

ADVENTIST REVIEW



January 27, 2005

AnchorPoints

The Best That He Can Be

*Michael Hasel makes learning
a lifetime journey.*

Inside: KidsView

LETTERS

Planting for the Growing Season

After reading "Planting for the Growing Season," by Bill Knott, in the



November 25, 2004, *Adventist Review*, I was reminded of the positive experience we had in sharing the message of the church in our hometown.

Several of us who had families of growing children enjoyed organizing branch Sabbath schools and Vacation Bible Schools. The neighborhood children were happy to come, and the interest for evangelism was stimulated and successful. The result was another church of 100 to 125 members in our town and another beautiful church in a town about 12 miles distant.

God rewards all who willingly and faithfully work for Him.

—**Elinor Dittes**

PORTLAND, TENNESSEE

I Can Never Give Back Enough

I cannot afford to send the enclosed check, but after reading William G. Johnsson's editorial "I Can Never Give Back Enough to Him!" (Nov. 25 *Review*), I cannot afford to *not* send money for the *Review*'s New Believers Plan!

I want Jesus to come, and I want to help our new believers be drawn closer to Him through the *Review*. May God bless the effort.

—**Lou E. Venden**

OMAK, WASHINGTON

Thank you for the exciting report by William G. Johnsson regarding the New Believers Plan. It helped me remember it's that time of year. Every time I read about it my desire is to contribute, so this time I tore the envelope out so as not to forget.

God bless the *Review* staff as you continue the encouraging and thought-provoking issues in the new year!

—**Phyllis J. Teller**

OTTUMWA, IOWA

Turtles All the Way Down

My letter is in response to Clifford Goldstein's November 25 column "Turtles All the Way Down."

I have a degree in physics from Loma Linda University, but I have also attended state-run colleges, which included taking a course in evolution. The "Unanswered Question" base comparison has been in circulation for 30 years that I know of. I usually follow it up with these observations.

If, starting from an evolutionary base, there is no moral issue involved when a humpback whale eats 4,000 pounds of krill, plankton, and fish each day; or when an osprey snatches a fish out of the water to feed its family; or when a bald eagle swoops on the osprey, causing it to drop the fish, which is then snatched in midair to become food for the bald eagle's family; or when a gopher eats a tulip bulb from the flower bed and then the homeowner sets a trap and kills the gopher; or when a bear kills a mountain lion that attacked a cub, then why

is there a moral issue when a needy person, at gun point, relieves a Wall Street stockbroker of his wallet, watch, and checkbook for the benefit of the needy person's family; or when the Tutsi government kills perhaps 100,000 Hutus following a Hutu rebellion (as happened in Burundi in 1972)?

In evolution, there is no basis, nor any reference point, for any moral issue. On the other hand, starting from a belief in the existence of God, the existence of the universe is explained; the existence of humankind is explained; the battle between good and evil is explained; the final outcome is explained. For me, it was easy to see the difference in the systems, and easy to choose the one that provided answers.

—**Daniel Reeves**

LICKING, MISSOURI

I always look forward to Clifford Goldstein's columns. "Turtles All the Way Down" was especially appreciated. The punch line, "It's not, then, only the 'just' who have to live by faith; scientists do too," is often overlooked in our modern, enlightened society.

There are many questions we encounter every day that can't be answered. If we knew all the answers, we'd be placing ourselves on par with God. If there is no God, Clifford Goldstein's punch line might be worth meditating upon one more time—possibly in a more general setting, not limiting the second alternative to "scientists."

—Gordon B. Hare

COLLEGE PLACE, WASHINGTON

A Feast for Our Hearts

Our cup runneth over! The October 28, 2004, issue with the article "O, When Shall I See Jesus?" by James R. Nix, and the equally moving "Every Moment Was of Utmost Importance," by Ellen G. White, was a feast for our hearts and minds. This was topped off by the extremely timely and all-encouraging article "Disruptive Winds," by Chaplain Larry Black.

These articles caused me to physically clasp the *Review* to my chest with gratitude and thankfulness for the straight testimony and messages conveyed. Thank you again and again for printing what would remain hidden and ignored if the enemy had his way.

—D. Cain

PENN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

James Nix's article "O, When Shall I See Jesus?" provided us a historical perspective of the Millerite movement's climactic events leading up to October 22, 1844. From the earliest Adventist recalls of the autumn of 1844, one can clearly see that a spiritual high is no guarantee of truth.

While not condoning the tactics of the skeptics and opponents of the Millerite movement, it is gratifying to learn that there were people who were not swayed by blind enthusiasm even in Miller's time. "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way" (Prov. 19:2, NIV). I hope this piece of history serves as an admonition to our surefire view of eschatology that strongly influences our spiritual, social, and political views of the world.

—Phillip Law

UNION CITY, CALIFORNIA

Walking in the Way

Thank you for Bill Knott's editorial "Walking in the Way" (Oct. 28 *Review*). I started my walk with the Lord at the

much older age of 22. This editorial makes me all the more eager to redeem the time, to live for Christ more than I ever have before. I cannot help wondering what my life would have been had I yielded to the Lord much earlier in life.

—Martin Mato

VIA E-MAIL

Support Our Pastors

Becki Knobloch's lessons from the eucalyptus tree really hit the mark (see "A Silver-Dollar Eucalyptus Tree," Oct. 28 *Review*). Reading between the lines, it seems that the church was giving the pastor a hard time. It is too bad that we, as church members, cannot realize that our pastors and teachers are human beings too. We should support them in every way. True, they make mistakes, but don't we all? We should unite and support one another and work together to reach the kingdom.

—Art Miles

APISON, TENNESSEE

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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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Basic Stuff

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

Some time ago my work took me out of the office on an overseas trip. For nearly two weeks I had no computer, no cell phone, no television, and no newspapers. When I got back, I was at first surprised at how much stuff I had missed—and then how little.

The gadgets that we think are so necessary have taken control of our lives. The technology that is supposed to save time for us ends up making our lives more frantic.

Look at e-mail. It's wonderful: I can send a message to someone on the other side of the world and receive a reply within minutes, and all at minimum cost. The downside is that some of the people who send me e-mails expect me to drop everything else I'm doing and fire off a reply. If they don't hear from me soon, I hear from them with something like: "At 9:42 a.m. today I sent you the following message. . . . It's now 11:38, and I haven't heard back from you." By the next day the tone becomes angry, then rude, then hostile.

What makes them think that their message is all that important? I haven't noticed that the world stopped turning or the sun didn't come up if I failed to reply. And when I was away from it all, everybody managed just fine, thank you very much.

Then there's the ubiquitous cell phone. Wonderful indeed: I dial in numbers, press a button, and hear the voice of someone thousands of miles away as clearly as if they were sitting by my side. In fact, this very week I have a new one, one that is supposed to connect me wherever I travel in the world (I am no Luddite).

But cell phones have a big downside. You can put it in one word: *pollution*.

The air of our planet is getting more and more polluted with the noise of people jabbering into cell phones. You see a guy walking down the street, waving his hands around and speaking loudly to himself. Not many years ago you'd have called for an ambulance to take him to a hospital for people who behave like that. No longer: he's just talking into his cell phone!

Why is it that people feel they have to speak so loudly into their cell phones, no matter where they happen to be—

in airport lounges, on buses, in restaurants, waiting for planes to take off? Do they think I am interested in their business or private life? Do they need to demonstrate to the world how important or busy or with-it they are?

And why do so many of us think that if we get a call, we must immediately cut off any conversation in midsentence? Recently I was in the middle of a discussion with two men

when the cell phones of both rang at the same time. Both rushed to answer, and continued to answer—leaving me wondering where civilization is headed.

I say: It's time to take back control of our lives. Time to reassert ourselves against the invasion of the gadgets. There are few—exceedingly few—messages and calls that can't wait for a day, a week, or longer.

A good test of relative importance, I think, is to try to imagine yourself during the millennium. From that perspective, away from the cares, frustrations, and struggles of our existence here and now, how significant will that e-mail be that demands I drop everything to answer it, or that call that wants me to cut off the game with my grandchild or the chat with my spouse?

"Be still, and know that I am God," the Lord counsels us. "I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10, NIV).

The question is: Will He be exalted in my life? Will I ever get still enough and quiet enough to get to know Him?

This is basic stuff. It's biblical stuff, the stuff that guided men and women in all ages who have truly lived. The stuff that shaped the great Christian souls of the centuries.

We need to get back to basic stuff. This is our big need as Adventists, individually and corporately. Which means: take control of our lives again.

Maybe I should rephrase that: let God take control of our lives again.

*Two weeks away,
and I missed
so much—and
so little.*



Reverse Hypocrites

I don't remember your being so spiritual in college."

Mary* and I had gone to college together, yet hadn't seen each other in many years. She spoke these words to me after hearing me preach. While I realize that a person can't gauge their overall impact on others by the testimony of one person, her words forced me to reflect.

My thoughts took me back more than 20 years. I considered myself a spiritual person while in college. I think many of my friends would agree. Yet I think I know Mary well enough to know that her comment was sincere, and without malice. What was she trying to tell me?

As I searched my college paraphernalia recently, looking for a picture for an article I was writing, I found my English 101 journal. All freshman students that year were required to write in their journal each day during the first semester of their college life.

As I read through my journal, I was surprised; first of all, to discover that I could still read my shorthand after so many years! (My shorthand teacher would be so proud of me.) But more important, I rediscovered that the Lord *had* been an integral part of my life. I had struggled to be the kind of person the Lord wanted me to be. I had agonized over many of my classmates' souls, asking the Lord to be with them. My journal attested to my desire for spiritual intimacy with the Lord, and to my burden for my friends.

I didn't think much more about it until one day while driving. During my 40-minute commute to work, I began thinking about my life since college. Somewhere while driving along New Hampshire Avenue and Old Columbia Pike, it all came together.

Often Christians label certain people as hypocrites, especially those who adamantly denounce a certain behavior while engaging in that behavior; or those who claim to be pious Christians, yet treat others unjustly. But have we thought about our being *reverse* hypocrites—people who want to love God with all of our hearts, and love others as ourselves, yet are afraid to share these desires with others for fear that we might appear "too religious"?

Ever since I was a child, I've had a sensitive spiritual nature. The Lord has had to do much training to deliver the

sensitivity from hypersensitivity. But He also has known that my deepest desires have been to love Him with all of my heart, soul, strength, and mind. Yet I believe in many ways I have been a reverse hypocrite. While my inner life sought to love the Lord and others wholeheartedly, I haven't always expressed those spiritual desires for fear of appearing "too religious." And what did the Lord do with someone like me? He placed me in ministry. He placed me where I would be

forced to depend on Him for my work. He placed me where I would be expected to lead others in spiritual matters. He placed me where I would need to reach out to others in their spiritual journeys—praying with them, praising the Lord with them, and even asking some of the hard questions for the sake of their souls.

It's not a matter of parading our spirituality on our sleeves, or of having every other word coming from our mouths be "Praise the Lord!" But are we willing to openly acknowl-

edge we are Christians by, say, offering a prayer of thanks while eating in a public place? Or saying to a hurting friend, "May I pray with you?" Or asking a loved one whose soul we are concerned about, "How is your relationship with the Lord?"

Mary's remark is the opinion of only one person, I know. But something *has* taken place in my life. God is delivering this reverse hypocrite from being a spiritual person merely inwardly, and has given me the opportunity to outwardly express who I really am—and want to continue striving to be. And after experiencing my true self, I exhibit more of who I really am not only with church members but also my family, friends, and others, as well. The fear of rejection no longer fuels me; rather, the freedom of God fills me.

Where has the Lord placed you to deliver you from being a reverse hypocrite?

*Not her real name.

*It's not a matter
of parading
our spirituality
on our sleeves.*



GIVE & TAKE

ADVENTIST LIFE

On November 6, 2004, at the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, we celebrated Senior Citizen Day with all seniors on the program, including one doing the children's story. Sister Henri began by asking who could tell her what they were celebrating. Several kids shouted out, "Senior Citizen Day."

Sister Henri replied, "That's right!" Then she asked, "Who can tell me what a senior citizen is?"

One loud boy's voice boomed out, "You!" Of course, the congregation went into hysterical laughter. After all quieted down, Sister Henri continued with her story.

—Marie Kelly, Lawrenceville, Georgia



ILLUSTRATIONS BY TERRY CREWS



A PRAYER

Lord, as I look upon my plants, which are a marvel of Your creation, I see some wilted, yellow, or diseased leaves; straggly, unproductive shoots; and faded blooms that are unpleasing to the eye: all a result of sin. They remind me of my life, with its imperfections, untrained growth, and blasted blooms of wasted opportunities.

As I trim these unsightly things, I pray You will prune my worthless, gangly branches and remove old, deep roots of hatred, jealousy, criticism, gossip, or whatever You find as *You* "search me . . . and know my heart" (Ps. 139:23).

—Esther Oldham, Montrose, Colorado



In September (2004) my husband and I attended a reunion of students he had taught in the mid-1960s.

Upon returning home from Arlington, Virginia, I discovered that we had inadvertently brought along a wooden hanger from the hotel. I sent it back in a padded envelope, along with a note of explanation and apology. The matter was promptly forgotten until 10 days later, when a delivery service left a mystery package. It contained a

Sheraton Hotel bathrobe along with a letter of thanks for our "exemplary" action. The letter was signed by the director of housekeeping services. What a lovely surprise!

—Janet Schlunt, Elburn, Illinois



S.W. PRODUCTIONS

LET'S PRAY

Have a prayer need? Have a few free minutes? Each Wednesday morning at 8:00 EST the *Adventist Review* staff meets to pray for people—children, parents, friends, coworkers. Send your prayer requests and, if possible, pray with us on Wednesday mornings. Submit requests to: Let's Pray, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; fax: 301-680-6638; e-mail: letters@adventistreview.org.

The Best That He Can Be

A young Adventist scholar digs deep into the world of the Bible.

BY BILL KNOTT

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BEGIN THIS story, each of them valid, each of them true. Any story of importance has several possible starting points, depending on how far back in time you want to go to find the right moment.

Some would say that this story begins with an Adventist scholar named Lynn Harper Wood, president more than 80 years ago of what is now Southern Adventist University. His 1937 Ph.D. in archaeology and his subsequent establishment of the first program in archaeology at the Adventist Church's new seminary laid the foundation for decades of research, teaching, and publication.

Others would say that this story begins with a faithful German Adventist family reconstructing their lives in the aftermath of World War II. Their loyalty to principle, the obvious enjoyment they found in learning, and their commitment to serving the church they loved have touched thousands of Adventist lives through three generations.

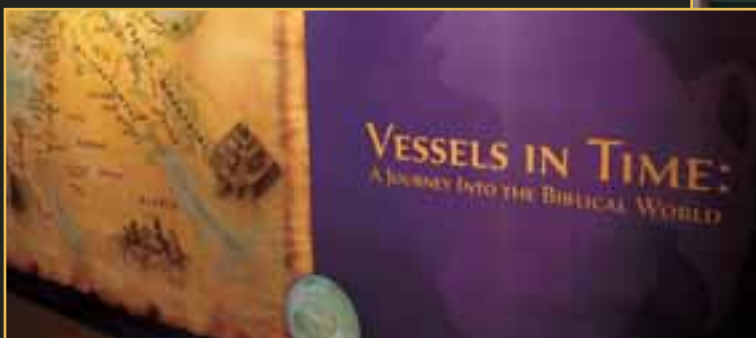
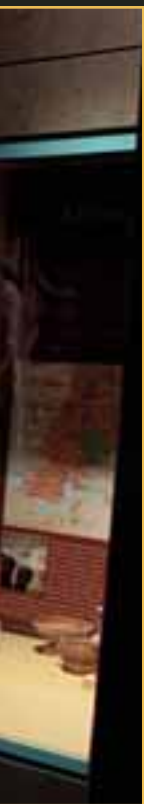
Some might even trace the tale much further back, to when an unknown Hebrew woman lifted a new-made water jug up to examine the excellence of the potter's craft before she filled it the first time. Three thousand years later, we wonder if her fingerprints are still upon the vessel that rests so lightly in the museum display case.

Begin the story where you will, you must not miss the Friday night tradition in which a world-traveling Old Testament scholar regularly took the time to show his family slides of all his journeys. The dark-haired boy who leaned against the sofa, drinking in his father's images of Palestine, ancient Babylon, Jordan, and Egypt, found his imagination fired and his heart stirred. The world of the Bible, glimpsed in Sabbath school songs and stories, took on tangibility, substance, and perspective. Seeing such things, interpreting these things, would be the tale of his life.

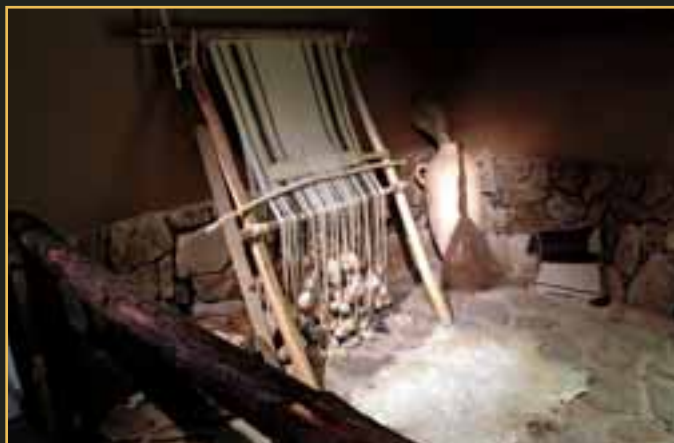
The intersection of these varied stories occurred on a warm and misty Thursday evening in November as dozens of donors, academics, and invited guests gathered on the campus of Southern Adventist University for a remarkable event. Five years of planning, months of heavy construction labor, and the generosity of friends who believe in biblical scholarship came to a climax with a celebratory dinner and ribbon cutting for the new Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum, one of only three Adventist archaeological collections in North America, and one of the finest exhibits of any kind the church has ever produced (see "Working on So Many Levels," p. 12).

The unique Middle Eastern menu of the dinner, the gracious words from university administrators and invited guests—even the





The photos on pages 8-10 are of display items in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum





rain that fell lightly over the Collegedale hills—could not mask the realization that all these things had coalesced because of the energy and faith of one gifted man. Thirty-six-year-old professor Michael Hasel, director of the university's Institute of Archaeology and curator of the new museum, modestly pointed to the contributions of patrons and academic colleagues, but all in attendance knew that little of what they saw and experienced would have happened without his efforts.

Hasel, who holds a Ph.D. in archaeology from the University of Arizona and has taught at Southern Adventist University since 1998, will have even more opportunities in the near future to practice being modest. In the summer of 2004 he received word that he had been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant for the

2004-2005 academic year, placing him among only a handful of Adventist

academics who have received the prestigious research grants from the United States government for international scholarship. The competitive Fulbright Scholarship Award program selects recipients on the basis of aca-

demical or professional achievement, and focuses on those who have demonstrated leadership in their chosen fields. More than 160 countries participate in the collaborative scholarly program.

The Fulbright award will allow Hasel, his wife, Giselle, and their two daughters, 6 and 4, to spend seven months in Cyprus at the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI) from January through August 2005. He will be researching and writing a volume that focuses on the worldview of the ancient Egyptians as reflected in the place names they used for other countries and ethnic groups around the Mediterranean basin in what would today be Israel, Syria, Jordan, Cyprus, and Turkey. The project will call upon his training in both Egyptology and Syro-Palestinian archaeology, allowing an interdisciplinary look at materials that interface with the biblical record.

"The effects of postmodernist scholarship on the general public's belief in the historicity of Scripture during the past 20 years have been devastating," Hasel notes. "Many modern scholars are now producing volumes flatly stating that we can have no confidence that the events described in the Old Testament actually occurred—that all that we read in the biblical record from the patriarchs through the exile in Babylon is a brilliant and pious fraud. And many people are simply accepting those claims because they don't have access to better information.

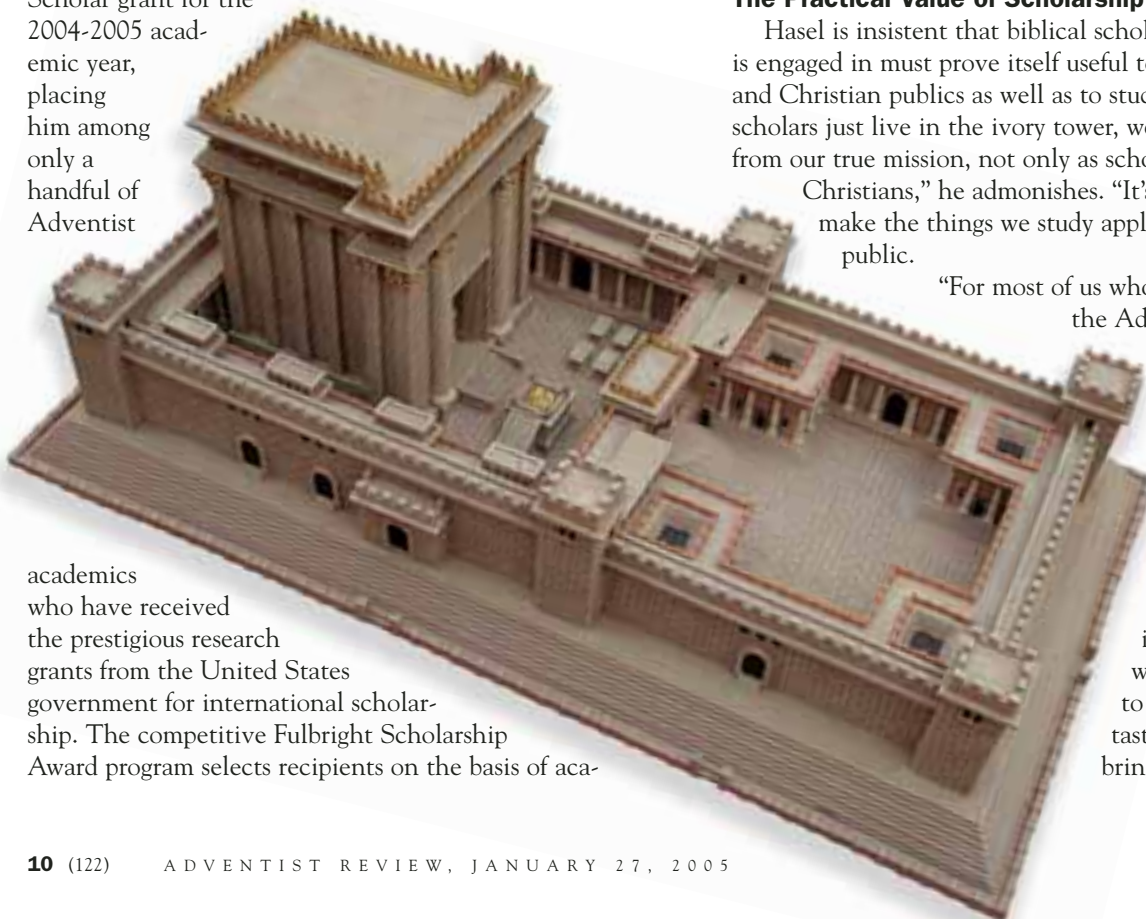
"By looking at actual place names and studying the historical underpinnings obtained through objective research in archaeology, I'm hoping that my work can provide assurance that we do have a reliable record in the biblical story."

The Practical Value of Scholarship

Hasel is insistent that biblical scholarship of the kind he is engaged in must prove itself useful to the wider Adventist and Christian publics as well as to students in classrooms. "If scholars just live in the ivory tower, we're isolating ourselves from our true mission, not only as scholars, but as

Christians," he admonishes. "It's important for us to make the things we study applicable to the general public.

"For most of us who have grown up in the Adventist Church, we've read these Bible stories again and again, and we think we know them—and we do, to a certain extent. But archaeology provides such a new and unique dimension, especially in the contemporary world where we want to touch and feel and taste everything. It just brings it to life."



Hasel found that the biblical world came vividly alive to him as a child and teenager through the stories and slides his father shared with the family. Gerhard Hasel, longtime professor of Old Testament at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, was a much-published scholar of international reputation, and served as dean of the seminary from 1981 to 1988. Michael credits his father's interest in the Old Testament and the trip he shared with his dad to the Middle East as a teenager with sparking his own interest in what he is doing today.

The younger Hasel also felt an enduring call to ministry rising in his life during his teen years in Berrien Springs, fanned by significant conversations with his pastor-grandfather in Germany. He held the two possible career tracks—archaeology and pastoral ministry—in tension through his college experience, during which he completed a bachelor's degree in theology and worked as a volunteer in the university's archaeology museum. Several summers were spent on archaeological digs in Palestine, and Michael was a frequent attendee at specialized lectures occurring on the university campus.

In the summer of 1990, a month spent colporteur-ing in the New Jersey Conference introduced him to his future wife, Giselle. Though they had both been studying at Andrews University for several years, they had never met. Their courtship stretched over the next two years as she finished a degree in illustration and graphic design and he prepared for a future that he hoped would include both pastoral ministry and scholarship.

A Fruitful Relationship

That same summer Michael also spent a month excavating in Israel at the site of ancient Gezer under the direction of William Dever, then the most prominent American archaeologist working in the Middle East and director of a prestigious academic program in Near Eastern archaeology at

the University of Arizona. After he and Giselle were married in 1992, Michael enrolled in Dever's program, and quickly forged a bond with a man at the center of much scholarly debate about biblical archaeology.

Though Dever shared few of Hasel's religious commitments, he earned Michael's admiration for his openness, his honesty, and the respect he showed for Michael's faith.

"I remember him saying right after I arrived in Arizona, 'You know, Michael, I know what background you come from, and I've known your father for many years and have read his books. I just want to let you know that I don't

*Michael is
passionate about
his role as a
teacher and pastor
to the dozens of
students with
whom he interacts
each day.*

care what you think or how you position yourself theologically, as long as you do good archaeology; that's what's going to count in this program."

"I've always respected Dr. Dever as a scholar, as an archaeologist, and as a friend," Michael adds. "It's been a good relationship over the years."

The value of that enduring friendship became apparent to the Southern Adventist University community in January 2000, when Dever placed more than 200 ancient art pieces and objects on the campus under the promise that they would one day be housed in a museum there. Establishing an archaeological museum on the campus had

long been the dream of the dean of the School of Religion, Jack Blanco. Hasel's personal and professional relationship with the eminent scholar provided the occasion.

The remarkable collection of complete sequences of juglets, jars, lamps, and bowls as well as stone and metal objects is displayed in the new museum to introduce visitors to the lands and life of ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Syria-Palestine, Greece, and Anatolia. Experts consider the Dever contribution to the new Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum to be one of the finest collections of Near Eastern antiquities in North America.

"Museums—at least good ones—are built around a respect for the *real thing*, real artifacts," Hasel adds with a smile. "Replicas or even pictures won't do: you have to be able to display the actual items that illustrate how life was lived in the ancient world. The items from the Dever collection are exhibited in a visually stunning display, and they're accompanied by more than 200 photographs, paintings, and maps that focus each case on a different aspect of life in the ancient world."

A Focus on Faith

As excited as he clearly is about the opening of the new museum and the impressive collection it houses, Michael is even more passionate about his role as a teacher and pastor to the dozens of students with whom he interacts each day in his classroom and office. He credits the years he spent pastoring two congregations near Detroit, Michigan, between the completion of his Ph.D. and his employment at Southern Adventist University with sharpening his skills as a listener and guide to students.

"I often say that being a pastor is the highest calling anyone can have," Hasel says solemnly. "All of us here who teach in the School of Religion function in that capacity as well, as we counsel with students and work with them. It may mean talking with them about faith issues, baptizing them

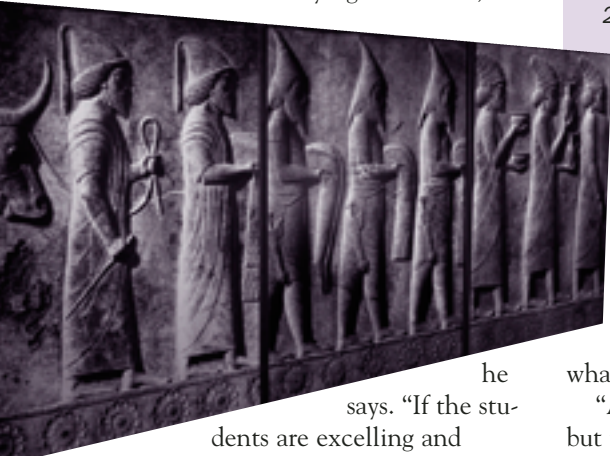
when they've made a commitment to faith, or even marrying a couple you've had in classes through the years. Those are all important elements that we're involved with."

"I've had the privilege of attending his Old Testament class," says Rita Vital, an Adventist retiree in Collegedale who used to direct the church's health ministry van outreach in Boston. "I've gotten such a blessing out of his classes that I asked him if I could invite some non-Adventist friends—and they're loving it too!"

"He's the reason I've decided to refocus my career plans," murmurs one admiring student who helped to guide the guests through the new museum on the opening night. "He's a first-rate scholar, respected by people in his profession. He's got the gift of making learning accessible and fun and inspiring all at once. And he's clearly a godly man."

Hasel himself blushes to hear such things, waving away the compliments. "It has really been amazing to see the level of commitment the students in this program bring," he notes, pointing to the seven graduates and 25 students enrolled in the university's bachelor degree program in archaeology. "Last summer, when we were excavating at Hazor (a prominent biblical site in northern Israel), I was so impressed by their performance and their attitude, as were the Hebrew University professors who were running the excavation.

"To me, that speaks for the success of what we're trying to do here,"



he says. "If the students are excelling and doing well, that matters more than the museum or the professors. We've been

Working on So Many Levels

BY BILL KNOTT

"Good museums educate. Excellent museums inspire."

Measured by that maxim, the new Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum (inaugurated by "Vessels in Time: A Journey Into the Biblical World") is one of the best anywhere in Adventism—a technically strong and accessible exhibit that never loses sight of its goal to make the life ways of the biblical world understandable to contemporary people.

Having spent many hours in large archaeological collections in Paris, London, Rome, and New York, I'll admit to having steeled myself for what I would encounter on the lower level of the School of Religion's Hackman Hall. For the typical layperson, which I am for all things archaeological, such collections can sometimes seem remote, an exercise in gaining information that rarely moves the spirit.

Despite my reservations, I quickly became a fan of the new museum, perhaps just because it is smaller and less ambitious than collections in major metropolises. The signage and illustrations, designed and executed by Giselle Hasel, wife of curator Michael Hasel, are superb and inviting. The museum's sequenced collections of ancient vessels are arranged in clear chronological order and with reference to major historical events occurring at the same time. The re-creation of a rural Hebrew house from the era of the united monarchy underscores the human scale of the entire exhibit.

Display cases do not overwhelm: each item seems specifically chosen for its place. Artifacts displayed span an impressive 3,300-year history from the Early Bronze Age to the first century A.D., and illustrate both urban and rural life, developments in clothing, trade, commerce, and agriculture, and the rise of the monarchy in ancient Israel. A major feature of the museum is the innermost atrium, designed to illustrate the interior of Solomon's Temple. The unusually high ceiling and richly decorated walls of this space provide fascinating glimpses into the building that was the center of Israel's worship.

A magnificent 1/72 scale model of the massive royal audience chamber of the Persian capital of Susa also brings the biblical story of Esther approaching Ahasuerus (Xerxes) fearsomely to life.

Most tellingly, the kids who visited the museum on the night I was there seemed to be greatly enjoying it as well.

A museum that can "work" for scholars, middle-aged laypersons, and children—all at the same time—is doing many things very well.

For more information about museum hours and exhibits, call 423-236-2030, or visit www.archaeology.southern.edu.

fortunate to get a good group of young people here, and not just in archaeology. It's encouraging to me to see these students so eager about faith, so eager about Scripture, so eager to show the world the evidence that undergirds what we believe."

"A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor,"* says the proverb. So long as persons like Michael Hasel continue to

invest in Adventist higher education, neither they nor their students will lack for honor, both here and above.

*Prov. 29:23, NKJV.

Bill Knott is an associate editor of the Adventist Review.



Graced to Teach

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Why do we need a Matthew, a Mark, a Luke, a John, a Paul, and all the writers who have borne testimony in regard to the life and ministry of the Saviour? Why could not one of the disciples have written a complete record and thus have given us a connected account of Christ's earthly life? Why does one writer bring in points that another does not mention? Why, if these points are essential, did not all these writers mention them? It is because the minds of men differ. Not all comprehend things in exactly the same way. Certain Scripture truths appeal much more strongly to the minds of some than of others.

The same principle applies to speakers. One dwells at considerable length on points that others would pass by quickly or not mention at all. The whole truth is presented more clearly by several than by one. The Gospels differ, but the records of all blend in one harmonious whole.

So today the Lord does not impress all minds in the same way. Often through unusual experiences, under special circumstances, He gives to some Bible students views of truth that others do not grasp. It is possible for the most learned teacher to fall far short of teaching all that should be taught. . . .

The teacher's success will depend largely upon the spirit which is brought into the work. A profession of faith does not make men Christians; but if teachers will open their hearts to the study of the Word, they will be able to aid their students to a clearer understanding. Let not the spirit of controversy come in, but let each seek earnestly for the light and knowledge that he needs.

God's Word is true philosophy, true science. Human opinions and sensational preaching amount to very little. Those who are imbued with the Word of God will teach it in the same simple way that Christ taught it. The world's greatest Teacher used the simplest language and the plainest symbols.

The Lord calls upon His shepherds to feed the flock with pure provender. He would have them present the truth in its simplicity. When this work is faithfully done, many will be convicted and converted by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is need of Bible teachers who will come close to the unconverted, who will search for the lost sheep, who will do personal labor and will give clear, definite instruction.

Never utter sentiments of doubt. Christ's teaching was always positive in its nature. With a tone of assurance bear an affirmative message. Lift up the Man of Calvary higher and still higher; there is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ.

It is the student's privilege to have clear and accurate ideas of the truth of the Word, that he may be prepared to present these truths to other minds. He should be rooted and grounded in the faith. Students should be led to think for themselves, to see the force of truth for themselves, and to speak every word from a heart full of love and tenderness. Urge upon their minds the vital truths of the Bible. Let them repeat these truths in their own language, that you may be sure that they clearly comprehend them. Be sure that every point is fastened upon the mind. This may be a slow process, but it is of ten times more value than rushing over important subjects without giving them due consideration. It is not enough that the student believe the truth for himself. He must be drawn out to state this truth clearly in his own words, that it may be evident that he sees the force of the lesson and makes its application.

In all your teaching never forget that the greatest lesson to be taught and to be learned is the lesson of copartnership with Christ in the work of salvation. The education to be secured by searching the Scriptures is an experimental knowledge of the plan of salvation. Such an education will restore the image of God in the soul. It will strengthen and fortify the mind against temptation and fit the learner to become a worker with Christ in His mission of mercy to the world. It will make him a member of the heavenly family, prepare him to share the inheritance of the saints in light.

This article is drawn from Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pp. 432-435. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.



From Basketball to Bible Studies

How to mobilize your members for ministry

BY DAN SERNS

I THINK EVERY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST wants to be part of an active, vibrant church. And one to which we would feel comfortable bringing our friends. Unfortunately, few churches seem to have found a way to muster more than 20 percent of their members to engage in ministries they enjoy.

I'd like to share with you the top three things that I believe can add life to your church. I wish I had learned these things 20 years ago when I was starting my pastoral ministry! I believe I would have had a much greater impact in God's work in the local church.

1. Baptism is a God-given ordination to a lifetime of ministry.

This principle has tremendous implications. It means that everyone who is a baptized member is already *ordained for ministry*! The church's job is not to beg or coax them to minister, but to help them recognize that the next step is up to them—to find a ministry and go for it. Conversely, if a person is not yet ready to be involved in regular service or ministry, then they are not yet ready for baptism.

What is the biblical evidence for this? Consider the following:

- Jesus' baptism marked the official beginning of His ministry.
- When spiritual gifts are discussed in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul explains that baptism is the initiation process of becoming part of the body and using your gifts (see verse 13).
- In Ephesians 4 Paul discusses the role of the equipping gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors who teach, verse 11) that are "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (verse 12, NIV). He makes it clear that this is within the context of unity in baptism (verse 5).

- In Romans 6 Paul explains the meaning of baptism, and six chapters later tells his readers to use the gifts they have been given (Rom. 12:4-8).

- When Peter talks about the importance of each member using the gifts God has given (1 Peter 4:10), he has already emphasized 11 verses earlier the importance of baptism in this process (1 Peter 3:21).

Carlos Martin, a professor at Southern Adventist University, points out that the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century began to discover this biblical truth and called it the priesthood of all believers. They said that baptism was not sprinkling water on babies before they knew what was happening to them. Instead, baptism should take place when a person is old enough to repent, surrender their life to Jesus Christ, be taught the basic principles of the Bible, and *be ready to minister to the needs of others in service and outreach*. As the candidate for baptism was standing in the water, the pastor would not raise his hand toward heaven, as is often the case now. Instead, he would place his hand on the head, signifying an ordination to a lifetime of ministry. Being baptized "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" was recognized as the time at which God gave the candidate power to live a godly life, which included service to God and others.

Ellen White echoed these thoughts when she wrote, "We are to be consecrated channels, through which the heavenly life is to flow to others. . . . The commission has been given to us. Upon us is laid a sacred charge. Go then, Christ says to them. Make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 'And, lo,' He declares, 'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' You are dedicated to the work of making known the gospel of salvation."¹



"All who are *ordained* unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. Their hearts will throb in unison with the heart of Christ. The same longing for souls that He has felt will be manifest in them. Not all can fill the same place in the work, but there is a place and a work for all."²

Share these biblical principles with your friends, Sabbath school class, church leaders, church board, and pastor as the opportunity arises. As a church becomes more aware of these biblical truths, more members take their God-given role in the body of Christ, and the church becomes more vibrant.

2. Use the four connections: God-partner-coach-flock.

I have often had church members say to me, "Pastor, don't you think we ought to start this ministry or that ministry in the church?" When I first began pastoring, I thought I had to take all the good ideas and do something about them. I was headed for rapid burnout! One day it dawned on me that if God gave a good idea to one of my members, maybe He wanted *them* to do something about it. But what should I encourage them to do? That's where the four connections approach comes in.

If someone comes to me with a great idea (or what they think is a great idea), I tell them that "God has given *them* this idea because He wants *them* to do something with it. And here are the steps to take to start a ministry:

- Make sure your connection with God is up-to-date, that you are surrendered to Him, and that you seek His will each day.

- Next, find a partner who will help you plan and carry out this ministry. Even if the idea seems wild or weird, if you follow this process, you and your partner may be able to reach some wild and weird people for Jesus—and there are plenty of them we need to reach!

- Once you have developed a plan of action with your partner, ask a church board member to be your coach. The coach's role is not to run or do the ministry, but to listen to the ideas and to give counsel to keep you from going into the ditch. As soon as a church board member agrees to be your coach, you are an official ministry of the church. On the other hand, if your coach ever lets you know they can no longer serve as your coach, you must find another church board member to serve as coach in order to remain an official ministry of the church. Your coach serves as your link

to the official leadership group of the church, and represents you on the board as needed.

- When you have your connection with God, partner, and coach, your final connection is with your flock—those you will minister to. Go recruit them!

I had recently baptized Jim. He was excited about being part of his new church family. I told him it was very important for him to find his ministry soon. About three weeks after baptism he told me, "Pastor, I love computers, and I want to teach a computer class as my ministry."

"Great!" I said. "Are you keeping your connection with God up-to-date?"

"Yes."

"Now you need to find a ministry partner to help you plan and do your ministry, and a church board member to listen to your plans and give you counsel and encouragement."

The next Sabbath after church Jim could hardly wait to talk to me.

"Pastor, Doug is my partner and Rick is my coach. What's next?"

"Next, you need to recruit your flock. Invite members and nonmembers to join your class. Then go for it!"

"Pastor, I've already lined up 11 computers and talked to the church

secretary about a room for Thursday nights!"

Jim ran the class for 12 weeks. What were the results? Two of the 11 who signed up were not church members but came regularly and made friends with the members. One of the church members who attended got a better job because of the skill learned. There was no cost to the church. Several people were mobilized in ministry, and a new member discovered how to use his gifts in ministry.

Using the God-partner-coach-flock connection approach could help a church quickly mobilize members in recreation ministries (e.g., cycling, skiing, rafting, basketball, volleyball, skateboarding, motorcycle ministries), ministries targeting those with specific needs (homelessness, blindness, deafness, terminal illness, recent divorce, etc.), and more direct soul winning (Bible study groups, Bible seminars, video seminars, new Sabbath school classes, and even baptismal classes).

It all begins with one person to whom God has given one idea and who is empowered to act in an accountable way. *And that person can be you!*

3. Challenge the nominating committee to contact all attending members to discover their interests.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church follows a plan in which every year or two certain key positions in the church are filled through a nominating committee process outlined in the *Church Manual*. Sometimes this process becomes routine and, unfortunately, can be quite tedious.

Our church has experimented with an approach to ministry in the past few years that protects a system of accountability and, at the same time, involves many more people in ministry without the frustration. I'll give you the simple

steps we have used, and let you adapt them to your own situation.

1. We enlarged the size of the nominating committee (nomcom) so that we had one nomcom member for every 12 attending households.

2. We divided the attending households among the nomcom members, making sure we didn't overlook any newly baptized or transferred members. The designated nomcom member was the one to make all contacts with his or her households through the entire process.

3. The first assignment for each nomcom member was to contact the 12 homes assigned and say something like this: "Hi, I'm Susan, calling from the church nominating committee. We aren't asking anyone to serve yet, but

we do have two requests. First, please pray for us during your family worship as we try to place people in the best ministry positions possible. And second, from each person in the family,

I'd like to hear some ways they might like to serve during the coming year." A lot of great information was collected during these calls.

4. When nomcom met again to continue their work, they had a wealth of information to use in filling the regular positions. They were also able to recommend additional ministry groups and assignments to the church.

I remember when we first began this approach. Richard was the nomcom member who had our home on his list of attending households. He called one evening, and my wife, Lois, answered the phone. When asked how she might like to be involved, she told him she enjoyed planning one worship service each month and helping with song service for Sabbath school each week. She would be happy to continue

with this if needed. Also she said she would enjoy helping with teen Sabbath school since we had two teens of our own.

Then Richard asked her about each of our children's interests. Lois talked with each one and relayed the information about their willingness to help with music and children's church, and to be members of the Pathfinder Club. Lois also said that her husband was busy enough as pastor not to take on additional responsibilities! That evening we prayed for the mission of the nominating committee as requested.

During the next few weeks there were a couple more calls confirming or adjusting ministry assignments. When the nominating committee report was presented to the church a month later, it included the names of my wife and all three of my children, as well as dozens of others who usually had not been given any ministry role. They all knew that they were wanted and needed in carrying out the church's mission.

Ready for Action

God has given the Seventh-day Adventist Church a tremendous mission. As more members see what piece of the mission God has given them, we can expect to see new blood flow through the arteries of the church body, and new life in our churches and communities. The Adventist message will be expressed in a greater variety of ways through a growing number of members. And soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior will go to the entire world!

¹Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 28.

²Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 301. (Italics supplied.)

*It all begins with
one person to
whom God has
given one idea.*

Dan Serns pastors, plants churches, goes on mission trips, and enjoys his family in Wenatchee, Washington, which is called the apple capital of the world.



Judgment Day

My mother, more than once, has expressed disappointment with my life, wasted (she believes) as a writer and editor for the Adventist Church. I should have been (she laments) what in youth I had always longed to be, a novelist.

My mom took her premise (a rejection of God and the Bible) to its logical conclusion: *my son spends his life promoting a god who doesn't exist. If that's not a waste, what is?*

How obvious: everything that exists in our consciousness comes parsed, tinted, and interpreted from a perspective. The world arrives to us through our own personal filters, and because these filters are constructed from endless unconscious and often inexplicable variables, we each see reality differently. "There are," wrote scientist Ian Barbour, "trillions of neurons in a human brain; the number of possible ways of connecting them is greater than the number of atoms in the universe." (No wonder some folks like crunchy instead of creamy peanut butter.)

Running (slightly amok) with that idea, that the world is known only through our minds, that each mind views the world differently, and that we can never get out of our minds in order to see the world for what it really is, some philosophers had discarded the world out there entirely. *We can never know it, so who needs it?* Let's deal with what we can know, and because that's the only phenomena, the experiences of our own subjective minds, there's no sense speculating about reality as it really is, or about the Absolute, or about the Truth. The only reality we can know is a mediated reality—a premise that has helped frame the foundation for postmodernism and the moral relativism so regnant today.

Yet the notion of a "mediated" reality undercuts the relativism that arises from it: to modify the term *reality* is to assume that reality exists. A horse, red or brown, is still a horse. Reality, mediated, is still reality. That we can't know this reality "objectively" doesn't mean it's not there any more than that because we can't "objectively" know God means He's not there either.

But for now it is true—we do see a

mediated reality, or, as Paul said, we see through "a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12); and we each see through that "glass, darkly" differently, which explains why on even the basics, the broadest a priori fundamentals, humans radically, even violently, disagree.

However, judgment day is coming, when the One in whom all things exist; the One in whom we live, move, and have our being; the One who is Truth and the source of all truth will strip away every contingency, every ambiguity, every excuse, and we will confront the Absolute, face-to-face, with every mouth stopped (Rom. 3:19). On judgment day many of the certitudes, the first principles and axioms with which we pulverized our enemies and mounted our moral high ground will melt off the bone before the One in whom there is no "shadow of turning" (James 1:17). What the world deemed great—the heroes it worshipped, the standards of worth, success, and genius it rammed into our childhoods—will crumble into "the chaff of the summer threshing-floors" (Dan. 2:35). Before the Absolute, even our math will look as transient and fleeting as fashions.

The question I ponder, though, is this: on judgment day, how will I—with all my selfishness, errors, and unrighteousness—fare before the Absolute standard of selflessness, truth, and righteousness? To stand before the Absolute is a thought that makes me cringe with fear! The only hope I harbor, the only one, is that Jesus—"the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), the "express image" of the Father (Heb. 1:3)—will take my place. How could anyone, with all our contingency and compromise, stand before the Absolute unless we have Someone in whom that Absolute has been met, in whom that Absolute has been fulfilled?

If I have no Substitute, one who embodies the Absolute, then on judgment day I will be condemned, and if condemned, lost. If so, though not in the sense she meant it, my mother would be right: my life's a waste.



Clifford Goldstein is editor of the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide.

Tsunami Kills Thousands in Southern Asia, ADRA and Adventist Church Move to Help

BY RICK MCEWARD, NEWS WRITER, ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

Nations in southern Asia are still reeling in the wake of the devastating tsunami that swamped coastlines from

Indonesia to Africa on December 26. Hundreds of fishing villages have been decimated, towns have been destroyed, and many tourist resorts have been flooded. It is estimated that more than 150,000 people perished as a result of the crushing waves that struck following the 9.0 Richter scale earthquake with the epicenter near northern Indonesia.

Sri Lanka's hardest hit areas are in the south of the island and along the east coast, and more than 1 million people in that country have been left homeless. For the first 36 hours after the tsunami, relief efforts were hampered because some roads were entirely cut off. Two days later small byroads were being used to bring needed relief supplies to those in the affected areas.

The people of Sri Lanka have been pouring out to help with relief efforts. Television stations organized relief drop-off depots in most villages, and people emptied supermarket shelves to provide dry rations for those who were homeless. Delivery trucks volunteered to drive supplies to the worst hit areas, and virtually every village in the island has been working to save lives.

"What can be said in the face of a

tragedy such as this?" General Conference president Jan Paulsen asked in a statement issued on the disaster. "It is on a scale that is difficult to comprehend.

the general public through ADRA International; the second is for helping to reestablish the lives of church members who have lost everything in the flood. That effort is being conducted

by a committee appointed to deal with the disaster.

"ADRA is on the ground in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and India, responding to and assessing the damage," said Frank Teeuwen, bureau chief for disaster preparedness and response for ADRA International.

While ADRA addresses the pressing needs in the country at large, the Adventist Church in Sri Lanka is focusing its energy on

locating and aiding members who have been affected by the disaster. About 20 Adventist congregations in Sri Lanka are located in coastal areas.

According to Wijetunge Anthony, president of the church in Sri Lanka, "In the coastal town of Thoduwawa many members went inland and stayed overnight in the Adventist church in the village of Diganwala."

He added, "At this time it appears the hardest hit Adventist church is the Kalmunai church," which is located on the east coast. The entire city was devastated by the rushing waves. The pastor, P. Jeyraman, was in the town with a friend when the tidal wave hit. They ran inland for 10 miles, not knowing how far the floods would come.



PICKING UP THE PIECES: Locals in Penang, Malaysia, attempt to rescue their fishing boats.

"We are called to be agents of hope and healing in this world," Paulsen continued. "Healing has both physical and spiritual dimensions, and we will do our best to provide both."

Two separate relief efforts are being coordinated by Adventists. One is for



SURVIVORS: The tsunami left more than 1 million people homeless in Sri Lanka alone.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PENANG ADVENTIST HOSPITAL

PHOTO BY REUTERS/DARREN WHITESIDE, COURTESY WWW.ALERTNET.ORG

Meanwhile, a large truck was thrown on top of Jeyraman's house, which was also looted.

Two Adventist hospitals in the region opened their doors to help vic-

tims of the disaster. The Lakeside Adventist Hospital in Kandy, Sri Lanka, has opened a dry rations and clothes collection center at the hospital, according to Percy Dias, hospital president.

And the Penang Adventist Hospital in Malaysia set up a control center and holding area at the hospital's lecture hall to assist in the relief of the victims of the island's first tsunami attack.

Nine Adventists Killed in India by Tsunami, Hundreds Lose Homes and Businesses

BY SANDRA BLACKMER, NEWS EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Six Adventist women and three children from the coastal villages of Andhra Pradesh, India, were killed as a result of the December 26 tsunami, reported Ron Watts, president of the Southern Asia Division. Hundreds of church members in India also lost or experienced damage to their homes, their possessions, and their livelihoods.

According to Watts, families of fishermen are among the hardest hit. "Members of the Periyathazhai church in Tamil Nadu are providing meals for 300 fishermen and their families," said Watts. "Thirty Adventist families in two villages lost their fishing boats and nets. Ten other families in the village of Idinthakarai on the Tuticorin coast also lost their boats and gear, and they are being housed at the Adventist church near Vallioor. Church members there are feeding 50 people three meals a day."

Church officials in Tamil Nadu



PHOTO BY NORUYUKI AOKI/ADRA JAPAN

LIVELIHOODS LOST: Families of fishermen are among the hardest hit in coastal areas of India.

reported that scores of Adventists in that state lost their homes and possessions. One man's grocery shop, including all his merchandise, was swept out to sea.

The rice paddy crops of nine church members in Binginapalli, Andhra Pradesh, are also said to be destroyed, and damage to the homes of 65 families from 20 churches on the Bay of Bengal near Ongole in southeast Andhra

Pradesh was reported. The boats and fishing nets of more than 40 families in this area were also either lost or damaged.

On January 4 the Southern Asia Division Executive Committee voted to ask every Adventist Church employee in India, including pastors, hospital and school employees, and retirees, to contribute a minimum of one day's wages to the relief efforts for victims of the tsunami, according to Watts. The committee also voted to contribute the offering taken in every Adventist church in India on the first Sabbath in February to the relief fund for church members affected by the tsunami. Compared to those in many other areas of the world, however, salaries of church employees in India are low, so financial assistance from the world church is still greatly needed.

To make a donation to the Asia Tsunami Crisis Fund, go to www.adra.org or call 800-424-ADRA (2372).—AR.

ADRA Increases Response to Tsunami Survivors

BY ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY INTERNATIONAL STAFF

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) continues to provide aid to tsunami survivors in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India.

ADRA/Indonesia coordinated a team of medical experts from regional hospitals to provide medical services

along the coast near Banda Aceh. Hospital tents will be established to deliver medical services. ADRA/Indonesia has partnered with a local nongovernmental organization (NGO) and recruited local volunteers to provide assistance in the delivery of food, water, medical supplies, and essential

nonfood items to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). ADRA is one of only two organizations working in Meulaboh, on the west coast of Aceh province, which was the hardest hit by the disaster and subsequently the most inaccessible.

In coordination with the health

department of the local government, ADRA/Thailand provided protective wear for workers assisting with the retrieval, transport, and storage of bodies. Supplies included 7,000 face masks, 1,000 pairs of gloves, and 100 aprons.

In Sri Lanka ADRA is operating a water purification unit that can produce 50,000 liters per day. Three additional units are being provided that will process an additional 80,000 liters of water per day. There are also 300,000 water purification tablets ready to be used as required.

ADRA/Sri Lanka will be assisting in the task of removing and burying bodies that pose a major health risk. ADRA is importing 200 foggers that clean and deodorize bodies and areas where they have been decomposing.

ADRA distributed medical aid in the Hambantota district in Sri Lanka, one of the hardest hit areas. The aid included a three-month supply of medical items for 10,000 people.

In India ADRA continues to provide 7,250 IDPs with food in Tamil Nadu. Two water purification units are providing drinking water in this region.

ADRA International urgently solicits emergency donations for this response. Only monetary donations are being accepted.

Donations can be made to the Asia Tsunami Crisis Fund online at www.adra.org or by calling 800-424-ADRA (2372).

For Your Good Health



NEWS BREAK

WORLD CHURCH: *Adult Bible Study Guide* Launches Web Site

The 25 million people worldwide who use the weekly *Adult Bible Study Guide* lessons produced by the Adventist Church have a new online ally: a Web site that provides each weekly lesson, teacher's notes, and other aids.

Although the lessons have been available online for many years via ssnet.org, a new private Web site that operates with permission to use the copyrighted materials has been developed—absg.adventist.org. It is the first official site for the study guide, which celebrated its 150th anniversary last year.

"We want to make the *Adult Bible Study Guide* more accessible and reach as many people as we can," says Clifford Goldstein, who is completing his fifth year as editor of the global publication.

Larrie Gray, editorial assistant for the department, added that the new Web site is also designed to make a systematic program of Bible studies available to people outside the Adventist Church who want to study the Scriptures.

Approximately 500,000 copies of each study guide are

printed and sold in North America by Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho. Millions more are translated into approximately 100 languages in countries around the world.—*Adventist News Network/AR*.

NEW YORK: Adventists Support U.N. Celebration on Human Rights Day

As hundreds marched through Times Square on December 10, the fifty-sixth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, people from New York to Vietnam, Botswana to Paris, joined the United Nations (U.N.) celebrations, calling for education and action. Adventists were among those who supported these celebrations.

"Human rights education is much more than a lesson in schools or a theme for a day," said U.N. secretary-general Kofi Annan. "It is a process to equip people with the tools they need to live lives of security and dignity."

The General Assembly dedicated the morning plenary session to reviewing the achievements of the U.N. Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). In Geneva U.N. high commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour said the day "is a call to action in the face of the enormous effort needed to make human rights a

Puff and Nonsense: A Look at Not-So-Harmless Marijuana

BY JAMES COFFIN, SENIOR PASTOR OF MARKHAM WOODS CHURCH IN LONGWOOD, FLORIDA, AND DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL MISSION'S CENTER FOR SECULAR/POSTMODERN MISSION

During a recent flight to Australia I sat beside a bearded, long-haired throwback from the 1960s. So when the subject of legalizing marijuana arose, I expected him to be a supporter.

I couldn't have been more wrong.

"I have extremely strong feelings about this topic," he told me, his eyes welling and his voice becoming husky. He then described his son's marijuana-induced schizophrenia and its attendant horrors. He revealed

his own anguish by saying, "I guess parents are never happier than their unhappiest child. So my wife and I have not had much happiness for several years."

A few days later I learned more of the story of not-so-harmless marijuana—from an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (December 13, 2004).

According to a quote cited from the *British Medical Journal*, "Exposure to cannabis during adolescence and young adulthood increases the risk of psychotic symptoms later in

life." With the average age of first-time users now at 16, use by 13-year-olds isn't uncommon.

Ian Hickie, professor of psychiatry at the University of Sydney, stated in the *Herald* article that modern imaging techniques show that the brain continues to develop—mainly in the frontal lobes, where many higher cognitive functions take place—at least until the early 20s.

"The earlier the exposure to drugs . . . the more likely it is there'll be harm,"

said Hickie.

The day I discovered the *Herald* article, I had lunch with a pastor friend. When I mentioned what I'd read, he said, with evident pain, "That's exactly what happened to my son."

When it comes to marijuana, the scriptural warning of Proverbs 14:12 (NIV) couldn't be more apropos: "There is a way that seems right to a man [at least to far too many], but in the end it leads to death [or a life so diminished that death might be preferable]."

NEWS COMMENTARY

NEWS BREAK

reality for everyone. One strategy to achieve that reality is education." Arbour, who met Adventist Church U.N. liaison director Jonathan Gallagher soon after her appointment as commissioner, thanked the Adventist Church for its continued support in speaking out on issues of discrimination and violations of human rights.

Events marking Human Rights Day included the release of *ABC: Teaching Human Rights*, a practical hands-on booklet for primary and secondary school students that was published by the U.N. high commissioner for Human Rights in partnership with the U.N. Economic and Social Council Division for the Promotion of Quality Education. It includes activities that teach respect for others and the environment, information on basic rights and freedoms, and material about how to fight discrimination.

"For many years the Adventist Church has spoken out for the rights of others," says Eugene Hsu, a General Conference vice president who helps oversee the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. "So it is appropriate on such a special occasion to say that we will continue to promote human rights for all individuals, including their right to basic education, health care, and religious beliefs."

For more information about the church work at the United

Nations, visit un.adventist.org.—Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty/AR.

HONOLULU: 86-Year-Old Adventist Woman Completes Marathon

Gladys Burrill, 86, made history on December 12, 2004, as the oldest woman to ever complete the Honolulu Marathon. And just over nine hours after crossing the starting line, she finished first in her division.

Last year while watching the marathon, Burrill says she was overcome with the desire to participate. So in January 2004 she began to train so regularly that her neighbors have become accustomed to the sight of her speed-walking.

Those who know her are not surprised at her energy and tenacity. Burrill, a member of the Medford Adventist Church in Oregon, has raised six children, is grandmother to 18, and is great-grandmother to 14. She has also climbed Oregon's Mount Hood and explored the part of Alaska that's in the Arctic Circle.—Oregon Conference Communication Department/AR.

Food for Thought

Funny how some foods evoke tasty memories. Such is the case with my mother's peanut butter balls. These sticky sweets bring me right back to the projects in Queens, New York, where I spent part of a happy childhood.

As a child I didn't realize that what we called "the projects" were, in fact, federally funded housing projects for the financially disenfranchised. Our building was comprised of six stories of identical apartments, with towers in the middle and at each end. To the left and to the right as far as you could see were ever more identical buildings of identical towers of identical apartments. We had concrete lawns, an armed police officer in the playground, a basketball court where the boys played on hot summer nights, and scattered park benches where old women soaked in the morning sun. This was home.

My parents worked hard to provide for our needs, and once in a while they managed a little something extra for us. Among Mom's extras were those strange peanut butter balls. The recipe had just three ingredients: peanut butter, honey, and powdered milk. Simply mix everything till it's the right texture. Form balls or squares, or (our favorite shape of all) just squash it in your hand. Refrigerate till chilled and firm, checking and sampling way too often.

Perhaps we treasured these treats because we got to mix the stuff with our hands. Maybe we prized them because no one else we knew had a mother who made such delicacies, so they were uniquely ours.

Twenty-five years passed before another truth dawned on me: those simple ingredients—the powdered milk, honey, and peanut butter—were government surplus foods provided to families in the projects. Mom must have invented this recipe because those ingredients were often all she had to work with. Instead of despairing, Mom set to work to find a way to use what she had to bring us joy.

Sadly, by the time I finally realized this, my mother had died. I wanted to tell her of my belated flash of insight, to thank her for all the wonderful things this recipe symbolizes about her: the way she always managed to bring something good out of something bad. How she could make a celebration out of almost anything, or almost nothing. How we could take the little we had and make it attractive and homey, and keep it clean. That it's not what you're handed in life that determines who you are, but what you decide to

do with it. That when you combine all of life's unusual bits, you frequently discover something new and wonderful you might otherwise have missed—like the Gonzalezes, Roosenburgs, and Gilroys who lived around us, with languages and customs that were unfamiliar to us, but who created a wonderful neighborhood made better by each being there.

But Mom died before I fully understood the lessons of the peanut butter balls: it was too late to tell her that I finally got it. So now, once in a while, at holiday times, or when it's been too long since I've seen my siblings, or when I'm especially sad about the people I've lost in my life, or when I entertain children who I sense need to understand such lessons, I'll make up a batch of Mom's famous peanut butter balls.

My mom would tell you: "You've always got the ingredients on hand to whip up a batch of love. Or to do whatever it is that God has asked you to do. Use what you have. Stop focusing on what you can't do, lost, or weren't given. Stop reciting, 'If only we had the money,' or 'If only I hadn't been so hurt,' or 'If only I could undo the things I've done.' Stop using your past experiences as an excuse to fail. Stop blaming others, including God, for all the things you had to do without. Even with every setback you've experienced, you have been given, in love, everything you need to accomplish what God has set before you. Figure out what you *do* have, and get cooking."

Anyway, that's what my mother would tell you.

Valerie Phillips is an associate dean of women at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where she has ministered to collegiate women for the past 25 years.



All-powerful or All Powerful?

Talking frankly about the most corrupting influence in the universe

BY JAMES LONDIS

LAST FALL A “DR. PHIL” SPECIAL AIRED ON U.S. television, focusing on families having problems with their children. Two family stories especially captured my interest. One mother could not say no to her 4-year-old daughter. She already owned 140 stuffed animals, and her mother always bought another one when her daughter told her she “wanted” it. In the second family, a father would not set boundaries for his teenage daughter who spent many afternoons in her bedroom with her boyfriend, door shut and locked. He said: “My child does not need my guidance. She can make her own decisions.”

Instead of these parents wielding appropriate power over their children, their children wielded power over them. Immature and ignorant people (especially children) who wield too much power almost always become tyrants. These

parents, to keep peace, gave in and would not take a stand. Such parental weakness guaranteed that when the children grew up, they would be disempowered and dysfunctional adults. Relinquishing parental power prematurely will corrupt children. In fact, too much power will corrupt anyone.

Lord Acton’s famous statement “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely” is true for any context and in any relationship. While we all recognize its implications for politics, business, family systems, and culture in general, I believe it may also apply to the church and our understanding of God. For example, can jockeying for power corrupt the operations of the church? Some will say that is a rhetorical question. Of course it does!

Might the corrupting tendency of power corrupt an all-powerful, omnipotent God? If “absolute power corrupts



absolutely,” is God the one exception? If so, how and why does God escape that corruption?

When Dictators Come to Power

We have seen what happens in nations run by dictators, including those leaders who proclaim that they “love” their people or “love” their country. Often such rulers seize power because, presumably, the situation is desperate. There is neither the time nor the culture for democratic processes. The pattern is so familiar: They acquire power ostensibly to serve the nation; in no time at all, the nation instead serves their lust for power. Once they have power, any threat to it is crushed, even to the point of raping, pillaging, and killing thousands of their own people. While democracies are not tyrannies addicted to power, they are not immune to its abuses. We have seen that in America and other democratic states. We sense that even if desired for the noblest purpose, power tends to corrupt.

Early in my ministry I received some advice from a conference leader. He said, “Jim, if you ever want to be a conference president, don’t tell anyone about it!” In our Adventist Church family we believe people should be “called out” of the congregation for leadership. This is a continuation of the prophetic tradition in the Hebrew Bible: God chooses prophets; the people choose kings. Just as you cannot run for the prophetic office, you should not “run” for the office of conference president—or even pastor. We are more comfortable offering the power of a prominent pulpit, even when that power is understood to be “servant” power, to those surprised by the offer than to those who seek it. We also suspect that even those who accept high office for the right reasons may (after

occupying that office) come to love it for its own sake and not for the good that can be done through it. Power tends to corrupt.

Yet We All Need It

As the philosopher Nietzsche observed, we are born with the “will to power.” We all need a measure of power. Totally powerless people, like slaves, lose their humanity. Plus, we learn very early the good things power can do for us.

Steven Spielberg describes a childhood event that seduced him into his moviemaking career. Because he was small and Jewish, one school yard bully made his life a living hell. Spielberg then acquired an 8mm camera and began making short movies. He asked the bully to “star” in one of them. The next thing Spielberg knew, the bully had become his best friend! That’s when the power of moviemaking captured him.

Our need (and desire) for power starts at birth. Every parent has experienced even infants asserting their wills against him or her. Later, as teenagers, our children desire to get out from “under” their parents as soon as possible (though this is not as pronounced in the children of baby boomers as it was in my generation). They want to control their own lives.

Like moths to burning candles, we fly to power.

This “will” or “lust” for power is a major concern in the Bible. It first appears as an issue in the Garden of Eden. The original temptation to Eve (then to Adam) was the suggestion that God withheld power from them: “If you eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” the serpent told them, “you shall be as gods” (see Gen. 3:5). God does not want any rivals.

*The first lie told
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have power.*



The first lie told to the human race was that God does not want us to have power. The God who created us to exercise stewardship for the earth was now being portrayed as the God who wanted to keep us powerless.

Later on in Scripture, when Yahweh decided to select a successor to King Saul, he picked a shepherd boy who had hardly been noticed until that moment. And, as we all know, Saul sought to kill him. Later generations would mirror Saul's lust for power. Israel's kings were often murdered by their children.

These examples bring us back to the question we asked at the beginning: if power can corrupt the best of us, how is God not corrupted by wielding absolute power over everything?

God and Power

A proper understanding of power must explain how God, the all-powerful deity, the one who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast (see Ps. 33:9), relates to His own omnipotence.

In Christian thought, while everything in the universe needs God for its existence, God is self-existent. God is "Being," as philosophers put it, which means that God is the one reality who must exist if anything else is to exist. Take God out of the universe, and everything disappears! God, further, created the universe out of *nothing*, which means that God did not need preexistent material to fashion the universe.

Knowing what we now know about the size and complexity of our universe, we realize that God possesses power that's truly inconceivable. This is not the power of God as "persuasion." This is raw power that will have its way, that no one or no thing can resist. God commands, and it happens. "Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

And yet Genesis remarks that when God was finished with the creation, God saw that "it was very good" (Gen.

1:31) and delighted in it. This language injects a moral dimension into the Creation. God is not satisfied with galaxies, black holes, quasars, pulsars, and atoms: something "good" must also be born, something with moral and spiritual integrity. God creates not to wield power, but to give it away.

Sin, as Genesis describes it, perverted the creation and our perception of the Creator. The irresistible physical power of God in creation was no longer seen as a manifestation of divine love, only divine arrogance. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

By populating the earth with free human beings capable of love and trust, God intentionally limited His

*It is a
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power over us—and at the same time increased His power for us. It's the difference, for example, between the power of Saddam Hussein and the power of Mahatma Gandhi, the difference between Stalin wanting power to rule over Russia, and Churchill wanting power to rule for Britain in its hour of greatest peril. Churchill was elated at his election to prime minister, for now he had the power to do what was essential if England was to defeat the Nazi threat.

These contrasts offer us a fundamental insight into how God wields power. The human race was not created so God would have people to push around. If that were true, God's power would isolate Him from us, even as masters are isolated from their

slaves. On the contrary, God created beings who could resist God if they wished. It is a contradiction for God (therefore impossible for God) to create free beings who are coerced by divine power. For us who are free, there is only the power of persuasion through example.

And that became very clear with Jesus. God seldom exercises divine power over us (there are biblical examples, and some might argue that the final judgment is one of them), *only for us*. Power *over* us would take power from us; power *for* us enhances our own power (and God's power with us). What greater power can an all-powerful God give us than that of resisting His will and threatening His universe?

Even the power to execute His Son?

So strongly does God want us to feel empowered, that Jesus told the disciples He would no longer call them servants, but "friends" (see John 15:15). The one who created all things, the one in whom we live and move and have our being, calls us "friends"? This is not the language of domination.

To Make Us All Powerful

Power can be wielded one of two ways: either it operates within the master-slave relationship or the teacher-student (or parent-child) relationship. In the master-slave relationship the master does everything possible to keep the slave a slave—powerless. If the slave's power increases, the master's power decreases.

In a teacher-student (or parent-child) relationship the teacher's goal is to empower the student to become the teacher's equal as quickly as possible. More and more power for the student is the mark of success. Does this lessen the teacher's power? Yes, it does, if you mean power over the student. But it increases the teacher's power *for* the student and creates a bond of affection between them that gives both of them the power "over" ("for") each other that arises from love.

Let me explain: To love someone gives them power over you because they now have the power to hurt you.

But this power “over” is not taken by force as it is in the master-slave relationship; it is given joyfully.

This is (put awkwardly) the most powerful kind of power. It is the “power of God unto salvation,” as the apostle Paul put it in Romans 1:16. God, the *all-powerful* one, uses power for the purpose of *making us all powerful*.

Because I believe this, I was troubled for some time by the notion of *surrender* in the Christian life. It sounded like giving one’s freedom and power back to God. If we are not careful, language about allowing God’s purpose to “control” our lives can give the impression that we are to be powerless in relation to God, that we are to let God “run” our lives almost as if we were puppets: God will tell us where to go to school, whom to marry, and so on. We just need to pray to learn God’s will.

This concept did not sound like empowerment to me. It felt like the master-slave, not the teacher-student,

relationship. However, I now see that it can be the teacher-student relationship if we understand that in the beginning the student (or child) does need to be told what to do in almost every particular. But the process of maturity means that such direction is less and less required, that we can decide for ourselves what is or is not within the will of God.

Power is like love: it is self-replenishing. God does not lose love by loving; it replenishes itself. Nor does God lose power by empowering; it only increases God’s power to relate and persuade. Giving us the power to choose gives God the power to persuade.

Now for an insight I have received from the Adventist understanding of the judgment: Even those who turn their backs on God will ultimately admit (without coercion) that God is just and full of truth. The judgment is the event that gives God ultimate

power over everything He created, for it is the final proof that God deserves to be God. It is one thing to be God in fact (the Creator); it is another thing to deserve to be God (the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ). “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Power over others for its own sake is by definition evil. No exceptions.

Power for others is always good. No exceptions.

This too is good news: the Lord of all creation does not lord it over all creation.

Even for God, being all-powerful is empty if we are not all powerful.

James Londis currently serves as the director of ethics and corporate integrity at Kettering Medical Center Network in Kettering, Ohio.



Hold Me While I Cry

Lessons learned in grief are never forgotten.

BY JAN S. DOWARD

SHE DIED. SUDDENLY, WITH AWFUL swiftness, our younger daughter, Daphne, was gone. Her energetic, fruitful life, accorded into 24 years, was over. The shock left me temporarily suspended in an unreal world, a sort of surrealistic sensation of drifting between an unbelievable, raw reality and some dreadful nightmare.

But nature has a marvelous way of absorbing shocks. Be it a deep physical wound or a death notice, the initial trauma does not always fully register; penetrating pain comes later. I was numb. I didn't even tighten my grip on the telephone receiver as I repeated the words I had just heard. Without flinching, I simply changed them into a question: "Daphne just drowned?"

The information about the late-afternoon poolside death would have to be pieced together later. Right then the very thought that I was now minus my lovely daughter seemed incomprehensible.

It made no difference that the report about her manner of death was false. She did not drown, but she was dead just the same. After swimming underwater on the long side of the pool, she had surfaced, wiped her face, then waded about 10 feet toward the shallow end and mysteriously collapsed. No amount of emergency measures prevailed. Even the autopsy report was inconclusive. But regardless, life on this planet had terminated for Daphne. Even when my mind finally seemed ready to sort through the data, it was difficult to accept the fact that this athletic girl, the one who was a skiing instructor and an excellent swimmer and who also held credentials in lifesaving, was dead.

As the numbness wore off, tears slowly trickled down my cheeks. I had not yet really cried. Periodically I squeezed my wife's hand or watched her stare out the dark window on our night flight to the funeral. But she was silently suffering in her own way. Her courage in the face of lacerating grief had furnished me with a clear view of inner poise and balanced

faith. Death was no stranger to her. She who had lost her mother earlier, then a brother, father, and now a daughter—one each year for the past three years—could show me a perspective in facing the ordeal ahead.

But losing a child is a different kind of sorrow. I found it opening springs of emotions I never knew I had. Part of me was torn away. I had lost a dear father, and later would mourn the loss of my sister and mother, but this grief seemed separate from that, uniquely capable of rubbing raw those delicate nerve endings that reach to the very inner recesses of the parental heart.

As time went on, in a very special way, Daphne's death strengthened my faith, brought me closer to God in prayer, and taught me lessons of compassion. But the Lord had still a deeper, more comprehensive and profound schooling for me.

Three Years Later

It happened three years later during the closing of a convention at which a religious pageant was given. The platform was supposed to represent heaven, and the "angels" dressed in white welcomed home those from all ages and walks of life at the resurrection.

Pageants and programs of this nature do absolutely nothing for me personally. I tolerate them because someone might be offended by my absence. On this particular occasion I sat near the exit so I could quietly slip out if I got too bored. I had no more than gotten settled when I noticed an acquaintance, Carl,* walk past. His face was contorted with deep emotion, his eyes red from crying. A moment before, I had glanced toward the platform and had seen a teenage girl walk with open arms to be welcomed home. In a flash I knew instinctively what had happened. Carl had lost a 16-year-old daughter a few years before in a terrible automobile crash. I knew instinctively that he had reached one of those times when suddenly the music or thoughts tore the scab

from sorrow's old wound. For a few seconds I sat wondering if I should follow him. *Maybe he needs me right now*, I thought. *But then again, maybe he wants to be alone.*

Silently I prayed. Then as waves of compassion swept over me, I felt impressed to follow. I walked out the door in time to see him round a corner down a dimly lit corridor. I hurried to catch up. By the time I had reached the corner, he was about 30 yards away, walking slowly with his head down.

"Carl!" I called. "Carl!"

He turned and glanced my way, then dropped his head again and waited.

"Carl," I said as I approached him, "I know exactly where you are right now. I caught it on your face when you walked by." He looked at me without saying a word. Tears streamed down his face.

"There's something very special about dads and their daughters, isn't there?" I offered.

He nodded.

"If you had as good a relationship with your daughter as I had with mine, then there's so much to remember, and remembering hurts a lot."

He reached out and embraced me, burying his head on my shoulder. Deep wracking sobs poured out from emotions welling up from within. Words were unnecessary.

Clinging to the Past

While I held Carl, memories rushed through my own mind. Once again I could see Daphne romping and playing as a child. I could hear the ripple of her laughter. I used to play "trap tunnel" with the girls. Melody and Daphne would scamper under my body, through my legs or arms, as I extended in a high-crouched position on the floor. Suddenly I would drop on one of them, gently pinning her to the floor beneath me as the "tunnel" collapsed. There was always much squealing in

sheer delight. I would release the victim, and the game would start all over again with the same anticipation of thrills.

My mind pictured those times when I would place a daughter straddling each hip and walk about the house singing above the laughter, "Pin 'em on the daddy, put 'em on the side!" Memory brought back the sense of touch, too. I could feel Daphne's fingers clutching my thumbs like handlebars when she sat on my lap during bumpy rides on small aircraft. She was always a bit terrified of flying, and hold-



ing tightly to my thumbs seemed to give her the security she needed.

But most of all I remembered how she would crawl up on my lap and squeeze me tightly around the neck and whisper, "I love you two-nine." Somehow the numbers two and nine were significant to her . . . the very epitome of love, the highest expression of her sentiments.

Because He Loved

While comforting Carl, I knew he too was remembering his daughter and happy family moments. Finally he pulled away and looked at me. "Thanks," he said quietly. "Thanks a lot."

Together we walked back to the

auditorium. As we rounded the corner, his son met him. He too must have seen his father leave. "Want to walk, Dad?" he asked.

Carl nodded. Then looking at me, he said, "Thanks again."

I watched as they headed down the hallway. I stood there several seconds fighting off a sense of loneliness. There were no tears, but I felt at loose ends. I wished like everything right then that someone would walk with me. I had sought out Carl to help him, but now I was alone myself . . . alone with all those memories I'd have to tuck away again.

Suddenly another thought crowded out the loneliness and astounded me. Without my knowing it

at first, the Lord had provided me with a profound lesson. The deepest compassion and sympathy had flowed through me to Carl. I loved him as a fellow human being.

But Carl was by no means a close friend of mine; indeed, I didn't really like him.

His whole personality turned me off. I would never have selected him as someone I wanted as a friend. It was much like the little ditty I had learned years before:

"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell;
the reason why I cannot tell.
But this I know, and know full well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell!"

But I could *love* him! The lesson was complete. Jesus never told us that we had to like everyone, even our enemies, but we could love them. We could even hold them while they cry.

*Not his real name.

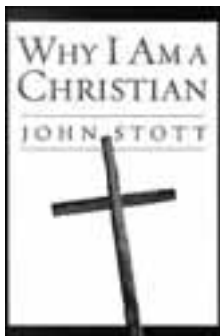
Jan S. Doward, a retired pastor and teacher, lives in Ferndale, California.



BOOK

• MARK •

Why I Am a Christian



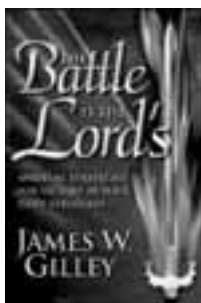
John Stott,
InterVarsity Press,
Downers Grove,
Illinois, 2004,
US\$10.00, 140
pages, hard back.
Reviewed by Ella
Rydzewski,
Clarksville,
Maryland.

Books on belief can become too familiar because our experience of the spiritual is often similar. It takes a special writer and spiritual leader not to fall into clichéd writing about the deepest of human feelings. But John Stott is such a writer. The reader is not tempted to skip over whole portions that may have been heard before with slightly different wording. Stott keeps us hanging on to each phrase, turning it over in our minds, becoming richer by its contemplation. We find ourselves touched by joy or an enlightened “aha” on almost every page.

Stott’s “inspiration” for this book was a public address and book written in 1927 by mathematician-philosopher Bertrand Russell entitled *Why I Am Not a Christian*. Such unbelief is even more widespread in 2004. Against today’s pluralistic background, Stott looks inward and answers some vital questions about Christianity and his own commitment.

I found this a valuable devotional book. It contains only seven chapters, and I carefully read one a day and plan to read the volume again. Stott’s book would make an excellent gift for the committed and uncommitted.

The Battle Is the Lord’s



James W. Gilley,
Pacific Press Pub-
lishing Association,
Nampa, Idaho,
2003, US\$10.99,
Can\$17.99, 128
pages, paper.
Reviewed by James
E. McClendon, who
writes from Crowley,

Colorado.

The Battle Is the Lord’s is a book of encouragement, liberally sprinkled with common sense and tempered by a whisper of light humor. Gilley writes with scriptural knowledge as well as experience as a pastor, evangelist, speaker, and administrator. He writes with clarity of purpose, offering up exactly what his subtitle pledges: “spiritual strategies for victory in your daily struggles.”

The author employs a variety of rich and penetrating illustrations taken

from personal observations and the experiences of others. He has a unique ability to increase the reader’s understanding as he sheds light on Bible principles relating to stress caused by worry. The volume consists of 15 short chapters that can help the reader gain victory over unhealthy anxiety while identifying its causes.

The use of maxims (or parables) is an effective instructional device, but the author has a tendency at times to belabor the example at the expense of the essential concept. I believe that broader values might have been reached with a greater number of supporting scriptures.

Still, I cannot dispute the excellence of the book. Though perceived as long on example and short on Scripture, this absorbing and helpful volume is interesting, easy to read and assimilate, and spiritually therapeutic, with readily applicable remedies to some of life’s major joy stealers.



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— Maric Oser

About My Father's Business

Have you ever lost your child in a crowd? If you have, you know what panic is. Joe and Mary knew that feeling when they were returning from an annual church convocation with friends—and discovered that their son was missing.

"I thought He was with His cousins," Mary lamented.

Joe, trying to stay calm, said, "Let's go back and see if He's still there."

"But, Joe, it's been a whole day already. Something must be terribly wrong!" his wife sobbed.

"Well," Joe insisted, "He's not here with our group, so we'd better go back right now."

As they searched along the way, they returned to the church site where the meetings were held, and as they walked up to the church, they heard their 12-year-old son's voice asking questions of the church leaders and teachers.

Relieved, Mary thought, *He sounds fine*. But stressed from all the anxiety, Mary chastised her son, "Young man, why have You done this to us? Your father and I have been half out of our minds looking for You" (Luke 2:48).*

Her son seemed taken aback by His mother's correction. "Why were you looking for Me? Didn't you know that I had to be here, dealing with the things of My Father?" (Luke 2:49).

Mary and Joseph didn't know what He meant, so they insisted that He return home with them. Though their son grew into a well-respected young man, Mary often pondered the events of that day, the only time she felt He was disobedient. Often she wondered, *What did my son mean when He said He had to be dealing with the things of His Father?*

While Mary and Joseph were concerned about what they presumed was a lost son, Jesus was already concerning Himself with lost souls and preparing Himself for service. When Jesus said that He had to be about His Father's business, He was saying, "I'm old enough to start looking for lost sheep." These words were the first recorded words of Jesus in the Bible. Interestingly, the next recorded words were a con-

versation with Satan when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness: "It takes more than bread to really live" (Luke 4:4). Jesus knew His mission.

Prior to this conversation Jesus, now a 30-year-old man, had been baptized by John, while God's voice, full of love,

was heard from heaven saying, "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life" (Luke 3:22).

The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, signaled all this as He descended upon Jesus. Talk about drama! This was no secret act, but one seen by the throng who shared Jesus' baptismal day with Him in that same river pool.

Every time I think about Jesus' baptism, I think of my own. No drama, no dove—yet I knew God's love then, as I know it now. And I knew, too, that I must be about my Father's business.

Jesus didn't reserve service just for Himself, but for all believers. He desires for us to be coworkers with him. So it is a reminder to all of us, young and old, who take on the name of Christian to also always be about our Father's business.

Do you ever get panicked when you think of the souls out there who still don't know Jesus despite so many years of missions and sacrifice? Should we give up and stop looking for the lost sons and daughters? Even if we get frustrated, as Jesus' parents obviously were, we must press on with the search. We need to keep this truth in our memory: even as Jesus took on His mission, He did so with the cooperation and blessing of the Holy Spirit, and so must we. Thus, with the Helper alongside, let's be about our Father's business in search of the lost.

*All Scripture quotations in this article are taken from *The Message*.

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