

# ADVERTISING Review

August 19, 1999

Cutting Edge



## Going Where the People Are

Are we just talking to ourselves?

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# LETTERS

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## At the Cross

In his article in the May 20 Cutting Edge Edition, Chris Blake said something about darkness that I hadn't thought about in many years. And when I see the attempts to re-create the Passion play, I am left to wonder that if this were the only scene presented—standing for three hours in complete darkness, and left to contemplate what can only be imagined—would we stay as long as did His immediate friends and family? In total darkness, three hours is a very long time.

Blake says within those three hours “the crowd thins considerably.” They lose interest, for there is nothing more to see, only a voice in communication with His Father.

To me, this is how the Passion play should be presented. I'm saving his article, and as Sabbath school superintendent, I plan on reading Blake's account on the last moments of Jesus' life next Easter Sabbath.

—Robert Rouillard

UNIVERSITY PLACE, WASHINGTON

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## Straight Talk

I was shocked and happily surprised to read Steve Chavez's article in the May 27 *Review*, which talked about our mistaken ideas on the delicate subject of homosexuality.

About eight years ago our small church, wanting to be a little different from the larger churches around us, thought we would have a musical ministry. We hired a young Adventist who signed an agreement to uphold

Adventist beliefs.

For eight years he led our music and worship team. He also taught a Sabbath school class for most of those years. He was part of the social activities of the church. He directed special events annually, and people from all around the area attended. Then we learned he was gay.

To many of us he was the same person we had known for eight years—talented, happy, and our friend. We learned from him that homosexuals can be celibate. When some in the church found out he was gay, however, rumors began to fly. Many stayed away from the church and the division in the congregation, while others changed their membership.

The Adventist Church really doesn't know how to accept or treat men and women who say they are gay. They are cast out of their homes and their churches, they lose jobs, and they are outcasts of society when they admit to a homosexual orientation. They can be kind, loving, and celibate, but we are still afraid that their orientation will rub off on us and our young people. We should be able to invite sinners to church (for some, it may be a little scary). We defiantly hesitate to invite gays or gay sinners.

—Name Withheld

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As a mother of a gay but celibate Adventist son, I wanted to let you know how very much I appreciated Steve Chavez's editorial. Needless to say, finding out I have a gay son has led me to be a lot less condemning of

others and develop an even closer relationship with God. When articles such as this can appear in our publications, it will do so much for a subject few know little about but that is a lot more prevalent in our churches than many would ever realize.

Praise God, my son has been able to continue attending his church. I pray this will continue, as the church is very important to him. Your article will help churches and church members who just do not know how to handle this type of situation.

—Name Withheld

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It is true that God loves everyone, including sinners of all kinds. I am thankful for that, for I am one of those sinners whom He loves. However, He cannot save all; because not all will come to Him for pardon and cleansing. Some of the church's work includes pointing out sin and calling it by its right name.

Homosexuals are some of the people whom God loves. However, He cannot save them unless they admit their sin and cooperate with Him in overcoming. Steve Chavez writes, “The Bible clearly condemns a promiscuous homosexual lifestyle.” While true, this seems to condone a monogamous homosexual lifestyle. All the versions of the Bible that I possess condemn all practice of homosexuality. The Adventist Church, while showing love, compassion, and concern for those who struggle with such a burden, must not even appear to condone any aspect of that lifestyle.

# ADVENTIST Review

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### A Wondrous Mix

*A family that embraces—and performs—all kinds of music forms.*

How can we encourage sinners, and support them in their battle with sin, unless we first recognize sin as sin?

—William Dudgeon, PASTOR,  
BANGOR AND PULLMAN, MICHIGAN

*Steve Chavez responds: We have to distinguish between a homosexual orientation and a homosexual lifestyle. The Bible condemns the lifestyle, not the orientation. I urge the demonstration of Christian grace for all people—no matter their sexual orientation.*

Thank you for Stephen Chavez's article. I needed it. I attend a small graduate psychology school, and a third of my classmates are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. I am the only Adventist in the school, and in the group of 50 students who entered the school in the same year I did, I am the only person to admit publicly to being a Christian.

Classmates have expressed being surprised to come to know that I have Christian beliefs and that I also extend friendship. I pray that through me God may show them an open door to Him.

—Liz Albertsen  
ALBANY, CALIFORNIA

## Why She Sings at Midnight

Bill Knott's midnight bird is lucky to still live (see June 17 Cutting Edge Edition). My informal poll shows that 99 percent of people would have disposed of that bird and then gone back to sleep.

What a frightening metaphor. Could our witness become like a midnight bird—singing only to the sleepless few, unable to find a voice in the midday crowds? Nobody I've met has "decreed that relevance is all," but there's absolutely no virtue in irrelevance. Only insomniacs and the deaf tolerate birds singing in a "clear, uncompromising tune" in their ears at midnight.

The bird may sing profoundly—even an end-time message in song. But it should sing at a time and in a style

that will attract people. Ellen White might remind the bird that the apostle Paul "varied his manner of singing, shaping his song to the circumstances under which he was placed." She might urge it to "study carefully the best songs and times to sing; and not become like "one-song birds, stereotyped in their manner of song, unable to see that their music must vary with the class of people among whom they sing" (adapted from *Gospel Workers*, pp. 118, 119).

Nothing irrelevant will do. Only faithful relevance will be rewarded.

—Gary Krause  
BURTONSVILLE, MARYLAND

## Our Mixed-up Church

May I say that the June 17 *Adventist Review* should receive an A+. I especially enjoyed the article by Daniel Giang. How wonderful to be in a church that can disagree and have diverse ideas and still love each other and work together. I feel sure this is what the Lord is waiting for.

I am a senior citizen, and I don't like some of the things that I see coming into our church, but may God give me grace to realize that my ideas may not be those of someone else. As Giang said, "Christians who retain an attitude of love when disagreeing with others keep the church united and attractive."

—Lorice Hanson  
RAIL ROAD FLAT, CALIFORNIA

## Letters Policy

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# ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

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

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**Associate Publisher** Charlotte McClure

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**E-mail:** Internet: [reviewmag@adventist.org](mailto:reviewmag@adventist.org)  
CompuServe network: 74617,15

**Subscriptions:** US\$38.97 for 40 issues, US\$50.97 for 52 issues. Add \$10.20 postage for addresses outside North America. To order, send your name, address, and payment to your local Adventist Book Center or *Adventist Review* Subscription Desk, Box 1119, Hagerstown, MD 21741. Single copy, US\$2.50. Prices subject to change without notice.  
**Subscription queries and changes of address:** Call 1-800-456-3991, 301-393-3257. or e-mail [shanson@rhpa.org](mailto:shanson@rhpa.org).

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

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The *Adventist Review* (ISSN 0161-1119), published since 1849, is the general paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is published by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is printed 40 times a year each Thursday except the first Thursday of each month by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association. Periodicals postage paid at Hagerstown, MD 21740. Copyright © 1999, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.  
Vol. 176, No. 33

# Blown Away

STEPHEN CHAVEZ

**I**n my last pastorate I had a moment of inspiration (some might say desperation). I decided that once a quarter I would surrender the worship service to a different demographic group in the church on a rotating basis.

One quarter it might be women; another, young adults; the Pathfinders had their Sabbath (of course); and one Sabbath it might be the leader of primary Sabbath school who would coordinate and lead out in the worship service. (The rest of the time our elders tried to make sure that the worship participants reflected the age, gender, and ethnic diversity of the congregation.)

When the primary kids were in charge it was quite a sight to see the congregation singing praise songs—with motions; to watch the skits that the children performed; to listen to the children's story, told by one of the students to the real little squirts; and instead of a sermon, to watch everyone participate in a learning activity that involved cutting out pieces of paper and gluing them to paper plates.

After the service an older couple (longtime members and supporters of the church) approached me in the lobby. "Don't ever do anything like that again!" they admonished. "This was a total waste of time. We didn't get anything out of it. Kids should have their own worship services," etc.

*That's a pity*, I thought to myself. After a lifetime of church attendance and active involvement, this particular couple (and as far as I know, they were the only ones who felt this way) couldn't appreciate the spectacle of third and fourth graders demonstrating their faith in God and leading the congregation in singing their praise songs to Jesus. They didn't appreciate the fact that God uses people of all ages to be vehicles for His Spirit.

And then I thought how often I'd planned worship services that pleased primarily myself; how rarely I reflected on the many diverse facets of a local congregation, just to suit my own preferences. *And if kids can sit quietly through an "adult" worship service every week, I thought, then adults should be able to endure and enjoy (?) a worship service designed by kids, for kids, once in a while.*

One of the best things to happen to the General Conference

in the five years I've been here was last spring's ConneXions '99 conference. Our world church headquarters was exposed to the vitality and vision of nearly 400 young adults from all over North America (and some from as far

away as England).

There were a lot of new faces, some unusual clothing (for this building), different kinds of music, lots of energy, and a deep sense of God's presence during the course of the conference. What I found most memorable and profound was how the building's administration and staff supported ConneXions '99 and participated in the morning worship

services; and how the young people invaded our offices, cubicles, and committee rooms to visit with us, pray with us, and share with us their visions for taking the gospel to the world.

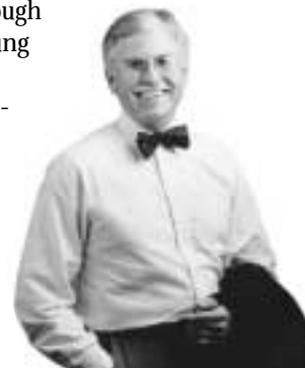
Now, maybe it's just my imagination, but it seems as though this summer we've had an unprecedented number of summer interns working here at the General Conference (we have two working for the *Adventist Review*). It's probably no coincidence that seeing some of the talent and energy at last spring's conference, many departments wanted to tap into that reserve and use it to bring back some of the sizzle that we old-timers have lost as a result of doing the same things in the same ways for these many years.

The church at every level has much to gain by mentoring our youth and young adults, giving them responsibilities, and watching them change the world and the church.

But change does not come easily. Those of us who are older may feel threatened. Some may be vocal in their opposition. But although methods used by the youth and young adults may be unusual and their emphases nontraditional, our movement has always put a premium on being nontraditional.

God's promise is "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Joel 2:28, NIV). If we can't be blown away when we see evidence of His influence, the least we can do is get out of the way and be amazed.

*They invaded  
our offices,  
cubicles, and  
committee rooms.*



# This Marriage Thing

**Y**es. I knew this word would change my life. From the moment I said it to Chris on top of a windswept sand dune, my life began to whirl. I instantly became an emotional land mine, rocketing from serene to sentimental with no warning at all. Country songs—even the happy ones—make me cry. I love my dog more. And yesterday I spent at least 10 minutes at the computer experimenting with various last-name combinations. Engagement is no small thing.

Oh, don't get me wrong. Mom warned me years ago about the consequences of saying yes. But no mother's warning could have prepared me for the onslaught of knowing glances, wedding plans, surging emotions, and forgotten appointments that I've experienced since then. My recently fiancéed friends agree: Nothing puts a maiden in distress quite like the changes she undergoes just prior to marriage.

Of course, there's joy involved as well. Chris and I are marrying on August 15, and I know it will be beautiful. But right now we're facing our own mountain of necessary changes.

Changes, for example, such as the name I will take once we've said our vows.

"Keep your maiden name as your pen name," Chris suggested one day. "It's safer that way. No one can track you down in the phone book!"

"That's true," I agreed reluctantly, "but I want to be completely united with you. I'd kind of *want* to change my name!"

"Oh. Yeah." We had ourselves a quandary.

After more deliberation (he lobbying for my safety, I grasping at sentimental straws), we settled on a complete name change for me. And—don't tell my feminist friends—I'm actually rather relieved. It'll be a whole new identity; an identity I'll keep forever. This is a change I'm going to enjoy.

Amid all this premarriage commotion I've taken a special interest in biblical allusions to weddings. After all, we (the church) are the bride of God. Isaiah says it best: "As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you" (Isa. 62:5, NIV).

Now, this is a verse I can relate to! Who hasn't seen (or experienced) the joy of a husband when he catches his first glimpse of the veiled beauty he will soon call his wife? Imagine it! The God of the universe gazing at His church—at *you*—with the love of an eternity shining in His eyes. You and I are marrying our Creator, our Lover, our Lord! It makes me sentimental just to think about it.

But who am I kidding? Weddings always bring change. And in this case, as in mine, the change involves a name. We're Christians now. We've assumed the name of the One we're pledged to. But are we proud of that name?



**T**he other day, on an especially long flight, I quietly bowed my head over a minuscule tray of airline food. Despite the hardly kosher dinner, I managed a prayer of thanks—and opened my eyes just in time to see the woman beside me concluding her own silent blessing.

"Are you a Christian too?" I asked, glad to be traveling with a fellow believer.

Lowering her eyes, she nodded an affirmative. Fantastic! But before I could continue our conversation, she ducked back toward her food and stared nervously at it instead of me. I slowly realized the truth: She was ashamed of her name.

By the time you read these words, I'll be sporting a new name myself. I can hardly wait. But beneath the excitement of this change lies the importance of a change I made long ago. I'm a Christian. I'm a part of God's church, His much-loved bride. Although He's not here right now, He'll be here soon. And until then I'll tell everyone I meet about my new married name.

I'm a Christian. How about you?

*Sarah and Chris Kelnhofer will live in Indiana while they finish college this fall. Sarah Coleman rejoined the Review staff (she was an intern last fall) during June, to help out after Andy Nash left.*



PHOTO © PHOTODISC

# GIVE & TAKE

## DREAM CENTER

In this feature Adventists share church-related dreams.

My goals and dreams for the Adventist Church are:

1. To see a strong, vibrant youth group in all of our churches worldwide.
2. For wounds and bad feelings among church members to be spiritually mended and healed.
3. To be prayerful in all circumstances.
4. Individualized care for members who have departed from our churches.
5. Outreach groups to bring back former Adventists "into the fold."
6. More kindness, love, caring, and sharing among Adventist members.
7. More focus on love, pressing together, and standing tall and firm in these last days.
8. More spiritual warriors in the battlefields. Adventists armed with more intercessory prayers, especially for the youth of today.
9. Focusing on Jesus instead of each other's and our own faults.
10. Spirituality on all church boards and groups.
11. Intercessory prayer.

—Tracy Green, Chico, California

## ADVENTIST LIFE

Years ago in his Bible classes, my father would use this story to show the students the dangers of using Bible references out of context.

At one time it was popular for women to wear their hair on top of their heads in a bun, or topknot. One brother felt this was sinful, so my dad quoted a Bible text in support of his position.

"See?" he explained, "Matthew 24:17 says 'top not come down.'"

—Clifford Ludington, Paradise, California



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

During some evangelistic meetings hosted by Doug Batchelor, he made reference to the healing of the Gadarene men from demon possession, as found in Luke 8:26-36. As Pastor Batchelor described how Jesus sent the devils into the herd of swine, one church member was overheard whispering to another, "That's the real reason we don't eat pork!"

—Pauline Sawyers, Boylston, Massachusetts

## HERALD'S TRUMPET

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



In our last contest (July North American Division Edition), we had 109 entries.

Our three winners were: Sarah Freedman, from Oroville, California; Mitchell Bilczewski, from Orlando, Florida; and Breanne Bradshaw, from Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Sarah, Mitchell, and Breanne received an *Adventist Review* cap. Where was the trumpet? On page 15.

If you can find the trumpet this time, send your postcard to Herald's Trumpet at the Give & Take address on this page. The prize is . . . a surprise! Look for the three winners' names in the September 23 Anchor-Points edition. Have fun searching—and keep trumpeting Jesus' love!



—Matthew Moores, North Highlands, California

## WE NEED YOU

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# Going Where the People Are

*Isn't it time we embraced a broader ministry focus?*

BY DAN MATTHEWS

*This article has been adapted from the keynote address given to the annual convention of Adventist Editors International last January. Some elements of the spoken presentation have been retained.*

**A**S THIS DATE HAS GOTTEN closer I've had growing reservations about having accepted the assignment. First of all, I'm really not a writer, except for a few speeches; and I'm certainly not an editor. Therefore, to address this crowd of professionals is an awesome responsibility.

I also want to acknowledge and assert that the Seventh-day Adventist editorial ministry is special and unique. It is important to write for our church. The Adventist community requires a continuing flow of instructive and nurturing material to keep believers focused, inspired, and informed.

Nevertheless, I am convicted that there is a much broader commission for Adventist editors than just the important ministry to Adventists. Indeed, all ministers—and editor ministers—are commissioned to reach out to all people in all walks of life. Unfortunately, although our commission is inclusive, it is easy to become exclusive and restricted.

## Who Are the People?

We live in a world of increasing variety and change. Since the Tower of Babel there has always been variety in cultures, languages, and national origins; but we now experience more diversity in Western society than in earlier times. We work in professions that were unheard-of only a couple generations ago. Work opportunities exist in computer technology and management. The media field has openings for applicants in all areas, from equipment installers to technical operators to creative programmers. This represents a population interest and identity that did not exist 25 years ago.

These are changing times. A friend of mine was preparing to purchase what he had learned by considerable research was the latest computer that could be acquired for his particular application. Someone proposed he should wait until after the beginning of the year when the particular model he was interested in would go on sale. He checked with the salespeople and was told it would not go on sale until it was replaced by a newer model.

He protested that the model he wanted had only recently been introduced. "Correct," the salesperson told him, "but this equipment is updated approximately every *four to six*



months." No longer are we even acquainted with the permanence and simple technology of the ax and the plow that we once knew.

Technology has connected us with other peoples, in other places, in amazing ways. Travelers to underdeveloped countries are no longer isolated from home for long periods of time. The Internet has created a new "in touch" world. Even some of us who believed we were born too soon to really take advantage of present-day technology find ourselves communicating around the globe and producing materials that could never have existed before.

We are exposed to cultures and philosophies that only a few had even read of a short time ago. Today people have hobbies and interests that my father had never heard of and couldn't comprehend. Priorities and values have changed dramatically. Even a new language of so-called political correctness presumes to keep us out of trouble.

We think we are more worldly-wise than our forebears were. Indeed, we have been exposed to ideas, impressions, and philosophies that have provided perspectives that were not known or allowed just a few decades ago. We boast a sense of freedom in attitudes and actions that does not really leave us so free after all.

We take advantage of opportunities in our global community. Still, there is increasing discontent and an alarming epidemic of stress and chronic depression. The incidence of divorce continues to increase. There are more suicides among younger and younger people. Society suffers from substance abuse at an alarming rate. Sexual promiscuity is no longer the exception among people aged 15 to 45.

Although people have better and better opportunities, their lives are becoming worse and worse. This is the world in which we are commissioned to minister. We are to go to this world's people.

But the vast majority of these people are not like us. They do not think as we do. They do not select priorities

the way we do. They do not live our lifestyle. They may not even comprehend our terminologies. They have little in common with our heritage. Consequently, much of what we do is irrelevant or foreign to them.

### Where Are the People?

Although much about our present society can be determined by identifying "who" we are, still it is instructive to discover more about "where" we are.

For the past 19 years I have been

## Much of what we do is irrelevant or foreign to people who don't think as we do.

involved in media work at Faith for Today and have been introduced to the entertainment industry as never before. I grew up in Adventist culture believing that the farther removed we could remain from such worldly influences the better off we would be. And I still hold that view for those who have succeeded in living their lives without the little screen, the big screen, or the stage.

However, those who have succeeded in living this way are in the extreme minority. For example, people in the United States spend between \$20 and \$30 million each week to view motion pictures in theaters. That does not include video sales and rental markets. Neither does it represent the cost of cable or satellite television, nor the hardware required to use them.

When I was a boy the church was a prominent influence in society. The churched and unchurched alike had at least some degree of respect for pastors. But that picture has changed. While it is true that there are more than

300,000 churches and synagogues in North America, fewer people attend them on a weekly basis, fewer read the Bible, and fewer embrace traditional moral perspectives and lifestyles. The church is no longer a major influence in society.

The entertainment industry has replaced the church as the dominant influence in society. This is where the people are. People's opinions, attitudes, actions, and lifestyles are virtually dictated by what is modeled in the entertainment industry.

Sports has also become a very big business. Many fans are more interested in football, ice hockey, basketball, and baseball than they are in church. On average, sporting events consume a larger percentage of the American dollar than all the churches, mosques, and synagogues combined.

We are in an age of affluence and materialism that lets us acquire things as never before. Fewer and fewer of my generation and those in succeeding generations use their resources for benevolent causes. Many Americans take exotic vacations, retire at younger ages, and enjoy winter homes in the sun. All of this points up a greater and greater commitment to present gratification than a willingness to forgo those pleasures.

Many people are alarmed over Y2K, worried about transitioning to the third millennium. Prognosticators suggest a host of frightening possibilities for the dawn of the new century. Whether their warnings are reality or fantasy, people are stashing money, guns, and even food under their mattresses in preparation for meeting whatever threats Y2K may bring.

Another significant indicator of where the people are is the NATPE (National Association of Television Programming Executives) convention. It was held in the expanded New Orleans Convention Center and boasted approximately 10 acres of exhibits under one roof. For the past five years Faith for Today has opted for NATPE over the National Religious

Broadcasters Convention. NATPE is where the people are. It is there that virtually everything that will be viewed on nonreligious television in the coming season is bought, sold, or traded.

It is significant, I think, that only a small percentage of society represents things about church and religious solutions to the complicating circumstances of this world. It is further significant that virtually all the material Adventist publishers edit goes to a small percentage of the people who think about church.

For all of our sincere efforts, we have not succeeded well in crossing lines into other markets. Where are our best-known writers, like Clifford Goldstein or Morris Venden or Kay Kuzma? In Barnes and Noble or Amazon.com? On the shelves of Christian booksellers such as Berean or Logos? Not yet.

Let me be quick to commend our publishing houses for being available on the Internet. I further want to give credit to Adventist authors Joe Wheeler and Steve Mosley for what they have done to secure publishers apart from our Seventh-day Adventist community. God has blessed Wheeler's efforts in a remarkable way.

Few Adventist-produced publications reach outside our denominational structure. However, much of what has been written for these publications could have been written for the general audience, had we really known how to address ourselves to that market.

While I assert that too little of what we do in either print or visual media reaches beyond our subcultural borders, I want to be quick to acknowledge that *Vibrant Life* does; *Message* does; *Listen* does; *Liberty* does; *Signs of the Times* does. But most of our publishing emphasis seems to be in the preparation of material for just us.

We must continue doing more and better of what we are doing. But that is certainly not all we should be doing. Those in decision-making capacities who are charged with setting mission

courses should be willing to allocate funds for ministering to people in our world who have yet remained largely untouched as far as we are concerned. So what does it mean to go where the people are?

### What Does It Mean to Go?

The answer to this question is not easy. We must devote our energies, convictions, and resources to answering the questions people are asking,

*We must devote  
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rather than giving answers for which the people do not know the questions.

This demands listening for the questions and sincerely addressing them. It means avoiding subcultural terminologies that may separate us from those we are commissioned to reach. It means writing for them regardless of what our historic perspectives and comfort zone may dictate. It's time to be serious about reaching out in the name, the character, and the spirit of our Lord.

Where would Christ be if He were here with us today? What would be His editorial policy? Many young people are asking the right question: "What would Jesus do" (WWJD)?

In simple terms, people must be sold what they will buy. Or, as it has sometimes been stated, satisfaction comes only when you "scratch where it itches."

Jesus ministered according to this principle, and it is recommended to us as the most effective way of reaching people where they are. Ellen White, in *The Ministry of Healing*, offered the following counsel: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.' There is need of coining close to the people by personal effort" (p. 143).

Further, the book *The Desire of Ages* contains this observation. "In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord" (p. 152).

I challenge us as a church to begin a serious search for gifted writers who are able to think cross-culturally, inclusively, with a genuine caring for other people where they are; writers who have an understanding of people who are not like us, who do not think like us, whose perspectives may be dramatically different, and who have different roots than we do.

We must encourage Seventh-day Adventist writers to write for other publishers and magazines who may get us connected to people we would not otherwise reach.

Yes, my dear colleagues and fellow believers, it is high time for us to "go where the people are." May this convention be the turning point in the mission of Adventist editorial ministries and the mission of our beloved church. Let us pray for vision, for wisdom, and courage. God will bless. ■

Dan Matthews is the executive director of Faith for Today Television, and host of the television program Lifestyle Magazine.



# cutting edge

m e d i t a t i o n s

## Prayer

The call was urgent: A woman of 83 years was in shock from bowel ischemia. Could I come at once and do surgery?

Arriving at the ICU a little later, I discovered an elderly woman who was unconscious on the respirator. She was obviously near death. Nothing that I might do could change the outcome, but the pressure was on. Her daughter, a nurse, had somehow convinced herself that surgery would save her mother's life. She had overruled the wishes and better judgment of the many other family members. I was the expected savior.

Tensions were high as a family conference was called by the chaplain who had been working with the family all day. As carefully as possible, I shared with them the reality of the situation. Daggers of anger were restrained but obvious as I dispelled false hopes. When the discussions finally concluded, there was a measure of resigned acceptance among those gathered there. But there was little peace.

Then someone suggested that we join together in prayer, seeking God's direction and blessing upon all concerned. As the chaplain prayed, one could sense the presence of the Lord. Tensions lessened. Fears calmed. Anger dispelled. When the chaplain completed her petition, a changed group of people left that sacred gathering. Peace and unity now prevailed.

Grandma died a few hours later. But the family was saved.

Miracles still happen for those who pray!  
—Walter C. Thompson, M.D., General Surgeon, Hinsdale, Illinois

## Knock Out the "K" Factor

God chose to give both my wife and me various talents. We are often asked to reinvest these talents in His service, usually on Sabbath. These talents can be scheduled and planned for use or beckoned for use when someone does not show up.

Recently my wife and I shared with each other how frequently this occurred. Often when the worship service, potluck, choir practice, committee meetings, etc., are over for the day and we tote all of the Bibles, books, dishes, music, and other assorted props back into the house, we find that we have not sufficiently (or perhaps even truly) worshiped our Lord.

Instead, we have *workshipped*. We have played keyboards, sung, taught, preached, cooked, cleaned up, fellowshipped, counseled, etc.—all to the glory of God. But our individual spiritual wells have not been filled sufficiently because we have not sat at the feet of the Master enough. We have traded business *for* Him for business *with* Him.

Have you experienced this too? Consider, with us, reassessing your Sabbath involvements. Limit or knock out the "K" factor. Let us once again rejoice in going into His sanctuary to worship Him. Let Him tell you how much *workship* to engage in.

—Russell C. Blair, Andover, New Jersey

## New Focus

The other day God gave me a new perspective on life. The facts of salvation are not altered, but it takes the focus off me and onto our fantastic God. Perhaps this focus is best explained

by my prayer journal entry on January 21 of this year.

*Good Morning, Father.*

*How can I ever start to express my praise to You! You are . . . There are not words glorious enough to explain you . . . Please, I want to honor You and give You the glory!*

*The other day You gave me a new focus on our relationship. For years I have prayed, “. . . whatever . . . for salvation,” and there is no question that is important because—*

*You left all the glories of heaven,*

*and*

*You came to this tragically lost world,*

*and*

*You died for me—my sins.*

*There is no way I can even start to praise You enough! Yet the other day You gave me a very important perspective:*

*My most important concern is not if I will be saved*

*(although I want that with my whole heart, and obviously You want it with Your whole life).*

*My most important desire*

*(which I learned through my love for my parents, husband, and children) is*

*to live in such a way as to*

*bring You honor, You glory, You happiness;*

*to live in such a way that I will*

*never cause You embarrassment,*

*never bring You pain,*

*never hurt You or*

*make You sad.*

*I want to bring others to You so they will know how proud I am of You—proud to be Your child, Your friend.*

*I want them to know how loving, compassionate, gracious, forgiving, and accepting You are—always giving and giving for us; for our salvation.*

*You are an awesome God, greater than any we can imagine.*

*You are a humble God,*

*walking today beside me!*

*I love You!*

—Veryl Kelley, Hinsdale, Illinois

### A Crowded “In” Box

I once worked for a man who rarely returned his incoming telephone calls. He told me, “If a person calls just once, he isn’t concerned enough for me to call him back. My schedule is so full that I have to set priorities.” He was serious, and I think he felt he was being a responsible person. But his view didn’t match those of the folks who called.

Yesterday we received our church newsletter in the mail. The front page features a message from our pastor, John Cress, called “Intimacy With God.” The story’s illustration portrays a man sitting behind a desk with a mile-high “in” box full of notes saying that “God called just to talk.”

For the past three mornings I’ve had problems getting up

early enough to spend my time with God. It cripples me throughout the day. And it reveals to me how limp my desire for intimacy with God is. God called. But I didn’t return His call.

I’m realizing this morning that the special “in” box God designed to receive His messages to me has been overflowing. What are my priorities? Is sleep more important than meeting with the King of the universe? When I get up late, is breakfast more necessary than meeting with my Saviour to receive my soul’s nutrition?

In the newsletter, Pastor John writes, “We fail to see that our first step must be brokenness and heartfelt desire for God to manifest Himself to us, who by nature, are aliens to His ways. He has made Himself available to us if we’ll take the conscious, deliberate steps to abide in Him. . . . Intimacy with God cannot happen unless you are willing to separate yourself with Him regularly.”

While we busily perform our daily activities, God calls us. Not just once. He treasures us so much that He calls again and again. Speaking through Jeremiah, He tells us, “While you were doing all these things, . . . I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer” (Jer. 7:13, NIV).

Oh, my Father God, my Lord, purify my heart from its double-mindedness. I do not want to grieve You by failing to answer Your call. And as I draw near to You in answer to Your call, fulfill Your promise that You will “come near” to me (James 4:8, NIV).

—Jeanina Bartling, Mount Aukum, California



PHOTO © PHOTODISC

# See You in the Morning

*This sweet grandma taught me something  
I didn't get in graduate school.*

BY LONDA EDELL-BISHOP

*The following is one of some 17 additional articles (beyond the top three winners) accepted in our 1998 AnchorPoints Essay Contest for young writers.—Editors.*

**H**ER SKIN WAS TRANSLUCENT AND PALE. Her breathing was labored, and her eyes were closed. “Grandma,” I whispered.

There was no response. I touched her hand and said louder, “Grandma.” Her eyelids flicked open, and she looked at me through blue eyes dulled with age. A flicker of comprehension crossed her face now and then as I told her how much I missed her. Something in my bones told me that she would not live long. I had never been face-to-face with someone who was dying before, but somehow it seemed familiar.

We as humans are familiar with death. For centuries stories, poetry, and songs have entombed its certainty in our minds. But it's only when it strikes one who is close to us that it engraves its own handwriting on our hearts. We recall the first words promised about our sinful state: “*You will surely die.*”<sup>1</sup> The most acute pain comes when you have to stand by helpless as the wise man's words come to pass concerning your loved one.

“In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,

And the strong men bow down;  
When the grinders cease because they are few,  
And those that look through the windows  
grow dim.”<sup>2</sup>

The words are true and trustworthy. For are we not confronted with the tremors of old age, the bent posture, the missing teeth, and eyes that no longer see as they once did? We who remain are faced with the pain of loss, remembering how it once was.

Her eyes were blue and blurry. My grandma lay on the comfortable bed in the critical-care home. Well, she wasn't really my grandma, but that's what I called her. I had spent the past two years with her as I was going to graduate school. I was her companion to help cook and clean.

## She Taught Me the Simple Joys

I remember the first time I met her. Her blue eyes were sparkling behind plastic-framed glasses. She always seemed cheery. When I heard the quaint British accent of her little voice I knew that I was home. Home was a basement apartment in her son's house. It was spacious, with plenty of windows and a sliding-glass door that faced an immaculate English garden—Grandma's source of keenest joy.

At times I would sit down beside her and ask what she was thinking. She would share her garden of memories with me. I'd learned about the names of the different flowers in the garden. Or she would share with me that she was truly Cockney because she had been born within the sound of Bow bells (the bells of St. Mary le Bow in London's East End). Or she would take me on the adventure of her young missionary life in Africa. Sometimes she would sing in a different

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POINTS**



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS



language. Other times we would sing her favorite hymn together. I loved those moments even though at times her memories would collide and stories would be confused.

She taught me about the simple joys of life. Every morning she would ask me if I was happy. At times it was hard to answer, especially after she would wake me up at 2:00 a.m. by opening my door and turning my light on just to see if I was still there.

Every night Grandma and I would go through a little ritual. It didn't matter what the time was—9:30 p.m. (usual bedtime), 10:00 p.m. (if there was a test the next day), or 2:00 a.m. (if there was a 30-page paper due the next day). Whenever she would hear the door to the hallway open, I would hear her cheery little voice even before my eyes would adjust to the darkness. "Good night, dearie. I love you. See you in the morning." And I would respond, "Good night, Grandma. I love you too."

She taught me about the fears that age brings. Her fears of not being able to take care of personal hygiene, or of my leaving lights on that she could not reach to turn off. Her fear of running out of serviettes. Her fear of being left



alone. Her fear of people hurting me.

I would invite my boyfriend over for supper sometimes, and the three of us would eat together. My relationship with him was not always smooth, and one day Grandma confronted him while I went to get her usual hot drink. He became furious because he could not answer her simple question of whether he loved me or not. Even though Grandma's eyes were dull, they could see 20/20 when it came to relationships. Though I could see clearly, my eyes had been dulled by my love. It took me a long time to see clearly again. Later, through the break-up of the relationship, she kept trying to comfort me. At times I would cry, and she would say, "Dearie, I wish that I could take away your pain." Then she would sit and stare out the window. She was living proof of the wise one's words, "*The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness.*"<sup>3</sup>

#### A Mug With a Message

Grandma had a special mug, white with two swans on it. The message on the inside rim read "Love is meant to be shared."

Every time she would drink out of it she would turn to me and say, "Love is meant to be shared, dearie." Her comment was all right for the first, or maybe even the second, time, but after a while I couldn't handle it. I tried everything to divert her attention from the saying. Once I filled the mug up to the top so she wouldn't see it. That only worked for the first three swallows, and then she pointed the smudged letters out for me to see. Once I tried giving her the mug with the handle on the left side so she would drink facing the blank side, but she just turned it around and proceeded to bring the words to my attention again. In final exasperation I placed that mug on the highest shelf and went hunting for other mugs. "She doesn't understand," I muttered under my breath. "Love is more complicated than it used to be."

#### As She Grew Weaker

Grandma started getting worse. Her ministrokes were affecting her walking ability and her communication. Once while I was helping her onto a chair in the bathroom she started shaking, her eyes rolled into the back of her head, and her legs went stiff. I had my arms



around her and the chair trying to keep her from falling. I was hanging on to her for dear life. I kept calling to her, but there was no response. As quickly as it had come, it passed. She shook her head as if clearing her brain and cheerily said, "Isn't life a silly thing?" I knew what she meant.

Unfortunately Grandma got so bad that she needed 24-hour-care. I could not give it to her because of my classes. Her family could not give it because of her medical needs. I remember the day she left. It was an agonizing decision for her family. They explained everything to her. She was mentally aware at that time, which increased the pain. I knelt down beside her bed before helping her family get her ready. She turned to me and sighed, "I've lived too long; I just want to die."

I choked down my tears and tried to encourage her the best I could. "Grandma," I said, "you haven't lived too long. You have been a great blessing to all of us, and especially me. You have changed my life. God knows best, and He still has a mission for your life. Maybe God has someone in that place that He wants you to touch, just as you have touched me." She responded with

hope, "Oh, do you think so?"

"I know so," I smiled.

I looked down at Grandma's pale bluish-tinged face again. I shared with her the plans I had for moving on in my life in the relationship area. There was a twinkle in her eye when I saw that the information had connected. I couldn't find much more to say. I was having a hard time talking then. I couldn't even pray. All I could do was squeak out our old evening ritual. "Grandma, I love you. I'll see you in the morning." She was too weak to reply. I squeezed her hand and left the room.

## Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5: 28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)—Fundamental Belief No. 25.

## When I See Her Again!

Grandma is resting now. God granted her wish, but not till she had changed more hearts for Him. She doesn't have any more pain or conflicting emotions. She is not fearful of the toilet paper running out or the lights being left on. She doesn't even have to worry about how I'm doing, or how her family so acutely mourns her death. Grandma, who was a great warrior for God, died in her armor, still helping Him to win battles in other people's lives. For Grandma the following prophecy was fulfilled.

*"For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun."<sup>4</sup>*

She truly is a warrior at rest. She awaits the call of Christ. "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

I can just imagine that when I see Grandma again she will say in her cheery little voice, "Good morning, dearie. Are you happy?" And her query will be met by my tears of joy. ■

Texts are from the New King James Version.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 2:17.

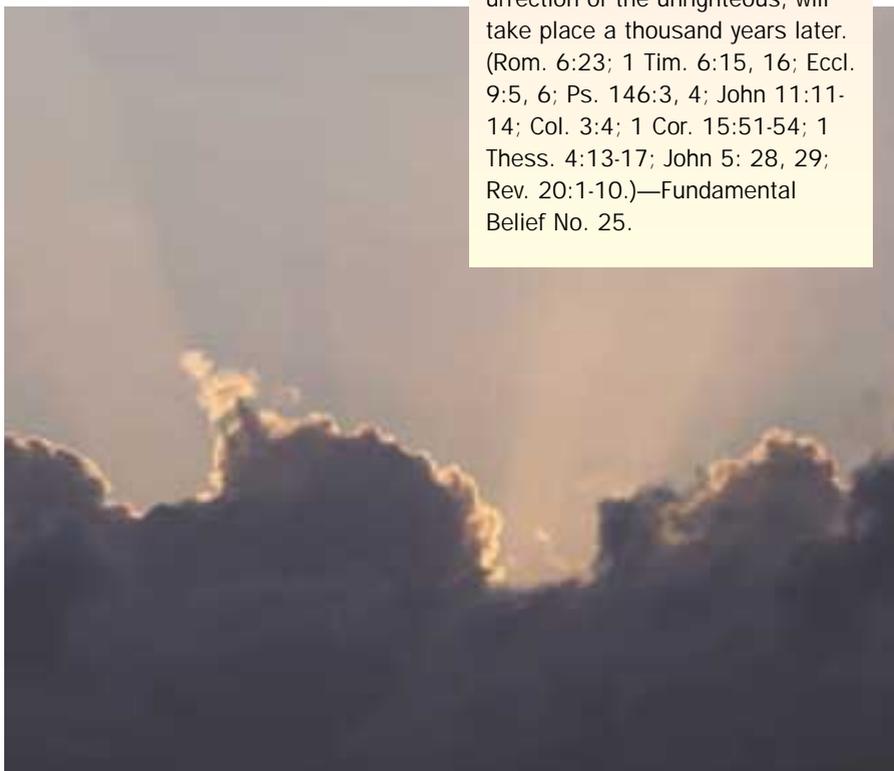
<sup>2</sup> Eccl. 12:3.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 16:31.

<sup>4</sup> Eccl. 9:5, 6.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

*Londa Edsell-Bishop was the chaplain at Wisconsin Academy when she wrote this article.*



# Celebrating a Century of Caring

## *Thousands throng Walla Walla General Hospital for its Century Celebration*

BY PAT HORNING BENTON, WHO WRITES FROM BUENA VISTA, COLORADO

**T**he campus of Walla Walla General Hospital (WWGH) in Washington State was transformed into a Victorian town for its community centennial celebration on June 6.

More than 7,000 people, nearly the population of the city 100 years ago, enjoyed 1890s-style family fun. Attractions included booths featuring games and food, street entertainment, a birthday-cake parade, live music, a fashion show, and fireworks.

In a ceremony from the main stage,



**SHARED CAMPUS:** From 1907 to 1931 the sanitarium occupied the space on the right of the Walla Walla College Administration building, where the library now stands.

outgoing president Rodney Applegate was honored and the new president, Morre Dean, was introduced to the community. Applegate presented Dean with a framed copy of the hospital's mission statement and challenged him always to remember why the institution was founded.

### Treatments Began in Basement

The hospital's history goes back to the fall of 1899, when Isaac and Maggie Dunlap returned to the Walla

Walla Valley from Battle Creek, Michigan. Dunlap, business manager at Walla Walla College during its inaugural year, had left the College Place, Washington, campus to prepare for the medical missionary work that was rapidly spreading westward. He graduated with the initial class from the American Medical Missionary College, the first Adventist medical school.

In cooperation with the college, the Dunlaps opened treatment rooms in the basement of the administration building, where some 3,000 treatments were given that first year. They taught that staying well was better than getting well. For several years the san and the college shared space, but in 1906 the san purchased the old College Place public schoolhouse.

The one-story structure was moved to its permanent location on the college campus, hoisted on jacks, and a new floor was added underneath. It was transformed into a graceful two-story sanitarium.

As the san prospered, it expanded several times. Space was again cramped when a hospital across town closed its doors. During the Great Depression administrators stepped out in faith and purchased the facility and equipment for a fraction of its value



**BUILT UP:** The old public school building in College Place was purchased in 1906 and moved to the Walla Walla College campus.

at a sheriff's auction. With additions and remodeling it served well for three decades.

By the late 1960s WWGH again needed more space and new equipment, and it was decided building a whole new campus would be more efficient than adding yet again to the 40-year-old hospital.

Less than two years after breaking ground on the 23.6-acre campus, the grand opening was held July 10, 1977. The one-level facility was aesthetic and



**GRAND FINALE:** To conclude the birthday-cake parade, dignitaries arrive in antique cars at the main stage near false-fronted buildings on Main Street.

efficient. Each single-patient room overlooked landscaped grounds flanked by Garrison Creek, a site Dr. Dunlap would have loved. Within a month the new WWGH hit 100 percent occupancy.

### Sweeping Changes

Major changes came in the 1970s. WWGH joined with other Adventist hospitals in the North Pacific Union to form Northwest Medical Foundation, a forerunner of today's Adventist Health medical system. Gradually additional services extended beyond the walls of the hospital.

What hasn't changed throughout the past century is the emphasis on whole-person health care. At the beginning the "Battle Creek treatment philosophy" introduced patients to outdoor exercise, a nutritious diet, hydrotherapy, and other natural reme-



**FEEDING 5,000:** Costumed employees serve birthday cake to participants at the hospital's celebration.

dies. In the early years Dunlap cooperated with the college to train medical missionaries. For a short time the sanitarium operated its own nurses' training program.

Even during the dark years of the Depression the hospital kept its reputation of providing a special spirit of caring for the whole person. A Bible,

*The Ministry of Healing*, and a *Signs of the Times* were placed on each bedside table.

By the time the new hospital opened its doors, health education was a prominent part of its program. Community education reached new heights in 1997, when more than 16,000 people attended 523 classes. Much of the funding for these programs was donated by hospital employees. Today health education is targeting specific health problems and giving people new skills to make necessary lifestyle changes.

Helping the residents of the Walla Walla Valley stay well is what the Dunlaps envisioned a century ago, and it continues to be the vision as Dean assumes leadership. "As WWGH begins its second century of service and prepares for a new millennium, we must continue to focus on mission as we have in the past," he says.

## N E W S B R E A K

### Seventh-day Adventist Becomes PNG's Deputy Prime Minister

The former Papua New Guinea speaker of Parliament, John Pundari, was appointed as Papua New Guinea's new deputy prime minister in a political upheaval that saw a change of government.

Pundari, a skilled young banker, is also a member of one of the Port Moresby local Seventh-day Adventist congregations.

Although widely favored to be elected as the nation's youngest leader ever, after Prime Minister Bill Skate resigned Pundari, 32, joined with the opposition coalition and supported the appointment of Sir Mekere Morauta as prime minister in a new government on July 14.

According to press reports, Pundari strongly criticized the country's political establishment several weeks ago, saying that he had a moral duty to fight economic mismanagement and the corruption that is endemic in most walks of Papua New Guinea life.

Pundari, the leader of the Advance PNG Party, was first elected to Parliament seven years ago and became deputy prime minister without having served as a minister.

Elected as the member for Kompam-Ambun in PNG's Enga province, Pundari was elevated to the post of speaker

in 1997. In this responsibility Pundari became known for fairness in his dealings with government and opposition members of Parliament.

In February Pundari, accompanied by his family, visited the Adventist Church world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. He identified educational and health needs as paramount for PNG.

"Education is one area in which the church can contribute greatly," said Pundari. "We need to do much more for both primary and secondary schooling. I am also very grateful for the health services provided by the Adventist Church, for with a healthy population, the development of a country is assured."

With a membership of more than 175,000 in PNG, Adventists are known for their educational, health, and humanitarian services. Many elected politicians in PNG are Seventh-day Adventists.

Pundari also emphasizes the importance of family values and their promotion in society.

"Churches impart positive family values. I promote them myself, since I have learned much through being a member of the Adventist Church. I call upon all churches to educate parents in the importance of family values, for the strength of any nation is in the family."

Pundari says that his country needs honest and genuine leaders, and criticized members of Parliament for

# Mind Games

BY MICHAEL D. COE, JR., ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, ADRA INTERNATIONAL

Every year at this time the computer hacking elite go to Las Vegas to play. Defcon, named after the nation's nuclear "defense condition," is what they call their annual convention—their seventh.

The hackers don't party alone. At least 20 percent of the attendees at the convention are federal agents—including the FBI, CIA, and postal inspectors. They are there for one very obvious reason—to catch criminals. But the hackers don't pay much attention; in fact, they joke about it. A popular game in "spot the fed": hackers try to identify the agents who have come to infiltrate their convention.

In the wee hours of the morning a group of attendees hold a private demonstration of how to break-and-enter actual targets. At Saturday night's culmination a group of hackers introduce software that will be distributed freely on

the Web, allowing anyone to dial into a computer operating Windows 95, 98, or NT and gain remote control of that machine.

Why would these hackers get together and give public recognition to their "dark trade"? They like to laugh in the face of their would-be captors. They enjoy seeing how far they can push the envelope before someone gets hurt. It seems that more and more crimes are becoming commonplace and the criminals more cavalier.

Technology may be susceptible to high-tech criminals, but we can take comfort, knowing that the hacker of all hackers cannot take control of our lives without our permission. We have a God who provides us with instant security and assurance; all we have to do is ask. Even the Defcon hackers quiver at that kind of power.

## NEWS COMMENTARY

### N E W S B R E A K

damaging PNG's image through their behavior while on trips overseas. He called for greater accountability of civil servants to the people they represent.

Reacting to the news, John Graz, the church's public affairs director, recalled Pundari's two visits to the General Conference in 1996 and in February 1999.

In his letter to the new deputy prime minister Graz said, "You are a modern Joseph, a modern Daniel, and a fabulous example for our members and especially for our young people. Your faith in God and your integrity will be your strength, and always know that your worldwide network of brothers and sisters is praying for you."—*Adventist News Network*.

### Historian C. Mervyn Maxwell Dies

C. Mervyn Maxwell, professor emeritus of church history in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, died July 21 in St. Joseph, Michigan, following an extended illness. He was 74.

Maxwell, who joined the university faculty in 1968, was retired, but occasionally taught classes during his retirement. He



began his career serving as a pastor in California, then taught on the religion faculty at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, for nine years. He was chair of the Religion Department at Union from 1966 to 1968.

Maxwell, who published extensively, held a bachelor's degree (1946) from Pacific Union College in Angwin, California, a master's degree (1951) from the SDA Theological Seminary (then located in Takoma Park, Maryland), and a doctoral degree from the University of Chicago (1966). He was a member of the American Historical Association, and he cofounded Adventist Historical Properties, a corporation for preserving and restoring Adventist historical sites.

Maxwell is survived by his wife, Pauline Weitz Maxwell, of Berrien Springs, Michigan; a son, Stanley, of Berrien Springs; and a granddaughter, Claudia "Roxy" Maxwell, of Berrien Springs. Mervyn Maxwell was the son of the late Arthur Maxwell, prolific writer of children's stories and devotionals.

### Hungarian Union Elects New Officers

On July 8, constituents of the Hungarian Union Conference elected new officers. **Zoltan Mayor**, former church ministries director for the union, was elected union president. Mayor replaces Jozsef Szilvasi, who has

## Did You Know?

### Lawsuit Seeks to Void Florida Voucher Plan

Florida has become the first U.S. state to allow students statewide to attend private secular or religious schools with the aid of tax dollars. The voucher plan, which begins with the upcoming school year, is open to students whose public schools are deemed to be "failing."

One day after Governor Jeb Bush signed the plan into law (June 22), opponents filed a lawsuit in an attempt to have it declared unconstitutional.

Bush countered by saying he was assembling a legal team to defend the plan. "We're going to give parents other options when their schools—the most important public service that we provide—don't work for their needs," Bush said.

The Florida plan allows students in schools that receive an "F" rating by the state to get up to \$4,000 a year to help defray the cost of attending a private school, including a religious one.

Two elementary schools in Pensacola are the first to qualify for the voucher plan. Opponents say the vouchers violate federal and Florida constitutional guarantees of church-state separation by allowing tax dollars to go to religious schools.—*Religion News Service*.

## For Your Good Health

### Alcoholics' Children May Suffer Same Fate

Children of alcoholics have an altered brain chemistry that may make them more likely to become alcoholics too. Researchers have found these children face two types of biochemical alterations. First, alcoholics' children's brains do not respond to stress in the same way as those of children who have no such family history. And second, these children have a much stronger reward/craving pathway that heightens even a small amount of alcohol's ability to overstimulate the brain.—*Johns Hopkins University*.

### H<sub>2</sub>O Overlooked?

Chronic mild dehydration—the loss of 1 to 2 percent of body weight, the level at which most people begin to feel thirsty—results in impaired physiological responses. New research says that inadequate water consumption can affect a person's risk for urinary stone disease; breast, colon, and urinary tract cancers; childhood and adolescent obesity; mitral valve prolapse; salivary gland and overall health in the elderly.—*Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

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

## NEWS BREAK

served as union president for five years. Szilvasi's next assignment has not been determined.

**Tamas Ocsai**, an ordained minister in the Duna Conference, was elected union secretary. He replaces Sandor Ocsai, who retired.

**Andras Szilvasi**, union ministerial secretary, became union treasurer. Szilvasi replaces Petronella Karpati, who will serve as an accountant.

### Griggs University Signs Agreement With the University of South Africa

Griggs University, the higher education division of Home Study International, recently signed an agreement of understanding with the University of South Africa, Pretoria.

The major features of the arrangement establish joint sponsorship of selected programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and cooperation in encouraging and promoting the advancement, recruitment, placement, and referral of students. Depending upon the discipline, as much as 50 percent of the total curriculum may be presented by Griggs University, utilizing Adventist course materials and Adventist professors.

"Through this strategic alliance Griggs University

hopes to enhance its services and program offerings to its students," says Joseph E. Gurubatham, GU president.

### Adventist Review Web Coming Soon

The *Adventist Review* plans to launch a magazine Web page this September. If you would like to be notified when the site is available, send your name and e-mail address to: [reviewmag@adventist.org](mailto:reviewmag@adventist.org).

### News Notes

✓ **An areawide evangelistic series on Grand Cayman** island resulted in 100 new believers joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church, reports Jeffrey Thompson, president of Cayman Islands Mission. The evangelist for the Word of Life Crusade tent meeting was Don Crowder.

### What's Upcoming

Sept. 4	Lay Evangelism emphasis
Sept. 11	<i>Adventist Review</i> emphasis
Sept. 18	Family Togetherness Day
Sept. 25	Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Africa-Indian Ocean Division

# Give Credit Where It's Due

**R**ecently at a college worship a colleague shared a classic heartwarming story she had received via an e-mail mass mailing. I recognized most of the story, as I had read the original 17 years ago in Becky Pippert's book *Out of the Saltshaker, Into the World*. This e-mail version did contain a few new specifics and added a concluding "sermon from the pastor" that wasn't in the original. Most distressing, however, was the lack of acknowledgment. No mention of Becky Pippert appeared anywhere. My colleague had no idea who wrote the original.

An epidemic of slipshod, careless transmissions is assaulting us.

Especially in the church, we are neglecting to give credit where it's due. People with a mission are becoming people of omission. Here are a few examples I've witnessed:

- A pastor uses a story from a book and gives no reference. Moreover, he gets many of the facts wrong, leaving me squirming in my pew.

- A church publishes a poem or anecdote in a bulletin or newsletter with the word "Selected" underneath. As I tell my writing students, "Selected" actually means: "We stole this."\*

- A drama is presented with no mention of the author.

- A song is sung with no mention of the composer.

Are we making God's house into a den of thieves?

Changing a few phrases in a story doesn't make it "my story" any more than changing the hood ornament on someone's old Mercedes makes the car mine. If we are to err in any direction, it should be in giving too much credit to others.

What harm is there in beginning a special music with the words "This song is titled 'El Shaddai' and was written by Michael Card"? Does it ruin a drama or illustration to preface it with "This is from Brennan Manning's book *Lion and Lamb*"? Even if we find acknowledgments distracting, they are the honest approach. If Hollywood can add an extra hour to the Academy Awards for the sake of acknowledgments, surely we can take extra time ourselves.

Giving credit to others and affirming them should be as natural to the Christian life as thanking God for "this nice day." We don't give people a big head when we're gracious toward them. Being stingy with genuine appreciation is a debilitating, cramped lifestyle. I pray that I might develop a more gracious approach to everyone I meet. Even people I'll never meet deserve my thanks.

For example, sometimes I hear people pray before eating, "Bless the hands that prepared this food." How much more broadening to pray occasionally, "Thank You for the farmers who grew this food; thank You for the workers who picked it; thank You for the truck drivers who transported it; thank

You for the stockers who shelved it; thank You for the hands that prepared it."

An awareness of how we all fit into humanity arrives with a grateful acknowledgment of our dependence on people we will never see—from the garment worker in Taiwan to the banana boat captain in Brazil to the construction worker in Toledo, Ohio. Examine what you bring home from the store and try to figure out how your merchandise got here. With or without the Net, we are already part of the network of humanity.

Life is 2 percent competition and 98 percent cooperation. The sooner we teach and appreciate that, the sooner we'll live humanely and compassionately.

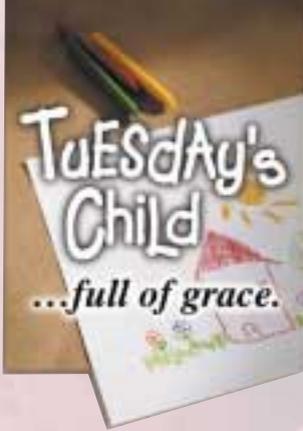
Living gracious lives is a healthy response to receiving God's grace. Gracious people joyfully, thankfully heap credit on others. May God help us to be gracious Christians.

\* If you attempt to locate the original source and cannot find it, simply write "author unknown."

*Are we making  
God's house  
into a den  
of thieves?*

Chris Blake is an associate professor at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he lives with his wife, Yolanda, and their sons, Nathan and Geoffrey. He credits them for helping to keep him predominantly sane.





# Take a Walk

**M**ark reached over from his mattress on the floor and pulled the shade off the lamp so he could see better to read. He wasn't ready to sleep just yet, not on a day—and a night—that had been as beautiful as this one.

Even with the glare of the lamp, Mark could see the northern lights through his bedroom window, flickering against a star-studded sky. It was all such a strange new world here in the Yukon in northwestern Canada. Winter days were short in December, when the sun set at 3:30 p.m. Nights were beautiful and long, opening up a whole new world to explore.

"Let's go skiing after supper," 11-year-old Mark had begged his schoolteacher mom as she locked the school doors at the end of the day. Older brother Cam and 5-year-old Holly had been quick to agree.

At home, Dad also agreed. After a quick supper, the family dressed, stepped out their back door, strapped on their skis, and skied down the cut lines through the forest behind their house.

The snow glistened, and all was quiet except for the *swish*, *swish* of the skis. Soon the fiery northern lights began to dance across the night sky. As Mark stopped several times to adjust his ski bindings in the deep snow, he drank in the beauty of the night. He felt God's presence close to him.

Tired but satisfied after skiing, the family met in the living room for evening worship. Mark looked around the room. He felt happy and safe as he listened to Dad read the story of Enoch from Genesis 5:21-24. The part he liked best was "and Enoch walked with God." Would God really walk with Mark as He walked with Enoch so many years ago?

After worship Mark went up to bed. Even though his book was interesting, he couldn't stay awake for long. He drifted off to sleep with the light still on, dreaming of lying on a beach on a hot day.

Suddenly strong arms grabbed Mark. Thick smoke seared at his lungs. "God, help me," he choked.

The lamp with the bare bulb had fallen over on Mark's foam mattress as he slept, melting a hole in the mattress and causing thick, deadly smoke. Clouds of black smoke were billowing out into the hallway.

Downstairs, Mom had been mysteriously awakened, sensing that something was wrong. She quickly woke Dad, and the two of them searched the main floor. Finding nothing, they turned upstairs and opened Mark's door.

Fighting his way through the smoke, Dad pulled the boy into the hall. He hurried back into the room one more time, tossed the smoldering bedding out the window into the snow below, and retreated, closing the door.

Slowly Mark opened his eyes as Mom held a wet facecloth over his nose. Mom told him what had happened, and how God must have woken her up just in time.

Lying there on the hallway floor, Mark thought again of what they had learned that night at family worship. Just like Enoch, he knew that God was very close to him. Silently he whispered, "Thank You, God. You do walk with me."

## Family Time

On Tuesday (or whatever day you like), invite your family to worship God together.

☞ Ask the person with the shortest middle name to pose in a snapshot posture, showing a time when God was with His people. See who can guess what the picture suggests. Take turns posing for pictures that show God's presence.

☞ Ask an adult to tell you about a time when he or she felt God's presence the most. Were they excited, surprised, hushed? Did other people nearby realize that God was near at that time?

☞ Find a Bible story that shows how God was with a person and helped His friend in many ways. Count how many times God did something special in the story.

☞ Choose a song that will praise God for His presence in your life. Can't think of one? Try looking in [The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal](#), nos. 309 and 310. Ask someone to read at least the first verse before you sing. What does it say to you?

# Mr. Landry's Mobile Ministry

*His pickup was only a means of transportation.  
And much more.*

BY BILL BRACE

**M**R. LANDRY OWNED A PICKUP TRUCK. He probably owned one because, by trade, he was a carpenter. He ran a little shop behind his home, and his pickup was an invaluable asset to his business. But the truck served more than just a single purpose.

The neighborhood where Mr. Landry worked and lived was on the outskirts of Moncton, New Brunswick. It was not unlike many neighborhoods of a generation or two ago: it was close-knit, families knew one another, they often worked together, and certainly the children went to school and played together. There were no strangers. Each knew the other's business—their joys *and* their struggles.

Moncton wasn't an affluent community by any standard. On the socioeconomic scale it wasn't even close to a 10. For many of the families automobiles weren't a necessity, but an unrealized luxury.

That's how Mr. Landry and his pickup truck played a vital role. That's how a number of the neighborhood families in the late 1940s became acquainted with the Seventh-day Adventist message.

## Going My Way?

People who wanted to attend church in Moncton, New Brunswick, often had no means of transportation. But Mr. Landry, a church member, committed himself to stop by their homes each Sabbath morning and drive them to church.

Mr. Landry would drive down the street and stop in front of one house and then another. Family members would

climb up into the back of that pickup truck for the ride to the church three or four miles away.

Perhaps it wasn't a noticeable ministry in some respects, but it did permit many adults and children to attend Sabbath services who otherwise would have had to walk or not attend at all. At times the back of Mr. Landry's pickup got crowded with as many as 15 individuals squeezed within its confines. He even provided benches for them to sit on, benches made, no doubt, in Mr. Landry's home carpentry shop.

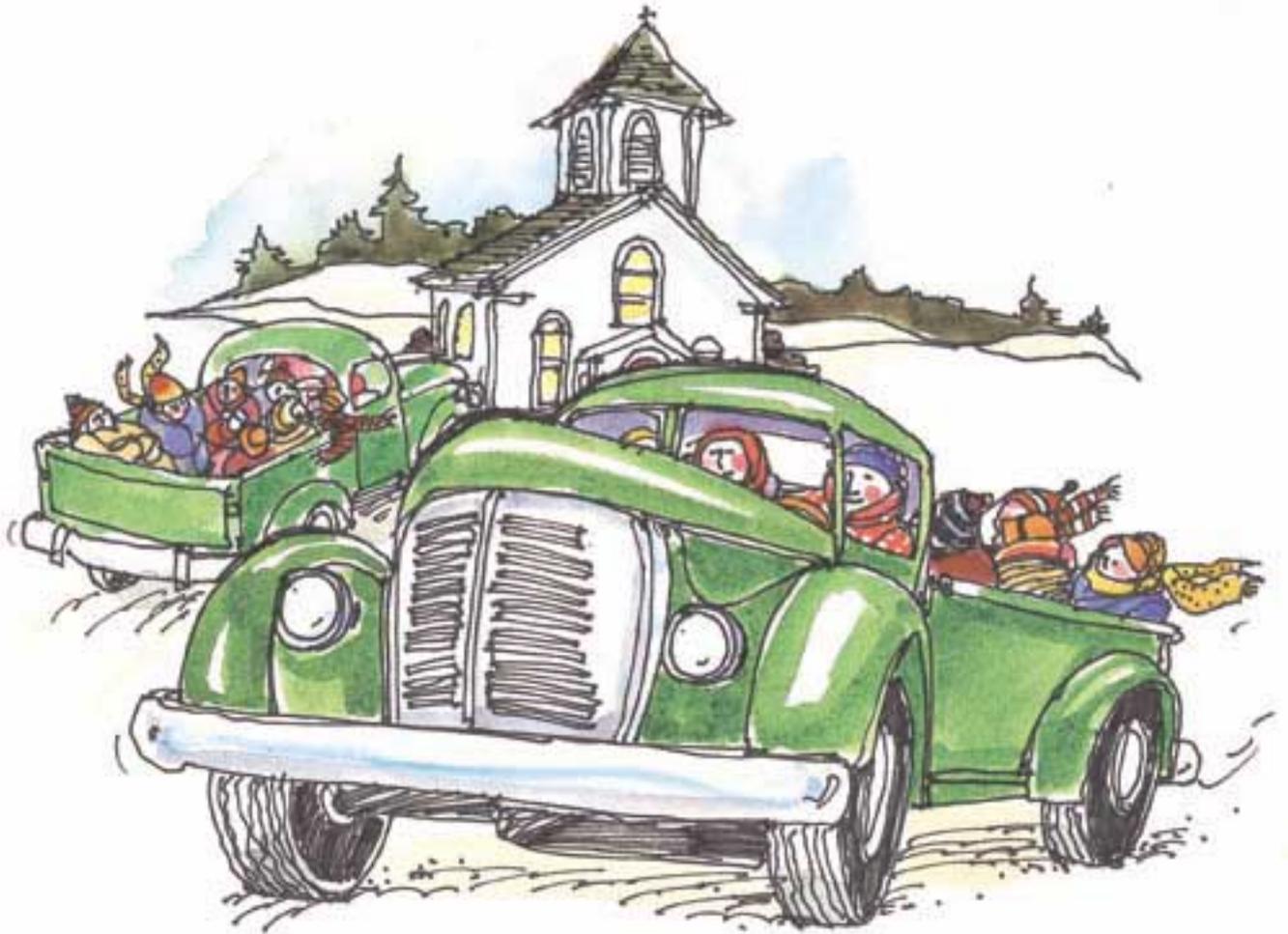
No one complained, not even during the frigid Canadian winters. With bodies seated cozily together, the passengers were grateful for the modicum of warmth that helped combat the bite of the icy wind that sliced the passengers' faces like a dagger and took their breath away.

## At the End of the Road

Years passed. Decades followed. Several of the children and some of the families who had been transported to church by Mr. Landry's pickup truck moved away to other parts of Canada and the United States to pursue better employment and economic opportunities. Mr. Landry and his pickup truck became a distant memory.

One pleasant summer Sabbath afternoon a visitor came calling. Mr. Landry was by now elderly and confined to his home for health reasons. He was sitting on his screened front porch, obviously enjoying the warm sunshine.

As the visitor approached, he wondered if the old man would remember him after so many years. Introductions took place, and yes, Mr. Landry did remember. That seemed to place them both at ease and led to an exchange



of a number of old stories.

Finally the younger man got to the point of his visit. Clearing his throat, he said, "Mr. Landry, I wanted to come by and thank you for taking my family and me to church in the back of your pickup truck all those Sabbaths many years ago. Who knows, perhaps I wouldn't be in the church today if it weren't for your faithfulness in making sure that we all received a ride each week. I am indebted to you."

Mr. Landry didn't know quite how to respond. He brushed aside the words of appreciation with a perfunctory nod and an "It was nothing, really." He seemed to be somewhat embarrassed by the expression of gratitude.

The visitor continued: "Mr. Landry, there's one more thing. I've become a pastor, and I wanted to let you know that you are partly responsible for every person I've ever introduced to Christ.

You played a role in bringing them to Jesus. They're your victories too."

Tears began to well up in the old man's eyes and cascade down his cheeks. His heart had been deeply touched at such a notion. His voice and lips quivered as he replied, "I would never have thought of it that way."

Goodbyes were exchanged between the former pickup driver and his former rider. Prayer was offered. Then the pastor got in his car and drove off, never to see Mr. Landry again on this side of eternity.

### No Small Jobs

Who makes us what we are? Well, there are parents and teachers, friends and pastors, work associates and others. But as Christians, we know very well that ultimately it is the Lord who brings all those people into our lives. "There are many members," wrote the apostle

Paul, "yet one body" (1 Cor. 12:20, NKJV). And Tennyson once penned: "I am a part of all that I have met."

Our lives intersect with those of multitudes of others each day. We are social and corporate beings. God designed us that way. And He utilizes us, usually in "small and routine" ways, to enhance others and to direct their feet toward the kingdom of heaven.

Not until we stand by His grace around God's eternal throne will we all see the wonderful and far-reaching results of our own "little" ministries. ■

*Bill Brace is a district pastor in the Southern New England Conference. He lives in Norfolk, Massachusetts.*



# WILL THEY GROW WHERE THEY'RE PLANTED

*Evaluating  
how publicly  
educated  
Adventist  
children  
understand  
salvation*

BY BRADLEY BOOTH

IT'S ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE TOPICS among the parents of Adventist children and youth, an issue so emotionally charged that many choose to avoid the subject in conversation with others for fear of giving offense: Does the school you send your child to make a discernible and lasting difference in his or her understanding of God and salvation?

Parents who have made the considerable financial investment of educating their children in church-operated elementary and secondary schools are typically confident that they have made a good decision. Parents who have chosen, for a variety of reasons, to educate their children in public schools frequently express their belief that the combined efforts of home and church can adequately provide for their children's religious education.

In the absence of empirical data, each point of view appears defensible. Numerous and painful anecdotes illustrate that investing in an Adventist education doesn't necessarily produce mature, well-adjusted Christian young adults. A distressing number of youth educated in Adventist schools still choose to leave the church. Examples of publicly educated youth who have gone on to make important contributions to the church also abound.

### Salvation Concepts Research

A recent study explored how the concept of salvation develops in Adventist children and adolescents who had been educated in public schools.<sup>1</sup> The study designers were trying to determine whether the choice of kind of schooling could make a measurable difference in a child's understanding of important ideas about salvation. Study participants were regular attendees at an Adventist church, and were selected from homes in which at least one parent was a baptized member of the church.

Interviews were conducted in the homes of 91 children and adolescents ranging in age from 7 to 18. Each tape-

recorded interview consisted of five components:

- (1) 34 carefully worded questions testing the child's understanding of biblical truths about salvation;
- (2) a drawing by each child to help portray his or her understanding of the concept of salvation;
- (3) a vocabulary test;
- (4) a survey to provide relevant information about the family unit, baptismal status, church attendance, parents' occupation, etc.;
- (5) a parent survey that asked questions about religious educational practices in the home, discipline in the home, and parents' commitment to a religious experience.

The 34 salvation concepts being tested for were divided into eight "group" concepts: sin; the impact of sin on one's relationship to God; baptism; how a person comes to be saved; the identity and role of Jesus; what happens to those who are not saved; the role of works and faith in salvation; and assurance of salvation.

### Understanding: Not Related to Age

One of the most intriguing discoveries from the research was that only some of the eight "group" concepts appear to be developmentally related. Many parents of publicly educated children might assume that the spiritual understanding of their children will parallel the rate and level of their cognitive development in formal education: younger children will tend to have a less developed understanding, and older children will tend to have a more advanced understanding. But only three major concepts—the impact of sin on one's relationship to God, baptism, and the role of works and faith in salvation—appear to correlate with increasing age.

For the other five major salvation concepts, researchers found that younger children were capable of giving responses at the more advanced levels of understanding, while older adolescents often gave less-advanced types of responses.

For instance, in response to the question "What does our choice have

to do with salvation?" some of the youngest children in the study answered, "We can choose God's side or the side of sin" and "We resist temptation, or we can give up. It is our decision." These responses illustrate a clear understanding that humans have the power to choose between God's way and a sinful path.

On the other hand, 16- to 18-year-olds often gave lower-level kinds of responses to the same question, such as "God decides" or "No one knows for sure," indicating a lack in understanding of this crucial concept.

Another of the salvation concept questions—"If Jesus returned today (or you died today), do you believe that you would be saved?"—brought additional contrasts in levels of understanding for children of all ages. When asked how sure they were of being saved, 7- to 9-year-olds frequently gave answers that demonstrated more advanced understanding, such as "By God's grace, yes. That's my ticket."

"Yes, nothing should keep me from knowing that. Not even Satan."

"Yes, I believe in Him."

The teenagers in the study, however, frequently didn't know how they felt about the question. The 16- to 18-year-olds surveyed gave responses such as "It's a personal thing" or "I want to, but it's different for everybody."

One of the key conclusions emerging from the research was that a child's understanding of salvation should not be viewed as a learning process entirely dependent on chronological or mental age. Much of what a child understands about God and the plan of salvation could very well be experience-related, and therefore dependent on environmental or instructional influence, including choice of schooling.

### Comparison With Similar Studies

How did the results of this research study compare with studies done on Adventist children who have been educated in Adventist schools?

A 1994 study that interviewed 120 children in attendance at Adventist schools indicated that levels of under-

standing of salvation concepts generally increase with age: the older the child, the better the understanding.<sup>2</sup> In 22 out of 27 concepts about salvation, the 1994 study showed that children who go to church and have regular family worship experiences have a better understanding of salvation by age. Since the overall majority of children in that study attended Adventist schools for their entire educational experience, it would appear that the choice of school and active involvement in the church, taken together, have a very strong impact on a child's understanding of salvation.

Another study conducted in 1995 by Adventist researcher Donna Habenicht also found that students who primarily attended Adventist schools showed a gradual increase in understanding of salvation by age.<sup>3</sup>

As already noted, Adventist students who have attended public schools revealed no uniform and gradual increase in salvation understanding. Children surveyed in this study had significant chronological phases in which understanding of salvation concepts eroded quickly.

Since all three of these studies were done with children and adolescents from Adventist homes who attended Adventist churches, it would appear

that *religious instruction in the school is a crucial factor*, something unavailable to students in public schools. A graded curriculum of religious instruction, such as that experienced by the children in the other two studies who attended Adventist schools almost exclusively, seems to have given them a noticeable advantage in understanding biblical concepts of salvation.

## Spiritual understanding isn't necessarily related to increasing age for publicly educated students.

### The Case of Heather

The data obtained in this study and the observations made for all age groups suggest the following (hypothetical) spiritual growth scenario:

Heather is a typical Adventist child who is attending a public school and will never attend an Adventist school during her formal education (grades 1-12). She comes from a home in which at least one parent is a baptized member of the Adventist Church.

Heather has the capacity to comprehend many of the concepts of salvation at age 7, and she can often do this at surprisingly advanced levels of understanding. She begins the first grade in a public school, but won't have religious instruction available to her in any form at her school. At this age, however, the influence of home, Sabbath school classes, and other church activities supplies the needed spiritual emphasis and religious instruction for her age group.

Ages 8 to 11 are the most productive years for Heather's development in understanding the experience of salvation. During these years her bond with the home is strong, and growth in understanding of at least half of the major salvation concepts accelerates quickly.

In the age span of 12 to 15 Heather has become a typical adolescent. Her attention has shifted to her peer group, and she is spending less time at home with her parents. Not surprisingly, Heather would rather spend time with her friends at school functions and activities in the community. At this stage Heather's growth in understanding salvation has almost come to a complete standstill and has even regressed in some areas. Here she is most at risk as relates to her spiritual formation. She no longer wants to learn her memory verse or study her Sabbath school lesson, and she has very little, if any, peer support for these kinds of activities outside the home.

The local Adventist church that she attends offers activities for youth her age as an expression of its concern for Heather and those like her. But if Heather's church is small (and a signif-



Photo © PhotoDisc

icant majority of churches are) she probably won't be highly interested in the activities or gain much from them. More than likely the congregation simply can't find the personnel to operate a strong, well-planned youth ministry.

During Heather's sixteenth and seventeenth years she experiences minimal growth in her understanding of salvation, and probably only in the concept of baptism and its significance for Adventist Christians. In her eighteenth year Heather may grow in her understanding of one group concept, the role and function of Jesus as Saviour and coming Lord. Heather finally begins to integrate her belief structure with an Adventist lifestyle as her parents hoped she would, but the hour is late.

Both anecdotal and research evidence suggest that it may be too late to win Heather's allegiance to the Adventist Church, if indeed it can even keep her within its fellowship. Heather's support system—friends, public school education, family, and local congregation—have helped her chart her own spiritual lifestyle, one that may or may not include a church of any kind. Given the price tag of a four-year degree in Adventist colleges, the chances are that she won't continue her education at an Adventist school.

Heather has effectively learned at least one thing: she doesn't need Adventist education to experience what she thinks of as a "good life." Because Seventh-day Adventists have not considered Adventist education an essential element for spiritual growth, the chances are that she will not consider it as an option for her children when they are of school age.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

What can be done to ensure that Adventist children whose parents choose not to send them to Adventist schools will still have every possible encouragement in their religious growth and development? The following suggestions may be of help:

**Doctrinal Refreshers:** Churches could provide an ongoing baptismal or doctrinal class for all youth in the

## Religious instruction in the school appears to be a crucial factor in understanding salvation.

church. This might be offered either during the Sabbath school time period, or at another opportunity during the week. Giving early adolescents helpful, practical information about their faith would certainly provide for better growth through the "lean" years (ages 12-15).

**The Home:** Religious education in the home, through family worship experiences, family discussions, and parent-child interaction, needs to be both consistent and continuous. It should be part of the regular family schedule, with both parents (if possible) participating in activities.

**Youth Activities:** Adventist congregations and conferences may need to expend more time, energy, and money in a revitalization program to help 12- to 15-year-olds grow spiritually. Musical festivals, weekend retreats, nature and camping experiences, and youth congresses that have an emphasis on social interaction may be especially valuable.

**Prayer and Bible Study:** Christian educators, church leaders, and parents should focus on the power of prayer and Bible study in personal life. Nothing can surpass the power of personal example. Weekend retreats can help put prayer and Bible study in practical perspective for teens through group participation activities.

**Media Choices:** Modern media options have robbed many families of the desire to experience quality interaction and personal growth. More time should be set aside by families for music,

art, and memory games as a regular part of family worship and conversation.

**Spiritual Mentoring:** Parents and church leaders need continual reminders that they have a special responsibility as role models with loving, caring, Christlike characters. Most Adventist youth would still rather see a sermon in shoes than hear one.

<sup>1</sup> Bradley Booth, "Development of the Concept of Salvation in Seventh-day Adventist Children and Adolescents 7-18 Years of Age Who Attend Public Schools" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Victor Korniejczuk, *Development of the Concept of Salvation in Adventist Children and Adolescents From Ages 6-17 Years* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Donna Habenicht, *The Development of the Concept of Salvation From Age 4 to 25 Years* (revised) (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 1995).

Bradley Booth, Ph.D., is an associate professor of education at Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Massachusetts.



# Money Under the Table

A. ALLAN and DEIRDRE MARTIN

**F**rom time to time musical groups visit our church to provide music for our 11:00 a.m. worship service. Tables are set up in the narthex on which tapes and disks are neatly displayed. At the conclusion of the program an announcement is made that the material in the narthex is available to whoever would like any of the products, implying that anyone who takes anything will be trusted to settle up by mail. It is noted that the “trusting” is secured by someone taking the names and addresses of the procuring individuals. It seems to me that a deal is being made. Is this a more appropriate Sabbath procedure than exchanging money?

**Deirdre’s reply:** Your question appears to be about the lines between deals and money. But I challenge you to go beyond that. Two Bible passages came to my mind when I read your question:

“Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it” (Ex. 20:8-11, NRSV).

“Then they came to Jerusalem. And he [Jesus] entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?” But you have made it a den of robbers’” (Mark 11:15-17, NRSV).

Tables of merchandise set up in the church foyer make me uncomfortable. I’m sure that the announcement was done in a nice, politically correct style, and certainly there was no money being exchanged. But if I picture Jesus coming to your church, I don’t see Him picking up a couple CDs and

leaving His name to “settle up” later. I don’t think God would exchange a freewill offering for a cassette tape or two.

**W**hat is the best way to meet our responsibilities as Christians when we see a fellow believer acting sinfully?

**Here’s an example:** A married male friend who is otherwise a great Christian likes to tell dirty jokes and use double meanings in his speech. He often calls attention to his sexuality and tells women in fairly specific terms how beautiful they are. I have asked him not to speak that way with me and he always says, “Oh, you know I don’t mean anything by it.” No one else seems to mind him, and I end up looking like a stuffed shirt.

**Nonetheless, I would like to share some passages from Ephesians 5 and pray with him, because I do think he hurts his witness and his reputation in general. But I want to do it in a way that is most likely to be well received, although I realize that sometimes we won’t be well received no matter what we say or how we say it.**

**Allan’s reply:** Along with your question you provide an insightful answer. Pray a lot. Know that the more genuine, honest, and authentic your relationship is with him, the more likely your advice will be taken to heart. Initial offense is likely, but if you share your reproof with a caring and vulnerable attitude, he is likely to be more receptive.

We’ll pray for you too.

*Merchandise in the church foyer makes me uncomfortable.*

Send your questions about young adult life, Christian lifestyle, and Generation X culture to: *The X-CHANGE*, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; or via e-mail to [dream\\_VISION\\_ministries@CompuServe.com](mailto:dream_VISION_ministries@CompuServe.com).

Allan and Deirdre Martin are cofounders of *dream VISION ministries*, dedicated to empowering young people in Christian lifestyle and leadership.



# Letting Go

BY JANALEE SHAW

**W**e divided into small circles to pray for each other as our study time ended. In that warm, caring setting I was startled and embarrassed when my tears began to flow. I've always prided myself on not crying in public, yet here I was, in a group composed almost entirely of slight acquaintances and total strangers, unable to stop tears from dripping off my nose and splashing down my pant leg. All because a friend said a genuinely moving prayer asking the Lord to be with me.

The pressure had been building for a long time. My acceptance to a doctoral program in Indiana had taken me away from my support group, and I was totally alone for the first time. I felt incredibly isolated. To make matters worse, in the months preceding my visit to the study group I had managed to entangle myself in serious, relationship-changing misunderstandings with two of my friends. A third had placed demands on me I was afraid I couldn't meet. I wasn't sure our friendship could survive.

It also seemed that every phone call brought news of an injury or life-threatening situation that someone I loved was facing. I couldn't take it anymore. My friend's thoughtful prayer crumbled the wall I'd built to protect myself, and all the dammed-up tears spilled out.

**S**everal weeks later I read during my devotions: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). I've known that text my entire life. No doubt I memorized it in Sabbath school. I can rattle it off glibly. But that day I really thought about it. I wondered if I'd given Him *all* of my cares.

I've never had trouble casting most of my cares on the Lord. For decades He's been accustomed to keeping me fed, clothed, and housed. He's opened and shut doors leading to the future, and He's gotten me successfully through all my academic challenges. I haven't even questioned His decisions in most areas of my life for quite a while. Except one.

I've always reserved decisions about relationships for

myself. Maybe I felt I needed to have control over some area, so I chose that one as something theoretically well within my ability to handle. When my brother was killed, I extended "my" relationship responsibilities slightly. Now they illogically included single-handedly keeping all of my loved ones well through my own sheer willpower. This was a tough feat, especially since I live so far away from all of them. How could I be sure they were all right, when I couldn't even see them? I was worried. Naturally my system was bound to fail.

That day I focused on the word *all*, and I turned all my cares over to Him. In particular, I placed my three shaky friendships in His keeping, simply asking that He take care of them. That night I managed to fall asleep

peacefully instead of engaging in my usual worry session.

Later that week, as I wrote in my prayer journal, I suddenly realized that I had received direct answers to my prayers, and that they had come so naturally I hadn't even noticed. I had lunch with one friend and phone conversations with the other two. Our misunderstandings were resolved, and we found ways to maintain our friendships. The responsibility for my relationships had been shifted so completely onto the Lord's shoulders that I hadn't even worried about them all week. I had traded in my control for peace and vastly improved friendships. The trade was well worthwhile.

Peter didn't ask that we cast every other care on the Lord, or only the cares we face on Sabbath. It asks for *all* our cares—the little and the big: my worry over a quiz in school, my indecision over the future, my finances, my relationships, the well-being of those I love. He can take care of all these things. He's willing to assume the weight of my burdens, but this isn't a tug-of-war. He won't yank them out of my hands. I have to let go.

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