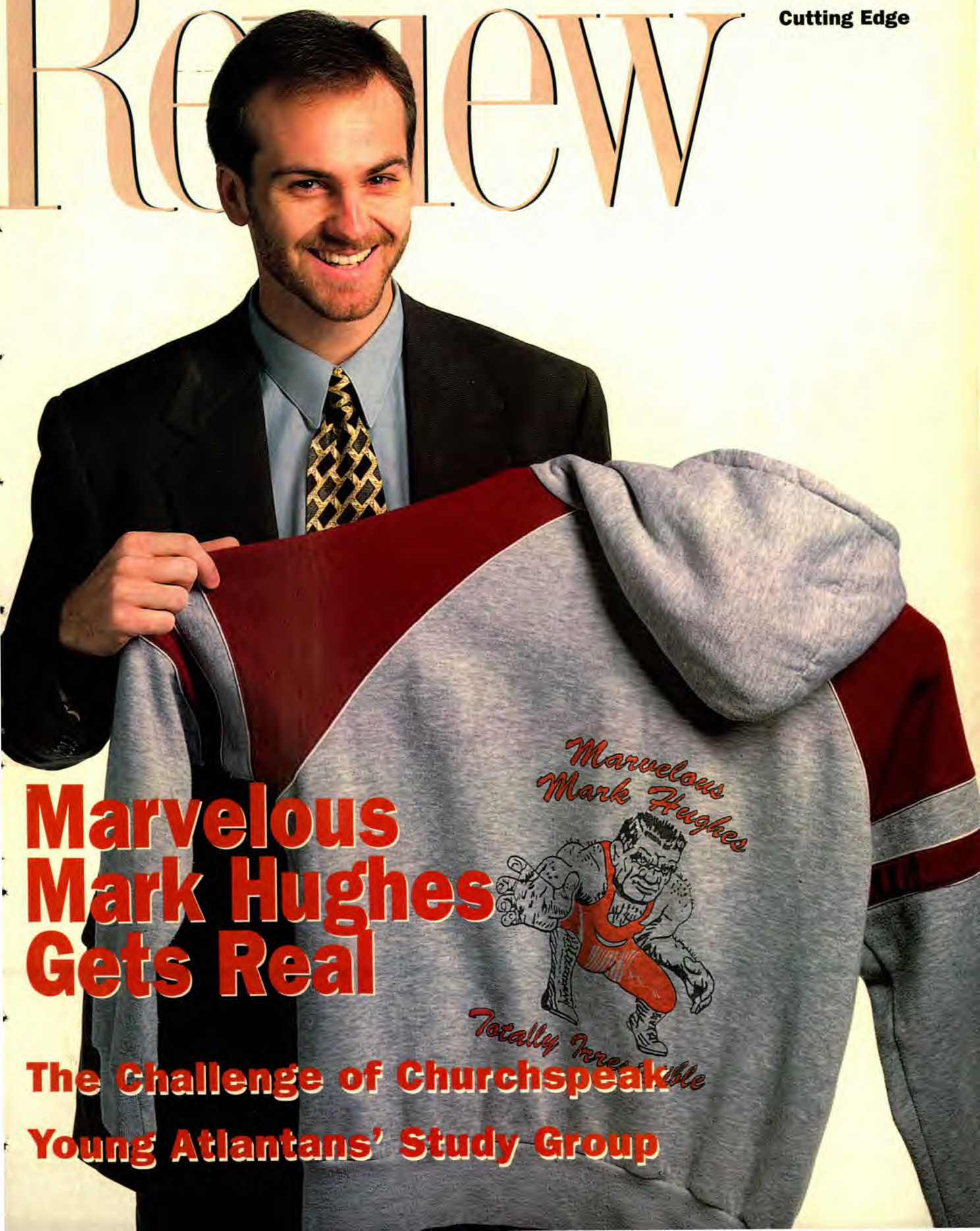


# ADVENTIST Review

February 19, 1998

Cutting Edge



## Marvelous Mark Hughes Gets Real

The Challenge of Churchspeak  
Young Atlantans' Study Group



# LETTERS

## Thanks From a Whole Church

Thank you for "The Salvation of Sam McKee" (Dec. 18). It has thrilled our hearts. This is what we need to hear and what keeps the *Review* special and needed by every Adventist. Keep up the good work.

—Columbus Hilltop SDA Church  
COLUMBUS, OHIO

## Fix Us, Jesus, Fix Us

I was so thankful to read Rosalie van Putten's "Fix Us, Jesus, Fix Us" in the December 18 Cutting Edge Edition, since it concerns something that has troubled me during the previous semester.

After attending various Adventist schools for 13 years, I switched to a large public university my sophomore year. I had been under the impression that people in "the world" were desperately searching for the truth. But after having numerous conversations about religion with my new classmates, I've found that few of them show feelings of emptiness and need. Actually, they seem comfortable and fulfilled.

I find myself at a loss to show them what makes our church (which, so far, no one has heard of) so much more desirable. Most of these people take their respective religions as seriously as I do.

Although the article offered no solution about how to reach the unreachable, I was relieved to discover that I'm not alone in my worries.

—Holly Davidson  
CHINA GROVE, NORTH CAROLINA

This article was stirring and thought-provoking. I suspect it will take many such articles to break the current mold of high-cost evangelistic crusades in the larger cities and the higher cost of cold, single-dimension television evangelism. The mountain can't be attacked and won without a mobilized force! It will require a commitment and singleness of purpose unspoken of today.

—Gordon Oakley  
VIA E-MAIL

Van Putten reminds us of a reality we should have addressed many years ago. Our Lord told His disciples that they would fish for people. Those who fish know that one single method of fishing will not bring in every kind of fish. The methods employed vary according to place, time, and the fish we are after. Likewise, we should have flexible evangelistic approaches.

In underdeveloped countries the promise of not just a house but a mansion in a city paved with gold makes people's hearts jump with hope and love. In middle-class America, people already live in mansions of gold. They need the gospel just as much as poor people do, but to have a meaningful answer to their questions, one has to understand what it means to walk in their shoes. Are we willing to broaden our ministries so that we can reach and keep people from all socioeconomic areas, people for whom Jesus died and for whom He will soon return?

—Daniel Lopez  
MOSES LAKE, WASHINGTON

I greatly appreciate this article. It clearly illustrates that one of the frontiers of mission in our secular world is the workplace and classroom. I have also found that involvement in community action programs brings me into contact with those most difficult to reach.

I do want to attempt to correct a stereotype that I see exhibited again and again. Adventist Community Services centers and inner-city projects are not typically involved in "holiday food baskets." In fact, the directors are more concerned about how to feed the hungry and homeless the other 11 months. And ADRA makes a much larger investment in community development than in disaster relief—because development changes the conditions that create poverty, disease, and the worst effects of disasters.

Our ACS and ADRA professionals and volunteers need our full understanding as well as our constant prayer support.

—Monte Sahlin  
ADRA VICE PRESIDENT FOR  
NORTH AMERICA

## On Willow Creek

Andy Nash's "On Willow Creek" (Dec. 18) is the best what-to-do-with article on this megachurch that I've read in Adventist literature. Thousands of church leaders in North America (and beyond) are seeking a new paradigm for church growth without compromising doctrine. And the church leadership conferences at Willow Creek provide an option.

I have a heart for church leaders and pastors who struggle to provide new methods for healthy, growing churches. When resistance seems insurmountable, it's



tempting to "bail out." But any local Adventist body that sees itself stronger by being separated from the worldwide body violates the interdependence taught in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Even though I tire of church politics, even though I get fed up with outdated methods, even though I'm turned off by autocratic leaders, even though I've run into some dysfunctional members (and churches), the Bible teaches that we need each other. We affirm interdependence by doing what we can to stay networked in the sisterhood of churches.

—Curtis Rittenour

VIA E-MAIL

I greatly appreciate Nash's contribution to the *Review* in putting a more human face on our Christianity, but I disagree with his Willow Creek stand. It is clear that the fruits of the Willow Creek philosophy are destructive and divisive. It produces individuals who have no loyalty to our mission as a church or to our distinctive beliefs and who have no respect for counsel or authority.

I don't believe that Willow Creek is commissioned to help re-create the Adventist Church. To the contrary, the fruits of many of its adherents clearly point to another spirit.

—William Robinson

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON

As an Adventist pastor I have been to Willow Creek many times and know quite a few other Adventist pastors who have gone also. Here's why we're drawn to Willow Creek:

1. Willow Creek appears to be one of the few examples of a modern version of "primitive godliness." An authentic and challenging all-stops-out spirituality can be witnessed on all levels and in every ministry.

2. Pastor Bill Hybels casts a compelling vision concerning the heart of God for lost people. He leads the church toward a real search for the lost within the context of secular America. For many

of us who primarily know methods that reach the already convinced of other faiths, we want to learn how other people groups can be successfully reached.

3. Willow Creek's ministries are built on the simple philosophy that God made each of us with a unique niche and the church should discover that niche and foster its healthy use. As a consequence, Willow Creek members serve the church in capacities that they find effective and fulfilling.

4. Willow Creek never has talked "church growth." I found this refreshing after having grown up in a system that makes growth and numbers often appear near the center of mission. Willow Creek is most concerned about church health. They grow because healthy church bodies grow.

—Dennis Pumford, PASTOR

SALEM, OREGON

We are concerned with this article. Why should we rely on a nondenominational church for motivation when we have the pen of Ellen White? She has given us ample motivation and advice on Christian living and spreading the gospel that, contrary to some modern thinking, is not old-fashioned.

Willow Creek has world popularity because there is no commitment to what day to keep or what type of foods to eat. Our message will never be popular until the true latter rain, when Christians "come out of Babylon" and understand the three angels' messages.

—John and Betti Wolf

FRUITPORT, MICHIGAN

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# ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

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

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# Spiritual Rubbish

CARLOS MEDLEY

**I**t crams my mailbox to the brim. It clutters the dining table and lies strewn across my kitchen counters. From the foyer to the bedroom you can probably find traces of it, and the nemesis has thoroughly invaded my precious desk space. No matter how many times I fill the trash bag, more shows up every day.

What am I talking about? By now you've probably guessed it's junk mail. During the past few years it seems that my mailbox is being deluged with the unwanted litter at an increasing rate and there's no way of stopping it.

This relentless stream of worthless correspondence comes from all over North America—from mortgage lenders, banks and credit card companies, telephone companies, real estate agents, insurance companies, airlines, hotels, department stores, book publishers, record companies, homeless shelters, and even some Christian ministries.



## 4.5 Million Tons

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, the average family receives 34 pounds of junk mail each year, or an average of more than 550 pieces. Just imagine, a total of 4.5 million tons of unwanted mail flows through the U.S. Postal Service and into America's mailboxes each year. Researchers expect the amount to increase by 300 percent within the next 10 years.<sup>1</sup>

One reason the direct mail industry is growing so fast is that marketers can rent your name and address to many organizations, again and again. I learned this several years ago when I obtained a department store credit card. The company registered my name as Carlos S. Medley, instead of Carlos G. Medley. Because I never corrected the error, numerous companies have sent me junk mail with the incorrect spelling.

Direct mail marketers are becoming adept at using sophisticated teasers to get your response. Studies on mail response show that the use of key words and phrases like "buy one, get one free" or "urgent" often hike results. The use of premiums and incentives, such as return address labels or holiday stickers, also boosts returns. I can't tell you how many times I've responded to various promotions because the sender offered a free magazine, radio, or some other premium.

## Twofold Nuisance

For me, junk mail is a twofold nuisance. It not only takes up space, but it takes time to evaluate and discard the material. If you've ever gone away for a few days, the first thing you'll discover upon returning is a mountain of junk mail.

Like the direct mail marketers, Satan also has a carefully crafted method of flooding our conscience with hundreds of unwanted messages every day. His spiritual junk mail is better known as temptation. Unlike the direct mail we receive in our mailbox, we are bombarded with Satan's rubbish at every turn—on the job, in the marketplace, by television and radio, while driving, and in our homes.

Like the direct mailers who use extensive research to build psychological profiles of their audience, Satan studies our character and knows exactly what it takes to make us respond to his snares. While it's not a sin to

be tempted, the catch is that we can't afford to respond to Satan's teasers.

When we succumb to the devil's wiles, the results are devastating. Our lives become cluttered with bad habits, and unholy thoughts and deeds. Our characters will be tainted and our personalities corrupted. We will not achieve the full potential God wants for us.

Ellen G. White says, "In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment."<sup>2</sup>

It's heaven's deepest desire to unleash the power of God's Word in our lives, a power that will readily discard Satan's junk mail and sweep clean the sins that clutter every area of life. Through daily communion with Christ we can barricade our soul against temptation and live our lives free from spiritual rubbish.

<sup>1</sup> Susan Headden, "The Junk Mail Deluge," *U.S. News and World Report*, Dec. 8, 1997, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>2</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 122.

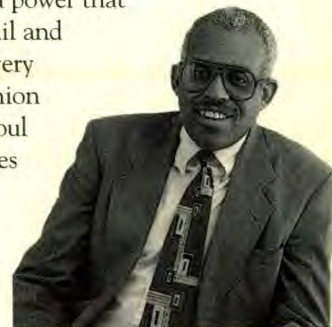


ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS



# When Love Hurts

Michelle and Ron didn't celebrate Valentine's Day this year—they're getting a divorce. Neither will Michelle's mother—her spouse has been gone for several years. Michelle sat across from her pastoral counselor expressing her pain in a strident voice. "Don't tell me how Jesus suffered like all of us," she said. "He was never married!"

An interesting thought. Jesus did know the pain of rejection, but how could He understand the pain of broken intimacy among equals?

The word "love" has become trite, trivialized, and perverted. Yet the Bible says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Love being the hunger of every human heart, these words seem too good to be true. Despite being distorted by human usage, we can find no other word to replace "love." Even our human interpretation of the biblical *agape* lacks God's passion.

Everyone who loves will at some point experience pain. When enemies persecute us we might keep going, but when friends and family forsake us, we can be mortally wounded. When we lose someone in death, we feel God has let us down.

Maybe it was the time your child said, "I hate you," or a loved one "told you off." Or your father's hand lay stiff and cold on a white sheet. Or your spouse said he or she had found fulfillment with someone else; or your son didn't call—again. You felt overwhelming pain akin to abandonment.

Abandoned. Forsaken. What lonely words! They hang like a dark, empty void, spoken in space. They are like "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12).

Jesus knew human rejection (and still does). His brothers and peers probably ridiculed Him. Later He drew people with His teachings, miracles, and healing. Perhaps some of those healed ones stood in the same crowd that cried, "Crucify him!" Some had accompanied Him into the city with palm branches—they thought He would be a king. Now, disillusioned by His lack of power, they turned as bitter as the Passover herbs (Ex. 12:8) and the drink the soldier lifted to Him (Matt. 27:34) on the cross. Not even a twinge of sympathy touched them. They hoped for a king and got a martyr. Not many people like martyrs; they want winners, heroes, and celebrities—not losers. By all appearances Jesus was a loser, and they became angry.

The religious bureaucracy was angry as well. They saw Jesus as a threat to their positions and theology. Hadn't they pub-

lished papers on the Messiah and taught the Torah for years? Didn't He lower the standards? This peasant was no Messiah! The blasphemy of it—He deserved the eternal curse of hanging on a tree! (Deut. 21:22, 23)!

Anger causes pain to everyone. Satanic influences find angry people great sport to tantalize. Angry people do not feel loved. "Tormented, they become dependent on others, manipulate, and play distorted games to secure some place to seek out a few morsels of love," says psychologist Jeffrey Imbach.<sup>1</sup> We have all been there.

Jesus only said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He knew they were sick with sin and felt unloved.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46) were among Christ's last words. Did Jesus suffer the ultimate pain of abandonment by His heavenly family, known

by us as the Trinity? Was God angry too?

John Ruusbroec, a fourteenth-century pastor, gives a beautiful description of Trinitarian love: The Trinity is the movement of Persons toward a union so profound and so deep that there are no distinctions between the Persons. At the same time there is a continual flowing out into fruitfulness—love going both ways. It is this ebbing and flowing into union that is the mystery of the Trinity: One yet Three.<sup>2</sup>

At the Crucifixion when Christ became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) and our sins were nailed to the cross, the Trinity seemed to disintegrate. For the first time Jesus knew abandonment; the Lifegiver had to let go for the Son to die and our sins to be blotted out. A deathly stillness came upon heaven as all watched the result of sin. The Son hung in an empty void between heaven and earth, between eternal death and eternal life—the most awful abandonment the universe had ever seen.

Yes, Jesus and His Father had to undergo the pain of separation. So don't despair—God's pain was born not of anger but of love. He *does* understand our human hurt.

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Imbach, *The Recovery of Love* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Ella M. Rydzewski is editorial assistant on the Adventist Review staff.





# GIVE & TAKE

## ADVENTIST QUOTES

**"Christians aren't perfect; they're just forgiven."**

—Jodie Henry, Brooklyn, New York

**"The seats always try to eat me."**

—4-year-old Nikki Jones, on why she didn't enjoy visiting Sligo Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland (Sligo has flip-up seats)

**"I like my school because there is a micro-society. I have a hair business, Hair Ware. I style hair and sell hair items and have my own brand of shampoo, April Showers. I'm in the third grade, and so are my three employees. Right now I'm making Christmas bows. Business is good, and we expect it to get even better over the holidays."**

—April Minnick, Richmond, Virginia, Academy of SDA, in a late entry to the Review's "Tell What You Like About Your School" contest

## ADVENTIST LIFE

One of my piano students at Shenandoah Valley Academy wanted to meet a blind piano teacher living nearby. As we talked with this fascinating woman, the sun set behind the mountains and all quickly became dark. It was interesting to talk to a blind woman in the dark.

But soon I received a note of apology from the woman. (Someone had asked her why she hadn't turned on the lights for her visitors.) "You see," she explained, "it's never dark to me."

—Alice Davis, Keene, Texas

*Attention readers: While we have plenty of Adventist Life vignettes about children, we need more about adults (like the one above).*



PHOTO BY JOEL D. SPRINGER

## HATS OFF TO ADVENTIST YOUTH

Last summer when Gene Moore, of Atascosa, Texas, had surgery on his spinal column, his wife, Patsy, didn't know how she was going to care for their six-acre yard. But then 15-year-old John Hayden-Taylor from church (Highland Hills) volunteered to help.

"He came almost every Sunday during the summer and mowed, hauled dirt and gravel, trimmed the yard, and did anything else I needed," says Patsy. "He even helped our 87-year-old neighbor by hauling gravel to fill holes around her mailbox. All summer he helped and never expected to be reimbursed."

Thanks, John. Your Review cap is on the way.



**ABLE AND WILLING:**  
John Hayden-Taylor

## DON'T FOLLOW THEM



## BUT LISTEN TO THEM:

Two Adventists, Edwin Smith (left) and Dr. Cleveland Houser (third from left), are among those participating in Don't Follow Me, an award-winning anti-drug, -alcohol, and -crime organization composed of men and women who have "been there." Cited by *USA Today* as one of

the top 10 drug busters in the United States, the Tennessee-based group volunteers their time speaking at schools and other venues. For information, contact Dr. Cleveland Houser at 1-800-699-5688.

## WE NEED YOU

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BY NANCY CARVER ABBOTT

IT WAS A CRISP NOVEMBER SABBATH AT THE end of an extra-long week. For several days my elderly father had suffered a series of distressing dreams. To keep from dreaming, he tried to stop sleeping. The less he slept, the more he called. And no matter how many times the telephone rang, I still didn't know what to do about his dreams.

On Monday my son got himself suspended from school for barking in class. On Wednesday my husband sent an E-mail from China saying that he was having considerable respiratory difficulty. Medical care conditions in China being what they are, this news thrilled me to no end.

By Sabbath I was ready to be enrolled in the nearest Betty Ford clinic for the terminally tense, so when I saw the flyer on the church bulletin board, I thought it sounded like the perfect way to wind down. It said, "Come close the Sabbath with a worship of praise and prayer. There will be a special song service."

Before the service started, I sat listening to the hum of casual conversation around me. A woman walked toward the front, alone. "Is it cold enough for you?" I asked, scooting over so she could sit down.

She smiled, pulled back the jacket

of her suit to reveal a sweater, and said, "No, ma'am. I'm not a bit cold!"

We talked about suits and sweaters and sewing until a man stood and cleared his throat. "We'll be doing some singing tonight," he said. "But first I'd like you each to share about your week and tell us your prayer needs."

I stifled an inner groan. Is "share" a special code word for "stop talking normally and revert to cliché-spitting Churchspeak"? It seems there's a set of unwritten rules that governs the way church people talk when two or more of them are gathered together sharing.

**Rule One:** State all stories in light of Christian experience, translating them into "tribulations," "blessings," or "lessons

# The Challenge of

Fighting out of cliché purgatory

learned." Do not say "I sold two articles today." Instead, say, "Today the Lord blessed me with two article sales."

As a woman across the row talked about the tribulations of her week, my thoughts drifted to the prayer meetings of my childhood. These meetings seemed to attract an unusual number of prune-faced people who spent most of the evening discussing Our Laodicean Condition. Their prayers usually ended with "May God's children keep the fire of the nearness of the Second Coming burning strong within their hearts so that we may all go home together in the clouds of glory."

When I was very young these words fascinated me. They were such big, mysterious, spiritual-sounding words. But as I got older, it was Churchspeak that contributed to my feeling that religion was fake and unreal. The search for authenticity is so commonplace these days that it's become a cliché itself. But authenticity is what I wanted, and as I sat in church each Sabbath, I couldn't find any meaning in the empty phrases passed back and forth between the adults around me.

The people at this worship, however, weren't sleepy, prune-faced saints. These were wonderful, awake, thinking people. For a year now I'd been noticing that church seemed different than it used to be—that it was OK to ask questions, to show doubt, to be vulnerable. But maybe things hadn't changed as much as I thought, not if everybody still talked like this!

**Rule Two:** When possible, use antiquated language. If





some people don't understand you, they're just too lazy to brush up on their King James vocabulary. "Rebuke" is a good word. So is "trespass."

The first prayer request was for help with spiritual warfare. My mind had started to drift again when one man's request jolted me back to reality. His voice shook as he spoke. "Please pray for reconciliation with my spouse."

Wow, I

# Churchspeak

thought. *That must have been hard!*

What if somebody asked for my prayer needs? Would I request a good doggie obedience school for my son and a case of Tylenol PM for Dad? Or, in the panic of being put on the spot, would I forget what to say next and stutter halfway through the request? Fortunately, nobody asked.

We closed with prayer groups. I hadn't prayed in public in a good 17 years, and I really didn't want to resume now, but it seemed rude to get up and walk out, so I joined the nearest group.

**Rule Three:** When you pray, say the same things again and again. It was my turn to pray. I didn't want to follow rule number three. "Lord," I began, "give us the energy to talk to You in real words." I wondered what to say next. The minimum prayer limit seemed to be about 60 seconds. Pray less, and I might disturb the whole group prayer dynamic. I took a deep breath and continued, "Help us to bypass meaningless clichés, such as 'Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies.'"

The people in my group stirred in probable discomfort, and it occurred to me that this was undoubtedly the most ridiculous prayer any of them had ever heard. For the rest of my 60 seconds I prayed for the sick and the poor and the missionaries and colporteurs around the world in my very best Churchspeak.

**D**ejected, I headed home, logged onto CompuServe, and shared my experience in the



Adventists

Online Forum. "How can anybody but the world's most astute evangelists come up with anything original to say while kneeling on the floor delivering a public monologue to an invisible Deity?" I asked. "I opened my mouth to say something authentic, but all that came out was a pile of used words. I don't think I'll go to any more worship services!"

My online friends commiserated. One noted that while adults have Churchspeak down pat, kids are still immune. Another suggested I start a prayer-writing service. As we talked and joked, we also formulated a short list of antidotes to Churchspeak.

**Antidote One:** Make liberal use of the other half of authentic communication, authentic listening. In the process of reacting to their style of speech, I hadn't paid attention to what the people at the worship service were really saying. I decided to give it one more try. If I had nothing to say, I wouldn't talk. If I didn't want to pray out loud, I wouldn't. But no matter what, I would listen.

The following week I sat with my favorite 92-year-old friend and her daughter. During sharing time, instead of letting my mind drift I tried to hear the stories behind people's words. The conversations seemed more relaxed, and so did the people.

I had been ready to give up on the worship service based on one visit. It was a new service. Everyone was still

struggling with format and content, uncomfortable with each other and unsure of themselves. If one week made this much difference, in a month these people would start to feel like a small family.

**Antidote Two:** Stick with it. As people get used to each other, they relax enough to drop their Churchspeak shields. When we paired off for prayer, I remained quiet. My 92-year-old friend didn't blink an eye. She prayed, then she sat talking softly about her week. She had just gotten back from her sister's funeral. Another sister was recovering from a broken hip. She talked, I listened, and if she used Churchspeak, I never noticed.

**Antidote Three:** Lead by example. When you're asked to "share," take a deep breath, relax, and speak as though you're involved in a casual conversation with a group of friends.

I still detest Churchspeak, but it's not going away overnight. We're human. Talking's hard. I haven't tried antidote three yet, but I think I'll do it soon—maybe at worship next week. ■

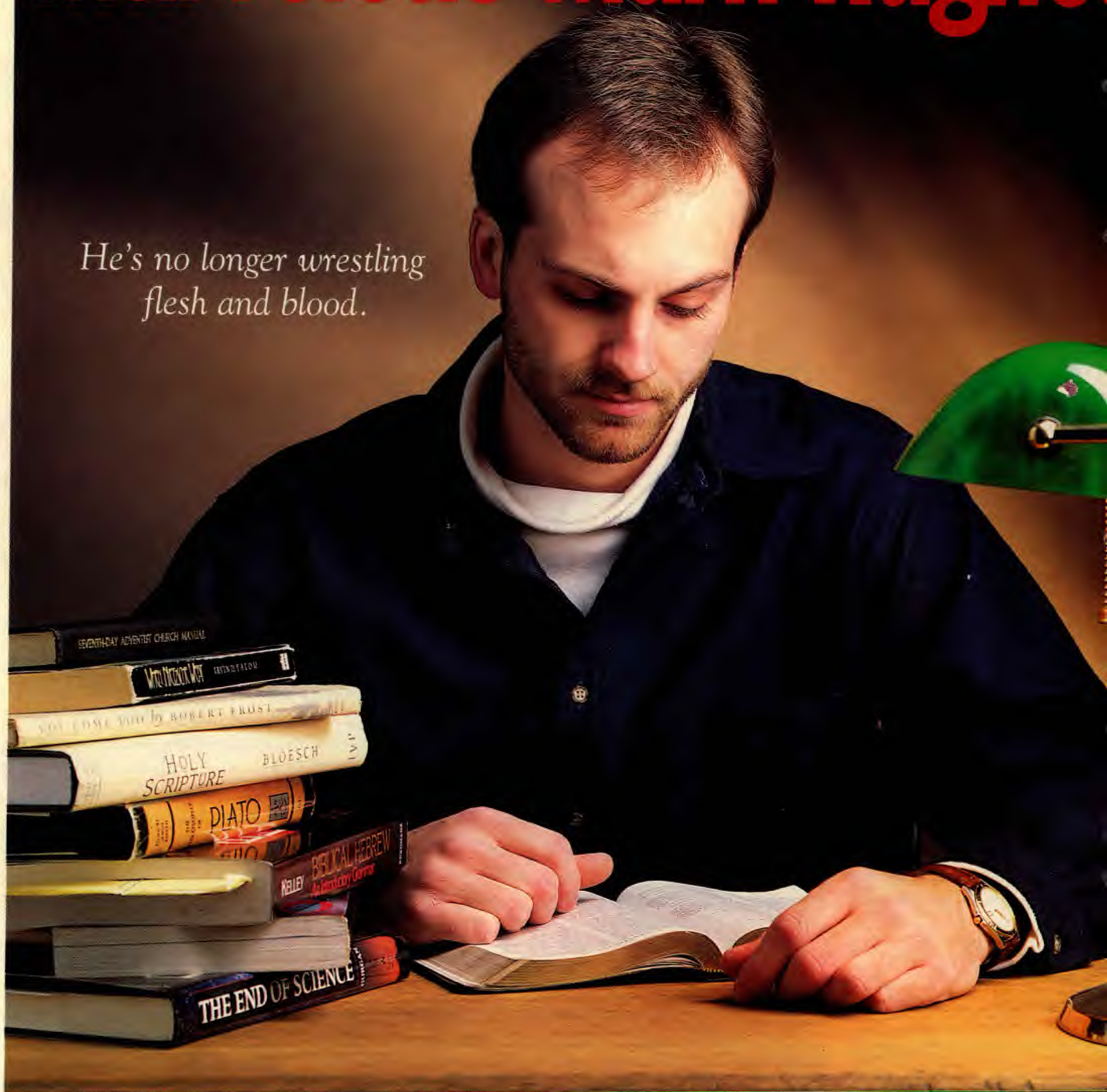
Nancy Carver Abbott is a mother, computer analyst, and humorist who writes from Marietta, Georgia.





# Marvelous Mark Hughes

*He's no longer wrestling  
flesh and blood.*





# GETS REAL

BY KELLIE TOMPKINS

**W**HEN MARK HUGHES WALKED INTO THE WRESTLING auditorium 10 years ago, he saw what he was searching for—guts and glory. Inside a mesh-caged platform stood Ted Oates, his face covered in blood. Mark studied the professional wrestler, remembering him from TV. That day Mark launched his own professional wrestling career—an attempt, he says, to cover up the turmoil inside him.

Every night before Oates wrestled, he trained Mark for his own match, a few weeks away. Still under 200 pounds and standing at six feet, Mark and his partner faced two men weighing close to 300 pounds and nearly seven feet tall. The partner was no help, and Mark took a pounding. He remembers waking up bruised the next morning.

But Mark didn't give up. He started eating six heavy meals a day—and started winning matches. Promoters billed him as "Marvelous Mark Hughes, Totally Irresistible," and teenagers asked for his autograph. His hometown, Cordele, Georgia, cheered him as a champion, and girls idolized him.

Friends said Mark was in his element. He developed a jokester attitude but became more withdrawn. Inwardly Mark questioned his existence. After wrestling matches he often walked outside and looked up at the stars, knowing there had to be something better.

Mark was familiar with spiritual matters, even church services. As a boy he went to church every Sunday with his mom and grandparents. All that changed one Sunday when he was in the sixth grade. He called up his grandparents to take him, but his grandfather was sick and couldn't go. While Mark was at church that day, his grandfather died. That same week his parents divorced, his two older brothers joined the Army, and his sister left home.

Suddenly he and his mom were alone. They sold their farm and stopped going to church. Mark's mother went to work, and Mark joined school wrestling—a loner's sport, he says. In seventh grade he experimented with alcohol and marijuana. In high school he grew his hair long and worked out with weights. He hung around a group of athletes and used steroids. Mark came to his own graduation high on drugs while his best friend from grade school gave the valedictorian speech.

Then he met Ted Oates and his bloody face. At last Mark found his niche. Professional wrestling gave him a place to direct his energies and fulfilled his desire for approval and applause. But wrestling also showed its uglier side.

One night after a match an adoring teenager came up to Mark and told him she planned to beat up another girl who didn't like him. He thought about what his success had caused, what the wrestling profession seemed to encourage. Another time Mark watched a professional wrestler walk into the arena with a T-shirt that read, "Yes, you may worship me." The wrestler held a bullwhip in his hand.

## Seeking, Finding

Devotion belongs only to God, Mark decided. He picked up a Bible and started reading. Sometimes he knelt in prayer and wept in disbelief at the people who crucified Christ. Mark knew he wanted to serve God, so he looked for a church to join. He talked to his brother Bill, a new Seventh-day Adventist.



# There's No Such Thing as Converting Just One

BY KELLIE TOMPKINS

Although Mark Hughes' life changed dramatically, the chain of events that led to his baptism weren't so dramatic. Some might even consider them outdated.

Mark's conversion began with Peter Matthews, whom he has not yet met. "I grew up an Adventist," Peter said in a telephone interview from Orlando, Florida "We had morning and evening worship and read the Conflict of the Ages Series. We read the Sabbath school papers, such as *Our Little Friend*, and always read the Morning Watch book."

Peter works as a choral conductor and holds master's and doctor's degrees in music conducting. He does commissioned works for organizations across the country. At the time of this interview he was writing a choral work for the Boston Children's Chorus to be performed near Christmastime in Boston. Besides writing commissioned works, Peter plays in churches on Sundays—something, he said, that helped remove fears of other denominations and helped him discover the major differences between Adventism and mainstream Protestant beliefs.

The two main differences, said Peter, are the state of the dead and the Sabbath. "Other doctrines are somewhat different," he said. "But most important is what happens to you when you die. The Sabbath is unique because it's part of the moral law. We're promised we're made holy if we keep the Sabbath.

"I've never believed you can convert a person," Peter said. "The Holy Spirit has to do it. I do not go around preaching Seventh-day Adventist doctrine—unless someone comes asking."

That's exactly what Mark Hughes' brother Bill and Bill's wife, Wendy, did. The Hugheses were members in the Beaches United Methodist Church and choir in Orlando, where Matthews conducted. "I noticed the minister of music wasn't paying much attention to the sermon," said Bill.

When Bill asked someone why that was, he was told,

"Oh, the minister of music is not a Methodist but a Seventh-day Adventist."

The idea that the Methodist Church could not find one of its own to direct music irritated Bill. He wanted to find out what made Seventh-day Adventists so different from Methodists. Peter told Bill and Wendy he was not a proselytizer, but warned them that if they were serious about finding out, the outcome could change their lives.

Every week after the sermon the three looked at passages of Scripture. The most frightening thing about that, Bill said, was Peter's readiness to look at any text in the Bible that Bill brought up. Peter eventually invited them to a Revelation Seminar, to which three other people from the Beaches United Methodist Church also came. Bill and Wendy Hughes were among three who were baptized after Bible studies. Later on a trip together in Texas, Bill gave his *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* to his brother Mark.

Peter had prior experience witnessing through his music career. The state of the dead doctrine gave him his first opportunity when he was a doctoral student in Kansas City. He wrote an anthem about John Donne believing in the resurrection, and his teacher asked him to talk about the anthem and the resurrection to the whole class.

After class a young woman told Peter that her brother had just died in an automobile accident and that she wanted to know more. A couple from the class were also interested in the subject, so Peter put together a pamphlet explaining the state of the dead and arranged a meeting with the three. Right away the couple accepted the Seventh-day Adventist belief. The other woman wouldn't, because her brother had consumed alcohol before the accident and she wanted to believe he was in heaven.

The couple, Peter and Laurie Cooper, married and moved to Germany, where they were baptized. Upon returning to the United States, Peter Cooper got a job at Andrews University teaching piano. He now heads the Music Department.

Perhaps this is why Ellen White writes that the angels rejoice over just one soul seeking Christ—because like the potato chip advertisement, there's no such thing as converting just one.

While driving through Texas one day, Mark asked Bill if he had a book that detailed what Adventists believe. The only book Bill had in the car was a church manual. The reading was dry, he warned. Mark took the book and read it, spending hours comparing and looking up every principle in the manual with the Bible. He searched out reasons for standards and came away satisfied.

The Sabbath made sense to Mark—he recalled questioning it as a child in Sunday school. As an athlete he found

the Adventist diet sensible, too. He realized God had not created religion on one hand and life on the other. Seventh-day Adventists taught religion and life as one. He liked that. Mark began approaching every relationship with an attitude of evangelism. He lost interest in wrestling and finally told his promoter to stop booking him.

In 1990 Mark attended Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists (now Southern Adventist University) in Tennessee. He brought with him two books, a Bible and a dictionary. That

year Mark was baptized. He decided to attend Weimar College in California, where he studied philosophy and became engrossed in how to reach people's minds. A different kind of wrestling match began—one with the devil.

With an insatiable desire to acquire knowledge, he spent more time reading philosophy books and less time with the Bible. Finally one day he stopped at a Christian bookstore to pick up some Christian philosophy books, heavy volumes deep with information about the human experience.



He remembers the name of the bookstore, Crossroads—an irony, he says, concerning his own need to make a decision. Mark believed that once he read these books, he could truly dispel serious doubts people had about spiritual things. But a nagging feeling that he wasn't seeking the right understanding plagued him.

In the bookstore Mark knelt down and prayed. He told God he wanted the books, but asked for His leading. When he finished praying, he picked up a small red, leather-bound Bible from a shelf. He opened the Bible to Colossians 2:2 and read through verse 8: "Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. . . . See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world

rather than on Christ" (NIV). He looked at the verses and thought about God's message to him. Instead of buying the philosophy books, he bought the Bible.

### That Was Then, This Is Now

After Weimar, Mark prepared for an evangelistic meeting near his hometown in Georgia. He set up an advertising spot with the local TV station, and just before he went on, the station aired a professional wrestler advertising the next wrestling event. The wrestler tore off his shirt, ripped a poster from the wall, sputtered and spewed his challenges to his opponent, and bragged about his own greatness. Standing with a trimmed haircut and suit, Mark could only laugh at the change in his own life.

"When I met Jesus, I decided words

would be used in a different way," Mark said in a sermon at Lansing, Michigan, where he interned as a pastor.

Mark, now attending Andrews University, is earning a master's degree in divinity. He pastors the Dowagiac, Michigan, church and still carries Bill's church manual and the red Bible. In place of the wrestler's platform stands a pulpit; his new opponent is Satan, and his new tag-team partner is Jesus Christ.

*Kellie Tompkins, who recently graduated from Michigan State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism, lives in Lansing, Michigan, with her husband, Joel, and sons, Andrew and Daniel.*



# Plants by the Sea

ROSY TETZ

**I**magine that you are at the seashore. What is your favorite part? Different people like different things about it. Some people love the water. They like to swim or surf or play in the waves. Some people love the sand. They like to dig in it and build things with it. Some people love the sunshine. They are happy as can be to just lie there, soaking up the sun.

Doesn't it all sound just wonderful?

Not if you are a plant. Most plants can't grow at the seashore. The problem with sand, as far as plants are concerned, is that it cannot store water. Water runs right through it. Since plants need water, they have a hard

time growing in the sand.

Another trouble with sand is that the wind blows it around. The wind can blow hard at the beach, and plants can easily get all covered up by blowing sand. Then they can't get sunlight. Since plants need sunlight, they have a hard time growing under the sand.

That's not all. Another problem plants have at the seashore is the water. It's salty. Salt water kills most plants. And then there's the tide. When the waves come in, they cover up the plants and drown them.

And yet some plants still can grow at the seashore. Some of them have really long roots that reach back to the fresh water away from the ocean. If they are

buried by the blowing sand, they send new shoots to poke up through the sand. The salt water doesn't seem to hurt them. It's amazing.

Their job is to grow, and they do it even if they get buried in sand or covered in salt water or scorched by the sun or blown around in the wind.

These plants remind me of the apostle Paul. After he decided to follow Jesus, it didn't matter what happened to him; all he wanted to do was preach about Jesus. If he was put in jail, he still preached. If he was in a shipwreck, he still preached. If he was beaten up or run out of town or dragged to court, he still preached. Whenever something terrible happened, he saw it as a great opportunity to preach. It was amazing.

Paul wrote, "I have no choice. I must tell the Good News" (1 Corinthians 9:17, ICB). No matter what happened, Paul knew that he was doing what Jesus wanted him to do and that Jesus would help him.

Jesus will help you grow, no matter where you are planted. Jesus will help you do what He wants you to do.





# They're Studying What?

*A group of Atlanta young adults are discovering new relevance in an old book: The Adventist Home.*

BY DWAIN N. ESMOND

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE COMMENT. IT pierced my ears with all the subtlety of a stiletto. She said it so calmly, so nonchalantly, as if talking about a friend with whom she no longer wished to be acquainted. "Ellen White is no longer relevant to our times," she said. Everyone around seemed to agree.

The discussion had to do with child rearing. "Who could be a good parent in her eyes?" she continued in a half-musing tone.

Today it seems that many Adventists equivocate on a point that used to be above question: The writings of Ellen G. White—the Spirit of Prophecy, an identifying mark of God's end-time church—are inspired by God. Her effort to exalt God's standard in personal and marriage relationships, health and temperance, child rearing, Christian development, etc., is often met by the kind of skepticism mentioned above. But while some question Ellen White's prophetic credentials, others are discovering a wealth of counsel that is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago.

## Something Old

On this particular Sabbath afternoon, the home of Earl

and Donna Esmond is peopled with close friends and a few new faces. The banter is light and loose, the kind of conversation you hear before a big event. Soon all is quiet as someone asks God to invigorate what's about to take place. A collective "Amen" signals the beginning of the study, and like magic, little red and white books appear. Earl begins: "Today we're going to study about courtship and marriage—Section III of *The Adventist Home*, entitled 'Choosing the Life Partner.'" Everyone finds the chapter, and after a few opening remarks a spirited discussion ensues.

Later James Rodriguez, a well-dressed fortysomething whose athletic build belies his age, reflects on the session. "I'll never forget the chapter on choosing a life partner," he says. "Having gone through a divorce, I found it painful to see the mistakes I had made. At the time of my marriage I did not know the Lord. What I learned through our discussion pulled at the very core of who I am. For the first time I understood the solemnity of marriage."

Another attendee, Robert Foster, has been separated from his wife for more than two years. "It was a sensitive issue for me," he says. "In fact, I was ready to get a divorce. Then I learned that even though I was separated from my wife, God still expected a certain level of conduct from me. I still had to live a principled life. Several weeks ago I called some of the group members together for a special prayer. They held a prayer vigil for my marriage. Since then I have become much more patient. I want to give God an opportunity to save my marriage."

Donna Esmond, wife of the group's facilitator, also finds the discussions stimulating. "My personal devotions with God have improved tremendously," she says. "I remember when we studied about Enoch and his walk with God. That really helped me



to understand the importance of each spouse having a personal relationship with God."

Earl underscores the point. "A few years ago," he says, "we went through a very painful stretch in our marriage, and it had to do with the fact that we were not both committed to Christ on a personal level."

### Growing Group

The meetings began when Kevin and Debra Davis, of Atlanta, Georgia, decided to strengthen their marriage by studying Ellen White's *Adventist Home*. They invited Earl and Donna Esmond to join them. Soon the word spread, and other friends started coming. Within a few weeks the number attending ballooned to 40. "We never intended for the group to grow this big," says Debra, "but God had another idea in mind. We wanted to affirm our

relationship, and it just so happened that the circle widened to include others."

With the increase in size came a plethora of opinions and views. "We have a wide variety of people attending," notes Earl. "We have divorcees, singles, single parents, marrieds, and members who are separated from their spouses. It makes for a rich, textured discussion."

While there is consensus on most points, some issues generate lively debate. "There are times when Ellen



White's counsel is outdated," says Augusta Malone, a single mother of two. "For instance, in one part of the book she counsels parents to teach their children how to plant and farm crops. Because many of us today do not live on farms," she continues, "her

counsel here is outdated. However, the point she seems to be making is that kids should learn the value of hard work. That principle can be taught today."

Pam Foster, who is single, recalls another session during which the rhetoric grew heated. "One of the issues that brought much discussion was the role of women in the home," she says. "Ellen White seems to discourage career pursuits in favor of homemaking. She wrote this at a time when a woman could expect to marry someone who would take care of her for life. That's not the case today. The point is that women need to be balanced. The skills necessary to care for the home are as important as, or more important than, educational and career pursuits."





## Nine Start-up Tips

BY DWAIN N. ESMOND

If you'd like to lead an *Adventist Home* study group, here are some tips that might help smooth the way.

1. Develop a personal connection with God. You cannot share what you do not possess.
2. Be prepared. Study the material carefully and ask for God's guidance. You'll find amazing insights.
3. Develop the Oprah persona. Guide the discussion. Know when to cut off discussion.
4. Use the Bible to support what you study.
5. Be sure that those who come want to learn. Be leery of those who come to matchmake.
6. Create a low-pressure climate in which attendees feel comfortable sharing.
7. Don't allow the group to get too large. If this happens, attendees will not feel comfortable sharing.
8. Pray for members and encourage members to pray for each other.
9. Encourage members to share what they learn with someone not in the group.

Madison Wisdom is a newlywed and head of a blended family recently moved to Atlanta. He believes that some of the tension arises because what Ellen White says goes against the way people want to live. "I think whenever you tell people something that goes against their lifestyle, they are going to question it," says Madison. "There's nothing wrong with questions. But we have to understand that God's inspired counsel is relevant to our lives."



study of the Bible. Some were pointed in the direction of churches that conducted in-depth Bible study. "A few people stopped coming because they felt that there was not enough biblical corroboration for what we were studying," says Robert. "Now we make sure that the Bible is used to buttress the material we study."

James Rodriguez remembers a time Ellen White's authenticity as a prophet came into question. "Many of the group's members were not born and raised in Adventism," he says. "As

a new Adventist I find it very difficult to accept the writings of a woman 'they' say is inspired. But as I study *The Adventist Home* in the light of Scripture, I gain a new perspective on Adventism, Christianity, and Ellen White."

"We are not trying to establish a personality cult here," Earl cautions. "We simply believe that outside of God's Word, Ellen White's writings comprise the most reliable source of counsel for

young people today. Her writings are clear, graphic, and relevant. At the end of each session everyone is given an opportunity to share how the insights from that particular day are relevant to their lives. Time and again members remark—sometimes tearfully—how much pain they would have avoided if they had heeded the inspired counsel of God's servant. I've found it to be true in my life."

Says Madison, "Many of us today are spending money on secular counselors. While professional counseling is important in some cases, there is a wealth of information at our fingertips. This group has been a way for my wife and me to build on our marriage counseling. I thank God for the wise advice of Sister White." ■

Dwain N. Esmond works as an assistant editor at the *Review and Herald* Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland.



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# Let's Plan SET '99, Part 2

*"For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power"*  
(1 Cor. 4:20, RSV).

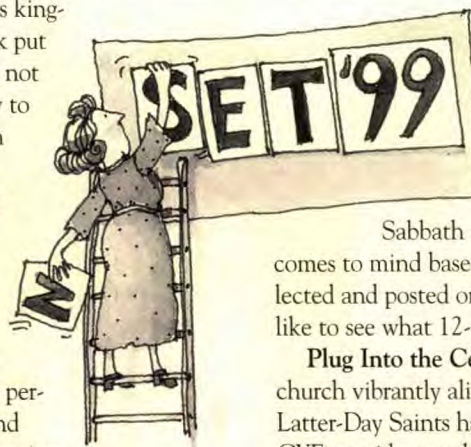
In my previous column I suggested joining the NET evangelistic events with equally ambitious SETS, to make disciples, not merely decisions. This follows Jesus' approach of involving those closest to Him to enable His kingdom to take root in reality. Jerry Cook put it this way: "Focus on the people you have, not the ones you hope to get. Whenever we try to build big churches we get in trouble. When we invest ourselves in building big people we make progress." Here are some ideas for building big people.

**Ministry Gallery.** Do you ever wonder if there's a better exit from a motivating Sabbath sermon than to shake hands, smile, and drive home to succotash and Special K loaf? How many times can a person get inspired to do *something* for God, and then do nothing? How many times can a portion of God's land be burned over without growing new vegetation? ("The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind . . .")

What if instead, upon exiting a sermon, members encountered a menu of ways to help someone in the community? On the ministry gallery in the foyer is a list of contacts, times, and phone numbers for members to be healing salve to someone in need. A member sits behind a table to sign people up and answers questions about the options. Possible ministries might be providing car mechanic service to single moms, paying an electric bill for a month, giving Bible studies, intercessory praying, tutoring with the local literacy council. The church spends as much energy on finding people to help and helping them as it does in running its own programs. This may mean electing a ministry team and coordinator as regular church officers. It definitely means involving new and young members in leadership positions.

Tony Campolo tells a parable of touring an oil refinery and noting the ways petroleum is broken down into gasoline, lubricating oil, and other products. At last someone asks, "Where's the Shipping Department?"

"Oh, there's no Shipping Department," the tour guide explains. "All the energy generated in this refinery is used to keep the refinery going."



When most of the money and energy of the church is consumed promoting its own programs and constructing its own buildings, it becomes an end in itself. A saltshaker on display.

The ministry gallery could also be used to introduce new members, or "members of the week." Allow these members to decorate the panel as they wish—with photos, wallpaper prints, medals, Bible texts—to let the church know who they are. Have some fun with it.

We do a pretty good job of encouraging musical artists, but visual artists find few church-sponsored outlets. My friend Conrad Christianson suggests that churches hand out blank sheets of paper one

Sabbath a month to encourage artists to draw whatever comes to mind based on the sermon. The drawings could be collected and posted on the gallery the next Sabbath. Wouldn't you like to see what 12-year-old Vinnie Van Gogh comes up with?

**Plug Into the Center for Youth Evangelism.** To keep our church vibrantly alive, we must concentrate on our youth. (The Latter-Day Saints have mastered this.) At Andrews University the CYE provides youth specialists who can give ideas, put on training events, conduct Youth Summits, and even enroll students in Giraffe University. Contact them at 1-800-YOUTH-2-U.

**Hospital Outreach.** Nowhere do nonchurchgoing people contemplate eternity more often than in a hospital. With each birth, accident, illness, and death, friends and relatives slow down to reflect on transcendence. For many, a hospital waiting room is their church.

So develop a ministry packet for parents of newborns and for those who are grieving. Provide booklets and invitations, and possibly a gift (such as a hand-knit baby cap) from the church.

Members and nonmembers will be attracted to a church that offers such opportunities. No church is evangelizing very well until every member has been enabled to be vitally involved in an ongoing, enjoyable ministry. The possibilities for member involvement—the key to church growth—are as endless as your ideas.

Ready. Get SET. Go.

Chris Blake teaches at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. He was once asked to teach a Sabbath school class before he was a member. He joined that church.





# Discovering God With an Attitude

*Young adult symposium targets Generation X*

BY JOLYNN R. FISHER, ASSISTANT COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE

**A**ttitude, the very gift God gave to [Generation X], is the gift we're trying to take away. It's that very attitude that is needed to get through to this sinful world."

That statement from José Rojas, North American Division youth and young adult ministry director, launched the two-day Generation X symposium (GXs) on November 18, 19.

More than 125 youth and young adult ministry professionals, family life ministers, educators, and lay church members from around the world met in San Diego for the symposium, targeted at developing ministry for young adults born between 1961 and 1981, commonly called Generation X, or simply GenX. The countries represented included Canada, Austria, the Cook Islands, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal,

Romania, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For those who didn't speak English, the programs were translated into French.

Allan Martin, dre.am VISION ministries co-founder and himself a GenXer, planned the meetings, which preceded Youth Specialties' National Youthworkers Convention, a Christian youth ministries convention held biannually.

Through a wide range of presenters the symposium focused on provoking new thoughts and challenging previously held assumptions regarding Generation X. Instead of rehashing all the research and analytical studies done on

Generation X, GXs participants were challenged to fashion specialized tools and locally relevant strategies in reaching prebelieving GenXers and in nurturing/empowering Adventist young adults.

"The purpose of the GXs was to foster a team approach to young adult ministry and outreach that could go beyond the event into actual practice," said Martin. "Our hope was to spark young adult ministry synergy through spiritual and experiential interaction among the participants,



**WORSHIP LEADERS:** Symposium delegates (left to right) Joelle Reed, Johnny Bennett, Bob Cundiff, Greg Phillips, and Susan Ross led the group of 125 participants in morning praise and worship.

to deepen empathy with GenXers, and to seek Christ in the midst of the journey—ours and theirs. I am elated with how the sparks flew at the GXs and am eager to see the fire grow."

Featured speakers were Janet Lea (Bernardi) Waldo and William P. Mahedy, coauthors of *A Generation Alone: Xers Making a Place in the World*; Steve Daily, La Sierra University campus chaplain; and Mike Yaconelli, owner of Youth Specialties.

Waldo and Mahedy spoke tag-team style about the premise of their book, their insights from ministering with young adults, and practical ways it could be applied in working with GenXers. Waldo concluded her presentation by saying that even though Generation X as a whole has more going against it than any other generation, GenXers also have more opportunities than any other generation. She



**INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP:** Allan Martin (center), GXs coordinator, was delighted with the numerous international registrants. Marianne Dyrud (left) and Roger Flaaloekken Jakobsen came from Norway.



challenged GenXers present to view their supposed drawbacks as unique opportunities. She appealed to delegates to cultivate relationships of trust and integrity with nonbelieving GenXers, helping fill the God space that they unknowingly or knowingly have.

Shasta Emery, Adventist Intercollegiate Association president, facilitated focus groups Tuesday evening. She was joined by La Sierra University students who took time away from classes to meet with the delegates. In small group meetings with the individual LSU students, GXs delegates were able to bounce ideas and opinions off actual GenXers in hopes of finding viable options for reaching their youth and young adults.

Mike Yaconelli presented the Wednesday devotional, encouraging delegates to work with the GenXer need to explore life and find purpose. He shared a story of a young person



**NEW INSIGHTS:** Mike Yaconelli, owner of Youth Specialties, shares insights for reaching Generation X.

who dropped out of college, much to her parents' chagrin, and spent three years living first in Hawaii, then in a remote ski resort, and finally on a mission boat in South Africa. Yaconelli

asserted how her parents were beside themselves with worry for her future. As her stint on the mission boat drew to a close, she wrote home of her experience and how God had been providentially present throughout her quest for identity.

"It was then we knew our daughter had found what she was looking for," said Yaconelli. "She had found God."

Primary sponsors for GXs included the Association of Family Life Professionals, the Association of Youth Ministry Professionals, and dre•am VISION ministries.

An exceptional resource generated by the symposium is the GXs notebook that includes the presentation outlines, extensive Generation X bibliography, and a wide array of relevant articles, resources, and reviews. A limited number of GXs notebooks are available by calling PlusLine, 1-800-SDA-PLUS.

## N E W S B R E A K

### Adventist Community Service Provides Flood Relief in Tennessee

**A**dventist Community Services (ACS), the Adventist Development and Relief Agency's United States branch, recently began immediate relief response to the disaster left by flash flooding in Carter County, Tennessee.

Some 64 inches of snow had collected in the mountains, when two days of warm weather and 11 inches of rain caused a 30-foot wall of water to rush through the valley in the middle of the night, say ADRA officials.

According to recent reports, seven persons were killed and 350 homes destroyed, with many more structures damaged. The 1,500 survivors suffered almost complete loss of their homes and possessions.

Sylvia Bradwell, local ACS director, oversaw the opening of an emergency relief center at the Adventist church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee. Terry Haight, ACS disaster response coordinator for eastern Tennessee, took a truckload of blankets and comfort kits to Roan Mountain on January 11.

On January 12, ACS leaders consulted with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) and the American Red Cross. ACS has been responsible for

setting up a distribution network for donated goods.

Under the terms of ACS agreements with the federal and state governments and the Red Cross, TEMA has asked ACS to operate a multiagency warehouse for donated goods at the Rebel Industries building in Elizabethton, Tennessee. From this location relief supplies such as groceries, cleaning supplies, blankets, and clothing are being disbursed to several emergency centers.

Large amounts of donated goods were collected in the Carter County public school district, putting classes on hold. ACS volunteers worked hard to clear the goods out and transport the relief supplies to the warehouse for sorting, boxing, and putting into storage for continued use.

### Security Officer Shot Dead at Loma Linda University

The peace and tranquillity of the Loma Linda University (LLU) campus was shattered by gunfire on January 15.

Ken Kuck, LLU Security Department captain, was shot and killed outside his office. His alleged assailant, a university employee who had just been fired from his work as a parking enforcement officer, was taken into custody by the San Bernardino



# The Sabbath—And Generation X

BY SAM MCKEE, EDITOR, GIRAFFE NEWS

**S**elf magazine recently asked well-known writers to each evaluate one of the Ten Commandments to see how it would fare under modern scrutiny. The fourth commandment appears in the December issue of this popular magazine with a special glow, as it did in the visions of Ellen White.

Novelist Cynthia Ozick writes: "The Greeks and the Romans derided the Jews for observing the Sabbath—conduct so abnormal as to be absurd, and economically wasteful besides. . . . For the Greeks and Romans, all days were weekdays. Both masters and slaves were slaves to a clock that never stops. It was the biblical Sabbath that divided time and made the week. . . . Without the Sabbath, time in a crucial sense has no reality—it simply rolls on, one sunrise after another, meaninglessly. . . . The Sabbath is set apart from routine so that the delights of being alive can be savored without the distractions of noisy demands, jobs,

money, and all the strivings of ego."

Specialists tell us that baby boomers characteristically "live to work" and often find their identity in their occupations. But members of Generation X "work to live," and they live for their leisure time.

What church could be more relevant than one that

calls people to rest without reservation and find their joy in the perfect work of Jesus? What could be more healing

than inviting people to spend a day gazing into the face of Christ in His church and His creation?

We must challenge this radical young generation to change the world in Jesus' name every Saturday by serving the poor and the brokenhearted (see Isa. 58; 61), by taking time to walk with their children and smell the roses, by truly living for at least one day out of seven as a dim but beautiful reflection of the glory and peace that only heaven can hold.

## NEWS COMMENTARY

### NEWS BREAK

County Sheriff's Department.

Kuck, 56, had worked in the Security Department for 20 years. Augustus Cheatham, LLU vice president for public affairs, said that "the entire Loma Linda family is devastated by the loss of a dedicated employee who has been with us for so long. He will be sorely missed."

Funeral services took place at the University church on January 22.—*Adventist News Network*.

### Health Series Brings 73 Baptisms in Tanzania

A unique health outreach in the Tanzanian village of Lemara resulted in 73 baptisms in early January, reports Paul Wangai, Eastern Africa Division health and temperance director.

The outreach program included daily clinic visits at which 463 patients were treated. Before each nightly meeting, health lectures were given on topics such as nutrition, family planning, infection control, dental hygiene, substance abuse, and AIDS. Two physicians, two dentists, and a team of eight other medical workers were involved in the meetings.

More than 100 families were visited and 180 health lessons were given in preparation for the meetings, Wangai says.

### Newbold Students Aid Outreach in South Africa

When two students from Newbold College stood in Transkei College of Education in South Africa in December to say a public prayer before 1,500 people, they became the first White persons ever to participate in a Seventh-day Adventist Students' Association (SDASA) conference program in the association's 31-year history of struggle over apartheid.

Located in Bracknell, Berkshire, England, Newbold College has an emphasis on ministerial training. The theme of the conference was "Our Origin and Destiny Is Rooted in Christ." Nigel David, pastoral ministry major from Newbold, called for students at the conference to make a commitment, saying, "You can take the world, but give me Jesus." Ninety-seven persons, including a former Anglican minister, decided to join the Adventist Church.

Other students also aided the church's outreach program. Eddie Hypolite teamed up with others from Britain and Holland to lead out in a revival in Soweto.

The team then moved to the SDASA conference, where Hypolite conducted a workshop on witnessing, Susanne Kirlaw led out in a workshop on puppet ministry, and Samantha Jean-Jacques spearheaded a workshop on mime.

The program was organized by Jeffrey Brown, senior



## Did You Know?

### Lost Benefits a Major Cause of Homelessness

The International Union of Gospel Missions (IUGM), in a survey of homeless people checking into its 260 shelters across the United States, has found that 20 percent of its clients became homeless because of loss of government benefits. The survey of 15,000 homeless men, women, and children was released December 1.

"Those who lost benefits tend to be alcohol- and drug-addicted men and women in their 40s and 50s who previously received Social Security disability and SSI (supplemental security income) benefits," says Stephen E. Burger, executive director of IUGM. "Even though we have not yet seen the total impact of welfare reform, people are falling through the cracks."—*Religion News Service*.

### First Women Hired as Orthodox Jewish Interns

In a first for Orthodox Judaism, two New York synagogues have hired women as "congregational interns," a position expanding the role of women within tradition-bound Orthodoxy by including some duties performed by rabbis. Orthodoxy is the only one of Judaism's four major denominations that does not allow women to serve as rabbis.—*Religion News Service*.

## For Your Good Health

### Downsizing Flu

Unemployment's adverse effects on health are well known. But now researchers have learned that in companies with a large number of layoffs, remaining workers were up to seven times more likely to go on a long-term sick leave than employees in companies in which minor downsizing has taken place. The effect was strongest in companies in which there were many workers age 50 and older.—*The Lancet*.

### Heart Disease: You Reap What You Sow

It pays to start paying attention to your blood cholesterol levels early in life. A new study suggests that individuals who have high cholesterol in middle adulthood continue to have a high risk of heart disease in spite of declines in cholesterol in later years. Individuals with histories of elevated cholesterol and other risk factors cannot depend on lower levels in old age to make everything right.—*American Heart Association*.

—"For Your Good Health" is compiled by Larry Becker, editor of *Vibrant Life*, the church's health outreach journal. To subscribe, call 1-800-765-6955.

## N E W S B R E A K

lecturer in pastoral care and Christian mission at Newbold. A total of 31 persons financed their trip from Britain to take part in the program.—*Adventist News Network*.

### New Magazine Offers Fresh Ideas for Children's Ministry

*Kids' Ministry Ideas*, a new quarterly journal published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, offers relevant, innovative ideas for children's ministry leaders.



The articles, written by experienced children's ministry specialists, authors, and Sabbath school and Vacation Bible School leaders, present tried-and-proven techniques and tips to help make the gospel understandable for children.

The journal also surveys the latest ministry resources and announces future children's ministry events. The column *The Doctor's In* gives readers an opportunity to submit questions to children's specialists. For more information or to subscribe, visit your local Adventist Book Center.

### News Notes

✓ **Dr. Linda Hyder Ferry**, of Loma Linda University, appeared on the NBC news program *Dateline* on January 20. She was interviewed about her groundbreaking research in the field of smoking cessation.

Ferry, originator of the first nicotine-free pharmacologic treatment for smoking, also assisted in the development of the bupropion drug, which was recently approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

✓ **Correction.** The poem "Sister White Said It," appearing in the January 8 *Adventist Review*, should have been credited to Thelma Norman, of Mena, Arkansas.

### What's Upcoming?

Feb.	14-21	Christian Home and Marriage Week
Feb.	21	Youth Temperance Day
Feb.	21	<i>Listen</i> , <i>Vibrant Life</i> , and <i>Winner</i> magazine promotion
Mar.	7	Women's Day of Prayer
Mar.	14	Tract Evangelism
Mar.	22-28	Youth Week of Prayer



BY ARIEL ROTH

**I**N THE SUMMER OF 1925 THE FAMOUS "Monkey Trial" rocked the usually sleepy town of Dayton, Tennessee. The narrow legal issue was whether John Scopes, a young public school teacher, had violated a new Tennessee law proscribing the teaching of evolution. But the issue in the public mind was whether creationist or evolutionary theories of origin were true.

The trial, which attracted world attention, had somewhat of a carnival atmosphere, complete with chimpanzees and two celebrated public figures: William Jennings Bryan, three-time candidate for the U.S. presidency, defending creationism, and Clarence Darrow, famous Chicago attorney, defending evolution.

In one of the more poignant moments of the trial, Darrow asked Bryan about the biblical account of Creation. How could there be an evening and a morning on the first four days of Creation week, he wanted to know, before the existence of the sun, which was not created until day 4?

Bryan answered the objection by suggesting that the days of Creation may have been very long periods of time, an argument that certainly didn't resolve the peculiarity of having evenings and mornings without a sun.

While Scopes was found guilty of violating the law, the decision was later reversed on a technicality. Both sides declared a victory, leaving many questions unanswered.<sup>1</sup>

It does seem, at least at first, incongruous to have an evening and a morning before the creation of a sun, as the sequence is chronicled in Genesis, giving rise to other questions about day 4 of Creation week and, indeed, the sequence of the whole Creation account. Some have used this problem to justify the categorization of the Creation account in Genesis as "primeval history" (i.e., without factual significance),<sup>2</sup> but the Bible clearly doesn't present it as such. For a better understanding of the following discussion, the reader is encouraged to read the whole account from Genesis 1:1 to 2:15.

### Models

Many different models of Creation week have been proposed, usually centering on determining when the various parts of the universe were created and what the source of light was during the first three days of Creation week. Three main models continue to attract attention.

#### 1. All is created during Creation week.

The matter of the earth is created on day 1. Life is created on days 3, 5, and 6. The sun, moon, and all the rest of the universe are created on day 4. Light for the first three days is created in an undisclosed way by God, then provided by the sun afterward. Thus the entire

universe is only a few thousand years old.

2. *The solar system is created during Creation week; the rest of the universe is very old.*

Stars, galaxies, etc., were created by God many millions of years ago, but the solar system is only a few thousand years old. The matter of the earth was created on day 1; life on days 3, 5, and 6. The sun, moon, and planets were created on

# THE Wrestling With the FOURTH Genesis Creation Account DAY

day  
4.  
Light for the first three days was created in a special way by God and from day 4 thereafter was provided by the sun.

3. *All of the universe, including the solar system, was created long ago. Life on earth was created recently during Creation week.*

Long ago the universe was created, including the solar system and an empty dark earth. The earth was prepared for life, and life was created on it a few thousand years ago during Creation week. Light during Creation week came from the sun, which already existed. The partial lifting of a dense



cloud on day 1 of Creation week lighted the earth, but the sun, moon, and stars, while present, were not visible from the earth. The light was similar to that of an overcast day. The complete lifting of the cloud cover on day 4 made the previously existing sun, moon, and stars fully visible from the surface of the earth.<sup>3</sup> Hence their presence is recorded for that day.

### Weighing the Models

A straightforward reading of the Genesis account clearly specifies each day of Creation week to be of 24 hours' duration. Bryan's suggestion that the days of Creation were extended periods of time, which is a popular interpretation, isn't entertained in the biblical text itself. For each of the six days of Creation the writer unambiguously states that there was an evening and a morning.

More debatable is the question of the source of light on the first three days, since the sun is not mentioned until day 4. The book of Genesis records the production of light on both days 1 and 4 (Gen. 1:3, 15) of Creation week. While the details of the source of the light on day 1 aren't given, it wouldn't be beyond a God who can create a uni-

verse of stars to provide light on days 1-3. If it were a localized source and if the earth was already rotating, evening and morning would occur in the conventional way. It has also been suggested that God Himself could have been the source of light, since He is described elsewhere in the Bible as a dazzling light (Ps. 104:2; Eze. 1:27, 28; Dan. 7:9, 10; 1 Tim. 1:16), and will be the source of light for the earth made new, where there is no need of the sun or moon (Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

One of the questions frequently raised about Creation week concerns the length of time it takes for light to come from distant stars. On a clear night, even without a telescope, we can see the faint nebula of Andromeda, whose light takes some 2 million years to travel to our eyes. If the stars were created on day 4 (Gen. 1:16) a few thousand years ago, how can we already see the light from stars, some of which are so far away that it takes billions of years for that light to reach us? Having the stars created long before Creation week is one way by which the problem is resolved.

Some suggest that God could have created the stars recently, complete with their pattern of radiant light already reaching the earth so humanity could see and enjoy them. Furthermore, because God created a mature Adam and mature trees, why not also create an apparent mature universe, with respect to radiant light patterns? The latter is a definite possibility, although more contrived. One can think of necessary reasons for creating a mature Adam (babies are helpless) or mature trees (saplings do not produce needed fruit), but for God to make it appear that light had been traveling for billions of light-years, when it had not, seems less essential and has even been interpreted by some as a challenge to His integrity. Some are therefore more comfortable with the concept that at least the stars were created a very long time ago, giving light the necessary time to reach the earth. Others see no problem with God's making the stars

appear older than they are.

A common interpretation related to this question is that the reference to stars in the description of day 4 of Creation week ("He made the stars also" [Gen. 1:16]) is a parenthetical statement distinct from the other activities of day 4, and is only a declaration that the stars also were created by the same Deity. On the other hand, it is sometimes suggested that because the words "He made" were inserted in translation and are not part of the Hebrew manuscripts, the stars were also created on day 4, along with the sun and moon. This latter conclusion may not be the intent of the original author, since earlier (verses 16 and 14) the text speaks only of God making two great lights. On this basis, the statement "the stars also" does appear parenthetical.

Likewise, the Hebrew language doesn't have a pluperfect (past perfect) tense and can't distinguish between God "made" or "had made" the sun and moon (verse 16). Thus, based on syntax, the original writing couldn't provide a preference for models 1 and 2 (young solar system) as compared to model 3 (very old solar system), or vice versa.

One of the great unresolved questions regarding the Genesis creation account is the interpretation of the first two verses of Genesis, which state that God created heaven and earth, and follows with a description of a dark empty earth with water. Does that description apply to an earth that existed for an extended period prior to Creation week, or does it refer to the earth as first formed on day 1? Most translations of the Bible provide an equivocal statement, because the Hebrew is capable of more than one interpretation. A few translations favor the former interpretation beginning the account with such statements as "When God set about to create heaven and earth—the world being then a formless waste, with darkness over the seas and only an awesome wind sweeping over the water—God said, 'Let there be light'" (Gen. 1:1-3,



Anchor; see also verses 1-3, Goodspeed). These translations definitely imply the existence of Planet Earth before the creation described in the following verses. With reference to the Hebrew manuscripts, one appears to have a choice here. That question has been with us for a long time and was discussed on the front page of the July 3, 1860, issue of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.

The description of an original dark empty earth covered with water (Gen. 1:2) could imply that the earth existed in this state long enough to be worthy of description. This is strengthened by similar descriptions in other Bible passages. Job 38:9 (KJV, NIV) mentions an original earth with a cloud garment wrapped in "thick darkness." Psalm 24:1, 2 speaks of the world being founded upon the seas, and most translations of 2 Peter 3:5 speak of creation of an earth formed "out of water." This seems to imply something here before Creation week. These four passages can suggest an original dark earth covered with water, which could have been here for a long period of time.

The book of Job also may be describing stars present at the time of the creation of the earth, when it states "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). The stars in this poetic passage have been interpreted by various Bible commentators both as representing angels<sup>4</sup> and as actual stars.<sup>5</sup> The latter interpretation suggests that the stars existed prior to Creation week.

It has also been argued that because the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:11) states that God created "heaven and earth" in six days, all must have been created then. This argument is equivocal, for the original Hebrew term for heaven (*shamayim*) is used in different ways and is not all-inclusive. It is

applied to the firmament (Gen. 1:8), the source of rain (Gen. 8:2; Deut. 11:11), the place for the stars (Gen. 1:17; Deut. 10:22), and for birds (Gen. 1:20; Ps. 104:12).

Some scientific data, in addition to the above-mentioned question of light from the stars, can be amassed as evidence of an old age for the matter of both the earth and the universe,<sup>6</sup> but not all of these data are consistent.<sup>7</sup> They are part of the information from nature that might help answer questions and details that the Bible doesn't address directly.



### Spirit of Prophecy Perspectives

Ellen White doesn't specifically discuss the questions of day 4 of Creation week or the age of the matter of the earth. Her numerous related statements have been studied for help in elucidating these questions.

Several of her statements, for instance, indicate that the Sabbath is as old as the world and that the Sabbath was instituted when the foundations of the world were laid down:

"The Sabbath was instituted at Creation, when the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning

stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (*Signs of the Times*, Feb. 28, 1884).

"The Sabbath institution, which originated in Eden, is as old as the world itself" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 336).

These statements could be referring to a world with all its matter being only as old as the Sabbath (model 1 or 2). In other words, nothing of the earth was here before Creation week. On the other hand, "foundations . . . were laid" or "world" could also be referring only to the organized world resulting from Creation week. Before this the earth

was already present, but unformed (undeveloped) and empty (Gen. 1:2).

Ellen White also makes this interesting statement:

"In the work of creation, when the dawn of the first day broke, and the heavens and the earth, by the call of infinite power, came out of darkness; responsive to the rising light, 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy'" (*Signs of the Times*, Jan. 1, 1880).

Here she seems to allude to an earth that "came out of darkness," implying a preexisting earth. This concurs with related biblical statements in Genesis 1:9;

Job 38:9; Ps. 24:2; and 2 Peter 3:5 that seem to show an empty, dark, wet earth present here before Creation week (model 3).

While the question of the age of the matter of the earth seems equivocal, there's no doubt that Ellen White thought that there were other celestial entities before Creation week. She refers to inhabited worlds before Lucifer's rebellion and the creation of the earth after that rebellion. Speaking of Lucifer, she states:

"He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly



beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37).

Another statement also refers to some creative activity before the creation of this world:

"The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants" (*ibid.*, p. 36).

It's clear that Ellen White didn't hold the view that all the universe was created on day 4. Her views fit better with models 2 and 3.

### Faithful Conclusions

The brief Genesis account of beginnings obviously leaves many unanswered questions, and several faithful interpretations are possible. There's no room for being dogmatic here.

The assertion of the creation of light by God on day 1 of Creation week answers the objection of light occurring before the appearance of the sun on day 4. It could also answer the objection of no evening or morning if it was a single light source illuminating a rotating earth. On the other hand, if the sun was already present before Creation week, the light question can be solved according to the scenario proposed for model 3. The problems of Creation week arise mainly from a lack of detailed information.

Model 1 fits well with part of the Creation account (Gen. 1:3-2:3), but it has to answer suggestions (not affirmations) in the Bible of an earth and stars here before Creation week (Gen. 1:1, 2; Job 38:7, 9; Ps. 24:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:5). It also has to answer the objection of light reaching the earth from stars billions of light-years away,

as well as other evidences of an old universe.

Model 2 answers the objection of the time of travel of light from very distant stars. It also fits well with the specific account of Creation week (Gen. 1:3-2:3), but doesn't fit biblical inferences of an earth here before Creation week. Nor does it accommodate those scientific interpretations that suggest an old age for the matter of the earth.

Model 3 proposes that an empty earth and all the rest of the universe were here before Creation week. This

most readily



resolves the question of light, and evening and morning before the sun appears on day 4. Preexisting light and luminaries become visible on days 1 and 4, respectively, by the stepwise lifting of a dense cloud cover. However, this two-stage process (day 1 and day 4) of lifting the cloud cover of the earth appears contrived. In this model the sun and moon are not created on day 4, but only appear on day 4. It fits well with scientific interpretations that suggest an old universe, including the matter of the earth, and also biblical inferences

of an earth here before Creation week. However, it doesn't fit as well with Genesis 1:14-19, which seems to state that the sun and moon were created on the fourth day.

While our information about the past is so limited that we should be cautious about drawing conclusions, our lack of knowledge about some details of Creation week shouldn't detract from the evidence for Creation itself. That evidence is becoming more abundant as science probes deeper into the secrets of a highly complex nature. It's also important to note that none of the three models proposed above challenges the truth of a six-day creation and God's resting on the seventh-day Sabbath. Those important aspects of the Genesis account and the fourth commandment remain intact, regardless of which model is adopted. ■

<sup>1</sup> For more details about the trial, see: R. Ginger, *Six Days or Forever? Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958); L. H. Allen, *Bryan and Darrow at Dayton* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1925, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> For example: J. Skinner, in *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), vol. 1, p. 1; H. J. Van Till, *The Fourth Day* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1986), p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> For further details, see R. E. Hoen, *The Creator and His Workshop* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1951), pp. 17-21.

<sup>4</sup> For example, A. Clarke, *The Holy Bible: Old Testament*, rev. ed. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.), Vol. III (Job to Solomon's song).

<sup>5</sup> For example, S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, in *International Critical Commentary*, vol. 10.

<sup>6</sup> R. H. Brown, "Geo and Cosmic Chronology," *Origins* 8 (1981): 20-45.

<sup>7</sup> A. A. Roth, "Some Questions About Geochronology," *Origins* 13 (1986): 64-85.

Ariel A. Roth, now retired, was senior research scientist for the Geoscience Research Institute of the General Conference when he wrote this article.

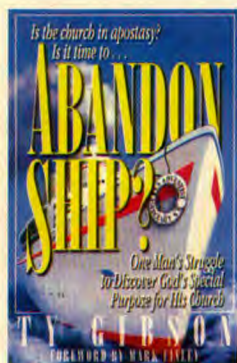




# BOOK

• MARK •

## Abandon Ship?



Melbourne, Australia.

Ty Gibson;  
Pacific Press  
Publishing  
Association,  
Boise, Idaho,  
1997; 124  
pages, paper  
cover,  
US\$8.99,  
Cdn\$12.99.  
Reviewed by  
Eliot Bolst,

Is it time to abandon the church ship? After all, many seem to be living contrary to biblical and church teachings. Depending on which side you are on, some seem to ignore the gospel and major on rules; others sacrifice truth and standards for "new theology." Are schisms breaking up the ship? Is the ship sinking?

Ty Gibson, associate director for "Light Bearers Ministry," in this timely book tells his personal story. He gives an insider's glimpse of some issues posed by the "abandon ship" philosophers.

Gibson had been warned of "hassles from the devil" when he joined the church, but he never thought they would come from people in the church. As he came in contact with dissident voices, his focus, he confesses, "shifted from Christ and His gospel to the church and its problems." Gibson shares his experience, which almost stole from him the privilege of sharing Christ with others. He counsels those who support, or contemplate support-

ing, ministries that exert the adverse influences of division.

Gibson notes that "for the first time in its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is faced with the serious threat of fragmentation . . . a fate that has befallen virtually every other Protestant denomination before us." He candidly talks about his attendance at a gathering of "independent ministry" groups. He relates that some believe that because of "irreparable apostasy" within the church:

the faithful must finish the gospel commission without the organized church;

the independent ministries must collect tithe money so as to prevent its misuse by the denomination;

it's time to organize local churches, conferences, and leadership to guide the worldwide work.

Tracking church history, the author gives possible reasons for the current divisions. He notes that from its inception Adventism had to defend its distinctive teachings and thus succumbed to a legalistic, works-oriented lifestyle, often failing to elevate the significance of Christ's righteousness and plan of redemption.

Gibson gives his arguments biblical

and prophetic support. He directs readers to the words of Ellen White to "err on the side of mercy rather than on the side of condemnation and harsh dealing." He tells us to take time out to listen. The true seeker will hear a voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it . . ." (Isa. 30:21).

## Other titles on the same subject and suggested by the reviewer:

*A Remnant in Crisis*, Jack W. Provonsha, Review and Herald, 1993.

*The Remnant: Biblical Reality or Wishful Thinking*, Clifford Goldstein, Pacific Press, 1994.

*The Apparent Delay: What Role Do We Play in the Timing of Jesus' Return?* Review and Herald, 1994.

*The Fragmenting of Adventism*, William Johnsson, Review and Herald, 1995.

*Adventism in Conflict: Resolving the Issues That Divide Us*, Review and Herald, 1995.



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# Come Together

ALLAN AND DEIRDRE MARTIN

**O**ur church is looking into participating in NET '98. We realize that most of us don't have a clue about how to reach GenXers, yet we don't want to turn them off totally.

Another concern is that our current worship services and programs are not appealing to GenXers. What resources are available to help us make necessary adjustments? Some changes need to take place, and they need to start happening now so we can slowly adjust to them by the time NET '98 comes around. But we don't know where to start.

**Allan's reply:** It's admirable that your congregation wants to prepare to reach prebelieving young adults (Generation Xers, GenXers, Xers). Dwight Nelson's presentations for NET '98 will be exceptional, but you're right to start now, because far more than previous generations, outreach to Xers relies heavily on relationships of depth and integrity. In addition to contacting your local conference NET '98 coordinator, here are my suggestions to help you and your church gear up to reach GenXers:

**Pray.** Not only for the Xers, but for yourself, that God will grant you and your congregation special portions of grace, acceptance, and patience. Pray that God will help you demystify "Generation X" and realize that they—like you—seek the spiritual peace that Christ alone provides. Pray that God will help you empathize with them, look beyond their cynicism, and be with them in the midst of their lostness. Pray that God will bring you and your church to Xers, that He will put you in their midst. Pray that God's love will simply ooze from your pores and shine from your eyes as you are in touch with Xers. Pray that God will transform you and your church from the inside out.

**Renew.** Renewal of the heart is primary. I'm not of the opinion that worship style is as crucial as a change of focus to calling yourself and your congregation to a renewal from within. Xers are not drawn to programs or events as much as they're drawn to people with passion. If you want to make changes in your worship service or program, it's fine to make them. But make them to renew your drive to love God consummately, and love each other with reverent abandon. Revive the sense of community and connectedness in your church. Start personally, and encourage your fellow

believers to join you. As you're being transformed, listen closely to God's prompting. Be willing to change for Him.

**Research.** Read what you can regarding Generation X (I would be happy to send you a bibliography and book recommendations). Spend time with young adults in your church, gleaning from them insights about their own spiritual struggles and the life realities of their prebelieving peers.

Call the Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry (800-785-HCYM), the Center for Creative Ministries (800-272-4664), the Center for Youth Evangelism (800-YOUTH-2-U), the National Black Youth Resource Center (205-726-8426), and the PlusLine (800-SDA-PLUS) to request materials, training, and resources to help you and your

church foster the renewal and outreach orientation you desire.

As you and your congregation peruse resources, remember that these tools are not one-size-fits-all solutions that will magically make your church Xer-friendly. The research simply prepares you further to be God's means to accomplish His purposes.

**Relate realness.** As you interact with prebelieving Xers, build relationships of integrity with them. Being a part of their lives is the primary objective—with or without NET '98. If you're simply thinking about putting on a chameleon "getting-to-know-you" face for the sake of luring them to NET '98 for purposes of proselytizing, you're missing the boat. Being real with an Xer is a far more powerful witness to God's holiness. Your candor and authenticity in your relationship with Xers is key.

And here is where God's patience needs to come in. Conversion is a process, so be ready for God to move the Xer you are in relationship with at His pace. Plan to be in the relationship for the long haul—with or without a signed decision card.

So pray—for the Xer and yourself. Pray and revel in the journey God will unfold before you . . . together.

*Outreach to Xers relies heavily on relationships of depth and integrity.*

Allan and Deirdre Martin are cofounders of dre•am VISION ministries, dedicated to empowering young people in Christian lifestyle and leadership. Allan also serves as the cochair for the NET '98 young adult task group.





# No Easy Answers

*Can an A-plus Adventist Be a C-minus Christian?*

BY JAMES A. DITTES

**I** ONCE CONSIDERED MYSELF TO BE SOMEONE with the "right answers." Throughout academy and college I had been a good student filled with enough right answers to carry a high grade point average and earn a degree. But it wasn't until I became a high school teacher that I discovered that right answers have their limits.

One of the first wrong answers I made in my teaching career came during my first high school job interview. The principal, interviewing me for a vacant English position, looked through my résumé and asked me a startling question.

"I see from your transcript that you took calculus in college," he said. "Would you be willing to teach an algebra class?"

My mind raced back to the precalculus class I had taken my freshman year. I couldn't remember the difference between a tangent and a transverse. But I needed this job. I dreaded the thought of being jobless. I took a deep breath and sighed. "Yes," I finally answered.

Wrong answer. To algebra was added pre-algebra, and to pre-algebra, chemistry, and to chemistry, two classes of sophomore English with a group of students that had chased away three teachers the year before.

I managed to be a convincing algebra teacher for one

semester. By preparing for upcoming assignments and actually doing some of the homework on my own, I stayed a few days ahead of my students. But by spring that two-day head start had dwindled down to a matter of minutes. I was struggling to keep ahead, reviewing lessons with the full-time math teacher to make sure I knew what I was doing. Worst of all, the class was factoring equations—a lesson I had failed in academy.

Finally I decided that I would cloak my flagging algebra skills with enthusiasm. One of the few things I remembered from my lone college math course was how the professor would get excited when he had solved a complicated calculus problem on the board. He had been so enthusiastic that I had, for at least a few moments, decided to major in math.

So I really performed. When I solved an equation on the board, I would step

back and say, "Now, doesn't that just wake you up? Algebra is caffeine for the brain!" At first my students groaned at my theatrics; later some of the more clownish ones would clap after I solved a homework problem. They would stand and politely pat their hands together like sophisticated operagoers.

One day I found that even my enthusiasm wasn't getting

$$y=g(x) = 3x-2$$



$$)=g^{\circ}f:(x,3x^2-2)$$

the lesson across. A student would ask me to solve a problem from the homework assignment. The class would dutifully copy the problem down as I did it on the blackboard. Although they assured me that they understood the problem once I had demonstrated it, they would invariably be unable to factor a similar equation.

I was frustrated. My mathematics ability had failed to teach these students; so had my enthusiasm. As a last resort, I turned to philosophy.

"This isn't doing any good," I said. "All you are doing is copying the answers. You still don't know the way to factor these equations. When I give you the test, you are bound to fail, because the answers aren't always the same for every variable. In algebraic equations  $x$  doesn't always equal 7, and  $y$  doesn't always equal 10."

My students stared blankly back at me, some with guilty looks on their faces.

"It's as Jesus said," I continued. "He said, 'I am the way.' He didn't come to give an answer for every problem; He came to show us the way."

I stopped. I had stepped outside the bounds in a public school classroom. I waited for a reply. After a few silent moments, a group of students in the back stood up and politely clapped their hands.

Fortunately for me—and my high

school's math department—my experience as an algebra teacher is now behind me. And though the lesson I taught that day on factoring equations has probably been for-

gotten by many of my students, the lesson I learned remains: There are no easy answers, but only one way to the Father: through Jesus.

### Jesus: The Way

How often Christians are relegated to the place of a student in the back row, copying down answers and seldom learning how to actually solve a variety of personal and spiritual problems. "Do You want me to write this down?" we ask Christ in our daily walk with Him. "Am I going to be tested on this?"

Often we treat redemption as something that can be studied for, much like an algebra test. Adventists pride themselves on having "the truth" and knowing the answers to many confusing biblical prophecies. We are a denomination set apart by our emphasis on the Sabbath and other Bible teachings ignored, by and large, for centuries after Christ's ministry.

But in our urge to become A-plus Adventists, we face the temptation to become C-minus Christians—Christians who know all the biblical answers to life's questions, but who don't know the way to the Father or how to lead others there.

Christ went to extreme lengths during His teaching to avoid giving answers. Consider the men who asked the simplistic question

"What must I do to be saved?"

To the rich young ruler, He prescribed a way to salvation. "Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven," He said (Luke 18:22, NIV). To the lawyer He said, "Love your neighbor." These weren't easy, universal answers, but, individual avenues to the Father that lead Christians closer still today.

Even Christ's disciples failed to discover the meaning of "the way" until after Christ had gone into heaven. At Pentecost, Peter quoted David, who had said, "You have made known to me the path of life" (Ps. 16:11). From this point on, Peter seldom healed or preached without stressing Jesus Christ, the trailhead of our path to sanctification.

**W**hen Jesus becomes "the way," the test that many feared they would flunk

$$\cos^n ax \, dx = \cos$$

becomes the path that anyone can follow. Christ bursts from the answer sheet to become a personal trail guide who meets us where we are and leads us to the Father. Few Christians can agree on all of the answers; no one disagrees on the ultimate objective: salvation.

Christians start on their paths to salvation at different points along the way. They bring with them—to continue an algebra analogy—many variables, equations that need balancing, problems to be solved. For these Christians, answers aren't enough. Our mission is to help them find the way. ■

*James A. Dittes is a teacher and writer living in Superior, Arizona.*



$$x, (ax=b)^{1/n}] \, dx$$



# Don King: Bringing People Together

**D**on King is the executive secretary and communication director of the Atlantic Union Conference, a territory that includes nearly 80,000 Adventists in New England, New York, and Bermuda. King spoke recently with associate editor Bill Knott at his home in South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

**Knott:** You're an administrator in a very racially and ethnically diverse region of the country. You've got traditional Anglo Adventists here whose stock goes back 150 years; you've got immigrant populations moving into this union who have been in North America only a little while, and who don't communicate in English as a first language. What are you doing to keep those tensions in creative mode rather than in conflict?

**King:** We're trying to bring people together, to bring us all to work together. And to some extent we've succeeded, but we have a long way to go. The transition, the rate of change, is taking place much faster than we're able to keep up with, and the research seems to predict that this trend will increase as time goes on. At our last union session we elected two new vice presidents for the Atlantic Union—one for Hispanic ministries, the other for Franco-Haitian ministries, both of whom represent a very significant number of constituents.

We have churches in our region that are highly diverse in their membership makeup. We all come from different backgrounds, different family trees, and we come to worship with different experiences. Some enjoy raising their hands; others enjoy just sitting quietly and listening. One thing that can help to bring everyone along is to intentionally seek out ways to identify with the various groups—ethnic groups, cultural groups—in each local congregation.

The key word is going to be "intentionality." It will have to be the future of our church—intentionally seeking to touch the traditions that people identify with. Once that's done, I think there'll be a coming together.

**What steps are you and other leaders taking to reassure groups who are feeling frightened or uncomfortable with rapidly changing congregations? What are you saying to your more traditional church members out there?**

I think we need to reassure our members constantly that we are family. When one group comes in and achieves larger numbers, there's always the possibility for another group feel-

ing threatened. I think our job is to cut away little by little at the unknowns, because the unknown is what people fear the most. And if we can be open in communicating with each other and emphasize the family concept, people can begin to feel more comfortable, no matter what the numerical ratios will be.

There's altogether too little training to help people understand and develop skills they need in dealing with other cultures. We aren't born with these skills. We get them through learning and experience. There ought to be many, many more opportunities for seminars and workshops in transcultural and intercultural skills. After all, the world is doing it in the workplace. Why shouldn't we?

**Who leads the way in that for the church?**

Right now, if you announced an intercultural sensitivity training on ACN in an upstate Anglo congregation, we wouldn't guess that a lot of people would show up.

Leadership at the conference, union, and NAD/GC levels has to initiate this. In addition to current workers, leadership can recruit Spirit-filled laypeople—men and women who are already involved in this kind of training for corporate America. Those members can lead training opportunities for all our members.

**There are many voices just now talking about streamlining the structure of the church to facilitate greater mission. Some are talking about adjusting tithe percentages so that more money is available at different levels. Some suggest flattening out the pyramid structure of church organization so that it's more responsive to local congregations. Do you share any of these concerns?**

The local church is the foundation of this whole structure, and it's always going to need resources to fund outreach opportunities. We must ensure that our funds, whatever the percentages agreed to, are used to build up ministries in each congregation. That's really where it's happening, or ought to happen if it isn't. When ministry is happening at the local level, resources will come in because needs are being met.

*Bill Knott is an associate editor for the Adventist Review.*





# Fur and Feather Stewardship

BY LAURIE BARCELOW

Most people express at least an interest in my work as a veterinarian, and sometimes they envy my career. My 7-year-old son, Travis, has a more realistic view. "Mom," he recently told me, "your job is gross. Why did Dad even marry you? I'll never do the work you do or even marry anyone who does what you do." I grant him leeway with this attitude, considering he was watching me do an autopsy on a goat at the time he expressed those feelings.

Even when he assists in the more positive aspects of a veterinarian's daily routine, such as holding newborn puppies after an emergency cesarean section on a Sunday night, Travis isn't impressed with what I do. When questioned about my work, he's likely to say I cut holes in animals (his interpretation of surgery) or I make animals bleed.

Although Travis doesn't always appreciate certain aspects of my work, I do hope I am instilling in him a respect for life and an appreciation for stewardship that involves more than financial obligations.

One of God's first directives to humanity was to name and care for the animals. I believe that directive still stands in today's world. I strive to instill in Travis a healthy respect for the creatures with which we share our world. And even if he never wants to follow in my footsteps, I still want him to feel a responsibility to the creatures who are dependent on us for their well-being and survival.

I can't help thinking that if a child grows up respecting and caring for animal life, those lessons will translate into appropriate respect and caring for human life. Surely those men I see in my office who can cry over the loss of their cats, dogs, or even iguanas are not men who go home and abuse their family members. In a world full of abuse and violence, it comforts me to see people who can express sorrow at the loss of a pet.

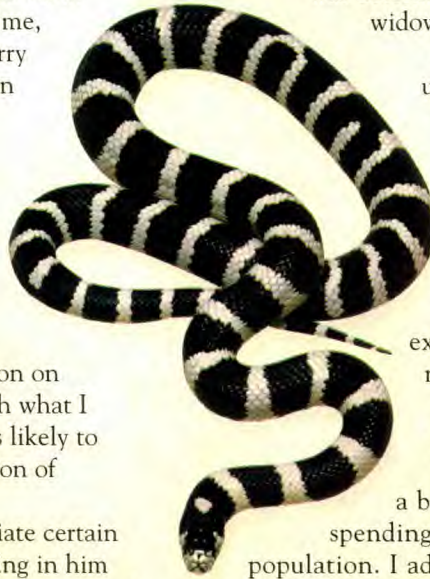
Although it's not always been an easy lesson for me to learn, I can now accept that Travis and others may not appreciate and love animals as I do. As a child growing up in the deserts of Idaho, where I found snakes, scorpions, and spiders irresistible, I learned my first lessons in others'

intolerance of my pets. My father found me collecting beautiful black spiders with red spots on their abdomen; he became worried, and consulted an entomologist. When it was determined that these arachnids were black widows, an exterminator was promptly called.

Fortunately, not all my encounters with unusual pets ended this disastrously, and sometimes I was even able to use my sisters' passionate dislike for my snake and arachnid companions to my benefit! But as I came to accept that most friends and relatives did not want my assortment of creatures as close inhabitants, I did not change my expectation that people at least show respect and consideration for these creatures and acknowledge that they have a role in our environment.

I've also learned that there needs to be a balance between spending on pets and spending to alleviate suffering in our own human population. I admire a client who, when faced with the option of a \$2,000 surgery for her beloved dog, replied that she couldn't justify spending thousands of dollars on her dog when she was currently working in a homeless shelter that was in desperate need of funds to ameliorate human suffering. (Her dog eventually did improve on medication and strict rest—which seemed to me miraculous.)

Animals are an important part of our world, and through them God teaches us some meaningful lessons. No, I don't expect everyone to have a pet tarantula, but animals are a way through which God speaks to us. The respect we have for animals may testify to a friend or neighbor the respect we have for the Creator. ■



*Laurie Barcelow is a veterinarian who writes from Bethel, Vermont.*



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