

# ADVENTIST Review

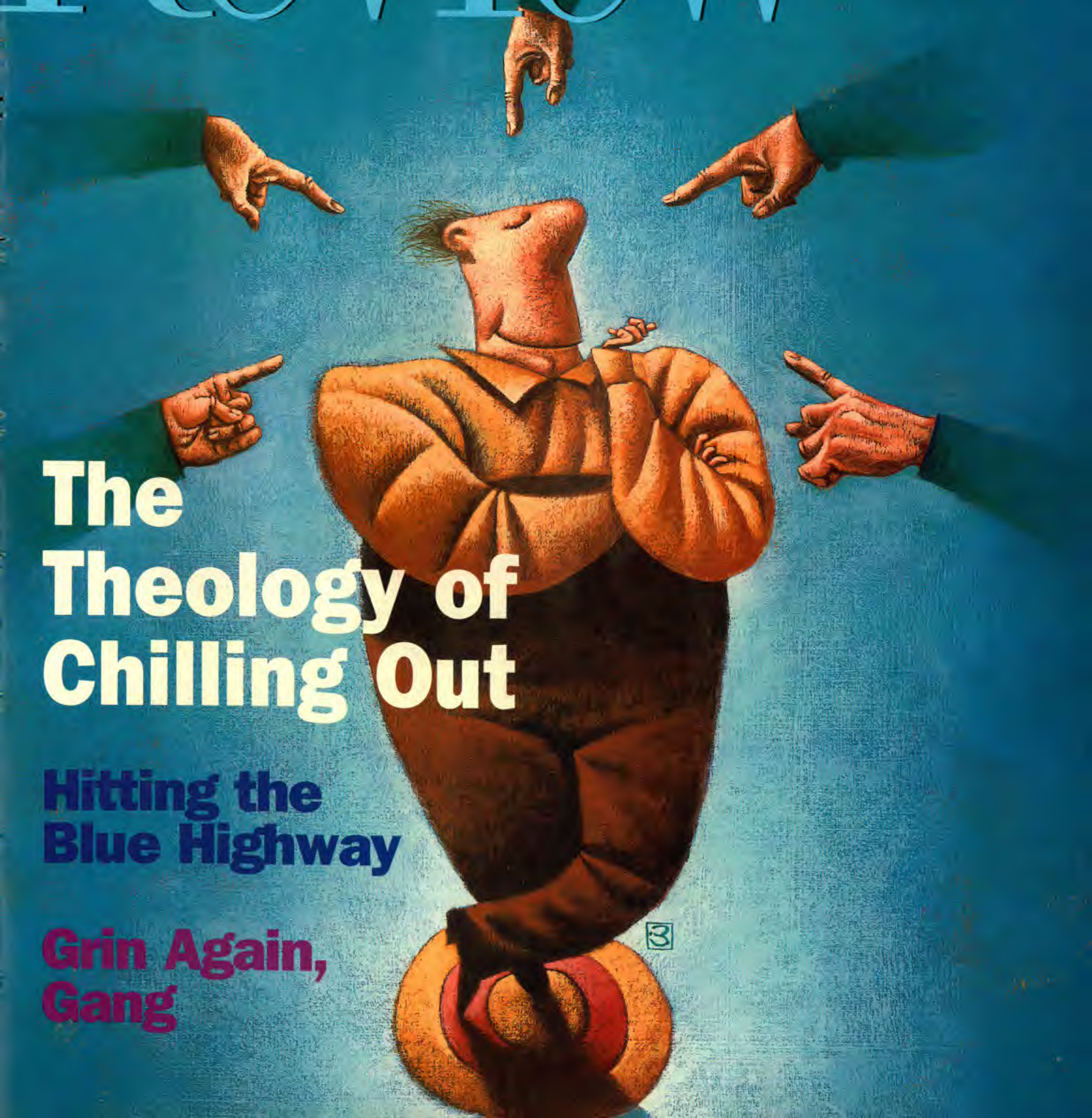
June 19, 1997

Cutting Edge

## The Theology of Chilling Out

Hitting the  
Blue Highway

Grin Again,  
Gang





# LETTERS

## Same Old Same Old

I really look forward to the *Review* and think you are doing a great job, but I was disappointed in Yvonne Lewis's "Pressing Through" (Apr. 17). It seemed to be the old mistaken

theology of the bedtime stories years ago: do what you are supposed to do (pay tithes and offerings) and everything will turn out great. Unfortunately, life doesn't work out that way very often.

I think we need realistic articles: "I did what I was supposed to do even though life wasn't turning out the way I wanted."

—Warren Thomas  
FARMINGTON, MISSOURI

## Adventist "X" Files

Being a fortysomething with some twentysomethings of my own, I'm beginning to feel the effects of old age. My mind isn't as sharp as it used to be (at least that's the impression my kids give me), and it's easy just to muddle along in the same old rut—without worrying much about where I have come from or where I am going.

So thanks for Melanie Scherencel Hess's "The Adventist 'X' Files" (Apr. 17), which pierced through

my fog and directed me to the two things that can give all of us identity and a feeling of belonging in this wonderful movement—a careful and continual looking at the way God has led us in the past and a willingness to share the map as we study together where we are going.

—Homer Trecartin,  
CALHOUN, GEORGIA

## Sabbath Do's and Don'ts

In response to Angela Wiant's well-intended and interesting "Keeping the Sabbath and Your Career" (Apr. 17). I had hoped to share this with some non-Adventist professionals with whom I am studying, but the article is disqualified on two points.

First, a sergeant is not an officer. He or she may be an NCO, but NCOs are not referred to as officers. Such a faux

pas raises doubts about the credibility of the story.

Second, articles like these serve as role models to others in similar situations. The answer given by Tori to the recruiting sergeant misses the mark. It's not wise, especially with the military, to refer to the Sabbath as "my" Sabbath or "your" Sabbath, as if we have a legitimate choice. It is better to say, "As a Seventh-day Adventist, I cannot [not "will not," "won't," or "don't"] work on Saturday from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday." The implication is that, out of obedience to God, my conscience and my faith do not allow me to work on the Bible Sabbath.

—G. D. Strunk, PASTOR  
TEMPLETON, CALIFORNIA

## Contemporary Worship (cont.)

Regarding Richard O'Ffill's April 17 letter.

There are thousands of us—and we too are of all generations—who feel it's about time that a variety of responses to the "awesomeness" of God can be tolerated, maybe even embraced. I do not believe that because one chooses to use one form of worship over another they are trying to make church history. Do Cain and Abel represent worship styles? Was it not a matter of obedience, a matter of trusting in God's provision of salvation and not man's?

## Wanted: Snapshots of Worship

You're invited to contribute to a special October issue on praise and worship. Our need? Top-quality prints or slides of Adventists, young and old, worshiping God in some way (prayer, music, drama) and a short paragraph describing the photo (names, place, occasion, etc.). All settings are welcome: church, Sabbath school, summer camp, you name it.

Deadline: August 4.

Send to "Snapshots of Worship," *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Please include phone number. Photos will not be returned.





What is the Constantine syndrome—making the gospel “user-friendly”? I thought he was merely advancing his political boundaries and clout.

I cannot agree that the rise of new and creative expressions of worship is divisive to the unity of the church. Can there not be unity among diversity? Do we all have to wear the same clothes? walk the same way? sing the same songs? The variety in God’s creation should be an answer. I wonder what some of my friends more comfortable with traditional worship would have said to David had they seen him dance around the ark.

In Florida it is not so much a matter of trying to save our youth by using or allowing creative forms of worship. We simply want to give them the freedom to shape and express their faith in ways meaningful to them. We trust God’s leading in the process and the salvation of His children.

—**Bill Crofton**

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES  
FLORIDA CONFERENCE  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

## The Real Evangelicals . . . (cont.)

As an Adventist who had grown up in our church and educational system, I was both happy and frustrated to read Robert Folkenberg’s “Will the Real Evangelical Adventist Please Stand Up” (April NAD Edition). Our church seems to be struggling with gospel believers on one side and those who believe Jesus *plus* “the traditional Adventist teachings” on the other.

It’s great to hear the smooth syncroneshed gear change of “Let’s adjust the way we teach these truths . . .” However, many of my classmates have, in the pain of legalistic defeat and fear of an investigative judgment that none of us were ready for, either apostatized or stayed as disenfranchised pseudo-members. We are not talking about a mistake made by a few teachers or pastors, but an accepted churchwide curriculum and emphasis. It doesn’t surprise me that many Adventists have

not experienced the good news of being accepted today, right now, because of Jesus’ white robe of righteousness that covers our filthy garments.

What frustrates many of my generation is the apparent lack of responsibility and sorrow that our church feels for the pain these teachings have caused. I remember having to apologize to my children when I realized how hurtful and non-scriptural my legalistic teachings were. It seems this too would be a great starting point for our church to make a heartfelt apology to those who trusted and had faith they were being properly led and instructed, only to find themselves disillusioned and discouraged. Showing compassion for those injured or in despair would be one of the best, most loving sermons ever.

Second, we could go a long way to promote unity by listening to Ellen White’s directive of reestablishing the main pillars of our faith on sound biblical scholarship and trusting the interpretation to the Holy Spirit. If we could be more honest about the problems of our past and less worried that the whole house will come down if we admit failure, we could rebuild the credibility that has been eroded by a lack of forthrightness.

Third, the only way that we will discontinue our lukewarm bench sitting and satisfaction with Christ’s nonreturn is to be Spirit-filled, gospel-centered Christians who don’t just retell a missionary’s story in Sabbath school, but confess firsthand what Jesus’ grace and power are doing in our lives. Only when we see our true condition and overwhelming need can we accept His gift with the deepest gratitude.

—**David R. Silverstein, D.D.S., P.A.**  
FRANKLIN, NORTH CAROLINA

## Letters Policy

The Review welcomes your letters. Short, specific letters are the most effective and have the best chance at being published. Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: Reviewmag@Adventist.org CompuServe network: 74617,15.

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# ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly..."

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

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Vol. 174, No. 25

## Prepare Your Church for Satellite Evangelism by Organizing a Local Discover Bible School



Schools at local churches will provide many students and graduates to be invited to Kenneth Cox's "Hope Beyond 2000" evangelistic series by satellite in November.

### Assistance Available

Local schools don't have to generate all their enrollments themselves. Enrollments in response to Voice of Prophecy broadcasts, It Is Written telecasts, and ads in *Signs of the Times* magazine will be forwarded to a school near the applicant.

Enrollment cards and newspaper inserts are available for Discover Bible Schools to localize and distribute in their area. A toll-free number, paid for and answered by the VOP in California, can be used on print advertising.

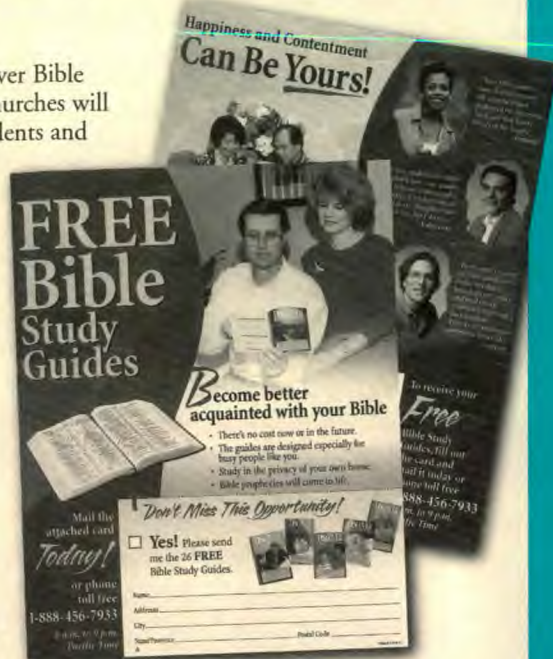
### Proven Effectiveness

Discover Bible Schools proved their effectiveness in connection with last year's NET '96 satellite crusade by Mark Finley. Not only did thousands of graduates attend the meetings, but entire congregations were transformed as members worked together to share the gospel with their communities. Former and missing members were reclaimed, and hundreds of graduates were baptized.

### Not too Late to Start

"If your church doesn't have a school already, it's not too late to start one," says Pastor Dan Guild, consultant to the project. "Even if students have completed only a few lessons, they are still among the best prospects to invite to the public meetings."

*Call or write today for information on how to start a Discover Bible School at your church.*



*Full-color newspaper inserts are among the advertising materials available for local Discover Bible Schools.*

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# Share the Wealth

STEPHEN CHAVEZ

I'm a rich man. (But don't ask for a loan. That's not how I count my wealth.) I'm rich because of the people God has placed in my life. I've been nurtured and encouraged by a host of people over my relatively short life span. I feel like the New Testament writer who wrote of being "surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1, NIV).

In small group worships at my church and here at the General Conference I've asked people to share something of an individual who has had a profound influence in their lives. It's always fascinating to hear

people recall how teachers, spouses, pastors, parents, friends, and family members have made a difference in their lives.

Allow me to mention a couple examples—not because they're typical, but because they show how God has used others to make me a useful part of His kingdom.

After I graduated from college, my first pastoral assignment was to Fortuna, California, where I worked under the leadership of W. A. "Bill" Hilliard. A seasoned pastor and former missionary, Bill was a master of basic pastoral skills: solid sermon preparation, home visitation, Bible studies, administration.

From Fortuna my wife and I spent a couple years at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Upon our return to northern California, we were assigned to work with Gordon Bietz at the Stockton Central church. One of the great innovative thinkers in today's church (now president of Southern Adventist University), Gordon taught me how to look at situations and solve problems in creative, nontraditional ways.

As I look back, it's easy for me to see why God put me in touch with the persons He did. I first needed training in the basics, and then the Lord saw that learning to think creatively would come in handy as well.

I could fill pages with names and specific instances in which parents, friends, colleagues, teachers, administrators, church members, and people I have admired from a distance have helped me reach a higher standard than I would ever have reached on my own.

As I think of it, it occurs to me that one's effectiveness as a role model is directly related to the influence Christ has had in one's life. Without Him we have nothing to reflect.

But beyond a celebration of role models past and present, I'm writing to remind you that whatever you do, wherever you go to church, you're a role model. And someone is tucking away a memory about you, a mental image of what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

You don't have to be a pastor to make a difference in someone's life.

A man I know hands out sticks of gum after services to the kids in his congregation (and a few lucky adults). I know a woman who "adopts" kids who go away to school, writing them notes and sending small surprises

throughout the year. An earliteen Sabbath school leader goes out into the halls just before Sabbath school begins and rounds up all his "lost sheep" who haven't yet found their way to class. (They pretend to complain, but I'm convinced that inwardly they're pleased that he notices when they're missing.)

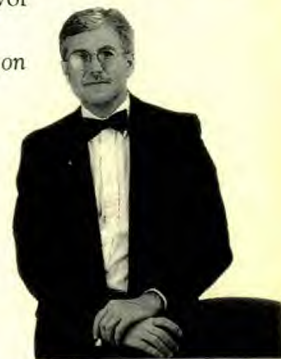
And the church isn't the only place in need of living examples of Christ's grace. For many in our society it's a lonely, ugly world. And there's lots of room for individuals who care enough about spreading God's love to volunteer at a homeless shelter, to tutor a child in the inner city, to coach a Little League baseball team, to visit folks in a senior citizens' home.

The church is not a building or a collection of doctrines; it's a people thing. We do well to communicate our doctrines in a clear, simple way. But we do better to demonstrate, in tangible ways, the joys of being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

Most sermons don't have a very long shelf life. (I remember few, if any, of Bill Hilliard's or Gordon Bietz's sermons.) But the influence of a godly Christian will never be forgotten. "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian," wrote Ellen White (*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 100). And our greatest privilege is directing people's attention to our Saviour.

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2, NIV), wrote the apostle. After all, He's the perfect role model. And knowing Him gives us something infinitely valuable to reflect.

*The church is a people thing.*





# It's Still the Best Policy

If, somehow, I were to be granted one wish for my church, I'd wish for honesty.

Honesty, of course, can be wished for at many levels—from the deeply personal to the high profile. I'll focus here on my current field—church communications, specifically these areas:

**Hiding our identity.** A few Fridays ago a really friendly guy named George approached me at the grocery store, forced eye contact, asked my name, and proceeded to show a rather unusual interest in my life. I left the store with a multiple-choice question in my head: Was George (a) gay, (b) Mormon, (c) with Amway, or (d) just a really friendly guy? Two weekends later George phoned me at home and, after some interrogation on my part, revealed himself: Amway.

"Why the sneaky approach?" I asked.

"Because," he said, "people have preconceptions about Amway, so we don't reveal ourselves up front."

Sound familiar? Too often our evangelism techniques resemble George's. We bear false witness now so we can bear true witness later—anything to pack the pews opening night. But packing pews is *not* our job; our job is to be open, honest, authentic. People today are sick of being duped—they want the full story, the fine print first. So from NET '98 brochures to our outreach magazines, let's tell them first and large: "We're Seventh-day Adventists. We're serious about God. Here's what we mean . . ."

Such honesty might be more appealing than we think—and would certainly be a nice addition to what Adventists are known for.

**Protecting our image.** With all the money and energy we've spent distancing ourselves from the Davidians and other "embarrassments," I can't help wondering whether a more honest, compassionate public relations strategy might be more effective. It would certainly be more original. "Yes, yes, Cokie, many of them *were* part of our church family. They veered from Adventist beliefs—and we'll be glad to explain how—but we still love those people. They're God's children too."

Unconventional? Maybe so. But again, our primary task is not to imitate the latest spin techniques at Hill and Knowlton. Our primary task is to be refreshingly honest—and to leave room for God.

**Telling one side of the story.** Objectivity brings credibility, yet too often we're reluctant to tell the bad news or a bad detail within the good news, all of which makes

some readers or listeners wonder "what really happened."

This reluctance puzzles me. As far as I know, we have nothing to hide. We're an imperfect church—always have been, always will be. We're 1997 Adventists, and we've got 1997 problems. A lot of members leave; a handful of congregations do the same. A lot of Adventist adults drive \$50,000 cars; a lot of Adventist kids wear jewelry. (If you don't think so, drop by an Adventist college campus or—if jewelry is banned on campus—a nearby shopping mall.) Certainly we need to uphold such principles as modesty, economy, and simplicity. But we also need to uphold the principle of honesty. The two *can* walk together. It's the difference between good counsel and good journalism.

One of the reasons, of course, that we hesitate to tell (or picture) the whole truth is the sensitivity of those members who don't want to *know* the whole truth. They don't want to hear why members leave the church or see a photo of a teenager wearing earrings, even if that teenager has done remarkable things for God. They want things to be as rosy as they were in the pioneer days—even though they weren't.

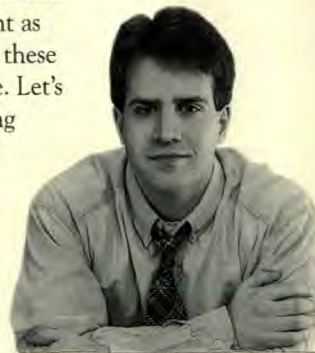
But by glossing over the questions, the struggles, the failures, the "bad news," we kid ourselves. And we miss opportunities to build. Instead, let's place all the bad news on the table and piece the puzzle together. *Together*.

These suggestions won't be popular with everyone—possibly not even my close relatives. But dialogue is how we grow, and I'm grateful to my colleagues/mentors at the *Review* for the chance to write freely, even if imperfectly.

Still, on this subject I can't shake the thought that God would do anything but bless honest efforts beyond our wildest hopes. "Everything God's people do," wrote Ellen White, "should be as transparent as sunlight."\* Let's seek transparency in these areas and in others we could all name. Let's avoid modeling the slick and changing wisdom of the world and stick to the true, the noble, the right.

Honesty, honesty. I wish we may, I wish we might.

\* "A Peculiar People," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 18, 1890.





# 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, and other short contributions to: Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; CompuServe: 74532,2564.

## "HATS OFF" TO ADVENTIST YOUTH

Do you know a young Adventist (age 18 and under) who goes the extra mile for God? Maybe they've taken a lead role at church. Maybe they shovel snow or rake leaves for older people. Maybe they've created their own unique ministry. Maybe they've touched *your* life.

The *Review* would like to honor them.

Send us a paragraph telling why a young person (not a relative) deserves special recognition. Please also send the address, the phone number, and a photograph (preferably "in action") of that person.

Soon we'll begin featuring Adventist youth on this page. We'll also send them a limited edition *Adventist Review* cap. (By "limited edition" we mean that only *Review* staff members—and a couple of our relatives—own them.)

The *Adventist Review*—taking our hats off to Adventist youth.



## ADVENTIST QUOTES

"God is more anxious to forgive than we are to sin."

—Richard Neil, M.D., at the Azure Hills (California) church

"I can't be a junior deacon. I can only be a *primary* deacon."

—eight-year-old Nathan Lowry, when asked to serve as a junior deacon at the Stevens Point (Wisconsin) church

"Six days shall your neighbor do all your work . . ."

—three-year-old Jenna Richard, in a creative attempt to recite the fourth commandment

"The evening promises to be both entertaining and educational. Plans include a delicious sinner prepared by the renowned Mission Inn chefs."

—an E-mailed announcement regarding a function at La Sierra University

## ADVENTIST LIFE

Our young pastor invited our conference's ministerial director to attend a church board meeting. At midmeeting the director distributed performance evaluation forms for board members to complete. The forms would be used in our pastor's first annual review.

As the forms were given out, a few board members gently teased our pastor, who seemed somewhat uncomfortable sitting there while we evaluated him. My mother, who loves our pastor dearly, whispered in my ear, "Should we make him really nervous and ask him how to spell 'arrogant'?"

—Kami L. Borg, Everett, Washington




My 3-year-old grandson, Jonathan, was playing with his trains when his 5-year-old sister, Jennifer, decided to join him. When Jonathan objected, his daddy reminded him about the sharing song he had learned in Sabbath school.

Jonathan then proceeded to give his own rendition of the "Sharing Song": "I have some trains and I don't share. You have no trains and I don't care . . ."

—Meribeth McFarlane, Sonora, California





# The Theology of CHILLING OUT

*Have you ever taken anything just a tiny bit too seriously?*

BY ALEX BRYAN

**W**HY WAS THE OINTMENT WASTED in this way?<sup>1</sup> At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?<sup>2</sup> Will You grant us a spot on each side of You in Your glory?<sup>3</sup> Why do your disciples eat with defiled hands?<sup>4</sup> Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?<sup>5</sup> Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!<sup>6</sup>

*It's time to chill out.* I think that's what Jesus really wanted to say. And maybe He did. After listening to criticism of a heartfelt gift, a meaningless theological question, obnoxious power plays, and pointless nit-picking about clean hands, sinner contact, and Sabbathkeeping, Jesus might well have sighed, "Can we please just chill out?"

## Some Things Never Change

I once volunteered for a popular teenage event called a lock-in. The purpose of the event was for Christian teenagers to invite their unchurched friends to an all-night party of sports, food, and fun—a great way to build community and a creative way to reach kids who would never step inside a church. (In fact, we had so many kids interested we had to turn some away.) A few "concerned" church members rallied against the event because it was literally *all night*. They said it wouldn't be healthy and that Ellen White would certainly be against it. Never mind that a dozen Adventist youth pastors would have a first opportunity to spend time with many of these kids—evangelism at 4:00 a.m. just wasn't acceptable.

A group of local church leaders once enumerated the

complaints unsatisfied members had voiced over the past couple years. Among the compilation of nearly 100 distinct complaints were: the haircut of the pastor, the duration of Christmas decorations, the dress preferences of several members, sermon topics, the interior decor, the way the secretary answered the phone, the order of the worship service, criticism that church leaders were "working too hard," and opposition to a weekly church breakfast on Sabbath morning. The list literally went on and on.

Another church I attended claimed one of the best musicians I've ever heard. His ability to play and lead music was inspirational in every sense of the word. The musician was the kind of person everyone liked, the kind no one could say anything bad about. Or so we thought. A couple church members hated his music, thought it was inappropriate—no, *immoral*—for the church. Complaint upon complaint, attack upon attack, drove this gifted Christian away. Criticism prevailed. And a light temporarily burned out.



I know an Adventist who never said anything, but was internally critical of much in the church. He expected every deacon to wear a coat and tie. He

accepted only high church music. He thought waterskiing the great Sabbath sin, while he counted the last seconds until 6:38 p.m. EST so he could watch the fourth quarter of the Bears-Dolphins game. He classified Adventists into the "eat-meats" and the "don't-eat-meats." He could call 'em like he saw 'em.

I know this Adventist because he used to be me.

The spiritual teaching of Jesus that I missed was the one in which He said, "I'm not overly concerned with becoming a professional critic. Who cares if she spent a lot of money on perfume for Me? Who cares if My disciples didn't wash their hands? Who cares if we pluck grain or water-ski on Sabbath or not? I say unto you, 'Chill out!'"

For some reason we Christians really struggle with this one. A propensity to make everything "a hill to die on," "the beginning of the slippery slope," or a "salvation issue" so often entices the church down the road of hypercriticism, overanalyzation, and scrutiny. It's a road that forces us to categorize everything "sheep" or "goat," with most things proclaimed "goat."

### The "Perfect" Church

This dangerous road was traveled by a group of European settlers to the New World. Edmund Morgan's *Puritan*

*Dilemma*<sup>7</sup> tells of English Christians (Anglicans) who crossed the Atlantic to form the *perfect church*, the consummate religious society, the city "built on a hill." These churchgoers were convinced they could purify the church by separating from it and starting a new body. They would be the remnant. Focused on eradicating everything they considered sin, the Puritans worked hard to keep comprehensive Sabbath laws, numerous personal relationship requirements, and exhaustive lifestyle regulations. Church members were prepared to follow God's will in "every detail," and knew that "they must punish every sin committed" in their religious society. Missing just one church service was reprehensible. Parents spied on children, leaders on members, members on leaders, neighbors on neighbors. "With virtually the whole population for a police force," wrote Morgan, "[church leaders] found it no problem to punish sin."<sup>8</sup>

In time, though, the Puritans found creating the perfect church much more difficult than anticipated. As much as they tried to eliminate every possible sin (both private and public), church leaders discovered imperfections continually cropping up: broken Sabbath laws, flawed personal relationships, violated lifestyle codes. The more attention they placed on creating a perfect church, the more discouraging the whole venture became.

Many Puritans' innate hunger for absolute perfection and their discouragement over the obviously *imperfect* church led them to start their own utopias. They would not abandon their original search for the perfect religious organization; instead, they would build their *own* cities on a hill. And Congregationalism swept New England as each cluster of Christians rushed to create their ultimate congregation. The Puritan dream splintered into numerous attempts to create *perfect* churches—until those churches were deemed imperfect by a faction of members off





to find flawlessness once again. Morgan writes, "The most dangerous tendency among the saints of Massachusetts was not excessive liberality but excessive purity."<sup>9</sup>

### Same Song and . . . Dance?

I believe excessive purity is often a dangerous tendency for Seventh-day Adventists. A desire for theological perfection, rigid adherence to Ellen White's writings, and a quest for "remnant" status frequently leave us vulnerable to religious intolerance in our own ranks. This is dangerous. In today's Adventist world there are at least four good reasons for us *not* to go down the road of the Puritans and those critics whom Jesus encountered.

First, an obsession with correctness creates an environment that scandalizes freethinkers in both classrooms and churches. The strength of Adventist

theology lies in our continual prayer, Bible study, and open debate on scriptural issues. If the Holy Spirit is guiding a healthy exchange of ideas, our understanding of God's will and Word can only increase. The intellectual energy spent discussing differences of opinion fuels the engine of theological production. If we try to quiet dissenting views, we run the risk of becoming either spiritually arrogant or feeble. I rarely grow from those who agree with me. I often grow from those who challenge my thinking.

Second, a purity-focused church fosters a climate for obsessed perfection-seekers like David Koresh and the Branch Davidians. If remnant status means that everything has to be just right, yet reality tells us that everything isn't just right, what are our options? We must either leave and continue our search elsewhere or

give up altogether. (Adventist offshoots and huge "inactives" lists tell us many have chosen these very options.) But if we *aren't* convinced that every ounce of church life from music to dress codes has to be regimented, then each of us has the wonderful option of learning to live with those nonessential things we don't particularly like. Clearly, an insistence on perfection hurts us on both the left and the right.

Third, structurally we will shatter into numerous little cities on a hill if we don't allow latitude in many areas of church life. We must, for example, allow churches to enjoy latitude in the way they worship. For Adventism to hold together, styles will have to vary across ethnic and generational frontiers. We must allow Sabbath school classes to offer a variety of lesson possibilities. We must teach

## When to Chill, When Not to Chill: An Online Conference

*In his "Theology of Chilling Out," Alex Bryan asks that we stop majoring in minors—and minoring in majors. In light of this article, Review assistant editor Andy Nash hosted an April 27 conference via CompuServe's Adventists Online Forum. Most of the participants were young adults (Dan, age 48, says he has a "25-year-old heart"). Some excerpts:*

### VARYING ATTITUDES

**Andy:** What are your reactions to Alex's remarks? [Portions were shared.]

**Allan:** Been there to a degree.

**Dave:** I was surprised [at how Alex used to be], but not surprised at the attitude in our church.

**Dan:** He was brave enough to be honest and come out publicly about something that continues to happen in our churches.

**Tim:** I think everyone does that some.

**Allan:** For those evangelized in the traditional way, it is hard to circumvent that type of legalistic thinking. At times it seems as if a "remnant" theology almost expects a true believer to be obsessive/compulsive about one's spirituality. It gives the false illusion of control.

**Andy:** How have you changed over the years?

**Dan:** My change came as I saw my children and nephew grow—as I tried to communicate with them and to like what they liked at their age.

**Dave:** One thing I find interesting is that the Caribbean is far more conservative than North America. And it can be attributed to the missionaries who came down and taught the people how to live (not necessarily how to choose). The people have followed that gospel to this day. Dark colors and jackets are still required for pulpit duties.

**Lori:** The same is true with the Marshalese. When missionaries came to the islands, they preached American culture rather than the Bible. To this day the Marshalese women believe it's a sin to wear pants.

**Dave:** And the irony is that Caribbean people go to North America and see the liberality that exists there and ask, "Are these the same people who taught us what we believe?"

### CHILL OUT ABOUT . . .

**Andy:** What does this church need to "chill out" about? What do we, as a whole, take too seriously?

**Tim:** Judging young people.

**Lori:** Worrying about what other people are wearing.

**René:** . . . and eating.

**Tim:** Jewelry.

**Dave:** Worrying about other people, period.

### DON'T CHILL OUT ABOUT . . .

**Andy:** Can this idea of "chilling out" be taken too far?

**René:** Yes, it can be taken to where there are no longer moral absolutes: Who cares if I sleep with someone other than my spouse? Who cares if I cheat my business partner?

**Dave:** Jesus was saying that His mission was to touch people and to do good. I think He disregarded the



biblical *principles* that allow people around the world to make Spirit-led decisions about Sabbathkeeping, dress codes, and religious expression. We live in an incredibly diverse world; our multigenerational, international church can survive only with solid Seventh-day Adventism taking many forms. In short, we don't all have to do it the same way.

Fourth, a Puritan mind-set risks allowing trivial issues to consume imperative issues. We have been called to tell the world about Jesus Christ's first and second comings. We have been called to love God with intensity and people with tender compassion. How much the ointment cost, who sits on Throne 2, clean hands, eating with tax collectors, and plucking grain on the Sabbath are issues that get in the way. I think that's why Jesus was so emphatic. I

think that's why He probably said, "Chill out!"

**W**hile it's imperative that we remember our prophetic calling, that we remain both united and committed to the clear teachings of Scripture, the vast array of personal decisions and beliefs that stem from these teachings should be respected and encouraged. Every Adventist must carefully scrutinize God's wishes in his or her life, but express openness to the spiritual leadings of brothers and sisters across the sanctuary and around the world.

The reality of Planet Earth is that a lot of things are neutral. That's right. Neither sheep nor goat. Something may be less than perfect or not what we'd prefer, but hardly worthy of an all-out spiritual assault. Sometimes it's OK to relax, let live, chill out. We

often lose opportunities to do ministry and build community when we each create our own 10,000 commandments in hopes of perfection. Such excessive purity is toxic for God's bride on the brink of a wedding. ■

<sup>1</sup> Mark 14:4.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 12:23.

<sup>3</sup> Mark 10:37.

<sup>4</sup> Mark 7:5.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 9:11.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 12:2.

<sup>7</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (New York: Harper, 1958).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 71.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Alex Bryan is pastor of *The New Community*, a new church designed to reach unchurched Generation Xers in Atlanta, Georgia.



traditions that opposed His mission.

**Karess:** We have to remember that we are in this world as a light to the world. If we take things too lightly, wouldn't we become careless like the world?

**Allan:** Light is to illumine, not burn.

**Andy:** Has the church moved toward or away from absolutes in recent decades?

**René:** It seems like half has gone one way and half the other.

**Karess:** It has [moved away]. Divorce is accepted, and we are allowing our youth to behave more like the world.

**Allan:** Our youth mirror us.

**Karess:** We are not striving to be like Jesus. We are trying more to be like the world to please them.

**Dave:** We don't know our Bibles as we once did.

**René:** Jesus told us to be in the world but not of the world. Yet it seems we as Adventists are more likely to be of the world but not in the world.

**Andy:** Why do we do that?

**Dave:** Because we have lost our focus.

**René:** I think we worry about what others will think of us. To be perfectly honest, I know I do.

**Andy:** Do you think we focus less on Jesus than 100 years ago?

**Dave:** I think we do focus less on Jesus. I think we really don't think He's coming. And we do the same things as the world, with about an eight-year delay.

**René:** I don't know, Dave. At least where I am we focus on Jesus, but not on the Second Coming per se. We focus more on how a relationship with Jesus helps you get through the day, conduct your business, etc.

**Andy:** What doesn't the church take seriously enough? What are we *too* chilled about?

**René:** The mandate to make disciples of all people.

**Dave:** Absolute amen, René.

**Karess:** Preaching Jesus' love instead of the "don'ts" list.

**Andy:** What did Jesus say *not* to chill out about?

**Dave:** Using His Father's house improperly.

**René:** Loving your neighbor.

**Allan:** Loving God.

**Lori:** Waiting eagerly for His return.

**Allan:** Surrender.

**Dave:** Being ready.

**Allan:** Taking His promises seriously.

## WHEN TO REBUKE

**Andy:** When should we rebuke someone else?

**René:** That's a toughie, Andy.

**Dan:** You can rebuke with lots of love—as Jesus did.

**Dave:** When you have a relationship already and the object of your rebuke is redemption.

**Andy:** Does rebuke always equal judging?

**Allan:** Rebuke without relationship is judging.

## GOD'S ABSOLUTES

**Andy:** How specific is God's list of absolutes? Is it just principles, or is it applications, too?

**René:** It seems like God's lists are pretty broad, which is why there's so much disagreement.

**Allan:** All I know is that God is absolutely in love with us. That might be the only absolute I need to know.



# The Issue Is Value

*The difference between how we see ourselves—  
and how we're seen.*

BY ERIK STENBAKKEN

**L**ET'S FACE IT. IN OUR PRESENT selfish, sinful state, we are not safe to save. Can't you see it? People sneaking out of heavenly mansions at night to pry up bricks from streets of gold or sneaking door-to-door pocketing celestial doorknobs.

Since character is the only thing we can take to heaven with us, if we've developed a habit of satisfying self where the getting isn't that good, what a mess we'd be in palaces of precious stones. It's torture to *have* and yet want and want and want.

It's a sensitive topic, but it needs to be looked at. That's right, I'm talking about jewelry—the kind we wear on the *inside*.

Perhaps we Seventh-day Adventists have focused on this issue too narrowly and in so doing let the core problems slip

by unnoticed: selfishness and self-gratification. This same problematic core shows symptoms in other areas of life also—sexuality, appetite, and avarice. By looking at particulars and ignoring principles, we can commit the most blatant errors—and feel cozy while doing it.

## The Larger Issues

What caused Lucifer to fall from heaven? It wasn't a desire for precious gems and metals. It was a selfish spirit that caused his fall—pride, ambition, and a desire to have his own way. That root still bears fruit today, and for some reason we have ranked some manifestations of sin more tolerable than others.

Most of us are aware of the dangers, moral and physical, related to sexual abandon. But like the issue of sexuality, it's often easier to treat (or just talk about) the symptoms of covetousness than address the cause. But which is more significant?

The real issue behind jewelry is only peripherally related to pearls, diamonds, and gold. The issue is *value*. And value has a direct correlation to motivation and action.

Where do we place our value? On what do we spend our time and money? I don't mean the time we *have* to spend at work and duty or the money we *have* to spend on sustenance. I mean the choices we make when we have so-called disposable income and extra time.

In order for us to avoid following a red herring off the trail of the real issue, it's important to address the topic of intrinsic value. Is a diamond wrong because it's beautiful?





PHOTO © ERIK STENBÄCKEN 1997



because it's rare? Obviously not.

Certainly beauty is to be appreciated. It's a wholesome ideal God built into us. Think of all the beautiful things we can experience but can't have: a quiet sunset, a mountain skyline, a bird's graceful flight, and a child's delighted laugh. Beauty.

Now think of the things we can have by getting our hands on them (or having them in our hands). Is all that off-limits?

If so, the heaven-bound are in for trouble. The City of God has the most lavish use of jewels and gold imaginable (as recorded in Revelation, chapter 21). Gold, pearls, rubies, splendor galore, all in a city 1,400 miles square. Wow!

That's great, but that's then. What about now?

The seeming dichotomy of "OK-ness" in extravagance presents a potential catch-22 situation for us in the here and now.

The issue is not one of holding out for the solid-gold crown—less now, more later. It's a matter of adopting God's values of unselfishness.

Balancing the knowledge that we're prone to selfishness with the knowledge that God Himself instilled in us an appreciation for beauty and quality is not easy.

Perhaps the best way to maintain balance is to establish a set of priorities for ourselves. If we invest our resources in our top priorities first, there will be many items that may be OK that we simply don't get to—not because they're bad, but because we've chosen higher priorities.

### The Larger Priorities

So how do we establish these priorities? On what do we base our rationale? The answer lies in finding where real value lies.

"[The saved] will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown" (Zech. 9:16, NIV). We're the real jewels. Not diamonds. Remember, the Second Coming is all about God's rescuing us, not the things of this world.

Our Saviour left all the splendor of

heaven to live in the dirt with us, to provide our way to heaven. Did you catch that? *Our* way to heaven. Even in our filthy, pathetic condition He sees infinite value in us—talk about spotting "diamonds in the rough"!

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is a graphic demonstration of what God values. He's not opposed to precious or beautiful things, but they always

God  
is not  
opposed to  
beautiful  
or precious  
things.

come after the big-ticket items: us. That's the governing principle: the principle of value.

No matter how cliché it sounds, there's a good way to tell what's valuable. Ask yourself "What would Jesus do?" Study His life. Listen to the simple yet infinitely deep truths He spoke. Look where He spent His time and resources. Notice the company He kept. Then stand at the foot of the cross and evaluate everything you do in its light. That is the standard.

We can ask the same question and view it with new illumination: Is it possible to lose eternal salvation over a simple thing like a cherished ring?

Yes.

And it's just as possible with a cherished Mont Blanc pen, a Nikon camera, a Movado watch, a Nissan automobile. It may even be more likely—because they seem so innocent. And in themselves they are. They are just artifacts of this earth. But earth is where they will

stay. And if we don't hold them loosely, we'll stay with them.

Ask yourself "What do I value?" "What should I invest in?"

When we place value in something, we invest in it. Investment is the visible, tangible result of our values. Time, money, talents, and emotions are just some of the resources we spend.

It's a sobering thought: whether we realize it or not, we are investing in eternity. We are accountable for every word we speak, every dollar we spend, every minute we use—or waste.

Values and subsequent investments are very personal decisions. And when it comes to our lives, we must be the judge. Our judgments, however, will ultimately be weighed on God's scales and viewed in the light of the cross. At the judgment bench, before God's throne, the opinions of others will matter little. Whether we've been judged "good" or "bad" by our contemporaries will be irrelevant.

So take a look at your own life.

Weigh your own priorities right now. It's a serious matter with eternal consequences. We need to examine our own lives prayerfully and apply the principle of eternal value to every choice we make.

And now we come back to the all-too-familiar question: What should one wear on the outside?

The answer begins with an application of Christ's standard of value in our own lives. And perhaps—from the inside out—each of us will develop and wear His character, the most beautiful of adornments and worthy investments. ■

Erik Stenbakken is assistant director of public relations at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. This article is adapted from CORD magazine, the alumni magazine for Union College.



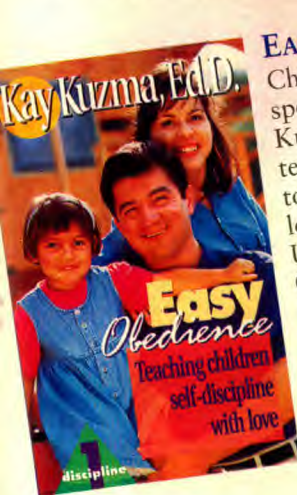


# Especially for Parents

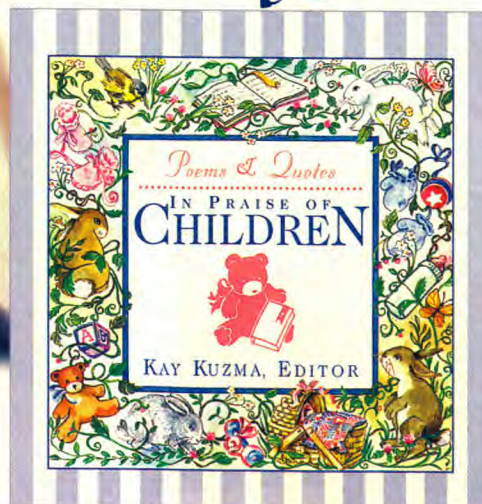


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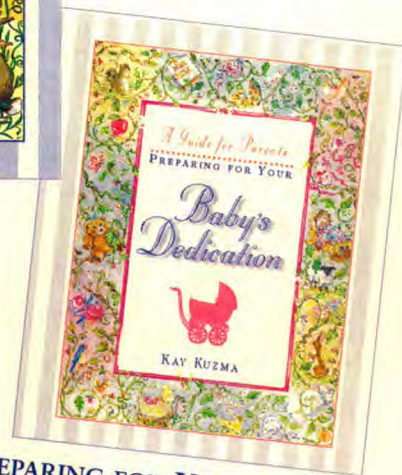


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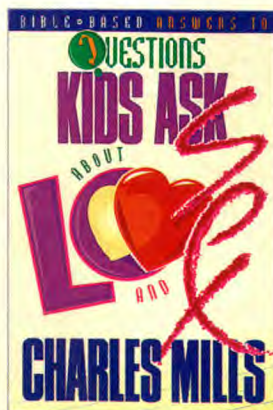
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# Grin Again, Gang

*Smiling, even looking at a smile, boosts life energy.*

BY ARLENE TAYLOR

**H**E HAD BEEN CAUGHT RED-HANDED trying to transplant a frog into the girls' locker room. The pug-nosed, freckle-faced 13-year-old now stretched dejectedly in the school nurse's office. Gazing at the floor, he queried, "Do you think God has a sense of humor? My teacher sure doesn't!" He ran his hands through unruly auburn hair.

I chose to begin by addressing the difference between possessing a sense of humor and choosing to apply it to a particular situation—his most recent prank, for instance. He grinned somewhat ruefully. "But does He?" the boy persisted.

"Absolutely," I said with certainty.

Our Creator fashioned the human brain; research has associated the function of humor with the right frontal lobe of the brain; therefore, Deity must have a sense of humor, because humans are a reflection of the character and personality of God (dim though that reflection may be at times). That was a new thought to him; it took me back to my childhood.

One of God's gifts to children is an almost irrepressible sense of humor. Smiling and laughing seem second nature to

most youngsters. My brother and I laughed a great deal when we were young. Our giggles often bubbled up in the most undesirable of situations (according to societal and religious standards): at funerals, during long sermons, in the middle of stern lectures from the teacher, and once even during prayer. A very elderly gentleman who fell asleep during a long supplication began to snore loudly. Gradually he slid down in the pew until he plopped onto the carpet. The jarring woke him up. "O, for crying out loud!" he blurted out disgustedly.

The whole incident was hysterical—to us. Mother elbowed me in the ribs and hissed, "Stop it!" Of course, the harder we tried to control our mirth, the more it burst forth. We were still giggling as we left church.

There were other incidents during which I tried to contain myself, with only marginal success. There was a teacher who meant to tell me to finish my spelling. He actually admonished in no uncertain tones, "*Spinish your felling*," and obviously saw no humor in the situation. Neither did the usher who lost his toupee while bending over to pick up a bill that had slipped off the offering plate. After that service a conscientious soul asked me ponderously







if I didn't find it hugely significant that there were no pictures of Jesus smiling.

I could count the times I heard "The very thought of foolishness is sin." In reality, no one seemed able to point out the distinguishing marks between healthy laughter and foolishness. This—plus growing up in a conservative nation, religious denomination, and home environment—conspired to swamp me with a huge collection of false guilt and shame about my propensity to see the humorous side of life. It would be nearly a half century before I would come to grips with the concept of humor as it relates to Christianity.

"We heard a cool lecture today on what smiling does to the immune system." Marvin burst into the living room, a bundle of kinetic energy, a grin splitting his face. Sitting at her desk, his mother nodded but did not look up. The teenager skidded to a halt beside her, concerned. "Mom, are you sad today?" The words came out haltingly.

"Of course not. I'm quite happy, actually." This time she glanced up at him, but her face did not change its somber expression. He looked closely at her for a moment and then turned

## A Time to Laugh

Dr. Samuel Shem, author of *The House of God*, says that one of the most effective ways to deal with a high-stress situation that we cannot escape is to make fun of it. Humor can help us to manage our suffering effectively by giving us power in what often appears to be a powerless situation. When we learn to laugh at the vagaries of life and teach ourselves to spot some humor in the midst of our difficulties, we will usually discover a new perspective that can help us to deal with them more effectively.

and took the stairs, two at a time, up to his room. "Well, your face doesn't know about it," he muttered under his breath.

Researchers tell us that it takes 13 facial muscles to create a smile, 37 to frown. Why would anyone take the extra energy to perpetually frown? Babies smile within the very first week after birth. Perhaps one of the reasons so many of us are attracted to babies is that they smile so frequently: dozens of times each day, according to one study.

In adulthood, however, most people average less than four smiles a day. What a loss. We all need to join the Share-a-Smile club!

Dr. John Diamond believes that smiling, or even looking at a smile, boosts life energy. In his book *Your Body Doesn't Lie* he states that smiling contributes to a healthy immune system. It can strengthen the thymus gland, as the zygomaticus major (smile muscles) and the thymus gland are closely linked.

Author Blair Justice writes in his book *Who Gets Sick?* that "if we assume a facial expression of happiness we can increase blood flow to the brain and stimulate release of favorable neurotransmitters." When our faces shape a smile—even more so when we are smiling internally and laughing, as well—our immune system is boosted. The level of the antibody immunoglobulin A (IgA), designed to provide localized protection on mucous membranes, increases.

Wearing pleasant facial expressions most of the time does not mean we deny other appropriate emotions and feelings. It does mean that we recognize that only approximately 20 percent of the effect on our lives from a given





situation results from the event itself; 80 percent can result from our perception of, or response to, the event.

Laughter is a behavior that is evident by the third or fourth month of life. Someone has said that laughter is a smile that has taken on life. Laughter can turn almost any disadvantage into an advantage. When we look for humor in our misfortunes, they do not necessarily go away, but we see them from a different perspective. The seat of humor and the home of new options reside in the same part of the brain. When we develop and use a healthy sense of humor, we can disengage from our predicaments to some degree. We can marshal our resources and recognize our opportunities more easily. Humor helps us to maintain perspective, to avoid getting caught up in our own melodramas. As Charles Schulz (creator of the cartoon strip *Peanuts*) once said: "If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself."

Humor is an important coping tool that some individuals fail to use because of erroneous belief systems. This can be especially true when people are dealing with serious illnesses. Comedian Victor Borge said that laughter is the shortest distance between two people. Sharing a chuckle reminds us that although someone may be seriously ill, human beings are more than their diseases. We cannot allow the illness to crowd out all else.

Norman Cousins referred to laughter as "internal jogging" and authored *Anatomy of an Illness* to describe how laughter helped him to heal from a life-threatening disease. He reported the joyous discovery "that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect that gave me at least two hours of pain-free sleep." Physiologists have discovered that anxiety and muscle relaxation cannot coexist. The relaxation response after a good laugh has been measured as lasting as long as 45 minutes.

## Guffaw for Your Health

Laboratory studies have shown that mirthful laughter affects most, if not all, of the body's major physiological systems. In fact, hearty laughter is very much like aerobic exercise. According to Dr. William Fry, Jr., 20 seconds of guffawing gives the heart the same workout as three minutes of hard rowing. Hearty laughter is convenient, cost-free, easily accessible, requires no special equipment or clothing, and can be accommodated in anyone's schedule.

In his book *The Healing Power of Humor* author Allen Klein writes, "After a fallen tree has landed on your car, putting a sign on it that reads 'compact car' may not make the car whole again, but it will help you see your misfortunes a little differently." When I landed my first organ-playing job for pay, I arrived at the church in plenty of time for the Sunday morning service. Glancing at the large billboard situated prominently on the front lawn, I noticed six-inch letters announcing the sermon title: "Do You Know What Hell Is?" Underneath, in letters barely smaller, were the words "Come and hear our new organist." I was so busy trying to keep my chuckles under wrap that I completely forgot to be nervous during that first service. And for years since, whenever I've needed a good laugh, I've simply seen that billboard in my mind's eye.

Sir William Osler referred to laughter as the music of life. He believed that a patient with a well-developed sense of humor had a better chance of recovery than a stolid individual who seldom laughed. The study of the mind-body connection, psychoneuroimmunology, is tracing the effect of our thoughts on neurotransmitter ratios in the brain as well as on immune system function. Unmanaged grief is associated with lowered activity of the body's T-cells (a type of white blood cell that attacks foreign invaders). Positive thinking

styles are associated with higher levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that has an antidepressant action.

Many Christians go through life with facial gestures and body language that do not reflect the genuine happiness that is the byproduct of a personal relationship with God. In an effort to avoid the *frivolous conversation* and *silly laughter* condemned in Ellen White's counsel, many get caught in habits of stolid gloom and depression.

Actually, Ellen White makes it eminently clear that we have a duty to discipline our minds to dwell on cheerful subjects. Those who do not make this choice will usually be found at one of two extremes: "elated by a continual round of exciting amusements, indulging in frivolous conversation, laughing and joking," or "depressed, having great trials and mental conflicts, which they think but few have ever experienced or can understand" (*Counsels on Health*, p. 628).

The balanced Christian life avoids both extremes. Jesus, the wellspring of joy, loves to see human beings happy (*The Adventist Home*, p. 513). Those who constantly wear a frown, who are chilled by the innocent laughter from the youth or from anyone, who consider all recreation or amusement a sin, do not represent Christianity aright (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 565).

Scientific evidence is accumulating to support the biblical axiom that *a cheerful heart is good medicine*. A positive mental attitude, along with smiling and laughter, can improve our mental, emotional, and physical health. Positive facial expressions, gestures, and body language evidence our inner joy.

A smile, they tell us, is a curve that straightens out a lot of things.

So try one often—just to see how many blessings that it brings. ■

Arlene Taylor is risk manager at St. Helena Hospital and founder-president of Realizations, Inc.





# Between Gravity and Grace

A. ALLAN and DEIRDRE MARTIN

I've attended Adventist schools for 10 of my 12 years in school. Ever since I can remember, we've had a wonderful, fun-loving, happy man serving as our chaplain. Lovingly dubbed "Pastor," he served everyone at the school and showed each of us a little more of who Jesus Christ truly is. He helped create programs that encouraged us to share Christ with others—not just with those we passed in our school hallways, but with people we saw at McDonald's or at the public library.

*Sin alters  
the course  
of our lives.*

In his Bible class I finally began to understand some of the pain Jesus went through in the hours before the Crucifixion. Pastor's words made me want to take away the sting of the soldier's whip. I wanted to cry by the foot of the cross and somehow thank Jesus for His sacrifice for us.

Pastor always took the time to talk to the "loners" in the hallways. He carried around a coin purse full of quarters, and whenever he forgot someone's name or said it incorrectly, he gave him or her a quarter. I've never known him to do anything mean or wrong, but if he had, I'm sure he would have been quick to apologize. Pastor was the nicest, most Christlike person he could be.

But all of a sudden there were rumors that he was leaving. At first no one really knew why. Then we found out. Pastor had messed up—he had committed adultery. At first we were in shock. But after a few weeks most of us had accepted it and were willing to move on. We didn't want Pastor to be fired. We loved him and his teaching.

Pastor's gone now. He lost his license to teach—and to preach. "Humans" took his right to preach God's Word. I accept the fact that Pastor made a mistake. But I don't accept that because of one mistake we as a system have forced him to keep quiet—not to release that burning desire to tell the whole world of Jesus' love for them.

Is it so horrible to have made that particular mistake that even a pastor cannot be forgiven? Who gives anyone the right to cast him out of the society of Seventh-day Adventists when Jesus offers to wrap us in His loving arms? Jesus forgave Pastor. I forgave him. Why can't "they"?

**Allan answers:** Part of the tragedy of sin is that it alters the course of our lives. The gravity of your pastor's actions, especially as a community figure, has broken the trust given him. His choice has hurt not only himself and his family, but you and your peers. He's lost the confidence of those who loved him most. And though he's also lost his teaching and preaching credentials, let me assure you that that doesn't remove his right to share the gospel. Because beyond the gravity of his sin there is grace.

Grace, like the forgiveness you and your peers offer him, will bring healing. If and when he repents and reconciles his relationships, God will show Himself true to His Word: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, NIV).

In this case, I don't know the details of why the "system" took the actions it did. I hope your pastor was provided the professional support and counseling referrals that will help him reconcile his relationships—and maybe even pastor again. It is here God grants us the discernment we need to navigate somewhere between gravity and grace.

As to your question "Why can't they forgive him?" that may be a discussion you and your local education superintendent may be better served to have. In your conversations you may find insights as to why the specific actions were taken.

Whatever the case, I hope you'll continue to show grace to your pastor. Help him reconcile, even if he is no longer at your school. Further, I pray you'll extend that same grace to the system, making efforts to empathize also with those who had to make this decision. If this situation serves to embitter you against "them," it adds to the negative consequences of your pastor's sin. If you find ways in the midst of this to exude grace, then healing can begin. Sin does change the course of our lives. Beyond the gravity of sin, may grace be found . . . in you.

Got a question? Deirdre and Allan would love to hear from you via E-mail, at [dream\\_VISION\\_ministries@CompuServe.com](mailto:dream_VISION_ministries@CompuServe.com).





# Horses Help Kids Connect With God

BY JOANNE CHITWOOD NOWACK, CORRESPONDENT WITH THE SOUTHERN TIDINGS, FLORIDA CONFERENCE

**M**y horse was there for me when no one else was. Through the turmoil of my early teen years, I poured all the affection of my young heart on that horse. He was my counselor, friend, and true love. I wouldn't be who I am today if it hadn't been for my relationship with him."

The young woman's story isn't an isolated one. A strong bond forms between children and horses when they are given the opportunity to interact. As a staff wrangler in the late 1970s at Florida Conference's Camp Kulaqua, I had the privilege of watching Dave Snow, our head wrangler, match campers to horses to bring out the strengths of both. The results were nothing short of miraculous.

One shy young girl appeared to be overshadowed by her vivacious, outgoing twin sister. Snow paired her with the most strong-willed horse in the stable for the horse pack trip. As the week wore on, we all saw a transformation occur in the quiet girl. An inner strength hidden previously under layers of insecurity emerged as she gently bent the stubborn horse's will to her own. She returned home from the pack trip with a new sense of confidence in her abilities.

"We're placing even more emphasis on the horses now as an integral part of our camp experience," says Phil Younts, administrative director for Camp Kulaqua. "Our activity staff has discovered that inanimate objects just don't have the appeal of live animals. The animals interact with the kids. They have personalities. They need the love and affection the kids have to offer as much as the kids need to give it."

Located in High Springs, Florida, Camp Kulaqua has expanded its equestrian



**HORSE SENSE:** Participating in the horse's care helps teach kids valuable lessons.

program to include year-round horseback riding in addition to the standard summer camp experience. A new barn with an indoor riding arena, miles of horseback-riding trails, and a string of 50 horses provide a "once in a lifetime" wrangling experience for city-dwelling kids who would never know the squeak of saddle leather, the musty-sweet odor of horse sweat, or the thrill of a gallop through the woods.

Certified by the Camp Horsemanship

Association, each spring the camp operates a clinic to certify instructors for its staff and other Adventist and non-Adventist camps across North America. Handicapped recreational riding is another area that the camp is looking closely at developing more fully in the future. Camp wranglers assist disabled children with riding the trails. They watch with pride as the children push beyond their limitations to develop confidence and independence on horseback.

"It's great," says one wrangler, as he boosts a young vision-impaired camper into the saddle and sends him on his way down the trail with the others. "These kids have more gumption than my sighted riders sometimes. Putting them on a horse is like giving them wings to fly. They love it."

Younts agrees. "We've seen what riding horses can do for these kids. It gives them a faith in themselves that they may not be able to develop any other way. That's why we want to become a therapeutic riding center," he says. "This bond between kids and horses is also a very spiritual thing, whether the kids are handicapped or not. As the campers relate to the horses, they learn what it means to give and receive unconditional love. I can't think of a better way to teach them about God."

## Listen Turns 50

**T**his year marks the fiftieth anniversary of *Listen* magazine, a journal that stands front and center in the print war against drug use.

Launched as a journal of the General Conference Temperance Department, *Listen* very quickly established itself as a youth-oriented, positive-lifestyle temperance magazine. About 50 years ago drug use was pretty much confined to alcohol and tobacco. Today its scope is broader and the articles treat



drugs as diverse as "cat" and "ecstasy."

*Listen* has always contained a lot more than information on the dangers of drugs. The journal has also emphasized positive alternatives to destructive habits. That means giving young readers life skills, goals, and role models.

"Editing *Listen* is a privilege and a thrill," says Lincoln Steed, who has edited the magazine for six years. "I know it works with young people, because I've seen them literally fighting over copies to read the latest personality profiles."

Last October leaders from the Review and Herald Publishing Association, North American Division, and General Conference jointly sponsored a first-ever *Listen* summit in Hagerstown, Maryland. The meeting brought together many literature evangelists who promote the journal.

As part of the meetings, former editor Francis Soper told of the journal's



**PAST AND PRESENT:** Francis Soper, *Listen*'s first full-time editor (seated), and current editor Lincoln Steed.

beginnings and of its successes in the past, including a maximum print run in the mid-1970s of 250,000 a month.

The recommendations coming from the summit are a challenge for the magazine to continue reaching out into public schools, to continue to investigate a wide variety of nontraditional marketing initiatives, and to continue to appeal to Adventist members for sponsorship.

As Steed remembers: "It's been sobering talking to quite a number of non-Adventists who, in discussing the magazine, eventually come to say something like 'You Seventh-day Adventists have done something very special with *Listen* magazine; you must be proud of the statement it makes to other people.' That commendation is mine to receive only as long as our membership *truly* supports the magazine and the principles of Adventist temperance."

## NEWS BREAK

### ADRA Signs Agreement With UN

**A**n Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) agreement with the United Nations World Food Program, signed on May 8, defines a new cooperative relationship between the international bodies.

The Memorandum of Understanding sets the framework for cooperation between ADRA and WFP to provide food assistance, maintenance of adequate nutrition, and promotion of socioeconomic self-reliance, especially among the vulnerable.

WFP executive director Catherine Bertini and ADRA president Ralph Watts signed the memorandum. "We are very pleased to be entering into this relationship with the WFP," Watts said. "We are pleased to be entering into this endeavor to expand the service we provide in trying to meet the plight of those who are hurting so much."

The document is designed to serve as a catalyst for both organizations at the headquarters and field levels to initiate formal and regular contacts, exchange infor-

mation, and collaborate in field operations.

According to the agreement, ADRA will be primarily responsible for the final distribution and monitoring of all food commodities delivered to it by the WFP. The WFP will be responsible for resource mobilization, transportation and delivery of food commodities, and accountability for their proper use.

"I salute all the work that ADRA does worldwide and the work that you do to keep people alive, help people grow, and help people improve their lives," said Bertini. "We are very pleased to be

partners with you in this effort."



**THE BEGINNING:** WFP official Catherine Bertini and ADRA president Ralph Watts sign the historic agreement.

### Newbold College Elects Female President

Newbold College, a Seventh-day Adventist institution in southern England, elected the first woman president in its 96-year history and the fourth woman to head an Adventist institution of higher learning.

The appointment is also significant because she is the first female administrator of any type at the school.



# A Little Lower Than Deep Blue?

BY GARY KRAUSE, GLOBAL MISSION COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

**H**uman beings used to be special, the crowning achievement of God's creation. Then Charles Darwin stirred up the primordial waters. We're still drowning.

Today we're told we're not unique—just sophisticated animals. According to one internationally respected philosopher of ethics, Peter Singer, there's no ethical distinction between human beings and animals. He's even lobbying for a bill of rights for apes. Further, in his book *Rethinking Life and Death*, Singer argues that a pig is higher up the scale than a newborn human baby and that infanticide can sometimes be appropriate.

Where will computers fit in this Darwinian jungle? Garry Kasparov, world champion chess player, recently lost to IBM's Deep Blue, a harmless-looking computer that calculates a quarter billion chess moves a second without sweating. Will computers also need a bill of rights in a few years?

## NEWS COMMENTARY

The Judeo-Christian tradition has always stressed the uniqueness of humanity. Whatever the genetic and physical similarities, we're in a different moral category than animals. Human beings have God-given purpose. Deep Blue may win at chess, checkers, Monopoly, and every known board game, but it will never be human. We're created "in God's image." By calling us to care for the rest of creation, God sets us apart.

Restoring the image of God in humanity has always been an important doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1997, when God's image seems all but obliterated from the face of the earth, it's never been more vital. We may have been created a little lower than the angels, but we're called to be a little higher than the animals. And a lot higher than computers.

## NEWS BREAK



Andrea Luxton

Andrea Luxton, who is currently principal of Stanborough School in Watford, Hertfordshire, England, was elected on May 11. She previously headed the college's English Department for four years and served as education director and women's ministries coordinator for the British Union.

Commenting on becoming the first woman president since the college's inception in 1901, Luxton remarked that "this is not the major issue. My role is to build an effective team with the staff and the church constituency to prepare the college as an effective educational institution for the twenty-first century."

She succeeds Derek Beardsell, who is to retire after seven years as principal. No date has yet been set for the changeover. Newbold College is one of the 80-plus institutions of higher education operated by the Adventist Church around the world.—*Adventist News Network*

### Two Adventist Choirs Win Music Awards

Two Adventist gospel choirs were awarded the top honors at the Voice of Tomorrow youth gospel choir competition in April.

Of the 425 groups that entered the competition, three

Adventist choirs from the Atlanta, Georgia, area placed among the 10 finalists.

The Lithonia Adventist Church gospel choir received the first prize of \$17,500 in cash and scholarships, and the Maranatha Adventist Church choir received second prize of \$10,000. The New Gainesville Adventist choir, also among the 10 finalists, did not receive an award. The Quaker Oats Company sponsors the competition in eight cities and gives a total of \$280,000 in awards and scholarships.

### Native American Youth Congress to Convene in July

The second Native American Youth Congress will be held July 8-13 at the Holbrook SDA Indian Mission School in Arizona. "Native Youth Taking the Spirit to the Nations in Strength" will be the theme of the program.

The congress will offer seminars on relating to parents, communicating, understanding the Bible, and dealing with peers. The program also will include time for worship, fellowship, and community service activities, the North American Division reports.

There is no charge for accommodations or food for those who mail their applications by June 30. For information and reservations call 1-888-HIS-YOUTH.



## For Your Good Health

### Don't Want to Get Old?

Men who are lifetime smokers are half as likely to reach age 73 as nonsmokers. Those who started smoking before age 40 had a 42 percent chance of reaching age 73, versus 78 percent for nonsmokers.—*UC Berkeley Wellness Letter*.

### Sneeze Control

About 10 percent of the general population and 90 percent of asthmatic patients are sensitive to house dust. Dust mites, tiny bugs that thrive in warm areas filled with dust (such as pillows, mattresses, carpets, or furniture) are primarily to blame. Placing an airtight cover on your mattress is the most important step to take in controlling the problem. Other steps include covers on pillows, regularly laundering sheets and blankets in hot water, and weekly vacuuming carpets and rugs. Air-conditioners can help by keeping humidity low.—*Medical Abstracts*.

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

## Did You Know?

**Trends in Church Attendance.** Participation in Sabbath school throughout the Adventist Church in North America has been on the decline since 1960, when calculated as a percentage of church membership.

In 1960 attendance was more than 80 percent of the total membership recorded in church books, but by 1990 this portion had declined by half. Attendance was less than 40 percent of book membership.—*Adult Sabbath School Needs Assessment Study, conducted by the North American Division Church Ministries Department (1990)*.

**World Missions.** Two out of three Adventists (67 percent) in North America believe that the church's world mission program has a Christianizing impact in foreign nations and does not primarily export American culture.

Fewer than one in 20 (4 percent) feel it is primarily an agent of influence for Western technology and ways. Fewer than a third (29 percent) see its impact as a mixture of both.—*North American Attitudes Toward World Missions Study, conducted by the North American Division Office of Information and Research (1996)*.

## N E W S B R E A K

### La Sierra Academy Receives \$259,000

La Sierra Adventist Academy in Riverside, California, received \$259,000 to create an educational endowment fund, reports Chris Gaines, academy development director. The endowment drive was sparked by matching gift challenges from two donors.

"It was a terrific incentive for individuals to make a lasting gift to the school that could be quadrupled through matching gifts," says Gaines. Donors had their gifts matched dollar for dollar, and the combined total was matched again by a third donor.

### News Notes

✓ **Tears of joy** accompanied the baptism of three new Adventist believers at the close of an evangelistic series conducted by Newbold College students in Varazdin, Croatia, reports General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg. Another 25 believers are preparing for baptism.

✓ **The Adventist community in Israel** is growing at an unprecedented rate, reports General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg. In the past 10 years the number of Adventist believers has increased from 50 to more than 700. About 600 believers recently gathered in

Jerusalem for a daylong Sabbath celebration and to meet the new Israel Field president, Richard Elofer.

✓ **G. Alex Bryant**, Central States Conference education, youth, and temperance director, was recently elected conference president. Bryant replaces J. Alfred Johnson.

✓ **Dionisio Olivo**, Greater New York Conference youth and family life director, was recently elected conference president. Olivo replaces Charles J. Griffin.

✓ **V. J. Mendinghall**, South Atlantic Conference communication and temperance director, was recently elected conference president. Mendinghall replaces Ralph P. Peay.

### What's Upcoming

June	28	Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Euro-Africa Division
July	5	Vacation Witnessing Emphasis
Aug.	2	Global Mission Evangelism Day
Sept.	6	Lay Evangelism Day
Sept.	13-20	Adventist Review Emphasis
Sept.	20	Family Togetherness Day



# Hitting the Blue Highway

*But it's so easy to flow with the traffic.*

BY RANDY FISHELL

ON THE OLD HIGHWAY MAPS OF America the main routes were red and back roads blue. Now even the colors are changing. But in those brevities just before dawn and a little after dusk—times neither day nor night—the old roads return to the sky some of its color. Then, in truth, they carry a mysterious cast of blue.”<sup>1</sup>

Such are the descriptive words of Native American author William Least Heat Moon. Some years ago, divorced and despondent, this Indian college teacher took to the

experiences in what became a best-selling book. *Blue Highways* chronicles Moon's journey along 42,000 miles of America's back roads.

The author met

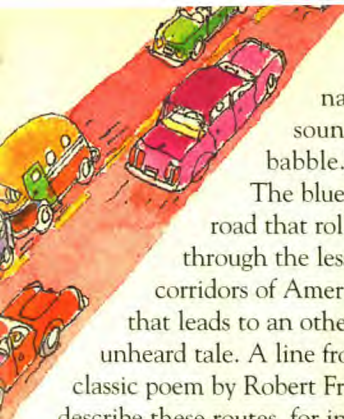
such intriguing individuals as boat-builder Bill Hammond; Alice Middleton, an octogenarian and former schoolteacher; and patrolman-turned-Trappist monk Patrick Duffy.

The blue highways led Moon to such singular destinations as Ninety Six, South Carolina; Dime Box, Texas; and Nameless, Tennessee. Familiar to some readers of this article would be a small town in eastern Washington, of which Moon wrote, “The future passed eastward to Walla Walla . . . with its many small streams instead of navigable rivers. Outsiders may laugh at the name until they consider the original one: Steptoeville. Walla Walla, a pleasant little city of ivied college buildings, wasn't at all what you'd expect of a town with a

off-the-beaten-pathways of America and chronicled his

ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY





name that sounds like baby babble.”<sup>2</sup>

The blue highway is a road that rolls on through the lesser-known corridors of America, a trail that leads to an otherwise unheard tale. A line from the classic poem by Robert Frost serves to describe these routes, for indeed the blue highway is “the one less traveled by.”<sup>3</sup>

Blue highways are usually not the shortest distance between two points. Yet even though there may be a more direct multilane freeway or interstate system nearby, some—oddly—opt for the blue highway over the faster, smoother route. It seems a questionable choice, unless you have discovered, as some on the journey have, that it is often on the road less traveled that the human spirit faces challenge. It is here that the human spirit grows.

You will not find such soul-stretching roads on the maps you carry in your glove boxes. Only by traversing the blue highway of God’s providence will the Christian ultimately reach those character-building crossroads between *compromise* and *conviction*.

### On the Road With Moses

In a literary sense Moses was the original “basket case,” having been placed in a little papyrus boat by his mother, for safety. As his name (*Mosheh*) suggests, he had been providentially “drawn out” of the Nile River, eventually to make his home in the royal court of Egypt. There in the dazzling Egyptian palace, Moses became a man, trained in the ways of triumph under the greatest military minds. All this so that he might one day exercise authority as ruler of Egypt.

Years of preparation rolled by, until the time came to discuss the future of the dynasty. There would be no contest, no national convention, no costly campaign that might end in failure. Moses was *heir* to the throne of Egypt. Just one

thing stood between him and the seat of power: he must subscribe to the national religion. Only by worshipping the dead could Moses live as a pharaoh. And here lay one of the major factors that persuaded Moses to take the road less traveled by.

The heat was on. And though he’d gotten his start in water, Moses came to know something of the blue highway. The seducing pull of pleasures in the royal court wooed him. How could anyone even consider declining such royal accolades and amenities awaiting him? A toe’s length away from stepping onto a street of dreams, onto a free ride to fantasyland, Moses turned his back on it all.

Hebrews 11:24 tells us that Moses just said no: “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”\*

A hard road lay on the horizon. But Moses was convicted of the direction his life should take. He knew that while the free and easy way of the pharaohs led to prestige and power, it was another road—the blue highway of loyalty to his God—that led to lasting, inner peace.

### Killed by Compromise

Today many communication and business seminars explore the art of negotiation. This valuable skill can often help resolve difficult relational conflicts. Typically, compromise is a vital component in the successful negotiation of a corporate or interpersonal impasse. But there is a critical difference between conscionable negotiation and conscience-denying compromise that achieves a resolution at the cost of one’s true conviction.

The story is told of a hunter who stalked the woods one day in search of a bear. He spotted one and took careful aim, lining up the bear’s big, black eyes in the crosshairs of his rifle’s

scope. The hunter was about to pull the trigger when, much to his surprise, the bear began to speak in a soft, soothing voice.

“Isn’t it better to talk than shoot? What do you want? Let us negotiate the matter.”

Still amazed at a talking bear, the hunter lowered his rifle and responded, “Well, I happen to want a fur coat.”

“Good,” said the burly beast, still staring into the eyes of the hunter. “That is a negotiable matter.” Then continuing diplomatically, he said, “I, on the other hand, want a full stomach. So let us negotiate a compromise.”

According to the story, the two sat down on a nearby log to negotiate. After a while the bear was seen to walk away *alone* into the dense woods. The negotiations had been a success, for the bear now had a full stomach, and the devoured hunter had his fur coat.

There is a time for negotiation, but there is also a time when remaining true to conviction is the only thing that will spare you from certain destruction. Compromise can kill.

### On the Road Again

The blue highway Moses took led him victoriously out of slavery in Egypt. But it landed him in a wilderness of despair. The might-have-been pharaoh listened to the cheers and weathered the jeers of the people he loved. Again and again the wandering Israelites had complained, questioned, and even challenged him.

And they challenged Moses’ God as well.

Moses was high up on Mount Sinai meeting with God when the people declared him “missing in action” and proceeded to fill the power vacuum with a glistening, golden idol molded into the shape of a calf. A shout of twisted devotion soon rang out over the camp: “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt” (Ex. 32:4). At dawn the next day the real celebration began.

But while the people were drinking and dancing, Moses descended Mount Sinai, the twin tablets of God’s law in



his hands. Scripture says that "when Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain" (verse 19).

Righteous indignation burning within him, Moses "took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it" (verse 20). Then he turned his attention to Aaron. "What did these people do to you," he asked his brother in astonishment, "that you led them into such great sin?" (verse 21).

Displacing the blame and pointing to circumstances beyond his control became Aaron's only hope of vindication. "You know how prone these people are to evil. . . . They gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" (verses 22-24).

What a lame excuse! Moses must have been bitterly disappointed by his spineless sibling. I can see the great leader turning his back and heading away. But suddenly he stopped. He stood alone, his reputation and his very life on the line. With a confidence born only of God, Moses lifted his head and spoke with boldness: "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me" (verse 26). There was no negotiation, no compromise. Moses was empowered by a sense of heavenly conviction.

The rest of the story, as Paul Harvey might say, is not pleasant. Swords were strapped on, and divine retribution was allowed to prevail. "That day about three thousand of the people died" (verse 28).

As the sun set on that sad day of long ago, the issues were clear. Moses had options. He could have come down off that mountain and simply eased into the flow of that idolatrous freeway. He might have easily taken a ride on the tide of rationalism: "I'll let them get it out of their system. Then when the time is right, I can suggest we talk

## Only by traversing the blue highway of God's providence will the Christian ultimately reach those character-building crossroads between compromise and conviction.

things over. We can negotiate."

But instead of cruising down the center line of compromise, Moses took the hard road of conviction. He took the blue highway of holiness.

### What Road Are You On?

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that someday, perhaps sooner than we realize, we will traverse blue highways that involve obedience and loyalty to God while the rest of the world goes another direction. In some parts of the world the road of religious persecution is already being traveled.

But what of the blue highways in the here and now for the rest of us? In a society that places high value on tolerance and diversity of opinion, are there any occasions worthy of taking such a stand as Moses did?

Christian tolerance is a virtue. But it's not without its limits. Informed by God's Word, empowered through prayer, and enriched by the wise counsel of others, we are increasingly enabled to discern those times when God beckons us to hit the blue highway—in an attitude of love. With God's Spirit working within us, our courage will be bolstered to act upon

our convictions.

Former college classmates are skyrocketing toward corporate success, but your calling as a husband, wife, or parent finds you choosing the blue highway of meeting family members' needs instead of achieving your own career goals.

The guys at the shop are having a laugh, with the punch line rooted in the color of a workmate's skin. Suddenly you have an overwhelming sense of conviction that the blue highway of racial reconciliation through Christ is the only way to go.

Everyone is talking about Hollywood's latest release, the one that even a myriad of church members have seen—because it has "enough redemptive value" wedged between the sin and the sex to make it worthwhile. But

somehow the Spirit's urging that you take the blue highway of a pure life seems crystal clear.

In the pursuit of holiness, it is inevitable that there will come times when we must take one of two roads: the freeway of moral and ethical compromise, or the less-traveled blue highway of godly conviction.

"I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood,  
and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the  
difference."<sup>4</sup>

\* Scripture references in this article are from the New International Version.

<sup>1</sup> William Least Heat Moon, *Blue Highways* (Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1982), foreword.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Randy Fishell is associate editor of *Guide at the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland.*





# Divorce's Other Victims

I recently ran across an article that seems to explain some of the emotions that have been expressed to me by *Review* readers. The article, "The Other Sorrow of Divorce: The Effects on Grandparents When Their Adult Children Divorce,"<sup>1</sup> brings up some issues that many experience but few understand. When a couple divorces, our attention automatically turns to the most immediate players—the husband, the wife, the children. We may take sides. Whatever our stance, we feel for the parties involved. But what of the parents of the divorcing couple?

They too go through the stages of grief and loss. They too mourn for what can never be. They too experience a shift in roles as they struggle to determine how to parent the divorced child, how to extend their own finances, how to support their grandchildren.

Parents of divorcing children may be blamed by members of their church, accused of being less-than-model parents. They may suffer, too, from unresolved issues in their own marriage, which they are suddenly forced to confront. They are left, without warning, in the midst of a storm that affects their time, their finances, their emotions, their sense of self, and their psychological well-being. Their children look to them for help. To whom do they look?

I am disheartened to learn of churches in which parents of divorcing children are made to answer for their own parenting practices, which members somehow connect to the divorce. I am sorrowed to find that church administrators must keep silent about their families, pictures must be removed from offices, conversations must be turned, eyes averted. What are we doing when members need support, courage, help, friends? Are we sharing their burdens, or contributing to their suffering?

When are we going to learn that the "ideal family" seated at the table while Uncle Arthur smiles in benevolence does not represent the reality of the nineties any more than it did the reality of the fifties? People suffer now. People suffered then. Sometimes they suffer surrounded by the loving arms of a church family. Other times they suffer alone.

Jesus recognized suffering as He walked on earth. He did not avoid it. He did not tell sufferers that they must answer for their pain. "Who sinned," asked His disciples, pointing to a

blind man, "this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither," replied Jesus. "This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9:1-3, NIV).

Jesus sought to bring restoration out of suffering. Beauty from ashes. Glory from despair.

What can we do, then, when we learn that a member of our congregation has a son or daughter whose marriage has come to an end?

1. Provide reassurance. Let the parents know that you do not blame them, that their status in your eyes has not changed. We are here to support

one another through the trials.

2. Accept the emotions expressed. The parent of a divorcing child may express anger and bitterness, blaming others for what has happened. This is not the time to jump into the fray, taking sides and trying to prove logically who was "at fault." Listen with the heart.

3. Direct parents to sources of support. Since 1965 all 50 states have enacted laws regarding grandparent visitation.<sup>2</sup> Public awareness is growing. Look for support groups in your area to help grieving parents.

4. Let parents know that their own needs are important too. In the overwhelming desire to help a divorcing child, parents may overextend themselves, depleting their own financial and emotional reserves. Sometimes it takes a friend to help draw some healthy boundaries.

In short, be there. Offer your time. Your ears. Your heart. For who knows if at some point in the future it might be you standing cold and desolate in the church lobby, hoping for a gentle hand on the shoulder, a compassionate glance, a place without blame.

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Gray and S. M. Geron, "The Other Sorrow of Divorce: The Effects on Grandparents When Their Adult Children Divorce." *Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 23 (1995): 139-159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

*Jesus sought to  
bring glory  
from despair.*

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# Purr

ROSY TETZ

**H**ave you ever had a chance to pet a cat? It's very pleasant. The cat's fur is soft and warm, and the cat gets all happy and snuggles up to you. But the very best thing is the purr.

When a cat is happy and contented, it starts to purr. What a wonderful sound! Have you ever heard it? It's sort of a little rumbling noise that seems to come from deep in their throats.

When cats purr, they are saying that they like how you are petting them. They love how it feels when you stroke them. And when you stop, lots of times the cat will come up and rub against you to ask you not to

stop—to pet it some more.

Cats start purring when they are very young. If you've ever seen tiny little kittens drinking milk from their mother, you might have heard them purring. They purr because they are so hungry, and the milk tastes so good, and they are cozy, all cuddled up with their mama and brothers and sisters.

And have you ever seen a mother cat give her babies a bath? She washes them with her tongue! Would you like that? Well, kittens love it! It makes them feel safe and happy. So guess what they do—they purr.

Some people think cats are smart. Every day a human is there to feed them and give them fresh water and

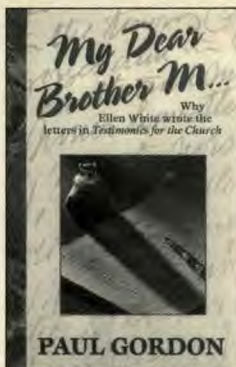
pet them. Every day they get to sleep as much as they want and play whenever they feel like it. A cat doesn't care if the cat next door has more toys or gets more expensive cat food. A cat is content.

It is very smart to be content. One of the Ten Commandments says that is the way to be happy: "You must not want to take anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exodus 20:17, ICB). God knows that you cannot be happy if you want something you can't have. It doesn't make sense to always be worried about what you can't have. You never get time to enjoy the wonderful things you can have.

The Bible says, "Be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5, NIV). God is with you. That's the most important thing. He will give you what you need—and you can be content.



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# BOOK

• MARK •

## The Fat Lady and the Kingdom

**Can a Wealthy Church Fit Through the Pearly Gates?**

George Knight, Pacific Press Pub. Assn., Boise, Idaho, 1995, paperback, US\$11.99, Cdn\$17.49. Reviewed by Eliot W. Bolst, Melbourne, Australia.

Its questionable metaphor offended many would-be readers when *The Fat Lady and the Kingdom* was published in 1995. Politically incorrect? Yes! But wait! One needs to understand the imagery before rejecting the content. You can't always tell a book by its title. If you stop at the title, you'll do yourself a disservice and the book an injustice.

George Knight, professor of church history at Andrews University, draws on the use of women in the Bible. He extends it to characterize his church as it approaches the twenty-first century. He explains: "When I first used this

title some years ago, my editors and myself wrestled together over its wording—all of us keenly sensitive to avoid sexist stereotypes. After a multitude of alternatives proved unworkable, we fell back on the title as you see it, finding it most in keeping with the images of Scripture in both Testaments. It is my hope that the readers will look past this detail to the book's message."

Knight imagines an obese woman with her arms full of packages, standing before a door. The church, as he depicts it, has become wealthy. It has a multitude of institutions, schools, hospitals, philanthropic organizations, and universities. Hence a church "rich, and increased with goods" feels in need of nothing (Rev. 3:17).

The book is a collection of 10 papers Knight has written on the state of the church. He particularly targets those in church administration. Knight challenges the reader to become an agent for change so that the church may fulfill its mission in the world.

Among other issues, he discusses the life cycle of a church, secularization, and the nature of covenants.

Some interesting quotes appear: "He [God] is no more dependent upon modern spiritual Jews than He was upon ancient literal Jews."

"There is too much talent allotted to greasing the wheels and watching the church bureaucracy." He suggests that businesspersons should "run the finances of the church."

He discusses the relevance of work methods in the "missiological quadrilateral"—publishing, medical, educational, and conferences. Though these methods proved effective in the past, in their present mode they need a change of focus.

Knight believes Adventists can learn lessons from the Amish and the Methodists. He reminds us that the Amish have been successful in maintaining standards, but it has come at the price of mission. On the other hand, when Methodism's standards became indistinguishable from mainline America's, its membership declined.

This volume has the potential to work as a catalyst to renew the church's mission rather than accumulate dust along with the church as the world rolls on. Don't dismiss this as the work of an uninformed academic. Church leaders need to acquaint themselves with the arguments, to expose themselves to the thinking of an author who is not part of the administrative establishment.

Knight addresses many issues being discussed in Adventist online forums, so who should read this book? The young people taking responsibility in the local church and questioning the "way things are" on all levels; church employees; administrators of every stripe; educators; and members—everyone.



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# Comeback

**T**he ballpark announcer gasps: "Look, it's . . ." He gets a little choked up, then clearing his throat, he begins to speak rapidly: "Ladies and gentlemen, pitching for the San Francisco

Giants is Daaave Dravecky!" The crowd is on its feet, waving wildly, cheering, whistling. As Dravecky pitches a winning game, the crowd responds with six standing ovations.

It's halftime in an NFL playoff game. The fans have been waiting for two years for this moment: Joe Montana, recovered from injuries that almost ended his career, takes the field as quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers and leads the team to two touchdowns for the win. The fans are ecstatic. Another great comeback.

Magic Johnson in the 1993 Olympics, Larry Bird after surgery, Michael Jordan after retirement . . . in the world of sports and entertainment, when the legends and stars make a comeback, they are greeted with cheers and standing ovations from their fans.

The pastor is making the morning announcements when Mary Montgomery hurries through the back door and heads for a nearby pew. Heads begin to turn—Mary, born an Adventist, recently divorced, hasn't attended church for years, but today she just felt like bringing her two preschoolers to cradle roll. She tries to listen to the sermon, but her active little ones keep her distracted—moving in, out, and under the pew. Do you hear the applause? Does she get a standing ovation?

Shawn stands outside of church between Sabbath school and church, smoking a cigarette. When he was in elementary school, his folks were baptized in an evangelistic campaign, went to church sporadically, then stopped. A public high school graduate, he's now on his own and decided to come back for a visit. He sits alone, and those around him— noticing the distinctive smell of tobacco smoke—give him plenty of room. After the sermon, when the pastor makes an appeal, Shawn walks to the front. On the way out he tells the deacon at the door, "I'll be back next week, and every week." Do you hear the cheers and shouts?

Head elder Johnson was a pillar in the church from the first building fund-raiser. He was faithful with his tithe and gave

liberally to special appeals; he ministered with weekly Bible studies, taught Sabbath school, and served on the board. For 20 years his name was closely associated with the church, until that year of confusion. Johnson became the talk of the town—an affair, a divorce; he lost his home, then his job. It seemed as though the best thing for him to do would be to leave and never return. But one Sabbath morning he enters the church with hat in hand and eyes to the floor. After the sermon Johnson pauses at the door to speak a few words to the pastor. "I've made a tragic mistake, the biggest mistake of my life," he says as the tears begin to moisten his eyes, "and I've asked God

to forgive me. Now I want to be rebaptized." The members standing in the foyer begin to . . .

There are other examples that come to mind: students who leave home and the church; those who, for whatever reason, work on Sabbath, marry non-Adventists, or use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs; disillusioned members who are no longer actively involved, but return for special speakers or camp meetings; visitors who are noticeably different from the regular members—dressed casually or in work clothes, wearing lots of jewelry or an unusual hairstyle, or disabled in some way. Is someone there to encourage and cheer?

Yes! Although we may not see or hear the fans cheering wildly on Sabbath morning, those who make a comeback to church, taking small or giant steps on the road of repentance and recovery, are getting a standing ovation in heaven:

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

This parable sends a message to the men and women, friends and neighbors, parents and siblings, who are there when the lost is found. To each of us, Jesus extends these invitations: "Rejoice with me" (Luke 15:6, 9) and "Be glad" (verse 32). ■

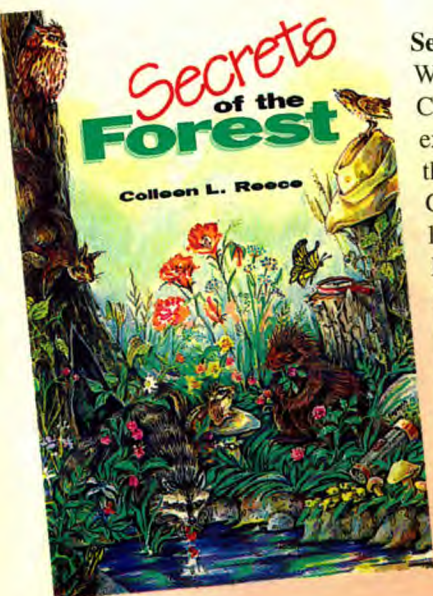
Tom Kohls is a freelance writer living in Brunswick, Maine, with his wife and four children.



*Those who come  
back to church  
get a standing  
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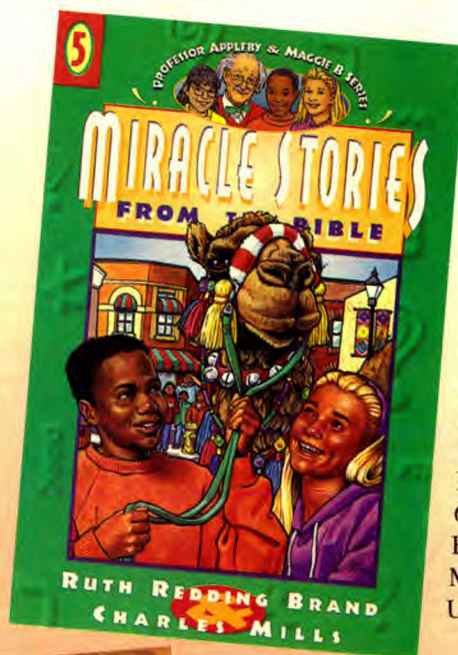


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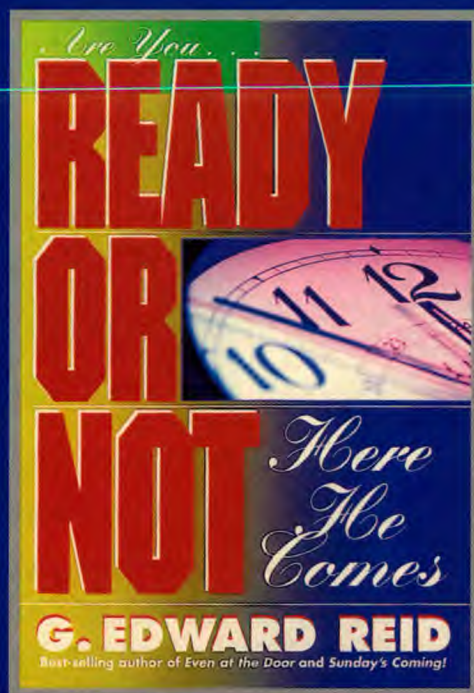
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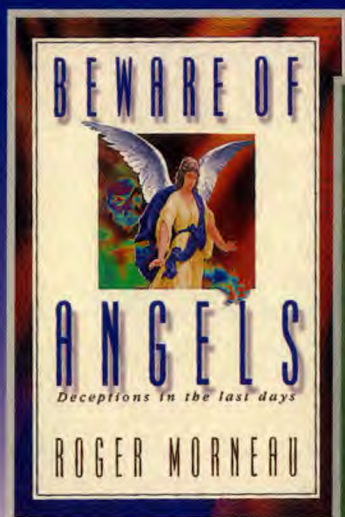
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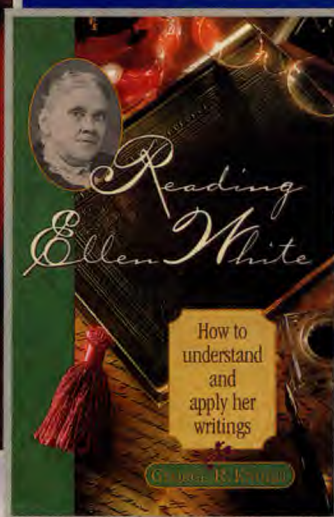
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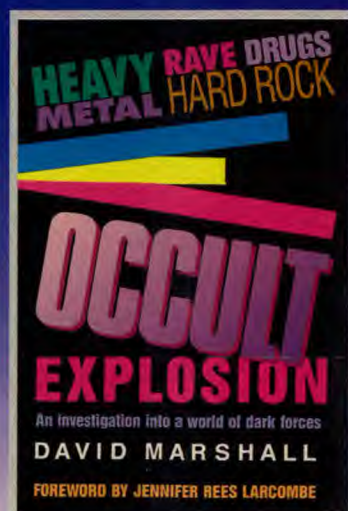
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