

Review

Cutting Edge

The Bible People

Seeing the old stories through new eyes

The Allure of Adventism

**Listen to the Young,
Listen to the Old**



Arts Justice

LETTERS

Adventists and CCM

If there were ever any doubts about your commitment to youth/young adults, Jeff Trubey's "Making Waves" (July 17) dispels them!

I appreciated the way Trubey affirmed the artists and their ministries. I also thought William Johnsson's sidebar was very good. It is so healthy and refreshing to hear church leaders willing to look at the church and admit that mistakes were made in regard to the Wedgwood Trio. I hope this kind of candid article is the beginning of a trend.

—**Victor F. Brown,**

ENROLLMENT VICE PRESIDENT/
CAMPUS CHAPLAIN
SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST U.

Praise God for such a fair presentation on contemporary Christian music! It's so encouraging to see godly Seventh-day Adventists boldly proclaiming the gospel in this way. The truth never changes, but culture and styles certainly do. This article should be a source of encouragement to Adventist musicians who face criticism from among their own people.

I and many others have been richly blessed by the music of Patty Cabrera, Take 6, and other modern Christian musicians. Now I would like to see some of our musicians take one more step and present our church's more

controversial Bible doctrines through modern music.

—**Atom Biggs**

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

I am overwhelmed with sadness. I have spent a lifetime dedicated to upholding my church's standards, including those in music. It is bad enough to become old without also having to carry the feeling that one's best efforts didn't make a lot of difference or were misplaced.

—**Jack W. Provonsha, M.D., Ph.D.**

PROFESSOR EMERITUS
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

Congratulations! We have long wished to see an improvement in the music for the benefit of those no longer in our pews. Having attended Seeds '96 and having registered for Seeds '97, we see the road ahead. Thank you for your leadership. May the many younger people not listening to the message of Jesus be turned around by the coming changes in our church. Oh, yes, we are 65.

—**David and Dianne Hiller**

VIA E-MAIL

The one theme that comes through loud and clear is that the end justifies the means—kids coming forward, etc. This is the same approach that backfired in early Christianity and led to large-scale "conversions" and an influx of paganism, resulting in the

formation of Catholicism.

It is very unfair to compare the music of the Wedgwood Trio with what is happening today. Their bright, lively singing bears no resemblance to the heavy metal and jazz sounds of the nineties, with their deafening decibel levels and hypnotic beat. It is true, however, that their style sort of opened the musical floodgates (as the decision in favor of wedding bands did for jewelry).

—**James Hoffer, pastor**

BENTON HARBOR AND COLOMA,
MICHIGAN

The strongest statement in the entire six-page treatise was William Johnsson's "One generation's poison may be another's meat." I need to keep this in mind as I respect the rights of others to project their own picture of God.

I've long been a *Review* reader, but now I don't read from duty. I read because each feature has relevance. It speaks to me. Please don't ever cut out the Cutting Edge Edition.

—**Lorabel Hersch**

COLLEGEDALE, TENNESSEE

It occurred to me that the issues dividing us—contemporary and traditional—could easily be handled. In multichurch areas, designate churches to be one or the other. If there was only one church, a vote on those two types of worship—plus a third choice of a mix—could determine the service.

I am a traditionalist. The world is left behind me for one hour each week. The hymnal is music that connected generations of Protestants. Organ music is highly valued. Quiet reigns when one enters the sanctuary, and there is no need to shout or clap when a heartfelt amen would suffice. My generation listened to big bands and jazz, but we didn't bring it with us to worship.

I don't deny anyone their worship preferences, and I hope they are sympathetic to mine. To each his own—may we all be Adventists.

—**Mary L. Copeland**

KEIZER, OREGON

As an early 40s subscriber, I was disturbed to read this article. I'm sure there are all types of people to reach, but getting in the mud to get the stuck vehicle out will only result in getting stuck yourself.

At age 17 my daughter attended a camp meeting and went to the youth tent. She wrote that she and some others left during the song service because of the type of music used. "You wouldn't believe the way our church has taken to try to reach us young people," she said.

—**Valerie Hamel Morikone**

VIA E-MAIL

Telling Them Straight

I was very interested in Roy Adams' "What I Saw in St. Louis" (July 17), in which he described two youth speakers who "unapologetically [challenged]" our youth and told "them straight," which, he suggested, is what our youth want.

I agree with Adams that many of our young people do want this sort of thing. And I think we might say that the two speakers he referred to would probably have challenged them whether it was what they wanted or not. As Adams implied, this is what the Elijah message is all about.

Years ago my wife and I talked with

a popular speaker, suggesting that this approach is what our youth need. His response: "That would discourage our young people. I will not do that!" We thought he was wrong then. We still do.

—**Thomas A. Davis**

ARMSTRONG, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Theaters and Videos

In "The Long and Short of It" (The X-Change, July 17), Deirdre Martin answers the question "Is there really any difference between watching a video at home and going to a movie theater?" Her "No" answer is incorrect. She should have said, "About \$5."

—**Steve Riehle**

SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA

I was really disappointed in Deirdre Martin's simplistic "No." She obviously doesn't have teenagers, or believes adults can't be a stumbling block to them. For young people there is a big difference between watching an acceptable movie in the privacy and security of a home and going to a theater, unless accompanied by their parents.

First, they go for the socialization as well as the movie—meaning they might go with friends (or find friends) who may be questionable. Another trick kids play is to say they are going to a movie their parents approve of, then, once inside a multimovie theater, check out the other movies being shown. (Of course, there are always the coming attractions to tease their interest.)

Let's not be too naive to mention the opportunity for kids to make out, access drugs, and risk being molested. If my father was molested by a man sitting next to him in a theater in the 1920s, what are the possibilities today?

Without supervision and with our warped culture, the "No" reply sends a strong message to immature minds.

—**Donna Voth**

VICKSBURG, MICHIGAN

ADVENTIST Review

COVER STORY

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They dressed funny, they had odd customs; people in Bible times were a lot different than we are today. Right?

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Will the Stars Fall Again?

If the "signs of the times" are more than 150 years old, should we expect another demonstration?

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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Listen to the Young, Listen to the Old

Listen.

Listen to the young. Listen to the old. Listen to the voices of this incredible, wonderful, amazing, confusing, frustrating family of God.

We at the *Adventist Review* try to listen. Before we formulated the new *Review*, we spent a lot of time listening to the voices of the church. Above all, we spent a lot of time trying to listen to what God had to tell us.

Out of that listening came not just a new look but a new focus. Every issue of the *Review* comes to you with the pledge of four foundations—material to feed you spiritually, the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, diversity, and reader interaction.

We are still listening. Maybe 5,000 of you write or call us every year, and I read every letter. The mail continues to be remarkably affirming (we have basically given up printing the bouquets). This summer the editors fanned out across North America and as far as Europe for camp meetings. We preached and taught, but we also listened. From Florida to Montana, and from British Columbia to the British Isles, you gave us the same word: "Keep it up. We're praying for you. Please don't change anything."

Every now and then we get a letter from a longtime subscriber who feels bewildered about the changes in the church paper. One brother wrote at length expressing a concern that the *Review* had become a mixture of good and bad. "You are drifting," he warned us.

What he perceived as confusion is really the expression of the church's diversity, and I wrote and told him so. We Adventists have one hope, faith, and mission, but the expression of our oneness takes varied forms.

Today's *Review* intentionally includes writers of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian backgrounds; women as well as men; and younger writers as well as older ones. You no longer have to be 50, White, and a pastor to make the cover of the *Review*: Alex Bryan, who wrote the June 19 cover story, "The Theology of Chilling Out," is 27 (he is a pastor), but Sarah Coleman ("They're Baa-aaack," May 15) was only 19 when she wrote that feature.

Writers like Alex, Sarah, and assistant editor Andy Nash are leavening the church, doing us all good.



Sarah Coleman



Alex Bryan

Listen to what they are saying.

Here's what I hear.

I hear a passion for honesty, integrity, and openness. Maybe they have seen so much deception and lying in government that they become fierce in demanding that the church be absolutely forthright in our dealings. They challenge us to avoid any practice that might smack of deception—right down to the manner in which we advertise our evangelism.

This passion for honesty speaks to me. It rings true to the Scriptures and to Ellen White's writings.

I hear young voices calling us to uplift Jesus in truth and not just in word. They call us to get real, to put off our

masks, to forget our preoccupation with appearances. They can smell hypocrisy and pharisaism a mile away, and if this is what the Adventist Church stands for, they want none of it. The tragedy is that with so much emphasis on behavior and externals we did not lead them to what is at the heart of it all—a living relationship with a living Lord.

I also hear the young calling us to quit talking and get doing. If we believe Jesus is coming again, act on it. Stop theological argumentation and get out and get our hands dirty trying to live like Jesus in helping others.

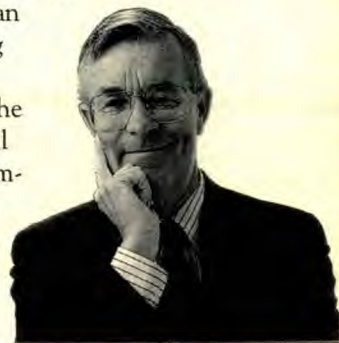
Listen to the old.

I hear the old saying that they too love the Lord. However the young may feel about the old approach—a detailed pattern that pretty much encompasses all of life—it came from hearts that wanted only the best for the young.

I hear the old saying that Christian standards are to be treasured, not scorned; that "obedience" and "loyalty" are good and noble words and not part of legalism. And that change cannot be open-ended so that anything goes in worship or in Christian music, or we run the risk of making shipwreck of the faith.

Listen to the young, listen to the old. Listening to each one, we will grow more and more into that community that the apostle John and Ellen White foresaw, who *together* perfectly reflect the character of Christ.

Listen.



Our Smug Smiles

"To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men"' (Luke 18:9-11, NIV).

A few years ago a former church member penned a crisp, cutting statement that still jabs at me. "Adventists," he wrote, "are an arrogant, insular people." While much too sweeping, the analysis is not without truth: at some point many of us have been or will be arrogant about our identity. No surprises there. Any person or group specially called by the Lord will be tempted to lord that calling over others.

■ Each week at the *Review* we receive dozens of submissions for our Give & Take page. Occasionally some of these submissions will repeat, particularly Adventist quotes. The most frequently submitted quote? "There is no dust on Adventist Bibles—only fingerprints."

Now, even if this well-intended statement were true, it wouldn't be our place to proclaim it. If others want to laud the dust-free condition of Adventist Bibles or how "caring" Adventist churches are, let them. But to subtly "thank God we're not like other denominations" only sets us back. We can't write our own reference, and we shouldn't even try.

■ Recently, on a major Adventist radio program, the story was told of two men—one a Christian, one not—who sat down for lunch at a fast-food restaurant. Unwrapping his sandwich, the non-Christian started to take a bite.

"Hey, wait a minute," said the Christian. "You forgot the human part."

"Huh?" said the non-Christian.

"The human part," repeated the Christian. "You forgot it."

At this point the Christian explained that what separated humans' eating habits from animals' is the capability to thank God. "That," said the Christian, "is the human part."

Though clever, this brand of witnessing—and its endorsement—disappoints me. Surely we can do better than trite one-liners: the "God said it; I believe it; that settles it" attitude that robs the listener of the chance to grow step by

step—as Jesus' listeners grew. If you want to witness about giving thanks, give thanks.

■ In Sofia, Bulgaria, a few years ago my friend Jeff and I found ourselves touring with a fortysomething Brit named Simon. Simon was an intriguing man, as demonstrated by his spontaneous cartwheel at the national museum. Just as intriguing was Simon's insistence that Creation wasn't a literal seven-day event. "Sure it was," I said, launching into a smart-aleck study of the seventh-day Sabbath and other truths I thought Simon needed to hear. By midafternoon Simon had quit doing cartwheels,

Jeff was looking at me funny, and the mood in general had darkened.

I wish I could say this was the only time I pushed truth at the expense of trust. Only later did I learn to focus more on people and less on *changing* people—and to leave room for God. As Orlando pastor Terry Pooler puts it: "Truth isn't something you have—like a commodity. It's something you live. No one can honestly say 'I have the truth' and be a pain in the neck. You don't have it until you're living it."

Our smug smiles. Hard words; maybe harsh words. And there would seem no need to run ourselves down further ("We're scum, we're scum"). Nor would it be accurate. As "children of the kingdom" (Matt. 8:12), we're invited to work closely with the King.

And inevitably those working most closely with Him will best realize their need for Him. "My ears had heard of you," sobbed the blameless and upright Job, "but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5, 6, NIV). In turn, Job was exalted—as anyone looking to God will be exalted.

But when our eyes shift from our Exalter to our exalting, any good that we're doing, any truth that we're living, deteriorates.

We become the Pharisee, praying to our own ears, blessing our own name, oblivious to the wretch down the block about to enter holy communion with the God of the universe.



GIVE & TAKE

ADVENTIST LIFE

Our 3-year-old grandson, Riley, recently came for a visit. His parents had been trying to curb Riley's active sweet tooth by lessons in healthful eating.

One morning Riley surveyed the set breakfast table with interest. Pointing to a jar of syrup, he asked, "What's that, Grandma?"

"It's syrup for your waffles, Riley. Kinda like jam."

His face took on a serious expression. "But that's not good for your body, Grandma," he said.

A moment passed. Then his little face lit up and his eyes sparkled. "But," he said, "it sure is good for your mouth, huh?"

—Mary June Flaiz-Wilkinson, Yakima, Washington



ALL SMILES: Did Riley eat the syrup?

"TOP 10 CLUES YOU MAY NOT BE GRADUATING FROM ANDREWS UNIVERSITY"

Edward O. Blews, president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan, was undergraduate graduation speaker during June 8 commencement ceremonies at Andrews University. Before reaching the substance of his address, Blews told the students why some of them might not be graduating after all.

10. As Andrews president Niels-Erik Andreassen was congratulating the graduates lining up this morning, he shook your hand, smiled sympathetically, and said, "Welcome back."

9. Just yesterday you learned from a classmate that Andrews University classes *do* meet on Mondays and Fridays.

8. They found your student ID card in the ashes of the chemistry lab that blew up last month.

7. You received a letter from your bank offering a great interest rate on new student loans for next year.

6. Last week you accidentally killed the school mascot and nobody seems to buy your claim of self-defense.

5. You were named chair of the 10-year class reunion—for the class of 2001.

4. After four years of Spanish, you still can't order at Taco Bell.

3. You look around this great assembly and see none of your relatives.

2. You have narrowed your choice of a major to organic chemistry, systematic theology, or Russian literature—but it's still so hard to choose!

1. When you arrived this morning and your classmates were being handed caps and gowns, they gave you a McDonald's uniform.

Attention, Adventist colleges: If you've noticed a lot of Andrews University in the Review lately, that's because their public relations office keeps flooding our office with good material. Submissions from other Adventist colleges and organizations are always welcome.



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ADVENTIST QUOTES

"I could do better than that with a chain saw."

—Kenny Campbell, groping for words to describe modern music, in a sermon at the Deer Park, Washington, church

"Jesus accepts you the way you are, but loves you too much to leave you that way."

—Pastor Lee Venden, at the Auburn, Washington, camp meeting

"I learned all the books of the Old and New Intestines."

—5-year-old Lauren Snell, Dowagiac, Michigan

"Captain Nemo."

—a summer camper at Camp Cedar Falls, Angelus Oaks, California, when Pastor Nephtaly Valles asked which Syrian captain suffered from leprosy

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The not-so-easy task of getting fired up for Christ
on a Christian campus

TURN UP

BY SARAH E. COLEMAN

I'M SO FRUSTRATED," I COMPLAINED TO MY friend Cody one afternoon at my Adventist college. "Everyone, including me, complains about being spiritually unfulfilled, but we never do anything about it."

I shifted positions on my big, gray, desk-worker's chair and looked over the counter. "Do you know what I mean?" I asked, mentally tallying the horizontal stripes on Cody's multi-colored shirt.

"Yeah," he agreed. "I totally relate to what you're saying. I haven't been very excited about God lately either."

"Maybe it's the weather," I suggested, remembering the past few winter-gray weeks.

"But it was sunny this weekend," Cody reminded me.

"Oh, yeah." I paused to answer the women's dorm desk phone, a consistent interruption to my at-work conversations. "Then what's the problem?"

"Do you know what I think?" he said. "It's harder to be excited about God on a Christian campus than anywhere else."

Harder? On a Christian campus? When the thought first occurred to me, it sounded ironic. But as Cody later observed: "If you can be an on-fire Adventist in our school system, you can be an on-fire Adventist anywhere."

Now, I support Christian education as much as the next I've-never-been-to-public-school student, and I think one of its values lies in the fresh, creative options for praising God it provides. But somehow many of us students fail to catch the glow. When I listen to my friends describe their spiritual

experience, I hear phrases such as "boring" and "irrelevant" mentioned all too often.

Meanwhile, in Chicago . . .

My friend Chris attends a public university in Chicago. Recently Chris found an "inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Peter 1:8, NIV) in Jesus—the same joy that each of us felt when we discovered Him for the first time.

"I'm so excited!" he told me on the phone one evening. "I feel things I've never felt before!" His voice, raised several decibels for emphasis, echoed in the pay phone earpiece like a village celebration gong.

"Yeah?" I asked curiously. "Like what?"

"I just want to tell *everyone* about what I've found. I'd love to go to Africa for a year. Or even stand on a street corner in Chicago and preach. I think it would be so awesome if all the guys in this fraternity had a chance to know God."

Chris's last statement intrigued me. "That's a good idea," I said cautiously, mentally preparing motherly advice about not trying to tackle the world. But before I had a chance to inject my pessimism into his fast-pumping faith, Chris continued.

"In the past week several guys have come up and asked me about God. I guess they see a big change in my life. People I barely know gather in my room to argue about evolution. All I can say is that I believe in miracles."

As I listened to Chris ramble about singing Christian songs with his roommate, I nodded a silent affirmation. I

THE HEAT

believe in miracles too, Chris. And you are one of them.

I'll be honest. During the past few months Chris's excitement about God has fluctuated a bit. But through it all he's kept the same fresh perspective, the same desire to share.

Retaining Our Excitement

Can we capture that outlook in our Adventist schools? At first glance it appears doubtful. Most students in the system have grown up there: we know which animals entered the ark in pairs, which disciple doubted the most, who our community service program is named after. Phrases like "washed in the blood," "free from sin," and "the power of the cross" are as mundane to us as Friday night popcorn and Sabbath lasagna. How can we retain our excitement?

Comparing my experiences with Chris's, I found several differences that account for his excitement and my frustration.

1. Chris had something new to share. How can I stay excited about

sharing God unless I "feel things I've never felt before"? I can't let my relationship with Him stagnate and still enjoy sharing it. To make sharing God fun, I've got to make fresh discoveries in God's Word.

2. Chris had a goal. Once he looked up, Chris looked ahead—dreaming of reaching the guys in his fraternity. It's hard to catch the vision of global ministry when I don't explore the small world I inhabit.

3. Chris felt needed. "People I barely know gather in my room . . ." As an already-baptized Adventist who spends most of my time with other already-baptized Adventists, I seldom feel compelled to help the church grow. After all, many people around me already *have* their walk with God; why should I share mine? I forget that those around me need my support just as much as I need theirs.

4. Chris acted. Singing spiritual songs with a bunch of guys, praying with people he didn't know very well, arguing about evolution—Chris's faith became so packed with power that

everyone noticed the difference. I already go to church, pay tithe, and pray with people (if they ask first). What *more* can I do?

While I believe these four factors will enliven a campus-wide outlook on God, I won't pretend that I offer a simple solution. *Real* change on an Adventist campus doesn't begin with the college president, spiritual vice president, or campus chaplain. It doesn't begin by blaming others for a spiritually sinking campus. It begins within my heart and your heart.

Discover something new to share. Set a goal for your excitement. Realize that you are needed. Act on your decisions. ■

Sarah E. Coleman, an English major, recently completed her sophomore year.



The Allure of Adventism

*And what keeps me
coming back.*

BY MICHAEL ADAM

WALKED UP TO THE BIG GLASS DOOR, TOOK A deep breath, and opened it. Waiting just inside the door was my first formal experience with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I felt terribly nervous. Several times I almost changed my mind. What was I doing? And why? It was Saturday—a day to mow the lawn, go shopping, catch up on desk work. Yet here

I was, all dressed up and going to church. How weird!

As I drove through town I noticed people doing “normal” Saturday things: buzzing quickly around, rushing in and out of stores. There was even a detour—past a parade and a street fair—that I had to take to get to church.

Church? What church? *You know*, I told myself, *that odd one that meets on Saturdays*. My mind flashed back to the old brick building, painted pink, that stood across from my high school. We’d show up in the school parking lot for car washes and Saturday ball games, and see people going to church just across the street. *Weird*, we all thought.

Then there was the day I was going door-to-door, selling encyclopedias to earn money for graduate school. It took every-

thing I had to get psyched up enough to knock on each door anyway. So I wasn't prepared for the door that opened that sunny day to reveal a houseful of men in ties and women in nice dresses. "We don't do business on Saturdays" was all I remember a man saying. Weird.

So as I reluctantly drove my old Chevy pickup toward the Adventist church, I wondered why I was doing it at all. Then I thought of several things that had led to this moment.

I thought of several Adventists I had come to know over the years in my career as a Christian counselor. I came to enjoy these fellow Christians very much. One thing about them was particularly compelling: their sincere desire to deal seriously with the issues of their lives that held them back from knowing God deeply and personally. As a Christian and a therapist, I knew that this desire was the only thing needed for them to find what they were looking for.

Hadn't God said "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13)?* Through the years I watched with delight those who were determined to take the difficult and risky path to finding God. Eventually I saw them rewarded with an awareness of His closeness and relevance in their daily lives. Truly, "he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

I was personally rewarded by the privilege of being part of the healing and growing process of these dear saints. I was drawn to explore more fully their Christian roots in the Adventist Church.

My opportunity came when my personal life crumbled last year. My own marriage blew apart, and I lost a spouse, daily contact with my two daughters, my occupation, and my emotional and physical health. I also lost my church, my reputation in the Christian community at large, and most of my friends. There were the inevitable rumors and questions.

After my wife and I separated and eventually divorced, I felt abandoned, gossiped about, superficially advised, and worst of all, harshly condemned—and this from the Christian community I had served and been involved with for many years.

So here I found myself, after several months in seclusion, heading toward church on a Saturday morning. What would I find there? More superficial smiles? Pat answers? Rejection? Judgment?

I opened the church door and stepped into the foyer. Nice-looking people, a friendly greeting, a handshake, and a bulletin. *Nothing strange yet.* I found a seat in the far back, left side, near an exit. *I can escape anytime,* I consoled myself. *I can fly out of here unnoticed at the final "amen."*

The service was pleasant. The pastor spoke on the need to look inside one's own heart and seriously deal with the issues that prevent good relationships with God and others. I was impressed.

The closing prayer was offered, and I made my move. But not soon enough. A small voice to my right interrupted my self-preserving agenda with a greeting: "Hello, my name is Annita. And you are . . . ?"

Hooked now into light conversation, I didn't notice that we were caught in the flow toward the pastor and his wife, who were greeting people at the door. Within moments I was telling the pastor that I enjoyed his message, and his wife was inviting me over for dinner. I must have sounded rude when I told her that I had to think about it for a few minutes, but she was more than gracious.

I wandered aimlessly around the foyer, wondering what to do. "Lord, this wasn't what I had in mind," I told God. "I wasn't planning to be visible here so soon, let alone meet the pastor." Yet I couldn't deny the deep sense that God was at work in all this. "OK, God," I said submissively. "I'll go."

After eating one of the most nourishing meals I'd had in months, we settled into the living room for a chat. I was among several guests that afternoon, all strangers to me. But the initial awkwardness soon dissolved with the genuine warmth of good-hearted people. Soon I was opening doors to my heart in response. I forgot that I hadn't even known these people just hours earlier. They asked questions without prying, and listened to my story intently without

patronizing or judging me. I was deeply touched by their acceptance and grace.

As I drove away from the pastor's home six hours later, I was aware of a surprising joy in my heart. Then a strange irony jolted me. For the past 25 years I had been in evangelical circles that used the word "grace" liberally to describe their beliefs and practices. But any references to Seventh-day Adventists always included the word "legalistic." On this day I discovered the opposite to be true.

From one who has tasted the nourishing fruit from the fellowship of Adventist believers for many months now, here are five beautiful things about one local congregation that have compelled me to keep coming back.

Grace

When I first arrived at the Adventist church, my first need was grace. I was, by all appearances, a complete failure, and plenty of people were telling me so on a daily basis. I knew that God is forgiving and gracious, but some of His people seemed to regard me by a different standard.

Until that visit the Adventist Church would have been one of the last places I would have gone looking for grace. But God has a wonderful sense of surprise and irony. Recently an Adventist friend I've known for several years gave me a little card that said, "A friend is one who knows who you are, understands where you have been, accepts what you have become, and still gently invites you to grow." Countless people are crying out for such *grace-full* friends.

In this congregation I found people who care about *who* I am. They offered understanding and acceptance of right where I was in my spiritual journey, and gentle encouragement to grow and rebuild my life according to God's design.

Family

I am discovering what all of you know already—the Adventist Church is one large, extended family. Across the country and around the world, everyone seems to be related; at least they know someone you know or someone who

knows someone you know.

I grew up with very little sense of family. And my adult life hasn't been much better. As our culture continues to disintegrate, people are feeling extremely disconnected and alone. To see "family" at work is compelling. To be invited into this family is wonderful.

As a newcomer I could have been left simply on the outside looking in, like a freezing child with their nose against the window, watching a family celebrate Christmas together. Instead, I've been graciously invited in from the cold and given a warm place at the family circle.

Devotion and Rest

Most Americans are on the go seven days a week. Work, recreation, shopping, chores—there's no end to it. Demands and expectations drive us to keep "running on empty" every day. We feel guilty if we rest for a moment.

As a result we end up completely exhausted. But more than that, the "urgent" drives out the important. Our relationship with God, the most important thing of all, withers for lack of attention and care.

A compelling feature of Adventism is that it devotes one entire day each week solely to the care and nurture of one's relationship with God. It's vital. It's necessary. And it makes sense.

We were designed to live in unbroken fellowship with God. Through Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit, the Father has taken up residence in our hearts. Here is where the hearts of the redeemed connect in vital union with their Creator. Here in the deep places, below all the hassles of everyday living, we find sweet sanctuary from the noise of life.

More than a commandment, more than something to do just because we're told to do it, honoring and cherishing the Sabbath and nurturing a heart-to-heart relationship with God are the most important things we can do. By strengthening our vertical bond with the Lord, our souls are refreshed and restored. We can then move back into our world of human relationships and responsibilities with strength and proper priorities.

The closing prayer was offered, and I made my move. But not soon enough.

Priorities

Coming to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind is a lifelong pursuit. After this, there are still a number of things that need to be prioritized.

I've observed that sometimes a Christian's real battle isn't good versus evil; it's good versus better. For example, working for a living is good. But not if it crowds out one's relationship with God and others (workaholicism). Offering to help struggling people is good. But not if it fosters unhealthy codependency. Reconciliation is good. But not if it does so at the expense of truth and personal integrity (people-pleasing).

Jesus criticized the Pharisees, who carefully tithed even their spices, but "neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness" (Matt. 23:23). God is indeed concerned with our behavior, but He is more concerned with our hearts. In fact, all good behavior must originate in the heart.

In this congregation I've been thrilled to find the heart emphasized above behavior. Instead of finding everyone uptight over minute points of dress, diet, and behavior (as I had been told), obedience arising from a changed heart is the central focus.

On Wednesday evenings there are 12-step groups for men and women that emphasize heart work for true healing and growth. Having such groups is a courageous move for any church, for heart work is hard, messy, and ultimately out of our control. However, not surpris-

ingly, the groups are exploding numerically. People in our culture are starving for a relevant gospel that can deeply change hearts and lives.

The Future

Much of Scripture appears as prophecy. An awareness of future things brings consolation to troubled hearts. It's also a great motivator to live soberly, for we don't know when we'll be called to give an account.

I'm drawn to sincere Christians who live in light of an imminent evaluation of their lives before a righteous, yet always fair, God. Adventists' ongoing focus on future events is one of the adorning gems that draws my eye away from self and earthly things, and toward a Saviour who is coming soon to take us to be with Him in glory.

I'm currently studying for membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At different times in the process I'm confused, troubled, and allured. Confused by a number of things that are simply different from what I was taught over many years. Troubled when I see the inherent danger of legalism lurking about wherever religious practices are carefully observed. Allured when I see the beauty of the Lord whenever such practices are done from the heart.

I've been drawn to this fellowship by God's providence. Individual Adventists over the years have played their part, and now I'm surrounded by a community of good-hearted believers that surround me with God's love. This is where I want to be.

It's good for my soul. ■

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

Michael Adam is a pseudonym.

Support Groups and Ministries

Do you think Adventist-sponsored homosexual support groups in our churches and schools condone homosexuality?

Allan replies: The answer really depends on the objectives of the specific "support" group you're talking about. For example, a support group for recovering alcoholics serves as a community with a goal of staying drink-free. On the flip side, there are also groups that do not have recovery as a goal. Such groups advocate and facilitate certain activities, such as groups that endorse open marriages and multiple partners.

Please be clear. If the "support" group you mention endorses a homosexual lifestyle, it's not named correctly. To use the guise of "support group" to condone homosexual practices is deceitful and irresponsible. Such groups would better be called a homosexual club or gay/lesbian advocacy group.

That being said, support groups geared toward recovery are a wonderful arena of healing. Whether in our churches or in our schools, when we help and support one's efforts to live in step with God, that's a good thing. Many have special struggles, and support groups can be a means by which our church can readily display Christ's character by loving the people who struggle with various forms of addictions and propensities.

Whether in our schools or in our churches, I don't think Adventist support groups for homosexuals and their families condone homosexuality. They are simply an extension of Christian concern to those in the midst of this particular struggle. Having support groups for homosexuals in Adventism does not condone homosexual practice. Neither condoning or condemning, support groups are involved in recovery.

Thinking of the church as a support group for recovering sinners might give you a good rule of thumb.

Groups geared toward recovery are a wonderful arena for healing.

How does someone feel "called" to work for God? Rarely do you hear "I was called to go into advertising." Does God only call people into the pastoral ministry?

Deirdre replies: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17, 18, NIV).

If you are a Christian, you are called to ministry. It doesn't matter if you're an ad executive, a barber, or a cab driver; if you're in Christ, you have been given or called to a

ministry of reconciliation.

I'm not saying that all of us are called to be preacher-type ministers. Each of us has our own spiritual gifts and special strengths that allow us to minister in diverse ways (check 1 Corinthians 12).

For example, I have no desire or ability to speak in front of a group of people. Clearly that is *not* my spiritual gift. But in my work as an NICU (neonatal intensive-care unit) nurse, I'm "called" every day to be a minister of compassion, comfort, and healing to those who cross my path. I was called to nursing.

Ministry doesn't just happen inside the church walls. Ministry is a way of life for Christians. The homemaker who raises godly children is a powerful minister. The construction worker who uses Christlike language is as much a preacher from the beam as an evangelist is from the pulpit. The neighbor who exhibits grace, hospitality, and warmth may reach a nonbeliever who would otherwise never experience the gospel in person. We are Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20), daily sharing Him through our lives.

Have a question for The X-CHANGE? Send it to the Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, or via E-mail to dream_VISION_ministries@CompuServe.com.

Allan and Deirdre Martin are cofounders of dre•am VISION ministries, which strives to empower young people in Christian lifestyle and leadership.



Me and Mattithiah

What an obscure Old Testament figure taught me about career choices

BY DICK DUERKSEN

HAVE NEVER BEEN A FAN OF THE “BEGATS.” In fact, I still suffer guilt twinges from having read the Bible through, “like H.M.S. Richards, Sr.,” but having skimmed over the lists of Canaanite kings, grandchildren returning from Babylon, and other reports of the long forgotten. Those were the “irrelevant” words of Scripture, dusty columns left for the research wonks among us. Me? I wanted the “good stuff.”

Then, in the morass of 1 Chronicles 9, I met Shallum and Mattithiah. This time, rather than skim the unpronounceable names, I decided to look at the Babylonian returnees and busy Levites as if I were in God’s living room perusing the books of photo memories He keeps stacked on His coffee table. I like to imagine that just as parents keep photos of kids, families, and favorite pets on the refrigerator door and the piano and in living room photo albums, God also keeps albums packed with pictures of Levites, Benjaminites, Zerachites, Adventists, and more.

Look at the photos described in 1 Chronicles 9:4-7. “Uthai son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, a descendant of Perez son of Judah.” “Asaiah the firstborn and his sons.” “Sallu son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah.”

Imagine the faces. There is young Uthai with his father, Ammihud, grandfather Omri, great-grandfather Imri, and great-great-grandfather Bani. Five generations from Judah. A handwritten note under the photo describes them as proud descendants of Perez. Some photos include three or four generations, while others show only one old saint, or a proud father with his son, or just a yellowing black-and-white photo of “Hassenuah the ancient.”

I smile, and settle back into the feather-filled sofa, meeting character after character—special friends of God.

The Gatekeepers

Then comes verse 17: “The gatekeepers: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman and their brothers, Shallum their chief being stationed at the King’s gate.” In the photo Shallum, chief of the king’s secret service police, stands between two pillars at the gate of the ancient Temple. His starched robe, scarlet turban, and golden sash mark him as one of the favored, an agent to be avoided. His eyes, dark and piercing, search far beyond the camera into the crowds coming to worship. Ever on the alert, Shallum exudes authority and safety. Yet even in the official photo there is a playful twinkle in his eyes and the hint of a smile above his perfectly groomed beard.

The first gatekeeper photo shows Shallum alone; after all, he is the “chief.” Turn the album pages, however, and Shallum comes to life as leader of 212 Temple guards. Phinehas, Zechariah, Akkub, Talmon, and Ahiman are all gatekeepers deserving of special notice. Leaders of the respected watchers, standing proudly beside the doors they guard each day, they are so significant that God has placed their pictures in the photo album. Like Shallum, their robes are starched, their turbans and sashes gleaming in the evening sun.

Tradition says that Temple guards worked in shifts, some caring for the night, others for the mornings and afternoons. Some of the photos show these groups: the keepers of the east gates, the keepers of the night, those who guard the treasure, those who guard against the beggars, those who open the doors on the east, west, north, and south.

I admire the treasure guards for a moment and then turn to the band of door-openers, the ones who “spend the night stationed around the house of God.” “They had charge of the key for opening it each morning” (verse 27).

There it is—the key of the Temple, hanging as a glittering star from a cord around Chief Shallum’s neck—its brilliance



nearly matching the gold of the newly polished gate.

A Family Tradition

Under one of Shallum's photos is a note telling that he is a descendant of the great Levite Korah. Beside him are other photos, some yellowed with age, showing the chief gatekeepers who have come before him. Shallum's father is there. And his grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. Being chief gatekeeper of the Temple is what Shallum's family is all about.

I wonder how Shallum's oldest son

feels about his future. His picture is there, a young boy standing on a stool beside his father, trying hard to look as official as a future "chief" can look. I smile, consider my own son, Jeremy, and turn the page. I expect to find a photo of Mattithiah on the day his father placed the key around his neck, passing the "chief" responsibilities to the next generation.

Yes, there is a photo of father and son, but look at verse 31—the key is still around Shallum's neck. Though Mattithiah stands proudly beside his famous father, his turban and his sash

surprisingly are *not* the colors of the gatekeepers, but the colors of the Temple bakers!

It cannot be! The chief gatekeeper's son a baker of bread? No—he must carry on the traditions of the past, must hold the key, must open the Temple each morning, must wear the scarlet and gold of Korah. Shallum knew that—how could he ever allow otherwise?

I look closely at the photo, trying to see into the relationship between gatekeeper father and baker son. Matt's face glows with the energy that comes from "doing what you love." His sash is deep brown, his turban a baker's golden cap tipped jauntily to the north. The faces of both men are bright with smiles. Doing the impossible seems somehow to have energized them both.

Imagine the conversation on the morning Matt told his father of his desire. "Dad, I am proud of your job and accomplishments. I know how important the gatekeeper responsibilities are to you, and I want to make you happy. But Father, have you ever smelled bread as it comes from the oven? It is sweeter than spikenard! Have you ever felt the squishy softness of the dough between your fingers? Have you ever touched the smooth wood of the paddles and the rough bricks of the oven? To me all of this is as exciting as the gates, the keys, and the night air are to you. Dad, I want to be the best baker of offering bread the Temple has ever had!"

The "Right" Career

First Chronicles 9 includes pictures of bakers, musicians, furniture cleaners, and keepers of the storehouses. But my favorite photo is the one of Shallum and Mattithiah.

For 12 years of my ministry I served as a college admissions officer. During those years I listened as numerous parents demanded that their children choose careers solely to fulfill the hopes of mom and dad. One father even tried to humble his son in my office. "You *will* become a doctor," he shouted, "or I will not pay one penny toward your education!"

Now, through an often-avoided picture book, God has shown me a truth I would have loved to show that father. It's OK for some of us "gatekeepers" to become bakers.



Me and Gideon (Judges 6, 7)

BY JEFF EMDE

God, You want me to do what? Attack the Midianites with 300 soldiers? Have you forgotten who I am? I'm Gideon, the least likely hero in the weakest clan in Manasseh. Before I agree to take on this challenge, I'll need a sign that knocks my sandals off . . .

Gideon had trouble stepping out—and so do I. We would rather stay in our linear "comfort zone" than chance growth and reward.

Don't get me wrong—being cautious does occasionally have its own reward. For instance, I'm glad that as a sixth grader I decided against a wardrobe of parachute pants—although at the time it would have meant instant popularity.

But because I fear taking risks, I'm sure I've missed countless opportunities to witness for God and gain soldiers for His cause.

So what's the major difference between Gideon and me? I have the privilege to grow from his mistakes. Through his experience I recognize that creating something out of nothing is God's specialty. When I give God control of my life, He can turn my cautiousness into victories.

Jeff Emde is a physical therapist in Altamonte Springs, Florida.



But it is much more personal than that, especially since I am the proud father of a 21-year-old son and two teenage daughters. I, of course, know exactly what they should do with their lives. At least I did till I met Shallum and Matt. Now this ancient photo reminds me that I must allow my family to "do what God is calling them to do" rather than just make my dreams come true.

It's a good lesson, even though it comes from the "begats"!

The Photo Album Approach

I am convinced that there is a special personal message for each of us on



Me and Jochebed (Exodus 2)

BY TAMARA TERRY

Jochebed's faith inspires me. Even if she knew the exact time Pharaoh's daughter went to bathe, she could not know for certain that this daughter of the pharaoh (who had said all newborn males should be thrown into the Nile) would take a liking to her son Moses.

My favorite part is Miriam asking Pharaoh's daughter if she wanted a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby. The princess *had* to know this was a relative! But the Bible says the princess merely said yes and offered to pay the woman for her services. Imagine being paid to feed your own child. Not bad!

As I anticipate the arrival of my own little boy this Thanksgiving, I pray for Jochebed's faith. Born with a birth defect myself, I find this pregnancy really challenging my faith. I constantly remind myself that the Lord loves this boy even more than I do.

So far all tests have shown that we will have a normal healthy boy. But even if that should change, I know that the Lord will help us through. Just as He did Moses. Just as He did me.

Tamara Terry is Columbia Union communication director, Columbia, Maryland.



every page of Scripture: in the begs, in Ezekiel and Lamentations, even in the wars of Judges. But since this message does not always jump meaningfully from the dusty names or bloody battles, I've begun using the "photo album" approach to study.

1. Select a "boring" passage.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to show me the passage through new eyes.



3. **Imagine the photos in God's album.** Look at the colors. Listen to the sounds, feel the textures, smell the fragrances, taste the flavors. Each photo is a window into God's life and a lesson from His heart.

4. **Transfer the picture from "then" to "right now."** I've found great "right now" help from passages such as David's not fitting into Saul's armor, from Jeremiah's using drama to

make God's point, from Esther's asking Hegei to help choose the perfume she was to wear before the king, even from Ezekiel's watching dancing bones. In each case God has given me some practical message that has helped to solve a problem.



Me and Timothy (Acts 16)

BY BERNIE ANDERSON

The life and ministry of Timothy truly speak to my heart.

Probably a teenager when he became a Christian, Timothy is first mentioned in Acts 16, where he's described as "a disciple" the brothers "spoke well of" (verses 1, 2, NIV). Timothy would later train under Paul during the second missionary journey, where the two apparently developed a friendship so close that Paul refers to Timothy as "my true son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2, NIV).

Two things impress me most about Timothy. First, he received his call to ministry while he was young. Second, he never appeared to have resisted the call—instead, he wholeheartedly embraced it.

I also became a Christian as a teen—and soon after realized that God was calling me to the ministry. Like Timothy, I didn't waste any time. I quickly got involved in my church, learning from my pastor and others whom God was already using in His work.

Now, as a young pastor much like Timothy, I've realized that ministry isn't always easy. But nothing beats knowing that you're doing what God has called you to do.

Bernie Anderson is a youth pastor in Arlington, Texas.



Me and Sapphira (Acts 5)

BY JOELLE REED

Here's the deal, God. I'll give You my career (after all, I'm a Bible teacher). I'll give You my talents (use them however You want). I'll give You control of my money (the *huge* salary teachers get). I'll even let You direct where I should live (Napa Valley would be nice). But I have to draw the line at my social life.

Lord, I'm 25 years old and haven't had a boyfriend in a full year! I mean, we're running out of time here. You can have 95 percent of my life, but I've got to keep this one part to myself. Because if I give You my social life, You might pick some guy three inches shorter than me. Or someone who hates dogs—or worse, pasta!

Like Sapphira, I struggle to give God complete control. I am willing . . . until the last threads slip through my fingers and I can't help grabbing hold again. I imagine that's what happened to Sapphira. Maybe she was worried about a rainy day—as I worry about Mr. Right. But God has always been willing to take everything we are and turn us into everything He is. So I'm going to let those last threads slip into His hands.

Just in case You were wondering, God . . . six feet three would be just right.

Joelle Reed is campus pastor and Bible teacher at Newbury Park Academy in southern California.



David reminded me that I don't have to be like that other pastor I respect and envy so highly. Jeremiah's naked drama in the town square encouraged me to use a clown wig (successfully) in a sermon. Esther and Hegei challenged me to get help on a project I thought I could do alone. Ezekiel's dancing bones helped me see spiritual potential in a couple "useless" workers. There is a practical lesson, a message from

God to me, in every page of the Book. Sometimes it seems as though God guides me to tales perfectly matched with challenges I did not even know I was going to face.

And the pictures are great! ■

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

Richard Duerksen is Columbia Union vice president for creative ministries, Columbia, Maryland.



Me and Obed-Edom (1 Chronicles 13)

BY BYARD PARKS

I love when God surprises me. That's why I connect with Obed-Edom, the recipient of one of the most magnificent surprises in history.

As most often happens with God's thoughtful intervention, this surprise likely came at Obed-Edom's lowest moment of drudgery—perhaps after a long day of shearing sheep. Startled by a loud purposeful knock, Obed-Edom probably shuffled to the door with the zeal of a man suspecting the IRS.

Instead, his eyes became pomegranates. There stood King David, 30,000 soldiers, and the golden, electrifying ark of the covenant! "Kind sir," says David, "we request of you to house the ark of the covenant."

The Bible says that Obed-Edom's household was blessed ever after that. Perhaps his little cottage became an oasis. Palms sprouted; cantaloupes climbed the walls; lambs, ducklings, and baby chicks entertained his many grandchildren (notice 1 Chron. 26:4-8). And for three months the Shekinah glory rested in his living room.

As with Obed-Edom, sometimes God surprises me with His sudden nearness—through a phone call, an invitation, or a miraculous encounter. Other times it is in a lonely moment gazing at a sunrise. I love it when God becomes the unexpected guest of my heart.

Byard Parks is a pastor in Castle Rock, Colorado.



Me and Martha (Luke 10)

BY ROSE BOWEN

In my kitchen is a plaque with a prayer set in rhyme. My favorite line reads, "Although I must have Martha's hands, I have a Mary mind."

Like me, Martha was probably a firstborn, "driven" to do the right thing, attentive to details. Our motto could be "If we don't do it, it won't get done properly." Like Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, I believe that Jesus *can* do miracles, but I have a hard time believing He *will*.

I'd like to be a "free spirit" like my younger sister, emotionally expressive and outgoing, unconcerned with appearances. But my practical nature inhibits me as much as it helps me. When it comes to hospitality, I easily get bogged down with preparations. By the time our guests arrive, I'm too frazzled to fellowship. What a loss to serve the meal and not the people!

Busy, busy Martha. I understand her. It's hard for me to slow down and just sit at Jesus' feet, soaking in His words and feeding my soul, as Mary did. Martha's hands, Mary's mind: that's what I want.

Rose Bowen is a homemaker and freelance writer in Floyd, Virginia.



Grown but Not Forgotten

I have before me a 21-page letter written by a mother lamenting the difficulties encountered in raising a child. The mother speaks of afternoons she let opportunities to affirm her son pass by unheralded. She writes of mornings she acted too hastily, reprimanding her son for minor errors. Then she turns the focus to a recent episode during which her boy appeared at a get-together in torn, dirty pants, embarrassing the family.

The mother's concerns and sorrows are not unusual. As parents we agonize over our relationships with our children. We realize that somewhere along the way, after carrying the bundled treasure across the threshold of our lives, we have hurt them. They have hurt us.

Lamenting the errors of parenting is not unusual. What is unusual is that the writer of this letter is 87 years old. Her son is 60.

My prayers go out for this woman, to the son she bore, and to all mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, trying desperately to figure out their roles and how to help one another. Our intentions as parents are rarely the problem. We all want the best for our children, no matter what age they are. We all dream of producing fully functioning adults who can support themselves, establish meaningful relationships, enjoy the zest of a challenge, maintain high ideals, believe in God, and live committed Seventh-day Adventist lives. And when that doesn't happen, we turn to our memory banks and shuffle through the card file, pulling out the anecdotes, incidents, and mornings and afternoons that highlight the sins we committed as parents that have brought our families to this place in time.

We are haunted by the memory of a cry, a look, a closed door. When the child was 4 we spanked her for throwing a tantrum at camp meeting in front of the main pavilion. When she was 8, we lacked the funds to send her to junior camp when all the other children her age were going. And when she was 16 we ignored the failing grades, the teachers' warnings. If only we had been better parents, we tell ourselves, things would have turned out differently.

And so we overcompensate. On some subconscious level

we justify our actions by reasoning, "If I hadn't botched up so many times as a parent, if I hadn't messed up this human being that came to me as an innocent baby, if I had done my part properly, he wouldn't have this problem now."

In penance we allow ourselves to be used, spent, overextended, by the child-turned-teenager, young adult, middle-aged man. We find it more and more difficult to draw boundaries—to see ourselves, our sons, our daughters, as adults capable of constructing distinct lives. We sink deeper and deeper into dependent relationships, agonizing over our own shortcomings personified in our flesh and blood. Our 24-year-old

daughter lacks the ability to earn her own keep. Our 30-year-old son cannot maintain a lasting relationship. Our 60-year-old has developed a lifetime pattern of instability, job changes, and shiftlessness. What to do?

First, we must unleash ourselves from the guilt that ties us forever to the role of caregiver. Alone with the Father, we must cry out, unburdening all of our own frailty, humanity, weakness, and lack of perception in the role of parenthood. Getting up from our knees, we must claim the sweet grace of the present, the unsullied day.

Second, we must forgive our children. Forgive them for not turning out in the ways that we had hoped. Forgive them for being subject to frailty, passion, human weakness, and insensitivity. Forgive them for being themselves.

Finally, we must relinquish our role as the savior of our adult children. Realizing that we do not possess the objectivity needed to help those we love the most, we must trust them to the wiles of their own decisions, the wisdom of professionals, the mercy of the Father. In doing so, we gain new energy to pursue our lives and free our sons and daughters to live theirs.

We all want the best for our children—no matter what age they are.

Sandra Doran, Ed.D., is an author and speaker who works as an educational consultant with Kaufman and Associates in Newton, Massachusetts.



Czech Children Share Hope With Sarajevo Children

BY RAY DABROWSKI, GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

Schoolchildren throughout the Czech Republic recently participated in a "project to remember," collecting household items such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and toilet paper for the children in Sarajevo.

"I collected things that I need every day. I did it for a girl like me in Sarajevo. She needs the same things I have," said 8-year-old Cesky Tesin, who proudly showed her gift-wrapped box. Cesky was taking her gift to a delivery point at her church.

Coordinated by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency/Czechoslovakia (ADRA), the program resulted in several shipments of gift packets to Sarajevo schoolchildren. Last year ADRA delivered 23,000 parcels in Sarajevo and other parts of Bosnia.

The children's project was sponsored and publicized by the children's



NEW VISION: The children expressed their feelings in new and different ways.

magazine *PePe*. The project grew, and soon there was another national campaign to help Sarajevo children. It involved gathering essential items for writing and drawing that children usually need in their school and home artwork. This project has become a daily preoccupation for many schoolteachers, parents, and aid workers.

The idea came about when Jan Barta, a graphic artist and journalist from Prague, visited Sarajevo with Rudolf Reitz, ADRA director. Barta realized that these children needed pencils and pens and things to draw on. The project soon included a second Czech artist, Marta Lipusova. Together they became the architects of a nationwide drive to collect art supplies for Sarajevo children.

Lipusova and Barta went to Sarajevo schools two years ago and conducted art work-

shops. They took clay, paints, crayons, and paper and asked Sarajevo kids to express their reality through art forms. Knowing that human needs can be divided into "vital" and "unnecessary" categories, they felt that joy is often brought about with things that are less necessary.

As a result of their visits, the artists organized a traveling exhibition that brought the reality of the "child and the war" to schoolchildren throughout

the Czech Republic and even abroad. After 11 exhibits around the country and in Sweden, the exhibition, titled *Joy for the Children of Sarajevo*, traveled to Bosnia with scores of packets from the Czech children. The road show ended in Sarajevo.

The whole project idea originated in October 1995, when ADRA representatives met schoolteacher Nesima Vajica at the Musa Cazim Catica grade school in Sarajevo. Vajica was proud of her first graders, who sang Bosnian melodies. Only the cold and the shatterproof plastic windows reminded the visitors that they were at a place where a war had just ended.

As Vajica described the students' needs, one of the visitors came up with an idea that could provide a solution: "What about organizing a charity drive in our country to collect school supplies for the pupils? We could name it *Joy for the Children of Sarajevo*."

Beginning with this idea, the initiative soon became reality. Adults and



BUDDING JOY: Art workshops brought joy to Sarajevo children.

children became enthusiastic as school supplies accumulated steadily in ADRA storage centers. By Christmas of 1995 the centers in numerous towns were filled with crayons, watercolors, pencils, rulers, pencil sharpeners, sheets of paper, and even some toys. Supplies had been brought in or mailed by pupils, scouts, and parents from all over the Czech Republic.

In February 1996 a ton (900 kilograms) of school supplies were shipped to Sarajevo. At the last minute, film director Libuse Ciharova contributed pictures from a popular television series. Another truck carried 440 pounds (200 kilograms) of potter's clay, which Lipusova planned to use for sculpting with the children. Barta also went to aid Lipusova by painting with the children who did not want to sculpt.

A few days later sixth and seventh graders from Musa Cazim Catica school and the first graders from Dobrinja cre-



NEW SONG: Music played an important role in lifting the spirits of children.

ated exquisite works of art under the two artists' supervision. Most of the children's artwork has been displayed together with documentary photos by Jiri Kopac in a traveling exhibition

named after the original charity drive, Joy for the Children of Sarajevo.

Marta Lipusova recalls: "We passed an enchanting countryside with lakes and waterfalls; we passed burned, demolished, and deserted villages. In my heart I cannot stop crying over those who had to leave this place in the night, carrying their children in their arms."

For Barta, the whole experience became simply the sharing of hope. "All we wanted to do is to give hope to Sarajevo children," he said. Recalling the experience of meeting firsthand the results of war, he commented: "Even forgetting can be a blessing from God. One may consider it a pity that only children are capable of forgetting hate."

In the words of one Adventist leader in Prague who saw his church's congregations respond to the project, the whole activity was "teaching compassion to our own children."

N E W S B R E A K

Hawaii Youth Outreach Ends With 11 Baptisms

Theologians say the number 12 represents completeness or the right amount, owing to the significance of the number 12 in the Scriptures: 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples, and 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem.

The number 12 turned out to be significant in Hawaii recently as a "Freedom in Christ" youth evangelism series was held on the island of Oahu. Twelve youth and young adult speakers were featured on each of the 12 weekend nights of the series.

The meetings were held every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night, starting on June 27 and ending July 20 in the Pearl City Cultural Theater.

The series was conducted entirely by the youth and young adults and was targeted to reach those of the same age. Nightly topics focused on Christ's giving freedom from fear, guilt, loneliness, confusion, violence, addiction, and uncertainty.

Though the preaching has ended, observers say the impact of the "Freedom in Christ" youth meetings is just beginning. Two hundred non-Adventist visitors were touched over the span of the four weekends, and on July 26 the first 11 converts of the series were bap-

tized. Three more persons responded to an invitation to follow Christ and prepare for baptism.

Lay Evangelistic Series Brings 230 Baptisms in Cayman Islands

The Adventist churches on Grand Cayman combined their efforts in a six-week evangelistic series by lay evangelist Fitz Henry, of Jamaica.

The meetings ended on August 3 with 230 baptisms and a newly organized Adventist church on the island. The opening meeting was aired on Radio Cayman, and a member of the island's parliament welcomed visitors.

Special features in the series included a prayer fellowship club, at which requests from the congregation were presented in intercessory prayer. More than 200 persons graduated from the Real Truth Bible course.

The series also included wedding ceremonies and health lectures, reports Jeffrey K. Thompson, Cayman Islands Mission president.

Construction Update From Moscow

Construction continues on the first of several Seventh-day Adventist church buildings in Moscow. The completion of the project is dependent on a worldwide offering to

Dangerous Good Things

BY ALEX BRYAN, PASTOR, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Mary as Co-Redeemer? fourth member of the Godhead? morally perfect? *Newsweek's* August 25 cover story tells about a growing movement in the Roman Catholic Church to place the mother of Jesus on the highest spiritual level yet, granting her the title "co-redemptrix." A petition to Pope John Paul II (who believes Mary saved his life during a 1981 assassination attempt) is under way.

Says one woman: "I love [Mary] who was sinless."

A second unfallen Saviour? Out of the question. The New Testament clearly teaches that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus is the Second Adam (Rom. 5); Mary isn't the Second Eve. It's not that Mary wasn't a good person; she was the best of fallen persons. And maybe that's the reason she's such an attractive candidate for worship.

NEWS COMMENTARY

In our lives and our churches, the good things are most often the fiercest rivals for God. For many members it isn't hangovers but honest hard work on Friday that keeps them from 9:30 a.m. Sabbath school attendance. For others it's excessive time not in Grisham but in Ellen White's *Testimonies* that keeps them from the New Testament letters. For pastors it isn't Nintendo but devotion to church that squelches devotion to God. For church administrators it isn't overt blasphemy but a noble desire to please people that hinders a risk-taking commitment to please God. For too many it isn't lawlessness but law-love that crowds out grace-love.

We wouldn't think of considering Saddam or Cunanon or Satan himself for Godhead status. Spiritual danger most often lies closer to home in beautiful religious packages that we open every day.

NEWS BREAK

be collected October 11 (December 13 in North America).

Early Adventists in Moscow, without the luxury of owning their own church, rented space in existing buildings. By 1940, however, they were assigned to worship in a church building owned by Baptists. This was the only church that was allowed to function in Moscow for several decades.

Since the termination of Communism in recent years, government authorities gave the church to the Baptists free of charge. Now Adventist usage of the church is at the discretion of the Baptist congregation.—*Adventist News Network*.

NBC Segment Available for Churches to Air on Cable

A video feature on George Schramm, the 83-year-old Adventist who thinks retirement means to "keep on truckin'," is available for local churches to place with local cable stations.

The 16-minute segment aired as part of *A Lifetime of Sharing*, a one-hour documentary that aired on NBC affiliate stations in many North American cities; other affiliates have scheduled it in the months ahead. Schramm's work for the church has been devoted to providing disaster relief to victims of windstorms and floods.

The video segment has been packaged with an interview featuring Monte Sahlin, director of Adventist Community Services in North America, to make a 30-minute television show for local cable stations. The video is available from AdventSource by calling 1-800-328-0525. Churches can receive a VHS copy for preview or a copy ready to air on cable stations.

News Notes

✓ *Testimonies to the Church*, the nine-volume work by Ellen G. White, will soon be available in the Russian language, according to Leo Ranzolin, a General Conference vice president. The Spirit of Prophecy Committee at the General Conference voted to print the books to assist the Euro-Asian Division. The only other language besides English that has a complete set of the *Testimonies* is currently available in Spanish.

In another action the committee voted to translate *Prophets and Kings*, *The Adventist Home*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Acts of the Apostles*, and *Receive Power* into Chinese.

✓ **Leslie N. Pollard**, pastor of the Oakwood College Community church in Huntsville, Alabama, was recently appointed special assistant to the president for diversity at Loma Linda University in California and vice presi-

Did You Know?

World Missions Viewed as Adequate

According to the North American Division Office of Information and Research, nearly half the Adventists in North America believe the church's world mission program is adequate to "meet the needs of the world today."

Less than one third, or 29 percent, see the program as "progressive," and more than 20 percent view the program as being "outdated."

The study also found a relationship between size of churches and respective attitudes. Church members attending congregations with more than 300 members tend to see the program as outdated, while congregations with less than 100 members believe the program is progressive and forward-looking.

Lay members who have no children at home, and Hispanic members, see the program as "progressive," while single parents, members with high incomes, and Canadians tend to view the programs as "outdated."—North American Attitudes Toward World Missions, North American Division Office of Information and Research Report 12, p. 8.

For Your Good Health

Walk to Sleep

Brisk, regular walks during the day can be the path to better sleep at night. Almost all of a group of 50- to 76-year-olds reported having an easier time falling asleep and staying asleep after less than four months of half-hour walks four times a week.—*Johns Hopkins Medical Letter*.

Diet and Diabetes

A six-year study of more than 65,000 women revealed that those who consumed the most sugar and ate the least fiber had two and a half times the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent diabetes. Women who consumed a large amount of fiber from cold breakfast cereals saw a 28 percent decreased risk of diabetes. Foods that caused a significant increased risk: cola beverages, white bread, white rice, french fries, and cooked potatoes.—*Journal of the American Medical Association*.

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.

NEWSBREAK



Leslie N. Pollard

dent for diversity at Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center. Pollard replaces Delbert Baker, who became Oakwood's president.

✓ **Andrews University** recently received \$1.4 million in software and technical support from Oracle Corporation of California. The grant was issued as part of Oracle's Academic Alliance program, which distributes software to give students exposure to industry-standard technology that can be too expensive for colleges to purchase. Software valued at more than \$350 million has been distributed under the program.

Raymond Paden, chair of the Andrews University Computer Department, says, "Our students are not only getting great exposure to the right kind of software, they're also going to contend for better-paying jobs when they leave us."

✓ **Generation-X** is the focus of a ministry symposium to be held November 18 and 19 in San Diego, California. Youth workers, family life professionals, educators, and youth and young adult ministry professionals are encouraged to attend. For more information call 1-800-SDA-PLUS.

What's Upcoming

Sept.	13-20	Adventist Review emphasis
Sept.	20	Family Togetherness Day
Sept.	27	Pathfinders' Day
Sept.	27	Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Trans-European Division
Oct.	5-11	Health Emphasis Week

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The Big Date

How we wait for Christ's return is more important than how long we wait.

BY JOHN MCLARTY

I WAS SPEAKING AT A MIDWESTERN CAMP meeting. Halfway through the week a genial couple invited me to join them for lunch. Food out of the way, we got down to the real reason for the invitation; they wanted to share with me the good news that Jesus would return before the end of the year.

I heard complicated mathematical calculations. I saw charts of jubilee cycles. But most of all I sensed their excitement that Jesus was coming . . . and soon!

They had moved out of the city and purchased a farm where they could protect their children from the chaos that would engulf America's cities as we entered the final months of earth's history. They were enjoying country life, the quietness and serenity, the extra time with their children. But the conversation didn't focus on the benefits of country living. We talked about the good news—within a matter of months Jesus would return.

My hosts were gracious and courteous. They didn't demand that I agree with them, but they just had to

share the good news with me. Without setting a precise day, they were absolutely convinced by the signs and chronological charts that Jesus was coming before the end of the year.

They won my heart. I liked them. I was drawn to their obvious sincerity and sweet Christian spirit. But there were a couple problems with what they had to say. First of all, that was the summer of 1994. And Jesus isn't here yet. Second, they were Adventists. And Adventists should know better. Our history should teach us something.

Adventists in the 1840s were absolutely convinced they had figured out the date of Christ's return. They lived their lives on the basis of that certainty. Some Adventist farmers actually left their potato crop in the ground. Why harvest food they'd never eat?

October 22, 1844, came and went, and Jesus did not return. Some of the early Adventists continued to set dates for a few





ILLUSTRATION BY RALPH BUTLER

years after 1844, refining and restudying their calculations. But every date failed.

With this kind of background, it shouldn't be hard for Seventh-day Adventists to remember Jesus' counsel: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36).*

But what about the signs of Christ's return mentioned in Matthew 24 and 25? Don't they give us some guidance about the date of Jesus' return?

Tell Us When

At the beginning of Matthew 24, as Jesus and the Twelve are leaving the precincts of the Temple in Jerusalem, the disciples call Jesus' attention to the exquisite artistry and massive solidity of the Temple buildings. Jesus responds, "Do you see all these things? . . . I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down" (verse 2).

The disciples were startled. How could God's Temple be destroyed?

Surely the destruction of the Temple could be accomplished by nothing less than the end of the world.

A little later they were all sitting on the Mount of Olives, across the valley from Jerusalem. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (verse 3).

The disciples wanted a chronology. Jesus began answering their question: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name,

claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars" (verses 4-6).

Given the disciples' question and these opening words, I half expect the next sentence to say something like: "Beware! These events prove My return is just around the corner. Sell your houses, cash in your stocks and bonds. Throw everything you have into the work of the gospel, because the Second Coming is right upon you!"

But what, in fact, did Jesus say?

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come" (verse 6). The King James Version reads, "The end is not yet."

When we see world civilization in turmoil and hear about false prophets and Christs, we long for the Second Coming. The worse things are around us, the more intense our desire for Jesus to come and make everything right. But we mustn't be misled into trying to predict the date of Christ's return on the basis of the trouble that surrounds us in the world. The end is not yet.

Jesus then goes on to talk about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, ending with a series of six parables. As you move through the parables, there is a distinct progression. The first parables deal with the time of the Advent. The final parables deal with the character of those expecting His return.

At the beginning of Matthew 24, the disciples ask *when* certain things will happen. They are concerned with *chronology*. Jesus, however, directs their attention to *what* will happen. He is concerned with *character*. And He drives home His point with the six parables.

Six Ways to Say the Same Thing

Parable 1 (verses 38, 39): In Noah's day people were eating, drinking, and getting married. Life went on as usual—right up until the very day of the Flood. Then catastrophe overtook the world. Just so, in the last days life will go on as usual. Nothing will seem

to be out of the ordinary until suddenly Jesus appears in the clouds of heaven.

When I was growing up, many Christians (Adventists and otherwise) linked the exploding divorce rates in America with this passage in Matthew, as though "marrying and giving in marriage" were somehow evil. But that's not the point of the passage. Jesus isn't talking about a breakdown of marital fidelity and chastity. He was

Others may
give up on the
Second Coming
altogether because
of consistently
false alarms.

describing the ordinary cycles of life—normalcy—right up to the end.

Parable 2 makes the same point (verses 40, 41): Two men will be in the field, working—as usual. Two women will be grinding grain—their *everyday* routine. Nothing out of the ordinary—until one is taken and the other left.

We don't have to guess what these parables mean; Jesus Himself tells us. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into" (verses 42, 43). Here's Jesus' conclusion: "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (verse 44).

Disciples, you don't know when, so *stay ready*.

Parable 3, which features a master and his servants, makes the same point (verses 45-51): You don't know when Jesus will return, so *stay ready*. Don't put

off the Second Coming into the distant future. Dallying will lead to disaster.

But in parable 4 Jesus makes a radical shift (Matt. 25:1-13). In this story about the 10 wedding attendants he warns against overconfidence that Jesus will return *really soon*.

The foolish attendants are not those who put off the coming, but those who are sure the coming will occur very soon. The losers in this story *underestimate* the time.

If you're certain that Jesus will return before the end of 1998 or before the end of the millennium, beware. You may find yourself like the foolish attendants, standing outside, knocking vainly. You may not have the spiritual resources you need to make it all the way through to the kingdom. Or worse, you may cause others to give up on the Second Coming altogether.

In 1989 I met an old friend at the New Jersey camp meeting. He was standing at the entrance, handing out literature to prove that Jesus was coming in 1994. He's still distributing literature that gives at least approximate dates for the Second Coming. But he has failed in one of the most basic of missions: his family. His passion for the dramatic and exciting associated with the end-times has interfered with his faithful performance of the routine, prosaic duties of husband and father.

While I was working on this manuscript I visited with a friend, who told me he never expected to finish high school, much less college. Jesus was sure to return long before he had time to do all that. So he goofed around. Didn't go to college. Married earlier than was wise. Because, hey, you never know when Jesus will come and your chance to enjoy life's pleasures will be gone.

Now he's in his 40s and thinking about retirement. He wishes he had pursued a career that offered a bit more financial freedom. His certainty about the timing of Jesus' return has damaged his life.

Another friend laments her failure to get her master's degree when she was young and unencumbered. She

didn't do it then because it would've been a waste of time—Jesus was coming too soon for her to be concerned about a career. Now she's in her 40s, married, with children, stuck in a dead-end job, certain she has the aptitude to do something really interesting that would be a blessing to others . . . if only she had the degree.

These friends are like the foolish wedding attendants. They based their lives on a short chronology. They just knew Jesus was going to be here *really soon*. They were wrong. They should have invested more in equipping themselves for service and less in theories about the date of the wedding feast.

The last two parables in the series drive this point home with great force. In the parable of the talents (verses 14-30), time has very little to do with the story. The crux of the story is one's view of God's character. If you trust God, then you'll put to work the gifts He has given you and will be rewarded handsomely. If you make God out to be a stingy ogre, you'll fail to take risks for His kingdom; you'll ruin your life and your future.

The last parable, the sheep and the goats (verses 31-46), takes us even further. And as Jesus tells it, the crucial tasks that prepare us for judgment day have nothing to do with theories about jubilee cycles and the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. The way we get ready for Jesus' return is to spend ourselves in the down-to-earth, unglamorous work of taking care of people.

In the last judgment the most important question is How did you respond to the real needs of those around you? Did you give a drink to people who were thirsty? Did you give a listening ear to your children? Did you show ordinary kindness to ordinary people?

The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like . . .

A modern-day parable: The Second Coming is like a father of three children who, before leaving the house, gave his children a list of chores. And he told them to be sure to have them done when he got home.

Now, if those children say to them-

selves, "Dad's going to be gone all day," and if they begin to fight with each other, you may be sure Dad will come home at a time they do not expect.

And if those same children spend all day standing at the front window, breathlessly exclaiming "He's coming!" every time a car comes around the corner, when Dad does return home there will also be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

But if those children turn their backs to the window and put their hands in the sink and wash the dishes, and get out the vacuum and do the rugs, and take rag and cleanser and clean the bathroom, and fold all the laundry and put it away, you may be sure that when Dad returns home, there will be great rejoicing (and likely a trip to Dairy Queen).

So it is for us. If we put off the Second Coming into the vague, unreachable future, we may well begin to squabble and quarrel like children, thinking that God's authority seems too remote to trust. And if we spend

our time breathlessly speculating about the date of Christ's return, we will still be distracted from our work.

Instead, with full assurance that Jesus will come again and take us home, recognizing that justice and truth will ultimately triumph, let's live in eager, daily expectation of Jesus' soon return. Let's devote ourselves to the work He assigned us: loving Him and loving people. Then when Jesus returns, we'll bask in His welcome: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you" (Matt. 25:34). ■

* Bible texts in this article are quoted from the New International Version.

John McLarty is writer and producer of the weekend broadcast of the Voice of Prophecy radio program.



Sabbath School Lesson Helps for Fourth Quarter '97



WHY DID JESUS SPEND a considerable part of His ministry healing people? What is the role of prayer in a healing ministry? Is "natural" healing better than treatment in a hospital or clinic? Is it important to tell people about good health, or is it just a supplementary teaching of the church involving primarily the members? Written by a team of professionals, this book explores the philosophy of health through the eyes of Jesus and His health ministry.

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That Smells Good!



ROSY TETZ

Has this ever happened to you? Let's say you've been playing outside. You aren't particularly hungry, because you ate lunch not too long ago. But you are thirsty, so you go inside to get a drink of water. And the minute you walk in the door you know that someone is baking bread. You can smell it. And all of a sudden you are hungry. You want some of that bread.

You weren't hungry. You didn't want to eat; you just wanted a drink of water. But the wonderful smell that was coming from the bread baking in the oven made you think that yes, you were hungry after all.

Have you ever seen something like this in cartoons? A cartoon character is walking down the street. Someone puts a pie in the window to cool. The smell from the pie floats through the air (you can see the smell in cartoons) and tickles the nose of the character, who can't help following that smell all the way to the pie.

Smell is an odd thing. It is strangely powerful. Smelling is done inside your nose. When you smell a flower, extremely tiny bits of the flower float through the air into your nose. Sensors in your nose send messages to your brain about the smell, and your brain memorizes that information.

So smell can help you remember

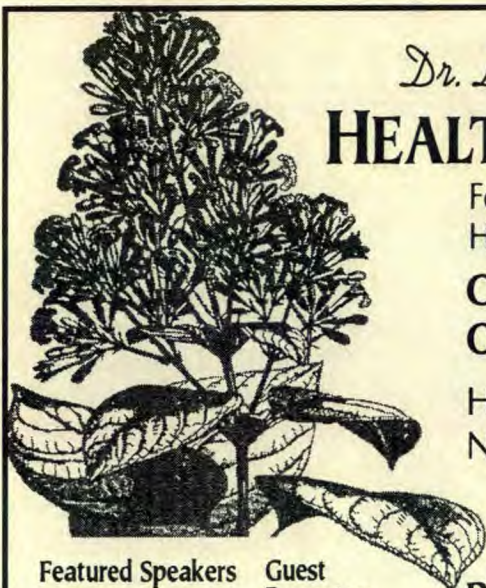
things such as bread is very good to eat. I think the memory for popcorn might be even stronger.

You probably know that it is a good thing for you to read your Bible and learn more about God each day. But sometimes you just might not feel like it. Sometimes you might rather watch cartoons.

So what should you do? Remember the power of smell. Remember that you didn't want the bread until you smelled it. If you try to read a little of the Bible, you might remember how wonderful it is, and then you'll want more.

First you smell the bread, then you want to taste it. Smelling is very nice, but when it comes to bread, tasting is what it's all about.

The Bible says, "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). Isn't that funny? It doesn't just say "listen" or "read." It says "taste." We need to experience Jesus. We need to know Him, not just know about Him. We need to smell and taste. We need to know that the Lord is good.



Dr. Lottie C. Blake Memorial

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Lottie C. Blake, M.D. was the Seventh-day Adventist denomination's first black physician, a graduate of the American Medical Missionary College in Battle Creek, a protege of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and an avid practitioner of homeopathic medicine.

Guest Musical Artists

Wintley Phipps, Edrene Malcolm
Elder Sydney Mills,
Charlotte Holmes,
Angela Meriweather

BOOK

• M A R K •

The Secret Melody

Trinh Xuan Thuan, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, US\$25.00, 313 pages, hardcover. Reviewed by Ben Clausen, Ph.D., associate research scientist, Geoscience Research Institute, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California.

Can one find evidence for God in nature, as Romans 1:20 suggests? This popular science book is one of several that describe developments in physics during this century and address their philosophical implications. As in similar books by other authors, Thuan recognizes the need for explanations beyond the naturalistic view of science. This realization leads some authors to New Age concepts, Eastern mysticism, or a generic god. But it leads others to the personal God of Christianity.

The term *new physics* includes relativity, quantum mechanics, astrophysics, complexity theory, and artificial intelligence. This book does well at discussing the current understanding of these topics from the perspective of an astronomy professor (University of Virginia). Authors of other books give additional perspectives for comparison: Paul Davies, John Polkinghorne, John Barrow, Frank Tipler, Robert Jastrow, Roger Penrose, John Gribbin, Martin Rees, Fritjof Capra, Stephen Hawking, and Steven Weinberg. Informed laypersons will find *The Secret Melody* readable. But as with any popular science book, it requires effort to understand. Thuan explains technical material carefully, and provides appendices and a glossary.

The first chapters give a history of cosmology up to the present. This histor-

ical viewpoint forms a framework for understanding current theories. The book reveals scientific developments that removed the earth (in the Copernican revolution) and then humans (in the Darwinian revolution) from being the center of the universe. Emphasizing this trend can lead to a loss of meaning and purpose for humans. Thuan doesn't go that far. Humanity and the earth are a



natural part of the universe, but additional features set us apart.

Several chapters describe relativity, quantum mechanics, and black holes. These theories have been experimentally confirmed, but are often counterintuitive.

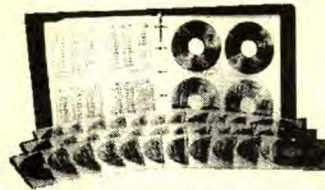
The Secret Melody provides evidence for the Big Bang, a theoretical "history" of how the universe may have developed, and a possible future. Thuan discusses

alternatives to the Big Bang theory and problems yet to be solved, particularly the existence of dark matter. The concept of a beginning to the universe was partially responsible for scientists rejecting the Big Bang for years. It came too close to needing a "beginner"—a creator. In the standard Big Bang theory, approximately 10 billion years have passed since the beginning of time. Scripture doesn't directly address the time issue, although it suggests the existence of other created worlds before our own.

Two further chapters discuss some of the coincidences necessary for the universe and life to exist as we see them today. Naturalistic attempts at explanation use complexity theory, denial of a fundamental coincidence, or exception to the second law of thermodynamics for an open system. Other less scientifically verifiable options include the anthropic principle, multiple universes, and a supernatural intelligence.

In summary, I would want to go much further than the author, although I am pleased with his conclusion from the last page. He is "prepared to bet on the existence of a supreme being. . . . Betting on chance implies nonsense and despair, as witness the cries of distress by Monod and Weinberg. Why not, then, bet rather on sense and hope?"

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Rah-rah Ma

My 6-year-old son moped around the kitchen, complaining of having nothing to do.

"It's 70 degrees outside. Why don't you go ride your bike?" I suggested.

He looked at me as if I had as much sense as the saucepan I was stirring. "I can't ride my bike, Mom, unless you're watching. It's just not fun."

Once again he so conveniently reminded me of a mother's most important role: cheerleader.

I longed to be a cheerleader when I was in the sixth grade. Unfortunately, my cartwheels had bent spokes and my jumps barely cleared the ground. All I could do was yell.

Now I sit against the garage and cheer for the youngest member of my team. One month out of training wheels, Gabe grips the handlebars of his green neon bike as he cuts fluorescent circles around the driveway. Every few rounds he sneaks a peek to make sure I'm watching.

"Wow, you really know how to ride that thing," I tell him. He pedals faster.

"You should see me brake," he says. "I can leave a mark on the driveway."

I admire the bluish stripes crisscrossing the pavement. Later we'll talk about wear and tear on rubber tires.

Cheerleading opportunities beckon daily, but some-

times I'm too busy to show up. Sure, I attend all the public events. I watched my fifth-grade Queen Isabella, decked in Granny's fruit necklace, tell Columbus where to go. She spoke two lines, obliterated by someone in the audience with a nasty cough.

"How'd I sound?" she asked afterward.

"Perfect."

I cheered for my oldest son at the spelling bee. "Give him an E," I prayed when he struggled with "canoeist."

But these daily home events that seem too insignificant for an audience need a cheerleader too. No splits, leaps, or pyramids required, thankfully.

I keep my eye on the home team as he wheels around the flat part of the driveway. I smile. I shout words of encouragement. I keep my mouth shut when he wipes out the just-planted grape hyacinths.

From the sidelines I root for my little guy and know that he needs a lift, the same as I do, every day.

Unconditional love keeps us both learning and erases all our skid marks.

When he comes off the court, I pat him on the back and give him a hug.

Home: won.

Cheerleader: won too.

Saucepan: benched again. ■

*Marti Attoun is a
mother who writes
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