



ADVENTIST Review

APRIL 1996

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION EDITION

**From
Play Church to
POWER CHURCH**

**She Asked Me,
"WHAT'S A CHRISTIAN?"**

**God at
30,000 Feet**

LETTERS

Dealing With Depression

I enjoyed Laurie Denski-Snyman's "Depression—Why It Happens to Christians" (Jan. 25), but was concerned about this statement: "Just as God does not send angels to do surgery, give blood transfusions, or put a broken arm into a cast, so God does not magically change our moods, habits, or our choices. With the help of professionals, we must do this work."

I have been involved with hundreds of anointings over the years and see incredible answers to prayers concerning people with depression and addictions. God does change moods. God does change habits. Sometimes God chooses to work through professionals, but sometimes God chooses to free people miraculously.

I bring this up to encourage our people not to bypass taking their problems to God when professionals are handy, but to turn to professionals expecting God to work through them after going to God first.

—**Chad McComas**, PASTOR
MEDFORD, OREGON

Laurie Denski-Snyman's article has been a real blessing to my family. My husband has been depressed for many years, but it was not until he read this article that he realized and accepted that fact.

I prayed that he would seek counseling, and the Lord told me, "Leave him alone; I will take care of it." Sure enough, within two days he had made an appointment to meet with a

counselor. God answers prayers, and He uses people like Ms. Denski-Snyman to bless His children.

—**Name Withheld**

Fish Stories—and Covers



This is the most disgusting, sadistic, unchristian cover (Feb. NAD issue) I have ever seen on a church paper!

Whoever thought of it and allowed it to be printed ought to be fired!

—**Don Williams**
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Would you also use a photograph of a chicken or a cow being killed? This poor fish is in an absolute state of terror—it's about to die. It is freaking out. You should put a hook in your lip—at least for a few minutes. I don't want to see some beautiful creature dying on my Adventist magazine.

—**Richard Hartley**
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Your February cover story was outstanding. How often we have adopted the attitude manifested by the priest and the Levite in Christ's parable, leaving those wounded by sin lying on the road of life while we pass by on the side to avoid contamination. Those who feel that the minister's approach in Pastor

Vickery's article was inappropriate may want to read "Helping the Tempted," in *The Ministry of Healing*. Our Saviour is powerful and loving, well able to deliver those who have fallen into the most abject sin and to preserve and to protect those who are willing to "go beyond enemy lines" to rescue them.

—**Stephen Mallery**
JEFFERSON, TEXAS

"Bravo" to Pastor Jim in "Fishing Facts"! He should get a gold star for not being concerned about what people think or about getting his shoes dusty by his associations.

How in the world can we ever win the world if we sit on our pedestals and look down on the future heirs of the kingdom in their "rough diamond" form? If Jesus is still our example, let's look at who His best friends were: a tax collector, a traitor, lowly fishermen, and even a prostitute. Do we find fault with Jesus, too?

I may not get to meet Pastor Jim on this earth, but I would love to have him for a neighbor in heaven. I'll bet he would even help me plant my flower garden!

—**Pauline Pierson**
COLLEGE DALE, TENNESSEE

Indebted

"When You're 'All Shook Up'" (Feb. 15), following which Greg Brothers claims indebtedness to a pastor for his basic idea, leaves me indebted too. Thank you, pastor, writer, and *Review*, for a

fresh reminder of the God who “still remembers” me.

—Ann Burke

YUCAIPA, CALIFORNIA

Married—and Not Grading Papers

Regarding “When Satan Tried to Scatter” (Dec. 28), I have two corrections. First, my parents were not schoolteachers. Second, they were not divorced. They were married 55 years when Father died. My apology for not stating the facts more clearly.

—Evangeline E. McKeel

MARYSVILLE, WASHINGTON

Ingathering—A Clarification

I am sorry for not communicating better, but the February 29 letter by Dr. John Marsh in response to my article on Ingathering (Dec. NAD issue) reflects a serious misunderstanding. The “ministries of compassion” that I reported on are not the same as the overseas projects funded from Ingathering.

“Ministries of compassion” are humanitarian projects of “disinterested benevolence” done in the local community. “Ministries of compassion” are programs such as social services for families in crisis, homeless shelters, job-finding for the unemployed, tutoring for the illiterate, refugee resettlement, and help for inner-city children and youth.

The major concern that we are attempting to address in the pilot projects about which I reported is the question asked by thousands of our members: “Why aren’t we doing something here in North America for the homeless and inner-city children like ADRA does overseas?” Our failure in this area of work is seriously undercutting the success of Ingathering.

—Monte Sahlin

ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT,
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

From Adventist to Poor Adventist

In “Adventists and the Poor” (Feb. 22), your statement “Most of us, even those who seem to have it made, are only a few paychecks away from losing everything” is so true! My husband and I both have college degrees and for several years were church employees, but now we find ourselves incredibly in debt and struggling to pay the rent and buy food for ourselves and our two small children.

It has certainly been a humbling experience for me to default on debts owed to others, to sign my children up for WIC, to apply for Medicaid and heating assistance, and to consider the possibility of food stamps and even public assistance.

But on the brighter side, this is also a growing experience for us. We’re really learning to trust God as never before! Last Sabbath morning when I sat down to write out our tithe check, I realized that if we paid our tithe and combined budget as usual, there would not be enough money to pay the rent on Tuesday. I wrote the check. When it came time for the offering, the organist played “God Will Take Care of You,” which has kind of become “our song.” When the plate came by, I put in the tithe envelope.

That Monday my husband’s office was having a callathon and paying cash commissions for sales made that day. He’s fairly new at his job and hadn’t yet made a sale during a callathon. But that Monday he did—and brought home, in cash, about \$1 more than we needed to pay our rent.

I’m sure there must be many others like us who are struggling, and unfortunately, probably some who are much worse off—perhaps even homeless. I would be very interested in reading something about what the Bible says about being poor and Christian. Please keep us in your prayers.

—Name Withheld

ADVENTIST Review

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Young and successful, he thought he had the world on a string. But something was wrong, and then he heard . . . the voice.

BY KENT A. HANSEN

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NEXT WEEK

It Started in a Barber’s Chair

Answering people’s questions gives us the opportunity to be reminded of what we believe.

ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ through stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.

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Zero Days to Go

New we promised. And new it is.

You hold in your hands a small piece of Adventist history. For one year we've been dreaming about one of the most significant renovations ever in the general paper of this church. And now that dream is reality. Oh, sure, there's bound to be some fine-tuning here and there. But for the most part, the waiting is over: the new *Review* has arrived.

Consider, for example, what this month's NAD edition offers that last month's didn't:

- A brand-new design featuring 16 pages of full color and 16 spot color, new type styles and page layouts, a new cover, and the best artwork this magazine has ever seen.
- More "God of the real world" articles that invade your lives rather than tiptoe around them.
- A new column, "Take a Stand," written by two young bundles of pizzazz, Gina Brown and Loretta Spivey (p. 29).
- New features, including the reader-driven Give & Take and Herald, the *Review* Angel—a special ministry for kids (p. 7).
- An enhanced and updated Children's Corner (p. 28).
- More letters.
- Adventist news that's more personal and practical, less institutional.

With all this "newness," you may worry that your old favorites have been pushed aside. Worry not. Robert Folkenberg's "From the Heart," Reflections, and two editorials continue to be a regular part of the NAD edition.

But hold on. The NAD edition is only the beginning. Look for even more new features and new columnists in the full-color, 32-page World, Cutting Edge, and AnchorPoints editions this month.

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As Churches Burn

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

A monstrous evil has again reared its ugly head in America: Black churches are being torched. First one church burned—perhaps an accident. But then another, and another, and another . . . As I write, the count has reached at least 23 in five states, according to *USA Today*. In some places Blacks are back to keeping watch as in the days when white-robed gangs rode the night burning, killing, and planting flaming crosses.

If there was any doubt that relationships between Whites and Blacks are approaching flash point in this fair land, the new round of burning churches should dispel it. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream from 30 years ago of an integrated society lies in tatters.

The civil rights legislation of the 1960s opened all housing, restaurants, toilets, and drinking fountains to everyone, but it couldn't change hearts. Suspicion, hatred, and fear stalk the land. You see the signs on every hand—the polarization over the O. J. Simpson trial, the Million Man March on Washington, D.C., the battle over affirmative action.

And the strangest aspect of this appalling scene is that hardly anyone wants to deal with it. It's like a family with a dark secret that everyone knows about, but no one mentions publicly. The politicians play their games, concerned mostly about their reelection, while race relations suffer.

This is a time for Christians to stand up and be counted. This is a time for Seventh-day Adventists to speak out and proclaim the power of Jesus Christ as the one solution that can bring hope of reconciliation.

We need to speak up in terms of our own house as well as the larger society. We need to confront racism in our own family. We should quit pretending that all is well when it isn't, because in many respects we are a house divided. Here in North America you may worship wherever you choose, but not all churches give you the same welcome if you don't fit the right ethnic mold. And administratively we are separate: White pastors often don't even know the name of Black pastors in the same city, or vice versa.

This isn't just a problem for North America. Pride of race is perhaps the most deeply rooted pride we carry from our mother's womb.

On every hand you see the strange phenomenon of our times: as the world shrinks ever smaller it is cracking and fragmenting along ethnic lines. Rwanda. Bosnia. Northern

Ireland. Chechnya.

We Seventh-day Adventists have a world vision—one people in Christ, one family from every nation, race, color, people, and tongue (Rev. 14:6, 7). As the world splits apart, can we, will we, be one?

I believe this is the biggest problem and the biggest opportunity we face as a church.

Will we capitulate to culture, or will we confront culture when culture opposes the gospel?

Too often we have succumbed to culture. I have lived on three continents and have seen it, have been part of it. I confess it with shame: racist attitudes toward the Aboriginal people of my native Australia, caste considerations in India, Black-White animosity in North America.

God help us to confront the culture! God help us all to confront our racism! God help us to bring our need out in the open!

Will we quit seeking political solutions to situations that cannot be remedied by political solutions?

Political solutions attract us because they offer the mirage of a quick fix. Pass legislation. Change laws. Vote actions at Annual Councils or General Conference sessions.

Legislation and voted actions have their place, but they never go far enough. They cannot change the heart.

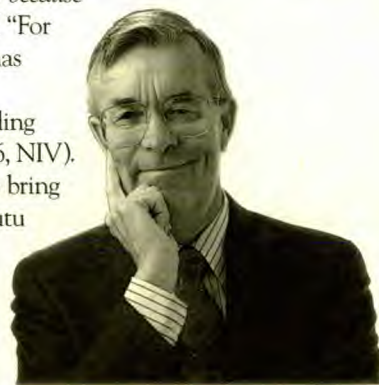
And so often political solutions come down to questions of power: Who gets the money, and how much? Who winds up in charge?

Could our greatest need as a people be to accept, teach, and practice the everlasting gospel we are called to proclaim to the world? That gospel tells us that by His cross Christ *already* has reconciled us to one another because He has reconciled us to Himself. "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14-16, NIV).

This is the only solution to bring together Black and White, Hutu and Tutsi, Serb and Croat.

When will we give this message priority?

When will our budgeting show that it is priority?



My Journey

BY ALFRED C. MCCLURE

My roots go deep into the soil of Adventism—back four generations. My great-great-grandfather carried the Advent message to the state of Alabama following the Civil War and eventually became the first Adventist pastor to be ordained in that state. I grew up on the stories of our pioneers, the heroes of the Bible, and prophecies of the end-time. I learned the Bible stories well enough that I could tell them about as well as my teachers. But that can be both a benefit and a liability. An inherited religion isn't very satisfying.

I wish I could describe—as some can—the precise moment Christ became real to me . . . a Week of Prayer, some dramatic encounter, a voice, a friend or teacher who took me aside and led me to Christ. But for me it was more a growing awareness that I was a sinner and in desperate need of a Saviour. Even though I had been nurtured in the warm environment of a devout Christian family, with a preacher for a father, the reality of salvation became mine only by my own choice. In academy I made that decision.

I enrolled in theology at Union College, but my head did battle with my heart. There was a part of me that felt the call to ministry—another part that resisted it. No one ever pushed me—not even my dad—but in my junior year when I finally turned the decision over to God I had the distinct sense that I had moved into the center of His plan for my life. I fell in love with a beautiful young education major who shared my love for the ministry, and we were married my senior year.

I wish I could report that my 40 years of service to this church have been all smooth sailing. That is not the case. Like you, I am a growing Christian, and at times I have disappointed myself and my God. More than I like to acknowledge. I am constantly encouraged to know that as the miracle of forgiveness is needed, He is there to provide it.

And with the apostle Paul, I quite frequently find myself sighing, "And besides this, there is the care of all the churches." (2 Cor. 11:28). The devil doesn't like this church, and he does everything he can to distract it and destroy it—from without and within.

During the nearly six years that I have served in the North American Division office, I have come to understand even more fully how totally dependent I am on the leading of God. I have also come to appreciate anew how real is the guidance He wishes to provide to His church.

We face tough issues every day. Some are the same kind of issues nearly every member of the church faces—such as how to find sufficient quality time to nurture my own soul in God's presence when faced by a demanding schedule. Other issues are varied and complex. There are education issues, health-care issues, personnel, finance, and of course, mission—how to keep this church walking in step with its Leader. How to capitalize on our diversity. How to steer us away from

worldliness and fragmentation. The list is a long one.

I see that my responsibility is to pray and study, then to make the best possible decisions on the basis of the information I have, in consultation with trusted colleagues. I am committed to never allowing the popularity of a decision or its political correctness to intrude into the process of decision-making. After that, I leave the results with God. Because of that, I sleep well at night.

I am grateful for a strong Christian heritage. I am thankful for the influence of Christian schools. I am deeply appreciative of the presence of Christ that sustains me now, and for the Holy Spirit, who provides counsel. I am encouraged by the promise of an eternity with Him—and with you, the members of my church family. As I pray for you regularly, I solicit your prayers for me as well. I have no greater desire than to be a faithful leader in the cause of Christ. When this life is over, I want that sentence to describe my journey.

Alfred C. McClure is president of the 840,000-member Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.



*As I pray for you,
I solicit your
prayers for me.*

GIVE & TAKE

APRIL FLOWERS?

When members of the Oregon Conference Summer Mission Team found themselves sleeping in the cradle roll room of the University Park church in Portland—the site of their free Vacation Bible School for underprivileged children last August—they couldn't resist the urge to relive the days of felt boards and "Father Abraham."

The team of college students, led by Oregon Conference youth director Monte Torkelsen, also touched a few lives at a youth camp in St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, and at a church building project in Kenya. "The primary changes," says Torkelsen, "are in the lives of those who serve. They're saying, 'There's something I can do for God and for my church.'" Photo by YouthNet/Torkelsen



ADVENTIST LIFE

Our 3-year-old Mitchell is doing pretty well with his limited vocabulary. But long sentences can still be a little confusing. For example, last week Mitchell's memory verse was about Jesus' feeding the crowd with five loaves and two fishes: "Jesus replied, . . . 'You give them something to eat'" (Matt. 14:16, NIV). This week's verse was about the lost sheep: "Rejoice. . . ; I have found my lost sheep" (Luke 15:6, NIV).

In Mitchell's attempt to remember and say his memory verses *all by himself*, here's what came out: "Rejoice! Now give me something to eat."

I guess that verse is found in Mitchell 1:1.

—Randy Griffin, Indianapolis, Indiana



ADVENTIST QUOTES

"A problem not solved is trouble involved."

—Henry Albert Swan, Bisbee, Arizona

"They call these the 'red books.' They should call them the 'un-read books.'"

—Pastor Dwight K. Nelson on the Testimonies, at Pioneer Memorial church in Berrien Springs, Michigan

"I'm not sure how hungry I am anymore."

—Loretta Spivey at the General Conference cafeteria, when told that her new column (which she shares with Gina Brown—see p. 29) will be sent into roughly 300,000 North American Adventist homes

"And now welcome me in joining Obed Graham."

—The podium speaker introducing the Florida Conference president at Forest Lake Academy near Orlando



INTRODUCING ... HERALD

Hey, kids! We at the *Adventist Review* would like you to meet a little friend of ours—an angel named Herald. Oh, we know, Herald is only a *pretend* angel. But we like to think that Herald represents the billions of real angels who help us trumpet the best news you'll ever hear: *Jesus is coming again*.

As you can see, Herald doesn't have a trumpet. That's where *you* come in.

Every five weeks Herald's trumpet will be hidden somewhere in this magazine. You never know where—in an article, a photo, a margin, anywhere. The first part of your job is to find Herald's trumpet. The second part is to do some "trumpeting" of your own.

This time we're asking you to tell three people that Jesus loves them.

Can you do both of these assignments? If so,

send us a postcard telling where you spotted Herald's trumpet and whom you talked to about Jesus' love.

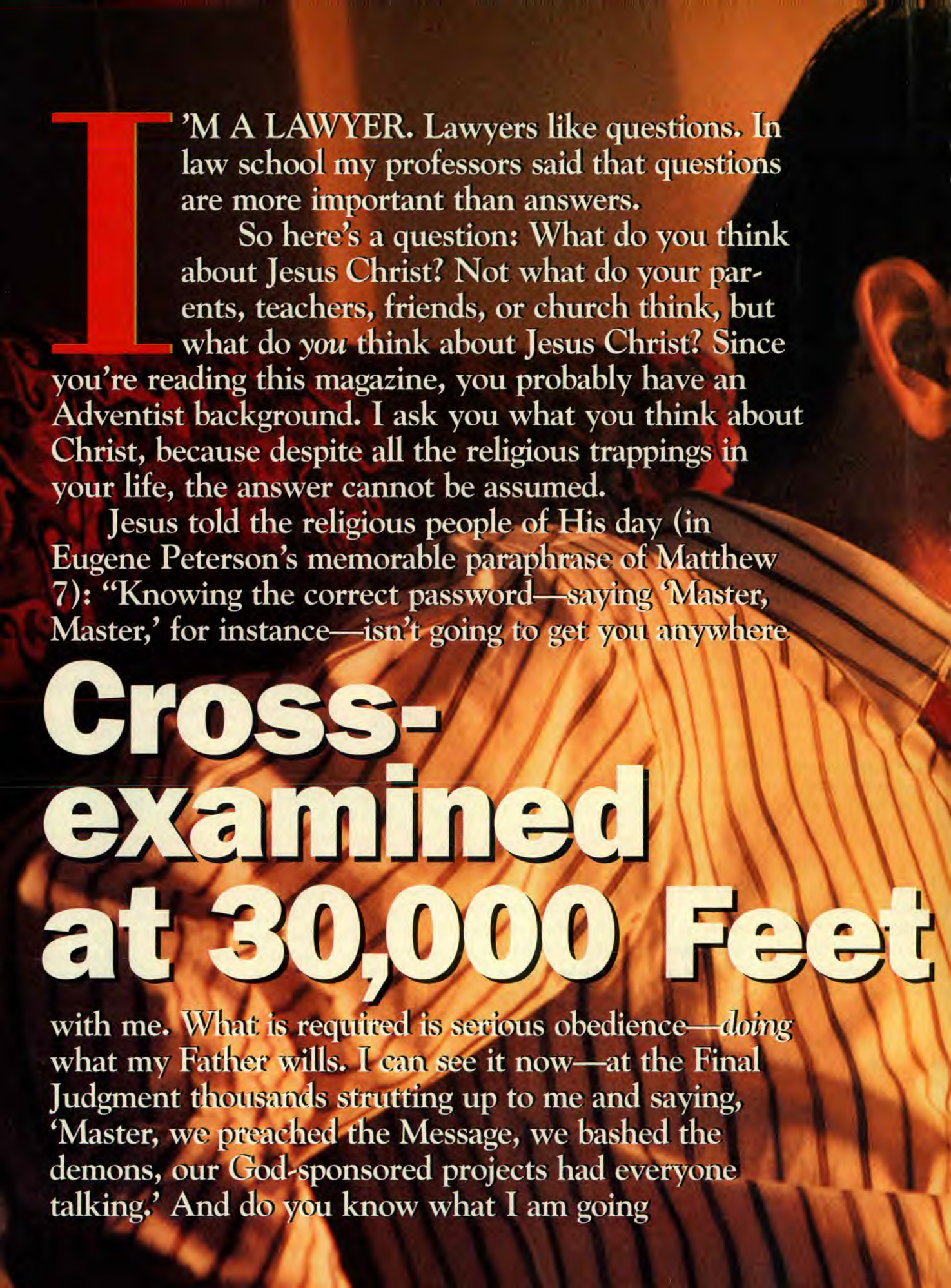
Then we'll put all the postcards in a big bucket and pull out three entries. If one of them is yours and if you gave the correct location, we'll send you a prize and publish your name, age, and hometown in the May 9 World Edition of the *Review* (when Herald returns).

Our prize this time is a brand-new book called *Nature Trails and Animal Tales*, by Eileen Lantry (Review and Herald). Remember, it's *your* job to find Herald's trumpet. But if your parents ask nicely, you might let them help. Have fun searching—and don't forget to "trumpet" Jesus' love.

Send postcards to: "Herald," *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

WE NEED YOU

Give & Take is your page. Send your "Adventist Quotes," top-quality photos, "Adventist Life" vignettes, "Readers' Exchange" items, and prayer requests to: Give & Take, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; CompuServe: 74532,2564.



I'M A LAWYER. Lawyers like questions. In law school my professors said that questions are more important than answers.

So here's a question: What do you think about Jesus Christ? Not what do your parents, teachers, friends, or church think, but what do *you* think about Jesus Christ? Since you're reading this magazine, you probably have an Adventist background. I ask you what you think about Christ, because despite all the religious trappings in your life, the answer cannot be assumed.

Jesus told the religious people of His day (in Eugene Peterson's memorable paraphrase of Matthew 7): "Knowing the correct password—saying 'Master, Master,' for instance—*isn't* going to get you anywhere

Cross- examined at 30,000 Feet

with me. What is required is serious obedience—*doing* what my Father wills. I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, 'Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.' And do you know what I am going



to say? 'You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don't impress me one bit. You're out of here;'" (verses 21-23, Message).

A few years ago I defended a lawsuit in which it became necessary to find out what a certain 21-year-old woman knew about Adventist beliefs. She had been educated in Adventist schools and academies. Here, from the transcript of her deposition, is her answer to the question "What are the basic beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?"

"They believe that women shouldn't wear pants and that they shouldn't cut their hair; they shouldn't wear makeup or jewelry; there shouldn't be any drinking of alcohol, drug use, or smoking. You should do all your housework before Friday sundown.

"Did I tell you that you shouldn't eat meat? . . . You shouldn't have affairs while you are married to others; and you shouldn't have abortions because it's like killing a life; and you shouldn't envy or lust after someone else's goods. Example: their car, their house, their clothes, their wife, their children. And you should be an example to others. . . . That's about it. I think I covered it pretty much. Excuse me. You shouldn't go to discos, and you shouldn't wear bathing suits."

You may laugh, but how would *you* answer the question?

Why do you sit in orderly rows, beneath stained-glass windows, dressed in your best clothes each Sabbath? How much of your religious life is determined by the rules of the schools you attended, the routines of Friday night and Sabbath morning, and the opinions of the persons in the pew next to you? What would happen if those props were taken away?

You see, as much as you may want to be somewhere else, you're much safer in church institutions and traditions. Think about it: you're told when to go to class or church, when to eat, when to play, even when to worship. It doesn't take a lot of thought—just show up, keep the rules, color within the lines, and you'll make it.

But what happens when there isn't anyone to enforce the rules and you have to figure them out for yourself? Believe me, there's a huge gap between living your life in the safety of a religious culture and facing life in the real world.

**I was on
the fast track
to nowhere
—until I
heard
the voice.**

BY KENT A. HANSEN

When I graduated from Monterey Bay Academy in 1971, I entered Loma Linda University. I fast-tracked—grades, scholarships, awards. I was a resident assistant in the dormitory, I edited the student newspaper, and was student body president.

When I went to law school, I did well and was asked to join the staff of the *Law Review*, an elite academic publication.

After that, I returned to Loma Linda University at age 26 to be associate dean of students and legal counsel. After three years I joined a law firm and became a partner a year and a half later, managing partner at age 35. My clients were corporations, companies, hospitals, and universities.

I married a loving woman and we have a young son. We bought and restored an old house. I was living the American dream.

But I was spiritually empty. I was on seven civic boards, raising millions of dollars, but volunteer service didn't help. I think I attended church only twice in seven years. The church had become only a business to me. I would drive home at night and pound the steering wheel in frustration—thinking that there must be something more.

In the midst of this, my favorite client—Loma Linda University—got into a horrible internal struggle. Four years of slugfest followed over whether the two campuses of Loma Linda University should consolidate or become two separate universities.

Corporate battles are not unusual for an attorney, but this was different. This was my alma mater; these were my friends and teachers; this was my church. And it was all coming apart. Both sides claimed legal rights, and the lawyer was caught in the middle. Yet I kept thinking I could fix it.

In October 1989 I went to a university board meeting at General Conference headquarters. I was burned

out, and was cynical about the church's ability to solve problems.

When I left for the airport, I had picked up a book that had been lying around the house, *Ordering Your Private World*, by Gordon MacDonald. I thought it was a time-management book, but on the plane I found out that it was about having a relationship with Jesus Christ. It talked about the difference between being "called" and being "driven."

That evening I checked into a hotel, watched some of the baseball play-offs on TV, read a bit, and went to sleep. The next morning I read some more and thought about praying. But sitting there in the hotel room it occurred to me, *What do you pray about when you aren't asking for anything?* I couldn't think of anything to say.

I thought, *This is ridiculous!* And finally I blurted out some incoherent appeal to the effect, "God, I want to talk to You, but I don't know how."

That day I went to the board meeting, which did nothing to break the political deadlock. The next morning I read and tried to pray with the same result. It was unsettling.

On the flight back to California I kept reading MacDonald's book. In it I came across the prayer of an old Salvation Army evangelist named Samuel Logan Brengle: "Keep me, O Lord, from waxing mentally and spiritually dull and stupid. Help me to keep the physical, mental, and spiritual fiber of the athlete, of the man who denies himself daily and takes up his cross and follows Thee. Give me success in my work, but hide pride from me. Save me from the complacency that so frequently accompanies success and prosperity."*

I will never forget what happened as I read this prayer. It was 1:00 in the afternoon. Now, more than six years later, I can still recall that I heard a

"I Wouldn't Take Nothin' for My Journey Now"

The occasions vary, but my routine remains about the same: grab the sheet music, locate the right address, circulate politely, partake of the goodies, collect the check. At some grand events I've taken leave without even meeting the hosts.

Similarly, I've paid tribute to the icons of lifelong Adventism: academy, college, camp meetings, Weeks of Prayer, denominational service, Revelation seminars. I've often attended—coordinated—divine celebrations without meeting the Host.

During my childhood I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, but there came a time when work, personal relationships, and even church membership left me unsatisfied and disillusioned. Through a process too lengthy and painful to describe here, I became aware that I needed to acknowledge Jesus as sovereign Lord.

It's still not easy. I want a daily connection with my Creator, but my hand still hovers over the snooze button some mornings. I want to relate meaningfully to those around me, but I find human relationships messy and unpredictable. Out of confusion or fear I've made mistakes. But when I've been open to others, I've received some priceless gifts: strength from a group of wounded but courageous women, love from a Presbyterian parish, and freedom from food addiction in a fellowship of recoverers.

Yes, I continue to choose Adventism as the way of living out my faith. It's about listening, being misunderstood yet seeking to understand, making and accepting apologies, washing feet, paying debts.

I'm thankful for the Spirit's presence as I climb, fall, struggle, and grow. In the words of the Negro spiritual, "I wouldn't take nothin' for my journey now." I enjoy the peace Jesus' forgiveness gives me today, and the promise of His constant presence through all my tomorrows.



Joann M. Herrington

distinct, clear voice that said to me, "You are convicted of sin."

"What is my sin?" I asked.

The voice said, "Pride—pride and busyness are choking Me out of your life and are killing your relationship with your family." Then the voice said, "Don't you think I can take care of the university and everything else you're worried about? Trust Me."

That was it. I was 36 years old, a successful attorney on a business trip, and I was hearing a voice—and talking to it! I was

physically uncomfortable, and I squirmed in my seat. My mind was racing. This was real!

When I landed in California, I thought, *I'll have to tell my wife*. I drove home and Patty came out to meet me. I said, "I need to talk to you."

She asked, "Is anything wrong?"

I said, "Yes and no."

We went inside, and I told her about my trip. Then I said quietly, "Every talent that God has given me for leadership and organization I've squandered. I belong to all these groups, and I've never asked God if I should be doing this. All this activity, and I'm not satisfied."

"I come home late from work, eat, and play with Andrew for a while. You take him upstairs. I watch TV for a while and then work until past midnight night after night. Not because I really have to do it—nobody else in my firm does. I'm just out to prove that I can do all this other stuff and still outwork everybody else. I go to bed after you're already asleep. I get up and

leave for meetings before you're awake. Day after day it's like this.

"When you try to talk to me, I'm just selfish and say 'Why are you

dumping this on me?' Then you get angry and upset. I'm sorry," I said, "not because it's the thing to say, but because I'm really sorry—bone-sick sorry. Things are going to have to change, but it would help if you were in this with me."

She looked at me and said, "Things have been out of control for a long time. We've gone from a great marriage to an

ordinary marriage, and I've wondered where it was going to end. I want this too." Then we prayed together.

Exciting things started happening after that. For example, I'd never read the Bible much before that day. In fact, I flunked New Testament in academy. I somehow slipped through university with no religion classes except for a couple history of religion classes my senior year.

But when I experienced this rebirth, I craved God's Word. The craving is still there. I read at least a chapter a day. You can read a lot of Bible if you read a chapter a day.

Also, I began talking to people about God. My trip home from Washington, D.C., was on a Thursday. The next Saturday night I worked at a booth at the Corona Street Fair with a friend, Nita.

Nita's a schoolteacher who had gone through an unusually painful and public divorce. She had once been

a Baptist youth leader, but now she was alone and hurting. We were standing there in the middle of thousands of people, and I told her what had happened to me. She asked, "What are you going to do now?"

"I don't know what's going to happen," I said, "but I have to follow."

She's been a part of a small group Bible study with us for more than four years now. She didn't say anything for the first eight months. One night we discussed grace—the principle of God's love working in our lives. At the end she said, "None of you know how much

Quality and Quantity

The challenge of adopting the beliefs of our parents is difficult even in the best of times. Yet asking the tough questions and determining the answers that make sense in our own life experience are two things that each of us must do if we want a relationship with God.

After all, we're saved or lost based on our individual relationship with God. Our acceptance (faith) in what God has already done (His grace) allows us to survive all the challenges the world throws at us.

The problem is that we frequently quit at this point of merely adopting our parents' beliefs. Then self-sufficiency is the trap into which we'll most likely fall.

The process of staying grounded is never easy. Being grounded means spending *quality* and *quantity* time listening for God's voice. Being grounded means that change will happen in ways we can't even imagine. It means an adventure in faith!



Bill Ashlock

humiliation I've endured. I came here hurt and resentful, and you guys just let me sit here for eight months and didn't make me say anything; you just loved me. Let this Baptist tell you something: You Adventists accept people!"

It was the nicest thing I'd ever heard about the church!

The Monday after my airplane experience, I talked to Joyce, our office manager. She and I had talked before about matters of faith. She had been abandoned when she was 2 years old. Later, she was placed in a Christian's home where she was abused. And after that, she went to live with an alcoholic father.

She married a young man who became a minister. They had five children in quick succession. Her husband couldn't stay away from either women or alcohol and left her with the kids in a small apartment. She found a minimum-wage job, but developed uterine cancer. She battled back, but years later she was still hurting and wounded.

I told her what had happened to me on the plane, and when I finished she smiled and said quietly, "We used to call that 'the opening of the Spirit.'" The next week she went to church for the first time in seven years. She is part of our small group Bible study, and we worship together every week. She speaks often and convincingly of healing and forgiveness.

Mitch is a young, good-looking, very bright attorney in our firm. His wife was a young executive on the fast track with a leading department store chain.

Mitch and I often talked about the law and worked on cases together. He was distraught when his nephew died of crib death. He talked to me about it, and I prayed for him. He told me about his own faith, attending church with his family when he was a child, but slipping away because of athletic and scholastic activities in high school and college.

When Mitch's father-in-law died during open-heart surgery and when his wife miscarried, I shared with him the

Source in which I found comfort. I prayed with him again.

One night Mitch came into my office about 6:00, and we started talking. He asked me questions, and I told him about Jesus Christ, who persuades and doesn't coerce, trusting that unconditional love—expressed in loving service to men and women—will result in their response of love and acceptance of Him.

"Christianity," I said, "is not about cracking heads. It's about choice and commitment. It's about living with purpose and power—not just getting by through keeping the rules."

At 9:00 that night Mitch told me, "I want what you have." He accepted Christ. Later he and his wife decided to change their lifestyle and raise their new baby in less-pressurized surroundings. He left a partnership with our firm, and she left her department store job, where, at age 32, she had risen higher than most people do in their entire career. Jesus Christ entered their lives. They will never be the same.

Jesus in one's heart and mind makes a radical difference. I'm talking about the difference of love, hope, and peace. A religion that reduces this reality to no more than an academic exercise is a religion to be cursed.

Being a Seventh-day Adventist in name only, simply because that's what one's parents or grandparents were, or because that's what you have to be to get into medical school or get a job, or because you never thought about it much, but it seems like the thing to do, is a pitiful religion. A religion of conditions, of appearances, of tasks is a religion without risks, a religion of fear and superstition. It's certainly not what Christianity was meant to be.

Peterson's paraphrase of Jesus' great invitation tells the story: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you

Complete in Him

Born into a third-generation Adventist family, I went to church and church schools. I was a "good girl," a model student. I truly loved God. I had done everything "right," and in turn, God had blessed me with a good career, a wonderful husband, and three precious sons. The formula worked—"All things work together for good . . ." (Rom. 8:28). There was no need to doubt, to rebel.

Then one night the first rumblings of a storm entered my "perfect" world. My husband informed me that he wasn't happy. He wanted out of our marriage.

How could this happen? I had tried so hard to be a model Christian. And from outward appearances I had succeeded quite well—until now. I was forced to take a long, painful look at myself and my relationship with God. I felt like a failure; emptiness and the pain of rejection overwhelmed me.

One day while I was taking a shower—my tears flowing down the drain along with the water—a voice spoke to me above the din of my sobbing: "You are complete in Him." Immediately peace and reassurance filled my soul. At that moment I knew that whatever happened, in Christ I would find healing; I could be whole.

Later I rediscovered those five wonderful words in Colossians 2:10, and they continue to sustain me through some very turbulent times.

I've learned that when life is predictable, it seems as though we don't have to walk by faith. When we feel almost perfect and don't allow ourselves to be human, we don't need a Saviour.

But when we realize our brokenness, we come face-to-face with Jesus in a way that isn't possible when we're young, naive, and think that "playing by the rules" is enough.

Christ is the only hope for incomplete, broken people like you and me.



Rebekah Wang Cheng

how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly" (Matt. 11:28-30, Message).

Those of us who grew up in the conservative Adventist subculture learned all the rules. The problem with the rules is they show us what's wrong, but they can't fix it. The apostle James wrote that the law is a mirror (James 1:23-25). A mirror can show us the dirt on our faces, but it can't wash it off. God's love for us is more than His concern about the rules that reveal our imperfections.

When my son, Andrew, was 3 years old, I took him to the park one morning. He played on the slide and swing while I read. He liked to slide down the fire fighter's pole, but while he could reach out and grab it with his hands, he was afraid to swing over and slide down.

"Daddy, come play with me," he pleaded.

"OK," I said as I walked over to the pole.

He came down the ramp toward me and saw his reflection in the sunglasses I was wearing. He looked at his dirty face and said, "It's Andrew!"

"Yes, it's Andrew," I said. Then I took off my sunglasses and said, "Now it's Daddy."

He laughed and said, "Daddy helps me move my feet." I helped him to the pole, and he slid down and ran off.

We come down the ramp of life. We study diligently, we work hard, we play by the rules. But the day comes when all we can see is our dirty face.

But if we turn to Christ, He looks past the dirt. If we ask, He washes us and takes us where we want to go, where we are loved best and most—to the heart of God.

We can't get there by going through the motions—even if they're religious motions. To be a Christian means to be like Christ through the power of the

Holy Spirit. It means to be different—not just the difference of negativity and rules, but the difference of love and life. That difference is found only one place—in a personal relationship, a complete relationship with God.

Do you want to be different? Do you want to change the world? Give yourself completely to Him. The apostle Paul said, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, RSV).

Isn't it great? God loves us and wants us to think!

What about you? When the religious subculture that props up your conscience is gone and you're on your own, a superficial religion won't help you survive out there. You need what works. You need God.

That's it? Just some story of a burned-out yuppie lawyer? No sex, no drugs, no rock and roll, no violence?

That's it. Jesus Christ changed my life—not in a church, not in a Christian university, as important as those places are, but in the real world,

where I work and argue cases and make business deals and play with my kids and love my wife. That's where He has changed my life—in *that* world.

I began by asking What do you think about Jesus Christ? I can't tell you what to think, but I can invite you to know Him as the Son of God and your personal Saviour. And I can testify that if you know Him—really know Him—you can live in the real world with spirit and power and love. You can make a difference because He makes a difference in you.

If you don't know how to start a relationship with Him, why not try telling Him what I did: "God, I want to talk to You, but I don't know how."

He'll do the rest. ■

** Gordon MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World, p. 151.*

Kent A. Hansen is an attorney in Corona, California. He is a member of the Loma Linda University Church. This article is based on a talk given at a La Sierra University student chapel service.



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BILL HAS DISCOVERED THAT HIS 15-YEAR-OLD son has downloaded recipes for building homemade bombs from easily accessible ingredients. He wonders if by allowing the information highway into his home he has unleashed an evil power. His gut response is fear and anger. He is afraid of the computer and wants to get rid of it.

Sarah's son downloaded a "Smurf" story from a local bulletin board service (a mini on-line service usually local and not connected to the Internet) and brought it to her.

"This is an awfully weird story, Mom," he said. "I didn't know they allowed this stuff on computers." The story was filled with descriptions of deviant sexual acts the smurfs were performing on each other. Sarah and her husband tried to call the sysop (systems operator) of the BBS to complain about the pornographic material being made available to minors. Others had already complained to the local sheriff, and the BBS had been taken off-line.

Even more prevalent are pornographic pictures. These are not just pictures of naked people. *Time* magazine states that the greatest demand in on-line porn is "deviant material including pedophilia, bondage, sadomasochism, and sex acts with various animals."

What's a Parent to Do?

Parents become more and more fearful as stories filter down about children lured away by sexual predators on the net.

The Exon Amendment has passed in the U.S. Congress to limit and prosecute pornographic material on the Internet, but whether this will be enforceable remains to be seen.

Do we keep our children from the advantages of technology because we are afraid they will be bombarded with evil influences?

Anywhere they go they will be facing these issues. Cyberspace is just one more place. To ban our children from using the information highway is like throwing out a TV because it plays some bad shows. The responsibility for the uses of any technology rests on the user.

So what is a Christian parent to do? Here are five positive steps we can take:

1. Don't panic.

2. Learn how your computer works.

One reason we parents may be so afraid is that our children may be the computer experts in our family. Understanding how our computer and on-line systems work will make them less threatening, and we will be more able to discuss limits and concerns with our children.

3. Learn about on-line limits and blocks.

On-line services such as America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy monitor "chat rooms" for inappropriate language. Persistent offenders are asked to leave and may lose their access to the service.

However, if you enter the Internet through any of those services, the monitoring stops at the gateways. You may, however, block the Internet access for your children and make it available only by password.

Software is also available to block obscene language and prevent the user from logging on to pornographic sites. Some of these include Surfwatch and Net Nanny.

These blocking techniques will work with some children. For others it may just provide a challenge to find a way around it.

4. Put your computer in a family area.

If anyone in the family can see the screen as children are surfing the net, they are less likely to go to forbidden areas than if the computer is in a bedroom.

5. Give your children guidelines.

Teach your children what they need to know to function and make good decisions on the net.

First, *teach principles*. Anywhere in life, your children will have to make decisions

between right and wrong. The principles of right and wrong will be the same in cyberspace as they are anywhere else.

Second, *teach safety*.

You've already taught

your children not to talk to strangers. Now teach them *never* to give out their address or phone number to anyone on-line.

Also, teach them *never* to give anyone their password, even to those who say they are from the on-line service you subscribe to and need to fix a problem. Tell your children that dishonest people can misrepresent themselves even more easily on-line and may not always be who they say they are.

Third, *teach them Christian self-defense*.

Sometimes conversations on-line can

degenerate into "flame wars" or "spamming" as it is referred to on America Online (AOL). This can be distressing especially to the sensitive person. But no one has to stay and let people say mean things to them.

Teach your children to use their "ignore" button to tune out an obnoxious person if they are in a group chat and want to stay in.

Teach them just to leave. If the children are using AOL, CompuServe, or Prodigy, you can report problems to a "guide," who will follow up with the offender.

Teach your children what to say if they are propositioned. A simple "No, I'm not interested" is adequate. Then *leave* the chat area.

Fourth, *teach your children reality*. The greatest dangers on-line stem from the appearance that any behavior or anything read or looked at is consequence-free. No one sees you do it; there is no evidence afterward.

Surfing the Net Safely

Can your child surf the
net without being
eaten by sharks?

BY SALLY DILLON

So teach your children that sin is *real* whether or not immediate consequences are apparent. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

Downloading bomb recipes and reading anarchist materials are dangerous, and even setting off "harmless" bombs in a safe place just as experiments can create some pretty staggering repercussions as people become more afraid of the rising militia groups. Dabbling in pornography can warp the thinking and influence sexual behavior later in life. Going to cyberbars and flirting with other patrons can be as dangerous as hanging out in a real bar.

Great Opportunities

Teach your child that right and wrong is just as real in cyberspace as it is in the real world.

The information highway offers many

advantages to today's children. For example, it makes the world a smaller place.

Recently my son has made new friends all over the world through SDAs On-line. He has access to many universities and libraries, which he can access through the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and Gopher sites provided through our on-line services.

America Online has a homework help area where he can log on and ask for help with any homework assignment he is having trouble with. This is especially useful now that some of his homework assignments are a little challenging for me! He also has access to up-to-date editions of encyclopedias right at his fingertips. He even took a creative writing class with me on-line from a university in Florida. Also, there is a plethora of software and great files to download.

We have found that the benefits far outweigh the concerns we have. If anything,

it has provided a new way for us to discuss the decision-making process and help teach our children how to make good decisions.

In our family we have not chosen to purchase blocking software. Instead, we have focused on good decision-making and the principles behind our decisions. Ellen White comments: "The object of discipline is the training of the child for self-government. He should be taught self-reliance and self-control" (*Education*, p. 287).

Beyond this, we trust our kids to make good decisions, and are there for them when there are questions. Isn't that what Christian parenting has always been? ■

Sally Dillon is a freelance writer living in Timberville, Virginia.



She Asked Me, "What's a Christian?"

An Adventist young adult teaching in Japan is confronting questions she's never had to face before.

BY CHRISTINA SIRTAK

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?" THE YOUNG woman asked intently. I had come to a Japanese friend's house for dinner. And even though the family is Buddhist, my friend asked if I would pray before we ate. I said yes and prayed a simple prayer.

When I opened my eyes I sensed that a number of the other guests were confused about what I had just done. So a woman asked the typical Japanese question, "Are you a Christian?" I said yes, and in response she proudly told me about the Christian church to which her mother and sister belong.

Her question, however, still surprises me—even after six months of teaching English in Japan as a student missionary. I'm used to being called an Adventist, or a Seventh-day Adventist, or an SDA college student, or a church member, or even a backslider, but the name "Christian" seems more foreign to me than all the Japanese conversations around me that I can't understand.

I'm not really sure why I came to Japan as a student missionary. Maybe I was running to a new life. Maybe I was running away from my old one. Probably a little of both. It wasn't something I had really planned out. It just sort of happened.

And now, about halfway through my term here, I'm pretty sure that this one year will bring more changes for me than any other in my life so far.

It's not that life as a student missionary is always exciting, or that I do really great things. I haven't performed miracles, healed lepers, or even converted anyone that I know of. I take out the garbage, do the dishes, teach lots of students, and pretty much live a "normal" life, except that sometimes it seems as though it's on "fast-forward."

I remember telling my parents that in some strange way it

was easier for me to go nearly 10,000 miles away than to move to another state or across the United States. In Japan I would be forced to be independent. And I have been.

Harder to Hide

It also seems harder to hide from those things that at home I never really wanted to face. I feel like every question, every difficulty, every doubt I have ever had in my life has hit me since I came to Japan—and they usually come in groups, not one at a time.

All of this comes upon me in a country in which I can't read most signs, understand most conversations, or watch TV and understand what is actually going on, much less deal with more difficult problems.

I have learned that if I stand by the refrigerated section of the local grocery store long enough and keep asking strangers "Low-fat?" while pointing to the cartons of milk, someone usually comes along who can help me. And even though I can ask, "Dare ga Kami desu Ka?" everybody seems to have a different answer to "Who is God?"

Before I came to Japan, that question didn't bother me a lot. I was a Seventh-day Adventist with 27 fundamental beliefs to follow or argue about as I chose.

But when I came to Japan I got really, really scared, because all of a sudden all of the religious supports that had been holding me up—my Adventist college, Adventist friends, and Adventist culture—were gone. I was surrounded by millions of people for whom one God is a strange idea.

The Big Mystery

For many Japanese, Christianity is a big mystery, as foreign as the idea of eating raw fish is to most Americans. I had asked questions

before: about typical things such as jewelry and vegetarianism. Any of the other questions I raised I always shelved so I could discuss really urgent things—such as dorm rules!

I already was an Adventist, and that was enough. Questions such as who God is and what that means for me—not the Adventist Church—seemed too much trouble to look into. Any answers I needed would come later when I needed them, if they were important enough.

That “later” has now arrived. Maybe that’s why I’m so surprised when people here ask if I’m a Christian.

When people at home asked me what it meant to be an Adventist, I talked about going to church on Saturday, keeping Sabbath, not eating unclean meats, the state of the dead, and not wearing jewelry. I guess I assumed that they and I both knew all the rest.

But in Japan things don’t work that way. With every part of my life—pro-



WHO'S THE TEACHER? Christina Sirtak, left, is finding teaching English in Japan a two-way street. Sometimes she's the teacher, sometimes she's the learner—especially about her own Adventist Christianity.

fessional, personal, spiritual—seemingly up in the air, I need God on a personal basis, not just as part of my culture or a piece of paper that hangs on my wall.

I remember walking in the door one night and thinking that I wasn't going to make it, because it was just too hard to be a Christian. Not five minutes later the phone rang—my parents. We spent an hour and a half talking (mostly me crying, actually), but

I walked away reminded that God loves me, and so do my parents.

Just Like Me

I still get confused sometimes. But I have realized that most of the people out here are just like me. I can tell them all about the 27 fundamental beliefs, but it helps to start by just telling them about the God I know. Japan has been full of unforgettable experiences, and I've learned a lot of things that I hope to remember longer than my 20-word Japanese vocabulary. Even if I never make miso soup or eat with chopsticks

again when I return home in June, I will take those with me—they are a reminder of all the times people challenged me to answer the question “Are you a Christian?” ■

Christina Sirtak is currently serving as a student missionary in Chiba, Japan. She graduated from Andrews University in June 1995 with a bachelor's degree in English and minors in communication and history.

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Candlestick Park
Oakland Colliseum
Hometown Buffet
Woodys

From Play Church to Power Church

Thousands of Adventists are rediscovering the ultimate energizer—prayer.

BY ANN CALKINS

Then: "I could hardly stand to be at church—too many rumors, too much gossip, too much hurt . . ." Now: "I couldn't think about leaving that group—such a spirit of unity. We all got caught up learning how to minister."

Both statements were made by a Seventh-day Adventist who has undergone a spiritual makeover. Weary of "playing church," she experienced a renewal of faith. What made the difference? *Prayer.*

As local prayer groups, prayer conferences, and prayer partner initiatives sweep the North American Division, such experiences are multiplying.

In February **Pastor Will James** of the Pine Ridge Adventist Church in Calgary, Alberta, attended the Western Canada Prayer Conference, sponsored by the Alberta Conference. It changed his life.

"Following the death of my wife," says James, "if it were not for the support of the prayer groups in my church, I simply would not still be in the ministry." James's prayer partners called him each morning at 6:30 to pray.

"The prayer ministry in this church is exceptional," says James. "For example, just prior to the selection of their pastor, the local prayer groups scheduled round-the-clock prayer. When I walked in the door to greet them, they exclaimed,

'You are the answer to our prayers!' How could any pastor be more affirmed?"

"God is empowering people to pray," says **Janet Lui**, prayer partners coordinator for the Southern California Conference. "Look at the hundreds who responded to the first Prayer Summit, sponsored by the Pacific Union and La Sierra University last year. And the number of prayer retreats with Ruthie Jacobsen, Garrie Williams, Carol Johnson Shewmake, and others."

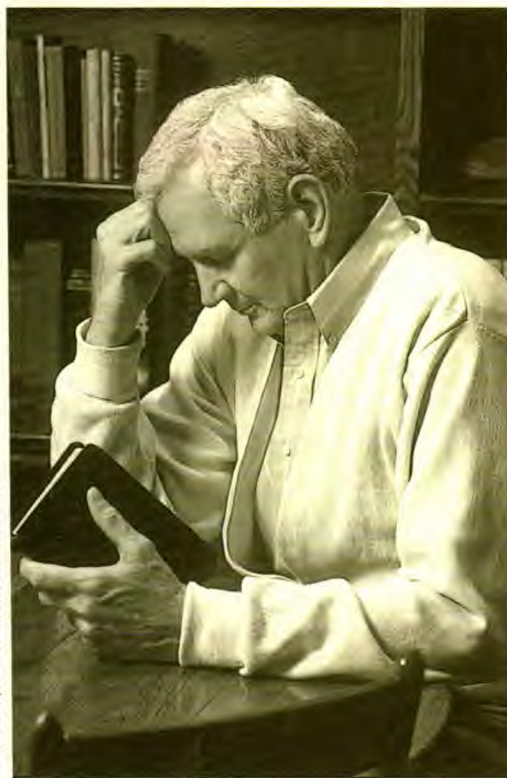
"I am a layperson," says Lui. "I am not trained as a theologian or a Bible worker.

And there have been periods of great spiritual warfare in my life. But I am discovering that women are the largest contingency of pray-ers in the church. And if God can use me to help organize a call to prayer, then He can use anyone."

Ed and Virginia Collins of Moreno Valley (California) have a unique prayer partner ministry. "We are setting up prayer partners for ministers. Our pastors are human and get weary; they need our support. They are constantly giving to us, and we thought it was time for us to nurture them."

Called the Aaron and Hur Fellowship Ministry (Ex. 17:8-13), these pastoral prayer partners are called to "hold up the hands" of their ministers. The ministry includes a quarterly Pastor Nurturing Day on which members assemble for a "concert of praise" and ask for a special blessing on the pastor and family. Several ministers have broken down and wept because they were being supported rather than criticized.

Israel Olaore, pastor of the University Seventh-day Adventist Church in Los Angeles, has a prayer coordinator in his church. "In my home country of Nigeria, our churches have many prayer groups and prayer partners. I need someone to call and give me support," says Olaore. "When Deborah instructed Barak to go against Israel's enemy, he said, 'If you go with me, I will go' [Judges 4:8, NIV]. That is how I feel about my prayer partners. As I face



B. TAYLER/H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS

the enemy each day, I want their prayers to go with me."

Frank and Mary Ransonet, of Homeland, California, also participate in the Aaron and Hur Fellowship Ministry. "I gave my life to the Lord 19 years ago," says Mary, "and He immediately gave me a hunger to pray. I prayed for more and more truth, and He led me to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And if ever I feel that I can't go on, He has taught me to walk into the victory."

"I was definitely 'playing church,'" confesses **Ed Hytinen** of the Fallbrook, California, church. "I had reached a point of emotional and physical burnout, and drifted away, attending church only occasionally."

"When my wife and I moved out of Orange County to our present home, we made contact with some friends who had such enthusiasm in their voices about their Christian experience. I

decided to give it one more try and attend the Prayer Summit at La Sierra University. It was a rebirth experience—I discovered righteousness by faith and felt filled with the Holy Spirit. Last November I was rebaptized and now experience the peace only God can give."

Ann Calkins is director of Anders, Burke, & Brown Information Services.

Prayer Information

For more information about Prayer Conferences, contact:

Ruthie Jacobsen
Prayer Ministries Consultant
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Aaron and Hur Fellowship Ministry
Ed and Virginia Collins
9423 Corbie Court
Calimesa, CA 92320



Education Challenges

Thirty educators and church leaders from North America recently analyzed Adventist education. At the opening meeting they brainstormed current challenges and ranked them. Here are their top five:

- 1. The cost** of Adventist education, both to parents and to the church—chosen by 89 percent of the attendees.
- 2. Adventist parents** making it a priority—74 percent.
- 3. The need** to have all members see the schools as their own—54 percent.
- 4. Developing consistent quality** throughout—50 percent.
- 5. Finding a clearly defined mission**—39 percent; and defining its relevance—39 percent.

Contributed by Kermit Netteburg, assistant to the NAD president for communication.

NEWS BREAK

Evangelism Pays in More Ways Than One

New members add life and vigor to their congregations. Now the latest figures show that they add even more—financial resources.

Yes, the tithe and offerings given to the Adventist Church in North America in 1995 rose significantly.



Tithe gained 2.3 percent over 1994—even though 1994 had 53 Sabbaths instead of 52. And world mission giving rose 3.5 percent. When the extra Sabbath is factored out, last year's tithe gain was actually closer to a healthy 4 percent—and above inflation. Tithe hit \$492 million, and world mission offerings topped \$23 million.

North American Division treasurer George Crumley attributes the larger-than-expected increase in tithe and mission offerings to increased evangelism. "I've analyzed conference after conference. When they do evangelism, they also have a tithe gain. I think the NET '95 satellite evangelistic series had a lot to do with our gain." Baptisms in 1995 rose to their highest level in the past 12 years, hitting 36,122. Net gain for the year was about 16,700.

In addition to the renewed emphasis upon evangelism, pastors also have been placing a greater emphasis upon whole-life (not just money) stewardship of members' resources.

Members' tithe in North America now averages almost \$10 million weekly—the highest ever. World mission giving averages almost \$500,000 a week.

Kenyans Go the Extra Miles to Build a Church

Kenyan Benjamin Obegi didn't want to build a church out of the commonly used straw and mud. He wanted to build something better—a church of lasting stone. The congregation, however, had little money. But they did have something else—a lot of energy and a willingness to work for their desperately needed house of worship.

So what did they do? Benjamin and his fellow members walked eight miles round-trip to the banks of a river, gathered stones, and carried them back for God's house.

By the end of six months all members had worked, including children, using their heads to carry stones. With the little money they did have, they purchased cement and put up the stone walls. Today the church is so packed that many worshipers must stand outside and listen to the service through open windows.—ANN

"I'm Nobody's Model Anymore"

—BY DICK DUERKSEN, VP FOR CREATIVE MINISTRIES, COLUMBIA UNION

Tommy Morrison is HIV positive. Tommy, a heavyweight boxer who was in line for a multimillion-dollar fight with Mike Tyson, was disqualified in Las Vegas in February when his blood tested positive for HIV. Tommy is a Seventh-day Adventist who said NO to the church after graduation from an Adventist academy. His grandfather has been praying for him for years.

So what makes Tommy Morrison news in your home? That he is another celebrity who played loose with the rules? That he enjoyed the pleasures of sin for many seasons—and finally got caught? That he is an example of what happens when you invite a different groupie in each night? That he is an Adventist?

Can church-attending Adventists get AIDS through promiscuous sexual contact?

I wonder what kinds of illustrations preachers and academy principals, dormitory deans and coaches, will find in Tommy's situation. He has given us a great opportunity to talk about the value of celibacy outside of marriage and about the

wisdom of choosing friends who lead you closer to God rather than away from heaven.

He has also put exclamation points after the sermons of so many church youth leaders: "Choose a career in which you can easily maintain your relationship with God, in which you can be a witness!" I hear many of the old lectures being preached in my ears again.

Then I hear Tommy in front of the microphones, acknowledging his situation. "I was wrong," he said. "I've gotten what I deserved. I'm sorry. I'm nobody's model anymore."

Tommy's words were good, a humble statement of confession and repentance from a man who understands the ugliness of sin. What impressed me even more, however, was Tommy's pastor standing beside him. When asked how he could stand so tall beside such a person he answered, "Because now is when Tommy needs me."

Now, that's a sermon worth living.

NEWS COMMENTARY

NEWS BREAK

A Dream Comes True in Guadeloupe

When Maria became an Adventist in 1991 in Guadeloupe, she dreamed of someday sponsoring an evangelistic series for her hometown in Guadeloupe.

Two months ago her dream came true, and 220 persons (see photo) became Seventh-day Adventists.

To raise money to help sponsor the series, Maria had to sell some of her property. And the only condition of her gift was that she wanted the same evangelist—Inter-American Division communication director Leslie McMillan—to conduct the series, says Daniel Carbin, Guadeloupe Conference president.



A DREAM FULFILLED: Maria helped sponsor an evangelistic series in her home town, with 220 people baptized.

president Ted N. C. Wilson. That would be up from the 18 percent who gave studies in 1995.

Wilson says that the giving of Bible studies by members "is a real miracle when one considers the cultural bias of members in an Orthodox country. Orthodoxy strongly suggests that the *pastor* is the only one qualified to prepare people for baptism."

To help with the Bible studies, an American organization donated 300,000 Russian-language Bible lesson sets. If printed in the former Soviet Union, Wilson says the value of the sets would be US\$200,000.

Adventists in the Former Soviet Union Prepare for Bible Studies

Adventist leaders in the Euro-Asia Division want to teach 80 percent of their members to give Bible studies. They hope such training will encourage at least 30 percent of them to give Bible studies, according to division

Add Some Spice to Your Life—Volunteer

Adventists are needed for a variety of ministries across North America. Here's just a few:

► Young adults are needed for church-planting and campus ministry projects in the United States and Canada. The Adventist Youth Service Network is looking both for volunteers and for pastors and local churches who want to sponsor projects. Call (800) 331-2767.

Did You Know . . . ?

An Adventist is featured on a postage stamp and his great-grandson now works at the General Conference. Yes, Joseph



E. Caldwell, a physician and educator, is featured on a 1989 postage stamp of the Cook Islands. Dr. Caldwell and his wife, Julia, sailed on the *Pitcairn* in 1894 and worked in the Cook Islands until 1903. Great-grandson Richard Caldwell is a lawyer in the GC Office of General Counsel.

Sojourner Truth (Isabella Van Wagener), a human rights activist in the U.S. in the mid-1800s, was depicted on a U.S. stamp in 1986. She reportedly was baptized by Adventist pioneer Uriah Smith.

The three-person GC Executive Committee in 1878 held a special session to condemn a certain lifestyle of 26-year-old John Harvey Kellogg, physician at Battle Creek Sanitarium. "Resolved, that in our opinion, [Dr. J. H. Kellogg] is sinning against God and himself, and committing a wrong against the supporters and patrons of the sanitarium, in depriving himself of . . . eight hours in bed in every twenty-four, whether able to sleep or not."

Compiled by Bert Haloviak, GC Office of Archives and Statistics.

For Your Good Health

Gifted Hands: Families that pray together survive surgery better. That's the conclusion of Ohio State University researchers, who studied 150 people who had a family member undergo coronary bypass surgery.

Using several measures—level of depression, how well they handled the situation, what they learned from the experience—researchers found that those who used religion to cope fared better. —*Health and Fitness News Service.*



Less of Everything: Men and women who live alone don't meet the recommended dietary allowances for as many nutrients as a person who lives with others. But overall they do better in limiting their consumption of fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

A study of almost 6,000 adults shows the differences can most likely be attributed to the fact that people tend to eat less when they eat alone. —*Tufts University Diet and Nutrition Letter.*

Compiled by Larry Becker, editor of *Vibrant Life*, the church's health outreach journal. To subscribe, contact your ABC or call 1-800-765-6955.

NEWS BREAK

► Student interns are needed to work with ADRA/North America projects for the homeless and hungry in the United States. Internships are available for college and graduate students. Call (301) 680-6437 for John Gavin.

Southern College Student Wins Journalism Award

Senior journalism major Stacy DeLay, at Southern College, is one of 137 students receiving \$3,000 journalism scholarships from the Scripps Howard Foundation.

DeLay, coeditor of the *Southern Accent* student newspaper, was one of 137 chosen out of 700 applicants, and is the only recipient from colleges and universities in Tennessee.

For Your Interest

The author of the book *Sit Down Until You're 35* quoted in the *Adventist Review* (March 7) is Gary Swanson.

The dates for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency/North America Community Action Workshop are set for June 26 through July 3.



Adventist Communication Network Broadcasts

For channel information call (800) ACN-1119, option 2. All times shown are Eastern Standard Time.

May	1	First Wednesday , 7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Telstar 401, channel 7
May	3	People of Hope , 8:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Galaxy 4, channel 5
May	4	Reclaiming Roundtable , 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m., SBS 6, channel 14 (Ku Band)
May	11	Starting a Neighborhood Bible Study Group , 4:00-6:00 p.m., channel 9
May	19	Why Christianity? 7:00-9:00 p.m., Galaxy 4, channel 9

What's Coming!

Apr.	6	Missionary Magazine Promotion (<i>Signs, Message, El Centinela, La Sentinelle</i>)
Apr.	6	Stewardship Sabbath
Apr.	13	Literature Evangelism Sabbath and Andrews University Offering
Apr.	20	Adventist Education Sabbath

Opportunities for Ministry

Looking to add some spice to your life? The Adventist Church and its supporting ministries offer you a vast array of mission opportunities both close to home and far away. We'll be sharing just a few of them in this column.

Teach in Russia and the Ukraine. The church is urgently seeking 42 volunteer teachers to spend one or two years teaching conversational English and Bible in Russia and the Ukraine. Open to qualified college graduates or persons with special training. Starting date—August. **Contact:** General Conference Secretariat, (301) 680-6029 or 680-6667; E-mail 74532,2224.

Build houses with Maranatha. Join Maranatha Volunteers International's convention project this year at Georgia Cumberland Academy, April 28-May 9. Skilled and unskilled volunteers will build two houses and other projects. MVI's next project is at Project Patch in Garden Valley, Idaho, May 26-June 7. **Contact:** MVI, (916) 920-1900; fax 920-3299.

Apply for a full-time foreign assignment.

- Anesthesiologist, Puerto Rico
- Theology teachers, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Haiti, Peru
- Hospital business manager, physician, and nursing director, Nepal
- Surgeon, Mugonero Hospital, Rwanda
- College professors of agriculture, social sciences, business, India
- English teachers, Asia-Pacific countries

Contact: General Conference Secretariat, 680-6667 or E-mail 74532,2224.

Become a full-time volunteer.

- Help your local congregation as a Sabbath school teacher.
- Elementary teacher and a high school teacher in math, English, Bible, chemistry, or home ec, Honduras (must be bilingual).
- Food service manager and a builder, Kenya
- Relief physicians and dentists, Africa
- English language teachers, Madagascar

Contact: General Conference Secretariat (see above).

DO YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE AREAS YOU ENJOY?



"I have a lot of free time to explore the areas I enjoy. I know I have a head start on my career and I have already started my own computer business."

—Bobby Gage, HSI Student

Bobby Gage, a 17-year-old senior, stands out among students for the article he wrote for the May 1995 issue of *DOS World*, one of the nation's leading technical journals.

If you are looking to advance your education while pursuing areas of interest, call HSI at 1-800-782-GROW(4769) or write Home Study International, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600



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My name is Yuvensius Lokobal. You can call me "Yuven."

That's what they call me in Tingginambut, Irian Jaya, Indonesia, anyway. I moved here four months ago to establish a group of Adventist believers. Although I'm the only Global Mission pioneer here, I'm far from alone in my ministry. Let me explain.

A few weeks ago a neighboring tribe came to make war with the people whom I'm growing to love. About 100 warriors stood on either side of the airstrip. Arrows started flying. I knew many people would die unless something was done. So, holding my Bible open in front of me, I ran between the groups, yelling, "In the name of the Lord, please stop!" Then I begged the warriors not to kill each other. "Life is precious," I told them. "You can never get it back once it's gone."

The arrows swished by—believe me, I felt them—but not one touched me. When the warriors saw



Meet Yuven, Pioneer to Tingginambut

that I was being protected by a force greater than theirs, they stopped fighting and retreated. Now I'm respected by my village and neighboring villages.

Even before the airstrip battle, the local authorities supported my ministry. They told the people not to damage the new jungle chapel because it was God's house, not the Adventists'. The villagers have put fencing around the airstrip and cut the grass. (The

Adventist mission plane is the only plane they've ever seen.)

But my new friends here are doing more than respecting me and my church. They're worshipping with me—more than 50 each Sabbath! Fifteen have already shown interest in being baptized.

Some of our lifestyle principles, such as abstaining from pork, are accepted more slowly—pigs play an important part in these people's lives. This past month, though, an epidemic swept through the entire region and destroyed most of the pigs.

Even today pigs continue dying. Some of the people are saying that the "guru" Yuven had been telling them not to eat pigs—and that's why the pigs have died.

Guru? No. Just an empty vessel through which God pours out rich blessings onto His children. Please continue to pray for me and my friends here—and for unreached villagers around the world.

Global Mission Facts

Yuvensius Lokobal is typical of 22,700 other Global Mission pioneers around the world, serving in unentered areas. Yuven, however, is serving by himself. Most go out in teams of two—to encourage each other. But since there was an uneven number of pioneers at the training program, he agreed to go by himself. Besides, he was acquainted with this particular culture and dialect—something very important when making new friends with the villagers.

Although Yuven is receiving a small stipend for living expenses, he still chooses to live like the local villagers, and

even goes barefoot—common in these tropical highlands. He grows his own food—mostly sweet potatoes—and helps villagers with their gardening. With the help of mission personnel and local villagers, he constructed a simple thatched-roof chapel. The materials were bought from a neighboring village chief with cooking oil and salt.

Before Yuven came to this area there were no Adventists here or in the surrounding area. Now 50 come to worship.

Please pray for Yuven as he continues to work in and around Tingginambut.

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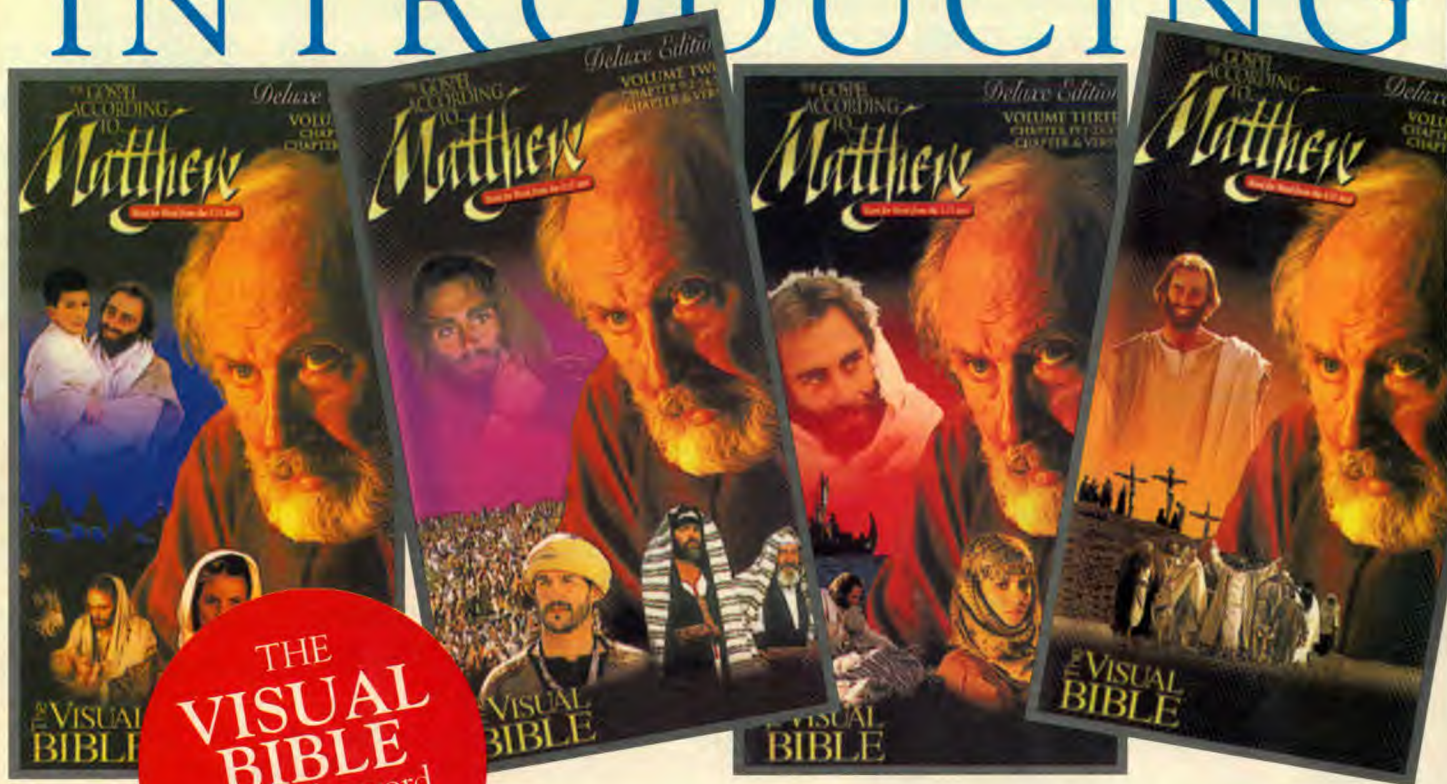
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John and Beverley Carter are from the "Land Down Under". They have seen tens of thousands of Russians and Ukrainians accept Christ during the past three years.

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Submission to the Mind of Christ

BY ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG

Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Then he listed the downward steps of submission that Jesus mandated for Himself—steps that took Him to "death on a cross" (verse 8, NIV).

For us today, possession of the mind of Christ will not take us to a literal cross. It leads instead to the death of self (Gal. 2:20). The paradox is that through the crucifixion of self—through submission to God—we experience the ever-increasing wonder of oneness with Jesus, with the Father, and with the Holy Spirit.

I want to think as Jesus thinks, to feel as He feels, to love what He loves, to hate what He hates, and to rejoice in what brings joy to Him. In lifestyle, in prayer, in empathy for hurting people, in compassion for the lost, and in every aspect of service, I want to be totally one with Jesus Christ.

What I want for myself I also covet for every reader of the *Review*, for every faithful believer, and for every pastor, administrator, and worker of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Everything centers, I believe, on this pivotal petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done" (Matt. 6:10). S. D. Gordon calls this the greatest petition one can offer. "Every true prayer," he says, "comes under those four words." We all struggle with self and self-will, but that struggle is made easier by this realization: oneness with God, submission to Him, and harmony with His will are synonymous with the greatest joy human beings can experience.

Keep Reminding Ourselves

As we near the close of the twentieth century we need to keep reminding ourselves that the great controversy allows us only two choices: submission to God, or control by self and Satan. We must inevitably be under the control of one or the other of these two great forces contending for supremacy in this conflict.

After James talked about submission to God in James 4:7, he took note of the opposition and urged, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

In coming to Christ, we must ever come just as we are. Any attempt to clean up our lives first is a fatal mistake. Saving faith is a transaction. We bring the only thing we have—a sinful heart. In exchange Christ gives us His righteousness. Paul describes that

exchange like this: "For He [God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21, NKJV).

This first aspect of "submission to the righteousness of God" is often called justification and takes place at conversion. But it is also ongoing. At the start of each new day, and any time I stumble, I can reaffirm that transaction. As I bow in confession and faith, Christ's character is imputed to me; it stands in place of my character, and I am accepted before God just as if I had never sinned.

But "submission to the righteousness of God" has a second phase—a submission to the full working of the Holy Spirit. This too is by faith—a faith strengthened by a study of God's Word. Sustained contact with God's Word must be an ongoing reality. As Ellen White observed: "The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the Word of God. This Word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise;

accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God" (*Education*, p. 126).

Here's a related truth so filled with wonder that we need to proclaim it with great clarity: submission to God brings freedom. "You shall know the truth," Jesus said, "and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32, NKJV). On the other hand, "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34, NKJV).

God's leading brings light—light that grows brighter and brighter. Through an ongoing submission and obedience to God's leading, His people become "a praise in all the earth" (*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 125).

Isn't that what we want? Shouldn't we begin each day with a prayer of total submission to Jesus Christ? And throughout the day, shouldn't we pray fervently not only for ourselves, but for seekers, believers, and leaders in every part of the world? Then through the grace of Christ let's separate totally from the sins that weaken the witness of the church and become instruments whom God can use to bring friends and neighbors to our Saviour.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Only in
submission to
God can we find
real freedom.

New Things



BY ROSY TETZ

Last year on the first day of school Timothy wasn't all that happy. His mom and dad had gotten new jobs, and the family had moved to a new town. They had unpacked all their stuff into a different house. He had to go to a new church and get used to a new neighborhood. Now he was having to go to a new school. He missed his comfortable old life. He didn't like all these changes.

Sometimes new things are hard, even scary.

But this fall Timothy was feeling much better about the first day of school. He was going to the same school, but there were lots of other new things. He had a new box of 64 crayons, a dozen new pencils, and a brand-new bottle of glue. He had some new clothes, and on the first day he wore his new T-shirt with the surfer on it. He was looking forward to seeing his old classmates and making new friends.

Sometimes new things are fun and exciting.

Now that it's April, you wouldn't recognize Timothy's new box of crayons. Actually, the box itself is gone. The crayons are lying around in a jumble inside his desk; many of them are broken or worn down, with the paper peeled off. The crayons may look old to you, but they can still do new things. Yesterday Timothy put a rubber band around the green and the yellow green and was able to put leaves on a tree twice as fast.

Sometimes new things happen when you don't expect them, or when you decide to color outside the lines.

There is always something new for us to discover about our lives. God gives us new things every day, every minute. New ideas. New friends. New challenges.

God says to us, "Look at the new thing I am going to do. It is already happening. Don't you see it?" (Isa. 43:19, ICB).

We can look at the new things God does. We can learn from them. They can help us grow. But you have to keep your eyes—and your mind—open so you can see them happening.

New things will happen to you this week. It's spring; the world is new. There are tons of new books to read and pictures to draw and friends to make. It's already happening. Can you see it?

The Bible is always talking about new

things. Here is a game you can play. Look up these texts in the New International Version to see what new things are going on. You can play it by yourself or you can take turns with someone else.

Ps. 96:1	(new song)
Isa. 48:6	(new things)
Isa. 65:17	(new heavens and earth)
Lam. 3:22, 23	(new compassions)
John 13:34	(new command)
Rev. 21:5	(everything new)

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HURRY! OFFER EXPIRES MAY 17, 1996



The Sabbath: Whose Delight Is It?

BY GINA SPIVEY BROWN
AND LORETTA PARKER SPIVEY



Gina Brown

Sabbath blessings are reserved for those who keep it properly. The

seventh-day Sabbath is God's day. It's a day of rest from toil, a day for communion with Him.

Am I the only one who's noticed a trend toward viewing the Sabbath as just another "day off"? It seems that some are more interested in "winning the game" than in winning people for Christ. For some, "take me to the water" means in a bikini and beach towel rather than a baptismal robe.

I won't waste your time dealing with what we should or should not do on the Sabbath. God is not a God of limits. "The Sabbath was never intended to be an end in itself, but rather a means by which man might become acquainted with the character and purposes of his Creator."¹

The bottom line is that the Sabbath is God's gift to His children, giving them the opportunity to "subdue selfishness and cultivate the habit of doing things that are pleasing to God."²

I've heard the flimsy excuse that we can use sacred Sabbath hours to meditate and witness anywhere—even while parasailing, riding a jet ski, or applying sunscreen. But I wonder if meditation and witnessing (so-called) aren't really passing activities on the road to our own pleasures. Instead, they should be the final destination of Sabbath activities.

The litmus test of proper Sabbath observance is this: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from doing thy pleasure on my holy day*; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58:13, 14).

I want to ride on the high places with Jesus!



Loretta Spivey

Sabbath observance is a matter of conscience. What's the definition of

"holy"? The dictionary definition is "dedicated or devoted to the service of God, the church, or religion."

The Sabbath is a heart thing. Just because someone shows up in church and takes up space in a pew during the worship service doesn't mean that he or she isn't thinking about tomorrow's baseball game or next week's semester finals.

Yes, Isaiah 58 does state that we should turn away from doing our own pleasure. But if I'm thinking about God and meditating on His Word, I can do that in a Sabbath school class, on a hiking trail, while sitting on a beach, even while throwing a frisbee in a park.

Jesus Himself dealt with those in His day who, like you, were stuck on traditions. He said, "The Sabbath was made for *man*, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, NIV).

Some say that participation in any kind of outdoor activity—other than witnessing—desecrates the Sabbath.

But it's our relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, informed by our Bible study, that will ultimately determine what we should or should not do on the Sabbath. When God gave the fourth commandment, He began with the words "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). Then He presented broad principles of what characterizes proper Sabbathkeeping—putting aside routine weekly activities in favor of those that nurture a relationship with God and others.

But He didn't go into detail about what is forbidden and what is permitted. That's why we were created with brains. Even more important than listening to someone tell us what's right and wrong to do on the Sabbath is listening to the Holy Spirit—and living accordingly.

Back in Paul's day it seems that Peter was wavering back and forth on the issue of circumcision. In front of the Jews he maintained that circumcision was necessary. However, in front of the Gentiles he said exactly the opposite (see Gal. 2:11-14).

In essence, Paul said to Peter, "Take a stand! Know what you believe . . . and live it." That's my point also.

If certain activities draw you away from the Lord, then don't do them. If the Holy Spirit convicts me that throwing a frisbee on the Sabbath is wrong, then I must be willing to take a stand . . . for Jesus.

Gina Spivey Brown and Loretta Parker Spivey have been friends since college and sisters-in-law since Loretta married Gina's brother. For them, the only thing more important than family and friendships is living for Jesus.

¹The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 307.

²Ibid.

God Uses Broken Things

BY DARRELL LINDENSMITH

The oldest Christian university in Japan is in Kyoto. Here Joseph Nijima, a convert of some of the earliest missionaries, founded the famous Doshisha University. Not only is the school well known, but a story regarding its Christian samurai president is also well known in Japan. The story of Joseph Nijima continues to be a perfect illustration of the cross for a people who are at times confused about this core message of Christianity.

The students of Doshisha University once went on strike, saying the school regulations were too strict. Nijima decided to punish the ringleaders. He prayed through a day and a night. Then he called all the students to the auditorium. Everyone wondered what was going to happen.

The Troublemakers

The instigators of the trouble were at the back of the audience and thought that no matter what might happen, they would hold their ground and never be moved. Nijima walked on stage.

"As I have informed you," he said, "I am going to punish the instigator of this trouble." How and whom was Nijima going to punish? Everyone watched breathlessly to see what would happen. Most expected that Nijima would call out the names of the ringleaders who were at the back, and would one by one, punish them.

Instead, he picked up a baton that was near him and said, "Now I am going to punish the one responsible for this incident." So saying, he suddenly began to hit his own hand with the baton. It tore the skin, and his hand began to bleed.

"Because of my own lack of discretion this trouble has happened. If I were a better leader, such a thing as this would never have happened." As the story goes, Nijima continued to beat his hand until two fingers were broken and his hand was a bloody mess. Finally the baton broke! They still have it displayed in the school trophy case.

Finally, unable to bear any more, one of the instigators rushed to the front. The others followed, pleading for Nijima to stop. Interesting story! What better way could he have gotten their moral attention?

The cross of Christ accomplishes the same two objectives: God punished Himself in our stead and thus tries to awaken in us the sense

of our sin. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8, NIV). Indeed, "God's kindness leads you toward repentance" (Rom. 2:4, NIV).

"Repentance" and "brokenness" are very much related, I've learned. Jesus' statement in Matthew 21 to the Pharisees often intrigues me because of His choice of words. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (verse 44).

I understand the last thought regarding the wicked, but the first statement about the righteous doesn't sound so great! Do we have to be broken?

Brokenness is our true condition really—anything else is pious pretense. Oh, yes, we believe in victory. But the astute Christian will come to recognize that the greatest victory, and therefore the greatest battle, is over our own delusion of strength. "So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall" (1 Cor. 10:12, NRSV).

In a statement Friedrich Nietzsche intended as a barb against Christianity he stated what, in a way, the gospel has tried to teach us. "Making sick is the true hidden objective of the church's whole system of salvation procedures. . . . One is not 'converted' to Christianity—one must be sufficiently sick for it."* What the self-reliant existentialist disparages as "sickness" is actually a simple and profound humility.

As the baton continued to break over Nijima's crushed and bloody fingers a few arrogant young men began to feel sick. When we fall on the Rock, we will be broken. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," Jesus said, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" (Matt. 5:3, NIV). Only by beholding the God on the cross who was broken for us may we experience the freedom of such humility.

* Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ* (New York: Penguin, 1969), p. 168.

Darrell Lindensmith is a pastor serving in McClusky, North Dakota.





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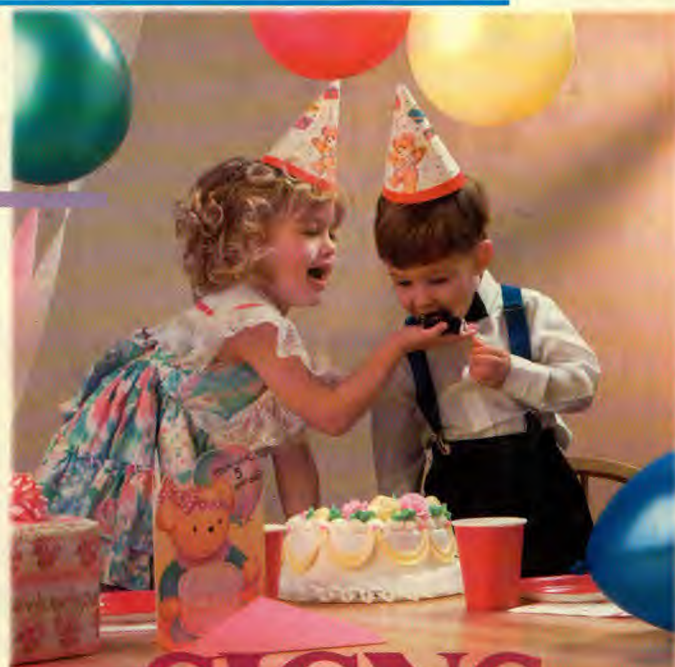
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