

ADVENTIST Review



June 12, 1997

World Edition

The God Who Calls Again

**Simple
Hospitality**

**Jesus and
Terrorism**

**Angel Rodríguez:
Idols, Old and New**

LETTERS

The Real Evangelicals . . .

I appreciated so much Robert Folkenberg's "Will the Real Evangelical Adventist Please Stand Up" (April NAD Edition). I have been an Adventist for many years, but only recently have experienced a greater joy in walking with the Lord as the Christ-centeredness of each doctrine has become more real and personal to me. Elder Folkenberg shared so beautifully and meaningfully the hand-in-hand relationship of "gospel" and "doctrine" and the difference it can make when realized.

—Edith A. Sines

MARTINSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA

Thank you for saying it so well! If our "distinctive" doctrines do not enhance our relationship with Jesus Christ, they have indeed lost their purpose. This brief introduction will, I hope, serve as a springboard to a full discussion of how this really happens.

The *Review's* candor and forthright dealing with the questions faced by the church are to be highly commended.

—Bill Waring

VIA E-MAIL

If ever words touched on one of the fundamental problems of human nature, it was Elder Folkenberg's discussion of our tendency to pit complementary truths against each other. How many sincere, searching Adventists have left the church because they haven't been shown how intimately related are church standards of lifestyle and a vibrant Christian experience?

I believe with all my heart that God is bringing His church through a maturation process designed to teach us how to think and properly, practically, relate to Bible truth—and thus to God and each other. After all, what is the final cleansing of God's people if not a cleansing of attitudes, ways of thinking, and relating?

—Paul Donnett

LAVOY MISSIONARY COLLEGE
ALBERTA, CANADA

As a Christian broadcaster at KARM radio, I come into contact with many of other denominations who call themselves "evangelical Christians." When looking at my own denomination, I see all the aspects of an evangelical organization, but when the word "evangelical" is mentioned in Adventist circles, a sigh of disgust is heard.

I feel a very definite connection with these dear brothers and sisters as we look at the cross. They and I are all saved by faith in Jesus. Yet I have felt a sense of guilt and shame because of the attitudes of other Adventists.

This article gave me the confidence to move forward, proudly claiming the title of an evangelical Christian. I love the Sabbath and the other doctrines of our church and would not trade them for anything. But I also feel a loving connection with other Christians. Thank you, Elder Folkenberg, for setting my mind at ease.

—Chuck O'Dell

VISALIA, CALIFORNIA

While this article does an excellent job in sorting out the conflict between gospel and doctrine, it leaves out a major core issue in Adventism. The problem that some Adventists have is not so much with the doctrines themselves, but with how these doctrines were taught.

Adventists in general lack skills on how to integrate their faith into their lives. It is easier for many Adventists to digest information and knowledge. We need to develop processes by which our people learn *how* faith works in their lives.

—Sergio Torres

MIAMI, FLORIDA

Sharing Power

In "Sharing Power: God's New Design for Personal Relationships" (Apr. 10), Ron Flowers says, "A true understanding of the New Testament shows that the gospel *reverses* the curse, nullifying it, freeing believers from it. The gospel does not simply enable us to live more graciously with it." This refers to the curse God pronounced on woman in Genesis 3:16 regarding her relationship to her husband.

In Genesis 3:16-19, God pronounced curses on both the woman and the man. It is interesting that the only curse Flowers says is reversed is the only one possible for humans to do anything about. What woman who has borne children wouldn't also like to reverse the curse of pain in childbirth or man to change the curse requiring him to work by the sweat of his brow for food? But these we can do nothing about.

My point is not concerning the

husband-wife relationship, but our interpretation of Scripture. It seems we often find ways to make Scripture say what we want it to say.

—**Delbert Gennetten**
SEDALIA, COLORADO

Regarding Ron Flowers' teeter-totter analogy ("sharing power") and Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson's reasons why we all deserve respect ("Who Are We?" Apr. 10).

I believe all organizations, including churches, should manage themselves [from the] bottom up, respect the rights of their members to think and choose, and encourage them systematically to contribute their ideas, participate significantly in decision-making that affects them, and evaluate those who supervise them—with the associated right to recall or transfer the incompetent or dictatorial ones.

Those beliefs have led me to challenge my university administration on such matters as management style and faculty rights. A person close to me has called my endeavor "quixotic." I was therefore very pleased to find in the two articles mentioned several powerful arguments that can help me. Thank you, *Adventist Review*!

—**Hector Hammerly, Ph.D.**
BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Street Smarts (cont.)

Andy Nash's "Street Smarts" (Mar. 20) triggered some serious theological contemplation. Each of us has a set of skills (sometimes called spiritual gifts) that can help us to witness in areas and situations where other believers might have difficulty. If we would actually believe and live this, we might spend more energy building up the strengths of our fellow believers and less energy being judgmental about activities in which we think someone else may be involved.

—**David W. Swenson**
DENSENZANO DEL GARDA, ITALY

Crime and Punishment

In "Crime and Punishment" (April NAD Edition) Gina and Loretta give us the choice between plague and cholera. Gina is concerned that "criminals are not made to pay for their crimes," speaking specifically about the death penalty. Loretta believes that "there are people who should die slow, painful deaths" in order to experience the suffering their victims experienced. Gina seems to think that she has God's support for the death penalty in this life, Loretta that God will administer the appropriate amount of torture when this life is over.

If these two views reflect the options offered to Adventists today, I suggest that we have a lot of serious thinking to do on this subject.

—**Sigve Tonstad**
OSLO, NORWAY

Speaking from behind the walls of correction, I challenge Gina to put down the first stone and spend an afternoon with any prison ministries group witnessing instead of sentencing. An educated guess tells me her heart would soften. Sorry—as much as she'd like to flip the switch, we don't go away that easily. See you in heaven, sister in Christ.

—**"Skip"**
ORANGE COUNTY (CALIFORNIA) JAIL

Sleepless in Sacramento

Wow! I'm really impressed! It's taken me one whole month to find Herald's trumpet in the March 20 issue. I looked through the magazine about eight times, going very slowly, and at 12:30 a.m. there it was. Now I can go to bed.

—**Karen Reynolds**
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Looks like another late night for you. The trumpet's in this issue. —Editors.

ADVENTIST Review

COVER STORY

8 The God Who Calls Again

It's a big story—of a big and merciful God.

BY JO ANN DAVIDSON

ARTICLES

16 The Best Medicine

It seemed as though the doctors had nothing to offer. Then God used a woman.

BY ERASMUS A. OKPOTI,
AS TOLD TO JAPHETH L. AGBOKA

24 Simple Hospitality

The blessings of an open heart and an open door.

BY SUSAN WHITTED

28 Jesus and Terrorism

He had no control over who responded to His call. Or did He?

BY JAMES A. DITTES

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Letters
- 7 Give & Take
- 14 Bible Questions Answered
- 18 World News & Perspectives
- 26 Children's Corner
- 27 Faith Alive!
- 30 Reflections

EDITORIALS

- 5 Food for Thought
- 6 You Won't Know When You Have It

NEXT WEEK

The Theology of Chilling Out
Resisting the tyranny of the trivial

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.

The *Adventist Review* (ISSN 0161-1119), published since 1849, is the general paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is published by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is printed 40 times a year each Thursday except the first Thursday of each month by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association. Periodicals postage paid at Hagerstown, MD 21740. Copyright © 1997.

Publishing Board: Robert S. Folkenberg, chair; Phil Follett, vice-chair; Lowell Cooper; William G. Johnson; A. C. McClure; Ted N. C. Wilson; Dorothy Watts; Martin Yreberg; Robert Nison, legal advisor

Executive Publisher and Editor William G. Johnson

Associate Editor Roy Adams

Managing Editor Myrna Tetz

News Editor Carlos Medley

Assistant Editor Stephen Chavez

Assistant Editor Andy Nash

Editorial Assistant Ella Rydzewski

Administrative Secretary Chitra Barnabas

Editorial Secretaries Mary Maxson, Jean Sequeira

Art Director Bill Kirstein

Designer Bill Tymeson

Design Assistant Alan Forquer

Desktop Production Stephanie Kaping

Ad Sales Melynie Tooley

Subscriber Services Steve Hanson

Director, Periodical Sales Ginger Church

Consulting Editors: Robert S. Folkenberg, Matthew Bediako, Phil Follett, Robert J. Kloosterhuis, A. C. McClure, Jan Paulsen, Leo Ransolin, R. F. Rawson, Calvin B. Rock, G. Ralph Thompson

Special Contributors: Bryan Ball, M. E. Cherian, P. D. Chun, L. T. Daniel, Ulrich Frikart, Lee Huff, Israel Leito, Ruy H. Nagel, L. D. Raelly, Bertil Wiklander

To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. (Please query before submitting long articles.) Include address, telephone number, and Social Security number, where available. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Editorial office fax number: (301) 680-6638.

E-mail: Internet: reviewmag@adventist.org
CompuServe network: 74617.15

Subscriptions: US\$38.97 for 40 issues, US\$50.97 for 52 issues. Add \$10.20 postage for addresses outside North America. To order, send your name, address, and payment to your local Adventist Book Center or *Adventist Review* Subscription Desk, Box 1119, Hagerstown, MD 21741. Single copy, US\$2.50. Prices subject to change without notice.

Subscription queries and changes of address: Call 1-800-456-3991 or 301-791-7000, ext. 2439.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Adventist Review*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

Scriptures credited to ICB are quoted from the *International Children's Bible, New Century Version*, copyright © 1983, 1986, 1988 by Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas 75039. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977. Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Texts credited to NKJV are from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Bible texts credited to RSV are from the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Vol. 174, No. 24

\$9,808*

(And That's Not Just Tuition!)

That's right! The number above reflects what an average **Kettering College of Medical Arts** student will spend to go to school for one year, everything included, period.

Consider attending **KCMA** where you will take advantage of educational opportunities, outstanding dorms, student activities, outreach programs, intramurals and all the other things you should experience in college, for a price that is very affordable. Even if you're not interested in health care, **KCMA** is fully accredited by the Ohio Board of Regents and the North Central Association of Colleges and School, so our credit is transferable.

Consider one of the major areas listed below or general education at **KCMA**. You can't afford not to!

Medical Sonography

Nursing

Radiologic Technology

Special Procedures in Radiologic Technology

Nuclear Medicine

Physician Assistant

Respiratory Care

Pre-Professional programs

For More Information Contact:

College Relations
Kettering College of Medical Arts
3737 Southern Boulevard
Kettering, OH 45429
1-800-433-KCMA

www.ketthealth.com/KCMA



Kettering College of Medical Arts

*The figure \$9,808 is based on average student expenditures and includes books/supplies, room and board, fees and tuition for two semesters. Call us for details.

Food for Thought

ROY ADAMS

The honorable gentleman had just run into fellow editor Steve Chavez; and now, within seconds, he was meeting me. "You Adventists are all over the place," he joked as we walked together toward the banquet hall. Then he was serious: "Seventh-day Adventists are known for their strong stand against Sunday legislation, and I'm on your side."

Senator Paul Simon¹ had come to the downtown Chicago hotel to deliver the keynote address at the opening banquet of the Associated Church Press's annual meeting.

As the speech got under way, I found myself totally captivated by its down-to-earth wisdom and common sense. Candid, utterly transparent, and passionate, the senator breathed an uncommon credibility.

Three emphases, above others, stand out in my mind:

1. His call to transcend popular sentiment

What we have in the United States today, Simon said, is a climate of pandering—a tendency to cater, uncritically, to public opinion and sentiment. Citing the news media as particularly culpable, he noted that the O. J. Simpson trial received overwhelmingly more coverage in the U.S. press than the fall of the Berlin Wall. And the media's attitude is: "We're giving the people what they want."

Even governments play to the gallery today, Simon said. We govern by polls, making critical decisions of public policy purely on the basis of popular sentiment.

It's an issue not irrelevant for Adventists. Every leader walks a fine line between riding roughshod over the opinion of the people on one hand, and catering to the lowest common denominator on the other. This makes it imperative, especially given the social and spiritual instability of our times, that church leaders move beyond concern for what is popular to what is right—always ready to face the ultimate question: "Is there any word from the Lord?" (See Jer. 37:17, NIV.)

2. His call for commitment to the poor

As a society, Simon said, we cannot afford to waver in our commitment to the poor—whether in our own backyard or across the sea. Recalling a visit to a refugee camp in Malawi some years ago, Simon told of spotting a little boy among the hundreds seated before him on the bare ground—his eyes blistered, sore, and infested with flies. "Will someone be helping this boy?" he asked an aid worker

following his talk. "Senator," the worker replied, "we can take only the most urgent cases."

Fighting back tears, Simon suggested that we'll begin to live up to our responsibility as enlightened citizens only when we come to the realization that the world is one, and that that refugee boy in Malawi is connected—in some mysterious way—to our own son or daughter, wherever we might live in the world.

It's an emphasis in need of renewal, especially at a time when the world community, against the sheer magnitude of recent natural and human-made disasters, has begun to experience humanitarian fatigue.

3. The influence of big money

"Some people think politicians are in the pockets of big donors," Simon said, responding to a question on political campaign contributions, "but it's not quite as crass as that."

"The issue, however, is access," he said. Tired on the campaign trail, you get back to your hotel in the middle of the night and find you've got 20 calls to return. Nineteen of them are from unknowns, but one is from a big donor whose name you recognize. Supposing you were able to return just one call, Simon asked, which one is it likely to be?

Our situation in the church is not exactly parallel. Church leaders do not build campaign war chests. But might we be equally vulnerable? Does not money talk to us as well?² Can we honestly say that every member of the church has equal access to us, regardless of their financial contribution? Is our model the meek and lowly One, to whom little people who could give nothing had full access?

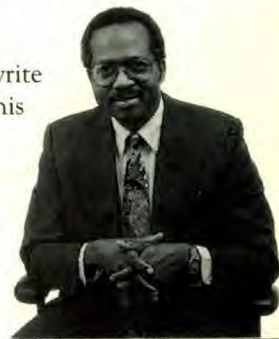
The bow-tied senator from Illinois was addressing political issues relevant to Americans, but I found myself drawing parallels for the church. The banquet cuisine—for vegetarians, anyway—was nothing to write home about. But the gentleman, with his down-home wisdom, had given this Adventist leader much food for thought.

¹ Simon recently retired from the U.S. Senate.

² See my editorial "Does Money Talk to You?" *Adventist Review*, June 17, 1993, p. 5.



Senator Paul Simon



S.I.U. PHOTO COMMUNICATIONS

You Won't Know When You Have It

James claims that God opposes the proud (James 4:6, NIV), which seems to profile humility as a virtue we should all attain. Pursuing humility is not easy—I know, for I've tried. Other people have found it difficult too. One person says he is a humble servant and proud of it. Another admits that it is hard to be humble when she is so perfect. A third helps others to attain humility because he looks down on people who look down on people.

It's such an elusive Christian virtue that it defies almost any kind of search. Last fall my husband and I moved from what we thought was a fairly adequate home on a good piece of acreage to a 25-year-old house trailer that had lost most of its appeal with the passage of time. We hoped this move would, besides enhancing our financial status, demonstrate abject humility to our family, friends, and colleagues. Fund-raising, my husband's job, would be better taught by example, would it not?

Mice, frozen pipes, water leaks, a fire, electrical problems, and a cat in a wall (which necessitated taking that portion of the trailer apart) brought at least a high degree of annoyance. We discovered the humility dream a great way off as we wished for something better.

A friend of mine announced she was going to heaven. There was no doubt about it. She had volunteered to greet at a series of evangelistic meetings, and as she arrayed herself with this I'm-better-than-you attitude, I smiled at her banter, wishing the attainment of sainthood was just that easy. Of course, had she been serious, her pride would have wiped away any credit she may have imagined was recorded in heaven's accounting department.

It's very possible, though, that we have the same problem. We consciously (oh, don't we wish it were unconscious) do good in the unspoken belief that it will aid in our quest for humility. We might participate in the Communion service, for we know that breeds humility. Helping at the food bank and the ADRA appeal should give us the occasion to feel some pity (even *Seinfeld's* Kramer says

pity is underrated) for those who have less than we do. Buying something from young people selling cookies or greeting cards to raise money for their travel to help at the orphanage in Belize should receive consideration. There's a double benefit here—you're being generous (a potential humility producer) and you're helping someone else learn the good feelings it brings.

The children of Israel were apparently in need of this gift, for they were given the assurance of forgiveness if they would humble themselves and pray. The prophet Huldah told King Josiah that because he humbled himself before God and tore his robes and wept, he would be gathered to his fathers and buried in peace. Peter admonishes the young men to humble them-

selves under God's mighty hand that He may lift them up in due time (1 Peter 5:5, 6).

Mother Teresa's example has not escaped our notice either. We read about her in the newspapers and watch her ministry on TV. The publicity she receives for her self-effacing lifestyle begs the question "Does she know she has it?"

Probably not, for the major problem with any quest for humility is that *when you think you have it, you don't*.

"Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people," says William Temple. "It means freedom from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all." Temple suggests that being occupied a great deal about yourself and saying you are of little worth is not Christian humility. He concludes that "it is one form of self-occupation and a very poor and futile one at that."

Christ did not accept any credit for Himself for anything He did. By the same spirit, anything we accomplish is a gift from God. Any love we bestow, any money we share, any soup we offer, is inspired by Him and done through Him. As we respond to His voice, we won't know when we get it. In fact, we won't even give it a thought.

The major problem with any quest for humility is that when you think you have it, you don't.



GIVE & TAKE

WANTED: YOUR ADVICE

So you've discovered a great new activity for junior Sabbath school. Or a Christmas musical that worked wonderfully. Or a fresh collection of worship songs. Or a dynamite way to reach your community. *Why keep it to yourself?*

Send your favorite church-related tips (keep them brief) to "Jots & Tittles" at the Give & Take address below, and we'll print them on this page. (Please include phone number.)

WE NEED YOU

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

HONK IF YOUR LEADER NEEDS IT

What we can learn from geese

■ They fly in a V formation, which takes less energy than flying solo.

■ The lead goose has the difficult job of breaking the wind barrier, so they rotate leadership.

■ Geese honk as they fly. If one drops out and breaks the efficiency equation, the others honk encouragement to the leader.

■ If a goose is hurt in flight, two others accompany it to the ground and help it.

—Richard Melendez, Lynwood, California (adapted from the Konnoak Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina)



ILLUSTRATION © DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

ADVENTIST QUOTES

"The most beautiful invitation in any language, whether it be English, Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans, or Portuguese, is when Jesus says, 'Come, come now.'"

—Pastor P's Martiens Malherbe, in a sermon entitled "Come Unto Me" at the Anerley church, Anerley, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

"You are now entering the mission field."

—A large sign seen by those leaving the Joshua, Texas, church parking lot

"A wee little man."

—Three-year-old Ashley Riddle, of Healdsburg, California, when her mom, Carla, asked if she remembered what Zacchaeus was

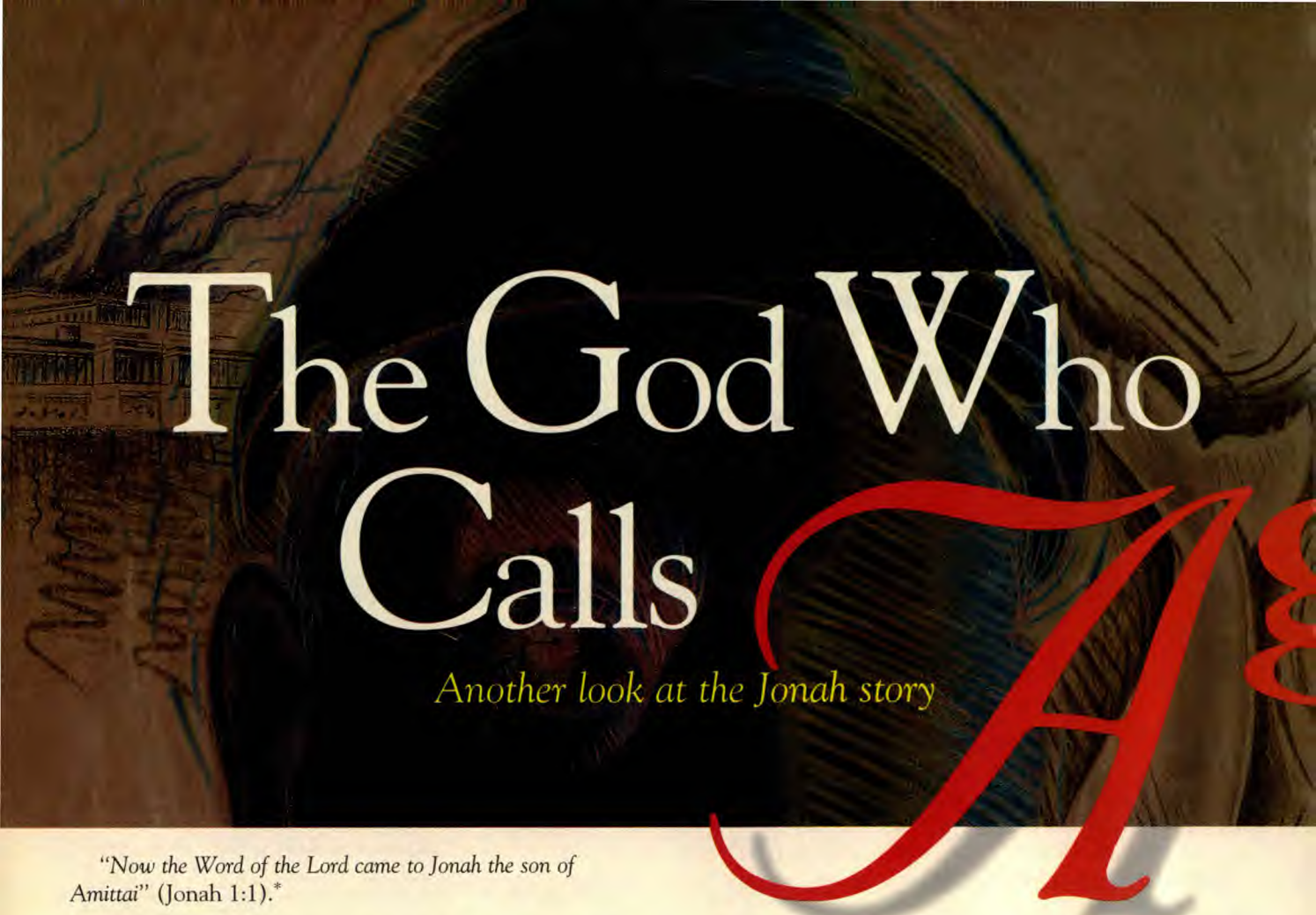
"Aaron and some lady."

—Eight-year-old Ronnie Rankin, of Lincoln, Nebraska, after his grandmother Ruth read the story of Aaron and Hur and then asked who held up Moses' hands



GRAND-MOTHERLY LOVE

LEAN ON ME: On a longhouse in Sabah (on the island formerly known as Borneo), a boy and his grandma take a midday rest. The boy is the nephew of the Sabah Mission president. *Photo by Dick Duerksen.*



The God Who Calls

Another look at the Jonah story

*"Now the Word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai" (Jonah 1:1).**

CONSIDER THAT GOD CALLS PEOPLE BY name. He knows our parentage and background. He knew Jonah was the son of Amittai. When God summons people, He doesn't just say, "Hey, you." He calls them by name.

A belief in the God of Scripture gives us personhood and authenticity. The modern philosophical movement of "existentialism" says that there is no ultimate purpose to life. Existentialists insist that human life is meaningless and absurd. But biblical Christians think differently. We believe that the Lord of heaven and earth has given each of us life and a destiny, and that He even knows us by name!

God called Jonah and said, "Arise, go to Nineveh" (Jonah 1:2).¹ "Among the cities of the ancient world in the days of divided Israel one of the greatest was Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian realm."² To obey God's commission, Jonah would have to make a tremendous journey across the desert—about 750 miles on foot. Yet it was not really the travel that distressed him, but rather Nineveh itself.

"Nineveh?" Jonah must have gasped. "The capital of Israel's worst enemy?" For Jonah, Nineveh meant the center of Assyrian power, the menacing threat to Israel's survival. The city of Nineveh itself was the epitome of everything Jonah hated about the Gentiles. He knew its reputation as an idolatrous, sin-ridden city, and nothing was more repulsive, repugnant, or distressing than going there to preach repentance.

God knows all people and all places by name—and we can never presume to know what God is going to do next. Who would have thought that God had any plans but judgment for the wicked city of Nineveh? This should remind us that we cannot always predict whom God is going to convert next. The next person on God's calendar may surprise us.

He surely surprised Jonah! For He sent him to a Gentile city—one of the most renowned cities of heathendom on the face of the earth.

And on top of that, God was sending him on a precedent-



gain

breaking mission. Of all God's messengers, only Jonah had ever received such a commission. The Lord did a new thing by Jonah—a startling and marvelous new thing upon the earth. He violated all current Israelite expectations by manifesting His care for people outside the seed of Abraham. He was sending His first apostle to the Gentiles!

However, Jonah seemed to prefer a funnel of God's providence targeted exclusively on the Israelites. The drama of the situation was profound. And a contest of wills between Jonah and Yahweh began with God's command: "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2). Archaeologists have excavated numerous ancient Assyrian inscriptions. And

from these we are reminded that God was accurate in His particular concern over their self-confident pride and their cruelty.³

Examine God's pronouncement: "Their wickedness has come up before Me." This is formal legal language. The Lord is seated in His court. We are ushered before God the judge. A case is to be called and judged. We are reminded that all nations come under His rule. Regardless of some modern voices that seek to soothe our consciences with an exclusive "God is love," we observe here (and all through Scripture) that God notices human wickedness. Thus this was a very serious situation.

But there came another surprise, for this announcement was also an indication of God's mercy. Yes, the people of Nineveh were notoriously wicked, and Jonah was commissioned

to bring Nineveh a judgment message.

However, the Assyrians could be grateful for that. The greatest curse that can ever be brought against a nation or a people is for God to turn away, as He had announced through Hosea: "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone" (Hosea 4:17).

But the mercy granted to Nineveh was just the beginning of God's astonishing attention to details. We have noted God calling a person by name and commissioning him or her. This is a frequent Old Testament pattern. But what happened next was far from routine.

"But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). The shocking surprise was Jonah's stark refusal to shoulder his task. Moses and Jeremiah also initially shrank from their divine assignments, but Jonah's blunt defiance went far beyond their

hesitation. As a result, what ensued was an accumulation of hair-raising phenomena, one after the other, as God pursued Jonah. The violent sea storm, Jonah's survival in the belly of a fish, the mass conversion of a great pagan city—these were not routine.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Notice in verse 3 that in just one verse we are informed twice that Jonah fled “from the presence of the Lord.” One time would be shocking enough. However, this duplication in a single verse compels attention to the irony of anyone, let alone a prophet, thinking they can escape from the presence of the Lord! Notice, too, that Jonah did not just depart—he fled!

Furthermore, three times in this same verse we are notified of Jonah going “to Tarshish,” which punctuates the fact that Jonah was traveling in a diametrically opposite direction from God's instructions! Nineveh is north-east. Tarshish is west. This verse emphasizes three times the magnitude of Jonah's rebellion.

As he “thought of the difficulties and seeming impossibilities of this commission, he was tempted to question the wisdom of the call.” I mean, what “could be gained by proclaiming such a message in that proud city”?¹⁴ Maybe if he just ignored these divine instructions, doom would come to the despised Gentiles, for they surely would not think of repentance on their own. Jonah may have thought that if God had a little more time to think about the situation, He might change His mind.

There are some people today who are of the opinion that God actually matures. This contemporary theory is termed “process theology.” The understanding is that God's thinking ripens through experience just as ours does—God's mind improves as it processes what happens in His creation.

In other words, God becomes wiser by watching what transpires, and He discovers better ways of administering His kingdom.

The account of Jonah (and of all Scripture) strongly contradicts this perspective. For it reveals to us just how diligent God was in getting His message to Nineveh. God did not learn from Jonah. Nor did He make mistakes. Jonah remained His chosen messenger even though he refused the assignment and tried to escape. Nor did God change His mind about Nineveh.

“But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea” (Jonah 1:4). For Jonah's sake a tempest was unleashed. It whipped up the ocean and caused the ship to founder. But its purpose was to smash Jonah's inflexibility. The elements of nature and many innocent sailors were engaged in the adventure with Jonah and because of him.

The extensive confession of both the Old and New Testaments (see, for example, Jer. 23:19, 20; Ps. 107:23-31) is that the functioning of all nature is dependent on God's action. Scriptural testimony opposes contemporary views in which the universe is considered a closed and secular system allowing no place for the action of God.

Right here in the book of Jonah the wind has begun to blow. The tempest is stirred—God has acted. God went to extreme measures to show Jonah how much He loved him—and Nineveh. This was a sign of His special grace.

God thought His message so important, and the person He elected so consequential, that He brought nature into play to help this chosen person fulfill his task. As God wrestled with Jacob at the brook Jabbok, so now He began to wrestle with Jonah. One of the major underlying themes of this book is the dogged persistence of God. Jonah

disobeyed and was trying to escape God, but God pursued him relentlessly. “Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god” (Jonah 1:4, 5). To their credit, these pagan sailors could see that this was no ordinary storm, but one divinely instigated.

“But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship” (verse 5). As we noted initially, twice the text mentions that Jonah tried to “flee from the presence of the Lord,” emphasizing the futility of what Jonah was trying to do. Now we are informed for the third time that Jonah “went down.” The first two times are in verse 3, when Jonah, trying to escape God's command, “went down” to Joppa and “went down” into the ship. In verse 5 we see that he “went down into the lowest parts of the ship.” Jonah just kept going down and down and down in his miscalculated attempts to escape his divine commission.

The storm raged dangerously, and the captain of the ship, “distressed beyond measure,”¹⁵ checked the ship from stem to stern and found Jonah asleep.

“Arise,” he said. Note the close similarity of the captain's exclamation and Jonah's original summons from God in verse 2, “Arise.” The word must have mocked Jonah. This was the very word with which God had disturbed his pleasant life a few days before. “Arise, call on your God” (verse 6). Note the irony of a heathen skipper pleading with a Hebrew prophet to pray to his God.

“So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah” (verse 7). Notice Jonah's response. He evaded all the questions about his town, country, and occupation and admitted only to the fourth inquiry: “I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven” (verse 9). Again, what delicious irony: Jonah did not want to carry salvation to Nineveh.

But now he was forced to speak of God to pagan sailors on the ship.

Jonah acknowledged that the God he worshiped was not merely a nationalistic deity, but that He was Yahweh, the God of heaven and earth, the Creator Himself.

"What is this you have done?" the mariners implored. "Why have you not obeyed so great a God, and how did you think to escape the hand of the Creator Himself?" These are words of amazement and wonder, an exclamation of horror at Jonah's flight from the God of heaven and earth. The frightening storm preached the omnipotence of God to the mariners more powerfully than words could possibly have done.

The sailors were impressed in spite of Jonah, for they certainly saw nothing particularly good or virtuous in him. In fact, what moved them was that they saw he was a disobedient man. But behind all this, they saw that there is a real God out there, a God who is in control! God had broken through in spite of His recalcitrant messenger.

"What shall we do to you?" they asked (verse 11). They had acknowledged the God Jonah worshiped. Now they asked him what attitude they should take. The sailors confessed their fear and sought the remedy. "What can we do that God should not be angered? You tell us and we will obey."

Jonah replied, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me" (verse 12). Jonah was no pious martyr. He knew he deserved death for his profound disobedience. He knew the Hebrew Scriptures and their teaching that the wicked will die. He knew that his ignoble disobedience had put everyone in jeopardy, but he stubbornly chose to drown rather than repent. What might have happened if

Jonah had repented of his defection right there and called for God to save him, the crew, and the ship? What an opportunity Jonah missed to witness.

After struggling for a while in vain to save Jonah's life, the sailors faced the awful choice. "So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging" (verse 15). And with the immediate change in the storm, the arm of the holy God was so suddenly manifested that the sailors "feared Jehovah with great fear." They had feared the storm greatly, but now they "feared the Lord exceedingly" (verse 16).

Such a stark contrast between Jonah and the sailors. The pagan mariners had been willing to do everything in their power to save Jonah's skin. Jonah was unwilling to make any such effort for the pagan Ninevites. Jonah, although orthodox in his beliefs, responded to God in disobedience. He claimed to fear God, but his actions contradicted his confession.

But what happened to Jonah? "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah" (verse 17). And "Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly" (Jonah 2:1).

Nowhere in his prayer, however, did he mention his rebelliousness and sin. He recognized that his troubles were great, but Jonah never acknowledged why all this had happened to him.

This prayer of Jonah should remind us that we can pray in the midst of failure, when our distress has been caused by our own disobedience. Often that is when it is most difficult to pray. Our self-condemnation makes us think that either we have no right to call on God or, if we do, we surely do not deserve His help. But Jonah discovered God's grace at the precise moment that his situation seemed hopeless—when to all appearances nothing

should be expected from God. At last Jonah learned that "salvation is of the Lord" (verse 9).

But what happened to Jonah? "So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land" (verse 10). Jonah was deposited on the beach. There Yahweh still awaited him.

"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time" (Jonah 3:1). Hug those words! Surely these are some of the most encouraging words in Scripture! Jonah deliberately and stubbornly rebelled against God. But marvel that even his disobedience was not enough to make God turn His back on him. The wonder is that despite his disobedience God called him. He is the God of the "second time"—Abraham's, Jacob's, David's, Peter's. "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren'" (Luke 22:32).

"Yet 40 days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). Jonah was again commanded to proclaim the startling message. It was a proclamation of judgment. And the response of the Ninevites was unbelievable. From high society to the hovel, every segment of Ninevite society humbled itself before God. From the king to the beggar, everyone put on "sackcloth and sat in ashes" (verse 6).

"God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them" (verse 10). The Ninevites did more than perform proper deeds of penance. They changed inwardly. "They turned from their evil way." Thus, paradoxically, Jonah's prediction was true. Nineveh was "overturned"!

Yet another surprise awaits us. "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and

he became angry" (Jonah 4:1). The overturning of the Ninevites resulted in turning away God's wrath (Jonah 3:10). But this caused an adverse effect on Jonah (Jonah 4:1). The Hebrew reads: "It burned to him." His reaction stops us in our tracks.

The issue for Jonah was not so much that God repented, but for whom He repented—this indiscriminate extension of divine compassion to notoriously wicked people. Sharing His mercy with the corrupt Ninevites? God should be more strict with His benevolence, Jonah thought. Jonah was furious at God's slowness to anger!

"He prayed to the Lord and said, 'Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness, One who relents from doing harm'" (verse 2). For the first time Jonah openly revealed the reason he tried to evade his call to Nineveh. He was concerned about his own reputation if God did not come through with the predicted judgment.

However, the wicked Ninevites were really no different from Jonah. All of them were rebellious sinners deserving only punishment. Yet God had graciously decided to show mercy to both. Jonah was willing to accept this mercy in his own case, but not for Nineveh. And so he begged God in Jonah 4:3: "Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" Jonah just couldn't comprehend why God had extended Nineveh's probation. He did not want to live if God could forgive the wicked Assyrians.

"Then the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?'" (verse 4). It was a mild response. He would have liked Jonah to come to his senses and see

the childishness of his behavior. The Lord could not have been more gentle with Jonah. Helping this person become a more mature believer seemed to be a goal second only to the salvation of Nineveh. He was chal-

"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time." Hug those words! Surely these are some of the most encouraging words in Scripture!

lenging Jonah to think again about his reaction, to analyze the way he had set his mind.

What was God's response to Jonah's anger? He acted out a parable (see Jonah 4:4-8). Like the great fish, the worm was now God's instrument, and like the great fish, it obeyed.

Jonah's attitude demanded of God that He destroy. So God did just that, to see how Jonah liked his theology coming true in his own life. God sent a weevil and a hot wind, and the shade plant withered, and Jonah was miserable and ready to die. He was more passionate about punishing

Nineveh's disobedience than obeying the Lord Himself.

"Then he wished death for himself, and said, 'It is better for me to die than to live'" (verse 8). These are Jonah's last words in the narrative. He ended, as did his actions in the beginning, opposing God.

But Jonah did not have the last word. Yahweh posed another question: "Is it right for you to be angry?" God inquired (verse 9). "Let us analyze this anger of yours, Jonah," God proposed. "It suggests your concern over this plant, but what did it really mean to you? Your attachment to it could not have been very deep, for it was here one day and gone the next. Your concern was dictated by self-interest, not by a genuine love. You never had for it the devotion of the gardener. If you feel as bad as you do, what would you expect a gardener to feel like who carefully tends a garden and watches it grow, only to see it wither and die? This is how I feel about Nineveh, Jonah, only much more so. All those people, even all those animals—I made them. I have cherished them all these years.

Nineveh has cost Me no end of effort, and its people mean the world to Me. Your pain is nothing compared to Mine when I contemplate their destruction."

Nowhere in the Bible do the personhood of God and His entanglement in our human situation stand more clearly revealed than here. A person's troubles are dwarfed by God's own hurt.

So, said the Lord, "should I not spare Nineveh?"

How much greater the mercy of God than even that of His chosen people!

Jonah had become a recipient of God's grace in a way no different from that which would be the case for

Nineveh—quite apart from the question of justice. This is one of the major themes of this narrative. And this is at the very center of the argument between God and Jonah.

All this brings us to the very heart of God's love. In reality God abhors sin, but He cannot bear the loss of any person. He detests evil because it destroys life and plunges a child of His into suffering and death. But God endures the sinner. He just cannot simply blot him or her out. It began with Adam and continues even to this day with me and you.

As a church we stand where Jonah stood. God has told us "Go," and we must discern through Jonah's experience that His commands are not to be taken lightly. "Men boast of the wonderful progress and enlightenment of the age in which we are now living; but God sees the earth filled with iniquity and violence."⁶ God has commissioned the Seventh-day Adventist Church to proclaim the final judgment message, that "the great things of God's law—the principles of justice, mercy, and love therein" may be set forth in their true light.⁷ He is serious about it. God is determined, indeed, as He was with Jonah, that the Great Commission shall be carried out.

Perhaps we, like Jonah, are hesitant to proclaim such a startling judgment message. Maybe we too are embarrassed that God's mercy has postponed the judgment we have preached for so long. Now it seems as though we do not know what we are talking about. And we are like Jonah, who, "jealous of his reputation, . . . lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that city."⁸

Consequently, this "test case" of Jonah is a look in the mirror. Have we too run away from God or His explicit guidance? A potential Jonah lurks in every heart.



What is the command from God that we find difficult to hear? What instructions from God annoy us? What prompts us to say "Anything but that, Lord"? What divine assignment causes us to dig in our heels? Most of us have our own Ninevehs, our own cities of escape and evasion.

Nineveh might be the Lord's urging that we change our behavior to do some action that demands more than we are ready to give. How many of us hear the word of the Lord and go the opposite way? Our running off to Tarshish can happen in our soul long before we physically board a ship. Some run away from God without ever leaving their geographical location. We can run away by so filling our lives with noble activities that time for God is squeezed out. We can be running off in all directions, but not under God's direction.

We readily notice others in the church who blur the message, but may God hasten the hour when we finally begin to accuse ourselves before God. The fact is that even the finest of us are "poor, miserable, blind, and naked." And in spite of all the good things we do for this church, we finally realize with Jonah the words of the great spiritual: "Not my brother, nor my sister,

but it's me, O Lord, standin' in the need of prayer." From the very beginning we all have been problem children.

Ultimately, the book of Jonah is about a magnificent God and His amazing compassion, especially enhanced against Jonah's self-centeredness. Jonah had never learned to look out at the world and its many people through God's eyes. He needed to let this divine perspective overcome his natural selfishness. Today we also need this great compassion to wash and cleanse our own hearts. ■

* Bible texts in this article are from the New King James Version.

¹ Nineveh, the ancient city on the fertile banks of the Tigris, was founded by Asshur, who went forth from the land of Shinar about the time of Babel's dispersion (see *Review and Herald*, Oct. 18, 1906).

² *Prophets and Kings*, p. 265.

³ See Isa. 10:12, 13; Nahum 3:1, 19.

⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 266.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

Jo Ann Davidson is an assistant professor of theology at the Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Idols, Old and New

ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

My question is about idolatry and the Israelites. The Lord did so many great things for them, but most of the time they worshiped other gods. Why would they do that?

Your question is a good one.

In the ancient world the gods were usually conceived of as having control over specific and limited geographical areas. The inhabitants of each nation or region, possibly each city, had their own specific gods and goddesses who were worshiped in those areas. They believed those gods had control over the fertility of the land, of the animals, and of the worshipers themselves. The citizens of those communities also looked to the gods to protect the territory over which they supposedly had control.

When people moved to a new territory, one of their main concerns was to seek the blessing and protection of the local deities by worshiping them. The people would continue to worship their own gods, the gods of the land from which they came, who were probably called the "gods of their fathers" (cf. Joshua 24:15). The worship of this plurality of divine beings had the purpose of providing the individual a sense of security. Idolatry was, in a sense, an insurance system that, if practiced carefully, would provide for the person security and protection she or he needed.

For the Israelites the worship of Baal was an almost irresistible temptation. This is understandable, although not justifiable. The cult of Baal was extremely attractive not only because of its immoral nature, but particularly because of what it promised to the worshipers. Baal, as a Canaanite fertility god, was supposed to control the fertility of that land, its livestock, and its people. In an agrarian society the financial well-being of the individuals was dependent on the fertility of the land, and nothing was more important than to receive the rain at appropriate times.

It was precisely that which Baal promised. But it was not just a promise; people believed they were actually able, through the performance of certain rituals, to influence Baal. That is to say, they thought they could do something to obtain the rain they needed and to preserve or establish their financial security and survival.

The God of Israel was essentially different. There was

nothing the Israelites could do to move the Lord to love them any more than He already did. In terms of the weather, the only thing they could do was to wait quietly in the Lord, who at the proper time would send what they needed (cf. Ps. 147:8-11).

The problem with idolatry is anxiety about the future.

The cult of Baal gave worshipers the impression that they had control over their ultimate social and financial security, while the worship of the Lord required complete trust in the covenant Lord. There was no room for a compromise, because the Lord was a jealous God (verses 19, 20). The pagan gods were not jealous. They tolerated and even encouraged their

worshipers to adore many other gods. Not so with the Lord. He wanted to be the exclusive God of His people and could not tolerate seeing them worshiping Him and other gods. The reason: the Lord knew that there was no other being in the universe who deserved to be worshiped by His people.

In today's Western society people do not worship idols in the narrow sense of the word. Modern idolatry is more abstract and difficult to identify. However, an idol continues to be what it has always been: that which we consider our ultimate source of security; that to which we surrender our energy, time, and loyalty; and that which determines our values, beliefs, and conduct.

Please allow me a homiletical detour. If our search for inner peace and joy leads us to ignore the Word of God, if our search for financial security leads us to violate God's will and to oppress or ignore the needy, if the search for self-fulfillment has crowded out the time we used to spend with the Lord, then we have an idol. The problem with idolatry was and continues to be related to our anxious concern for personal, economic, social, and psychological security. The experience of the psalmist should be ours: "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Ps. 27:14, NIV); "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken" (Ps. 62:1, 2, NIV).

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

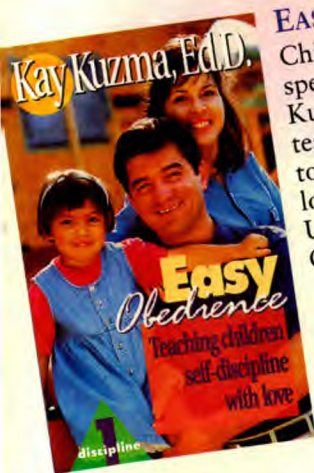


Especially for Parents

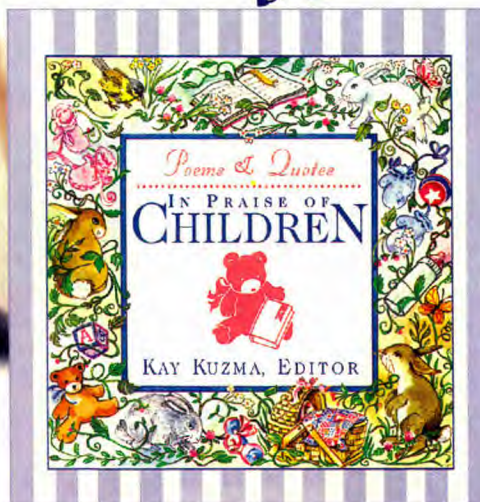


BIBLE-BASED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS KIDS ASK ABOUT LOVE AND SEX

Using principles from God's Word, Charles Mills answers questions about love and sex asked by Adventist preteens and young teens, and encourages them not to settle for anything less than God's plan. Paperback. US\$7.99, Cdn\$11.49.

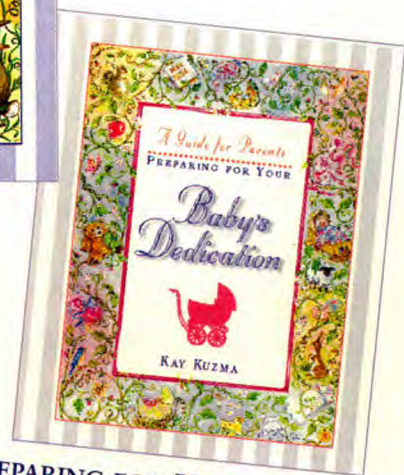


EASY OBEDIENCE
Child development specialist Kay Kuzma helps you teach self-discipline to children with love. Paperback. US\$11.99, Cdn\$17.49.



IN PRAISE OF CHILDREN

A delightful treasury of poems and quotes about children. Ideal for reading at baby dedications, baby showers, and church programs honoring mothers and fathers. Also makes a delightful gift for new parents and grandparents. Kay Kuzma, editor. Hardcover. US\$19.99, Cdn\$28.99.



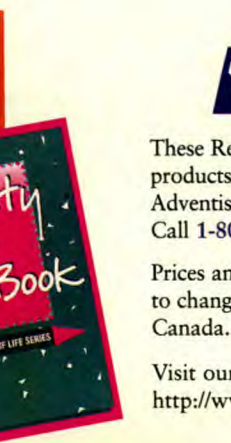
PREPARING FOR YOUR BABY'S DEDICATION

Includes dozens of ideas for creating memorable baby dedications, summaries of different service types to choose from, and advice for helping parents prepare for raising children for God. By Kay Kuzma. Paperback. US\$9.99, Cdn\$14.49.



THE LADDER OF LIFE SERIES

Help your children develop the progression of Christian virtues in 2 Peter 1:5-7 (faith, virtue, temperance, patience, love, etc.). Ideal for family worship, home school, and early childhood education. Activity and Song Book US\$9.99, Cdn\$14.49. Storybooks 1 and 2 with cassette, regularly US\$14.99, Cdn\$21.49. Special, US\$9.99, Cdn\$14.49. Storybooks 3 and 4 with cassette; 5 and 6 with cassette; and 7 and 8 with cassette are available for US\$14.99, Cdn\$21.49 each set.



These Review and Herald products are available at your Adventist Book Center. Call 1-800-765-6955.

Prices and availability subject to change. Add GST in Canada.

Visit our Web site: <http://www.rhpa.org>

The Best Medicine

*Every day I watched her reflect God's love.
And it changed my life.*

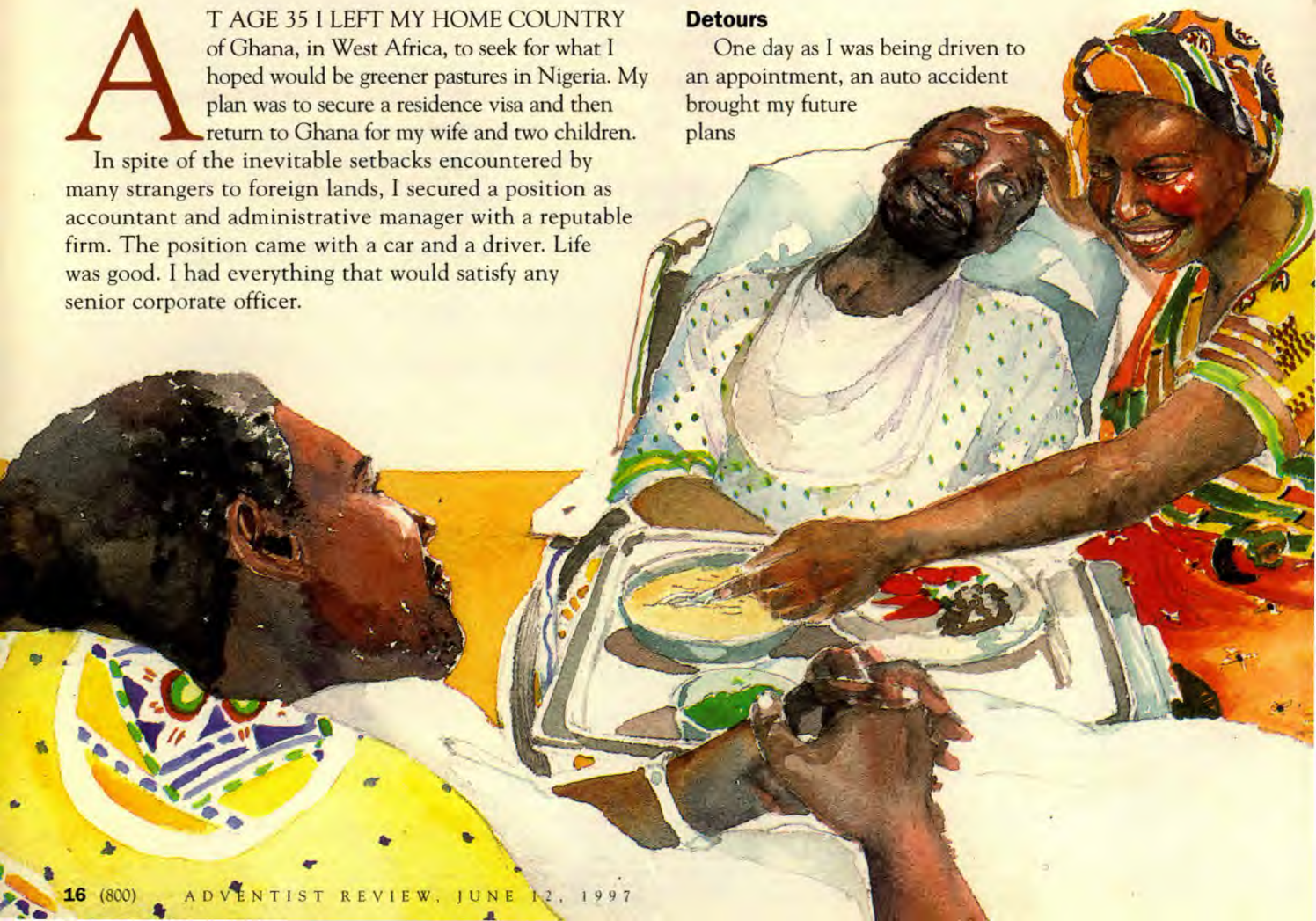
BY ERASMUS A. OKPOTI
as told to **JAPHETH L. AGBOKA**

AT AGE 35 I LEFT MY HOME COUNTRY of Ghana, in West Africa, to seek for what I hoped would be greener pastures in Nigeria. My plan was to secure a residence visa and then return to Ghana for my wife and two children.

In spite of the inevitable setbacks encountered by many strangers to foreign lands, I secured a position as accountant and administrative manager with a reputable firm. The position came with a car and a driver. Life was good. I had everything that would satisfy any senior corporate officer.

Detours

One day as I was being driven to an appointment, an auto accident brought my future plans



and personal ambitions to an abrupt halt. My right ankle was terribly mangled in the accident, breaking the skin and displacing bones and ligaments. To make matters worse, my injured foot and ankle remained in a pool of muddy, stagnant water until I was rescued and taken to the hospital.

In the operating room the doctors cared for me the best they could. They set the bones and sutured the cuts, but the wounds, infected by bacteria from the filthy water, became badly infected. The doctors waited for healing; for five months my wounds got progressively worse. Finally the doctors recommended amputation.

The very idea frightened me. I decided that I'd rather go back to Ghana with a useless leg than as an amputee.

Delays

In the meantime my brother had arranged for me to have further treatment at St. Joseph's Hospital in Koforidua, Ghana. For the next 12 months the doctors and nurses did what they could to bring healing. Initially they produced no better results than I had already experienced. But I was totally dependent on them—and they knew it. Hospital chaplains made daily rounds and prayed for the patients, including me. But nothing they said or did convinced me to believe in a Power who could remedy my wounded ankle.

Three months after I was admitted, another patient was wheeled into the ward that I shared with 13 other men.

This new patient was a building contractor who had fallen from the top of a building and was paralyzed from the neck down. A couple weeks after he was admitted, his sister, who had taken care of him, disappeared, leaving the poor man with no one to help him.

The hospital's nurses made inquiries around town and found a woman who

volunteered to help the man. The woman came every day. In the morning she helped bathe and feed him. In the afternoon and evening she returned to serve him as necessary. I noticed how cheerfully she attended him. It never seemed to be a burden; in fact, whenever I saw her, she had the most dazzling smile I had ever seen.

For seven months I watched this woman as she served the paralyzed man. Her cheerful and faithful service never flagged. Finally I asked one of the nurses, "What do you know about this woman?"

"She's an Adventist," the nurse replied.

"She's what?"

"A Seventh-day Adventist," the nurse answered. "It's a church, and she's a member."

Those words—"It's a church . . . she's a member"—kept going through my mind. As an adult I had become cynical about life, and the very notion that true love existed anywhere on earth, even in a church, seemed foreign to me. Yet this tangible demonstration of unselfish service jarred me into recalling a text I had learned years before in Sunday school class: "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

If God is love, and if such love was a regular staple of the Adventist Church, I reasoned, then God must be very close to that church. I resolved to get better acquainted with the church as soon as I could be discharged from the hospital.

Deliverance

That decision marked a turning point. The next three operations were successful. My elementary faith in God hastened the healing process. From a woman whose name I did not know, I was confronted with the love of a Saviour who began to heal me physically and spiritually.

My doctors were surprised at the turn of events. After a few more months I was able to get around without having to use crutches. Exactly one year to the day from when I was admitted to that hospital, the doctors gave me a

walking stick and told me to keep cultivating the faith that had helped me recover the use of my leg and live without crutches.

Immediately upon my release from the hospital I sought out the nearest Seventh-day Adventist church. Dressed in my best clothes and carrying my walking stick, I walked into the La Bone church the very next Sabbath. I felt a little conspicuous, being a total stranger, but the local pastor and one of the elders welcomed me.

A few weeks later I developed some complications and had to go back to St. Joseph's Hospital. My new Adventist friends recommended that I stay nearby in the home of E. G. Ayisi, educational director for the South Ghana Conference. For a month I joined him and his family for morning worship and took my meals with them. They fed me emotionally and spiritually.

When I returned home, I asked to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. My wife, Laurentia, accepted Jesus and was baptized also.

The joy we experienced by becoming Adventists led me to respond to God's call to serve the Lord full-time. I resigned my position as an accountant and eventually became the treasurer of the Advent Press in Osu, Accra, Ghana. The blessings I've experienced since then—not the least of which was improved health—have been too numerous to count.

But I would have known none of them were it not for a woman who demonstrated Christ's love in a hospital ward. In a quiet, conscientious way, that woman opened my eyes to see a God—and His followers—who cares about those who are wounded and those who are searching. ■

Erasmus A. Okpoti was treasurer of the Advent Press when he told this story. Japheth L. Agboka (right) is director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the Africa-Indian Ocean Division of Seventh-day Adventists.



South African Series Breaks New Ground

Church leaders work through cultural differences

BY PAULA WEBBER, A VIDEO PRODUCER FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OFFICE OF MISSION AWARENESS

For years membership growth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has been slow at best. The baptismal process often takes as long as it does for some students to learn a trade or receive a diploma.

A church board must decide whether to accept a candidate for baptism. The candidate then must prove that they thoroughly understand church doctrines and demonstrate evidence of Sabbath observance, tithing, and other aspects of the Adventist faith before the baptism can occur. It often takes years, says one South African church leader.

That's the situation 11 African-American pastors faced when they conducted the largest Adventist-sponsored evangelistic series ever conducted in the country. Held in Cape Town this past March in nine separate locations, the three-week meetings resulted in more than 1,100 persons baptized and many others receiving Bible studies.



DETERMINED: This man decided that nothing would stop him from being baptized.

Altered Policies

The impact was so great that the local church policies were altered to make evangelism more effective to reach the people in this area. "Our challenge is not so much culture or what happens in North America," says A. Norman Ryan, Good Hope Conference president. "But how do we

interpret the *Church Manual*? What should we do when an evangelistic campaign comes along? What should we do in our normal church meetings? We want to make sure that people have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and that we have carefully implemented a follow-up program to nurture these new believers."

Another problem that surfaced was the issue of age appropriateness for baptism. In the past young children were not permitted to be baptized. "We have not felt free to baptize children under the age of 11," says Pastor Joseph Niekerk. "We are facing the situation where children are definitely making the decision [to be baptized], and our North American brethren are helping us to look at this a little differently."

Working through the cultural differences and being open to a more lively style of worship, South Africans in Cape Town fully embraced the North American team. Tim Lewis, president of Real Truth Ministries and

HIGH DAY: More than 8,000 persons gathered at Vygieskraal Stadium for a special worship service and baptism on March 15.





NEW BEGINNINGS: The baptismal service represented a new beginning for 1,100 new believers.

South Central Conference evangelist, and William Scales, ministerial secretary for the North American Division, assembled a team of nine evangelists and 18 support team members to conduct nine meetings simultaneously for three weeks.

Stirring Testimonies

Crowds in the different locations ranged from 250 to 2,500. Those attending represented all of South Africa's major ethnic groups: Asians, Blacks, Coloureds, and Whites.

The testimonies of the new members read like a page from a mission story. Raymond Wendzer, who sits in a wheelchair, says, "My family doesn't know I was baptized today, but I had to do it. I had to give my life to the Lord."

Clarissa Abrahms, a former Jehovah's Witness who accepted the Sabbath doctrine after struggling over the issue, says, "Something big has been lifted off my shoulders. I don't feel as if I have to fight with my conscience anymore."

Alfred had mocked his wife when she became an Adventist 14 years ago. A few months ago he broke bones in his neck, back, and side in a serious fall. The doctors thought he would be paralyzed. Even after difficult surgery there was no guarantee that he would walk again. Alfred asked his wife to pray for him at church, and she did.

After the surgery, with some pain, he was able to move his left leg.

The meetings began, and Alfred felt determined to go. When the minister made an appeal, he jumped up and walked to the front, and was later baptized.

"I've lost my friends because I accepted this truth," he said.

"But I've made

new ones. This is the living truth, and there is nothing better."

Health Ministry

The series prepared people to accept Christ and also focused on healthful living. Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals from both the United States and South Africa presented valuable information on health care. The health component was a big attraction for the people in South Africa. Local Cape Townian Joanna Rodericas says she found out last year that she was borderline diabetic. "I had no idea what it meant until I went to the health screenings



SONGBIRD: Marshall Kelly (standing) provided music for the special service, and Tim Lewis gave the morning message.



ENCOURAGING WORDS: Good Hope Conference president Norman Ryan encouraged church members to play an active role in the evangelistic series.

provided by the Real Truth meetings."

A major service provided by the South African medical team was translating the health brochures into Afrikaans, one of the main languages in South Africa.

The marriage of preaching and health, plus the cooperation of lay members and pastors, was the pivotal point of success in this meeting. Says Ryan, "When the laity and the ministry join hands, God can really bless; that is what we've seen."

With North Americans and South Africans working together, the result was the largest and most successful series in the history of the church in South Africa. This in spite of the organizers having to coordinate their work with three separate conferences divided along racial lines.

The Cape (White), Good Hope (Black), and Southern (Coloured) conferences share overlapping territories in Cape Town. The series provided a unique opportunity for all church entities to work on a common project.

"I think the series was wonderful," says V. S. Wakaba, president of the Southern Africa Union. "We have not seen more than 1,000 people baptized in one day before this. This is history for us. Evangelism has been revived. Every church has been involved, and it has helped the laypeople get involved in evangelism."

A Letter to Myself (Open in 2011)

BY ANDY NASH, ADVENTIST REVIEW ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Andy:

Happy fortieth. Hope all's well with Cindy and your two teenagers.

Speaking of stress, remember back in 1997 when you were worried about the 38 to 50 percent attrition rate among your Adventist peers and frustrated that so many programs and ministries targeting youth and young adults were being planned exclusively by people twice, even three times, their age? Remember that?

Well, I've got news. Now you're them. That's right, pal—Generation X got old. And because it did, I have a little message for you . . .

If, by any chance, you currently happen to be sitting on a committee that's planning *anything* for young people, and if young people aren't well represented on that committee, then recuse yourself. That's right—get out of your leather chair, flip on your shirt-button telephone, and invite a

young person to take *your* seat.

Do this, Andy, not because young people in the year 2011 are necessarily more talented, creative, or even progressive than you are. (Some will be; some won't be.) Instead, do it for the same reason the execs at MTV used to let your

generation, the Gen Xers, generate MTV.

Because 1997 young people best knew the minds of 1997 young people.

NEWS COMMENTARY

This doesn't mean, Andy, that the youth and young adults of 2011, the millennials, don't need you. They do need you—desperately. They need you to mentor them, to teach them, to pass on what you've learned about Jesus Christ. But when it comes to planning *their* programs, step back. Give them ownership. Let them do their thing.

Because in the struggle to be relevant—to communicating Jesus in their language—you can have the best intentions, but you can't change your birth certificate. Don't forget that.

NEWS BREAK

Southern Asia Division Changes Leadership

A special meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's General Conference Executive Committee convened on May 15 and elected D. Ronald Watts, 61, as a vice president of the General Conference and president of the Southern Asia Division with headquarters in Hosur, India.

Canadian-born, Watts has most recently served as associate secretary of the General Conference and was director of the Center for Volunteerism. On May 13, the General Conference Executive Committee voted that M.E. Cherian be relieved for health reasons of his office and obligations as General Conference vice president and Southern Asia Division president.

Cherian, in his second term of office, suffered a brain aneurysm on February 20 and underwent major surgery in New Delhi. He is currently recovering in Pune, India.

Uncertainty regarding a recovery period, and the possibility that the division's chief officer would be absent for some time, led the General Conference to review the question of Cherian's continuation in office.

General Conference president Robert Folkenberg

requested Neal Wilson, former president of the world church, and Lowell Cooper, associate secretary, to visit India and ascertain Cherian's health status and to consider the impact of this on the leadership needs of the Southern Asia Division. Medical opinions obtained by Wilson and Cooper indicated the likelihood of a recovery period of at least six months, if not more.

Moreover, Cherian's ability to undertake travel is seriously limited for at least 12 months. In reviewing the health status of Cherian and the leadership needs of the division, the church officials recommended to the General Conference officers that Cherian be relieved, because of health reasons, of his office and obligations.

Cherian has a distinguished career in church and institutional leadership in India. The majority of his 45 years of service has been at Spicer Memorial College where he served as president for 28 years.

In 1990, Cherian became the second Indian national to be elected to the post of General Conference vice president and Southern Asia president. His second term in this office began in July 1995. His unexpected illness comes in the midst of several urgent challenges facing the church in Southern Asia.

The committee action included a statement of



Ronald Watts



M. E. Cherian



Test Your Global Mission IQ

1. Some regions represent "stony ground" for missionaries. On a Mediterranean island, Adventist workers tried three methods:

- (1) a cottage meeting on health and biblical topics—four visitors;
- (2) seminars on health—15 visitors; one stayed and enrolled in a Bible course;
- (3) a massive Bible correspondence enrollment effort—497 enrolled, and 143 became regular students.

The Italian Union nurtures these interested people. What island is this (the first Adventist church was organized in 1989)?

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| A. Sicily | C. Malta |
| B. Cyprus | D. Sardinia |

2. In one of the "Z" nations of Africa, evangelism resulted in 17 baptisms. In Gweshe, Chiweshe region, evangelists—25 laypersons, mostly youth and widows—targeted animists. Their tools were prayer and the message "God is

love." This nation lies south of another "Z" country. It is—

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| A. Zimbabwe | C. Mozambique |
| B. Zaire | D. Zambia |

3. In southwestern Russia lies Kalmykia, a republic with a Mongolian heritage and language. In 1993 three were baptized in the capital, Elista, and the congregation grew to 83 members. Global Mission provided US\$27,000 for church construction. In this world capital of chess, Adventists are highly respected and assist in humanitarian work. Can you guess the religion the Kalmykians adhere to?

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| A. Hinduism | C. Confucianism |
| B. Islam | D. Buddhism |

Answers

1. C. Malta. The one Adventist church on this island nation had 13 members at the end of 1995. Malta is 99 percent Roman Catholic.

2. A. Zimbabwe. Nearly 20,000 Adventists for each 1 million people. The 4 million animists though represent 40 percent of the population.

3. D. Buddhism. The Kalmyks came to the region in the seventeenth century from central Asia bringing Tibetan Buddhism with them.—Compiled by Don Yost, General Conference Global Mission Office.

NEWSBREAK

appreciation to Cherian, that "although untimely illness led to his being relieved of office for health reasons, his legacy as teacher, theologian, and administrator will have a lasting impact upon the church he faithfully served for more than 45 years." The statement also referred to Cherian's "seven years of energetic and influential leadership."

Hopes were expressed that Cherian's recovery will proceed without complications and that he will be able to serve the church, as a senior statesman, with the same insight and acumen that have characterized his life.

Watts, the new division president, is the spouse of Dorothy Eaton Watts who currently serves as director of the GC Women's Ministries Department. He and his wife spent 16 years in India between 1965 and 1981, during which Watts served in a variety of church positions as administrator and departmental leader, including that of ministerial secretary for the division.

In accepting the new position, Watts spoke of the 16 years previously in India, which had established in his heart a lifelong love for the country and its people. "I take this decision as the call of God and will depend on Him for empowerment to fulfill the responsibilities of this office," says Watts. Southern Asia is one of the church's 12 world divisions.

This division has a membership of more than 225,000 baptized members, the largest country in the division being India.—Adventist News Network

News Note

✓ **Matthew Bediako**, a vice president of the General Conference, is the chair of the GC's Divorce and Remarriage Study Commission, not the person indicated in the May 15 *Newsbreak*.

ADVENTIST Review Subscriber Services

- ☐ Please send me one year, 40 issues, of the *Adventist Review* for US\$38.97.
- ☐ Please renew my subscription.
- ☐ Please update my address. Enter new address at top of form. Copy previous address at bottom of form or enclose old mailing label.
- ☐ Please send a gift subscription to the address at the bottom of this form.

My Name _____
Current Address _____
City _____
State, Zip _____
Phone _____

Please enter previous address or gift address here.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State, Zip _____

Please enclose payment for orders. Mail to: Subscriber Services, P.O. Box 1119, Hagerstown, MD 21741.

Credit card orders: **1-800-765-6955**

663-01-0

Statement on Child Sexual Abuse

On April 1, 1997, The General Conference Executive Committee voted the following statement at its Spring Meeting in Loma Linda, California.

VOTED, To approve the Statement on Child Sexual Abuse, as follows:

Statement on Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse occurs when a person older or stronger than the child uses his or her power, authority, or position of trust to involve a child in sexual behavior or activity. Incest, a specific form of child sexual abuse, is defined as any sexual activity between a child and a parent, a sibling, an extended family member, or a step/surrogate parent.

Sexual abusers may be men or women and may be of any age, nationality, or socioeconomic background. They are often men who are married with children, have respectable jobs, and may be regular churchgoers. It is common for offenders to deny strongly their abusive behavior, to refuse to see their actions as a problem, and to rationalize their behavior or place blame on something or someone else. While it is true that many abusers exhibit deeply rooted insecurities and low self-esteem, these problems should never be accepted as an excuse for sexually abusing a child. Most authorities agree that the real issue in child sexual abuse is more related to a desire for power and control than for sex.

When God created the human family, He began with a marriage between a man and a woman based on

mutual love and trust. This relationship is still designed to provide the foundation for a stable, happy family in which the dignity, worth, and integrity of each family member is protected and upheld. Every child, whether male or female, is to be affirmed as a gift from God. Parents are given the privilege and responsibility of providing nurture, protection, and physical care for the children entrusted to them by God.

*The Adventist
Christian
community
is not immune
from child
sexual abuse.*

Children should be able to honor, respect, and trust their parents and other family members without the risk of abuse.

The Bible condemns child sexual abuse in the strongest possible terms. It sees any attempt to confuse, blur, or denigrate personal, generational, or gender boundaries through sexually abusive behavior as an act of betrayal and a gross violation of personhood. It openly condemns abuses of power, authority, and responsibility because these strike at the very heart of the

victims' deepest feelings about themselves, others, and God, and shatter their capacity to love and trust. Jesus used strong language to condemn the actions of anyone who through word or deed causes a child to stumble.

The Adventist Christian community is not immune from child sexual abuse. We believe that the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist faith require us to be actively involved in its prevention. We are also committed to spiritually assisting abused and abusive individuals and their families in their healing and recovery process, and to holding church professionals and church lay leaders accountable for maintaining their personal behavior as is appropriate for persons in positions of spiritual leadership and trust.

As a church we believe our faith calls us to:

1. Uphold the principles of Christ for family relationships in which the self-respect, dignity, and purity of children are recognized as divinely mandated rights.
2. Provide an atmosphere in which children who have been abused can feel safe when reporting sexual abuse and can feel that someone will listen to them.
3. Become thoroughly informed about sexual abuse and its impact upon our own church community.
4. Help ministers and lay leaders to recognize the warning signs of child sexual abuse and know how to respond appropriately when abuse is suspected or a child reports being sexually abused.
5. Establish referral relationships with professional counselors and local



PHOTO © PHOTODISC

sexual assault agencies who can, with their professional skills, assist abuse victims and their families.

6. Create guidelines/policies at the appropriate levels to assist church leaders in:

a. Endeavoring to treat with fairness persons accused of sexually abusing children.

b. Holding abusers accountable for their actions and administering appropriate discipline.

7. Support the education and enrichment of families and family members by:

a. Dispelling commonly held religious and cultural beliefs that may be used to justify or cover up child sexual abuse.

b. Building a healthy sense of personal worth in each child, which enables him or her to respect self and others.

c. Fostering Christlike relationships between males and females in the home and in the church.

8. Provide caring support and a faith-based redemptive ministry within the church community for abuse survivors and abusers while enabling

them to access the available network of professional resources in the community.

9. Encourage the training of more family professionals to facilitate the healing and recovery process of abuse victims and perpetrators.

(The above statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Lev. 18:20; 2 Sam. 13:1-22; Matt. 18:6-9; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 5:5-8.)



Simple Hospitality

BY SUSAN WHITTED

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ENJOY MORE Christian fellowship in your home? Do you wish you could develop closer relationships within the church family? Have you been impressed to fulfill the Lord's commission by feeding the poor or helping the widowed and fatherless? And could that commission extend today to our elderly, singles, and single parents?

Hospitality in the home is a very effective way to meet these needs. Sabbath dinner shared with others is truly one of life's simple pleasures. Yet few people seem to experience this pleasure today. There are many reasons hospitality seems hard to accomplish. Most of these problems can be eliminated by concentrating on the value of simplicity. Reconsider the excuses you may have used.

Problem: "I don't have a nice enough home."

Suggestion: It doesn't matter! Most people are so pleased when they are invited out, they don't care. Many are actually more comfortable in a less-than-perfect home. But if you still feel uncomfortable having people in your home, try this. Some of my friends invite guests to join them for a picnic at a park or pair up with another friend and invite guests to the friend's home for a mini potluck.

Problem: "I don't know what they like to eat."

Suggestion: What would you answer if they were

*Sabbath dinner shared
with others is truly one of
life's simple pleasures.*

wondering about you? You would say, "It doesn't matter!" Most people are willing to eat a variety of foods and would consider fellowship more important than what they eat. I find that non-vegetarians are usually very interested in trying vegetarian foods. People on restricted diets are adept at choosing the best of the available foods and would rather you didn't fuss over finding them suitable alternatives. Nor do they want you to feel bad if they choose not to eat something you made. For example, a person with diabetes or heart disease may or may not choose to have dessert. Don't put pressure on yourself.

Problem: "I'm not a good cook."

Suggestion: It doesn't matter! Again, it's the fellowship that counts. Don't apologize for using a simple and easy menu. Take advantage of prepared items, such as frozen pasta tortellini or stuffed shells and bottled sauces. Serve them with rolls, salad, a cooked vegetable, and a beverage. A simple bowl of fruit or ice cream suffices for dessert. Using your best serving dishes helps a simple meal appear elegant. Keep a list of menu ideas that you have found successful and use them again and again.

Problem: "I don't have enough time" (my personal favorite excuse as a full-time working wife and mother)

Suggestion: It doesn't matter . . . sort of! It's all the more reason to stay simple. Remember, the advantages of quality fellowship outweigh the extra effort or the acceptance of a simplified menu plan.

Ideas:

1. Plan ahead. Making the invitation early in the week sets my commitment. My menu is written and groceries are purchased by Monday or Tuesday. If I prepare the entrée and dessert on Wednesday and Thursday and clean the house too, by Friday all I have left is the finishing touches.

2. Make several entrées on Sunday and freeze them to be prepared for company on short notice.

3. Choose a Sabbath dinner menu that works for you and make it your family tradition. This can help maintain spontaneity in invitations because you don't have to decide in advance to have company. It helps if the

menu is easy to adjust for different numbers of guests. I have friends who make a pot of beans every Friday for haystacks. Others plan a spaghetti dinner. I often make a meal of baked potatoes with toppings if I don't have time to prepare food before Sabbath.

Problem: "We can't afford to have others over."

Suggestion: Don't let that stop you. Meals needn't be expensive. I've enjoyed delightful Sabbath dinners of simple soup or stew served with fresh muffins or corn bread. But don't hesitate to ask your company to help. Make your invitation with a direct approach, such as "Would you like to share Sabbath dinner with us? What would you prefer to bring—entrée or dessert? salad or vegetable and bread?" Don't apologize for your limited finances.

You can also make a difference by the way you present your meal. My 7-year-old son likes to fold paper napkins into the glasses to add elegance. Wildflowers or greenery arranged in a vase or around a candle will also dress up your table. Ask your children to make place cards or place mats. They'll be proud to help.

Problem: "I don't know what to talk about."

Suggestion: Although the subjects discussed need not be strictly "religious," my most memorable Sabbath afternoons have included an uplifting spiritual discussion. Here are some ideas:

Discuss interesting points from the Sabbath school lesson or sermon.

Ask such questions as:

1. How and when did you become a Christian?
2. What is your earliest memory of the church of God?

3. How can we help the poor today?

Going for a walk on Sabbath afternoon is always a relaxing choice for easy conversation.

Simplicity is a blessing. Jesus gave us the best examples. When surrounded by a multitude of hungry followers, He could have used His creative power to provide an abundant feast. Yet He chose what was available—the simple barley loaves and fish—to meet their needs. Why don't you invite someone to a simple Sabbath dinner this week? ■

Susan Whitted is a registered dietitian who writes from Gold Hill, Oregon.



Planting Seeds

ROSY TETZ



Have you ever planted a garden? Maybe some flowers or tomatoes or radishes? There is nothing quite like the excitement of planting a seed and running out every day to see if it has come up yet, and then one day seeing that it *has* come up.

But before that excitement, before that little plant can come up, there must be some hard work. You've got to get the dirt ready.

Before you plant the seeds, you must dig up the dirt. Seeds need air in order to grow. How are they going to get air if they are planted under the ground? You've got to put it there.

When you dig up the dirt, you help mix air into it so that the new little sprouts will have air to breathe when they start to grow.

Digging up the dirt also lets water soak in better and kills weeds and helps you find rocks. When you dig up the dirt, you make it nice and soft so the little plant can easily push its leaves up toward the sun and push its roots down into the ground.

Jesus told a story once about planting seeds (Matt. 13:1-23). He said the dirt made all the difference. If the dirt was too hard, the seeds couldn't settle into it. If the dirt was rocky, the roots wouldn't be able to grow deep enough, and before long

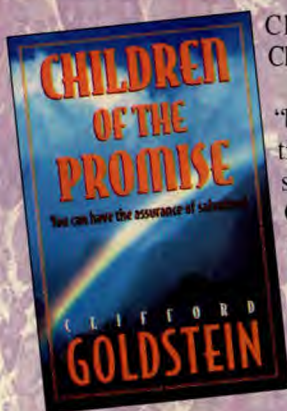
the plants would die. If there were weeds growing in the dirt, they would choke the good plants. But if the seeds were planted in good dirt, they would grow and give us food.

Why would Jesus tell a story about seeds? Well, it wasn't really about seeds. The people who were listening to His story understood about seeds, so Jesus used that idea to teach about a different idea.

In Jesus' story the seed is like His plan for saving us from sin. The different kinds of dirt are the different ways people can hear about that plan. People can choose to not listen. Or people can listen and understand and make Jesus the most important person in their lives.

What kind of dirt are you going to be? Are you ready to get dug up? Are you ready to throw out the rocks and weeds and the hardness? Do you want God's plan to be able to grow in you? Listen. Think. Obey.

EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE!



Children of the Promise
Clifford Goldstein

What does it mean to be "born again"? In this inspirational masterpiece, best-selling author Clifford Goldstein challenges us to accept the emotional experience of giving our lives to God and becoming children of the promise—heirs of all His promises. Experience new hope as you consider

what God has done and will do for you.
Paper, 144 pages. US\$8.99, Cdn\$12.99.

Stand at the Cross
E. Lonnie Melashenko and John Thomas McLarty

For anyone who aspires to walk with Jesus, the drama that took place the day He was crucified beckons thoughtful contemplation. The authors invite you to stand at the Cross with those who watched Christ die that dark day.

Paper, 128 pages. US\$8.99, Cdn\$12.99.



In the Light of God's Love
Ty Gibson

You are invited to encounter the cross of Jesus and ride on the wings of Calvary's love. A spiritual journey that promises to increase your strength and joy. Ty Gibson writes about personal salvation, obedience, temptation, failure and relationships with fresh insight

under the illuminating light of divine love.
Paper, 125 pages. US\$8.99, Cdn\$12.99.



Available at your local Adventist Book Center or call 1-800-765-6955.

Visit us at www.pacificpress.com © 1997 Pacific Press Publishing Association 135/70590

Music and Ministry

CALVIN B. ROCK

I don't want to sound elitist, but the jazzy and Pentecostal-like music in our Black sector I find offensive, and I'm puzzled as to how Christians can worship this way. Is this a genuine cultural difference?

The first step toward understanding is the elimination of generalizations. All Black Christians do not enjoy jazzy, Pentecostal-like church music. Many also find it offensive. Further, as most Sunday scanning of television and visits to even some Sabbath services will show, Pentecostal-like expression is not exclusive to any one ethnic group.

Worship style is influenced more by social class than by color. The antics of Ozark hillbillies who pray frantically while handling rattlesnakes and the histrionics of ghetto Holy-Rollers who dance frenziedly while their preachers pound the Bible are not driven by genes or skin color, but by socioeconomic realities.

But there are well-educated and affluent individuals in both the middle and the upper classes who not only enjoy Pentecostal-like music, but who finance it faithfully.

Does this mean, with respect to worship, that "anything goes"? It does not. The principles of dignity, harmony, symmetry, education, and, most of all, reverence expounded in the Word of God and in the counsels of Ellen White (see *The Voice in Speech and Song*) should characterize all forms of worship, including music.

One can understand how the socioeconomic background of some provides preferences that violate these principles. And since there is a greater percentage of Blacks in the lower socioeconomic class than Whites, a greater percentage of this group gravitates to the music to which you refer. What is more difficult to appreciate is the reason so many of our pastors, parents, radio station operators, and others, whose background suggests a more sophisticated expression, are willing to drift with the rising tide of neo-Pentecostalism.

Worship style is influenced more by social class than by color.

performance in this important service arena?

Yes, we can, and should, do much more in this ministry than we do. However, may I remind you that through Christian Record Services (CRS), headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, the church is very actively engaged in ministry to individuals who are blind and deaf.

This work, organized by the General Conference in 1888, was formerly named Christian Record Braille Foundation.

The primary responsibility of this organization throughout North America is to assist those blind and

deaf—both Adventist and non-Adventist—with delivery of tapes, cassettes, and other gospel-oriented materials. The budget for Christian Record Services in 1996 was \$4,625,000.

In addition to its visitation program and lending library, CRS conducts youth camps for blind and deaf persons, and distributes a number of printed materials, including news pamphlets, magazines, and Sabbath school quarterlies. All services are free.

Although CRS has for decades mailed materials worldwide, the North American Division is the only one in which there is an organized program, and even here most members are not aware of its services.

What can you do? You can give generously in the annual CRS offering. You can help canvas your neighborhoods for those who are blind and deaf and make their identification and care a regular part of your congregation's ministry. If you live in an area of the world other than North America, you can work diligently with your pastor in encouraging your division to begin a structured program for these important publics.

Our Lord devoted much of His time to ministering to those blind and deaf. Should we do less?

I am appalled that we Adventists do so little for the disabled in society. The Bible shows much of Christ's ministry was for those who were blind and deaf. Is there something I (we) can do to improve our church's

Calvin B. Rock is a general vice president of the General Conference. He holds doctoral degrees in ministry and religious ethics.



Jesus and Terrorism

Today His counsel seems every bit as radical.

BY JAMES A. DITTES

LAST SUMMER I STOPPED AT VICTORIA Station in London, England. Just off the plane from the United States, I bought a ferry ticket to cross the English Channel and planned a two-hour wait for the next train to the coast.

To pass the time, I bought a meal and some postcards. An hour later, my meal finished and postcards written, a walk around the train station revealed no trash cans and no mailboxes. I knew they had to be somewhere—Victoria Station is the size of a small shopping mall. Unwilling to seem like a “stupid tourist,” I took another stroll. Again nothing.

Finally I gave up and asked at an information booth. The woman directed me outside the train station to a mailbox across the street. It was then that I remembered that no English train stations had trash cans or mailboxes. Just six years earlier 10 people waiting for their trains to leave Victoria Station had been killed by an IRA bomb hidden in a trash can. I chided myself for my ignorance. In America bombs were the last things on anyone’s mind, but in England they were a sad fact of life.

In the months following my search of Victoria Station, bombs became a much greater menace in America. Since the destruction of TWA Flight 800 and the pipe bomb explosion at the Atlanta Olympics, terrorism and the fear it engenders have become prominent in American minds. Barely a week goes by without new revelations of bombing conspiracies by Islamic terrorists, right-wing militia groups, even Christian extremists.

Little by little life in America has begun to change. In Washington, D.C., the 1600 block of Pennsylvania Avenue outside the White House was cordoned off following the Oklahoma City bombing. Travelers are less startled by security delays at airports. Although one can still find trash cans in American train stations (what few there are left), security has gained preeminence in many people’s daily lives.

Christians aren’t exempt. Over the past couple years more than 40 churches have been burned to the ground, many by racially motivated terrorists. Christians now find themselves among the targets of terrorists; a church building is now more likely to be destroyed than an airliner.

An Unlikely Disciple

Yet Christians are uniquely qualified to eradicate terrorism, more so than any federal crime-fighting agency, because we serve a Master who once recruited a person with terrorist associations into His inner circle—a band of roughnecks seemingly more like 12 cronies than 12 disciples. Think about it—Matthew, a publican and noteworthy extortionist; four sunburned, uproarious fishermen; and Simon, identified by Luke as a “Zealot.”

Granted, we don’t know the extent of Simon’s “zealousness” (in *The Desire of Ages* Ellen White describes him as “the uncompromising hater of the authority of Rome” [p. 296]). Further, the political party of Zealots did not reach its zenith until long after Christ’s death, when they staged an A.D. 66 coup d’état and toppled, for a time,

the pro-Roman ruler of Judea. During the years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem the Zealots were infamous for their Jewish nationalism, as well as their modus operandi—assassinating Roman soldiers and agents in crowded streets, a practice that led them to be called “Sicarii” or “daggersmen” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, p. 1200).

Surely the disciple known as Simon the Zealot was not a member of this fanatical sect at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, but the roots of zealotry dated back to the years following Christ’s birth when a zealot named Judas of Gamala organized a resistance to a tax levied by the Roman governor Quirinius in A.D. 6 (*ibid.*).

So in all likelihood, Jesus counted among His 12 closest friends a right-wing, antigovernment tax protestor—an associate of men whose fanaticism would lead them to be the preeminent Middle Eastern terrorists of their day, even to the destruction of Jerusalem itself. What a strange choice for Jesus to make! What a strange mixture that must have made, considering that Christ also numbered among His followers one of the very tax collectors Simon was so adamantly opposed to.

After a casual identification in Luke’s list of the disciples, Simon the Zealot is never mentioned again. But one can infer that he was among those who collected the leftovers after Christ fed 5,000 men, that his feet were washed by Christ at the Last Supper, that he slept at the base of the Mount of Olives while Christ prayed before His death, and that he stood “gazing up into heaven” as Christ returned to His Father.

Simon, who before Jesus called him longed to change Judea with his antigovernment fervor, in fact discovered a message that changed the world more radically than any terrorist act or assassination could have. Through Christ he

received a heart as empty of hatred as Victoria Station is empty of trash cans or mailboxes.

History shows how Christianity transformed the Roman Empire. Emperors eventually swore themselves servants to the Jewish Carpenter from Galilee. Towns and provinces from Iberia to India converted to the disciples’ radical messages of forgiveness, grace, and hope in seeing their resurrected Master again. If the known diaspora of the other disciples applies to Simon, he probably left Judea for one of the corners of the then-known world and ministered to Gentiles, probably even to the very Romans against whom he had once so zealously campaigned. Wouldn’t it be ironic if this trail led him to Rome and to martyrdom—crucified by the very Romans he had once longed to assassinate?

“Do Not Resist . . .”

Today’s Christians live in a world transformed by hatred and fear. Our communities are walled; many have turned to guns for protection. Yet as we defend ourselves, we forget the radical message that made Simon the Zealot into Simon the zealous for God.

To find out the source for this transformation in Simon, one need look no further than the Sermon on the Mount. “Do not resist an evil person,” Christ said that day. “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:38, NIV).

What a revolutionary thought! The fundamental reason groups turn to terrorism is for protection. Islamic radicals destroy Western facilities in order to protect their Islamic culture from incursion. American militia groups organize to protect themselves from a government they find all too intrusive. Simon and the radical Zealots who came after him sought violence as a way to protect their wallets from the reach of the Roman occupational government.

And Christ told Simon, “Do not resist an evil person.” Do not resist the corrupt Roman tax collector. Do not

resist the dishonest Roman judge. Do not resist an autocratic Roman governor, even when he gives up your best friend for crucifixion. If he takes your wallet, give him your checkbook as well.

Simon listened—he must have listened—and Christians today must listen too. Walls and handguns cannot protect us from terrorism. No law-enforcement agency can overcome it. But when Christians begin loving to the radical extent proscribed by Jesus, terror will be overcome in the hearts of those touched, and peace, Christ’s peace, will reign.

Is this to say that the General Conference should design a ministry for racists and religious extremists? Probably not. But Christ’s method of change remains an essential one: root out hatred with peace, ask the extremists to share Christ’s extreme sacrifice, and find the zealots and lead them to be zealous for God. The directive “Go ye into all the world” may just include witnessing to those at the nearest gun shop or militia compound.

Terrorism has affected the lives of people from Victoria Station to Oklahoma City to Atlanta to the subways of Tokyo. Public places have been emptied of possible bomb receptacles. Yet nothing can allay the terror we feel when one airliner explodes or one church burns to the ground.

Christ’s peace is an extreme proposition. Christ’s love transforms completely. Christ’s example toward one of the terrorists of His day should be ours as we seek changes more powerful and more profound than any bomb could make. ■

James A. Dittes is an English teacher and writer living in Superior, Arizona.



Like Father, Like Son

BY MAX W. HAMMONDS

On September 22, 1995, my father passed away. It was not unexpected. Because of his severe ill health and rapidly increasing dementia, we hoped for death to come. It was becoming impossible for my mother to care for him, requiring night and day attention during the last six months of his life.

He was not a Christian in the usual sense of the word. He didn't attend church regularly. Although he tried very hard to clean up his cowboy language, that, too, deteriorated in the last two or three years. It is unlikely that he spent much time in Bible study. So far as I knew, his prayers (during which he cried) were limited to mealtimes and when there was company who expected it.

My Father did not tell me he loved me until after I had graduated from medical school. By then I had been married eight years and had a family of my own. By his actions I knew it. But he had never said it before.

In his passing I lost one of my greatest role models. In his living my father taught me principles of life that I am still trying to pass on to my sons. These principles were the gleanings of years scratching a living from the sod of Kansas, wrangling horses and cattle on the ranches of Colorado, raising five children on little better than minimum wages. The teaching methods were often heavy-handed. But somehow I learned.

What did I learn?

Work hard. At the age of 7 he was driving a team of four horses, plowing between his father's team and his grandfather's team. He worked for the Works Progress Administration in his beloved Colorado when there was no other work to be had. He worked 12 hours a day to save enough for a down payment on a new house and a new life for his family. When he was in his early 50s he risked a change of job after delicate cataract surgery cut his factory employment short.

Show respect for women. He cared for his mother in our home when she grew old. He supported his sisters when their husbands could not or would not. To my knowledge, he never struck his wife, though he had a fiery temper that was not easily controlled.

Sacrifice yourself for others. He gave up a childhood as the

oldest son to do a man's work. Despite earning the highest grades on the eighth-grade county exams, he did not complain when there was no money for high school. He passed by a potential

career in entertainment to care for his needy parents and siblings. He spent almost no money on himself so that his children would never know the want of a meal or the lack of warm clothes.

My father's principles were but a reflection of the Scriptures.

■ "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Eccl. 9:10, NIV).

■ "Husbands, love your wives" (Col. 3:19, NIV).

■ "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, NIV).

Did he know these? Did he consciously think on them as he did them?

Probably not. But they were as surely a part of him as his cowboy hat and his guitar.

I was fortunate enough to be aware of this legacy before he died. I was able to express my love for him and he for me. I was able to share my newfound faith in the soon-coming Saviour, which he and Mom accepted as members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

But that all came after the fact. As with Abraham, these principles were part of his experience prior to the blessing, not afterward (see Rom. 4:9-11).

As a human and as a father he was far from perfect. By the Spirit I had to choose what to cherish and what to reject. But he did the best he could with what he had.

"For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2:14, 15, NASB).

I thank God for his life and for his principles. He was my father, and I loved him. ■

My father's principles were but a reflection of the Scriptures. Did he know these? Probably not.

Max W. Hammonds is an anesthesiologist who writes from Hendersonville, North Carolina.



VITA-MIX® "PENNY PINCHER"

Can Pay For Itself In Your Home

Factory processed foods cost up to 50 times more! If a farmer sells wheat to the mill for as little as 7 1/2¢ a pound, should we have to pay up to \$4.00 for the same wheat as cereal and bread? NO! With the Vita-Mix Total Nutrition Center process your own foods. Save over \$3.00 and have foods fresh.

VITA-MIX® "BEST JUICE"

Will let you say "Good Bye" to ordinary juice. Our Total Nutrition Center will let you make it **5 TIMES FASTER THAN OTHER JUICERS AND 400% MORE NUTRITIOUS.**

**FREE BROCHURE!
CALL TODAY!
1-800-848-2649**



Save Nutrition, Time and Money with the Versatile NEW TOTAL NUTRITION CENTER

- Frozen Desserts In 60 Seconds
- Cook By Impact
- High Fiber Total Juice Made With Whole Foods
- Grind Whole Grains Into Cereals And Flours
- Mix and Knead Bread Dough In Minutes

PLUS FREE with every Vita-Mix TNC you'll receive: Whole Food Machine Recipe Book, Step-By-Step Getting Started Manual, Quickstart Video and Whole Grains Booklet* (Super TNC only).

9 "Fast Foods" that reduce your fat and sugar intake up to 50% and doubles your fiber.

1. The Vita-Mix TNC converts frozen fruit into instant fruit sorbets, healthy frozen yogurts, & low-calorie ice creams in 30 seconds.
2. The TNC makes delicious fruit & vegetable juices in seconds from grapes, apples, peaches—even raspberries—with almost no trace of seeds. Vita-Mix "total juice" with the pulp is over 400% more nutritious than extracted juice.
3. TNC eliminates tedious hours required to peel tomatoes & remove tomato seeds for canning or cooking.
4. TNC cooks delicious soups from scratch in about 4 minutes. Use tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, potatoes, onions, etc.
5. TNC turns tomatoes, peppers, chiles & onions into delicious salsas and picantes. You can process a 1/2 gallon in 5 to 10 seconds.
6. TNC chops whole zucchini in seconds for breads, pastries, soups & casseroles.
7. TNC converts tomatoes & other fresh vegetables into nutritious health cocktails.
8. TNC turns whole apples into creamy smooth applesauce in under 60 seconds.
9. TNC makes a dozen flavor-packed frozen fruit bars in 2 minutes in a variety of low-calorie flavors.

See For Yourself

Why Total Nutrition Center owners are "in love with the near miracles it can perform"

FREE BROCHURE!

The Vita-Mix allows you to juice, freeze, cook, grind, knead and more—all without attachments.

Vita-Mix® Makes Whole Foods Simple as One, Two, Three...

1. Put wholesome, unprocessed food in super-strong lexan container.
2. Flip lever for 37,000 RPM's of power.
3. Remove lid and pour...nothing wasted or thrown away!

Grind any Grain! MAKE BREAD!

Grind whole kernel wheat into cereal or flour and immediately **MIX & KNEAD** it into **BREAD DOUGH** all in one simple 5-minute operation, with precious vitamin oils and fiber retained.

* Super TNC only

Make Total Juice

The NEW Vita-Mix Total Nutrition Center uses a patented and revolutionary new method that juices whole fruits and vegetables without waste, unlike the old separate and throw-away extractor-strainer methods.

NOTICE: First 500 inquiries receive completely **FREE** Special Discount Coupon and **FREE** Special Report. When you buy you also receive **FREE** Whole Food Machine Book, **FREE** Step-By-Step Getting Started Manual, **FREE** Quickstart Video, **FREE** Whole Grains Booklet (Super TNC only) and **FREE** 7 Slow Poisons Report.

**Call Toll Free: 1-800-VITAMIX
(1-800-848-2649)**



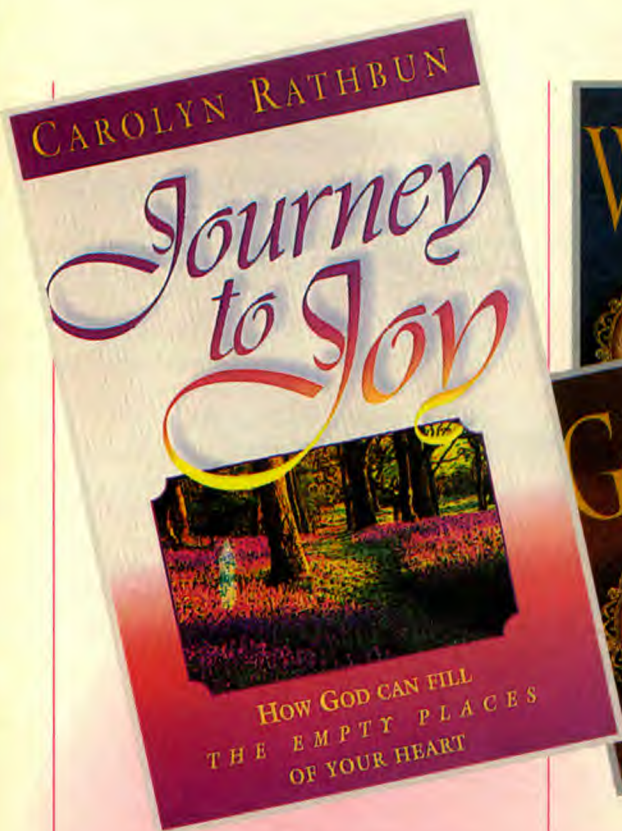
RUSH my Vita-Mix Brochure and Discount Coupon **ALL FREE!**



Write Or Call Today! Send This Coupon To:

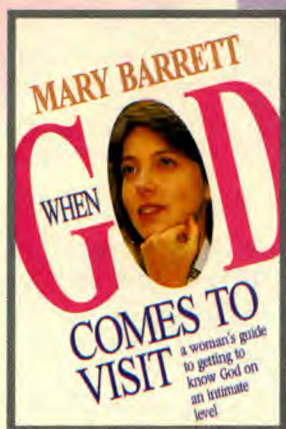
**VITA-MIX® Corporation, Dept. ADV0697,
8615 Usher Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44138**

Name _____
Address _____
Phone (_____) _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____



JOURNEY TO JOY
Carolyn Rathbun's book shows how God can bring healing to your life no matter what you're up against—loneliness, uncertainty, disease, guilt, anger. Sparkling with warmth, humor, and rare candor, it touches on issues deeply meaningful to women. Paperback. US\$11.99, Cdn\$17.49.

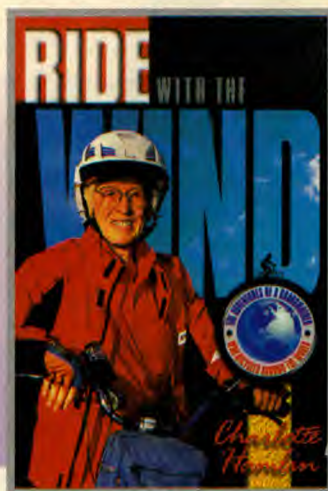
WHEN GOD COMES TO VISIT
Cultivate a more intimate relationship with God with Mary Barrett's woman's guide to deep spirituality. Distributed by Review and Herald. Paperback. US\$9.99, Cdn\$14.49.



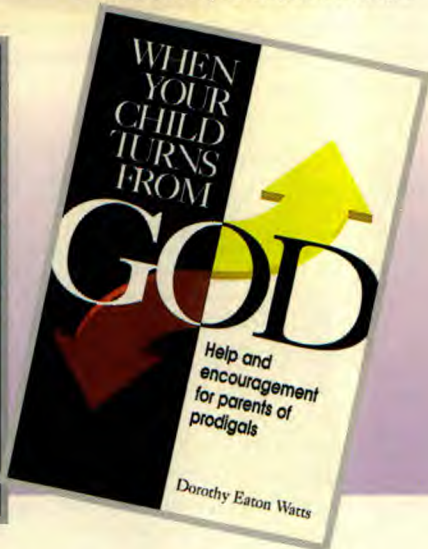
THE Vienna Brooks Saga

A true story of love and faith

Wilderness Journey chronicles the harrowing experiences faced by young Vienna Brooks as she journeyed west in 1852. Her schooling and quest to be reunited with the man she loves is traced in *Golden Journey*, while *California Journey* reveals her brother's struggle to become a teacher despite great odds. By Erna M. Holyer. Paperbacks. *Wilderness Journey* special US\$5.99, Cdn\$8.49, through August 31, 1997. *Golden Journey* and *California Journey* US\$8.99, Cdn\$12.99 each.



RIDE WITH THE WIND
Charlotte Hamlin was 68 when she decided to bicycle around the world. Packed with adventure, her story is a strong witness to the power of healthful living and trust in God. Paperback. US\$12.99, Cdn\$18.99.



WHEN YOUR CHILD TURNS FROM GOD
Help and encouragement for the parents of prodigals, by Dorothy Eaton Watts. Paperback. US\$10.99, Cdn\$15.99.



These Review and Herald books are available at Adventist Book Centers (1-800-765-6955) and other Christian bookstores.

Prices and availability subject to change. Add GST in Canada.