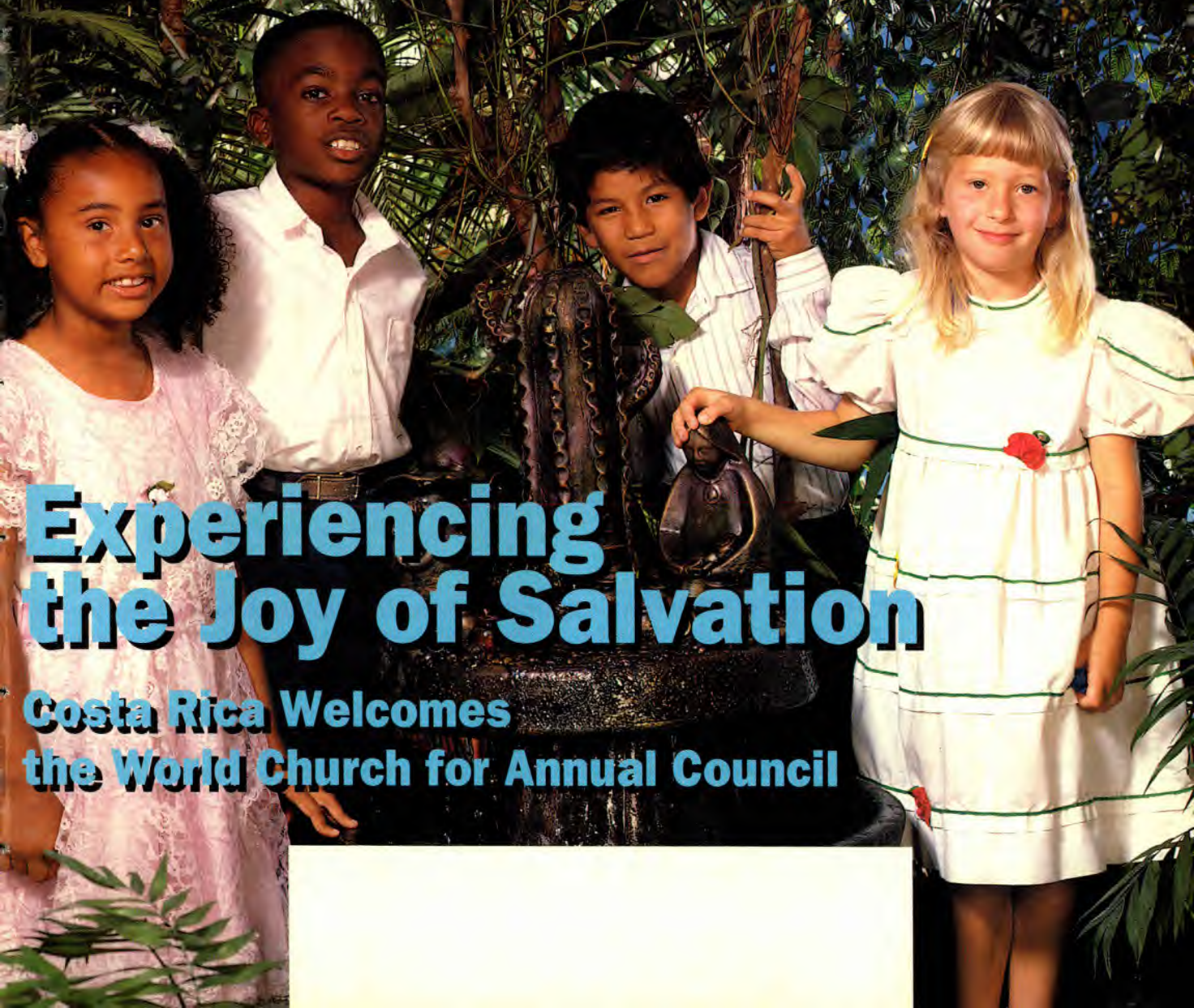


ADVENTIST Review

November 14, 1996

World Edition



Experiencing the Joy of Salvation

**Costa Rica Welcomes
the World Church for Annual Council**

LETTERS

Guiding Our Children

"Bringing Our Children to Christ" (September NAD Edition) is one of the best articles I've seen on raising thinking, caring, God-fearing children. Contrary to the popular parenting video sweeping through Christian churches (*Growing Kids God's Way*), this article points out that parenting is a positive, loving experience. By making family life fun and full of good memories we draw our children to us and to God. This is in stark contrast to the I'm-the-boss-in-control type of parenting that demands complete obedience without thought. Thank you for the encouraging words on lovingly guiding our children.

—**Judith Markham**
OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Sex on Sabbath? (cont.)

I am not a prude—I am an R.N. But I am appalled by your lack of propriety, decency, modesty, and good taste ("Sex on Sabbath?" Take a Stand, September NAD Edition). Topics like that might be appropriate in a counseling session or in small groups, but certainly not in a worldwide publication meant for all cultures and ages.

I have never been favorably impressed by this column, as the subjects chosen are often "on the edge" or trivial, but this last one was

totally unacceptable. You owe your readers an apology, which I doubt will be forthcoming, since your policy is to uphold/justify, by various rationalizations, whatever you print.

—**Loneva Doward**
FERNDALE, CALIFORNIA

This is really a surprise! The *Adventist Review* is bringing for discussion to the Adventist family a delicate and private topic as this? I just can't believe it. Who in the world thought of presenting an issue like this one? Don't the editors know that this is one of the things of life that is so private that it should be kept between the couple and God? Who can benefit from this?

—**Manuel Fernandez, PASTOR**
MIAMI, FLORIDA

New Review (cont.)

The Adventist family is truly wonderful to belong to. Each week we look forward eagerly to our *Review* coming. The old format was great, but the new is even better. Thank you for a great family letter that comes so regularly in the form of the *Adventist Review*.

—**John and Marilyn Maxwell**
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

This is overdue. The new *Review* is simply hot stuff. A year ago when I read some of the preadvertisements, I sensed a hint of hype and feared that the dignified William Johnsson might

be risking his credibility and integrity, based on the promises that were made. I couldn't imagine that you would actually outperform your promises.

I realize that a few people may think otherwise. I do not agree with them, but I thank them for another reminder that on earth it is impossible to please everyone on these matters.

As my kids would say: "Go, boy!"

—**Silton Browne**
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

I'm a young person, and my mentality during the old *Review* was *I'm an Adventist; I have to read it*. But now with the new *Review* I beg to be the one to read it first. I now think, *I'm an Adventist. I want to read it*.

—**Melissa Martin**
METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Music Is a Language

Roy Adams certainly expressed what many of us feel about church music ("Music Is a Language," Sept. 12). It can be so important in lifting our thoughts to heaven. How music that sounds like finger exercises could accomplish this I'll never understand. The larger the church, the less inspirational the music is at times. We need to build up not only lost doctrine of the past but also the art of communing with God through music, as did David.

—**Juanita Simpson, ORGANIST**
SHOW LOW, ARIZONA

While I usually appreciate Roy Adams's editorials, I was saddened at his barbed thrust at our professional musicians. He contends that "too many of our educated musicians seem content to serve up stuff that only a fraction of our worshipers can possibly comprehend."

As he was not specific, I am puzzled as to what music he does not comprehend. Would he suggest that we should scrap the vast body of great organ literature in favor of hymn tune arrangements? Would all "special" musical selections need to be vocal to be regarded as "a commercial for the King of kings"? Are we to judge the suitability of a selection by "audience" reaction?

From my perspective as a professional musician, it seems the problem is that many of our worshipers come to church to be entertained. Their musical tastes have been formed by TV, radio, and pop culture. Their exposure to great church music has been minimal, and therefore they find traditional sacred music incomprehensible. If we were to use more educated professionals to provide the musical portions of worship, we might be able through constant exposure to counteract the deplorable influence of pop culture on our worship services.

—**Margarita Merriman, Ph.D.**

SOUTH LANCASTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Did I read Roy Adams's injunction to the camp meeting musicians right: "Keep it simple, stupid"? Does he advise his preachers to do the same, to focus their message on the heart and not the head? Has he forgotten that in the great religious revivals of the past it was the preachers who urged the musical education of their congregations? Does he take Ellen White seriously when she counseled preachers to "educate, educate, educate"? Does he really want the Adventist Church to embrace an aesthetic of crass functionalism and

ecstatic spiritualism? If so, those who love beautiful, refined, and intellectual things will be running for the exits of his camp meeting tent, and those who remain won't know the difference.

—**Estelle R. Jorgensen**

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

Adams is absolutely right—music is a language. Our ability to understand and appreciate various types of music depends upon our cultural backgrounds and our past exposure to different styles. Some of my fondest memories of my days at Atlantic Union College are of attending Sabbath afternoon "soulspirations." But I remember just as fondly the inspiring choral anthems and majestic organ pieces from church services during my student years. Both of these styles of music speak to me, each in its own way.

—**Sharon Dudgeon**

BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN

Roy Adams feels that one kind of music (good) feeds the soul or heart, and the other kind (no good) feeds the mind or head. False dichotomy. The sacred music of Mozart, as just one example, has inspired thousands over many generations precisely because it speaks so clearly both to the mind and to the heart. Although the popular sacred music of the day appeals to many and has a valid place in public worship, most of it will be forgotten in a few years. Its popular appeal lies in its minimal cost in mental and emotional effort, and its lasting value is about proportional to its costs.

There is a place in our public worship for both the "easy listening" currently popular music and the more costly music Adams disdains. We can't afford to write off either group.

—**David Patterson**

VIA E-MAIL

See Adams's response in next week's Review.—*Editors*

ADVENTIST Review

COVER STORY

12 Church Leaders Address Commitment, AIDS, and Family Violence

Serious topics and substantive discussion dominated the agenda at this year's Annual Council.

BY CARLOS MEDLEY

ARTICLES

8 Answering the Call

Evangelism works when we do. And in Indonesia we do.

BY ARDIS STENBAKKEN

18 My Church and the Apple Tree

The "bad apples" shouldn't keep us from enjoying the harvest.

BY EUNICE MORTON-PEARSON

22 Undercover Kindness

There are people who talk about being Christian, and there are those who are.

BY GARY B. SWANSON

DEPARTMENTS

2 Letters

7 Give & Take

12 World News & Perspectives

21 Rx—The Doctor Is In

25 Children's Corner

27 Bible Questions Answered

29 Bulletin Board

30 Reflections

EDITORIALS

5 A Tragedy Forgotten

6 Get Some Rest

NEXT WEEK

A Testimony of Deliverance

AIDS will kill him; Jesus will raise him.

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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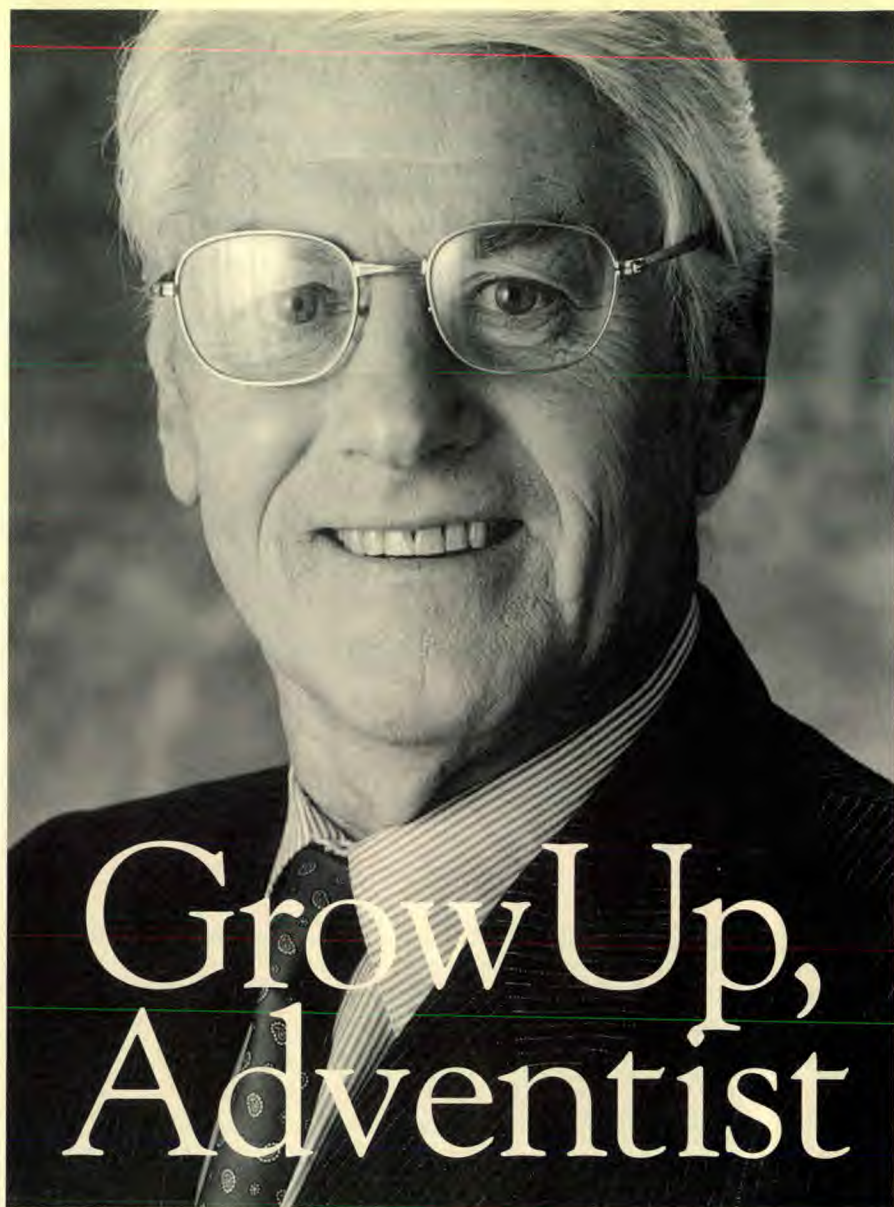
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Grow Up, Adventist

I can't remember when I haven't taught a weekly Sabbath School lesson. Even back when there were only about four of us in the class. But now my church is larger and its membership more diverse. The group has changed, and I guess I've changed, too. But one thing hasn't changed: We still come together each week. We still open our Bibles. We still seek the guidance of the Spirit. And we are always blessed.

ADVENTIST
Review

NEW
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Weekly journal of a faith that works. **The Adventist Review.**

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A Tragedy Forgotten

"I saw the tears of the oppressed—and they have no comforter" (Eccl. 4:1, NIV).

The three-year period between 1989 and 1992 will go down in history as the sunrise of a golden era of freedom and liberation.

In this short time span Communism fell in the Soviet Union and Soviet states declared their independence, the Berlin Wall was torn down and the two Germanies were reunited, democratic elections were conducted in Poland, social reforms were implemented in Albania, totalitarian regimes were overthrown throughout Asia and Eastern Europe, and the cold war ended.

For many people these historic events signaled the dawning of a new age of peace and stability, of hope and promise, and a spectacular thrust for liberty and independence. With these milestones came a new era of religious freedom, exceptional opportunities for evangelism, and tremendous growth for the church.

Unfortunately, as Christians in the United States rejoice over these blessings, many Christians are brutally tortured, unlawfully imprisoned, capriciously enslaved, shamelessly starved, and routinely martyred throughout the world.

Given the backdrop of the fall of Communism, most Christians don't even know that religious persecution is still alive, well, and growing daily. Consider these alarming facts supplied by the World Evangelical Fellowship:

■ More Christians have been martyred for their faith in this century (about 100 million) than in all the previous 19 combined.

■ Reported incidences of persecution in the former Soviet Union have actually increased since the fall of Communism.

■ Experts say persecution is most widespread in Asia, Latin America, the Mediterranean region, the Pacific Rim, and central Africa.

Nina Shea, director of the Puebla Program on Religious Freedom, describes the situation this way: "Christians are targeted by ruthless dictators who demand total power and

control. They serve as scapegoats for societies which aim to vent, foment, and popularize hatred of the United States."

Despite the rampant persecution, U.S. Christians seldom hear about religious oppression. The reasons for the silence are varied. Shea says some churches lack information, while others fear risking access to their ministries in oppressor countries. Even the Adventist Church is not immune to these concerns.

This year a major coalition of religious and human rights groups is speaking out and urging the U.S. government to assert its influence for positive change.

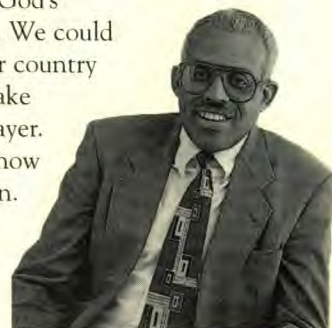
I applaud the efforts of Freedom House, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the World Evangelical Fellowship, and others for putting this issue on the center stage of public dialogue.

In January the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) approved a historic resolution condemning the persecution and calling on U.S. president Bill Clinton to appoint a presidential adviser on religious liberty, to improve the State Department's reporting of religious persecution, and to reform the way the Immigration and Naturalization Service treats asylum petitions from escapees of anti-Christian persecution.

The U.S. Congress passed resolutions (H.R. 515 and S.R. 283) that advocate many NAE recommendations. On September 29 the World Evangelical Fellowship organized the first annual International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

I believe we as Adventists should put this issue high on our prayer list. We should ask God's protection for persecuted families. We could adopt a village, town, province, or country in which oppression exists and make that location a special topic of prayer. As we pray, the Holy Spirit will show us other ways to voice our concern.

If we remember this forgotten tragedy in prayer, that very act will make us more grateful for the liberty God has given us.



Get Some Rest

If you're young and Adventist—or even if you're old and Adventist—and you lie in bed at night worrying about the selfishness, hypocrisy, and apathy within our church, then you might as well just go to sleep.

Don't you have enough selfishness, hypocrisy, and apathy in your own life to keep your nocturnal mind occupied? I do.

Perhaps the best thing for you who so desperately want “change” in the church is simply to accept that things aren't going to change—at least not to your satisfaction. If they do change, consider it a bonus. But please don't stew until 2:00 a.m., as if each toss and turn will somehow help.

This isn't to say that things *won't* change or that you shouldn't work for change. You should. I should. Let's take, for example, the general lack of youth involvement—of ownership—in this church. Many of us believe that God is again going to sweep the youth into the forefront of this church, and we like to think that He'll need our help to do it. Maybe He will.

But listen closely, youth—the way to help Him is not to continually point fingers at apparent injustices (“Hey, who represents *us*?”) and slow-developing promises (“*What* piece of the pie?”). It's not that such things don't exist; but by dwelling on them we accomplish remarkably little.

Instead, let me suggest that the *best* way to really make things happen in this church is to focus on two people: yourself and Jesus.

Focus on yourself because *your* spirituality is the only spirituality you can truly do something about. You can't do much about another's spirituality. And if your walk with God starts and stops in sync with someone else's, then you're treading on dangerous turf. Why? Because at some point others *will* disappoint you—as certainly as you *will* disappoint yourself. The difference is that when others disappoint you, you won't always have the chance to probe where they're coming from. Their mistakes may forever eat at you. But when you disappoint yourself, you know *exactly* where you're coming from, and you can quickly address the core problem.

You must not, however, focus only on yourself. That's where most self-help experts incorrectly stop. You must focus

also on Jesus. He's the standard to which you must constantly compare yourself. It's not enough to compare yourself to your best friend, parents, or pastor. Aim higher. Compare yourself to the very best, and when you find that you fall short (you will), don't throw up your hands in defeat. Throw up your hands in surrender. That's when Jesus can pull you a notch higher. That's when things begin to happen.

In contrast, don't dwell on how badly you've been treated or on how much those around you need to improve. Just because our generation has been labeled “negative” and “cynical” doesn't mean we have to be.

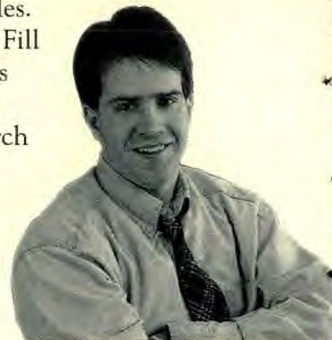
Instead, find something to be positive about and direct your corrective energy at yourself. The single best way to improve your church is to improve yourself.

Want a case study? Joseph. No one got treated as badly as Joseph did. Talents ignored. Appearance despised. Loyalties trashed. And what did he do about it? He climbed off the slave wagon and spent absolutely zero recorded minutes bickering over his bad luck or his betraying brothers. Instead, he leaned with the curves—serving those around him, focusing on his relationship with God. In turn, God lifted him to the pinnacle of not only his church but his world.

Sometimes, of course, change takes awhile. Joseph sat patiently for years. Samuel, David, and Esther got the call much sooner. You may too. I hope you do. But in the meantime don't get so flustered by the inevitable flubs that you spin out of control—a cheap top that hit one too many saltshakers. Maintain a balance.

When the workday or school day hits, go ahead and fight the battles. Write letters. Make phone calls. Fill Adventists On-line with analyses and lamentations. Do whatever you need to do to make the church around you a better place.

But when it's dark, when it's quiet, turn your attention to the church *within* you. Reflect on Jesus. Self-inspect. Fine-tune. Get some rest.



GIVE & TAKE

NEED A CENTER?



BIG FELLA: He hasn't yet attended a class, but this unnamed giraffe regularly drops by the campus of Maxwell Adventist Academy in Nairobi, Kenya, during recess. No word on how well the 12-footer shoots free throws, but dunks seem to be a lock.

ADVENTIST LIFE

As children of missionary parents traveling around the world, my brother and I got tired of the constant, monotonous questioning of the customs officials. One day, after being interrogated as to whether we had cigarettes or alcohol in our possession, my brother added, "And we don't eat meat, either!"

—Karen Downing Grob, Salmsach, Switzerland



When my nephew Michael was 4 his dad tried to explain to him why it was healthy to be a vegetarian. After being told that hamburgers were made from cows, Michael gasped, "Daddy, when we get to heaven, I'm gonna tell Jesus what they've been doin' down here!"

—Dave Gerstle, Collegedale, Tennessee

ADVENTIST QUOTES

"Many are cold, but few are frozen."

—James Estes, on Ingathering during Texas winters

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

—Dick Semaan at the NPUC administrators retreat, Parksville, British Columbia

"The church's problem today is not pews without people, but pews filled with empty people."

—Howard F. Faigao, publishing director, Asia-Pacific Division

"Of all the commandments, the one people seem to fear most is the eleventh—'Thou shalt not get caught.'"

—L. Niere, editor, Philippine Publishing House

"THE GOD BOX"

Does your mind sometimes wander when you kneel to pray? Mine does. Why not write out your prayers and present them to God via a "God box"?

Any box can be turned into a God box. I taped up the top of a diaper box and cut a 1" x 4" slot in the side and wrote "God Box" on it.

Sometimes I write out all the details of an event or situation. Other times I just write a couple words—such as someone's name—or draw a picture on a small square of paper. Then I drop my prayers into the slot and give a sigh of relief that my request or frustration is now in God's hands.

Why not try it yourself? You'll be amazed at the results.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6).

—Debbie Butler, Rio Linda, California



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Answering the Call

Women hit the evangelistic trail in Indonesia.

BY ARDIS STENBAKKEN

The scene was unusual. Guests at an evangelistic meeting were being asked to vacate their front-row seats.

Why? Because the leaders of the program, all women, were trying to make room for the baptismal candidates to stand in front of the auditorium for their baptismal vows.

I watched in amazement as the 178 candidates, each with a red ribbon pinned to his or her shirt or dress, filed into the crammed room and surrounded the stage. Some even sat on the platform. I was astounded that this area-wide campaign had been carried out by women (none of them preachers) here in Manado, Indonesia.

It was my first visit to Indonesia. As we flew in low over Manado, I was fascinated by the rusty corrugated metal roofs and graceful coconut palms rushing up to meet our plane. Fascinated but anxious, I was confident that the Lord had led us here. In a few days I would be speaking at my first-ever evangelistic meetings.

The other women organizing and leading these meetings were in the same boat. None of us had had homiletics or

seminary training—only women's ministries training. *How did I ever get myself into this one?* I had wondered.

Still, I knew how and why I was here.

About a year before, General Conference women's ministries director Rose Otis had asked if I would be interested in going to Belarus to help with evangelistic meetings. My answer had been a quick and emphatic "No way!" But the thought haunted me. *Could I not tell people about my love for God and what He has done for each of them? And if I didn't, who would? I have done public speaking—could I do evangelistic meetings, too?* I was about to find out.

The women in the East Indonesia Union Conference had wanted to hold women's meetings for a long time. They had been training and planning, but they lacked money or a speaker. I could supply the money through a special matching fund appropriation for General Conference departmental leaders willing to conduct evangelistic meetings. The women of the Manado area, led by East Indonesia Union women's ministries leader Netty Rantung, and I soon joined forces. And now here I was.

To my surprise, Manado turned out to be quite a modern city, with a population of about 300,000, of whom about 40 percent are Muslims. Traveling around the city, I encountered an amazing array of contradictory sights: lush tropical vegetation and flowers, satellite dishes, mosques, horse-drawn carts, small van-sized buses that came by about every five minutes, hole-in-the-wall businesses, large department stores—and Adventist churches. I soon learned to recognize the signs for our churches and discovered that



NEW START: In a just-completed baptismal tank, 178 people publicly accepted Jesus Christ.

we have 42 houses of worship in the area, all with active women's ministries leaders and programs.

Making Connections

I had worked hard on the eight topics assigned me: Jesus, the Creator,

the Bible, the Ten Commandments, law and grace, baptism, the Sabbath, and the marks of the true church. I had written out my presentations for the translator, and overheads of my texts had been prepared in Indonesian. The organizers had sent out invitations. But would anyone come?

Yes. By the time I arrived, 220 baptisms had already resulted from the satellite meetings that the women had held in area churches. At the reaping meetings in which I participated, women led out in all phases: registering guests, presenting flowers to each the first night, bringing government representatives to the first meeting, emceeding the

programs, presenting special music, and following up with those interested in the Adventist message.



STANDING ROOM ONLY: On the final Sabbath the meeting hall was filled to overflowing. At the front baptismal candidates take their vows.



ONE STEP AT A TIME: Maria Liwoso (above) explains the 12-stage plan to build the Koka Adventist Church (right).

Each evening Linda Koh, women's and family ministries director for the Asia-Pacific Division, gave a half-hour presentation on the family. The people identified easily with her message as she presented materials from an Asian perspective. Netty Rantung and Octofin Sumendap, a teacher at nearby Mount Klabat College, provided translation.

I had worried about sermon illustrations that would be culturally appropriate and whether people from a variety of religious backgrounds could follow and understand the ideas that were going to be presented. I wanted them to know that Jesus loves them and wants them to be saved, and to that end I had provided everything necessary. I was thrilled one night when a teacher told me that her guest, who had wondered if the Sabbath was always binding, had finally become convinced that it was.

Throughout the meetings we also kept our eyes on the women's ministries baptistry being constructed behind the new union office building, where we were holding the meetings. On my first day in Manado they were just start-

ing to lay brick. I felt sure the baptistry would never be ready for the second Sabbath. But as the week progressed, so did the baptistry. The final Friday the beautiful locally manufactured blue tiles were all in place, workers had covered the raw dirt with boards, and women had lined the edges of the pool with bougainvillea plants. Full of sparkling clean water, the tank was

ready. Still, I had no idea how many people we might baptize the next day.

Sabbath was hot and clear, and the assembly hall was packed even as Sabbath school began at 8:00 a.m. By church hundreds were milling around outside, unable to find seats. The hosts worked feverishly to get all the candidates into the front of the auditorium. The candidates paid close attention and responded to the baptismal vows with fervor as a local pastor led out.

But first there was the dedication of the baptistry. Netty Rantung, Linda Koh, and I each signed the identification plaque and cut the ribbon. Then I spoke about how women have always been intimately associated with birth. This was a place for new birth, so it was fitting that this be a women's ministries baptistry. I also pointed out that many people help with a birth and with the raising of a child so in the church there must be many who help the new members gain maturity. We must not injure the babies in Christ by pushing mature food on them before they are ready. After my prayer of dedication, the 16 pastors and the first of the 178 candidates



MESSENGERS: Ardis Stenbakken and Octofin Sumendap, translator, covered eight major topics in the two weeks of meetings.



DIFFERENT ANGLE: The Mapanget church sits on a slope, making the front pews lower than the back pews—perfect for seeing over that tall person in front of you.

entered the pool. What a sight! The water was so sparkling and the joy so evident on many faces.

That same day and the Sabbath following, more baptisms took place in surrounding churches, leading to a total of 430 for the women's meetings. Two months later Jean Zachary (sponsored by the Quiet Hour) and Netty Rantung held more women's ministries meetings. The 94 baptismal candidates from their meetings joined the 179 from Jim Zachary's nearby meetings at the women's ministries baptistry. (The baptistry, incidentally, is next to the land on which the new evangelistic center is to be constructed. The latter received the Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering the first quarter of 1996.)

Beyond the Meetings

Not only are the women of Indonesia working to fill churches; they are building churches, too. One morning Netty took me an hour out of Manado on a narrow, winding road through tall grasses and waving palm trees to the small village of Koka. Maria Liwoso and her husband chose Koka as the object of their Global Mission outreach. Soon they found

they were spending so much time driving back and forth to Koka for meetings that they moved there. Maria especially set out to build up the congregation. About two dozen Adventists had already been meeting in a home, but because it was such a poor little house they could not attract others to worship with them. So Maria began a campaign to build a real church for her fledgling group.

An architect drew up plans, and the committee divided the project into 12 steps. Each Sunday morning at 4:00 the members gather for a prayer service. They thank God for their blessings and ask for the Holy Spirit and for the unity of the members. They pray that each member's job will be blessed. And they pray for a spirit of sacrifice among the members. The group prays for God's Spirit, but not for money; they pray for donors, but not for donations. And they pray for those who work on the church. According to Maria, the small group that met together had been keeping the Sabbath, but had not really practiced other Adventist beliefs, such as tithing. So together they studied and grew in the Spirit.

Meanwhile the builder tells the group how much money is necessary

for the next phase in the project. Each Sabbath they try to give a sacrificial offering themselves. As soon as they have cash for the next stage, the contractor buys the materials, and the laborers begin. Through an almost unending series of miracles, they have arrived at step 5. The cement frame is up, the roof is on, electricity is in, and the ceiling is finished. But there are no doors or windows yet, and the outside is unfinished. When I visited, they had the scaffolding up to begin the entry to the church.

Over on the other side of Manado, in Mapanget, Mrs. Paulene Raranta, the widow of a former mission president, wanted a church built near her parents' home. So she set out to build one. Because she is a professional, she was able to go to the United States and work as a nurse. Lodging with friends, she was able to send most of the money she earned back to Indonesia. Mrs. Raranta's son chaired the building committee, and a lovely church took shape on the side of a hill, taking advantage of the slope. Each row of homemade pews is on a lower level as one goes toward the front of the church.

When I arrived in Manado, I was taken directly to the union office to give the women's ministries leaders instructions. But I admitted to them that I really had no instructions for them other than a few obvious observations. Instead, I learned so much from them. What marvelous things a group of women can do when they put themselves in the hand of God and ask for His blessing! ■

Ardis Stenbakken is associate director of the General Conference Department of Women's Ministries, Silver Spring, Maryland.



Annual Council Report

Church Leaders Address Commitment, AIDS, and Family Violence

BY CARLOS MEDLEY, ADVENTIST REVIEW NEWS EDITOR

They came from sub-Saharan Africa, from the Canadian heartland, and from the Asia-Pacific Rim. From the republics of Eastern Europe and the vast urban centers of South America, from New Zealand to New England, they came.

Nearly 300 Adventist pastors, lay members, teachers, and administrators came together October 1-9 to make a defining statement about their faith and commitment to God.

At the 1996 Annual Council, members of the General Conference Executive Committee voted several major documents, including a pastoral appeal for spiritual accountability, a Christian response to the AIDS crisis, and a position statement on family violence.



READY FOR BUSINESS: Some 300 leaders gathered for the Annual Council.



TOTAL COMMITMENT: GC president Robert S. Folkenberg calls for spiritual accountability.

Held in the picturesque environs of San José, Costa Rica, this year's meetings were conducted outside North America, a practice occurring twice in each quinquennium to underscore the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is indeed a worldwide fellowship. The occasion also gave local church leaders an opportunity to showcase the progress the church has made within their fields (see p. 15).

Another feature of the program was the two-day Message and Mission emphasis, during which committee members spent time in prayer, Bible study, and spiritual renewal (see p. 13).

Total Commitment

In his keynote address General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg took a bold step and called church leaders to spiritual account-

ability. The call involved a self-evaluation of their own spiritual growth and an evaluation of local congregations, hospitals, colleges and academies, health food factories, publishing houses, media centers and radio stations, hospitals, conferences, unions, missions, and the General Conference staff.

Through the sermon Folkenberg introduced the "Total Commitment to God" document, voted October 4 as a pastoral appeal. In describing the initiative, the GC president said the document attempts to "unite the beliefs and values that define the Adventist movement, that we enshroud in our mission statements, policies, and fundamental beliefs, with the realities of life as we live it both individually and organizationally."

The document sets forth principles that assist church members, pastors,

Prayer, Praise, and Study Mark First Two Days of Annual Council

BY RAY DABROWSKI and LYNN CALDWELL, General Conference Communication Department director and associate director, respectively

The first full day of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's world Annual Council, October 2, began with a two-day spiritual convocation known as the Message and Mission emphasis, under the theme "Experience the Joy of Salvation."

This convocation, an integral part of the regular business meeting of the General Conference's Executive Committee, was a time of spiritual emphasis for participants.

"Our prayer is that those who minister will be ministered to and will receive a touch of the Spirit and a sense of renewal," said Jan Paulsen, vice president of the General Conference and chair of the Message and Mission Commission.

According to Paulsen, these two days were set aside specifically as a time of spiritual reflection and renewal for church leadership and special focus on this year's theme. "We will explore the joy of salvation through speech, song, small group discussion, testimony, and prayer so that each leader here will carry the joy of salvation back to our people around the world," said Paulsen.

The first presentations of this year's theme were made by Calvin Rock, a vice president of the General Conference, whose sermon was titled "The God Who Comes Looking," and Gregory Nelson, senior pastor of the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, who presented "God's Heart Beats for His Bride: A Biblical Reflection on the Experience of Justification."

Between presentations time was spent in corporate and small group prayer as well as singing and discussions on the Pauline Letter to the Ephesians. A highlight of the convocation was a series of testimonials by church laypersons and employees.

Interviewed during a segment entitled "How Christ Found Me" was Dr. Patricia Fraguela, a physician and general surgeon from Costa Rica, and a religious radio talk show host. "I began to study the Scriptures with two Adventists who heard my radio program. It is because of the patience of these Christian brothers that I am an Adventist today," said Dr. Fraguela.

Don Schneider, president of the Lake Union in the church's North American Division, shared a testimony from his youth. "During my school years I experienced a rebellious time. Years later I sought out my schoolmate and apologized for leading him away from Jesus with my behavior and invited him back to Christ."

"The convocation has offered not only a Christ-centered message but a Christ-centered experience. It has been a time of inspiration," says Dr. Lyn Behrens, president of Loma Linda University and a delegate to the Annual Council.

During the second full day of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's world Annual Council, October 3, participants continued their study, prayer, and praise on the theme "Experience the Joy of Salvation."

"There was a real fear that those participating in this Message and Mission Celebration would not move beyond the generic discussion about the selected theme," commented W. Clarence Schilt, a facilitator of the group discussions and senior pastor of the Calimesa, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church. "What we witnessed surpassed our expectations."

Schilt explained that the various forms of the program,



GROUP DYNAMICS: Philip Samaan (center), editor of the *Sabbath School Bible Study Guides*, leads a discussion at the Message and Mission Conference.

which included preaching and discussion in small groups, brought a "refreshing level of reality and personal openness. The discussions manifested real spiritual hunger of the

participants when they prayed for each other personally."

Church leaders expressed their appreciation for the fact that this was not business as usual. "What was good about these two days was that time was planned for prayer and praise. There was time for sharing and study, and it all had a strong spiritual content," a church administrator commented.

teachers, and administrators in developing personal and organizational self-evaluations.

Folkenberg explained that the document is not "an intrusive third-party management system. The document does not advocate having

any group assessed by a higher organization."

Reinder Bruinsma, Trans-European Division secretary, commented, "This is a good document, though it is not immediately clear how world divisions should devise the assessment

instruments. Nonetheless, the idea of challenging believers and institutions to work on a constant spiritual development is of great value."

AIDS Response

Recognizing the widespread



STARTLING DISCOVERIES: Dr. Harvey Elder, a physician from Loma Linda, California, tells how AIDS impacts the Adventist Church.

scourge of AIDS and its effect on the church, four public health experts urged the committee to mount a compassionate response to the deadly virus.

"The HIV epidemic affects the Seventh-day Adventist Church," said Dr. Harvey Elder, an Adventist physician who is chief of infectious diseases at Veterans Hospital in Loma Linda, California. "In geographic areas where Adventism is rapidly advancing, HIV is spreading the most rapidly. Every year we baptize thousands of HIV-infected people who do not know they are infected.

"Some students arrive at Adventist colleges with the HIV infection," Elder explained. "Some are new converts whose lives are transformed by God. They graduate and minister as effective pastors and teachers. About the time of ordination the pastor's HIV infection becomes symptomatic. He comes down with shingles, and people suspect AIDS. Forgetting the long asymptomatic period, people rush to judgment and abandon the AIDS victim."

Gary Hopkins, director of the Institute for the Prevention of Addictions at Andrews University, told the committee, "If parents are using substances such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, the chance that teens will

participate in at-risk behaviors increases 10 times more than if parents abstain from such substances."

Hopkins' findings are the result of a survey of 1,748 youth attending 69 Adventist academies in North America.

Mekebeb Negerie, associate health director for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, also presented the results of his study of youth in several Adventist communities. The results showed that the incidence of at-risk behaviors was not significantly different from non-Adventist Christians and non-Christians.

Eunice Diaz, a health educator and former member of a United States presidential commission on AIDs, said the greatest challenge she's faced has been motivating the church to launch AIDS-related ministries. She challenged the committee with such questions as "Where can an Adventist go who has AIDS?"

After the presentations, committee members voiced their concerns on the issue and voted guidelines for Adventist Church members, pastors, and teachers, and for church entities, desirous of initiating an AIDS ministry.

"Seventh-day Adventist Church and the AIDS Epidemic—Guidelines" calls for the development of materials to help pastors counsel HIV-infected members, aids for teachers to help students cope with sexual pressures, and educational programs to help churches form compassionate ministries for AIDS victims.

The guidelines also call for strengthening the preparation process for marriage by affirming the ideal of abstinence from premarital sex and encouraging premarital HIV testing for both potential partners.

Mark Remmer, a pastor from Ohio, urged the church leaders to publish the guidelines widely in pastors' manuals and other publications. He said, "In my district it would be considered offensive to ask couples to take an HIV test as part of the counseling process."

However, a committee member from Uganda told the body, "The Adventist

Church in Uganda has made HIV testing a requirement for marriage."

Attacking Family Violence

The committee also addressed the growing crisis of family violence with a position paper that calls for a series of initiatives to care for and strengthen suffering families.

The initiatives include support ministries for families, encouraging training and placement of licensed Adventist professional services for church members and surrounding communities, and offering reconciliation ministries.

"This document is the first of its kind," says Ronald Flowers, codirector of the General Conference Department of Family Ministries. "It's a real breakthrough. It shows the growing awareness of family violence within the church.

"This statement is just a beginning. We hope that church policies will grow out of the document as the church becomes active in this area."

Secretary's Report

In his report to delegates, GC secretary G. Ralph Thompson announced that the Adventist Church has passed the 9 million-member mark. As of June 30, world church membership stood at 9,055,495. For the 12 months ending June 30, baptisms reached 681,962, an



READY FOR THE VOTE? GC vice president Calvin Rock chairs the business session.

increase of 17,989, or 2.7 percent, over the same period last year.

Thompson congratulated the world leaders for their efforts in sharing the gospel with others and helping the church's growth. He also reminded the leaders that congregations need to treat their new members with Christ's love and compassion, and noted that in the 12 months ending December 31, 1995, there were 175,000 apostasies, or one for every five people baptized.

"We are losing too many of our members through indifference and the coldness of our churches," he said. "We not only ought to gain members, but we ought to retain them by the grace of God."

Church Finances

GC undertreasurer Martin Ytreberg reported the 1997 world operating budget at \$124,795,000, a decrease of \$2,499,774, or 2 percent, from 1996. Ytreberg said the main reason for the decrease is that the General Conference transferred the administration of the Adventist Media Center in Newbury Park, California, to the North American Division.

Despite the decrease in the world budget, the GC in-house operating budget will increase by more than \$1 million to \$24,008,552. However, Ytreberg said the in-house expenses for 1996 will be under the GC's operating expense cap, which is 4.85 percent of gross tithes.

GC treasurer Robert Rawson reported that cash reserves decreased to \$20.7 million as of September 30, a 6 percent decrease from the same period last year. Since 1982 cash reserves have dwindled from a high of \$82.6 million.

The committee voted to give the North American Division \$7.6 million in working capital. This transfer should have taken place when NAD first became an independent division.

Annual Council Briefs

In other business, the General Conference Executive Committee:

■ Amended the General Con-

ference Human Relations Policy to include gender as a protected class against employment discrimination. The amended policy now provides employment and advancement opportunities without regard to race, color, or gender, except for positions that require ordination to the gospel ministry.

GC undersecretary Athal Tolhurst says the amended policy does not reverse earlier church actions

authorizing the ordination of women as local church elders in divisions where the division executive committees have given their approval.

■ Overturned a previous decision to hold the 1998 Annual Council in Seoul, Korea. Church leaders are exploring alternative locations within the northern Asia-Pacific Division. Meeting organizers cited extremely high costs as a reason for changing the venue.

Festivities Capture a Spirit of Joy

BY CARLOS MEDLEY, ADVENTIST REVIEW NEWS EDITOR

When the 300 members and invitees of the General Conference Executive Committee came to the 1996 Annual Council in Costa Rica, the world leaders did much more than vote policies and resolutions. The program included many spiritual highlights and joyous celebrations that captured the excitement and pageantry found only in Latin America.

From the opening song to the closing devotional, the nine-day conference celebrated God's blessings

on the Adventist Church during the past year. Underscored by the theme "Experience the Joy of Salvation," the program took on an upbeat, festive tone marked by thankfulness and gratitude.

Before the first item of business came before the body, the committee spent two days in prayer, Bible study, and spiritual renewal. The Message and Mission program, held October 2-3, featured devotional messages, discussion groups, intercessory prayer sessions, and testimonies centered on the council theme (see p. 13).



THE GATHERING: More than 9,000 persons attended Sabbath morning services at the Arias Sanchez Palacio de los Deportes (Sports Palace) in Heredia.

In addition to these meetings, leaders from each of the church's 11 divisions reported on how the church is growing in their territories. Through videos, live music, testimonies, and interviews, the leaders painted a picture of God's moving in the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide.

High Points

The high point of the council came on October 4-5 with a Sabbath celebration at the Arias Sanchez Palacio de los Deportes (Sports Palace) in Heredia. Church members from 25 area churches celebrated the Sabbath with a Friday night program commemorating the Adventist Church's Global Mission thrust.

Through graphic illustrations Gary and Rae Patterson, who direct the Office of Mission Awareness at the General Conference, showed the audience how the church has extended its reach during the past 100 years. During that time the ratio



GRACIOUS HOST: Inter-American Division president Israel Leito presents the Sabbath afternoon program.

of church members to world population has grown from one Adventist for every 250,000 persons in 1874 to one Adventist for every 650 today.

Perhaps the most momentous part of Friday night's program came when GC vice president Leo Ranzolin introduced retired missionaries Reggie and Ellen Mattison and their son Kenneth, administrator at Jellico Community Hospital in Tennessee.

Kenneth's grandparents, Harry and Bernice Larabee, helped pioneer the Adventist work in Costa Rica. Harry died in a plane crash in 1946 while serving in the country and was buried near San José. Bernice died two years ago, and her remains were brought to Costa Rica.

Sabbath Joy

On Sabbath morning an estimated 9,000 church members packed the sports palace for the morning service. A combined choir from the Montemorelos and Central American Adventist universities provided music.

GC president Robert S. Folkenberg echoed the conference theme "Experience the Joy of Salvation" in his morning sermon.

"The emphasis of Jesus and of the apostles was joy," Folkenberg said. "The emphasis of His life and the emphasis of ours should be the same."

In explaining the importance of joy in the Christian life, he commented, "Christians are the only people in the world who have an everlasting reason to be joyful, and the

closer our walk with Jesus, the greater our joy. Our faces should shout to our friends and neighbors and coworkers: 'I have absolute joy in my life because of my personal relationship with my Lord.'"

Even the coming judgment should give Christians a reason to be joyful. "The judgment means no more injustice, no more inequity," he said. "The judgment means God is vindicated throughout His universe, and harmony is restored to all of God's creation. If we cannot be joyful in the face of the judgment, it can only mean that we do not see the Judge as our friend."

"True joy comes when our spirit is one with Christ. Jesus said He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, and the evidence it is working is the joy it produces in His followers."

A Big Thank-you

Inter-American Division leaders presented a Sabbath afternoon festival to thank pastors, lay members, and world leaders for their continuous support of the Adventist Church in Central America. The colorful costumes, banners, and lively music provided a cheerful backdrop for the inspiring evangelism reports.

Among the persons honored were the division pastors, who have the highest member-pastor ratio (1,212 to one) of all the world divisions. The worldwide average is 643 to one. IAD



MISSIONARY FAMILY: Kenneth (left), Ellen, and Reggie Mattison commemorated the life and service of Kenneth's grandparents, Harry and Bernice Larabee, a pioneer missionary family in Costa Rica.



WELCOME: Students from Central American Adventist University welcome visitors.



RHYTHMIC RESPONSE: Adventist youth provide music for the Sabbath program.

president Israel Leito also thanked Maranatha Volunteers International

the program more than 20 persons had been baptized.

for the hundreds of churches volunteers have built throughout the division.

Division leaders honored women evangelists, who were responsible for 1,302 baptisms this year. To underscore the division's baptismal rate of one baptism every 4.8 minutes, organizers stopped the program at strategic intervals to hold group baptisms. By the end of



WATERY GRAVE: Twenty persons were baptized on Sabbath afternoon.

A Notable Council

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

I have attended every Annual Council since 1980. The recently concluded gathering in Costa Rica impressed me as a notable event, the most memorable of the 17 councils I have known.

■ **A new dynamic:** Last year's General Conference session in Utrecht mandated a major restructuring of the GC Executive Committee. Many more laypeople and pastors are now members, and all union presidents of the world church have their way paid to attend (they previously were members, but often did not attend because of financial pressures).

The new blood brought a new vigor to the Annual Council. Delegates took their work seriously: they stayed by the business, voiced their convictions, showed powers of perception and discrimination in voting complicated items.

■ **A new accountability:** For General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg, the main item on the agenda was the one he introduced in his keynote address and that was taken up in the first business session—the challenge of “Total Commitment to God.” The document embodies concerns that lie close to Folkenberg's heart.

The president seeks to initiate a process of spiritual accountability. He is calling every Adventist and every church institution and organization to self-examination in terms of spiritual values and the gospel commission.

■ **A new openness:** The council spent several hours addressing the challenge presented by the worldwide AIDS epidemic and the appropriate response of the church. I sensed

an openness to acknowledge and confront this massive social problem impacting Adventists and the general population; there was not one speech suggesting denial or hesitancy.

By its readiness to confront the nightmare of AIDS honestly, the Costa Rica council in effect gave permission for Adventists everywhere, and the church corporately, to get involved.

■ **A new spirituality:** Annual Councils start on a Tuesday evening with a call to order and the president's keynote address. The next day delegates roll up their sleeves and plow into the long agenda.

But not in Costa Rica. We started as usual on Tuesday evening, but during the next two days not a single item of business was discussed or voted. Instead,

delegates and spouses listened to sermons, participated in long prayer and praise sessions, heard testimonies, and joined in group studies of selected Bible chapters. The theme of the two days and subsequent devotional presentations: “Experience the Joy of Salvation.”

An enormous amount of thought and prayer had gone before. The focus throughout was on God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—and His incredible seeking, forgiving, transforming love. And the Lord drew very close and renewed hearts.

Church leaders work hard and give themselves to others. It is easy for their own lives to grow tired and dry. In Costa Rica they also received. They experienced anew the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ.

I found the council the most spiritual by far of the 17 I have attended. Maybe that's the secret of its progress in the other areas.

NEWS COMMENTARY



ILLUSTRATION BY JIM NUTTLE

My Church and the Apple Tree

I see conflict and change as signs of life.

BY EUNICE MORTON-PEARSON

My church is going through painful times. Theologians are disagreeing about details. Church members are condemning each other for lifestyle differences. Laypeople are condemning the preachers and teachers for being too strict or not being strict enough, for being hung up on the old theology or for straying from the "pillars." Sometimes it appears as though the church might die from being torn asunder by different groups. But all this painful growth and change is what I find most encouraging about this church.

Let me explain.

The church is like a little apple seed that sprouted out of the dark earth. When it began to grow, you could almost see the growth taking place each day. If you have ever planted a new apple tree, you know how avidly you watched each sprouting branch and waited for that first blossom. When the tree finally began to bear fruit, each apple was treated as if there had never before been another apple. Each year you kept a close record of the harvest. "We picked 20 apples this year." "This year we picked a whole bushel of apples." You proudly recount the tally to each and every person who will listen.

Soon the harvest becomes routine. In fact, the emphasis may even change. "I've pruned and sprayed faithfully every year, but I still have wormy apples!" you report to your long-suffering friends. You may have harvested 50 bushels of good apples, but you focus on the few wormy ones you found. Year after year the tree faithfully produces as you water, fertilize, spray, and prune. But the growth is not

nearly so apparent. Concern focuses on the diseases.

Our church has gone through a similar process. We started very small. The growth was obvious. Branch by branch we grew. First it was the 2300 days and the second coming of Jesus. Then it was the sanctuary message, the Sabbath, and the health message. The first missionaries were sent out. The church organization was developed. Churches were formed. Each of these was a major spurt of growth. Even in the early years the tree had to be pruned and deadwood cut. From the beginning there were always dissidents who criticized the church. There were disagreements about theological concepts. Formal organization met great opposition from those who thought such an organization was of the devil. Each new concept and process had to be discussed, prayed about, studied, and yes, even argued over.

Church members didn't always agree even when Ellen White was given a vision. When a location for Avondale College in Australia was under study, Ellen White received a vision identifying the site. Later, when church leaders came physically to examine possible sites, Mrs. White recognized the place she'd been shown in vision. But the committee turned it down! And the most remarkable thing is that Mrs. White went right on working with the same committee. She didn't throw up her hands in disgust and say, "You have voted against what the Lord has shown me. Now I refuse to work with you until you get right with the Lord."

No, she went right on working with the committee as they examined additional sites. The wonderful thing, however, is that God is the one who is nurturing this tree

When people tell me this church isn't what it was in the fifties, I want to shout "Hallelujah!"

I call the church, and He has many miraculous ways of guiding its growth that we human gardeners do not have. And with regard to the Avondale case, He was able to overcome, in the end, the reluctance of the committee in respect to the chosen site. The turmoil and change leading up to the final selection was part of the growth of the church.

After a lifetime in this church I am encouraged, because I still see change and growth taking place. Not just in numbers, but in our theology as well. It tells me that this church is alive. The message was not presented to our pioneers in a neat package, complete from A to Z. Rather God sent each ray of light as they were able to accept it. As each new concept was studied, understood, and accepted, new light came.

There is no reason to believe that God has changed His methods. Not all of the light was startlingly new theological concepts. He led them through church organizational details, mission expansion, and financial concepts. Only a dead church would stay the same. When people tell me this church isn't what it was in the fifties, I want to shout "Hallelujah!"

We are learning there is more than one way to present the message if we are to reap a harvest of many different types of people. We have

recognized for years that we approach Muslims differently than we do Orthodox Jews. Now we are learning that we must use different approaches for the educated and uneducated, church and unchurch, young and old—and yes, even those Adventists who have been sitting in our pews their entire lifetime and have not met Jesus yet.

The message isn't different; it's just wrapped in different packages. We are learning to present Jesus first and to care about people and their heartaches and problems as He did. Jesus used different approaches with the Pharisees, the Roman soldiers, and the adulterers. This does not negate the other aspects; it's just a part of the message that we have long ignored. Perhaps becoming a caring church is the last great message for this church. Maybe it is the one that will produce the harvest that will hasten the coming of Jesus to take us all home to heaven.

I'm proud to be a part of this great apple tree. I know that it is a living tree because I see the changes and the growth. I know that it is a living tree because the heavenly Gardener is so tenderly pruning, fertilizing, spraying, and watering it. I know it's alive because it is still producing a harvest of good apples. I know it's alive because it's still being attacked by insects and fungi and diseases of all kind, engineered by the wicked sower of destruction. If it were dead, the enemy would leave it alone.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (Ps. 92:12-14). ■

Eunice Morton-Pearson is a realtor with Century 21 Associates, Ltd. She writes from Skyland, North Carolina.



Simple Remedies

SAMUEL L. DESHAY

I am a middle-aged female. What are some of the things I should consider before taking estrogens?

This is an important question, and one with which women should be more familiar.

The use of any drug has the potential of producing unexpected problems and side effects. And one must weigh the potential benefits against the potential adverse effects of such a course of action.

Estrogens have been prescribed by physicians to act as a buffer between women and some of the physical and emotional changes that take place during menopause. Some women are enthusiastic in their support of their use, while others feel no appreciable benefit.

Research indicates, however, that estrogens should be used with caution.

In postmenopausal women, estrogens have been reported to increase the risk of cancer of the uterus. Depending on the length of usage and the dosage, the risk of endometrial cancer is about fourfold—or greater—that of nonusers. There has also been data to suggest an increased incidence of breast cancer in women who take higher doses of estrogens for prolonged periods.

There appears to be no significant increase of cancer risk among those who use the hormone for less than a year. The greatest risk is reported among women who use estrogens for more than five years.

Incidentally, small doses of estrogen are sometimes used to treat prostate cancer in men. This also is linked to an increased risk of blood clots and heart attacks.

Is there a simple way to lower one's blood pressure?

One of the simplest yet apparently effective ways of lowering blood pressure is claimed by Madam Kataria, the founder of the Laughing Clubs of India. Like the late American Norman Cousins, former editor and publisher of the *Saturday Review* (who claimed he laughed away a life-

threatening form of arthritis), Kataria claims that laughter can lower the blood pressure, combat stress, boost the immune system, and provide more energy.

*Many Japanese
take long soaks in
water heated to
about 110°F.*

In India participants in Kataria's 80 clubs gather together each morning and warm up with a few ho-ho's and ha-ha's (in unison). They also reportedly raise their hands skyward to remove their inhibitions and allow the laughter to come more easily.

Centuries ago the wise man, Solomon, declared, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Prov. 17:22). Indeed, medical science agrees that a healthy sense of humor is essential to an overall sense of well-being.

I'm having trouble falling asleep. What can I do?

In Japan people are often surprised at how much Americans sleep.

One reason may have to do with the American practice of taking morning showers.

Just before retiring, many Japanese take long soaks in a tub filled with water heated to about 110°F. My own visits to Japan were often graced by a trip to the spa before bedtime, and I highly recommend it.

Years ago we taught that a neutral bath (neither too hot nor too cold) was a relaxing way to prepare for bed. One family I know reported getting their best night's sleep after following this practice.

So perhaps instead of reaching for sleeping pills to aid us in our quest of a good night's sleep, we might take a neutral bath just before retiring.

Samuel L. DeShay is a practicing physician in suburban Washington, D.C. For many years he was director of the General Conference Health Department.



UNDERCOVER KINDNESS

Giving joy can be inexpensive, but priceless.

BY GARY B. SWANSON

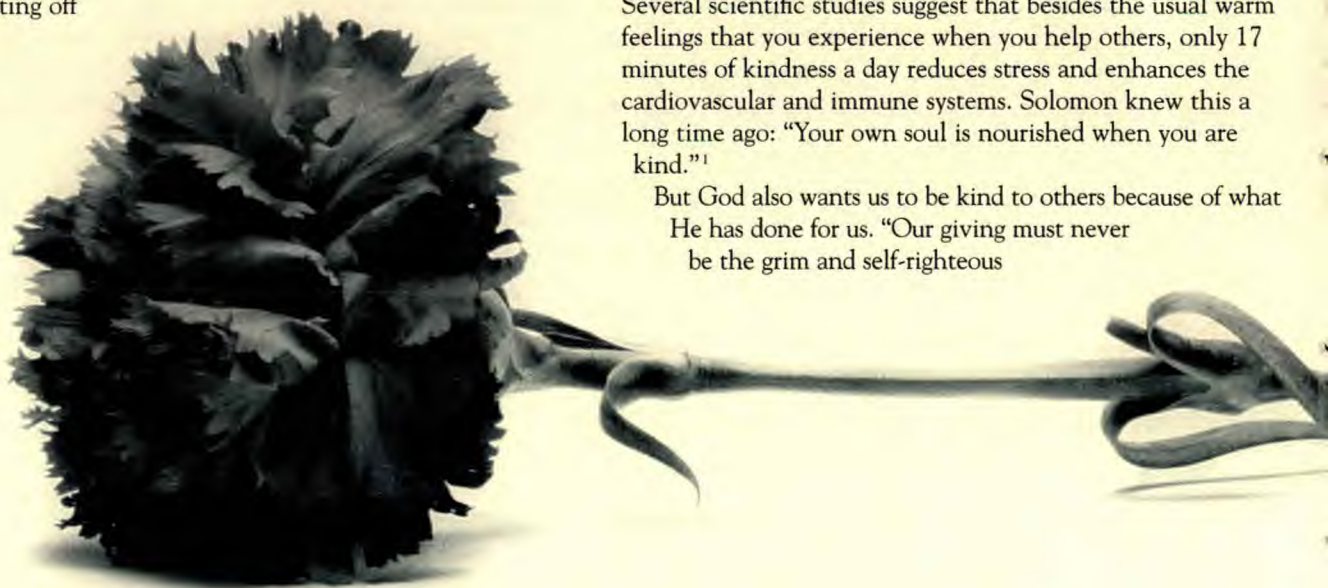
John Bowes, chair of the company that makes Frisbees, once participated in a charity effort by sending thousands of the plastic flying disks to an orphanage in Angola. He thought the children there would enjoy playing with them.

Several months later, however, when a representative of Bowes's company visited the orphanage, one of the nuns thanked him for the wonderful "plates" that his company had sent them. She told him the children were eating off

the Frisbees, carrying water with them, and even catching fish with them. When the representative explained how the Frisbees were intended to be used, the nun was even more delighted that the children would also be able to enjoy them as toys.

Sometimes when you do something nice for someone, you may have no idea how much delight and encouragement it may cause. Never underestimate the importance of gifts to others, even small ones. You will find, in fact, that kindness to someone else is actually beneficial to you. Several scientific studies suggest that besides the usual warm feelings that you experience when you help others, only 17 minutes of kindness a day reduces stress and enhances the cardiovascular and immune systems. Solomon knew this a long time ago: "Your own soul is nourished when you are kind."¹

But God also wants us to be kind to others because of what He has done for us. "Our giving must never be the grim and self-righteous



outcome of a sense of duty," writes Scottish theologian William Barclay. "Still less must it be done to enhance our own glory and prestige . . . ; it must be the instinctive outflow of the loving heart; we must give to others as Jesus Christ gave Himself to us."

Though you may take something for granted in everyday life, you may have no idea how much someone less privileged would appreciate it. Nothing is too insignificant when done in kindness to others. This is what Jesus commented on one day as He watched an impoverished woman stealthily attempt to slip a small contribution into the community chest.

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others."² The widow's mite was of more value to God than the vast contributions of those who could afford much more.

But one element of this story usually gets overlooked: the woman was trying to show her kindness *secretly*. Some would say, no doubt, that this was just a sign of her humility, that she was obviously embarrassed at the insignificance of her contribution.

Maybe.

The Secret of Being Secret

The widow was also demonstrating another important Christian principle of kindness that Jesus outlined on another occasion: "Don't do your good deeds publicly," He said, "to be admired, for then you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. . . . But when you do a kindness to someone, do it secretly—don't tell your left hand what your right hand is

doing. And your Father who knows all secrets will reward you."³

This is a radical idea. Doing things for people without their ever finding out who's responsible? That'll be the day!

Yet there are people on this earth who actually try to do just that. Gavin Whitsett, for example. This is the kind of person who sometimes, just for fun, pays the toll of the car behind him or surreptitiously drops a coupon for a free car wash into someone's grocery bag. Whitsett, a teacher of interpersonal communication at the University of Southern Indiana at Evansville, has even written a manual: *Guerrilla Kindness*.

The key to such acts, he says, is that you "must make a deliberate effort to communicate that there are no strings—you don't expect anything at all in return. . . . There's so much schmoozing and phony stuff going on in the world, you have to do your thing and then leave, so a person doesn't have to come up with some acceptance speech."

Here are just a couple of the tactics that Whitsett suggests in his book:

✿ Bury small coins in the sand under the swings and slides in a park so children will find them.

✿ On days when you can get flowers inexpensively, buy a bouquet of carnations and put one each under the windshield wipers of cars in a parking lot.

When you think about it, the ways of showing guerrilla kindness are limited only by your imagination. Just think of what would happen if a rash of this kind of activity broke out in your community, if a few thousand of

us began an underground campaign to rally to the call that has appeared on some bumper stickers: "Commit random acts of kindness."

But why, you may still be asking, should you do something kind for others if they don't have a clue why you are doing it? Jesus Himself answered this question when He said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."⁴

It is just this kind of motivation that led Mother Teresa to a lifetime of unconditional kindness: "Our work is only an expression of the love we have for God," she once said. "To us what matters is an individual. Any person is Christ for me. And since there is only one Jesus, that person is the one person in the world at that moment."

The motive for unconditional kindness is every bit as important as the gift. God can increase a gift or a favor, but He cannot increase the motive. No matter how small your kindness may be, in God's hands it can be transformed into something far greater. When John Bowes shipped thousands of Frisbees to Angolan orphans, he had no way of knowing that these mere toys would also become very practical everyday plates on which the children would eat. ■

¹ Prov. 11:17, TLB.

² Mark 12:43, NIV.

³ Matt. 6:1-4, TLB.

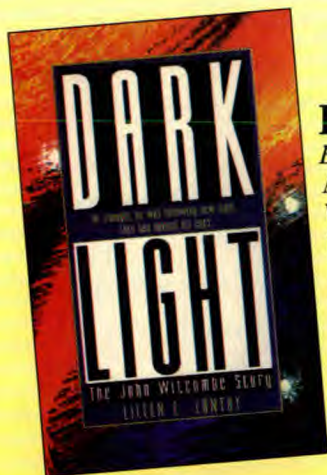
⁴ Matt. 25:40, NIV.

Gary B. Swanson is editor of the Collegiate Quarterly. He writes from Silver Spring, Maryland.



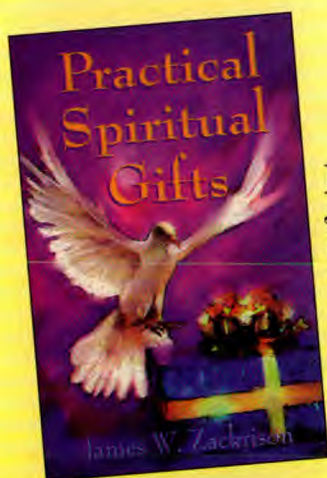
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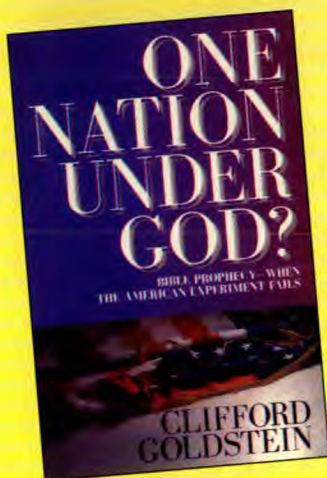
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D. REID MCCRARY

Do you live in a special house? My family and I did once. Three things made this house special: (1) it was small; (2) to get to it you had to drive over a bridge and through a lumber mill; and (3) the house was on 360 acres of trees and mountains.

We were a family of four—Papa (me), Mama, 5-year-old Andy, and 4-year-old Molly. We loved the wood smells from the lumber mill and hiking over hills and through the woods. Sometimes we would walk up the hill to the barn, sit on piles of nice-smelling hay, and have a picnic lunch and tell stories.

Other people liked our house too, and we often had visitors from the city. Do you like it when company comes to visit? Well, Andy and Molly did, because this usually meant they would have other kids to play with.

But there were two kids Molly and Andy did not look forward to seeing. I won't use their real names, because they might read this story. So I'll give them fun names—Mopsy and Flopsy. When Mopsy and Flopsy came to our house they would play with a toy for a while and get tired of it. Would they put it back where they got it? No. Never. They would drop the toy on the floor or couch and run and get another one. Soon toys would be spread all over our little house. When their mother got ready to go, they would jump up and leave all the toys scattered around. Guess who had to pick them up? Andy and Molly, of course.

One day as Andy and Molly sat on the front porch they saw Mopsy and Flopsy's car coming across the bridge. They looked at each other and exclaimed, "Uh-oh!" Then they

grabbed some water to drink and took off with their dog, Nubbins, up the hill to the barn. They played in the barn until they saw Mopsy and Flopsy's car going back over the bridge.

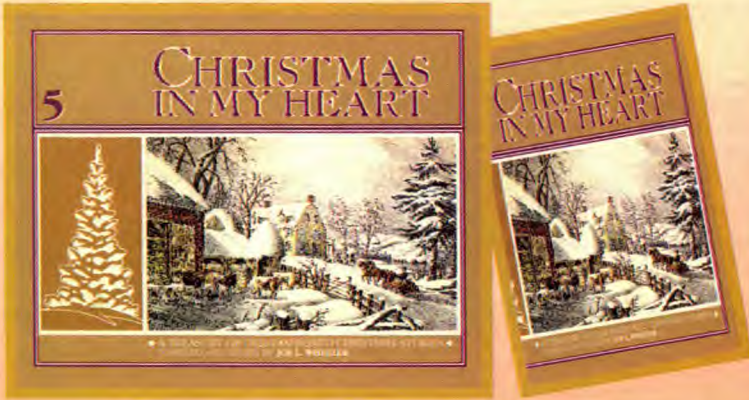
Have you ever had guests like those kids? Have you ever been a guest like them? Remember Mopsy

and Flopsy the next time you go visiting. Think of how you would like to be treated by your guests. As Jesus said: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31, NIV). Lend a helping hand when it's time to go home, and your friends will want you to come back and play again real soon.

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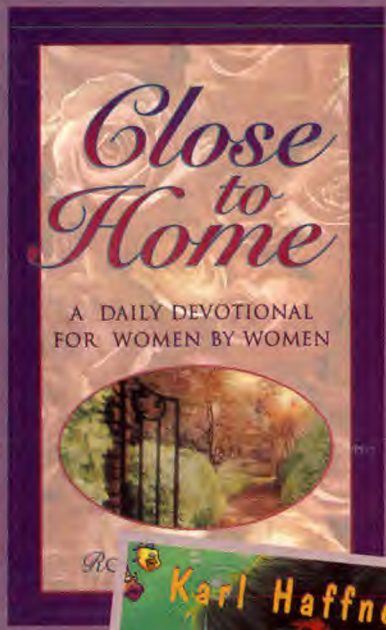
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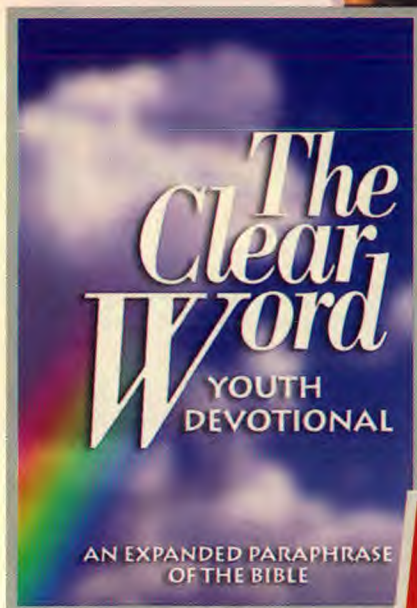
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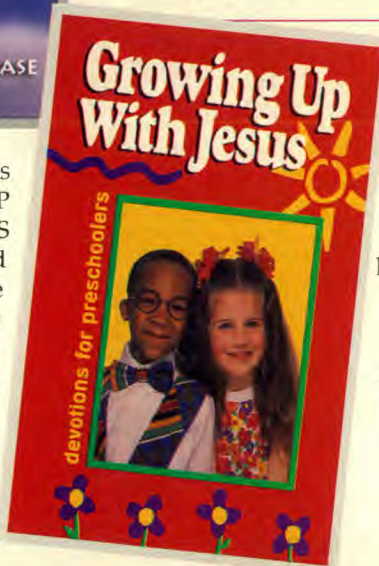


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Women's Words

ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

In our local church we've had some discussions on the meaning of the phrase "a woman . . . must be silent" (1 Tim. 2:12, NIV). We are interested in your understanding of this passage.

To understand this text we'll have to do a word study, that is, an examination of the Greek word Paul uses here, and how it appears elsewhere in the New Testament. This is not difficult, because the verb form *hēsuchazō*, "to be silent, be calm," is used only five times; the noun form *hēsuchia*, "silence, rest," is used four times; and the adjective *hēsuchos*, "quiet, tranquil," only two times.

The verb is used to express three main ideas. *First*, keeping silence in order to avoid an open confrontation (Luke 14:4). *Second*, being silent in order to bring a discussion or confrontation to an end or under control (Acts 11:18; 21:14). *Third*, in the sense of being inactive, to rest. This is illustrated in Luke 23:56, where the women "rested [were silent] on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment" (NIV). (This has an ethical content. It is, for Paul, a Christian virtue; something to which all believers should aspire [1 Thess. 4:11]. Christian life should be a silent/quiet one—free from senseless controversies or offenses to God.)

From studying the different usages of the verb we can draw the following conclusions: The verb is used most of the time in contexts in which there are tensions and/or controversies. In a few others it implies that through silence an offensive behavior is avoided. The verb designates a way of speaking that disrupts social interaction; in other words, a specific type of silence and not necessarily the absence of all speech.

The church in Jerusalem listened to Peter, and as a result they kept quiet (stopped arguing with him) "and praised God . . ." (Acts 11:18, NIV). Since the verb does not necessarily mean the absence of words but rather the absence of controversial speech, the verb can be used to express the ideas of calmness and tranquillity, thus making real communication possible.

The noun is used in basically the same way. *First*, it refers to the silence that brings to an end controversial language (Acts

22:2). *Second*, it avoids controversial and disruptive speech (1 Tim. 2:11, 12). *Finally*, it designates the quietness of the Christian life that avoids disrupting the community of believers.

It is this last usage that we also find, in the case of the adjective, "tranquil, quiet."

According to Peter, women are to adorn themselves with a "gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:4). But according to 1 Timothy 2:2 this type of quietness should be a characteristic of all believers. They are all to live "quiet lives in all godliness."

Having examined the New Testament evidence, we can now

take a closer look at 1 Timothy 2:11, 12. There is no doubt that Paul is concerned about controversies in the church. In verse 8 he exhorts men to pray "without anger or disputing." In the case of the women, the apostle is also concerned about behavior and attitudes that could be disruptive.

In order to avoid problems, he exhorts them to "learn in quietness and full submission" (verse 11), something expected of a first-century disciple (male or female). The implication is that women are described here as students, disciples, and they are being reminded of their duties as such. Paul is forbidding the speech of a student that disrupts the learning process, thus protecting the rights of others to hear and learn. The phrase "she must be silent" (verse 12) does not mean that she must remain *speechless*, but that controversial speeches are unacceptable, because they create unrest. This agrees perfectly with the use of the noun and the verb in the rest of the New Testament.

Why did Paul single out women? Possibly because some of them had become the target of false teachers and their instructions (2 Tim. 3:6). As a result, they were bringing controversies into the church. Paul forbids this type of controversial and divisive speech when he says that "a woman . . . must be silent."

*Paul forbids
controversial and
divisive speech.*

Angel Manuel Rodriguez is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference. He is also the author of several books and articles.



Opportunities for Ministry

Difficult Calls to Fill

Has God called you to take on challenging work where a great need exists, and no one has said, "Send me"? A review of difficult positions to fill in the interdivision field by the General Conference Secretariat reveals the following openings (contact the Secretariat at 301-680-6000 for details):

Surgeon: Mugonero Hospital, Rwanda. Several African nations have experienced political unrest, including Rwanda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Many expatriate families have returned to Rwanda, but no surgeon. Political conditions are only one problem. Lack of education for missionary children and employment for the spouse also make this a difficult position to fill.

Orthopedic surgeon: Cooper Memorial Hospital, Liberia. This hospital has been without a surgeon for several months. Frequent surgery cases involving gunshots or explosives reflect the country's civil unrest. Even a volunteer surgeon for a few months would help until a permanent one can be found.

Orthopedic surgeon: Masanga Leprosy Hospital, Sierra Leone. Masanga Hospital operates a major leprosy program. The search continues for a possible candidate who will go when conditions within the country permit.

Business manager: Scheer Memorial Hospital, Nepal. This position has been unfilled for more than 12 months. A qualified volunteer carried the responsibility until about two months ago.

Dermatologist: Adventist Medical Center, Okinawa, Japan.

Family practice physician: Hongkong Adventist Hospital. Hong Kong registration required.

OB-GYN physician: Tsuen Wan Adventist Hospital. Hong Kong registration required.

Pediatricians: Tsuen Wan Adventist Hospital (one) and Guam Seventh-day Adventist Clinic (two).

Volunteer Service teachers: To teach English in China and Korea.

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Rejuvenate yourself! Reenergize your heart for service! Whether you enjoy the city or a small village, you can pick an adventure for your New Year's break.

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Thailand: Help a village develop a gravity-fed water system and explore the enchanting sites of Thailand. December 26 to January 12; \$930 (travel only). Call Tony Anobile, Southern California Conference, 818-546-8449; 818-546-8430. Space is limited.



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They Still Go

Adventist Youth Service

Listed below are some of the young people of the church who have served in the mission field in 1996.

Dawn Marie Katherine Abbott, to serve as medical/geriatric, Forli Old People's Home, Forli, Italy, of Viola, Idaho.

Tamara Mae Lynn Adams, to serve as English teacher, Manaus Adventist Academy-ADRA, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil, of Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

Aaron Lane Davis, to serve as grade 3 teacher, Ebeye SDA School, Ebeye, Marshall Islands, of Rogersville, Missouri.

Jorge Roy Diaz, Jr., to serve as elementary

teacher/maintenance, River Plate Adventist University, Argentina, of Loma Linda, California.

Klaidas Gelumbauskas (UC), to serve as program assembler, of Panevezys, Lithuania.

Johnny Robert Hanuse (CaUC), to serve as TESL/Bible teacher, Japan SDA English Schools, Yokohama, Japan, of Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada.

Eric Christian Hughes (LSU), to serve as maintenance/construction worker, Majuro SDA School, Marshall Islands, of San Diego, California.

Krista Suzanne Joyce, to serve as occupational/physical therapist, Roundelwood, Crieff, Tayside, Scotland, of Lakeport, California.

Monica Puulani Kalua, to serve as English teacher, Manaus English Language School-ADRA, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil, of Kaneohe, Hawaii.

Gina Maxine Kim (LSU), to serve as teacher/evangelist, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

Erlene Deliana Pakpahan (LSU), to serve as teacher/evangelist, Korean SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Loma Linda, California.

Laurie Lynette Spilovoy (SC), to serve as nurse, ADRA/North Brazil, c/o Central Amazon Mission, Manaus, Brazil, of Greeneville, Tennessee.

Regular Missionary Service

The following persons left North America for service in other parts of the world during the summer of 1996. Please remember them in your prayers.

Jeffery James Brown, to serve as principal, Majuro SDA School System, Marshall Islands, **Joyce Irene Brown**, and two children, of Madison, Tennessee.

Luzelin S. Damayo, returning as physician, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, **Mike A. Damayo**, and three children.

David Samuel and LaRonda Rene (Curtis) Forsey, to serve as teachers, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa, and two children, of Apopka, Florida.

David Andrew George Gay, to serve as business manager/teacher, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, and **Phyllis Joyce Gay**, of Meridian, Idaho.

Wayne Albert Hamra, returning as vice president for financial affairs, Mission College, Saraburi Province, Thailand, **Sarapee (Sawini) Hamra**, and two children.

Roger Kenneth Kopitzke, to serve as director, ADRA/Vietnam, Hanoi, and **Pamela Kay Kopitzke**, of Modesto, California.

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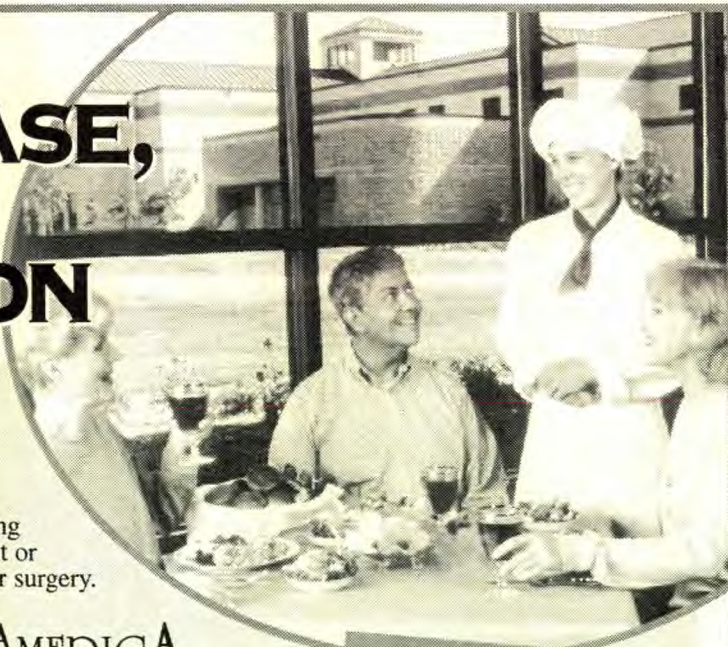
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The Music of St.-Pierre

My shoes were soggy from the rain as I stood in the portal of John Calvin's Chapel, listening to the carillon ring from the towers of the Cathédrale-St.-Pierre. It was not a fleeting shower that had soaked me, but a steady flow of water out of a heavy, gray sky, falling as though it would never stop.

On that Sabbath afternoon I stepped off the tram at the Place du Molard in Geneva and walked up the slippery stone-paved street especially to hear the organ in St.-Pierre. More than 450 years ago John Calvin himself walked this same hill within the walls of old Geneva and preached in the small chapel where I stood, only a few feet away from the cathedral.

I had arrived an hour early, and as I stepped inside St.-Pierre the carillon had begun. In spite of the rain I went back outside to listen to the music glancing off the stone buildings and the street. At the opposite corner the prophet Jeremiah stood, sculptured in timeless bronze, high on a concrete mount, his bent body and contorted face made even more intense by the rain dripping from his impassioned features.

Now I walked inside the cathedral again to wait for the organ. Others came too, perhaps 200, maybe even 300, visitors and Genevise alike. Some wore suits and ties, some had hair well-coiffured, but mostly the people around me came with tousled heads and water draining off them, wanting to hear an hour of music. They came alone, in pairs, and as families. Some were tourists, dressed in walking shorts and T-shirts, with cameras dangling from their shoulders. Mothers came with their children; young husbands brought their wives. The elderly walked in, some of them a bit unsteadily.

Beneath a lighted chandelier we sat, Gothic vaults towering above us, light from the stained-glass windows crossing the nave, and music pealing through the arches. Behind me sat a young woman, bolt upright and motionless as though carved in marble, her hands folded in her lap, her round face tilted upward, her eyes closed. Not far away a man leaned forward with shut eyes, his more than 60 years of toil clearly visible on his unshaven, leathery face. A crippled mother who had limped past me sat with her small son against her arm. A row or two ahead of me a young wife laid her blond head on her husband's shoulder.

I closed my eyes. It seemed almost irreverent to look around.

I forgot my soggy feet and the hard bench. I sensed only the power of that music and my head bowed forward in prayer.

*Lord, we have all come, just as we are,
From our work,*

*Where there is hardly ever time for rest,
From our homes,*

*Where we often labor thanklessly,
From our leisure*

*Where it is so easy to forget,
And from the street,*

Where no one cares.

*Thank You, Lord, for seeing us as we are,
Without pretention,*

Unadorned, unassuming,

Feeling so small in this place.

*We remember that You called Yourself a tender
shepherd*

Seeking the lost.

*Tonight among these resounding vaults and
vibrating arches*

You have spoken to us again,

With sounds at once awesome and sublime,

To remind us that You are also the Omnipotent.

Thank You for Your reassurance,

For trust in Your power,

For peace of mind,

And for the splendor of Your wordless promise

That You are our fortress and our protector.



The listeners around me were silent. Not until the concert ended did they applaud. The music was too powerful, too moving, too overwhelming to interrupt with human noise. Until it was over it was beyond applause.

I walked again into the wet street. The rain was still falling, perhaps more gently now on the slickened stones of Rue du Perron. Along the vine-covered walls of old Geneva lights were coming on. It was the same. But it was different now.

I shall always remember the music of St.-Pierre.

Floyd Greenleaf writes from Collegedale, Tennessee.



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Compiled by Ken and Debby Wade. Christians who know they have a Saviour have much to be joyful about! In this compilation of writings from Ellen G. White, we find a source of joy that inspires us to rejoice in the Lord always. Learn the importance of cheerfulness in all circumstances and find the source of encouragement, strength, and everlasting joy.

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Comfort (Quote Book)

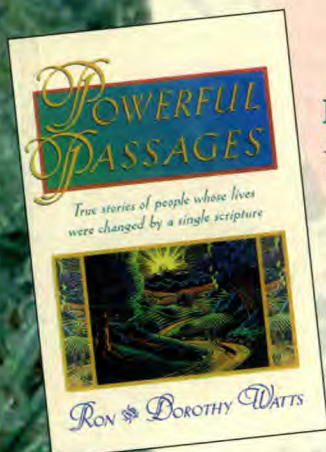
Compiled by Ken and Debby Wade. None of us are strong enough to bear up under life's great disappointments and trials alone. We all experience times when we are in need of comfort. *Comfort* invites you to see Jesus as a personal friend and as the only Comforter.

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Powerful Passages

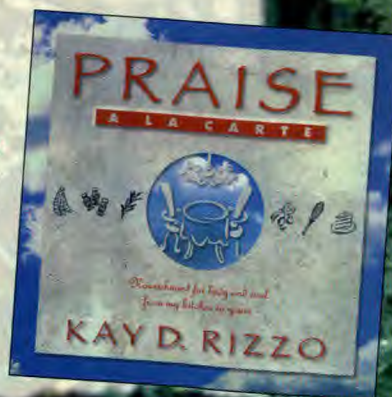
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