sept. NAD issue). Too often as Seventh-day Adventists we focus on narrow self-interests and fail to observe the greater realities of the world around us.

Having said that, I feel it is important to point out that in his condemnation of the tobacco industry, Adams falls into the same trap that he castigates. While I agree with the church's opposition to the use of tobacco, I am not comfortable with laws imposed on the nation by presidential fiat or whim. It is not anti-Adventist to oppose this potential misuse of executive power and usurpation of legislative authority.

Is the American president's newfound zeal sincere or just an attempt at relevancy? Could 1996 presidential politics have something to do with this executive order? Let's not forget that he smokes cigars. Oops! Is that partisan politics or just stating the facts?

*Michael Tomlinson, Pastor
Director of Public Affairs
and Religious Liberty
Texas Conference*

We are receiving a heavy amount of mail on this editorial. See next week's issue (Nov. 9) for more letters.

—Editors.

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After 50 Years

I have never been turned away from a church. No deacon has ever met me at the door and said, "You can't come in here. Your people meet at the church across the tracks."

We who are White easily forget how recently Seventh-day Adventist churches were integrated. Less than 25 years ago I worshiped in a church in which only a few years before the previous pastor had declared from the pulpit, "If any Black man comes to this church, we will meet him on the steps and tell him where to go." And while my wife and I had membership there, the pastor raised a furor among the congregation when he permitted the young adults of the church to hold an integrated Communion service one Sabbath afternoon.

I wonder what it would feel like to be turned away from church because of the color of my skin. It would be very easy, I think, to get angry. To walk away and never return. To decide that this could not be God's true people.

But most of our African-American brothers and sisters did not. They bore this gross injustice, along with others leveled not only by society but also by the church, with patience and forbearance. They put their trust in the arm of the Lord, not the arm of flesh, and waited and prayed and worked for a better day. And they learned to sing—and to laugh. Their humor exposed racism for the stupidity that it is.

Fifty years ago this fall, long before the Seventh-day Adventist Church had moved to integrate, our Black church in North America organized itself into regional conferences (see Delbert Baker's "Regional Conferences: 50 Years of Progress," p. 11 of this issue).

During the past 50 years the Black church has grown rapidly. But African-Americans have contributed more than

numbers and dollars. They have taught us all how to relate to situations in the church that seem, and may be, patently unjust.

Right now many Adventists in North America are hurting. Recent surveys conducted by the North American Division indicate that more than two thirds of members favor the ordination of women ministers, and many men and women feel troubled over the rejection of North America's request by the Utrecht General Conference session. In their frustration and anger some advocate leaving the church, withholding tithe, or embarking on unilateral action that would flaunt the Utrecht action and severely strain the unity of the body of Christ.

The Black Experience

We need to heed the lesson of the Black church's experience. We need to pray and sing, work and wait, trust in the Lord—and learn to laugh. We need to recognize that while equality is a vital biblical principle, unity is no less vital and biblical.

The Black church has other lessons for us all.

For nearly a generation public evangelism has been downplayed in the White church in North America. It has been belittled as too expensive and obsolete; intellectuals have made it a whipping horse.

But the Black church never bought that line. Black preachers continued public proclamation, and the Black church grew while the White church stagnated.

And suddenly, through the huge success of NET '95, the White church discovered that public evangelism wasn't dead after all.

Black worship services all along have been lively and often extended. In

the Black experience, church is an event to celebrate, not endure; Sabbath a time to enjoy, not to sleep.

For years Whites looked condescendingly at the Black worship experience. But then Whites became alarmed at the spiritual torpor, the loss of young people, the lack of energy and creativity—the White church was dying. Some White pastors began to look around to see where success might be found; some became advocates for the methods employed by Bill Hybels in his fast-growing Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago. "Celebration" entered the Adventist vocabulary and became a buzzword.

But all along, the African-American church had been celebrating—and growing. Here Whites could have found the integration of faith and life, of theology and practice, that every Christian needs in this age.

Shock waves rolled over the White church in North America—the challenge to the sanctuary doctrine, doubts concerning the role and integrity of the writings of Ellen White. During the 1980s these onslaughts weakened and divided the church.

But the Black church was largely unaffected. Perhaps its heritage of suffering—its endurance and struggles over so many years—prepared it to face the shock waves.

I'm sure that not everything is perfect in the Black church or the regional conferences. But as we look back on 50 years, we can truly praise the Lord for the vast contribution of our Black brothers and sisters to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America and the spiritual life of every Adventist.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON



Old City, New Vision

It was many years ago that I last visited historic Battle Creek, so it was with eager anticipation that I returned there a few days ago for the year-end business meetings of our church in North America. And I wasn't disappointed, for it became a time to re-explore our roots and God's providential leading in our history.

When James and Ellen White moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1855, only a few hundred Sabbathkeeping Adventists even existed. They and a few other leaders immediately opened a publishing house to print a gospel publication. During the next several years they built a large tabernacle, a college, and a hospital. They also selected a name for the new movement and organized the Michigan conference and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

When hundreds of representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America returned to Battle Creek October 11-13, the membership had grown to more than 800,000 in some 4,600 congregations, and nearly 9 million around the world. In 1855 all the members lived in the United States. In 1995 more than 90 percent of them live *outside* the North American Division. The assembled leaders included the officers of nine union conferences, 58 local conference presidents, 14 college and university presidents, and executives from a number of Adventist health-care corporations, publishing houses, and other institutions.

Starting Over

Yet it seems as though we are almost starting over. The business meetings constituted the first North American Division "quinquennial council." It was

the first time that a fully constituted North American Division exercised its option under the new General Conference bylaw to elect its associate officers and departmental staff.

For the first time, the North American Division elected a vice president for evangelism/Global Mission and a vice president for education. We voted to include an unprecedented number of lay representatives, local pastors, and classroom teachers on the NAD executive committee, so that there could be a broader base and wider representation in decision-making.

A more important difference: in 1855 the population of the U.S. and Canada was about 28 million; today it is more than 280 million, or 10 times greater. Our mission is much larger and perhaps more pressing than that faced by the early Adventist community, before massive urbanization, before the AIDS epidemic, and before nuclear weapons. But God has given us potent tools and the promise of His Spirit.

The 1995 assembled delegates voted ambitious evangelism goals—to involve 2,000 churches in the NET '96 evangelistic campaign, and to enroll at least 1 million people in Bible studies over the next 12 months before the public meetings begin. Our multiple minorities in the North American church will continue to set the pace for soul winning. The young people in our churches and schools will be provided with unprecedented opportunities to make a difference in their church—from helping to reenergize languishing congregations to entering unentered cities, towns, and secular campuses in our own division.

The gifts that God has continued to shower on His church during the past 140 years make us stand in awe. Powerful new communication tools for

outreach. Plus the spiritual gifts present through the power of the Holy Spirit in hundreds of thousands of converts and young people in our midst. As last-day events press the church into service, He is there to assure there is adequate power.

The Future

But back to Battle Creek, 1995 . . . We were joined by nearly 5,000 church members on Sabbath in a huge tent at Battle Creek Academy. We sang the old Advent hymns and reaffirmed our faith in the third angel's message. The central focus was on two landmarks—the continued relevance of the Sabbath and the key role of Ellen White in the remnant church. Almost a quarter of our local churches across North America joined us on Friday night and Sabbath afternoon by satellite linkage through the Adventist Communication Network.

There is no more precious heritage than the persons that God has brought into His remnant church. It is more important than ever that young and old, men and women, the educated and those who lack education, immigrant and native-born, all races and every language join in the sacred calling to serve in Christ's name to complete the task that burned deeply in the hearts of the pioneers who preceded us to this Midwestern city. God lighted a fire within them that we must not allow to be extinguished.

After 140 years the task is the same, the power is available, and the prize is in sight.

ALFRED C. MCCLURE

*President
of the Seventh-day Adventist
Church in North America*

NAD Year-End Meeting

Historic Assembly Brings Many Changes

By CARLOS MEDLEY, *Adventist Review* news editor

Church leaders in the North American Division have taken a major step in establishing the division's distinctive identity and simultaneously celebrating Adventist heritage.

More than 200 Adventist administrators, pastors, and lay members returned to the roots of Adventism when they attended the NAD executive committee's year-end meeting in Battle Creek, Michigan, October 12 and 13. It's the first time in decades that an international meeting of the church has convened in Battle Creek.

Following the business meeting, 5,000 Adventists converged on Battle Creek for a week-end celebrating Adventist heritage. The meetings were held in a 5,000-seat tent on the campus of Battle Creek Academy, October 13 and 14.

The events commemorated the 140th anniversary of the relocation of the fledgling movement's headquarters to Battle Creek from Rochester, New York. The move marked Battle Creek as the city of Adventist beginnings. It was here that the Adventist publishing and medical work began with the founding of the *Review* and Herald Publishing Association and the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

Of the 56 General Conference sessions held by the church, 27 have been held in Battle Creek! The *Adventist Review* will carry a report on the weekend in an upcoming issue.

Reorganization

The first major business item for the NAD executive committee was the approval of a new organizational plan that gives local and union conferences the option of streamlining their staffs.

Under the measure, local conferences could create "districts" of 15 to 25 churches with a coordinating district leader and district committee empowered to make decisions for their areas.

According to the document, these districts would replace the traditional conference-level structure and departments, such as Sabbath school and personal ministries.

The districts would plan and implement joint outreach activities for local churches, recommend pastoral personnel, coordinate volunteer training, and provide nurturing, support, and evaluation of pastors. The proposal also allows smaller conferences to become districts and merge into neighboring conferences.

Local conference staffs would then be minimal. Their primary functions would include the management of K-12 schools, Adventist Book Centers, youth camps, and the handling of finances. The document does, however, allow conferences and unions to maintain their present form of administration or experiment with other models.

Written by the Commission on Mission and Organization, the doc-

ument calls for unions to maintain minimal staffs. It encourages flexibility for each administrative unit and simplification of the flow of funds. The new plan seeks to eliminate duplicate departments and services at the local conference, union, and division level.

In explaining the rationale for the plan, NAD president Alfred C. McClure told committee members, "We have a church structure that is essentially the same as in 1903, but we're living in a much different world. That's a long time for any organization, in light of changes in travel and communication." He said, "It doesn't say that what we've been doing is bad. But we need to review our structure periodically to make sure our focus is on mission."

McClure continued: "We're not imposing things on any organization. The primary attempt is to get each organization to make a realistic self-study and create the most viable and most exciting organization for today's environment."

Reaction to the document was diverse. Some committee members saw the proposed plans as a threat to the current administrative setup, while others saw the plan as a chance to experiment.

Clarence Wright, a pastor from the Southern Union, said, "Perceptions are reality, and there is a perception here that we are phasing out confer-

ences. I believe this plan fosters congregationalism and strengthens the North American Division's control over unions and local conferences." McClure responded by pointing out that the plan provided more grassroots input.

Elmer L. Malcolm, Northern New England Conference president, welcomed the proposal as an opportunity to experiment and bring about cost savings. "Between the local church and the General Conference we're going to have to save money," he said. "We're cutting back pastors in my union, and we're not keeping up with the [denominational] wage scale."

John Fortune, a Michigan Conference pastor, told the committee that his conference already had a district system. "We have 12 districts in the conference, and this has been helpful in planning evangelistic outreach projects." Discussion on the document lasted for nearly two hours before the group voted the proposal.

Financial Report

NAD treasurer George Crumley reported large increases in Tithe Fund income for 1994. The nearly \$481 million given last year represents an increase of 5.7 percent over the previous year, Crumley said. As of August 31, 1995, tithe income has increased 2.2 percent over the same period last year.

Crumley also said that giving to special projects totaled more



NAD president Alfred C. McClure: "We have a church structure that is essentially the same as in 1903, but we're living in a much different world."

than \$22 million last year, down about \$1 million from the previous year.

The committee approved the 1996 operating and appropriations budget of \$54.3 million, up 4.6 percent from 1995.

Grassroots Involvement in Governance

The committee approved a significant increase in its own membership by adding more lay members, pastors, and teachers. The changes increased the number of pastors on the committee from 9 to 27, and the number of lay members will increase from 10 to 59.

These changes came after a long impassioned debate that lasted more than an hour. The original proposal called for 18 pastors and 36 nondenominationally employed persons.

The committee has by policy included only NAD officers and department directors, union presidents, chief officers of denominational institutions, and a few pastors and lay members. Now local conference presidents become full members (not invitees), and union education directors are added. Some institutional officers will become invitees. The changes will increase overall official membership from 89 to more than 250, and attendance (with invitees) from approximately 180 to about 250.

Women in Ministry

McClure announced the appointment of a presidential commission on women in ministry.

It will bring a report to the 1996 year-end meeting, with recommended plans for increasing the number of women in the church's decision-making bodies, affirming women employed in pastoral and chaplaincy ministries, and sensitizing church members to the fact that the GC session vote not to allow women to be ordained as ministers does not change women's ministry in the jobs they currently occupy.

McClure also designated February 3, 1996, as a special day of prayer for the purpose of bringing encouragement to young men and women who sense a call to ministry.

In other business the North American Division executive committee:

- Appointed a new team of division officers, department directors, and staff for the quinquennium. The appointments reflect a certain realignment of functions, including the addition of a new vice president for evangelism/Global Mission, a new vice president for education (replacing two education positions), and an assistant to the president for communication (see adjacent list).

- Dissolved the Board of Higher Education and replaced the body with a presidential cabinet on higher education. Chaired by the NAD president, the cabinet includes the presidents and board chairpersons of the 14 colleges and universities within the division. A college president will serve as vice chair.

- Voted new guidelines for implementing diversity initiatives for church entities. The guidelines include recommendations for new



Nearly 250 church leaders and lay members gathered in Battle Creek for the year-end meetings.

policies, programs, and practices needed to make the entities sensitive to all age, racial, ethnic, and gender groups.

- Revised guidelines for cases in which church employ-

ees and volunteers are accused of sexual misconduct or harassment. Sexual ethics commissions will be set up to review such allegations and provide a finding based on evidence.

- Approved guidelines for a tracking system for church employees who have been convicted of sexual offenses, admitted guilt to such offenses, or have had findings of sexual misconduct entered against them by the church's sexual ethics committees. The system, to be housed at NAD headquarters, will be used as a clearinghouse for identifying sexual offenders and will be available to hiring entities who are evaluating potential employees.

NAD LEADERSHIP TEAM

At the recent NAD year-end meeting in Battle Creek, leaders for the next quinquennium were appointed. The president, secretary, and treasurer were reelected in July at the GC session in Utrecht. New individuals appointed to the leadership team are shown in boldface.

President: Alfred C. McClure

Vice Presidents:

Clarence Hodges, General

Cyril Miller, Evangelism/Global Mission

Richard Osborn, Education

Manuel Vazquez, Special Ministries

Administrative Assistant to the President: Donald G. Jacobsen

Assistants to the President:

Kermit Netteburg, Communication

Monte C. Sahlin, Ministries

Secretary: Harold Baptiste

Associate: Rosa T. Banks, Director of Human Relations

Treasurer: George Crumley

Associates:

Donald R. Pierson, Director of Retirement Plans

Juan Prestol

Field Secretary: Elizabeth Sterndale

Adult Ministries: Auldwin Humphrey

Children's Ministries: Noelene Johnsson

Associate Directors for Education:

Dallas Kindopp

Erma Lee, Elementary

Family Ministries: **Willie Oliver**

Health/Temperance: DeWitt Williams

Ministerial Association Secretary: William C. Scales, Jr.

Associate: Eradio Alonso

Public Affairs/Religious Liberty: Clarence Hodges

Associate and Editor, Liberty: Clifford Goldstein

Pathfinder, Camp, and Adventurer Ministries: Norm Middag

Publishing: Robert Smith

Stewardship: Ed Reid

Women's Ministries: Elizabeth Sterndale

Youth: José Rojas

Get Ready for NET '96

By MONTE SAHLIN, an assistant to the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America

Based on the demand from pastors and church members, North American Division president Alfred C. McClure has announced that the division will initiate a second continent-wide evangelistic campaign in the fall of 1996 called NET '96.

The announcement came at the NAD year-end meetings at Battle Creek, Michigan, and was part of a major focus on evangelism in North America that lasted nearly two hours. The discussion also included reports of the NET '95 evangelistic series, outreach in the Black conferences, Hispanic evangelism, and youth ministries.

Amid applause and amens, many church leaders voiced enthusiasm and affirmation for the NET '95 series and shared stories of how the project changed the mood of pastors and lay members toward public evangelism. With more than 5,000 baptisms thus far, NET '95 has turned out to be the largest soul-winning effort by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America to date.

Like NET '95, NET '96 will be uplinked via satellite on the Adventist Communication Network (ACN).

"We believe NET '96 may result in the most dramatic breakthrough in soul winning that we have ever seen in North America," said Alfred McClure, NAD president. "To be successful, it will take a joint effort. We need strong leadership from our conference presidents and pastors, committed involvement from our members, and the miracle-working power of God."

Strong Organization

NET '96 will be uplinked five nights a week, October 5 to November 9, 1996, from Orlando, Florida. The live event will be held in a 3,000-seat auditorium at Forest Lake Academy.

Mark Finley, speaker for *It Is Written*, again will be the evangelist. Charles D. Brooks, speaker for *Breath of Life*, again will conduct the question-and-answer periods.

Don Gray, a veteran evangelist, will serve as general coordinator of NET '96. Local conferences have been asked to appoint NET '96 coordinators. According to Don Jacobsen, administrative assistant to the NAD president and a member of the planning committee, a number of goals have been set for NET '96. These were endorsed at the meeting.

"We want at least 2,000 North American churches involved in this evangelistic effort," he said. "We have also been asked by the General Conference to plan for the Inter-American, South American, and Euro-African divisions to downlink the event, so

we're going to provide simultaneous translation in Spanish, Portuguese, French, and possibly German."

Jacobsen says that in preparation for the reaping series, the Voice of Prophecy Bible School will coordinate an effort for church members to enroll 1 million people in Bible study during the next year; *Lifestyle Magazine* programming will be focused on reaching inactive church members; and interested pastors, leaders, and church members will be trained in personal witnessing.

A planning committee for NET '96 has been meeting since May, chaired by Glenn Aufderhar, president of the Adventist Media Center. The committee is reviewing input from the debriefing interviews conducted by telephone with the pastors who participated in NET '95, as well as the results of an anonymous evaluation survey.



The NAD meetings were held in the Battle Creek Tabernacle (left). The twin towers of one section of the old Battle Creek Sanitarium stand on the right.

Deep Commitment

"The NAD is taking the initiative with the NET '96 project because of our firm conviction that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is proclaiming a message that the world desperately needs to hear," said McClure. "NET '95 was a pilot project that many doubted would be successful. But we not only baptized 5,000 people; it changed the minds of many Adventists who had given up on public evangelism. NET '95 demonstrated that under

the blessing of God, public evangelism can work and is still a viable means of bringing men and women to Christ."

The NAD's commitment to another evangelistic campaign gives some churches a second chance to be involved. "NET '96 will give all of the pastors and churches that didn't participate in NET '95 a second chance," said Gray. "And based on the success of NET '95, many Adventists are now interested in participating in NET '96."

"We were skeptical," admits one local church pastor. "We didn't think NET '95 would work. One evening I visited a church that was participating. I was absolutely sick that we had not brought it to our church. We will in 1996."

Catching the Spirit

The team that facilitated NET '95 and saw many blessings and miracles from God can only expect to see more of the same with NET '96. "NET '95 revolutionized my thinking regarding evangelism," says Finley. "I believe that God wants to do so much more than we possibly can imagine. North America is on the verge of a significant evangelistic breakthrough. Churches are catching the spirit; pastors and members are gaining a new vision."

As a food scientist my husband, John, is accustomed to phone calls and letters from people wanting answers to food-related questions. They want to know about additives and canning procedures, juiced carrots and breadmakers. Sometimes they call once and sometimes repeatedly.

But *nobody* has been as intrepid as Della, an inquisitive lady from a city on the West Coast. Her questions seemed to come, and come, and keep coming. The reason was simple. Della was doing research.

A widow sharing her home with several cats and kittens, Della agonized each time one of her pets became sick, and grieved when one died. When it occurred to her that, having something of a scientific background, she might develop a new and healthful cat food, she began in her small home to conduct experiments. Day by day and often far into the night she worked. Her product would not be merely some marketable new mixture with a cute cat face on the can. It would be revolutionary.

And so it was that when in her home "lab" Della reached an impasse, she wrote

to John. Later she phoned him. In time she began to call our home in order to reach him in the evenings or on Sundays. Her voice was easy to spot.

"It's the cat lady," our children would whisper if one of them answered the phone. Hers was an expressive voice, ranging from exuberant to pensive, with the zesty touch of an accent thrown in. For me it conjured up an intelligent middle-aged woman with snapping dark eyes.

But Della was more than a cat lady. As my teenage sister

acquainted with her, the inquiries began to involve subjects other than science.

"Tell me," she'd begin forthrightly as she and I chatted upon occasion, "do you trust your church?"

Do you feel safe giving them money?" At other times her questions probed our lifestyle, as though she were piece by piece assembling a puzzle. "What does Dr. Brannon eat? What do you send in his lunches?" Time after time I prayed my way through question-and-answer sessions. There was no way to prepare for them.

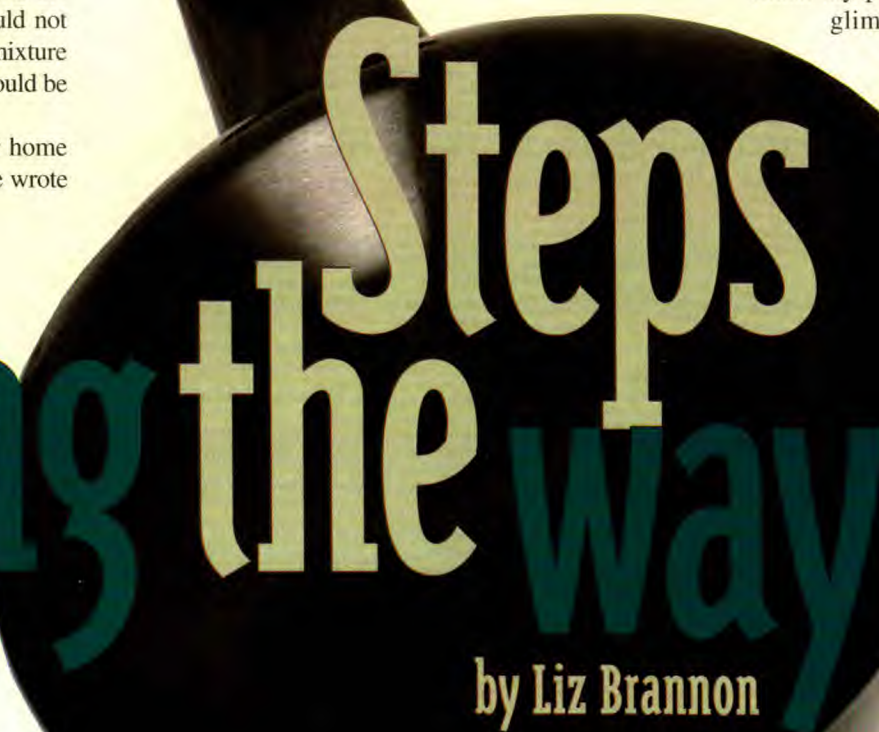
"I see," she'd often observe softly as we finished. "Yes, yes."

Sometimes she revealed herself quite openly, considering that to her I was merely the friendly voice of a woman she'd never met.

"My mother is clinically depressed, and I feel so sad." Or "I believe in God, but I have many doubts."

John sent Della a *Steps to Christ* in her language of choice, and the phone calls kept coming. At her pace. Sometimes that meant three calls in one day; sometimes it meant nothing for six months.

"I'm a perfectionist," she confided in one conversation. "That's why I can't finish my project." That glimpse told me much about Della, for she and I



Steps along the way

How one
perfectionist
helped another
—long distance.

by Liz Brannon

The words
coming from
the earpiece
sounded
strange in
my ear. How
little Della
knew about
my life!



had more in common than she knew. No stranger to the need to do more and be better than I reasonably could, I too tended to “shoot myself in the foot.” Any given project caused far too much stress because of my strong need to do it expertly. Not measuring up to expectations set me up for guilt or embarrassment; and on the other hand, doing well set me up for pride—and more guilt. (Oh, the rigors of perfectionism—in no way to be confused with the gradual, symmetrical ripening of character in the sunshine of Jesus’ love!)

Excitement!

One day Della called with unmistakable excitement in her voice.

“I have something to tell you,” she said. “Last week I attended the Seventh-day Adventist church here, and I am going to begin going regularly.”

“Why, Della, that’s wonderful!” I exclaimed. “I’m so happy!”

It was wonderful. It was definitely a step along the way. But of course, it was not the end of the journey. Old attitudes do not necessarily fall away at once when one becomes a disciple of Jesus. Consider James, John, and the rest of that interesting mix of personalities. A patient Saviour had to gentle them past Samaria when they wished to call down fire from heaven.

Just the other night Della phoned again.

“Tell me,” she said, plunging almost at once into the depths of a well-pondered issue. “What about the _____ [members of a church with whom she disagrees sharply]? What do you think will happen to them?” It sounded as though she could

almost smell the scorching of their garments.

“Well,” I began, “I believe the Lord has many truehearted people in that church, and He’s drawing them to Himself, just as He’s drawing His honest people in all churches.”

It must have sounded radical. Perfectionists depend—and I do mean *depend*—on things being right. And *that* church . . .

“What about the _____s?” she persisted, moving to a non-Christian group. “They don’t even—”

“I think,” I said, “that He’s drawing His people from among them, too.”

“Yes, yes . . .” Della lifted the words slightly at the end, as she does when she is not quite certain. What a revolutionary concept: Jesus loving and drawing to Himself those unrighteous people! We moved closer to the real issue.

“But Liz, you are so good. I’m not good. I have doubts. You don’t have doubts—you have strong faith.” The words coming from the earpiece sounded strange. How little Della knew about my life! But as God prepared a sometimes

willful Jonah to reach willful Ninevah, He now prepared one perfectionist to touch another.

“I’m not good either, Della,” I admitted. “And I struggle with doubts, too. Do you remember the man who wanted Jesus to heal his son but was afraid his faith wasn’t strong enough? He said, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief’” (Mark 9:24).

“Tell it to me in your words,” Della urged. “I don’t understand that language.”

“Lord, I believe—You help my unbelief.”

“I see. Yes, yes.”

“Nobody is good but Jesus, Della. If we have Jesus, God counts His righteousness as ours. He helps us with our doubts. He puts His love in us and changes us. [I was warming to my subject and not about to stop.] Did you know that even a baby Christian who still has some bad habits and who doesn’t know everything is just as perfect to God as one who’s been growing for many years?”

For Della these were strange new thoughts. As she reflected tentatively, we said good night.

In a short time the phone rang again. It was Della.

“You know,” she said very quietly, “you have really helped me. You have told me things that nobody has told me . . . Sometimes I think, *I can’t pray. I’m not good enough.* Now I’m going to ask God to give me faith. I feel better before Jesus.”

Tears filled my eyes.

“Thank you, Della.”



or her, for me, it was still not the end of the journey. We would often have to bow down and weep over the tendency to call down fire on others or on ourselves. We’d have to keep moving forward in our understanding of grace. This was simply another step along the way.

Liz Brannon is a pseudonym.

FIFTY YEARS AGO WORLD WAR II ended. The United Nations was formed. And a sea of change took place in the Adventist Church in North America. That year the church voted to organize regional conferences.

This year represents, therefore, a special time of celebration for Adventists in North

ences have positively changed the face of Adventism, making a notable contribution to every facet of the church's ministry, and engendering a new sense of identity, participation, and spiritual ownership among constituent members. As we reflect on how God has blessed the Black work in the United States through this means, His providence confronts us on every hand.

on boards, councils, and committees.

Membership in Black conferences is now approaching a quarter million, tithes are more than \$90 million, and workers trained in regional conferences have made an inestimable contribution to the world church by serving at every level of the denomination, in North America and around the world.

Innovative programs and outreach plans of regional conferences annually add vitality and strength to the world church program (see sidebar "Looking to the Future"). Regional presidents and leaders have demonstrated administrative acumen that has matched, and in many cases surpassed, that considered to be the norm in the general church. Further, through regular councils, meetings, and boards, there have been ongoing network-

REGIONAL

by Delbert W. Baker

CONFERENCES

50 Years of Progress

America, heralding as it does the fiftieth anniversary of that historic development. It is historic—and pivotal—because it established a new area of governance in the Adventist Church. As intended, regional conferences have dramatically expanded the Adventist work among Black people in the United States. Membership in these conferences is open to all people, and the term *regional* merely describes the distinctive geographic territories they cover.

During the past 50 years these confer-

Formed to achieve greater soul-winning results among Black Adventists in a "shorter space of time than would be achieved under the previously existing organization," regional conferences have brought about the following results, among others, in the Black sectors of the church:¹

- Dramatic increases in evangelistic outreach.
- New opportunities for training and experience in ministry.
- Increased opportunities for leadership, service, and participation in church governance.
- Normal eligibility for elected offices, and ex officio representation

ing and support for all aspects of the world church program. Clearly, the hope of those leaders who supported the establishment of such conferences has become a reality.

This article is not written to recount the entire history of regional conferences. There are several histories that already do so.² Instead it will provide the story of why and how church leadership came to establish Black conferences.³

The Way Things Were

The decade of the 1940s was a turbulent one for the United States. Change and conflict were constants. The country was still recovering from the Great Depression. Morale was low. And, perhaps most traumatic, the nation was struggling in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entrance of

the United States into World War II.

All this was compounded by unrelenting racial tension in the nation. The Roosevelt presidential order, issued in 1941, began to address the problem. "There shall be no discrimination," it said, "in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin."

Conditions in the Adventist Church, however, were not reflective of the government position. White Adventist congregations and administrative leadership positions were rarely accessible to Blacks prior to the 1940s. The first Black person to work at the General Conference was the director of the Negro Department. Neither he nor Black visitors to the General Conference were permitted to eat in the Review and Herald cafeteria (the eating place for the General Conference workers at the time). Segregation was the norm for the first half of the 1900s. Across the United States the denomination's schools and institutions did not yet have an equitable admissions policy.⁴

From the late 1800s, when Charles Kinney, the first Black minister to be ordained, was faced with segregation on the day of his ordination, the church struggled with what to do about race relations between Blacks and Whites.⁵ Educator and author A. W. Spalding recorded that in 1890, R. M. Kilgore, the first denominationally assigned director of the Adventist work in the South, "advocated the separation of white and colored churches" to the church leadership; and "in the end this view prevailed."⁶

As the situation between Whites and Blacks went from bad to worse, Ellen White was forced to confront the church about its unjust treatment of Black people in general and Black Adventists in particular.⁷ Following the turn of the century, though the overwhelming majority of Black Adventists remained faithful to Adventism, a number of prominent Black Adventist ministers and laypersons gave up their affiliation with the Adventist Church because of its treatment of Blacks.⁸ Conditions deteriorated as the confrontations between Whites and Blacks became more frequent, resulting in Black (and some White) Adventists speaking out against the discriminatory practices of the church through the printed

page, through demonstrations, and through lay organizations.

An event that has come to be known as the Byard incident personified the tragic conditions in the church and the frustration and disquieted mood of Black Adventist believers. Perhaps more than any other, this incident highlighted the need for a change in the church's attitude toward race relations and the need for a new way of administering the Black work.

Shortly before the 1944 Spring Council, in which the decision was made to establish regional conferences, Lucy Byard, a fair-skinned Black female who was a longtime member of the Brooklyn Seventh-day Adventist Church, was visiting relatives in the Washington, D.C., area. She became seriously ill and was taken to the nearby Washington Adventist Hospital, then a segregated facility. When the staff realized that Lucy Byard was a Negro, they refused to treat her and discharged her from the hospital. Before she could receive treatment at the Freedmen's Hospital across town, her condition worsened, and she died. The effect of this incident was profoundly disturbing to Black Adventists. Numerous solutions were proposed—including total integration. But none were accepted as feasible by denominational leadership.⁹

Grieving but resolute, Black ministers and laypersons pressed church leadership for immediate redress. Emotions were stirred. The mood was tense, resulting in an uneasy standoff. It was a dark and tenuous period in the history of Adventism. Resolution was badly needed.¹⁰

A Time for Action

In the wake of the racial tensions, an apprehensive and troubled group of workers convened at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago on Saturday evening, April 8, 1944. These premeetings of the Spring Council of the General Conference were specifically called to discuss the advisability of the organization of regional conferences. The stakes were high. The reputation and direction of the church were on the line. The

racial dilemma and the grievous misfortunes of the recent past challenged the very unity of the movement.

As the premeeting got under way, it was apparent that there were differences of opinion as to what was the proper solution to the racial impasse. Some advocated the status quo approach, which would essentially leave conditions as they were—hoping that the situation would evolve into a more acceptable state. Others wanted full and complete integration, regardless of the mind-set of the White Adventist membership. Then there was the group that believed that the regional conference arrangement would resolve the tensions without compromising the essential unity of the body. Still others advocated more radical solutions.

Ideological differences crossed racial and collegial lines. There was a diversity of opinion among Whites, among Blacks, and between Whites and Blacks. Then there were differences between administrators and pastors and laypersons. To further complicate matters, as the time for the crucial discussions arrived, James L. McElhany, president of the General Conference and the facilitator for the discussions, lay in his hotel room sick. When he did not appear as scheduled, George E. Peters, director of the

Regional Office of
the General



Conference, delayed the discussions until he could go and talk with the president.¹¹

Peters impressed McElhany with the need to speak to the issue one way or another. Clearly the dilemma would not be resolved unless and until the General Conference president articulated his position. Peters insisted that if the crisis wasn't addressed, he didn't know how he or McElhany "could ever face the colored constituency again."¹² The problems would not just go away.

Upon arriving at the meeting, McElhany started the discussion by recounting the evolution of the Black conference concept. He indicated that much thought and discussion had been given to the topic not only on an administrative but also on a pastoral and lay level among Whites and Blacks. He further spoke of his keen concern for Blacks as a people and how he had developed "a deep interest in their welfare."

Rejoicing over the progress of the Black work in the Adventist Church, McElhany spoke of his belief that now was the time to "lay wise and adequate plans" for the development of work among Blacks. "Self-interest ought to be laid aside," he commented, as he invited discussion. Concluding his remarks, McElhany added: "I have known conferences to be organized with only 800 members which have proved to be successful."¹³

During the ensuing discussion, White and Black leaders openly expressed their views. William A. Spicer, former missionary and editor, and a former president of the General Conference, spoke in favor of the organization of Black conferences. "In Europe," he said, "we have

German conferences, French conferences, Swedish and Polish conferences; why not Black conferences?"¹⁴

Jay J. Nethery, president of the Lake Union Conference and later a vice president of the General Conference, gave an

inspirational presentation and expressed strong support for Black conferences. He highlighted his remarks with the thought that he had confidence in the Black leaders; that just as it had worked when they had formed conferences some years earlier, so it could work now. Most important, by having conferences they would "be able to save more souls in their territory."¹⁵ This statement was particularly meaningful in that it focused on the major objectives for forming Black conferences—the saving of souls and the building up of the work of God.

Of the several Black persons who spoke, Peters sought to direct attention to the big picture of the work in the future. He reminisced that Blacks had been patient and had not forced the issue of Black conferences, even though they had raised the issue some years earlier. But he was quick to add that as invited guests of the premeetings, they were ready to support the recommendation, to move beyond the "status quo," "avoid confusion," and accept "some organization [structure] that will give us a future."¹⁶

F. L. Peterson, another prominent Black minister, forcefully spoke in support of Black conferences. He felt it was "one of the most outstanding moves that [has] ever been made for us" and that it would "have a wholesome effect on all our people throughout North America." He indicated

further that Black conferences would inspire leadership by giving "the young people courage and something to look forward to in the denomination." This, he added, would be a means of helping to finish the work.¹⁷

As the discussion progressed there was a coalescing of views, and a consensus began to emerge. Of the 22 speakers on record, 17 spoke in favor of Black conferences, three spoke against it, and two asked questions of clarification. The overwhelming majority of leaders present, White and Black, voiced their support of Black conferences. Those who did not favor the idea ended by saying they would support "whatever organization is selected."¹⁸

Of all the speeches made, the most influential was that by the General Conference president on the second day of the meetings. Not only did McElhany support the wisdom of Black conferences, but he also went on to affirm the capabilities of Black leadership, expressing confidence in them as leaders. "To say a man could be a pastor of a thousand members, but couldn't direct a thousand members if they were divided into conferences seems to me to be inconsistent in reasoning," he said.

Sensitive to the diverse views concerning Black conferences, McElhany expressed his intent both to help Blacks take leadership responsibilities and preserve unity. "If I thought anybody was proposing a conference organization that would drive a wedge between the races I would oppose it. I do feel anxious for us to develop every resource. . . . We must keep together and maintain the spirit of counsel and helpfulness." He reminded the meeting that resistance to new ideas was something that had been experienced before, and that during the early days of the Adventist Church when the denomination "first organized churches [and conferences] people looked upon it as dangerous . . . [and] wrong."¹⁹

The Enabling Action

After the premeetings, the discussion, and the debate, the moment came. Walter W. Fordham, retired regional conference president and former director of the General Conference Office of Regional Affairs, attended the meeting and later

**Regional
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contributions to
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of the church's
ministry.**

summarized the event: "Finally the inevitable happened. . . . The discussion finally came to a head. Pros and cons were examined. There were heated discussions. And in the end there was a vote to establish Regional conferences."²⁰

After the recommendation was voted in the premeeting, the action was passed on to the Spring Council in session the next day. Though Blacks (as invited, nonvoting guests) did not participate in the vote on the pending recommendation, the records indicate that the "recommendations were submitted to the delegations at the April 1944 Spring Council and were unanimously adopted." Thus, it is recorded:

WHEREAS, The present development of the work among the colored people in North America has resulted, under the signal blessing of God, in the establishment of some 233 churches with some 17,000 members; and, **WHEREAS**, It appears that a different plan of organization for our colored membership would bring further great advance in soul-winning endeavors; therefore

WE RECOMMEND, That in unions where the colored constituency is considered by the union conference committee to be sufficiently large, and where the financial income and territory warrant, colored conferences be organized.²¹

Organizing Regional Conferences

Thus, regional conferences came to be. Following the enabling action of the General Conference, the unions quickly scheduled and convened constituency meetings across the country for the organization of regional conferences. In rapid succession regional conferences were formed:

- Allegheny (1945—J. H. Wagner, president; in 1967 Allegheny Conference divided into the Allegheny East Conference—W. A. Thompson, president; and the Allegheny West Conference—W. M. Starks, president).
- Central States (1947—T. M. Rowe, president).

■ Lake Region (1945—J. G. Dasent, president).

■ Northeastern (1945—L. H. Bland, president).

■ South Atlantic (1946—H. D. Singleton, president; in 1981 South Atlantic divided into South Atlantic Conference—R. B. Hairston, president; and Southeastern Conference—J. A. Edgcombe, president).

■ South Central (1946—H. R. Murphy, president).

■ Southwest Region (1947—W. W. Fordham, president).

To date, the nine regional conferences, located in six of the nine unions of the NAD, cover 39 of the 50 states.²² H. D. Singleton and W. W. Fordham, both retired, are the only two of the original presidents alive. At the time of the forming of regional conferences, the West Coast territory, which included the Pacific Union Conference and the North Pacific Union Conference, chose to administer the Black work through Regional Affairs offices.²³ Bermuda Mission, a Black-administered field, was officially organized as a conference in 1984.

The Black work has made quantum leaps since the establishment of Regional conferences. The membership increased from 17,000 in 1944 to 23,000 in 1950, to 37,000 in 1960, to 70,000 in 1970, to 193,000 in 1990, and to more than 220,000 in 1995. In 1944 Black Adventists constituted 9 percent of the membership in the U.S. By 1977 it was 20 percent; then 23 percent in 1985; and more than 25 percent in 1995. In 1944 the tithe from the Black constituency was \$511,000. It grew to \$18 million in 1977, \$40 million in 1984, \$69 million in 1990, and to more than \$90 million in 1995. Currently, tithe returns from regional conferences exceed the annual tithe returns of every world division, except the North American Division.²⁴

As we think of the progress as well as of the remaining challenges, let us remember the words of J. L. McElhany:

"The thing for us to do is to get this work finished just as soon as we can and go to our eternal home where these racial conditions do not exist. . . . It will be a glorious thing when we can go to our eternal home. We will forget all the things that have troubled us in this world."²⁵

¹ Today there are nine such conferences in the North American Division that have a largely African-American leadership and constituency. Most of them were organized between 1945 and 1947. (The terms *regional conference* and *Black conferences* are used interchangeably in this article.) Each regional conference is organized within the existing administrative structure of a union conference, and covers not merely one portion of the union area, but generally all the Black churches in the whole region of the union. The Pacific and North Pacific unions currently have no regional conferences, but instead have union and conference regional departments that serve in an advisory capacity for the Black constituency in their areas. In Canada there are churches that are predominantly White, churches that are predominately Black, and churches that are fully integrated—but no separate conferences. In Bermuda most of the churches have a majority of Black members and the current president is Black. (See *SDA Encyclopedia* [1976], p. 1191.)

² See, for example, D. W. Baker, *The Unknown Prophet* (1987); *Make Us One* (1995). (The latter has a chapter by Roy Branson entitled "Adventism's Rainbow Coalition" that traces the roots of the different ethnic groups that make up the SDA Church and includes a section on Black Adventists; W. W. Fordham, *Righteous Rebel, an Autobiography* (1990); Ronald Graybill, *Ellen G. White and Church Race Relations* (1970) and *Mission to Black America* (1971); Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony* (1975); L. B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow* (1984); Calvin B. Rock, "They Without Us Shall Not Be Made Perfect," in *Go On: Vital Messages for Today's Christian* (1984); R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (1979); Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work* (1966 reprint); *A Star Gives Light, Seventh-day Adventist Heritage* (a teacher's resource guide), produced by the Office of Education, Southern Union Conference (1989); *SDA Encyclopedia* (has a wealth of material on the Black work and the events surrounding the establishment of regional conferences).

³ Unless otherwise noted, the quotations referred to in this article are taken from the minutes of the General Conference Spring Council premeeting (hereinafter: premeeting) (Apr. 8-9, 1944) and the Spring Council minutes of the General Conference of SDA (Apr. 10, 1944).



⁴ Louis B. Reynolds, in *We Have Tomorrow*, discusses the conditions in the SDA Church and cites illustrative examples. See chapters 16-18.

⁵ It was on this occasion in 1889 that Kinney first proposed the idea of the regional conference concept ("C. M. Kinney's Statement" [Nashville: Oct. 2, 1889]); James Edson White also intimated the merits of Blacks providing leadership for their own people in a letter to his mother, Ellen White, on June 28, 1900.

⁶ A. W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (1962), vol. 2, p. 188; see also Spalding's unpublished manuscript "Lights and Shades in the Black Belt" (1924) p. 142; see also *Review and Herald* report by Kilgore (Oct. 29, 1889).

⁷ See Delbert W. Baker's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "The Dynamics of Communication and African-American Progress in the Seventh-day Adventist Organization: A Historical Descriptive Analysis" (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1992), for an examination of Ellen G. White's role in the progress of Black Adventism.

⁸ One of the most well-known cases is that of Pastor J. K. Humphrey. For more information, see Joe Mesar and Tom Dybdahl, "The Utopia Park Affair and the Rise of Northern Black Adventists," *Adventist Heritage*, January 1974.

⁹ See the November (1943) General Conference Executive Committee minutes where it is noted that a committee was appointed to study "the future development of our colored work in North America" (Nov. 3, 1943).

¹⁰ See Calvin B. Rock's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "Institutional Loyalty versus Racial Freedom: The Dilemma of Black Seventh-day Adventist Leadership" (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1984), for an examination of various protest methods to effect positive change in race relations in the Adventist Church. For information on the rationale of Black conferences, see also Frank W. Hale, Jr., "Commitment versus Capitulation," *Spectrum*, Spring 1970.

¹¹ Reynolds, pp. 294, 295.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 295; Fordham, p. 78; Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony*.

¹³ Premeeting minutes—Apr. 8, 1944.

¹⁴ Fordham, p. 79.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Premeeting minutes—Apr. 9, 1944.

¹⁶ Premeeting minutes—Apr. 9, 1944.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Premeeting minutes—Apr. 8, 9, 1944.

¹⁹ Premeeting minutes—Apr. 9, 1944; Reynolds, p. 295.

²⁰ Fordham, p. 76.

²¹ General Conference Spring Council minutes, Apr. 10, 1944.

²² See *SDA Encyclopedia*, pp. 1190-1196.

²³ Currently, there is a movement on the West Coast among Black laypersons and pastors to establish regional conferences. Most notable in this connection is WURK (Westerners United for Regional Conferences).

²⁴ See statistics from the NAD Office of Human Relations; Harold Lee's "A Comparison and Analysis of the Tithe of North American Regional Conferences With Other Segments of the World Church, 1992" (updated, 1995); Rock, *Go On!* p. 103.

²⁵ Premeeting minutes—Apr. 8, 1944.



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Looking to the Future

Regional conference presidents share their vision for ministry

My vision for ministry is:

"To integrate the wellness concept into all aspects of ministry in my conference—spiritual, social, physical, and mental. Thus we can equip our constituents to make a greater difference in their communities."

*Alvin M. Kibble, Allegheny East Conference
(original membership: 6,745; current: 24,396)*

"To facilitate a massive conference-wide sense of urgency on the part of pastors, administrators, and laypersons as we approach the year 2000—to unite together to spread the gospel and to prepare for the coming of Christ."

*Willie J. Lewis, Allegheny West Conference
(original membership: 4,624; current: 11,206)*

"To educate every member as to the soul-winning benefits of developing a Christlike character. A plan to help accomplish this goal is Project 100 for 1, by which every member is personally challenged to get involved in a specific ministry of the church."

*J. Alfred Johnson II, Central States Conference
(original membership: 798; current: 8,700)*

"To help people in the Black community—inside and outside of the church—to realize the tremendous potential of Adventism to address and provide solutions for the challenges facing them. In so doing, we help people prepare for the temporal as well as the eternal."

*Norman K. Miles, Lake Region Conference
(original membership: 2,500; current: 22,117.)*

"To use our resources as one of the largest conferences to assist other regional conferences in such projects as Ebony Evangelism, with the aim of spreading the three angels' messages to urban centers and training workers and educators to train others."

*Stennett H. Brooks, Northeastern Conference
(original membership: 2,208; current: 39,561)*

"Besides the charge to evangelize and keep the unity of the faith, there remains the challenge to do something to minister to the Black male—not only in regard to his future destiny but also for the sake of his self-esteem and self-worth in this present life."

*Ralph P. Peay, South Atlantic Conference
(original membership: 3,523; current: 25,122)*

"To constantly develop creative and innovative forms of ministry to finish the work of God, and to keep the history and vitality of the Black work alive so that it will be a means of inspiration and motivation for future generations."

*Joseph W. McCoy, South Central Conference
(original membership: 2,235; current: 24,804)*

"To focus on the mission of the church in our schools, our churches, and in everything we do. Evangelism should be the golden strand, clearly seen as our reason for existence and the purpose of our being."

*Roy R. Brown, Southeastern Conference
(original membership: 8,511; current: 21,420)*

"To so dynamically multiply members, churches, and resources by the year 2000 that we will have to divide the conference in order to adequately administer the work. We want explosive church growth to lead to explosive conference growth and expansion."

*Robert L. Lister, Southwest Region Conference
(original membership: 1,939; current: 15,821)*

Sacrifice Is...

It isn't only what we **"DO WITHOUT"** that defines the word.

Sacrifice, for many, is a nebulous word. Difficult to picture. Challenging to translate into tangibility.

Though the word may not be easily represented, the results of it can be.

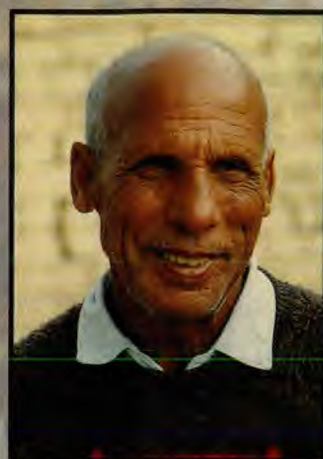
Christ's sacrifice on the cross is an image with which we can identify. And the Holy Spirit, united with the sacrificial giving of many people worldwide over the past five years, has produced tangible results for God's kingdom—men, women, girls, and boys in formerly unentered areas who now have hope. These results can be felt in the heart, lived in the life, and pictured in stories and photographs.

On these two pages we offer a few glimpses—the results of sacrifice. Each smiling face, each worshiping congregation, each church building that pierces the horizon, tells a story of the miracles wrought by the combination of God's power and human sacrifice.

It's been said that "one picture is worth a thousand words." It's true. But these photographs reflect the reality of only one word: *sacrifice*.



South Africa



India



Belgium



Burkina Faso



South Pacific



Philippines



Magadan



Mongolia



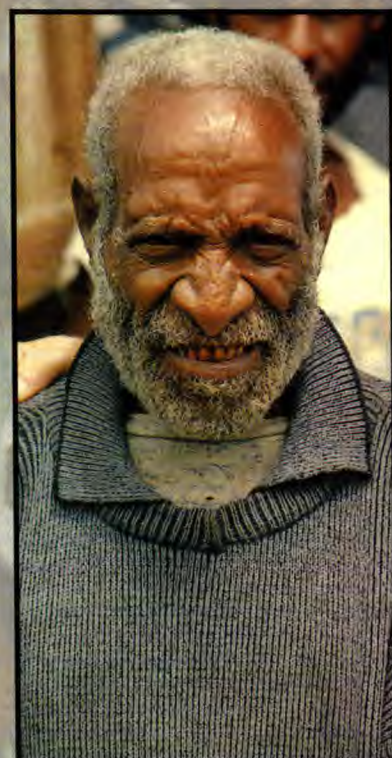
Nepal



Bulgaria



India



Papua New Guinea



Mission and Sacrifice

Robert S. Folkenberg

From Adventism's earliest days, Christ's solemn mandate recorded in Matthew 28:19 communicated three imperatives: go, teach, baptize. To accomplish this mission in the entire world requires thoughtful plans, committed members, and generous financial support.

Wherever I go, members approach me with wonderful plans for church growth. Often I have to explain that funds are not available, for example, to send two local workers for two years at \$35 per month, or to subsidize a reaping campaign, or to provide medical supplies for a mission launch, or . . . The list is almost endless.

In the early 1920s the mission program of our church was at risk. When the problem was brought before conference presidents, they suggested making a week in November a week of thanksgiving, self-denial, and sacrifice. Offerings taken at the close of that week would be channeled directly into frontline mission work. Cable messages asked members worldwide to give a week's wage.

In 1922 members in North America responded by giving an average of \$1.60 each—equivalent to six days' wages! Their relationship with God flourished as they trusted Him to supply their needs. That sacrificial offering by our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents enabled frontline missions to scatter seeds resulting in harvests of millions of new members through the years.

Back to Breaking New Ground

During the past 30 years the church divided this special offering among several different worthy entities, but that changed the distinctive purpose of funding frontline missions.

But good news: the Annual Sacrifice

Offering is returning to its original design. In 1994 the General Conference Executive Committee voted to again return 100 percent of the offering to frontline missions! Every dollar, pound, mark, peso, franc, and ruble donated to this annual offering will be used for frontline missions—Global Mission!

God is blessing our mission initiatives. Yet more than 1,675 people groups with a population of 1 million or more have yet to hear the gospel. The highest priority for Global Mission over the next five years will be to organize churches in the 18 countries that have members but no churches, and to start work in the nine countries that have neither a Seventh-day Adventist member or a church.

This is a serious challenge. Through prayer, self-denial, and sacrifice, you may be impressed to give the equivalent of a week's wages, a day's wages, or an hour's wages to the Annual Sacrifice Offering on November 18.

In North America alone, if every one of the 800,000 members gave one week's wage to the Annual Sacrifice Offering—as was typical in the early history of this offering—at say \$10 an hour, the Global Mission budget would have \$320 million, enough, based on average costs over the past five years, to establish more than 100,000 new congregations! Even each member giving an hour's wage would provide \$8 million, which could send 13,300 church planters for one year!

In 1994 the Annual Sacrifice Offering amounted to \$2.8 million, with the members of the North American Division giving \$944,590, or an average per member of \$1.15—45 cents less than the average gift in North America in 1922!

W. E. Nelson, then General Conference treasurer, wrote in the *Review*

and *Herald* (Oct. 26, 1939): "The . . . Advent message was laid in sacrifice, and it will be finished in the same spirit. The pioneers of this movement knew what it was to bind about their own personal wants in order . . . to advance the cause of truth. . . . We are living near the end, and this should call for even greater sacrifice on our part."

An Exercise in Trust

An academy teacher recently contacted me with a burden. She had been stirred by the appeal at the General Conference session and wanted to be a part of the Global Mission Hands Across the World Offering. She had been a single mom for many years, struggling to feed, clothe, and educate her three boys. But God had provided for her needs and blessed her with means to provide for the future.

Our appeal to establish 2,000 new congregations by the year 2000 touched this woman's heart. After much prayer, she decided to give \$7,000—a widow's mite of biblical proportions—to establish a new congregation in an unentered area.

When I asked if she was sure about her decision, she responded, "I don't want my money tied up on earth accomplishing nothing when it can be used to move the work forward."

The spirit of mission is alive and well in Adventist lives. The Annual Sacrifice Offering is a fantastic opportunity for us to express our belief in the urgency of taking the gospel to every nation.

Thank you for giving prayerfully—and generously—to Global Mission on November 18.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

A History of Sacrifice

Inspiring images from the past

SEVENTY-THREE YEARS AGO Adventists around the world responded to an urgent plea. New opportunities for outreach were opening up, yet the General Conference budget was a quarter of a million dollars short, and missionaries were at risk of being recalled from their posts.

Delegates to the 1922 GC Autumn Council discussed the problem and adopted an inspired plan whereby denominational employees and members alike were asked to give a week's wage in a once-a-year sacrificial offering.

At a time when the world was in an economic slump following the ravages of World War I, even feeding one's family was difficult. But members responded because they believed wholeheartedly in the mission commission given to God's people. The united sacrifice of 208,771 members in 1922 yielded one third of a million dollars!

Through the years this spirit of sacrifice and united effort has served as a reminder that Adventists will support the church's outreach efforts despite prevailing economic, social, or political conditions. During the Great Depression of the early 1930s, people who were already financially desperate found ways to sacrifice. The strength of their faith put God to the test, and He did not fail.

In 1923 an 82-year-old woman was impressed to give something for the

Week of Sacrifice Offering. She said she would gladly give a week's salary—if she had an income. She prayed, counted her money, and found she did not have enough to purchase even a cord of wood. But long-ing to enter into this contract with God, she prayed twice daily, asking the Lord for a way to earn extra money.

Within a few days a neighbor received some unexpected guests who needed a place to stay. They rented the woman's spare room for \$2.50 a week. Knowing that God had answered her prayer, she exclaimed, "Now I can help, so the missionaries will not have to come home."

Investing in Eternity

Is this type of sacrifice still necessary in 1995? Ours is a much more affluent society than that of the early 1900s. Still we, along with organizations and corporations, have to struggle to balance budgets.

There are still nine countries in which there are no Adventists or churches! To go forward on Christ's "Go, tell" commission, funds are needed. Regular giving is vital, but sacrificial giving is essential also. In addition to raising necessary funds, it is a spiritual experience that unites us in a working relationship with the Saviour of the world.

While the Global Mission staff prepared this special emphasis for the Annual Sacrifice Offering, we shared among ourselves personal memories related to sacrifice. Tina remembered how tough it was for her mother—the only Adventist in the family. Her father was not sympathetic to the church and its programs, and refused to let her mother tithe the household allowance.

Tina's mother took in sewing in order to care for her children and to have something for the Lord. Then she was able to tithe not only her sewing income, but the grocery money as well.

When Annual Sacrifice Offering came around each year, Tina's mother would plan to give a week's wages. Her income was meager, but God always provided unexpected opportunities so that she received more than the amount pledged.

On November 18, in churches all over the world, men, women, and children will again enter into a partnership with the Lord as they step out in faith to give beyond the comfort level and allow God an opportunity to prove His promises. Many will experience the joy that comes from trusting in the care of the Lord.

As the offering plate is passed and envelopes marked *Annual Sacrifice Offering* are gathered, they will claim the following promise: "Give what you can now, and as you cooperate with Christ, your hand will open to impart still more. And God will refill your hand, that the treasure of truth may be taken to many souls" (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 50).

One hundred percent of the Annual Sacrifice Offering will provide funds for establishing an Adventist presence in unentered countries. This exciting prospect has inspired a coworker to give \$1,000 of his retirement funds.

We all want Jesus to come. If every Adventist in North America donated just the price of one ice-cream cone—\$1.35—nearly \$1.1 million would be available to benefit the global outreach programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

For most of us, giving up an ice-cream cone is hardly a sacrifice. Many of our forebears lived with less and still found ways to promote the Lord's work through sacrifice. When we reach down to do the same, we'll be thrilled by the sight of thousands of new believers from every corner of the globe. And then, together, we will soon gather before our great God, praising Him for His wonderful works!

Papua New Guinea



New Congregation: Burkina Faso



Bernadine Delafield works with development in the Office of Global Mission.

BY BERNADINE DELAFIELD

InTimes Like These

*Resisting the temptation
to believe the myth of
“the good old days”*

BY R. H. HARTWELL

shouldn't consult our convenience. It's our *duty* to give the full week's income now, when it's needed. I believe that the Lord will bless us if we do."

When the appointed day arrived, we put our sacrifice offering in the plate at church. It was all the money we had in the world, but we did not tell anyone else about it.

That same day some members who lived about 20 miles away visited our church. After the service they said, "We'd like to stay for the afternoon meeting; may we come to your house for dinner?"

We didn't want to tell them that we were all out of food, so we said, "All right, come along!"

We hurried home ahead of them to set the table. We put on the dishes and the silverware. Then we placed a glass of water at each setting. All the time we were wondering what we would give them to eat—we didn't have any food!

Just then one of our guests came in, carrying a big box that they had brought with them. "We brought our own food," they said. "We just needed a place to eat it." They had plenty too. They invited us to join them. They had pumpkin pies and many good things. When all were finished, there was plenty left. Since they didn't want to take it home with them, they left the rest of it with us.

On Monday the grocery man's delivery brought bags of groceries that the man insisted on leaving at our house. My wife told him that we had not ordered the groceries and would not be able to pay for them. But he left

them anyway.

When I arrived home and saw the groceries, I went down to the store and told the grocery man that I didn't order the groceries and couldn't pay for them, and asked that he come back and get them. He said, "That is all right; they were paid for, but I cannot tell you who paid for them."

It was a long time before we learned where they came from. A widow who had left the church some years before,

whose daughter we had encouraged and taken to Sabbath school, appreciated our interest in her and the little girl and felt impressed that we ought to have some groceries right away.

A day or so later a family of Adventists



Japan



New Congregation: Cambodia

BACK IN 1925 THE WEEK OF Sacrifice found us in anything but rosy financial circumstances. We were young workers engaged in evangelistic work.

We had taken part in the yearly Week of Sacrifice plan previously, but this year, as the time drew near for the offering to be taken, I began to worry. In addition to my wife and me, we had an elderly sister staying with us who was sometimes unable to help with living expenses.

One day I asked my wife how our pantry provisions were holding out. She said they were just about gone. I told her that I had just enough money to give the week's income to the Week of Sacrifice Offering, but that we wouldn't be able to buy anything more until the first of the next month, which would be nearly two weeks off. With a somewhat weakened faith, I suggested that we give part of the week's income on the day of the offering and wait until the following month to give the rest of it.


"No," she said. "In this matter we

SistersAct

Two elderly sisters live together and struggle with finances and matters of health. They acknowledge when they mail their donations to Global Mission that they may need their money later, but they believe that the present work of reaching the world for Jesus is so important that they must send every penny that they can—now!



New Congregation: Papua New Guinea




A Snapshot of Sacrifice

A middle-aged widow works as a waitress to earn money to help with travel expenses for volunteers who pay their own way to Belarus (in the former Soviet Union). They go to carry the gospel message and help build a church for the Adventists there.

She is so inspired and excited about carrying the gospel that she has been giving regularly *as much as she can afford*. In one month's time she sent five donations averaging \$39. She sends the money on a U.S. postal money order at the end of each week "so the money will get there as fast as possible."

who lived out in the country came to town with produce to sell. They brought us a bag of potatoes and said, "We felt that perhaps you could use them." And they were absolutely right. We had no lack of food during those days. In fact, we fared even better than usual until our next paycheck arrived.

These experiences and others taught us that the Lord definitely cares for those who sacrifice for His cause. Truly the windows of heaven had been opened to us and a blessing was poured out. If we will "make Him a little cake first," He will always bless the meal and the oil, and what a great reward we shall be given. 

R. H. Hartwell was the director of the Kiangsu Mission at the China Union Mission when he wrote this for the November 13, 1941, edition of the Review and Herald.

Best Week Yet!

He was a church elder in Northern Europe, a tailor by trade. He prayed that God would give him a prosperous week. Customers came freely, more than usual. And to his surprise, people whose accounts he had written off as lost came in and paid the old bills.

He came to church with his offering for the Week of Sacrifice. He said, "Brothers and sisters, I prayed for a good week, and God sent me such a week of business as I never had. People paid bills that I had given up as lost. Then for a moment the suggestion came, 'This is too much; it is more than the real earning for this week.' But, brethren and sisters," and his voice broke with emotion, "here it is—all of it—for Christ, who sacrificed His all for me."

BEFORE

YOU read this, consider that the **largest** Annual Sacrifice **Offering** ever given was **\$2.6 million**.

Annual Sacrifice Offering 1995

This could happen:

Income

Expense

ONE HOUR

300,000 -----> Number of Adventist households
in North America
X \$10 -----> Average hourly earnings

\$3,000,000

\$3 million could support 7,142 frontline missionaries for one year.

or

ONE DAY

300,000 -----> Number of Adventist households
in North America
X \$80 -----> Average daily earnings at \$10/hr

\$24,000,000

\$24 million could establish 8,000 congregations around the world.

or

ONE WEEK

300,000 -----> Number of Adventist households
in North America
X \$400 -----> Average weekly earnings at \$80/day

\$120,000,000

\$120 million could build 13,000 churches for new Adventists.

Balance

"One soul is of such value that in comparison worlds sink into insignificance." The Desire of Ages, p. 578



Mark your tithe envelope **Annual Sacrifice Offering** for **100%** of your gift to reach the unreached.

Now 1995
Annual Sacrifice Offering

Where Does It All Go?

Global Mission demonstrates that there are no boundaries to God's good news.

BY JACKIE ORDELHEIDE SMITH

AFTER THE APPEAL IS MADE, THE offertory is played, and the gift is prayerfully given, what happens to the money for the Annual Sacrifice Offering? Where does it go? How is it spent?

Unlike the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering or the Sabbath school mission offering, the Annual Sacrifice Offering is taken only once a year. And from this year on—unlike years past—100 percent of the Annual Sacrifice Offering goes to fund frontline mission projects around the world. Whereas some offerings largely support the infrastructure of the church, this offering goes directly to the grass-roots level, to those who are communicating the gospel to the unreached.

Most commonly, these funds help support the more than 2,600 Global Mission pioneers who are serving around the world with the sole purpose of establishing new congregations. Part of the offering helps pay for their training costs, outreach materials, and other nominal expenses while they are establishing an Adventist presence. Depending on the area of the world where they serve, these pioneers receive a monthly stipend of \$35 to \$200 a month, enough only to cover food and a few basic living expenses while they work to spread the gospel full-time.

Frontline mission projects take various forms. In one part of the world it is a health clinic that serves to make initial contacts with local people. In other places it is a development project or a literacy program under the auspices of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

After contacts are made and friend-

ships are nurtured, doors are eventually opened to share beliefs and lifestyle principles. Workers can then talk about God and invite interested individuals to Bible studies, reaping meetings, and other church programs.

And throughout the process, it is the

miles (80 kilometers) from where they were living, killing more than 1,000 people. The Bezborodov's apartment suffered minor structural damage, but neither of them was hurt.

Prior to coming to Okha, Oxana and Paul had prayed for guidance in knowing how to approach the people in this town. In answer to their prayer, God turned a natural disaster into an opening for the gospel.

Because of frequent aftershocks from the quake, people would scatter out of their homes onto the streets when the shocks began. One evening during an aftershock Paul saw a group of young people in the street, sitting in a circle singing. He asked to join in, and even began playing the guitar.

Before long a crowd gathered, inquiring who he was. Paul and Oxana were able to talk with several people that



Bamboo church constructed by frontline missionaries in the Philippines

power of the Holy Spirit that makes these series of events effective and enables volunteers to establish an Adventist presence in a previously unentered area.

Earthquake!

Global Mission pioneers Oxana and Paul Bezborodov serve in Okha, Russia, on Sakalin Island. Just days after arriving, an earthquake shook a town about 50

night. As a result of those few contacts, they now have a group of more than 10 people studying with them in their home. By God's grace, an Adventist presence will soon be established in this unentered territory.

Frontline India

Sushil and Mavis Lall are frontline volunteers in Patwai, India. They were



Mavis and Sushil Lall, frontline missionaries in India

baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1989, and decided in 1991 to serve as frontline missionaries, along with their three children, near their own hometown. Through social service visits they are able to meet people in the community and share their hope in Christ.

Mavis tells the ladies she meets, "God has been gracious by giving us time to know Him. We must read our Bibles and share Him and His love with other people

while we can." The Lalls explain to others that there is one God—not just for Christians, but for Hindus and Muslims as well. The Holy Spirit has enabled them to bring 150 people to Christ in one year and to establish a new congregation in this previously unentered area.

As you consider sacrificing a week's wages, or even a day's wages on November 18, think of the impact your gift will have on the thousands of frontline programs that are cur-

rently in motion around the world. By marking your nontithe gift for the Annual Sacrifice Offering, you are converting "legal tender" into treasure for Christ's kingdom.

A week's wage never accomplished so much!

Jackie Ordelleide Smith is coordinator for Global Mission Pioneers, in the Global Mission office.



MARGARET and Mark Matthews are just one of hundreds of couples who have successfully dated and married within the SDA church through *Adventist Contact* since 1974.

Mark said, "My prayers were answered in the most remarkable way through *Adventist Contact*."

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THE LOMA LINDA REPORT

LLU Children's Hospital makes a difference

It was a sunny morning in June when 19 wide-eyed children from San Salvador Pre-school from nearby San Bernardino visited the emergency department at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital (LLUCH).

The line of little people on the walking tour often halted to observe their surroundings—there were so many shiny things to look at as well as lots of big people in white coats rushing around.

Their visit was part of a program to familiarize children with hospital emergency rooms, coordinated by the Children's Hospital emergency department and the child life therapy area.

The program is now in its third year which runs from September through June, according to Melody Schlamen, RN, BSN, pediatric nurse manager in the Children's Hospital emergency room.

"Hospitals can be very scary places for children," explains Ms. Schlamen. "This program familiarizes children with hospital emergency rooms and attempts to erase some of the fear and mystery."

Each visit begins with a child life therapist talking to the children. Then they all receive finger casts and hear a story about coming to the hospital.

As they walk into the emergency department, one child volunteers to be treated like a patient. He or she wears a gown as a doctor checks the child's heart, eyes, and ears.

A pediatric trauma coordinator then



An emergency department nurse listens to the heart of a San Salvador Pre-School youngster during a tour of the Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

talks to the children about safety when around cars, swimming pools, and when riding a bike.

The final event of their visit is when they go outside and look in an ambulance and talk with the paramedics.

Loma Linda University Children's Hospital opened in November 1993 as the newest chapter in Loma Linda's effort to

meet its community's health care needs.

Faced with the dramatic increase in poverty and lack of access to basic health care among American children in the 1980s, Loma Linda designed the 250-bed state-of-the-art Children's Hospital as a center to both improve children's health care and to address their special needs.

Please turn to next page

Information for this section supplied by the Loma Linda University Medical Center office of public affairs.

"FULFILLING THE VISION"

"FULFILLING THE VISION"

The Children's Hospital houses a 72-bed neonatal intensive care unit, one of the largest in the nation, as well as comprehensive pediatric intensive care and hematology/oncology units. The hospital offers the most advanced medical care available in a non-threatening, cheerful environment.

"Loma Linda truly believes that our children are our future, and intends to care for them well," states J. David Moorhead, MD, president and chief executive officer of Loma Linda University Medical Center.

An estimated 2.9 million children were reported as abused and neglected to child protective service agencies in the United States during 1993. At least three children die each day as a result of maltreatment.

Locally, almost one in 10 of all children in San Bernardino County are at risk of child abuse and neglect. In 1994, an estimated 51,502 children were referred to the child protective services, a 15.4 percent increase over 1992.

Early in 1994, San Bernardino County's children's diagnostic center for sexual abuse opened in Loma Linda. This is the first joint project of 10 county and private agencies to provide one-stop examination to sexually abused children, rather than moving them from place to place, and requiring them to tell their painful stories many times over.

"It is our hope that we can someday alter adult behavior so such centers will not be a necessity," says Claire Sheridan, MD, chief of the Children's Hospital's division of forensic pediatrics.

"But until that happy day, I believe centers such as ours offers the best means to help the innocent victim."

Recently, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital joined forces with two other organizations to create a "children's coalition."

The coalition is committed to making a difference through neighborhood-based strategies to assist children and their families, as well as through other long-term projects to improve the status of children.

More children will die this year from preventable, unintentional injuries than from all childhood diseases combined.

The Children's Hospital is proud to be the lead organization for the Loma Linda



A Loma Linda University employee volunteers at the Kids Care Fair. Last year, over 1,300 children attended the Kids Care Fair at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

SAFE KIDS Coalition which collaborates with local service organizations. The coalition is part of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, and is the only nationwide effort to combat the number one killer of our children.

The Loma Linda SAFE KIDS coalition is a structured group of diverse local individuals and organizations who have joined forces to reduce injury in our community.

In one year, 7,000 children died from injuries such as motor vehicle crashes, homicide, suicide, drowning, and burns.

"To prevent these tragedies we must discover who is at risk and take appropriate actions," says Connie Cunningham, RN, SAFE KIDS Coalition coordinator. "Education is the key to prevention—both for parents and children."

For the past two years, the Children's

Hospital has participated in Kids Care Fair, a southern California event with 40 sites in five counties. The fairs provide a full range of free immunizations and a variety of health education and screenings. While the immunizations are directed primarily towards children ages two months to five years, all screenings are available through 18 years of age.

Earlier this year, over 1,300 people attended the Kids Care Fair at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. This was the largest attendance at any of the 40 fairs in California. Attendance in 1994 exceeded 1,700.

Kids Care Fair is a unique public-private partnership which strives to increase awareness about the importance of long-term health care for children, while providing health services and information on how to access ongoing services to children and families.

■ NORTH AMERICA

Linking Churches, Filling Needs!

ACN works to provide local churches with quality resources.

BY JACK CALKINS

NET '95. *Welcome to the Family. Revitalizing Adult Sabbath School. Disaster Response Training. Transitions: Managing Mid-Life. Reclaiming Roundtable. Friendship Evangelism. Table Talk: Sharing Our Food and Faith.*

The Adventist Communication Network (ACN) is all of the above! ACN applies cutting-edge technology to meet the needs of local Adventist congregations across North America. Through satellite technology, we can communicate

simultaneously with nearly 1,200 downlink sites—churches, schools, and homes.

Serving Needs

"The response to ACN and NET '95 has been beyond all expectations, and the enthusiasm continues to grow," says Marvin Lowman, church ministries director for the Mid-America Union. "ACN has brought opportunities for training and skills development right into many of our isolated churches. Many of our members

are beginning to feel that the church is really serving their needs."

From the very beginning, ACN's live training and outreach events have been "needs-driven," meaning that topics, contents, and presenters are derived directly from the field. The executive producer engages the input of pastors whose churches are equipped with satellite dishes and receivers, and have already made use of ACN training and outreach events through teleconference focus groups. Usually five to seven pastors comprise each focus group.

The bottom line is that ACN training and outreach events are produced to meet the needs of the local churches.

"NET '95, training workshops, outreach seminars, and special reports are now common fare in many of our churches as they utilize the resources offered by ACN," says Jim Greek, president of the Gulf States Conference. "More than two thirds of our districts participated in NET '95, and a larger number is anticipated for NET '96."

Follow-up focus groups evaluate the effectiveness and quality of events after airing. Says M. D. Gordon, president of the Southern Union, "NET '95 had a tremendously positive influence in the Southern Union both in terms of baptisms, reclaiming former members, and strengthening our active members!"

Improving the Product

Because of input by ACN's users, several changes have already been made in the configuration of training and outreach events for the 1996-1997 season. For instance, the surveys indicate that many local churches can't effectively handle, nor do many want to hold, more than one outreach event per quarter. But they still want more than one to choose from.

Easy as One, Two, Three

"OK, press the menu button and go to 'Channel Menu.'" With these words the special equipment package developed by ACN takes on a personal dimension. Nothing shows ACN's commitment to meeting the needs of the local church more than the support offered to those who purchase the automated equipment through ACN.

As the church uses more satellite transmissions it's important for local congregations to purchase the equipment necessary to bring these evangelistic and training opportunities home to them. ACN has helped the process by developing a user-friendly receiver and equipment package.

The Chaparral M200C receiver is the heart of the downlink system and enables churches to receive and record ACN events. This receiver can be programmed for future events via satellite so that manually programming a VCR or satellite receiver is unnecessary.

Ordering Equipment

Ordering the equipment package from ACN is easy. ACN provides a toll-free technical support line and order desk. Once an order is placed with ACN, it is processed by Digitron, a national satellite installer who contracts with qualified people in your area to provide installation. Once installed, the church receives a free training video to acquaint them with their new equipment, and toll-free technical support is offered to those who purchased the equipment from ACN.

If a caller needs technical assistance and has the ACN satellite system (the M200C), it is usually easy to find help within a few minutes, saving the cost of an expensive service call.

The ACN equipment package is a complete system that includes: the Chaparral M200C receiver, a 7- or 10-foot dish, a VCR that the receiver can activate automatically, and a 13-inch TV. Basic installation is also included in the package price of \$2,995. Call 800-ACN-1119 to get information or place an order.

Douglas L. Janssen is a pastor working with ACN as technical support consultant and field representative. He is available to make presentations at camp meetings and workers' meetings about ACN, the equipment, and how it can benefit local churches.

Keeping Up With ACN

Here are several ways to know the ACN schedule so you won't miss an event:

ACN Bulletin—A monthly news and information sheet faxed, mailed, or E-mailed to local churches who have ACN satellites.

Church Publications—ACN program information is published monthly in the *Adventist Review*, union papers, *Celebration*, and several local conference newsletters.



Mark Finley, in the foreground, speaker for NET '95, addresses a group of baptismal candidates in Chattanooga last spring. Across North America more than 5,000 people joined the Adventist Church because of the satellite evangelistic series.

CompuServe—Members of SDAs On-line can access the ACN programming schedule anytime. Check the church resources section of the library.

For each training and outreach event, the following materials are provided to churches with satellite receivers:

Promotional Kits—Each month a promotional kit is mailed to local churches.

Handout Materials—A seminar or workshop booklet is created to accompany each uplinked event. Participants can use the materials to follow along, do activities, or take notes.

Evaluations—Participants are asked to complete an evaluation form and to make suggestions and comments to improve future events.

Information about ACN is just a toll-free phone call away. During business hours, someone will answer your call. Just dial (800) ACN-1119 and choose an option from the menu:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1—Current Schedule (recording) | 6—Seminar Materials |
| 2—Future Schedule (recording) | 7—Management Office, <i>ACN Bulletin</i> ,
Mailing List |
| 3—Equipment Orders | 8—PlusLine |
| 4—Technical Support | |
| 5—Videotapes | |

Celeste Ryan is the marketing and communications coordinator for ACN, based at the management office in Silver Spring, Maryland. Her E-mail number is 74617.1575 on CompuServe and 74617.1575@compuserve.com on Internet.

Concerning programs, there was a unanimous expression for more real-life, real-time demonstrations of exactly how local leaders are doing things that achieve meaningful church growth.

Recently, we completed our first fulfillment of a suggestion to do an event live from a local church. The Friendship Evangelism training workshop was produced live from the Berrien Springs Village church in Michigan. Participants came from many of the surrounding churches and proved the benefit of the suggestion. Interest in this topic was so high that after a half hour of calls from

participants across North America, we still had many calls waiting, but we were out of satellite time.

There was also consensus that ACN should prioritize informality over formality, personal concerns over institutional ones, relevance over information, and utilize as wide a variety of production values as the budget allows (pretaped interviews, eyewitness accounts, skits, quizzes, role-playing, and live question-and-answer sessions).

Most of our focus group pastors want ACN presenters to "be real"—to discuss problems openly and frankly. Appreciation

was expressed for the tasteful, open way that Len McMillan and Kay Kuzma shared insights and interviews on the outreach seminar *Transitions: Managing Mid-Life*.

Our narrowcast event times were also reviewed. Training events on Sabbath afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time wasn't perfect for everyone, but until we can afford to time-delay the signal, most agreed there wasn't any better alternative. The same applies to the outreach events being uplinked from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings.

For each event, participant churches order handout materials from AdventSource (formerly the NAD Distribution Center) to accompany the live workshop or seminar. They then reproduce any number in any way they need.

Finally, those that purchased the automated package from ACN have found the investment worth the price. Few, if any, technical glitches seem to justify the investment.

ACN is growing on both ends. Our users are growing in number and adapting to this new technology. And they're learning the evangelistic benefits ACN provides. One church in San Diego, California, is making the outreach seminars available to the community as a lifestyle seminar series.

During the first six months of 1995, baptisms in British Columbia increased nearly 55 percent—308 in 1995, up from 199 during the same period in 1994. Two out of every three baptisms in the conference were a direct result of NET '95.

ACN is also growing. We're improving our product and working to provide quality resources that fill the needs of local churches. More training and outreach, special, and evangelistic events are being planned for 1996 and 1997. As always, ACN is a two-way street, generated from a needs-driven process. With God's help, we will continue to guard that trust.

Jack Calkins is executive producer of training and outreach events for the Adventist Communication Network. Ann Calkins contributed to this report.

Mission to a Lost Land

Proclaiming liberty to captives

BY DANIEL G. MC MANUS

Imagine a land of more than 1.5 million people, where there are nearly 20 times more men than women, disproportionate numbers of ethnic minorities, no freedom, hopelessness, a lack of purpose, and sometimes violence.

This land is not imaginary. It's the terribly real world of those who occupy the prisons and jails of North America.

This is a virtual mission field—a lost land—untouched by conventional evangelism. Yes, a few dedicated missionaries provide some Christ-centered meetings, but not many inmates attend. For example, of the 1,400 men in one U.S. prison, only about 60 attend the 14 hours of activities sponsored by outside religious groups.

In 1989 the North American Division began to develop strategies to reach out to this lost land with the organization of the Adventist Prison Ministries Association (APMA).

APMA is also the official training and certification agency for prison and jail volunteers throughout the North American Division. Zeal without knowledge can be dangerous—especially in a prison or jail outreach.

Rehabilitation Through Regeneration

In a 10-year study of 180 federal inmates, only 45 percent of males involved with Bible studies or Christian worship services returned to prison, compared to 52 percent from a control group. Among females who attended Christian

programs, only 19 percent returned to prison, compared to 47 percent from the control group.

The answer to the rampaging crime problem is not building more prisons, simply "warehousing" people. The real answer comes when Christian men and women are committed to entering this lost land. "It is the only rehabilitation that changes a man's life from the heart," said Norman Carlson, former director of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

For many years scores of these prisoners have expressed their gratitude to Adventists who make weekly trips to correctional institutions to share the love of Jesus.

Eliseo Moenso was one such prisoner. He was voted into membership in the Adventist Church on February 19, 1987. Two weeks later he died by lethal injection at Huntsville, Texas. He was 27 years old, married, with four sons, ages 3 through 9.

Before his death, Moenso told of how two local Adventist prison missionaries,

Mr. and Mrs. Schroeder, came to the county jail and ministered to him each week. They continued to visit him—even after he was convicted for the murder of six people and transferred to death row. In a letter he wrote, "I am not asking for more years. . . I am just grateful to have had the chance to come to know our Lord and have the blessed hope of awakening in His presence someday."

Christ does change men and women. Even the worst prisoner can be changed into a child of God. But change doesn't occur unless inmates receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. And this won't happen unless the gospel is communicated to them effectively. The gospel commission applies to prisons just as it does to every other mission field.

Crime is a real problem. Knowing Christ is the real solution.

Daniel G. McManus is president of the Adventist Prison Ministries Association.

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To Be There or Not to Be There

My brother, Alvin, has died. I need you to be with me as we drive to Miami for the funeral," my wife explained.

All I did during the funeral was sit by my wife's side and hold her hand. Alvin's body was cremated, so we had no graveside service.

After the funeral, I thought, *Why did my wife need me? I did not do anything. I just sat there.* Indeed, what could I have done to relieve the situation?

Other people approach these things differently, but I am used to *doing* something. If I can't *do* anything, why be there? I think I am what is called task-oriented.

After the funeral, with nothing else to do, I took Alvin's children, Bonica, 9, and Timmy, 5, for a ride. Bonica asked me to stop at a small strip mall and suggested we get out and walk a bit. In time we arrived at an ice-cream parlor. I thought to myself, *She has learned to be a manipulator early in life*, as we went into the store and I bought their favorite ice-cream. Still, I was just there, not really doing anything, not solving any problem. Or was I?

Perhaps because I have been blessed to have experienced few real tragedies in my life, I have seldom felt as though I needed anybody to just *be* with me. So I did not understand my wife's situation as she tried to cope with her brother's death.

A Living Presence

Since then I have learned that when individuals suffer a divorce, lose a job, have a life-threatening disease, or are facing other less crucial problems in their lives, often they need someone to listen to them as they pour out their frustrations and fears.

Someone who will comfort them and help them look for a better day; someone to pray for them.

When a person dies, close friends and relatives often want someone to be there, not to *do* anything, but to show they care, to comfort, and to share their grief.

When a person is dying, he or she may not want to be alone. No, the person sitting by



*If I can't do
anything, why be
there?*

can't stop the process, maybe cannot even relieve the pain, but a living presence can help the person facing death to have comfort.

What Else?

There are people facing less threatening circumstances who would also appreciate our *being* there. Those persons may be housebound, may live in a nursing home, or may be in a hospital.

In such situations we may sometimes sit for hours, listen to complaints, feel the frustrations, or hear stories we have heard five times before. Our opportunity is to encourage, offer hope, reassure, and, if they wish it, to pray for the person in need. We may even learn of interesting experiences from the person's life. But when we leave, too often we may think we have nothing to show for what we *did* during our time spent there. Was the time wasted or not?

When we are going through trying times, the Lord has promised to *be* with us. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," the Lord promises in Isaiah 43:2. Although He could have taken them out of the fire, Jesus chose to *be* with the three Hebrew worthies while they were in the furnace (Dan. 3:25).

In Matthew 25:35, 36, the Lord says that when we feed, clothe, and house those in need, we do it unto Him. He adds: "I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

But besides doing things for Him, could it be that at times Jesus just wants us to *be* a witness for Him, a comforter: to show by our presence that we care, to offer a prayer for those in need?



Richard S. Norman is a retired teacher who writes from Avon Park, Florida.

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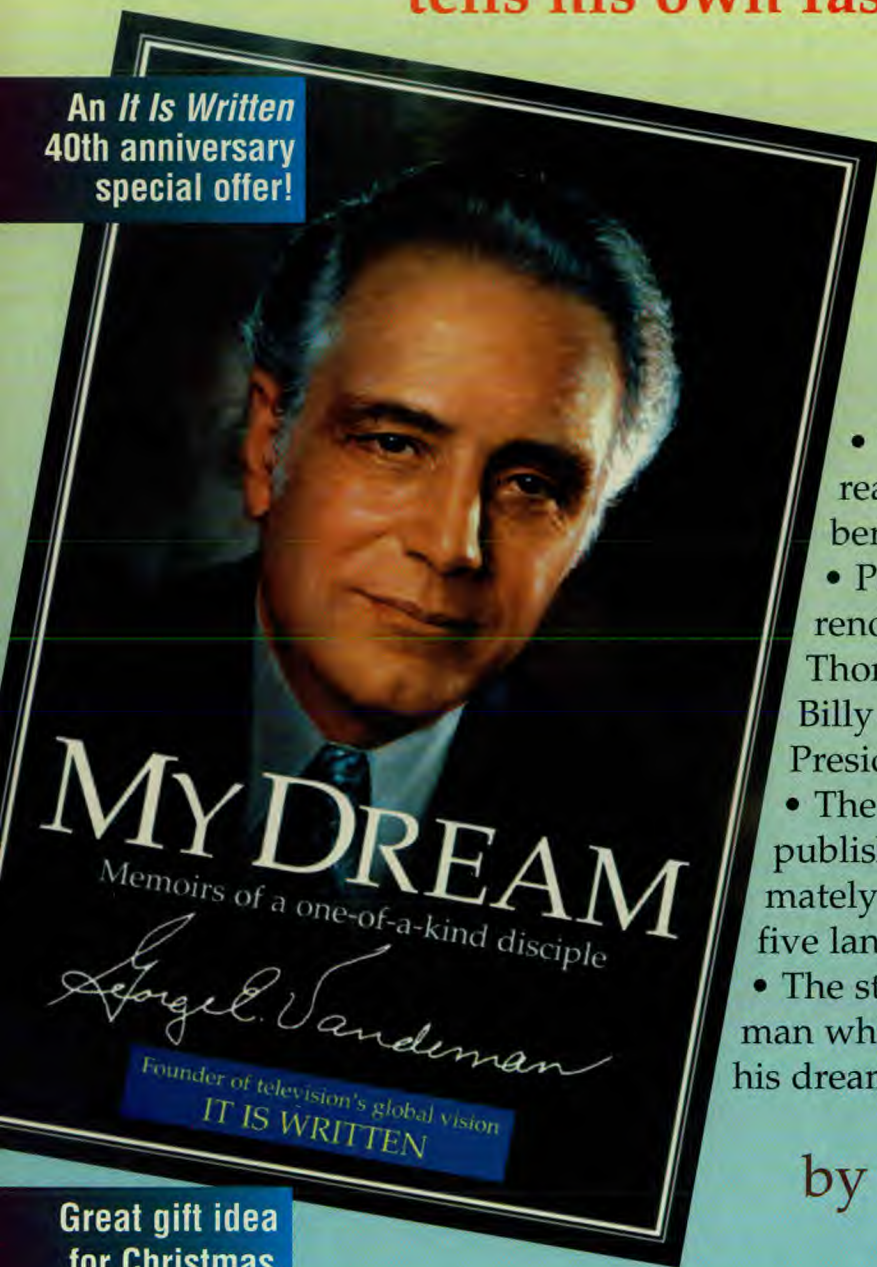
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