



ADVENTIST Review

June 18, 1998

Cutting Edge

Back Home

*Why David and Marian Lewis
said goodbye to Atlantic Starr
and Oil of Olay*

Chris Blake: Another Clothes Call

The Christian in an Age of Talk Shows

LETTERS

Adventist Higher Education

I loved Ginger Ketting's "A College



Professor Shares Her Heart," in the April 16 Cutting Edge Edition. I have attended an Adventist college for three of the past four years, and during that time I have visited with students from almost every Adventist college or university in North America.

It's amazing to see the discrepancy between college students' opinion of their professors and outsiders' opinions of these same teachers. My professors do such a wonderful job of relating to Gen Xers and are unrecognized for it. The Adventist professors at our schools come closer to consistently accepting students for who they are than does any other branch of the church. It can't be a coincidence that the ones who relate best to our generation are the ones who spend the most time with us.

—Adam Andreassen

SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST
UNIVERSITY

Ginger Ketting's "A College Professor Shares Her Heart" inspired and encouraged me. The anonymous sidebar ("When a Teacher Lets You Down") and accompanying editorial notes let me down lower than I had been lifted.

Having left a generous industry salary and retirement to teach electrical engineering, I am now happily part of the lowest-paid engineering faculty in North America. The happy part is that our students gather here to learn engineering together with Adventist Christian principles. I did not come here either to quietly observe or to contribute to a decline of Christian standards. Why have the editors of the *Review* thrown me into a barre?

about the newly established Women's Resource Center at La Sierra University (see "Kit Watts: What's She Doing Now?" Apr. 16 Cutting Edge Conversations). Some projects reported as fact are actually still in process—including a resource library, worship materials, and liturgies designed for women. Since this is a donation-based ministry and I'm a half-time director, it will take time to turn plans into reality.

Ella and I ran out of time and space to explore it, but my work at the Southeastern California Conference is also a cutting-edge experience! For example, SECC has:

- One of the first and largest education and endowment funds to provide a new source of income to church schools.

- A project to enhance the skills and spiritual leadership of pastors ministering to baby boomers.

- A successful Generation X congregation in Escondido that is poised to become a training center for others.

- More than a dozen women pastors, who make up 10 percent of our pastoral workers.

- Tremendous ethnic diversity in our congregations, represented in administration.

- A newly appointed assistant to the president for women pastors, Halcyon Wilson.

—Kit Watts

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Don't Forget . . .

The deadline for our Fresh Voices contest is approaching. If you're an Adventist age 35 or younger, we welcome your essay (1,700 words or fewer) about one of the church's 27 fundamental beliefs—what it's all about, what it means to you personally, and how it's made a difference in your life or the life of someone you know.

We'll award three prizes—a grand prize of \$700 and two runner-up prizes of \$500 each. (Other articles accepted will merit an honorarium according to our regular rates.)

Send your essay (on paper and on a three-and-a-half-inch disk, if possible) by July 31 to AnchorPoints Contest, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. (Call 301-680-6560 for details.)

apples in which we must surely expect a few to be rotten?

Stories that name neither the accused nor the accusers bring all of us under suspicion.

—Carlton Cross

WALLA WALLA COLLEGE
COLLEGE PLACE, WASHINGTON

More From Kit Watts

I enjoyed talking to Ella Rydzewski

Mixed Message

I have some mixed feelings about recommending a book that has erroneous information as to our beliefs (see Lyndon K. McDowell's review of Patrick Glynn's *God: The Evidence. The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World*, Apr. 16). We should not be offering a mixed message as did the people of old.

—Bob Roe

VIA E-MAIL

Home School/Church School

I read with interest Deirdre Martin's response to the letter in the April 16 X-Change ("One Size Does Not Fit All") regarding home-schooled children and their denied request to put information about their activities in the local church school paper.

Apparently there is much confusion about the role of the church school in the home-school arena. Some home-school parents expect the church school to provide them with textbooks; others want their children included in field trips and other school-sponsored activities, such as gymnastics or music classes. The basic idea among many home-school parents is that the church school should provide all these services to children who attend the church. That is an incorrect assumption.

Children whose families pay tuition to the church school are afforded the privilege of field trips, quality textbooks, and specialty teachers for music or gymnastics. The school newsletter is in this same category. The church school should not be obligated to provide services to students who do not pay for them.

A better answer might have been to see if the church newsletter would include information about the home-school group or suggest that the home-school groups get together and produce their own newsletter.

—Maureen Wisener

NATIONAL CITY, CALIFORNIA

What Would Jesus Do?

Chris Blake's "Beyond WWJD" (*Leaving the Comfort Zone*, Apr. 16) struck me as contrived, cutesy, and unreasonably critical, and I think it would be very offensive to our evangelical brothers and sisters in Christ as well as to many Adventists.

While I may be wrong, I think that most Adventists and virtually all evangelical Christians believe ardently that the highest calling we have is to try to "do what Jesus would do." Would Blake take issue with Thomas à Kempis, who long ago wrote the classic *Imitation of Christ*?

WWJD in no way precludes our individuality. When I sing that moving little chorus "To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus," I am not thinking about cloning Him in the literal sense of wearing long hair and no wristwatch, but about living by the principles that governed His life. For Blake to infer that WWJD is "Christian rhetoric filled with shallow optimism and easy piety" fills me with righteous indignation. Taken seriously, the WWJD slogan can form the bedrock of a Christ-centered life full of realistic optimism. Because He was victorious over sin, I too, in Christ, can conquer sin.

—Warren S. Ashworth, PROFESSOR
ADVENTIST STUDIES AND MISSION
PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE

During our family worship tonight we found Chris Blake guilty of mocking the stuff of our life. His penalty is to wear a WWJD baseball cap and watch all 10 of the Veggie Tales videos back-to-back while playing Script-tionary and sucking on a Testament!

—Ron, Jo Ann, Kristy, and
Kelly Vozar

FREDERICKTOWN, OHIO

ADVENTIST Review

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They traded in their glamorous lifestyle for the applause of heaven.

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Courting Trouble

Can "taking it to court" be reconciled with "turning the other cheek"?

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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Praise
God!



The Christian in an Age of Talk Shows

Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.—Colossians 4:6, Message.

When it comes to speech, this is a graceless age. Polite conversation, once the hallmark of culture, has yielded to that modern barbarism, the talk show.

"Everywhere we turn, there is evidence that, in public discourse, we prize contentiousness and aggression more than cooperation and conciliation," wrote Deborah Tannen, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, in a recent *Washington Post* article.¹ Her new book, *The Argument Culture*, is published by Random House.

Tannen describes a meeting with another guest as she was about to go on a television talk show. This man, who wore a shirt and tie and a floor-length skirt, had red hair down to his waist. He told Tannen, "When I get out there, I'm going to attack you. But don't take it personally. That's why they invite me on, so that's what I'm going to do."

And that's what he did. When the show began, Tannen hardly finished a couple sentences before the man threw out his hands in a gesture of anger and began to shriek out accusations against her and all women. Then Tannen watched in amazement as the studio audience erupted in vicious attacks on the other women guests.

This is the media age, and the media thrives on confrontation. The goal isn't to share perspectives in a common search for truth, but rather to best your opponents in debate, even if it means interrupting or outshouting them.

Notes Tannen: "Headlines blare about the Star Wars, the Mommy Wars, the Baby Wars, the Mammography Wars; everything is posed in terms of battles and duels, winners and losers, conflicts and disputes. Biographies have metamorphosed into demonographies whose authors don't just portray their subjects warts and all, but set out to dig up as much dirt as possible, as if the story of a person's life is contained in the warts, only the warts, and nothing but the warts."

Inevitably, the spirit of the age impacts the church. You would be shocked at mail that occasionally comes across my

desk. A few weeks ago, for instance, I received a letter that consisted of a page torn out of the *Review* with words scrawled across it, including an obscenity in large letters. And the writer signed himself a "sixth-generation Adventist"!

I have attended Sabbath school classes whose stated purpose is "to have a good discussion"—regardless of whether or not the dialog deals with the lesson or leaves members spiritually uplifted. Now, I love a good discussion and encourage it, but discussion isn't an end in itself. Jesus alone and His glory must be our goal in all we do, or we fall into a worldly mode of operation.

And, of course, we easily slip into harshness and criticism, faultfinding and gossip. As a people who profess God's name in these last days, may He give us words that heal instead of wound, that build up instead of tear down, that encourage and inspire—grace words. May our speech be like Jesus', seasoned with salt.

Jesus' searching test—"I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your

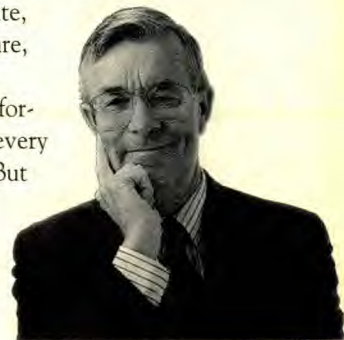
words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:36, 37)—seems severe. But the fact is that our words show who we really are: they reveal that the grace of a loving God has touched and changed our hearts and lips, or else, like Peter sitting by the fire while Jesus faced His accusers, that we have not yet yielded to the gracious Pattern.

Those same lips, those lying lips, spoke truth a few months later. Along with John, Peter boldly proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah and only Saviour of the world. His words amazed the religious leaders of Jerusalem, but then they recalled that he had been with Jesus (see Acts 4:5-13).

After Pentecost, notes Ellen White, "the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language."² That's an ideal for every Christian in this age of talk shows. But grace words come only, as they did for the disciples, as a gift of grace.

¹ "For Argument's Sake," *Washington Post*, Mar. 15, 1998.

² *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40.



Our Church Paper

ANDY NASH

Recently I was talking with a close friend's mom, herself a close friend, about my recurring dream for the *Adventist Review*—that it might fully review Adventists: printing the struggles along with the successes, the bad news¹ along with the good. “By reading the bad news,” I urged, “we’ll better appreciate the good news.”

“No, Andy,” she said, “you’ll lose your readership.” She then explained how her own parents don’t want bad news in “their” *Review*. “They know there’s pain and problems in the church,” she said, “but they don’t want to be reminded of it every week.”

More recently I got a letter from an Adventist author taking issue with my commentary (“Serious Bible Study, Anyone? Anyone? Mar. NAD Edition) on the books Adventists are buying. He didn’t question the commentary’s truthfulness—our tendency to gobble up end-time discourse, while new Bible study aids sit unsold—but its appropriateness. “What good,” he wrote, “are we going to achieve by telling . . . church members that they are basically no good?” He then directed me toward Philippians 4:8, asking, “If the Bible tells us to think about noble and praiseworthy things, shouldn’t these also be the same things we write about?”

I value both of these comments—first, because they were brought directly to me; second, because they underline the varying tastes and needs of Adventist readers.

Many Adventists fall in the “good news only” category. The *Review*, they believe, should be strictly an uplifting magazine, an anchor amid the storm. The reader should come away thrilled, even proud, to be a Seventh-day Adventist—“What a church!” Certainly most Adventist media subscribe to this view. “Publications Just Keep Mentioning Seventh-day Adventists,” proclaims the April 6 *Monday Fax*, a newssheet from the North American Division. The short piece tells of Adventists being lauded in *Vegetarian Times* and *Family Motor Coaching*. “Yes, our church name was misspelled . . .” it concludes. “But let’s take all the credit we can.”

Fair enough. It’s fine to report Adventists getting positive press. But are we as quick to report negative press? (Lately, there’s been a good chunk.) It is such one-sidedness that

frustrates another category of readers—the ones who want the “noble” and “praiseworthy,” but the “true” and “right” as well. It isn’t that they don’t enjoy good news; they do. They’re glad that 20,000 people were baptized last year, but they also want to know whether they’re still around *this* year—and if not, why not? To this group, one of the most

positive things the church can do is to share negative news about itself. It signals a desire to learn from mistakes—to grow.

One church paper; two different philosophies. The first emphasizes *Adventist*; the second emphasizes *Review*. Each is biblical. Which should reign?

We must somehow make room for both—and we aim to in each of our editions, especially our Cutting Edge Edition.

But we aren’t quite there.

Since one of my tasks² is to work closely with the Cutting Edge Edition, I invite you: Help get us there.

Conferences, colleges—all news suppliers: Keep reporting your organization’s highlights, but don’t shrink from also reporting the lowlights—the setbacks, the challenges. Your credibility will *soar*. I think of the pastor who, in a mass invitation to area young adults, described his church as a “struggling congregation.” That’s *exactly* the kind of church many young adults want to join—a church that recognizes its condition.

Individual Adventists: Do you have a story of spiritual growth or struggle to tell? a current issue to address? a lifestyle question to explore? an opinion, devotional, interview, feature, or news item to share? Share it. (When possible, share sidebars, photos, and graphics along with it.) Just one request: *Be real*. Don’t skip over the rough spots. Don’t sugarcoat your conclusion.

Send submissions (on both hard copy and disk) to Cutting Edge Edition, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

May your words be both true and noble.

¹ “Bad news,” of course, is a subjective label.

² My other tasks include opening unmarked packages and fielding calls from the far right and far left.



GIVE & TAKE

ADVENTIST QUOTES

"When you mind your own business, you'll have fewer decisions to make."

—Floyd Hilliard, Oroville, California

"I found my bike—except there was a big kid on it!"

—a 9-year-old boy during a Friday evening testimony time at the Celebration Center, Colton, California. (The previous week he had asked for everyone to pray that he would find his bike.)

"I'm almost done with the first draft of my article on drama. It uses a new, creative way of quoting Ellen White. Instead of whole sentences, I only quote one word or phrase at a time. For instance, a line from the text might read: 'On many occasions Mrs. White commented, 'I like' 'drama.' 'I think that Adventists' 'should embrace' 'it [drama].' 'People who don't like' 'drama' 'should be' 'disciplined.''"

—Rick Mann, Altamonte Springs, Florida, in a tongue-in-cheek query letter to the *Review*

HERALD'S TRUMPET

Hi, kids! Herald the *Review* angel is back, and Herald's trumpet is once again hidden somewhere in this magazine.

In our last contest (in the May 14 World Edition) we did something crazy—we let *grown-ups* participate too! The prize for our three winners (whose postcards were chosen randomly) was our famous *Review* cap (pictured below).

Who were the winners? Aletha Gerst, from North Platte, Nebraska; Chester Holbrook, from Beulah, Michigan; and Shirley Kleugard, from Hubertus, Wisconsin.

Where was the trumpet? On page 6.

This time the kids are taking the contest back. So if you're a kid, and if you can find Herald's trumpet somewhere in the magazine, send a postcard to Herald's Trumpet at the Give & Take address below telling us *where* you found it. The prize—a perfect prize for summer—is *Robby*, the true story of friendship between a robin and his human family, by Velma Craven Meyer. Have fun!



HATS OFF TO ADVENTIST YOUTH

Remember church school trips to the local nursing home? Some students continue the visits long after they're required.

A ninth grader at Adventist Christian Academy in Bloomington, Indiana, Shannon McArtor has visited members of two local nursing homes every month since September 1996. Shannon also visits shut-in members once a month, participates in the Dress-a-Doll campaign



SMOOTH MOVE: Shannon helps make clothes for the Dress-a-Doll campaign, in which dolls are given to underprivileged children during the holidays.



(see photo), walks for healthier babies in the March of Dimes Walk/America, leads out in her youth Sabbath school class, and much, much more. "We really appreciate the nice things Shannon does," says church member Carrie Bonnette.

So do we, Shannon. Look for your *Review* cap in the mail!

WE NEED YOU

Send Give & Take submissions to . . . Give & Take, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74532.2564@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.



Always ♦ ♦ ♦ and Forever

Former superstars
David and Marian
Lewis are tired, broke,
and without steady
work. They've never
been happier.

BY ANDY NASH

IN THE SUMMER OF 1988, STILL RIDING the wave of their number one hit "Always," the pop group Atlantic Starr was searching for a new female vocalist to replace Barbara Weathers, who had gotten a solo deal.

Hearing of the need, Manhattan-based high fashion model and singer Marian Jones phoned Atlantic Starr's Westchester, New York, studio, just 30 minutes away.

Lead singer/songwriter David Lewis took the call. He told Marian to mail her photo and tape to his manager in California. Unimpressed with the runaround, Marian pursed her Olay lips.

"Hey, look," she said, "you need to see me."

Marian offered to take the train to Westchester. No need, said David. He would drive his red 635 BMW to Manhattan.

The glamour couple cruised around the city listening to Marian's audition tape. David liked her soft Vanessa Williams-like sound and expressed interest in producing her songs (he later would). But, he said, Atlantic Starr was looking for a Whitney Houston type.

Still cruising, the mood less pressured, David and Marian found their talk turning to common experiences: life under the lights, family members with diabetes, and most stunning of all, a shared childhood in the Seventh-day Adventist Church—a church each of them had left behind.

Little did David Lewis and Marian Jones know that this Manhattan meeting would someday lead to their joining hands in marriage—and rejoining the church of their youth . . .

ANDY: You both grew up in the Adventist Church. Then you both left. Why are you back?

DAVID: Well, quite frankly, I came out of a trance. As far back as I can remember I wanted to be an entertainer. From the time I saw the Beatles invade America in the sixties I wanted what I now realize is worship. Girls screaming, pulling their hair out, fainting—the whole bit. I knew this was something I would one day pursue.

However, once I got in to the business, I realized what it was all about. It's like looking at the New York skyline. From the outside it looks beautiful—all the bright lights and skyscrapers. Only when you get in it do you see how dirty and dark it really is.

My spiritual roots were being pulled out—one compromise after another. There was very little I wouldn't do for money and success. I realized that this show business wasn't the wonderful thing that I saw on the screen. You might be the number one artist in the business today, but you are so afraid of not being there tomorrow that you can't even enjoy the moment. After years of compromise, anxiety, and stress,



IN THIS TOGETHER: After quitting their careers in 1995, the Lewis family lived off their savings until 1998, when they began touring schools and churches. "As our savings dwindled, I was panicking," says Marian. "But once it was all gone, a peace came over me. We live month-to-month now." Here David and Marian pose with their three children, Milan, Adrian, and Wanda. David also has a 9-year-old son, Brandon, from a previous relationship.

I said to myself, "This just isn't it. I still feel very empty."

ANDY: You say that you were feeling empty. Are you feeling fulfilled again?

DAVID: Oh, yes, I am. Although our lifestyle has changed tremendously, I have such a peace knowing that God is in my wife, in my kids, in my household, and that life for us will never end. For some people this life is all that they have. That's why they say, "You only live once. You better do it all now." I know that this life is just a pilgrimage for me. The real glory starts when I see Jesus.

ANDY: When you were with Atlantic Starr, were you still connected with God and with the Adventist Church?

DAVID: Yes. I sent 10 percent of my earnings back, and when I was in town, I went to church. So yes, I looked at myself as being a Seventh-day Adventist or a Christian. But I didn't realize that being a Christian was not just assisting God with material things, but allowing Him to use

you as a vessel in which He could dwell to save His children.

I thought that being a part of a Christian denomination made me a Christian. But I wasn't serving Jesus, so I wasn't a Christian at all. I wasn't anything.

ANDY: Marian, why did you come back?

MARIAN: It's really interesting. Like David, I always thought I was a Christian. I thought believing in God and asking forgiveness of my sins and going to church whenever possible made me a Christian.

I was in the fashion industry for many years as a print, runway, and commercial model, and there is a very dark side to those self-serving and self-glorifying industries. You're blinded by ambition, and you don't even see how dark it really is—the unhealthy environments, the constant competition, agents making sexual advances, women with women, men with men, drugs and alcohol, and much more. These were some of the things my parents weren't aware of when they

allowed me to become a model. I've done things that I'm not at all proud of—things my parents will never know.

David and I used to have these talks. Once he opened an *Elle* magazine, and a well-known model was wearing a totally sheer blouse. He asked if I would wear something like this. And I said, "No way—I wouldn't wear that sheer blouse." Then he asked, "What if Giorgio Armani asked you to wear a sheer blouse in one of his fashion shows?" And I couldn't say no. I mean, this is Giorgio Armani—the biggest designer in the world. I said, "Well, I don't know. I would have to think about that." And David said, "Don't you realize what you're doing—the pictures that you take, the pictures in your portfolio, the things you wear on the runway? They entice men." And I said, "What are you talking about? It's just fashion."

I used to justify everything I did because to me it was all part of my job. I had taken pictures in lingerie, swimwear, short tight skirts, low-cut blouses. Never once did I wonder how my Saviour would feel or how I must have made men sin in their minds. I just thought of it as a job. What brought me back was some of the talks that David and I had. They sharpened my conscience.



FOCUS: David and Marian pray before their program at Oakwood College this past March. Their 90-minute presentation includes a video documenting their journey, testimony, question-and-answer, and of course, music. Photo by Shawn Wray.

ANDY: He gave you a man's perspective.

MARIAN: Yes, he did. I would say, "Only women read magazines like *Elle*, *Cosmo*, *Bazaar*." He would say, "Those are the same exact magazines on the table in our recording studio, and let me tell you—we are not looking at the fashion."

As a child I had ethics. I had morals. But in the industry you slowly lose those things. They are chipped away. By beholding, you become changed.

ANDY: Is it possible for someone to be in these careers and still be a wholehearted Christian?

DAVID: In my opinion, no. You can't serve two masters. First of all, the motivation for going into these industries is to serve self, not Christ. What you have to realize is that the person with a 9:00 to 5:00 job doesn't have the same influence on the masses that those in the entertainment business have. When I was out there making records and performing on stage and in videos, someone's son or daughter was watching and listening. They were taking in every action, every word. No matter what I thought, I was affecting people I didn't even know. We who are in the business of entertainment—be it movies, sports, fashion, or music—are role models, whether we like it or not. Unless one's influence is Christian

totally and completely, we're sending out mixed messages.

Christ went into the ghettos and all of these different places, but He didn't condone or conform. He was a light in a dark place. He said, "I'm on this one mission—to seek and save—and that's it."

MARIAN: Also, David talks about being morally correct in pop music. Yes, he used to sing morally correct songs—sweet love songs—but he was singing these songs and those songs weren't bringing people to the cross.

DAVID: Songs like "Always" and "Masterpiece"—these songs were very clean and beautiful, but many of the people who loved these songs were not believers in the Son of God. God gave me this talent for a specific purpose, but I was not allowing that purpose to be fulfilled in my life. It would be like God ordaining a pastor to preach the gospel, but instead of doing that, the pastor is out doing motivational speeches. Now, motivational speeches in and of themselves—that's not a sin. But I was singing morally correct songs when God was saying, "Son, I gave you the voice to bring people straight to Me."

ANDY: Do you still sing songs like "Always"?

DAVID: Yes; in fact, some friends are having a family reunion, and their anniversary is going to fall around that time, so we are going to sing that song for them. Let me make something very clear: "Always" was a wedding song—a song about nature, family, commitment. All of these things are completely in harmony with the principles of



JUST ANOTHER GIG: In one of her last modeling jobs—which included Bob Mackey, Liz Claiborne, Valentino, and Oil of Olay—Marian poses for *Bride* magazine in early 1993. That August Marian put on a wedding gown for real.

God. These are things that He instituted. So the song was not evil. But for me to sing *just* those kinds of songs and never mention the name of Jesus—that would be an outright sin. You see what I'm saying? But if I sing about Jesus, I'm always safe. Always.

ANDY: David, earlier you mentioned a desire to be worshiped. Both of you were worshiped. But even in your Christian concerts now, you still have people lining up afterward to shake your hand and visit with you. Is there still a temptation to cater to that desire to be worshiped?

DAVID: In your flesh, yes! You have to say "Not I, but Christ." You always have to do that, because there's something in your makeup that still wants to take some of the glory.

ANDY: Marian, was it a hard transition to leave a career in which thousands of eyes are waiting to watch you? Was it hard to take off your jewelry, as you've done?

MARIAN: Yes, initially those things were difficult for me. I loved the world. And I loved nice things in the world.



EMOTIONAL MOMENT: Marian breaks down at her and David's baptism on April 29, 1995. Marian had been baptized into the Adventist Church at age 12. Though David also grew up Adventist, he had never been baptized.

And when David took off his wedding ring shortly after we got married, I was hurt, I was offended. I asked him, "How could you do that? These rings signify a bond between us." And David replied, "Honey, the true thing that binds us is Christ." And I said, "Well, I'm going to hold on to mine because I love my ring—I don't worship my ring." But the more I studied, the more I read, the more I realized that I didn't need adornment, because Christ has made me so full. He's filled my life so much that I



CELEBRITIES: David (second from left) and his two brothers, Jonathan (left of David) and Wayne (right of David), who made up Atlantic Starr, lock arms with Stevie Wonder in 1987. "My brothers and I had this dream to become famous," says David. "But as soon as we became famous, things started to change. Things that I could talk over with my brothers personally now had to be done through agents and lawyers. I was thinking, *Man, this isn't good.*" Wayne and Jonathan are still with the pop group.

don't need anything but Him.

I had diamonds and golden jewels—beautiful jewelry, expensive jewelry. My wedding ring is very expensive—we are still *paying* for that wedding ring. But when I let those things go, it was a relief, because I had come to a point where I realized that Christ was everything.

DAVID: A lot of times when we put on adornment—diamond rings and stuff—it's to make ourselves feel like we've arrived. I used to have a ring that I put on every day. And if I forgot to put it on and I was on the highway

driving, I would get off at the next exit, turn around, and go home and put my ring on. But once God came into my life, I forgot to put on the rings and chains, and it wasn't even a conscious thought. It was like "I don't need it."

ANDY: Marian, a lot of young Adventists—both men and women—are wearing jewelry. To many of them jewelry has become something of a moot issue.

MARIAN: The church has begun to compromise. One girl will wear a very small stud in her ear, and another girl will look and say, "Well, these little hoops shouldn't make a difference." And another will say, "Well, let me put two holes in my ears." And before you know it, so many people are doing it that it becomes the norm. Why can't we be the example? Why can't we set the standard? Don't we realize the advantage we have over those who don't know Jesus?

ANDY: What stops you from wearing jewelry?

MARIAN: I don't need these things to validate me—to validate who I

am. Christ validates who I am.

DAVID: It sets you apart. It gives people a chance to ask "Why?"

ANDY: Your music. How would you classify it?

DAVID: We do a mix of hymns and contemporary gospel. Our music is similar to the sound of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. We like their slower songs, like "I Am Not Ashamed," "Praise You"—songs that are Christ-centered and that have a sense of pure heart appreciation and reverence. And we do hymns in a more updated style.

ANDY: Put them in your own language?

DAVID: Yes, exactly. But we don't want the gospel/jazz, gospel/ rhythm and blues type of sound. We want to keep it beautiful. We want the message to be clear musically as well as lyrically.

MARIAN: We don't want the beat or anything else to distract from the message.

ANDY: So you don't have a beat in your music.

DAVID: We do use drums, but they're very subtle—almost to the point that you might not even realize they're there.

ANDY: How do you feel about what's happening in the contemporary Christian music industry?

DAVID: I'm very concerned that if we're not careful, the *business* of gospel music will take over. They call it the music business, but it's the business of music. The *business* boils down to numbers. We have to realize that as gospel artists we are really missionaries. We are not out here to be gospel icons—to be at the top of the charts and to sell the most records. We are here to bring souls into the kingdom of God. Everybody is so excited that gospel music is now becoming this lucrative industry, and we're catching up to the secular. But we're using the secular industry as a pattern for what we are doing. We have to be peculiar. We're not with a record company right now, because they wanted a secular sound with spiritual lyrics.

ANDY: What's a secular sound?

DAVID: For example, there's a contemporary Christian song called "Stomp." The music for this song was taken from a rhythm-and-blues hit called "One Nation Under a Groove," by George Clinton, who used to be a producer for a group called Parliament Funkadelic. Clinton contended that his music was an "unholy sound." To mix this music with a gospel message really concerns me, because this was a song that we used to bump and grind to in the clubs.

ANDY: Is a song's message in the words or in the music?

DAVID: Both. Some people say, "At first the beat attracts us, and then the beat goes away. Then we hear the message." But I don't believe that. Let's be honest—would God want something as important as His good news to be drowned out by the music?

MARIAN: At one academy one of the students said, "I hear the beat first, but then I hear the message, and the beat goes away." We took a vote, and a few students said, "Yeah, that's true," but the majority said, "No way. You never get away from the beat." It does make you want to move, you know?

ANDY: Are there some instruments that should not be used in worship?

DAVID: No, the instrument itself has no power to do anything. It's the mind. Once I touch that instrument, it's my influence that will make the difference. For instance, I could listen to somebody play "The Old Rugged Cross" on a guitar so pretty that I'll get tears in my eyes. Then they could turn around and use that instrument to convey something completely dark. It's the spirit within me that makes it good or evil.

ANDY: Do you have plans to come out with a CD?

DAVID: Yes, we're just now putting materials together. Right now we have a tape called "Coming Home," which has six songs and a couple stories. We want to do an album consisting of hymns and original material. We hope to release something by the end of the summer, if possible.

ANDY: You've been spending a lot of time with Adventist young people. What are you finding? What do they need most?



ADVICE: David (left) counsels another Adventist vocalist in January at the world church headquarters. Since leaving Atlantic Starr, David has rejected lucrative offers to return to pop music. "There's always going to be somebody trying to redirect your vision," says David, who acknowledges the difficult road independent Christian artists have to travel.

Photo by Andy Nash.

DAVID: Constant encouragement. They need to know that God is an unconditional, loving daddy, and that you don't have to clean up your act to come to Him. He'll do the cleaning.

Too often we're showing them a standard that isn't real. They look at us sometimes and say, "I can't attain that. I can't be that. So if I can't live up to the expectations of my parents and my leadership, then I know God can't accept me, because they are God's representatives."

Young people want to see something real. They don't want to hear a sermon; they want to see one. The pictures are not going with the message, and they're saying, "Well, if the church isn't doing anything for you and you've been an Adventist for 30 years, Dad and Mom, then what will it really do for me?"

ANDY: An observation. You both look very happy.

DAVID: We were just talking about that—

MARIAN: That's funny that you would say that.

DAVID: Well, we are just so happy that God allowed us to come together

in such a way where we as a family, as a couple, don't have the stresses that other husbands and wives have. If we do have a problem, we know where to go now. We get down on our knees and we pray.

ANDY: How do you feel when you wake up in the morning today compared to 10 years ago?

DAVID: I look forward to living now. I look forward to seeing another day—whereas when I was in the business, my stress was my alarm clock. And I was very fearful of my position and my status. But now I have so much to look forward to.

The hope just keeps me

going—the hope that one day I will really start living. This is just a pilgrimage now. Paul says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God hath prepared for them that love him" [1 Cor. 2:9]. I'm waiting for that.

MARIAN: When I lived in Manhattan I used to come home, lock my door, and rarely go out again. Now when I wake up in the morning, the first thing I do is say, "Thank You, Lord, for giving me another day." I look forward to waking up and seeing my husband and babies and knowing that God is good. It's just like "What are we going to do today, Lord?"

Want to Book 'Em?

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Andy Nash is an Adventist Review assistant editor.



Another Clothes Call

CHRIS BLAKE

"And why worry about your clothes? Look at the field lilies! They don't worry about theirs" (Matt. 6:28, TLB).

Recently my son Geoffrey embarked on a quest to find suitable clothes for Spirit Week—five days of sartorial high jinks at his academy. The next day would be Old Day, the idea being to simulate older persons by wearing ancient clothes, spectacles, glued-on wrinkles, powder in the hair, *ad extremum*. Geoff marched straight to my closet.

"Whoa!" he exclaimed, as though he'd finally found the father lode. "Any of this will work!"

Very funny. Or so it appeared to Geoff and to Yolanda, my wife and former friend. They held up shirts, ties, jackets, and pants, and cackled like young hens. Then Geoff tried on some of my clothes. I had to admit, he did look older. By about 80 years. He stuck his arms through a jacket that Walter Matthau wouldn't wear. Seeing him doubled over with convulsions of laughter made me think that maybe I should shop for clothes before the decade ends.

Around my house I'm a legend in long-ago. I'm the paragon of passé. A model of outmoded apparel. The fashion plate of fogydom. If Leonardo DiCaprio is the prototype of style, I'm the antitype. When they made my style, they didn't have to break the mold—I'm still wearing it.

Basically, I don't pay attention to styles. My theory is that they'll all come back anyway. And when they do, then I'll change. My haircut is the same as it's been since college, when I gave up on "the bush." I carry flip-up sunglasses in our car. My sweatshirts show bold evidence of events such as "BIG TOP '90" and "Remember the Maine!"

I'm not alone. In the Humanities Division here at Union College the male professors, mostly English and history types, generally dress according to one fashion era: primeval. We flowed into the retro look without even trying. Our wardrobe maxim is "If a robe was good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me."

When a male colleague gets some new "gear," he gains notoriety.

"What happened to the Nehru jacket?"

"Could I have your bell-bottoms now?"

Some months ago my friends and colleagues in the



Humanities Department, George Gibson and Karl-Heinz Schroeder, bought some new work shoes for the office—athletic shoes they wear with a shirt and tie. This is "ensembling" for us. To accessorize, we carry a briefcase.

Yet I've cut a few stylistic swaths in my day. I wore Chuck Taylor All-Star Converse tennis shoes in the sixties. Untied. I wore a hat through college, and my jeans sported holes at the knees. I owned blue shoes that I painted myself. "Mom, trust me," I wish I'd said. "Someday these will be in vogue."

Truthfully, I think I have pretty good taste in clothes, but if I could shop for 24 hours straight and do all the shopping I'd need for the rest of my life, I'd do it. I loathe meandering in the mall; I detest playing pawn to Parisian designers and Madison Avenue mavens.¹ Really, I'm not against modern fashions. I just don't care. My sense of self is not tied to my clothes, and I try not to humiliate my wife's sense of self. As for my sons, how can I trust the wisdom of people who wear "shorts" that extend below their knees?

Though it's tempting, I do not see myself as more spiritually advanced simply because I'm stylistically clueless. Adventists don't do God any favors by appearing en masse at a potluck of polyester. Ellen White, who possessed the spiritual gift of uncommon sense, writes of extremes in dress. "There is a medium position in these things. Oh, that we all might wisely find that position and keep it."²

In the end I consider Jesus' field lilies as well-dressed partly because they do not bend all the way to faddish breezes. Contemporary is *temporary* at its root. I prefer to call my style "enduring classic."

God's angels may wear Airwalks. They certainly have wing tips.

¹ Though one could appropriately ask how much Paris plays into the handling of Levis.

² *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 425.

Chris Blake dresses himself in Lincoln, Nebraska. He teaches English, too, at Union College.



FIRM STANDING.....

How young adults cope when their parents leave the church

BY ANDRA ARMSTRONG

YOU'RE THE REASON YOUR PARENTS ARE still in the church," a well-meaning yet naive church member told me one Sabbath morning.

I flashed a puzzled grin and turned away, wondering how someone could be so insensitive. "I'm only 15 years old," I wanted to yell. "I can't make my parents do anything, much less go to church. It's not my responsibility!"

He assumed what only God and my parents knew, and I was insulted. Who made him an authority on my family life? He had never spent time with my family or me.

I wondered if other people at my church assumed the same. I felt ashamed, embarrassed, and suspicious every time someone asked about my parents. Did they really care, or did they just want the latest scoop? Lying to everyone, as well as to myself, I would put on a brave smile and say, "Everything is fine." But it wasn't. Within a year my parents were separated, and Dad stopped attending church.

I was shocked. Dad was my spiritual leader. As a church elder and lay minister he taught Sabbath school, lived the health message, cohosted a local Adventist radio program, and was involved in prison ministries. As a teenager I was supposed to rebel, not Dad. He was supposed to worry about me. Instead, I found my concerns focused on him.

When Dad left the church, I too thought about leaving. But I stayed because the spiritual lessons my parents taught me as a child outweighed Dad's actions when I was a teenager. I was living proof of the verse: "Teach a child in the way [he or she] should go, and when [he or she] is old, [he or she] will not turn from it" (Prov. 22:6, NIV).

I can't say that I continued to attend church only because

of a deep spiritual burden. Visiting with friends at church was a part of my academy social life. But by attending church, even sometimes for the wrong reasons, I discovered what really counts—getting to know God and feeling Him in my life.

Now I attend church because I have made a conscious decision to do so, and I've found I'm not alone. Increasingly young Adventists are witnessing their parents' exodus from the church. But many stand firm in Jesus even when their parents do not.

Tom: "Our Family Worshipers Were a Joke"

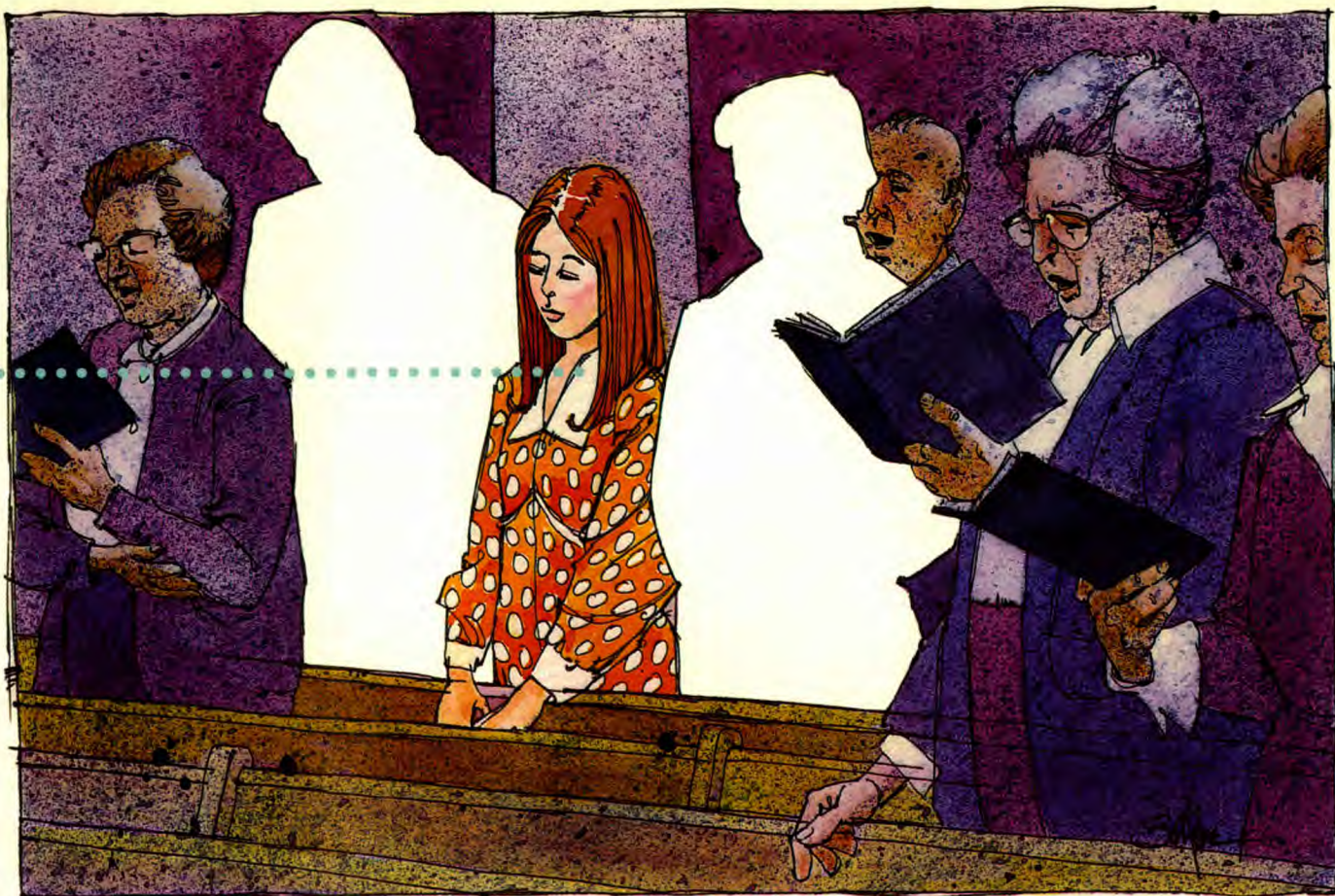
Tom,* a theology major at a Seventh-day Adventist university, says he remembers feeling confused when his dad stopped attending church four years ago.

"I wanted to know what was going on in Dad's head," Tom says. "Our family worshipers were a joke because Dad didn't take them seriously, even though Mom wanted this time to be special."

At first Tom wasn't worried when his dad started slipping away. "It was a gradual process," he says. "We really weren't alarmed when he started skipping church, but we did keep inviting him to attend church with us."

The situation deteriorated when the family moved to another state after Tom's dad faced a political struggle at the Adventist college where he taught.

"Dad was next in line to become chair of his department, but his colleagues were against his taking the position," Tom says. "When he started teaching at a public university, he realized that non-Adventists are nice too—even more so,



Dad said, than the Adventists he had worked with before."

That's when Tom's dad completely stopped attending church.

"I didn't know my dad anymore," says Tom. "I thought he rationalized a lot. He started questioning Ellen White's credibility, and I started to believe him."

Tom says his personal time with God saved him. "I decided it was better to stay with the church, even with its flaws," he says. "There's a support group there that you don't have in the world."

Tom believes accepting young people in his situation is vital to nurturing their spiritual growth. In fact, he says an "accepting attitude" by Adventists might also draw his dad back to church.

Ali: "I Was So Confused"

Ali, a blue-eyed public high school sophomore, says she was deeply pained by watching her dad leave the church. Like Tom, she was troubled by her dad's gradual transformation from

church leader to barhopper.

"I was so confused," she says. "One minute Dad was a big part of the church; the next minute he wanted nothing to do with God, the church, or anything in between."

Ali's dad left the church when she was 11, meaning she had to grow up faster than most Adventist preteens, and her spiritual maturity level then was well beyond her years.

"I had to decide what was best for me," Ali says. "Having a close relationship with God was what I wanted, and most of all, what I needed [during that time in life]."

Ali attends public school now because her dad doesn't want to send her to a Seventh-day Adventist academy. But Ali misses the encouragement of her Christian teachers and friends. "When I attended a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school, my principal was very encouraging and was always there for me when I needed to talk," she says. "Fortunately, the youth leader and several

adults at the church I now attend have also made a big impact on my life."

Ali stresses that it is important for the church family to support young Adventists in their spiritual walk. "They need to know that the spiritual path they take is their choice," she says.

Leslie: "My Parents Were Burned Out"

Leslie, a student at a Seventh-day Adventist university, says she was disappointed when both her parents left the church. "I was a senior in high school before I really realized they had left," she says. "I was very stressed out about the whole ordeal."

But before they left, Leslie says, she knew something had to change because her parents were discouraged with the church. "My parents were burned out," Leslie says. "They were extremely involved in everything [at the church], and people started taking advantage of them."

When her parents left, Leslie went through a period of role reversal. "This

Helping Them Stand Firm

BY ANDRA ARMSTRONG

What can you do to help young Adventists whose parents are missing members?

Remember us. Include us in church activities, offices, and responsibilities.

Send us a birthday card. Show us that we're still an important part of the church, even if our parents are no longer involved.

Be supportive but not pushy. "I had tons of people asking me what was going on with my family, wanting to know if they could do anything to help," Leslie says. "I wanted to tell them to stay out. The more people pushed their way in to help, the more frustrated I became. The best thing they can do is pray."

Listen. Listening shows us you care and want to understand. Now is not the time to lecture or give unwelcome advice. "One of the best ways to give support is to listen and show sympathy," Tom says. "Sometimes people make comments when they aren't appropriate."

Allow room for spiritual growth. If there was ever a time when we needed support, not criticism, it is now. "I didn't grow a lot spiritually until my dad left the church," Ali says. "Before Dad left, he was my spiritual base. When he left, I had to decide which spiritual path to take, and [it was important] to know I made the decision."

situation was totally new to me," she says. "My parents were always the ones trying to drag me to church, but now I was trying to get them to go."

As with Tom and Ali, Leslie also felt confused. "I had to really think about my commitment to Christ, and I still do," Leslie says. "There were times when I wanted to give up, but I'm glad I never did."

Leslie says she is strong now because of her spiritual "support group" at the summer camp where she worked. "I was able to see God working through my life and [that of] others," she says.

"Whenever I struggle, I remember my summer camp experience and am encouraged. God became very real to me through those summers."

Leslie says she stayed with the church because of her "strong attachment to God." "I'd like to say my relationship with Him is perfect, but sometimes I feel like I am on the wildest roller-coaster ride," she says. "I'm fortunate to have good friends who are committed to Christ, and they've been a good influence on me."

The Need for Community

"And it's that same caring community that many departing parents haven't found," says Randy Harr, youth pastor at the Collegedale, Tennessee,

Seventh-day Adventist Church. "If they haven't experienced God, they have no reason to stay with the church unless they have a community," he says. "Because these parents are finished raising their children, they're out of the parenting crowd, but aren't quite ready for the retirement crowd, either. Sometimes their kids continue going to church because they have a community, especially if they're in academy."

The job of the church community, says Harr, is to help people—young and old—connect with God. "If they experience God," he says, "they will never leave [Him or the church]."

Going away to college helped untangle my spiritual life from my parents.' Instead of focusing on what I saw as Dad's missing spiritual life, I concentrated on loving him, no matter what, and building my own life with God. I hope that I will show Dad through my life that church is more than ceremony and mingling; it's about finding an eternal friend—God.

Now I'm not embarrassed when people ask about Dad. At times I'm even comfortable enough to share what I've been through with people in similar situations, hoping they too will gain strength. More important, I love and accept Daddy no matter what. After all, isn't that what God does? ■

* Names of those interviewed have been changed.

Andra Armstrong is a senior journalism major at Southern Adventist University.

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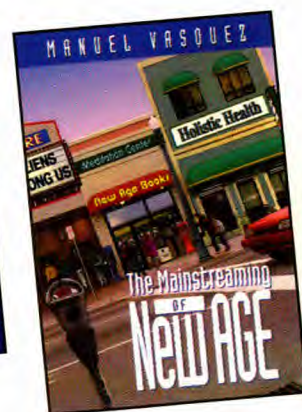
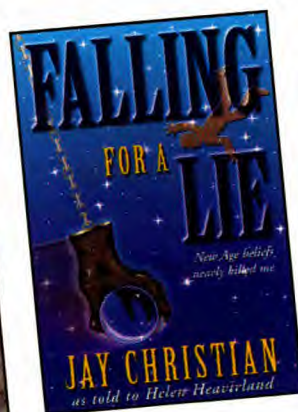
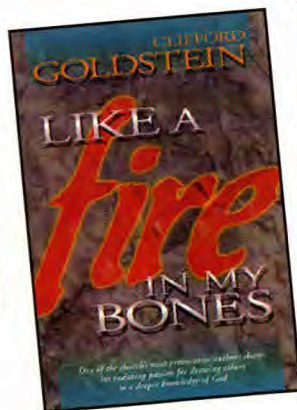
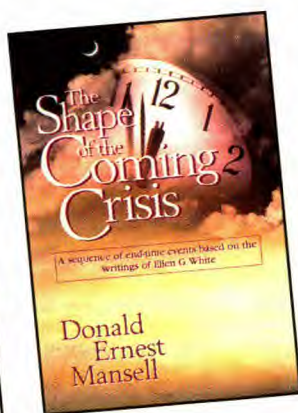
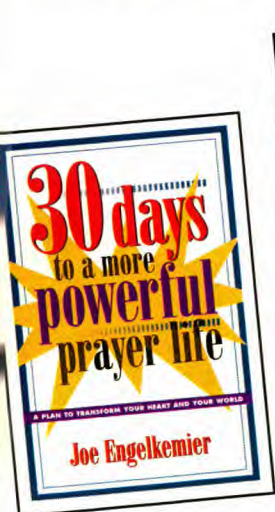
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Burned Out on Being Good

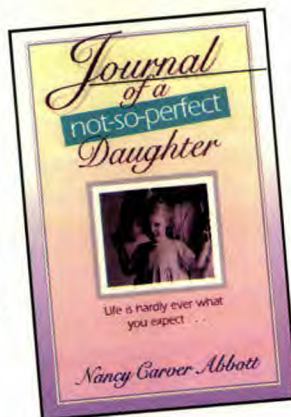
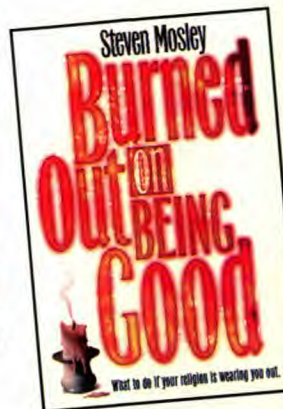
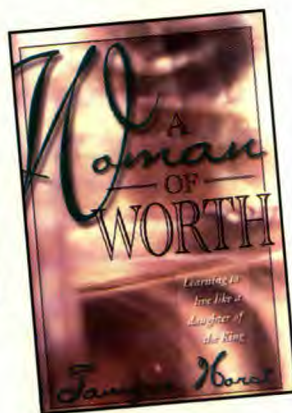
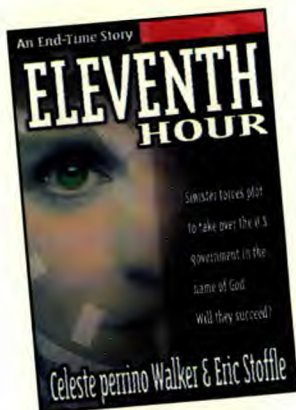
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Corrine Vanderwerff

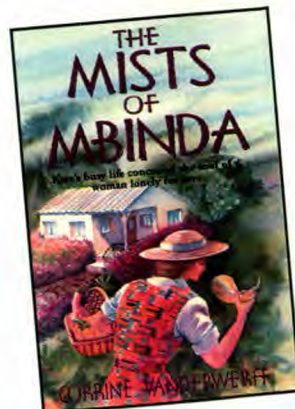
In this unconventional love story, set in an exotic mission location, the author paints a powerful and revealing picture of the personal struggles and triumphs of a woman who has dedicated herself to share God. It will take you to a place where God is doing a mighty work through His people even when they aren't perfect. 0-8163-1404-7. Paper. US\$11.99, Cdn\$17.49.



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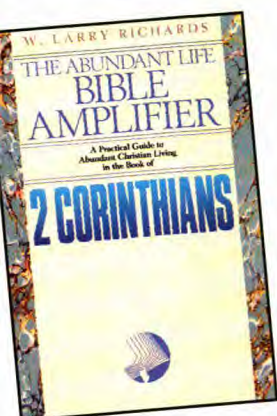


2 Corinthians—Bible

Amplifier

W. Larry Richards

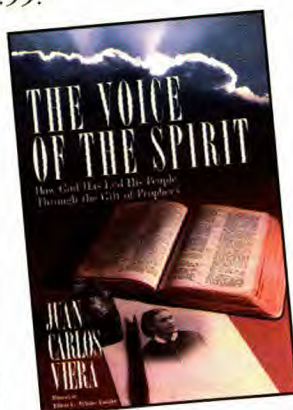
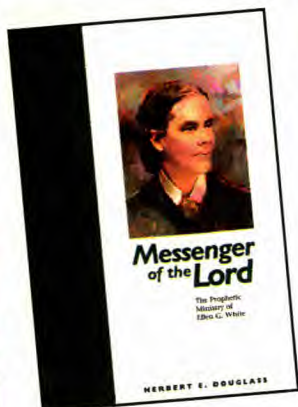
This book is being released just in time to study with the book of 2 Corinthians in the third quarter of 1998 Sabbath School Bible Study Guide. It will be a valuable addition to any Bible student's library. 0-8163-1652-X. Paper. Special price: US\$7.97, Cdn\$11.47.



A Call to Ministry

Ivan Blazen

Sabbath School Bible Lesson Guide companion book for third quarter 1998. Sense Paul's commitment toward his mission, his view of the Cross, and his excitement for the most challenging venture confronting the Christian—how to have a valid and vibrant personal ministry. 0-8163-1581-7. Paper. US\$8.99, Cdn\$12.99.



Ellen G. White Notes

Spirit of Prophecy comments, some not readily available, arranged for daily study with the Sabbath School Bible Study Guide. Four issues. US\$11.50 per year or US\$4.50 single issue. Outside US—US\$14.50 per year or US\$4.50 single issue.

Messenger of the Lord

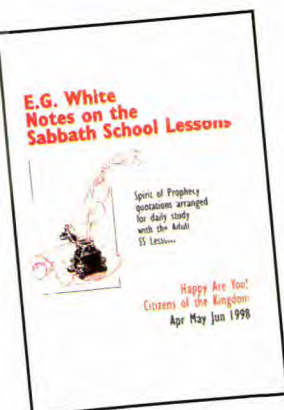
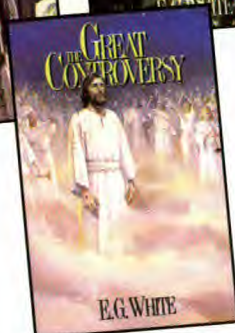
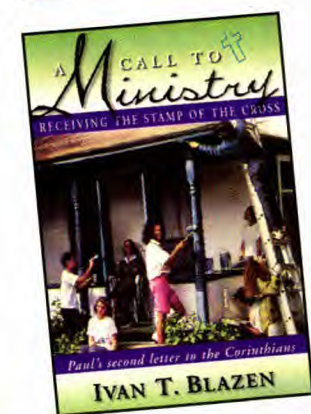
Herbert E. Douglass

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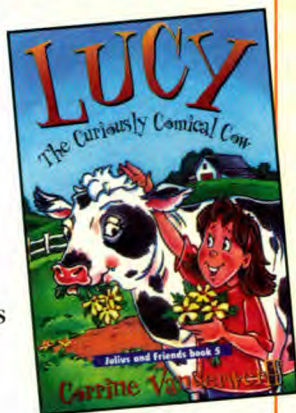
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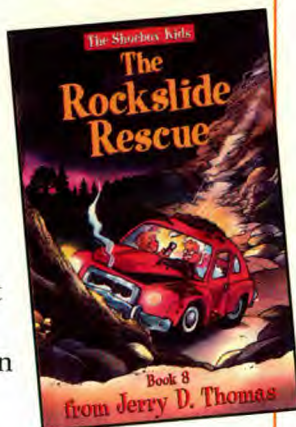
In this story DeeDee and Jenny explore DeeDee's grandma's big, old, spooky house! As they explore, things keep disappearing, including the family treasure. Is there a secret passage in the house, and what is happening to the things that keep disappearing? Teaches about the power of the Bible. 0-8163-1386-5. Paper. US\$5.99, Cdn\$8.49.



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BOOK

• MARK •

The Bible Code

Michael Drosnin, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1997. Reviewed by Ed Christian, Ph.D., assistant professor of English and Bible, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

The Old Testament has a secret code, discoverable with the help of a computer! So claims the author of *The Bible Code*.

By adjusting the number of letters in each line of text and treating the result as a giant word search puzzle, the author believes that the Bible reveals the future—the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin; Saddam Hussein's 1991 attack on Israel.

We can also look forward to a great earthquake in 2000 or 2006, the earth being annihilated by a comet in 2012 (a later verse says it's a false alarm), a great terror desolating the world in 2113, and an averted atomic holocaust near the end of the world.

Where did this code originate? Exodus 32:16 says, "The writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets" (NIV). Hidden in that verse (revealed by the code) is the phrase "it was made by computer."

Many Christian bookstores carry *The Bible Code* and similar books. I even heard an Adventist pastor preach on *The Bible Code* as a revelation from God for the last days.

The Bible Code uses several tricks. The author takes Hebrew without vowels, then adds vowels at whim to yield words. He attaches modern meanings to old Hebrew words to get words like *missile*, or he invents spellings (Clinton is spelled qlyntwn).

Hebrew word roots usually have three consonants, so when they read from any direction and vowels are added, many possibilities emerge (the consonants dg can yield *dog*, *dig*, *dug*, *Doug*, *Dag*, *doge*, *adage*, and *adagio* in only one direction). The computer adjusts the line length until the most difficult word (usually a name) can be found vertically; then the author finds related words horizontally (as words are normally read). It's no surprise that the word *war* turns up in a code when the related Scripture text uses the word several times.

The Bible Code uses Hebrew letters similar to our s, z, sh, and ts interchangeably, and w and y as either


consonants or vowels. The vowel-like letters *aleph* and *'ayin* are either used as vowels or ignored. Hebrew uses letters for numbers, so dates are easy to discover. Modern Hebrew dates don't usually name the millennium. Thus 1994 in *The Bible Code* could be 2994 or 994. If you apply these tricks to any page of English, there's a good chance that something "prophetic" will appear.

Christians don't need a code to tell them what will come. We have a more sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19). If we are faced with some new revelation, God tells us how to test it—to the law and to the testimony (Isa. 8:19-22). Let's not be deceived (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

More information—pro and con—is available on the Internet: <http://www.altavista.digital.com>, use Bible Code as the search field name, or write to Ed Christian, Department of English, Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA 19530.

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700 Adventist Teens Take a Community Plunge in Florida

BY CINDY KURTZHALS, FLORIDA CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

Seven hundred Florida Adventist high school students from Tampa, Jacksonville, Orlando, Saint Petersburg, Ocala, Miami, Avon Park, Lake City, High Springs, and across the state planted 211 trees in Orlando recently as part of Green Up Orlando, the Curry Ford Road landscape project. They partnered with the City of Orlando, Orange County, a number of area businesses, neighborhood organizations, and churches.

The tree planting was one part of the youths' Community Plunge, a series of one-day service projects conducted as part of the annual "Do Something" Youth Congress, held at Forest Lake Academy in Forest City March 12-14. Teams of students also painted two Orlando houses, did a trash pickup in downtown Orlando, visited a battered women's shelter, presented a puppet program at a home for abused children, and took Spirit Vans into the community to help others.

At the project kickoff Green Up

Orlando coordinator John Sorenson told that he'd gotten a call from Patty Hoder, saying, "We need a *really big* project." Hoder was part of the conference youth/young adult ministries department planning team. Sorenson immediately stopped the 5,000 volunteer-solicitation letters his office was ready to mail out for the 14 side streets project and scheduled the Adventist youth. "It was almost providential that it worked out this way," he said.

"You're in a servant-leadership role," Orlando city commissioner Don Ammerman told the Adventist youth, Cub Scouts, and city and county officials. "You're giving sacrificially to the community. You leave a gift to this community that would be impossible to do any other way."

"When budgets are tight and we pool together, even more takes place," said Orange County commissioner Clarence Hoenstine. "Boundary lines become invisible, and you meet the needs of people. You give them a level of service they deserve, and residents have community pride."

This is the first partnership for a landscape project between the city of Orlando's *Green Up* program and Orange County's *Orange Escape* program. "In a recent visual preference survey, eight of every 10 residents we asked—that's 80 percent—said they wanted to add more landscaping," said Mayor Glenda Hood, who also expressed great appreciation for community support. "I know I'm going to enjoy these trees as I drive to work now."

Several businesses, including Worthington Foods, Melita Bread,



HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE: Adventist youth planted 211 trees in Orlando, Florida.

Veda Farms, and Florida Hospital, donated food to feed the volunteers.

"It touched me greatly that the program was run by students," said Selena Cebuella, cohost for Youth Congress '98. "When adults do things, it doesn't have the same effect. We know how to reach our own peers. On the news you hear about 13-year-olds killing. [While we were planting trees] and looking at the faces of people as they drove by, they were smiling at us. It was good for them to see young people do something positive."

Why were the kids doing it? "We want to help people who need help, and we're trying to do our best," said Natasha Henry, a student at Horace Mann Middle School and member of the Eden French church in Miami.

Laces Wade, a student at Forest Lake Academy and a member of Press Memorial church, echoed the sentiment of every student interviewed when she said, "I want to make the world a better place."



PAINT-UP FIX-UP: The youth also painted a church and residential home.

AWR Purchases Station Site in Italy

BY ANDREA STEELE, ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

A long eight-year process has led Adventist World Radio to purchase 133 acres (54 hectares) of land in the small northeastern Italian town of Argenta, land that AWR president Don Jacobsen says will become the site of the church's newest short-wave radio station.

Church members donated \$4 million toward the station's construction in the 1990 General Conference session offering. AWR applied for a license to broad-

cast, but Italian law did not allow shortwave stations. However, Italy passed legislation at AWR's request, making the station a possibility.



ON THE DOTTED LINE: AWR president Don Jacobsen completes the purchase.

The proposed station will broadcast to North and West Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia, reaching 2 billion people. "We have looked forward so long to this day," says Jacobsen. "The authorities reviewed our plans and considered our applications for permits. Now we can proceed with building

plans and orders for equipment."

"The land is very flat," says project director Brook Powers, "and the water content makes it perfect for shortwave propagation."

Jacobsen said AWR plans to break ground later in 1998. "With the Lord's blessings, we plan to flip the switch to begin broadcasts from this station at the time of the General Conference session in Toronto in July 2000."

Angelo Orsucci, representing Ente Patrimoniale UICCA—the legal association of the Adventist Church in Italy—joined Jacobsen and members of the Bergamini and Bovolenta families, the owners of the property, for the signing of the purchase agreement.

"AWR owes a great debt to the Euro-Africa Division and the Italian Union of Churches for their support in this long process," Jacobsen says. "We are also grateful for the support of church members around the world."

NEWS BREAK

Riots in Indonesia Rally Churches to Aid Victims

While the country was in political turmoil recently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Indonesia organized itself to donate food to the needy and was among those "trying to help calm the situation," says Jonathan Wagiran, communication director for the West Indonesia Union Mission.

Wagiran reported that Adventists joined in a day of fasting and special prayer with the Forum Bakti Kasih Kristiani (United Christian Leaders in Indonesia) and that the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA/Indonesia) also joined the club of Peduli Sesama (Concerned Others) to collect funds and distribute aid to the poor areas in the city.

Some church members reported that their homes and businesses were demolished as looters and protesters ransacked the city of Jakarta.

"Many homes of church members were destroyed," says Wagiran. "They have lost their jobs because businesses have closed down. We are greatly concerned about our Chinese members, who appeared to be among the targets of the riots." The Chinese population, a small minority in the country, dominates commerce in Indonesia.

Trouble started when the government increased food

and gasoline prices. This caused great upheaval in a country that was already suffering from high inflation and unemployment.

"Our churches will be open on Saturdays, and we will have worship together," said Wagiran during the height of the crisis, "but those who fear for their lives should probably stay home and worship there." Our churches not the object of the riots, but some of our members were. Church leaders confirmed that no Adventist student or member was involved in any of the protests. In the city of Jakarta there are 10,000 Seventh-day Adventist Church members, 50 churches, and 12 schools.—*Adventist News Network*.

President, Governor Visit Alabama ACS Center

During his tour of the April tornado damage in several Southern states, United States president Bill Clinton and Alabama governor Fob James visited the Adventist Community Service's (ACS) relief center serving Pratt City.

President Clinton and Governor James both expressed their deep appreciation for the contribution the Adventist Church made to help tornado victims, says Verdie Culpepper, a disaster relief consultant for the North American Division and Arkansas-Louisiana Conference ACS director.

What's Mine Is Mine!

BY GARY SWANSON, EDITOR, COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

Pennsylvania State University sociologist Barry Ruback recently offered the following interesting insights into our human nature:

It takes an average of 27 seconds for a car to vacate a parking space if no one is waiting; if someone is waiting, it takes 31 seconds.

The average call from a public telephone is 82 seconds if no one is waiting to use the phone; if someone is waiting, it takes four minutes.

Surprised? Probably not. Who hasn't suspected as much?

But what exactly is going on here? One explanation offered by sociologists is that this unwillingness to give up possession of something is a manifestation of our territorial instincts that go back millions of years. They say it reflects a time in our evolution when such behavior was necessary

for survival: "This cave is mine. Go find your own!"

When you think about it, however, it doesn't seem all that necessary to trace basic human selfishness back to cave dwellers. The fact is, humankind is just plain ornery. You see it every day in the me-first and what's-mine-is-mine attitudes that we display to one another.

Humorist Garrison Keillor said it characteristically well in a monologue delivered at Carnegie Hall: "We're just

plain rotten!"

The Bible says as much too: "The heart is . . . desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9).

But the Bible also offers the only solution to such all-too-human behavior: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved" (verse 14).

So next time you're using a public phone, cut it short. God will be only too happy to help you do it!

NEWS COMMENTARY

NEWS BREAK

ACS volunteers helped 1,000 persons during the first day of operations.

New Adventist Publishing House Serves Koreans

Three hundred persons witnessed the dedication of the new Korean Adventist Press (KAP) building in Los Angeles, California.

Operating under the auspices of the Southern California Conference since 1980, KAP publishes and distributes Korean language books and journals, such as *Signs of the Times* and *NAD Church Compass*, to the 110 Korean Adventist congregations



across North America.

The cost of the new building and renovations was \$600,000, but press officials announced that the facility opened debt-free. KAP will provide a vital push to

Korean evangelism in North America, officials say.

There are approximately 1 million Koreans in the United States, and half of them reside in Los Angeles.

Adventist Health System Expands in Louisiana

Officials at Adventist Health System (AHS) recently completed an agreement with General Health System of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to take full management for the 556-bed health system.

The system includes Baton Rouge General Medical Center, inner-city tertiary medical center, and Baton Rouge General Health Center, as well as long-term care facilities. "Although this is the first time that AHS has been involved in this type of arrangement, we are excited about the possibilities," says Sandra Johnson, AHS vice president for business development.

Washington Teacher Garners Tandy Award

The Tandy Corporation recently awarded Tom Lee, a science teacher at Columbia Adventist Academy in Battle Ground, Washington, a Tandy prize for outstanding teaching through its national technology scholars' program. Lee is on the list of Tandy's top 100 teachers in North America, which recently appeared in *Time* magazine.

Religion in the News

Buddhist Leaders Alarmed Over Christian Inroads

Buddhist leaders from 15 Asian nations, meeting in Kyoto, Japan, expressed concern over the inroads that Christian missionaries have made among followers of the 1,500-year-old tradition.

The leaders—among them the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled religious and political leader—called for concerted efforts to increase interest in Buddhism among youth in traditionally Buddhist nations, the Associated Press reported.

Malaysian Buddhist priest K. Sri Dammananda Maha Thera said, "Buddhism is on the decline in South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan. Every day we are losing our youth to Christianity." There are about 300 million Buddhists worldwide.—*Religion News Service*.

Jews Fear Anti-Semitism More Than Inter-marriage

A new survey of American Jews shows them to be more worried about anti-Semitism than intermarriage.

The American Jewish Committee survey found that 57 percent of those surveyed believe anti-Semitism is a greater threat to Jews than intermarriage. Thirty-eight percent said intermarriage is the greater threat.—*Religion News Service*.

For Your Good Health

Lower Internal Pressure

Potassium is proving to be a key dietary factor in lowering high blood pressure. A new study measuring the effects of various minerals on hypertension found average blood pressure changes were significant with potassium, but not with magnesium or calcium. Eating more bananas, oranges, and green leafy vegetables can help lower high blood pressure or help prevent it from increasing in the first place.—*American Heart Association*.

Calorie Double Take

While more than 50 percent of consumers check food labels for fat, only 10 percent look at calories. That may explain increasing levels of obesity even as people eat less fat. Many low-fat foods have as many calories as their full-fat equivalents. A check of supermarket shelves showed one brand's regular and reduced-fat peanut butters both having 190 calories; and country-style and low-fat frozen potato steak fries both with 110 calories. Don't assume that less fat means fewer calories.—*Tufts Health and Nutrition Letter*.

—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.

NEWS BREAK

Nearly 17,000 public and private high schools are certified to participate in the awards program, Tandy officials say. Administered by Texas Christian University, the Tandy program also honors 29,249 meritorious high school seniors.

NET '98 to Offer Closed Captioning

Like most prime-time television programs, the upcoming NET '98 satellite evangelistic series that begins October 9 will offer closed captioning for the hearing-impaired.

Churches wishing to provide closed captioning need a 25-inch or larger television connected to the satellite source, says John Blake, a special representative of the Adventist Deaf Ministry Committee of North America.

The service is free to viewers. For details on how to connect for closed captioning, call Adventist Deaf Ministries at (403) 782-4255 or the Adventist Communication Network at (800) ACN-1119, option 4.

What's Upcoming

July	4	Vacation Witnessing emphasis
July	18	Home Study International Day
Aug.	1	Global Mission Evangelism Day
Sept.	5	Lay Evangelism Day
Sept.	12	Adventist Review promotion
Sept.	19	Family Togetherness Day

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Watch the Music

What I learned from the back of a first-grade class

BY SARAH E. COLEMAN

WITHIN SECONDS THEY'D discovered the hand chimes.

As I, an observer, watched, the seven students streamed in from recess.

"What are we doing now?" David asked just before tripping over his perpetually untied shoelace.

"Making music," Mrs. Grieb told the gangly first grader as she lifted him from the floor where he'd fallen.

"Music?" His eyes lit on the neatly arranged instruments before him. "Look, guys!"

Robert emerged from the bathroom and tromped to the table. "Wow, *fun!*" He lifted a chime over his head and swung it down within inches of the table. *Bong!*

Martine reached for the smallest chime at the end of the row. "Mine's prettier!" she claimed, waving it in front of her like a magic wand. *Ping-ping-ping!* Pleased with the delicate noise, Martine plopped into her chair and began a staccato of pings steady enough to mesmerize a monk.

"Wait a minute!" Mrs. Grieb yelled through a megaphone of rolled-up music. "Look at the sheet of paper in front of you. These are the notes you all will follow. We've got to play *together* before we go on tour."

Her profundity went unnoticed as the children laughed, traded chimes, and competed for the noisiest instrument.

"Listen!" Mrs. Grieb thundered, rising from her green chair and sending it skidding into the chalkboard. "We're going to make some music. Are you ready?" She raised her hands like a conductor for the New York Philharmonic.

Heads nodded and ringing chimes stilled into silence.

"Watch your music," she cautioned again, then counted

the beat: "One, two, three, four . . ."

With a disorganized clang the students' exercise commenced. From my vantage point behind them, I watched Mrs. Grieb's face contort into various expressions of surprise as anything but unity ascended from those chimes.

"Stop, stop, stop!" she finally bellowed. "We'll try number 1 again, only this time I want you all to *watch your music.*"

Several obedient children bent their heads to the notes, and the beat slowly emerged. Martine gleefully swung her chime in perfect precision with the rhythm, sending ear-splitting pings bouncing off the walls.

The Culprit

One chime, however, consistently rang a few milliseconds behind the rest. Like Mrs. Grieb, I strained my ears to catch the culprit.

"That was cool!" Robert giggled at the song's conclusion, "accidentally" hitting Micah on the head with his chime. "Can we do another one?"

"Of course!" Mrs. Grieb replied, smoothing her shirt and lifting her imaginary baton. "Watch that music!"

One, two, three, four . . . Heads bobbed and toes tapped with the faltering beat. Sometimes it lagged, and sometimes it rushed, but never did the lone chime find that elusive cadence. Like an almost-forgotten compliment after a formal dinner, it followed each note awkwardly.

Suddenly I spotted the culprit.

David hunched forward in his chair, his back rounded into a turtle curve of concentration. His music lay rumpled beneath his elbows, and his long sneakered feet kept sporadic

time on the dirt-blue carpet. Even the dust puffs that he raised *poofed* out of cadence.

"One, two, three, four!" Mrs. Grieb blasted the beat in his direction, hopping in vain to right the problem. Even David's sunburned nose strained as he brought his chime down again and again . . . inevitably just missing the beat. His deep-green eyes darted from student to student in search of a bobbing head to keep time with. Like a cat following a swinging string, he tried to mimic the rhythmic rise and fall of Mrs. Grieb's hands.

During song after song that struggling musician tried to find the jive of the music. I grinned at Mrs. Grieb from behind David's sweating neck, knowing music class would be a year long challenge.

I Was Just Like That Boy

Witnessing David's plight made me realize that I haven't changed much since first grade.

True, I don't get recess anymore. True, I've learned to catch myself when I trip over a shoelace . . . usually. And true, I can tap a decent beat with my foot. But I still haven't found the kind of unity David searched for during that firsthand chimes rehearsal.

At age 11 I officially joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now, well-meaning adults assured me, I officially belonged to the body of Christ.

The *what*?

We're all members, they explained, of His wonderful body. We work together to accomplish Christ's mission. Just as the body works together to digest food, smell flowers, or pump blood, we work together to save souls, rescue lives, and praise God.

We *do*?

You're a part of that awesome mission, they congratulated me with tears in their eyes. Now that you've affirmed

your loyalty to the church, you can accomplish the blessed work with us!

I *can*?

Just read your Bible and pray every day.

My mind teeming with new phrases and lofty ideals, I trotted expectantly off

more I knew I'd never belong. Like David, I strained to catch the beat by following others' lead.

I never found it.

Singing bands and hall worships echoed woodenly against the corridors of my heart. After moving prayer groups, my sore knees lasted longer than my spiritual high. And Communion services inspired inward yawns instead of tears of repentance.

Watch the Music

Finally a fragment of something I'd once read filtered through my frantic brain. "Follow Me."

"Follow *who*?"

"Me."

I shook my head to clear it. "What about the vibrant youth leader who claims she's on fire for You?"

"Follow Me."

"Should I imitate my classmate who has worship each morning for exactly 18 minutes?"

"Follow Me."

"Do You mean that copying the religious jargon, habits, and commitments of my church family won't bring me closer to Your heart?"

"Follow Me."

I'd been missing His point this whole time.

Instead of watching others to find my spiritual rhythm, I should have been watching Christ, my music, for the real beat of His pulse. Something told me that if I imitated Jesus' heartbeat instead of others' renditions of it, I might find the real cadence of His body more easily.

Today I pick up my chime, keep my eyes on the music, and forget about the sounds around me. I'm going to follow *Him* instead of listening to *them*. ■

Sarah Coleman is working as a recruiter for Adventist Frontier Missions in Berrien Springs, Michigan.



into my new life as a church member.

I went to church each week. I joined youth groups, prayer groups, and Bible study groups. I gave testimonies. I volunteered to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and befriend the prisoners. I led Sabbath school, song service, and witness teams.

Through all my hyperactive accomplishments, however, my blood never pulsed with the heartbeat of Christ's body. It seemed as though the harder I tried to fit in, the worse my effort sounded. Where had I gone wrong?

All around me church members shared and told and gave to others, blossoming like zinnias in the summer, while I, like an unopened tulip bulb, remained buried in the ground. I wondered why they seemed so perfectly in tune with the rhythm of service, the rhythm of God's body, while I simply struggled to tap my foot. The more I watched their "faultless" work, the

On the Level

Lessons learned while marketing



BY STEVE DIVNICK

YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN APPROACHED—maybe even pressured—by friends or family wanting you to try a “new” product. They tell you that they’ve lost weight, have cleaner clothes, improved their gas mileage, or that some vitamins have made them healthier. Their lives have changed—and yours can too! In fact, you may have bought the product and joined an organization—more than once—and even approached your friends, hoping they’d “get in” too.

This is multilevel marketing (MLM), sometimes called network marketing. Although full of controversial products and practices, multilevel marketing has become so successful that many of the largest corporations in the world now sell their products through one or more of these techniques.

What does this have to do with the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Plainly said, the essential difference between MLM and evangelism is only in the product. One is temporal; the other is eternal. But the prime ingredient for success in both is *passionate* belief—belief so powerful you can’t help sharing it with others.

Consider these characteristics that a vibrant church and MLM have in common:

- Friends talking to friends.
- People getting excited about an idea or a resource and

sharing that excitement with everyone they meet.

- People willing to stay up late at night talking and dreaming with friends—imagining in vivid detail what the future will be like.

- People eager to open up their homes to share their excitement with strangers from all over their city.

- People willing to invest in books and tapes, and to read and listen every day.

- People who aren’t deterred by naysayers trying to ridicule their conviction.

- People motivated by an intense loyalty and love for their product, who are swept off their feet with head-over-heels enthusiasm for the reward.

- People whose passion shows. Others want what they’ve got and ask about it!

Does that list describe your attitude toward your church and its beliefs? Would you like to belong to a church full of people with a deep passion for Jesus and the salvation of friends, family, neighbors, and fellow workers? Could that vision ever become a reality?

Absolutely! But some things will have to change, and that won’t be easy. Because MLM and the church have so many similarities, we can see the church’s challenges more easily by looking at this industry and some of its problems.



From the Ground Up

My MLM experience began in the early eighties. The company was new. In those early days the chairman of the board and the president went out and personally demonstrated the product and recruited distributors. They were full of energy and “modeled” how to grow.

The company spread across the U.S. and into several countries in less than a year using the person-to-person formula. People enthusiastically shared the product with guests in their homes, at restaurants, in hotel elevators, in supermarket parking lots, and in every other imaginable place. Company publications and conventions featured glowing testimonies.

“Natural leaders” were the focus of the company; “professional leaders” had not yet emerged. Simple repetition of the shared experience was the dominant theme, repeatedly demonstrating how to grow. The new “converts” were mentored into leaders who, in

turn, focused time and attention on new people, thereby repeating the mentoring process.

The plan was so simple and powerful that people could be recruited one day and go out and recruit others the next. They simply shared what was shared with them the day before. The “story” appealed to a cross section of poor and wealthy, male and female, young and old, and all cultures. Differences receded in the presence of a common passion that united everyone. Strangers became friends.

It was a marvelous and dynamic era. Growth was exponential.

As the company grew, the owners decided to organize the U.S. into territories and appoint top producers as vice presidents who would be trained at the “sales university” and earn an income from all the sales activity in their territory. Regional, state, and local officers were appointed. The company now featured these vice presidents in the publi-

cations and at the conventions, both of which increasingly featured information about territory volume rather than personal sales.

The chairman of the board and president had long since stopped their personal contacts, and now focused attention on their vice presidents, who had also stopped their personal recruiting to focus on their company jobs. A troubling dichotomy soon developed: people became distrustful of the officers while at the same time aspiring to similar positions. Promotions were now seen as evidence of success. Sales and recruiting began to slow down.

Midlife Woes

The company pressed on. Leaders believed the answer to organizational malaise was to expand to new cities and countries by requiring vice presidents to hold large advertised meetings using all the props and expertise learned at the training school.

Distributors paid a percentage of their income to cover the meeting expense, and the vice presidents ran the show. Testimonies from long-ago successes were used as inspiration, since recent testimonies weren't nearly so inspiring.

Even with these developments, people still joined! Though some people were now dropping out, the overall numbers still grew, leading administrators to believe they were on the right track. Dropouts were described as those "who never really believed." So long as overall growth continued, it was easy to ignore the danger signals. Company-sponsored meetings conducted by vice presidents were heralded as the "best" method for growth. The larger the attendance at the meetings, the more such meetings were reported in the publications and praise was directed to the vice president. Individual home-based meetings died out.

But somewhere, hidden deep in those company-sponsored meetings with their polished presentations, was a subtle, unspoken message: *You new recruits don't have the expertise or skill to hold meetings. We will do it for you. We've been to the training seminars. We know how to talk about the product. We know how to run things. You pay your dues, and we'll do the work.* The organizational paradigm appeared successful, and everyone who continued "bought into" it, including the new recruits, who believed they needed the vice presidents to succeed.

Eventually, however, even the vice presidents became frustrated at the lack of involvement by the distributors. Unfortunately, the vice presidents came to believe that the distributors worked for them. Ironically, the distributors believed that too. All were frustrated; few knew why.

A few hardy distributors still operated with their own style. But the officers tried to disparage the success of those who didn't adhere to company-approved plans—even when the alternative idea was successful. One statement by the CEO still rings in my ears: "Common distributors don't

For passion to thrive in the church, responsibility must rest with the people.

know what's good for them, so we will make and enforce rules to protect them from themselves."

Distributors were required to work through vice presidents who enforced the company's rules. The few who tried to get unique plans approved ran into a discouraging maze of committees and paperwork. Spontaneity and creativity were dying. Distributors with instincts that once motivated them to action now came to believe that their instincts must be wrong. They quit honoring their questions and ideas and eventually quit having them. The product and program attracted free-thinkers and highly motivated people, but once they joined, their creativity and individuality were no longer prized! They were expected to trust someone else's judgment and believe only what the company decided.

Endgame

Sales volume was now rapidly deteriorating. Many formerly active and successful distributors became discouraged and quit. Some of the vice presidents quit. The company labeled them as losers, quitters, and troublemakers. Ironically, the owners/administrators believed they were not authoritarian because they ran all policies through committees. Of course, the committees were comprised mostly of vice presidents, who were believed to represent the people. And the vice presidents *always* agreed with the owners (except for those who were quitters!). Vice presidents naturally found it very diffi-

cult to differ with those who signed their checks. If they had input the administrators didn't like, they kept quiet out of dependence or fear, or simply told the administrators what they wanted to hear. The gap of understanding between the people and the officers widened.

Distributors were now dropping out faster than they were coming in. Seminars and conventions became meetings filled with spiritless people who all looked alike—sitting in rows, staring toward the front, listening to vice presidents plead with them to recruit. They quit bringing their friends, neighbors, and fellow workers. Gone were the enthusiastic embraces and stories that had stretched far into the night at past gatherings. Some distributors, frustrated at feeling unheard, quit paying their dues and eventually quit attending. Others of the original distributors were still loyal—but not to the product and passionate belief. They had become loyal to the company and structure and the *memory* of what was once believed.

The once-vibrant, standing-room-only meetings were now attended by a small handful of lukewarm distributors who still *said* they wanted the rewards of sharing the product, but said it less often and without passion. The people and meetings were no longer attractive. Even the most enthusiastic distributors didn't bring new people more than once or twice.

Finally, despite many attempts to revive it, the company folded.

This cycle has repeated itself many times in the world of MLM. For unlike traditional business approaches that depend on professional sales facilities and personnel, MLM depends on enthusiastic, passionate amateurs—ordinary people who are excited and want to tell others. By nature an MLM organization is more loosely structured and thrives on individual initiative. Anything that stifles that individuality and enthusiasm eventually kills it.

Noting the Parallels

Is it really any different for a congregation or a denomination?

If growth is made dependent on the pastor, the conference administrator, or the evangelist, membership will eventually cycle toward stagnation. Passionate belief and action will gradually grind to a halt.

Even other fields of our world church are susceptible to this troubling trend. In many regions that are rejoicing in life, energy, and growth, there are currently very few pastors. Ordinary people are doing the work—the same people who have just joined the church. They are simply sharing what was shared with them—keeping the mentoring circle alive. Still, we hear appeals for funds to train and install more pastors in these areas. Why would the church want to do that? Do we want all the divisions of the world church to eventually have the same pastor-member ratio as we do in North America? God help us! Why not let the people continue to be responsible for evangelism?

Our elected leaders in North

America and at the General Conference have called for more focus on the local church, with less dependence on administrative structures. How can we get there from here?

Can administration create that focus, or must it come from the members? Can an effort to decentralize be developed by a committee and administered by the very leaders who are trying to be less administrative? How can we “give” more autonomy to local churches?

Taking it a step further, shouldn't the local church place its focus on the giftedness of the individual member? That would be truly risky—and exciting! We would have to trust the creative impulses of individuals who are being moved by the Holy Spirit. We would have to trust ordinary people to share the gospel who might lack theological training or administrative skill. Do we really believe in a Holy Spirit who is powerful enough to equip regular members to evangelize their communities—and then the world?

Let's celebrate the passion of godly individuals, and not be afraid when it looks different from our own. Let the pastor ask “How can I support your ministry?” and not “Won't you please support one of these committee-approved ministries?” For passion to thrive in the church, responsibility must rest with the people. Pastors and administrators can't cause passion or create giftedness. Their God-given role is to service growth and support passion.

My experience with MLM has helped me see the church I love with new eyes. Now I dream of a church full of people with passion—people whose lives have been changed by the one and only Product that *really* changes lives. Join me in imagining that church, and in creating it. ■

Steve Divnick is an inventor and manufacturer living in Miamisburg, Ohio.



Making Waves

ROSY TETZ

Have you ever been to the beach? There are lots of fun things to do at the beach, but one of the best is playing in the waves. You can dive into the waves or let them knock you over or try to catch a ride on them. No matter how full of energy you are, you always get tired before the waves do. They never stop rolling.

It might seem as if waves are the ocean's way of playing with you, but the ocean doesn't actually cause the waves. Do you know what makes waves? The wind. Waves are caused by the wind blowing on the water and making ripples. The harder the wind blows, the bigger the waves become.

You can make waves. Just toss a stone into a pond. The stone makes ripples spread wider and wider in a circle. Waves on the ocean move the same way these ripples do.

There are other ways you can make waves. Sometimes when we talk about “making waves” we are talking about people instead of water. We say that people are “making waves” when they try to make a difference.

Here's how it works. Let's say you are feeling kind of lonely. Your cat jumps into your lap and starts to purr. That is the “stone” that is thrown into the water. You start to feel more cheerful—so after you pet your cat for a while, you go find your mother. She's in the kitchen,

paying bills. She looks tired, so you give her a neck rub. The ripples are starting to spread. Your mom feels less tired—so after she's done with the bills, she decides to make a picnic for supper.

The ripples keep getting wider. Your dad had a hard day at work, but the backyard picnic makes him feel so much better, he takes everyone out for ice cream.

Everything you do makes a difference. If you do something mean, that makes waves too. When you are mean, it makes other people feel mean. But when you are nice, chances are other people will pass that niceness along.

Jesus made waves. He showed us how to love. He asks us to keep those waves rippling. He'll help us. “Even the wind and the waves obey him!” (Mark 4:41, NIV).

How many waves are in the ocean? More than you can count. What difference can you make? More than you can imagine.



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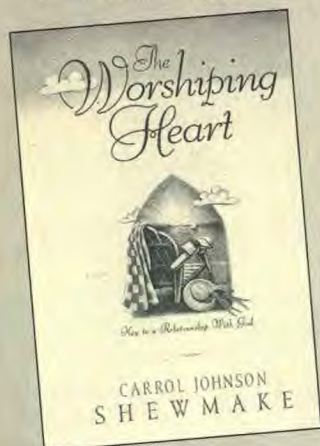
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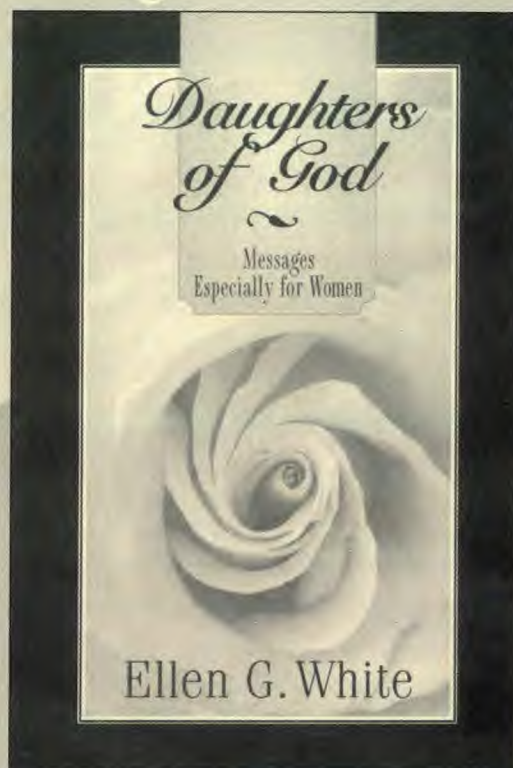
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Taking Faith to a Rational World

A. ALLAN and DEIRDRE MARTIN

How do you know that religion isn't just the "opium of the people"? How is it possible to explain to a questioning mind that God really exists and cares, especially since our church was founded on the immediate coming of God (and that was more than 130 years ago)?

Allan replies: In intellectual and philosophical settings it may be very difficult to explain your Christian experience. The modern mind frame of proving one's ideas with verifiable facts is still used by some to address religious issues, but I am of the opinion you will have little impact by simply trying to inform people of your faith, especially if their questioning is merely to debate or to denounce Christianity. The Pharisees of Christ's day are a good example of the difficulty of religious dialogue with those whose hearts are set against it.

Karl Marx's line reminds us that many people find comfort in their faith, but I would contend that Jesus Christ is the Great Physician for humanity. And in this postmodernistic age it's not the *knowing* that is the characteristic most prominent in our faith; it's the *experiencing* of Christ's forgiveness and indwelling that is central to helping questioning minds discover Him and find healing. Here are a few approaches I've found helpful:

Live Him. While it's important to have a solid rationale for your faith, Christianity is best displayed by living the life in Jesus. Being filled with the Holy Spirit not only makes you an example to seekers but also gives you the wisdom and discernment to say the words and do the actions at the appropriate times consistent with being Christ's follower. Being a living example opens the heart of a questioning mind.

Love them. As contentious as some prebelievers may be, know that they are struggling with their own faith or lack thereof. When you are questioned about your faith, it's important that your first response, even before speaking, conveys your love for them as God's creation. Returning their interrogation with authentic interest in them can be quite disarming. Being a loving Christian can help melt the heart of a questioning mind.

Let the Holy Spirit do His job. Your prayers—perhaps more than your replies—will convince the seeker of the reality

of Christ. Pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit will be the prime mover in the life of the seeker. Be careful of the pride and presumptuousness that are so tempting when one leads another to

Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to use you as His tool, to give you insight as to how best to go at His pace. The presence of the Holy Spirit is key to conversion. Being a humble tool of the Holy Spirit can help win the heart of a questioning mind.

While it's true that our church has been proclaiming Christ's coming for 135 years, every moment we share our faith within the context of our love for people and in submission to

the Holy Spirit another questioning mind may decide to be healed by the Great Physician.

Dr. Jesus wants to return for that person, too.

Are we going to have to pay for all our deeds in heaven?

Deirdre replies: I'm not sure where you came by that information, but as I understand it, once we are in heaven all the judgment and "payment" for deeds will already be done. The time of judgment is now (Dan. 7:13, 14; Heb. 7:25). When Christ comes again and takes His believers with Him to heaven (1 Thess. 4:17), we will be going to heaven to be with Him (John 14), not to pay for our sins. Jesus already did that.

Heaven will be an incredible place of peace, joy, and eternal happiness. It will be a place where we can spend quality time with Jesus Christ, the one who paid for all our sins on the cross, giving us the opportunity to be in heaven . . . debt-free.

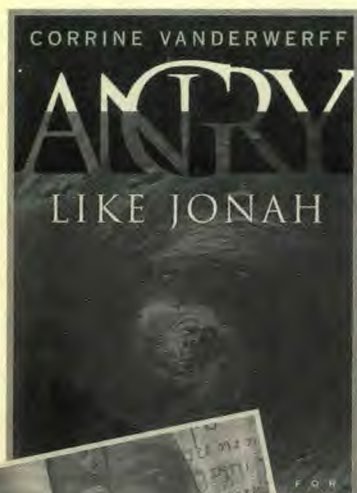
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Allan and Deirdre Martin are cofounders of *dream VISION ministries*, dedicated to empowering young people in Christian lifestyle and leadership. Visit their website at <http://www.tagnet.org/dvm>.



You will have little impact by simply trying to inform people.

Growing in Jesus



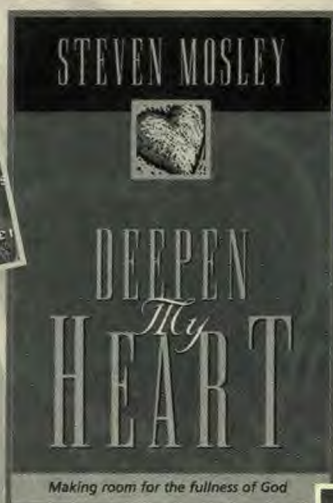
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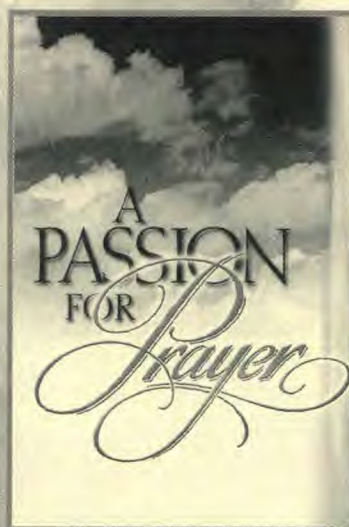


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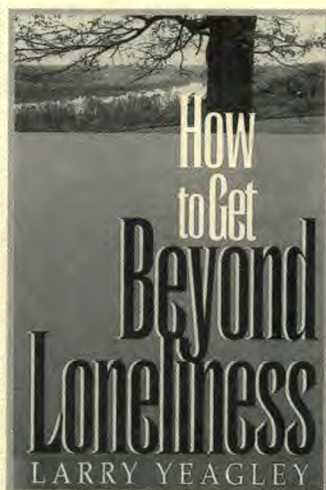


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The Perfect Father

BY J. GRANT SWANK, JR.

Not too long ago I heard a preacher tell his congregation all that a father should be to his family. He made us priests, kings, prophets, disciples, and companions.

Then there were all those scriptures to support his tally. It was neatly outlined. The delivery was impressive too.

When he neared the end of his remarks, I felt like David strapped down with Saul's armor. I couldn't get up from the pew. Whew!

I glanced around, looking at other fathers in the congregation. Although we tried not to show it, throughout the concluding hymn we were wondering how we could match up to the pastor's description.

I know I'm supposed to take the children to church regularly early in life and teach them the Bible, the ways of prayer, and the path of salvation. I also know that it is more important for me to live the truth than to talk about it.

But what formula applies when spats seem to increase within the family and the halo slips a bit off center?

During those moments I grapple with the priestly, prophetic, kingly hats, only to find them slipping off my brow. And then I glance to the right and the left, hoping the world isn't watching. After all, as a Christian father, am I not to live the perfect example?

I guess the attractive family pictures on religious magazines—the ones with a handsome man surrounded by beautiful offspring and that gorgeous wife—really did brainwash this naive mind. But enough years have gone by that I realize neat dads and perfect families don't always come in such attractive packages. With that, I heave a sigh and I recoup.

You see, being a father isn't a matter of appearances. When you stand before your Maker, He won't ask you to smile or show off your family. Instead, you must face Him honestly and say, "I did my best—even during the worst of times."

The other evening I was having a tussle with my 7-year-old son. We were not seeing eye-to-eye. It was time for him to get ready for bed, and I felt as though the evening had been rather botched up. I didn't like the feeling at all.

After he had climbed into his pajamas and curled up

under the blanket, I sat on the edge of his bed to pray as I usually do. Should I turn the prayer into a mini-lecture, trying to get in one last punch? Don't the pros tell us that during sleep the brain keeps on absorbing the last thoughts that are planted in the mind?

Or should I turn tender and love the little fellow to pieces? Would that be copping out? It was hard to find the right words, but I made a stab at it. His face was turned away from me. He was wondering what approach I would take. After all, this was not the first time a day had ended like this.

*Should I turn
tender and love
the little fellow
to pieces?*

Then I caught his big brown eyes, turned a bit more to size up my expression. I wilted. After all, he knew he had done wrong, but there was this look of hope in his face.

I closed my eyes to pray. "Dear Lord, thank You for my boy. You know how much I love him. He means the world to me. Now we thank You for this night's sleep. Be near us all. And may tomorrow be a good day. In Jesus' name, amen."

He swung his body around and hugged me tightly. "Daddy, do you love me even when I'm bad?" he asked with his mouth close to my ear.

"Yes," I answered. "I always love you."

With that he said one of the most encouraging statements known to humankind. It isn't novel or new. Yet it's powerful.

"You're the best daddy in the world."

It was then that I promised myself something. Yes, there's still room for improvement as far as my being a father is concerned. And yes, I've goofed from time to time.

Yet that night I told my memory to hold on to one thing as the years keep passing by. It was the innocent testimony of a little boy to a father who was sincerely trying.

"You're the best daddy in the world."

"Don't forget it," I told myself as I turned out the light.

"Don't ever forget it." ■

J. Grant Swank, Jr. ministers in the Church of the Nazarene and writes from Windham, Maine.



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