

ADVENTIST Review

May 22, 1997

AnchorPoints



Beyond Cards and Flowers

10 ways to minister to
those who are grieving

Stay With the Ship!

Love Lessons

LETTERS

On the Mark

The March 27 AnchorPoints Edition was a feast of great new writing with widely useful content. Please feed us more.



—Jim McNeill
PASCO, WASHINGTON

Many kudos for the March 27 AnchorPoints Edition. From the editorials by William G. Johnsson and Roy Adams to Ann Burke's "Washed," this was one of the most satisfying and stimulating issues I have read in a very long time. If our pastors would condescend to be preached to by the Spirit-filled lay members, they would come away with a profound reinvigoration that might amaze even them.

—Kwesi Acquah-Sam
COLUMBUS, OHIO

A couple years ago I thought the *Review* was boring reading, reflective of an institutional view of Adventism largely detached from where the rubber meets the road. Now the *Review* has become "real to life," encompassing the multifaceted experience of Adventist life here in the United States. I can say with all my heart that the *Review* has become my favorite magazine.

Congratulations for getting gutsy and printing stuff like Patti Hansen Tompkins's "California Adventists and Other Radicals" (Mar. 27), James

Jordan's "Running With the 24/7 Gang" (March NAD Edition), and psychologist Leslie Martin's "Is Midlife Crisis a Myth?" (Mar. 27).

Yet you're filling the spiritual hunger many have for straight theological/spiritual content like Hedrick Edwards's "O Jerusalem!" (Mar. 27). Our Lord, I'm sure, is very pleased.

—John Knoblock, PASTOR
VIA E-MAIL

Thanks for the wonderful job the *Review* does in giving me a paper that I can't wait to read and that always leads me closer to my wonderful Lord! Keep up the good work.

—Troy Beans
VIA E-MAIL

Red Rose on Snow

William Johnsson's "Red Rose on Snow" (Mar. 27) should be read aloud at every church/company in the country. Every word was crucial. It is a masterpiece.

—Lillian K. Praeger
LIVINGSTON, NEW YORK

Cheap Shot, but . . .

Regarding this quote by Pastor Lynn Schlisner appearing on the March 27 Give & Take page: "Adventists used to be legalists. Back then it was easier to get people to serve in the church because they thought they had to do good works to be saved."

It has become popular for some

Adventist pastors to take potshots at Adventists of the "back then" generation, branding them "legalists." I am not sure when the break-off point is for one to be considered part of the "back then" Adventist generation, but based upon the insinuations, it seems to stretch from our origin to about the 1960s. I am one of the "back then" Adventists, and it is time somebody protested loudly against this attack.

—Wendell T. Osborne
TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

An important clarification: Pastor Schlisner tells us that the published quote "was totally out of context and quite possibly a misquote of what I recall saying . . . on the joy of being in the service of God." We apologize to Pastor Schlisner and appeal to our contributors to clear the quotes you submit with the speaker.—Editors.

The God of Variety

Kudos to Patti Hansen Tompkins for her column sample "California Adventists and Other Radicals" (Mar. 27).

Patti finds it incomprehensible to believe that God desires all His children to "look, act, or think alike," and I do too. If we did, we might very well end up like the Heaven's Gate group, who all thought, behaved, spoke, ate, dressed, and died the same way—self-made clones.

Far too many of us have been guilty of turning "different" into "wrong."

—Gertrude Meleen Ayala
ALVARADO, TEXAS

Family Worship—And Humor

We enjoyed Bert Williams's article on family worship—especially the humor paragraph ("The Many Facets of Family Spirituality," Mar. 27). Humor makes worship meaningful to children of all ages. Sanctified humor honors the Lord. I think the angels, and even God Himself, smile and are pleased.

—**Marland Hansen, M.D.**
OAKHURST, CALIFORNIA

Leaving Arizona

Regarding Leslie Kay's "The Day the Cow Fell Into Our Mine Shaft" (Mar. 27). Unless we keep the boarding schools open, families like the Kays who want their kids to be educated in an Adventist school will eventually have to move back into the city and everything they fled. What a pity—the situation they and a host of others face.

—**Jay D. Linthicum**
LOMA LINDA ACADEMY
LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA

Defining Down Deviancy

Regarding Clifford Goldstein's "Defining Down Deviancy" (Mar. 27). The central issue involved in to whom we grant membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not of defining down deviancy, but of uplifting the downtrodden. We have a message to share with all peoples, even those with lifestyle differences. Jesus expressed acceptance to people in all kinds of life situations.

Postmodernism teaches the lack of absolutes. Yet we do worship the Absolute One. He absolutely accepts people where they are when they come to Him. He absolutely invites them to join His family, even though they still have a lot of growing to do. He absolutely calls on us not to judge people. He absolutely gives the church the commission to share the *good news* of His love, which is beyond our scope of understanding.

Thank you for having the courage to

print Goldstein's article. Let us remember that we all are sinners in need of grace and that our only hope is the accepting love of Jesus, which looks beyond who we are to who we can be in the Master Potter's loving care. Let us extend the invitation to as many as possible to be a part of God's family.

—**Jim Simonds, PASTOR**
ALBEMARLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Knotheads and Blockheads

Chris Blake's "Thank You, God, for Knotheads" (Mar. 27) brought back memories of a couple families of "Fordites" who came into our church to set us straight. They stayed less than a year, and when they left they said, "You can't do nothin' with those old blockheads."

Thank God for the blockheads.

—**Leanore Shaw**
WILLOWS, CALIFORNIA

Setting the Standards

Regarding "Adornment and Commitment" (The X-Change, Mar. 20), I was very disappointed with Deirdre Martin's reply. It did seem as though she was trying to be "cool" and lighthearted, but what came through to me was the usual judgmental attitude—suggesting that those who wear jewelry are not humble. One can no more legislate humility than demand that everyone wear jewelry.

For too long we have allowed the church to set our standards for us. It is time for us as individuals to think, pray, and study for ourselves, and then show respect for one another's differences.

Fortunately, in the same issue was Steve Case's "Are Our Standards Slipping?" which I thought was excellent in encouraging deeper thought and personal study into these issues.

—**Hilary Resla**
SINGAPORE

ADVENTIST Review

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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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Special Contributors: Bryan Ball, M. E. Cherian, P. D. Chun, L. T. Daniel, Ulrich Frikart, Lee Huff, Israel Leito, Ruy H. Nagel, L. D. Raelly, Bertil Wiklander

To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. (Please query before submitting long articles.) Include address, telephone number, and Social Security number, where available. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Editorial office fax number: (301) 680-6638.

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Stay With the Ship!

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

Tony Bullimore's amazing survival and rescue makes one of the great stories of 1997. And like every thrilling account, it has several angles.

On the evening of January 5 Bullimore suddenly faced seemingly impossible odds. Competing in a round-the-globe yacht race, he had sailed his solo 20-meter ketch *Exide Challenger* into the wildest waters in the world. He had ventured into the mountainous waves and howling gales of the Furious Fifties of the Southern Ocean, right down to 52 degrees south latitude.

Suddenly the lead-ballasted keel snapped, a cabin window broke, and water rushed into the hole and then out again, sucking out the fittings, radio, and provisions. Then the *Exide Challenger* capsized. Bullimore was alone in 30° F water; the closest help lay nearly 2,000 miles away in Perth, Australia.

Bullimore grabbed a few provisions before they were sucked out and, working in total darkness, struggled into his watertight immersion suit. Then he made a key decision—he would stay with the ship. Rather than braving the near-freezing water and icy gales outside, he would set up life in the upside-down forward cabin.

He rigged a hammock in his little den and curled up to keep himself warm. Concerned that the life raft would drift away and lead potential rescuers to abandon hope, he several times went up through the completely flooded cockpit to make sure that it was lashed on board. Bullimore also set off his emergency beacons one at a time.

Entombed in the darkness, Bullimore survived on little more than chocolate for four days. For the last two days he had no water.

At last he heard the drone of aircraft engines, coming through the rain squalls at 100 feet above the capsized yacht. Bullimore thumped the deck above him in rhythmic pattern to let the crew know he was still alive.

The Australian Navy frigate *Adelaide* reached the *Exide Challenger* at noon on January 9. When Bullimore heard the Navy divers on the hull and the sound of the warship, he swam out only after making sure it was rescuers and not the continual underwater banging of the rigging.

Bullimore saw the sailors and shouted, "Thank God, I'm

alive!" Overjoyed at being pulled from the water by Chief Petty Officer Peter Whicker, he startled him with a kiss.

Against impossible odds, Bullimore survived. In the *Adelaide's* sick bay he was treated only for the loss of part of a finger from a slammed hatch, and frostbite to other fingers.

The *Adventist Review* carried a short account of Bullimore's survival in a news commentary, "Waiting for Rescue," by Roger Hunter, in the February 13 issue. Hunter, a teacher at Stanborough Secondary School in England, called it "the big story in Britain this January." His write-up, reflecting the British press, focused on Bullimore.

Noelene and I visited Australia in February. People were still buzzing over the extraordinary tale, but we heard another angle—not only Bullimore's survival, but the rescue mission performed by the Australian Air Force and Navy.

We read dramatic accounts of the locating of the upturned yacht, of picking up the dull thumps that meant Bullimore was still alive, of 11-hour missions out of Perth that brought aircraft to the limit of fuel reserves, of Bullimore's turning his back on the crowd of 5,000 dignitaries and well-wishers who came to welcome him in Fremantle to face the crew of the *Adelaide* and salute them with his swollen and bandaged hands.

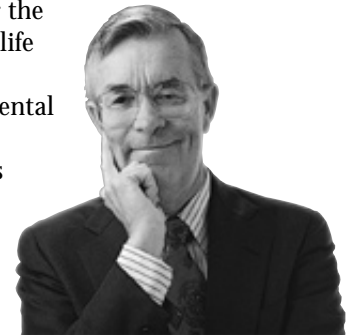
We also heard of some taxpayers who muttered about the costs of the rescue—at least \$10 million.

A great story always has several angles.

Is this a great story, or what? But—and you know this is coming—great as it is, it's nothing alongside the greatest story ever told. That too is a survival and rescue thriller.

In this story the spotlight falls on the rescue operation and in particular the Rescuer, who not only risked His life but gave it.

Not by force of will, not by mental toughness, not by daring and ingenuity were we saved—in this regard we are unlike Bullimore. But one aspect holds true for both stories: his decision, which must be our decision—stay with the ship!



Cutting One Another Down to Size

Figure skater Tonya Harding couldn't bear the thought of being bested by fellow Olympic hopeful Nancy Kerrigan. So she hired a hit man to do her in. The execution of the plan at a Detroit skating rink one afternoon three years ago sent waves of anger and disgust all around the world.

Rivalry. Competition. Selfish ambition. Does the same spirit exist among us?

No, as Adventists we don't hire thugs—that's too messy. But isn't there an unwritten code among us that none of us should rise too high above the rest of us? The moment we notice that one of us is about to break that code, do not the rest of us go into action to bring the person down? We set up roadblocks in their way, throw out obstacles to trip them up, and instigate damaging rumors through "the Adventist grapevine." By snide remarks, by innuendos, and by strategic silences when their names are being considered or discussed, we attempt to destroy or neutralize their influence.

Back in 1993 the *Adventist Review* carried a perceptive piece by Dorothy Minchin-Comm.* I hope you will allow me, as one of her former students, to quote extensively from her pen, to bring her powerful message to our attention one more time.

The article referred to the monkey carvings under the eaves of the emperor's stables in Japan's Imperial Palace, carvings representing the various stages of human life. In one of them "the monkey is humbly looking up, recognizing that some are more gifted and fortunate than he. In the next, he peers down out of the tree at those less prosperous . . . and toward whom he must show compassion." It's like Romans 12:15, Comm says, where the apostle admonishes us to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (NKJV).

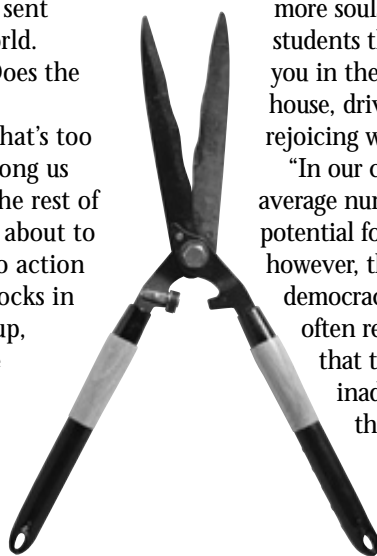
The second part of that admonition—to weep with those who weep—is relatively easy. That's because psychologically the weeping person, at least for the moment, is below us, so to speak. For the moment they're going through rough times.

The first part of Paul's admonition, however, gives us trouble, Comm says. "How do we respond when someone else gets the promotion we had anticipated? When a man is preferred over a woman, or vice versa? When a brilliant student outshines his teacher? When as a musician I see someone else perform better

than I do? . . . When newly converted sinners surpass us in the excellence of their Christian experience?"

And the list could go on: When another pastor baptizes more members than you do. When another evangelist wins more souls than you. When another college enrolls more students than yours. When the brother or sister next to you in the pew packs a bigger salary, boasts a bigger house, drives a more expensive car. Do we feel like rejoicing with them?

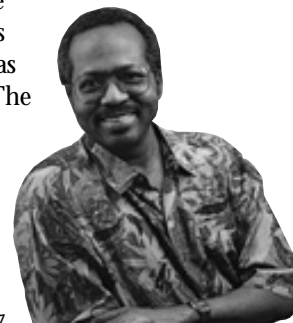
"In our church," Comm says, "we have an above-average number of creative, talented people with the potential for 'world class' achievement. From time to time, however, they get their wings clipped. Under the guise of democracy, equality, or some such lofty principle, we often reduce them to mediocrity. . . . Somehow we feel that their accomplishments magnify *our* inadequacies. We find it difficult to 'rejoice with those who rejoice.'"



We all know, of course, of people who are too big in their own eyes for their own good—people who, like Adventist pioneer D. M. Carrington, develop delusions of grandeur. I'm not talking about such megalomaniacs. I'm talking rather about those who serve humbly with integrity and distinction, not only year after year without affirmation, but also with the uneasy feeling that certain important people are just biding their time, waiting for them to stumble.

"God must be vexed," Comm says, "to see the discouragement of those who are ambitious and inventive. And God must grieve because of the gloomy—sometimes manipulative—jealousy of other believers around them. Surely this church should shine with [all] the gifts God has given."

How mightily will the church move forward when we can regard colleagues and fellow-members not as rivals, but as partners—players on the same team! The talents of all of us combined are insufficient for the task ahead. It's time to affirm and support, not to cut one another down to size.



* See Dorothy Minchin-Comm, "Weep and Rejoice?" *Adventist Review*, Aug. 12, 1993, p. 847.

GIVE & TAKE

BRIDGING THE GAP



TENDER TOUCH: Kaelibeth Caviness (standing) and her newborn cousin, Jessica Caviness—both sixth-generation Adventists—had never met their great-grandmother Goldie Caviness. But on a recent trip to Walla Walla, Washington, the Caviness women bonded rather quickly. *Photo by Michelle R. Caviness.*

ADVENTIST LIFE

Recently I took my 3-year-old granddaughter to the Los Angeles Zoo. At the observation window I looked up to see a baby boa in the top of a tree. “Look at the snake in the tree,” I said to Brittany.

Without looking up, she ran off yelling, “I don’t want his apple! I don’t want his apple!”

—Ruth Wilkins-Moore, Pasadena, California

My 5-year-old, Amy, wanted to know what her name meant. I explained that Amy meant “beloved.”

Some time later we were studying about Jesus’ baptism by John. At the part where God says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” Amy became excited.

“Mommy,” she said, “Jesus and I are twins—we are both beloved!”

—Lynnae Webster, Lodi, California



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

ADVENTIST QUOTES

“When God likes all the things I like, something is wrong with my picture of God.”

—Dick Duerksen, Columbia Union vice president, at the Wisconsin Conference men’s retreat

“Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Detour Around Me, Joshua, Judges . . .”

—the young daughter of Ethel F. Heisler, Keene, Texas

“I get the first footrace with you in heaven.”

—from a card sent to Harold Christie, 85, who’s had polio for 52 years, from his “favorite nurse,” Connie Rose, Moscow, Idaho

“There’s no telling what would happen if people started praying for each other rather than preying on each other.”

—Bruce Norman, Southern Adventist University professor of New Testament, at January’s Wisconsin Conference ministerial meeting

LET’S PRAY

Have a prayer need? Have a few free minutes? Each Wednesday morning at 8:00 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. Let’s share in each other’s lives.

WE NEED YOU

Give & Take is your page. Send your “Adventist Quotes,” top-quality photos, “Adventist Life” vignettes, “Readers’ Exchange” items, and other short contributions to: *Give & Take*, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; CompuServe: 74532,2564.

Beyond Cards

10 suggestions on how to minister to those who grieve

BY KARL HAFFNER

AT FIRST I THOUGHT I WAS DREAMING. Now, five months later, I'm still hoping to awaken from the nightmare.

"The paramedics are here," my wife said, sounding like she was in shock.

"Huh? Uh, what?" I pried my sleepy eyes open.

"It's Mom. I got up at 5:00 to feed the baby, and, um, she ah—"

"What happened?"

"Mom, um, said she'd . . .

I can't believe this is happening . . . she said she had been up for an hour because she had chest pains. I called 911 and . . . oh, Karl, she's always been so healthy . . . If only I'd . . ."

Through soppy eyes I watched the paramedics try to coax life back into Mom. Ambulance lights danced on the ceiling, lulling me into a numb trance. Radios blared an unknown language. Six men scurried about like a pit crew. And Mom died.

Mom's death blindsided us, leaving a hole the size of the Grand Canyon. Nothing feels normal anymore. Friday dinners seem irreverent without her. Leaving our daughter with another baby-

sitter seems irresponsible. "TCBY pit stops" seem irrelevant.

The memories still jab. Last night I was awakened by the tiny speaker of our baby monitor. During a late-night feeding I eavesdropped on a conversation between my wife and our 4-month-old daughter. "Today is Mimi's birthday. If she was still alive, we would have had a biiiiiiiiig party, 'cuz Mimi loved

parties. She loooooooved partying with her lil' Lindsey girl. You would have loved Mimi 'cuz she would have spoiled you with cookies and trips to the zoo and hot chocolate and . . ."

Through the chaos of Mom's untimely death, Christ's words were therapeutic:

"Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Friends have demonstrated "greater love." They have shown me how hollow my professional symbols of sympathy have been toward hurting friends. As a pastor I regularly console the grieving. Until now, however, I was clueless about sharing gestures of grace through grief. While my heart meant well, it first had to be broken so I could learn from others.

What follows is my top 10 list of ways, beyond the cards and





and Flowers



flowers, that our friends have helped. While every gesture of sympathy was greatly appreciated, some expressions of grace proved to be especially helpful. Perhaps this list will assist you the next time you have the opportunity to console a hurting friend.

Gestures of grace for the grieving

1. Offer to wash the car.

Bob didn't say much. He cried a lot, and gave a great hug. Then he said one thing more comforting than all the clichés: "Can I wash your car so it will be clean when you go to the funeral

tomorrow?" When he returned, my Toyota sparkled like a new silver filling.

Through the tornado of turmoil, it was nice to feel at least one closet of my life was in order. It was refreshing to drive a car that was clean. More important, it was rejuvenating to be reminded that someone cared.

2. Give a gift certificate to preserve the memory.

Three couples in our small group gave us a gift certificate from the local nursery. They included the note "Dear Karl and Cherie, Any words seem so inadequate. We wanted you to get your mom's favorite plant or tree as a reminder of her." Whenever I gaze out the kitchen window, the loose-leaf maple sings memories of Mom.

3. Roll up the sleeves.

The Preasts showed up shortly after Mom's death. I was standing in a mountain of boxes, feeling overwhelmed.

"Is the moving van still coming tomorrow?" Jeanine asked.

"Yeah," I said.

"I guess the timing couldn't be worse, huh? Is everything ready to move?"

"Yeah," I lied.

"Are you sure? Could we scrub your floors? wrap your sofas? clean out your freezer?"

"Yes. Yes. Yes."

I stared blankly at the garage walls

while they worked like an army of ants. By midnight they had everything ready to move.

It wasn't their words that meant so much. It was their presence. They laid down their lives by rolling up their sleeves.

Be specific when offering to help. Rather than saying, "If there's anything I can do to help, just call," ask, "Would it be helpful if I picked up your relatives at the airport?"

4. Practice a spiritual gift: be quiet!

The most helpful friends in the tunnel were the ones who could be quiet and listen.

Don't feel



PHOTOS © PHOTODISC



compelled to talk. The grieving person isn't counting on you to unveil the panacea for pain.

Don't say, "I know how you feel." Don't defend God: "It must have been His will." Don't Band-Aid the wounds by offering advice: "You'll feel a lot better if you eat some soup and go to bed." Just embrace your friend in the pain. Listen. Cry. Hug. Be there. These gestures of grace help to validate the feelings of anger, hurt, and confusion.

5. Help around the house.

Ready-to-eat meals are always a winner. The women's Bible fellowship delivered complete meals that kept us fed for weeks! Everything was included—entrée, drink, cups, plastic dinnerware, and even the after-dinner mints.

Another considerate way to help around the house is to send a gift certificate for a professional maid service. You can be certain that sometime during the process your grieving friend will appreciate a tidy house without having to lift a finger.

6. Give a scrapbook of quotes.

One of the most meaningful gifts we received was a scrapbook containing dozens of comments contributed by Mom's friends. This gesture requires a significant investment of time, but it is

certain to be deeply appreciated by your grieving friends.

Our album is packed with quotes that give us new insights about Mom. Here's an example:

"Nancy always showed up at my soccer games. She was my biggest fan. Sometimes she stood on the sidelines in the pouring rain. She was always there to encourage me." I

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never knew Mom regularly watched soccer games!

7. Remember the kids!

It's easy to overlook the kids in the grieving process. It's a nice gesture to give a stuffed animal or some type of age-appropriate gift for any of the children who are affected.

Another way to help is to offer baby-sitting while the family makes funeral arrangements or attends the memorial service.

8. Send a cyberprayer.

We received many prayers via E-mail. These were especially encouraging because we could read them again and

again. Here's one of the prayers we received: "Lord, I lift up Karl, Cherie, Clarence, and the rest of the family. They must be grieving terribly. Thank You for Nancy. Thank You for the opportunity of knowing her. Thank you that she was also able to hold her new granddaughter. Place Your arms around the family now and help them to know that You are with them, that You are also grieving the loss of someone You loved. Amen."

9. Offer a retreat.

A couple families offered their vacation homes (or certificates for a nice hotel) for us to escape the chaos and collect our emotions. These retreats proved very healing.

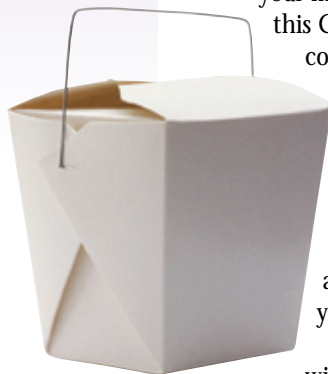
10. Remember them during the holidays.

Holidays are the most difficult time for a grieving family. Mark your calendar to send a personal note at the anniversary of the death and also during the holidays. Here's one we received at Christmas:

"As Christmas nears and we see families get together and memories of past Christmases come to mind, my thoughts seem to increasingly gravitate toward you. I imagine that there are moments of uninvited pain that rudely shatter the joy of Christmas. I wish

your mom could be with you this Christmas and that she could celebrate Lindsey's first Christmas. Your loss is big, and I feel that when the rest of us are going about our business and your mom's death does not touch us anymore, it still touches you every day.

"My heart and soul are with you, especially at this time of year. I pray for you, that God will not be silent in your moments of pain. You are loved." ■



Karl Haffner is an author and senior pastor at the Tacoma Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in the state of Washington.



The Tyranny of the Majority

However proud Americans are of their democracy, it's a lousy way to run a country (Churchill called it the "worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time").

First, democracy and liberty are not synonymous. Just because people live under laws they vote themselves doesn't automatically make them, or the nation they live in, free. Thomas Jefferson wrote that threats to freedom "chiefly" come, not when government acts against its constituents, but when "government is a mere instrument of the major number of the constituents."

Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, writing about America in the 1800s, warned that democracy, far from protecting everyone's rights, often "protects those of the majority" alone. After all, African-Americans in the South lived for years under democratic rule, and yet what they experienced could hardly be called "liberty."

Next, democratic rule assumes that the masses know what's best for their nation, which is rarely the case. Plato argued that because statecraft was so complicated, why should ordinary citizens be involved in crucial decisions about topics on which they're so often blatantly ignorant? How much, for instance, does a car mechanic in Peoria or a computer programmer in Tucson know about GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) or Federal Reserve regulations?

Another problem with democracy is that fallen human nature being what it is, people care mostly for their own immediate interests rather than those of the nation as a whole. In *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Gordon S. Wood wrote that many founders became disillusioned with American democracy precisely for this reason, and thus framed the Constitution in a way that would temper "private interests" in public government.

It didn't work. Though the founders created a republic, in which we vote in officials who then make laws for us, as opposed to a pure democracy, in which the people make the laws themselves, these officials are still at the mercy of voters who can ignominiously dump them at the polls. (Congress is kept on an especially short leash of two-year election cycles.) In other words, what makes democratic government so appealing—that is, that we plebians have a voice in it—is also what makes it so bad.

For example, Congressman A knows that Bill 55, though popular with the folks in his district, is bad for America as a whole. But because his constituents will soon be at the voting booth—and his well-funded opponent openly espouses Bill 55—Congressman A votes for the bill anyway.

"Voters routinely punish lawmakers," said Timothy Penny, a Democrat who left the House in 1994, "who try to do unpopular things, who challenge them to face unpleasant truths about the budget, crime, Social Security, or tax policy. Similarly, voters reward politicians for giving them what they want—more spending for popular programs—even if it means wounding the nation in

the long run by creating more debt."

The problems with democracy become pertinent in light of last-day events. In *The Great Controversy* Ellen White wrote: "Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the *popular demand* for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected" (p. 592; italics supplied).

A "popular demand" for a Sunday law? She's depicting not a fascist or oligarchical regime, but elected officials responding to voter demands, the essence of democratic rule. Her prediction, in fact, encompasses a major flaw of popular government: a majority—unaware of the real issues and looking out for its own interests—oppressing a minority.

Of course, the framers instituted the federal judiciary specifically to protect against the excesses of democratic rule. But the judiciary has failed before and obviously will again.

In short, democracy—instead of protecting the church from persecution—could be the mechanism that allows it to happen. And considering democracy's flaws, it's no wonder.

Our democratic system could allow persecution.

Clifford Goldstein is editor of *Liberty*, a magazine of religious freedom.



Christ, My Advocate

*Jesus silences our accuser, saying,
“The Lord rebukes thee,
O Satan.”*

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

A most forcible and impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, and the power of our Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people, is given in the prophecy of Zechariah. In holy vision the prophet beholds Joshua the high priest, “clothed with filthy garments,” standing before the Angel of the Lord, entreating the mercy of God in behalf of his people who are in deep affliction. Satan stands at his right hand to resist him. . . . He points to the transgressions of Israel as a reason why that people should not be restored to the favor of God. He claims them as his prey and demands that they be given into his hands to be destroyed.

The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan’s accusations. He does not claim that Israel are free from fault. In his filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and

humiliation, relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer and in faith claiming the promises of God.

Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” . . .

As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, “Take away the filthy garments from him,” and to Joshua the Angel declares, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” “So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel were clothed with “change of raiment”—the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. . . .

As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who are seeking the mercy and favor of God. In the Revelation he is declared to be the “accuser of our brethren,”



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“which accused them before our God day and night.” The controversy is repeated over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil and whose name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life. Never is one received from the family of Satan into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the wicked one. . . .

But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary. His perfect obedience to God’s law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.’ These

are the purchase of my blood, brands plucked from the burning.” Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.”

All that have put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. Not one soul that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy’s power. ■

These statements, selected by the Ellen G. White Estate staff, are from Ellen White’s published sketches of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and can be found in Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, pages 467-471. Much more than a one-dimensional individual, Jesus portrayed a unique blend of the human and the divine.



A Case of Mistaken Identity

I knew who I was when I woke up this morning. When I was jolted into the predawn darkness by a familiar pair of 3-year-old knees pressing into my vertebrae. When I was welcomed by the same sweet, unshaven face that has warmed me for the past 11 years. And when the fortysomething blond in the water-spotted bathroom mirror peered sheepishly back at me, that clinched it. Yep, this is me.

So when did the identity crisis set in?

During breakfast when I asked, "Jenny, do you want peanut butter on your toast?"

"I not Denny," came the cryptic reply. "I Seesah."

"Seesah?" I repeated blankly.

"She means Theresa," explained Becky.

"And I'm her mother."

"Oh. So who does that make me?"

"You're the aunt," Becky instructed.

"We're visiting you, and you're making us breakfast. I'll have peanut butter and jelly, please."

Later as I wiped off the counter, my purse-toting 5-year-old approached. "I'd like some stamps, please."

"Stamps?" (Why am I asking all the questions here?)

Becky laid her pennies on the counter with a sigh.

"You're Eva, the post office lady, and I need to buy some stamps," she explained patiently.

And so the plot thickened. As my tender maternal ego was hustled from pillar to post office, Eva was sent on vacation, her counter commandeered by Rosemary.

Rosemary soon tired of her new career and ditched it for a little house on the prairie. And I didn't even get to be Ma.

As my children danced blithely through their cast of characters, I admired their flexibility, their fearlessness, even their eagerness, to be someone new—so unlike my rigid responses to the Lord's invitations.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you," He promises eagerly (Eze. 36:26, NIV).

"But Lord, people seem to like me just the way I am," I protest.

"You will be called by a new name"! He tells me excitedly (Isa. 62:2, NIV).

"Actually, I'm kind of attached to the one I've got," I demur.

"Be made new in the attitude of your [mind] . . . put on

the new self," He pleads (Eph. 4:23, NIV).

"But Lord, I'm comfortable with who I am. I don't want a new identity," I frankly refuse.

No doubt the Lord is by now well accustomed to my habitual rebuffs. The longer I know Him, the more

deeply they must wound His generous heart. And I add insult to injury by often not even recognizing His loving advances, mistaking them for the unwelcome overtures of a stranger.

In my pre-Mommy days I lived alone for a time in an old miner's cabin on the open range. One night as I sat reading, the desert silence was split by a heavy thud on the front porch. This was followed by a steady percussion of clumps and bumps that made their way toward my window. I was petrified! I had no phone, and my doors did not lock.

Suffocating with fear, I switched off the light and crouched by the window. Straining to see, I gradually discerned the outline of a huge, shaggy

face, with great, staring eyes, not more than a foot away. I recoiled in fear, only to realize that I was staring into the face of a cow, which blankly returned my gaze.

So I have often reacted to the sound of my Lord's approach. Not discerning the rhythm of His footsteps, I have been filled not with joy, but with dread. I have wrestled with Him as with an enemy who has come only to deprive me of my treasure, my identity, and my life.

I so need to become more familiar with His tread, His voice, His touch. To believe that He comes to impart only that which is for my good and for the good of my family. To allow Him access to the darkest recesses of my soul, that He may cleanse me of every vestige of indifference and arrogance, fear and rebellion. Then to receive with joy the new name that describes my new, eternal identity—a name that is, after all, His name (see Rev. 3:12).

How else can I make Him known to those who don't yet know Him?

How else will I recognize Him when He comes?



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

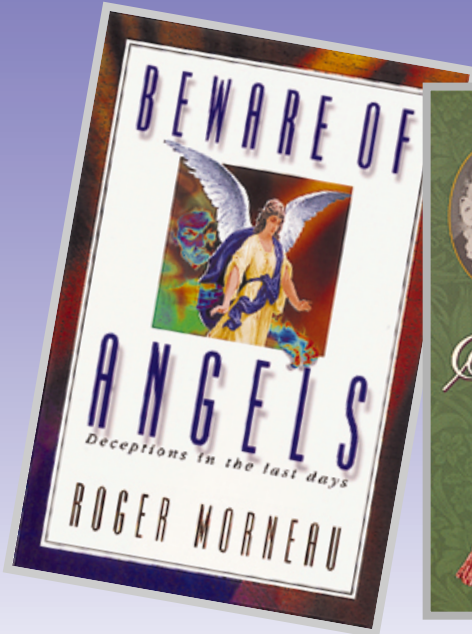
Leslie Kay is a wife, mother, and freelance writer who lives in Chloride, Arizona.



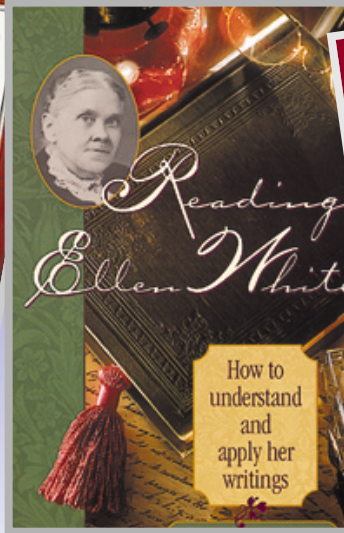
HE IS COMING SOON!



READY OR NOT, HERE HE COMES
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FINAL VICTORY

It will be sweet and personal.

BY TOM SHEPHERD

IT ALL CAME DOWN TO ONE MAN'S decision. The generals themselves were evenly divided: five in favor, five against. Only one vote remained, that of Callimachus, the war ruler.

It was September in 490 B.C., and the Greek army of approximately 10,000 men faced the Persians, who outnumbered

them more than two to one. Athens was in danger, and the Greeks marched to meet the vast enemy expeditionary force at the Plain of Marathon, a mere 25 miles or so from Athens. Defeat at the hands of the Persians would bring back the tyrant Hippias, whom the Athenians had banished.

How would Callimachus vote? The general Miltiades had



voted to fight, and he now spoke to Callimachus:

"Never, since the Athenians were a people, were they in such danger as they are in at this moment. If they bow the knee to these Medes, they are to be given up to Hippias, and you know what they then will have to suffer. But if Athens comes victorious out of this contest, she has it in her to become the first city of Greece. Your vote is to decide whether we are to join battle or not."

It seemed like insurmountable odds, but Callimachus voted to fight. That decision changed the course of human history. The Greeks won the battle of Marathon by a careful strategy employing surprise and the use of natural obstacles.¹ A runner raced to Athens with the news. He delivered his message of victory and fell dead from exhaustion. From these traditions arose the internationally known marathon race.

Have you ever felt like Callimachus? Everything depends on your decision, and you get this sinking feeling that the odds are not in your favor? Life's ironies stand piled up against you, and there on the shore of your life Satan's battalions are coming ashore.

Your life and mine—indeed, every human life—are part of the great controversy. Satan's hordes continually conquer the feeble resistance of the human will. Again and again multitudes go down to defeat before the mighty prince. Defeat seems our lot, until we remember a shining light in this battle, for one Man made a crucial decision to resist the devil and his demons. And the devil and his hordes came ashore in a mighty way, not at Marathon, but at Calvary. It was 10,000 to one, but there our General, the Lord Jesus Christ, gained a most glorious victory.

We walk in the light of that victory today. And yet we seem to live in a paradox, for our old sinful world continues its sorrowful history and we yearn for the day of final victory. "How long, O Lord?" we cry. How long must we endure persecution, how long poverty and sickness, wars and genocide, the loss of loved ones snatched suddenly away? How long must we watch ourselves grow old, our strength and abilities ebbing with each passing year, the tomb our approaching enemy? "How long, O Lord?"

The final victory is coming, my friend. And the Bible's message is that the time is near. It is the message of the millennium and the end of sin.² The sweet news is found in Revelation 20. I invite you to read it right now. It is the message of final victory.

The chapter is divisible into four sections as follows:

1. The fate of Satan during the 1,000 years (verses 1-3).
2. The work of the saints during the 1,000 years (verses 4-6).
3. The work of Satan and his end after the 1,000 years (verses 7-10).
4. The work of God in ending evil after the 1,000 years (verses 11-15).

A careful examination of these four sections of the chapter shows that the first two are parallel events *during* the millennium and the last two are parallel events *at the end* of the millennium.³

What happens during the millennium is a turning of tables. An interesting marker of this appears in verse 2 of Revelation 20, where the deceiver is "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan" (NIV). The last reference in Revelation where he received so many names was in chapter 12,



where the great dragon sought to destroy the Son of God and then breathed out persecution against the Lord's remnant people.

But no more! The tables turn, and Satan is chained! What a sweet idea! The saints of God are in heaven with the Lord (see John 14:1-3). The wicked are all dead, slain by the brightness of Christ's coming (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:14-21). And Satan, that old scoundrel, is left to stew in his own evil juices on the desolate earth for 1,000 years, with no one to deceive.⁴

Amen!

However, the millennium is not a vacuum awaiting a conclusion. God's saints rule and judge (see Rev. 20:4-6). They were faithful unto death in the face of persecution, faithful to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.⁵ They obtained the privilege of serving during the millennium as priests and kings, judging, as Jesus said, while sitting upon thrones (see Matt. 19:27-30).⁶

At times we wonder what that means, or what it will involve. Some suggest that we will hear from God the reason a person we knew did not reach the Golden City. It will surely be a time of explanations. But our text suggests more of a "tables turned" scenario. Before the coming

The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)—

Fundamental Beliefs, No. 26.

of the Lord, the wicked treat the saints as the scum of the earth. They persecute them, hound them, and judge them worthy of death (cf. Rev. 13). God comes to their rescue, and the tables turn.⁷ The condemned become the judges and kings. As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:2: "The saints will judge the world" (NIV).

What encouragement can this bring us today? First, God has not forgotten us in our trials and sufferings. One of our great temptations during these experiences is to doubt God's presence with us. We are all too prone to equate good times with God's blessing and bad times with His displeasure and absence. When Satan's battalions show up on the shores of our lives, we often forget that he is a defeated foe! The millennium reminds us that God is with us now and that He notes every tear we shed, every pain we experience for His sake. Yes, these tables will turn. Final victory is coming. The mourners will rejoice; the weak will become strong. Where we have seen only inexplicable enigmas, we will behold the clearest truth. We will see that He has always been by our side.

Second, all wrongs will be made right. When we are mistreated, we are



PHOTOS BY LARS JUSTEN

tempted to become bitter and resentful. Our own sense of justice leads us to this. To remain calm and unperturbed under mistreatment appears to deny the validity of our sense of right and wrong.

It is a great conundrum. How can we suffer and not become bitter—not become the mirror image of the evil we detest? The millennium answers that question. God is the great judge and arbiter of the ages. His rulership is the pledge of justice for His people. He calls on us to leave vengeance in His mighty hands.

“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head’” (Rom. 12:19, 20, NIV).

This text proclaims our high calling—to show love to our enemies.

Repaying the evildoer is the prerogative of God, which we best leave in His hands. Revenge is such a powerful principle that we as humans are incapable of carrying it in our heart without its burning our spirit. The text assures us that God is keeping record of every wrong done, and He will surely repay evildoers. The death camps, the persecutions, the violent rape of innocents—it is all noted in His books. Unconfessed sin, sin that is not repented of, will receive its just punishment.

Revelation 20:7-15 explains how and when God will set all the accounts right. It is at the close of the millennium. The wicked dead are raised to life, and the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descends from heaven to earth. Satan takes command of a great army that stretches across the vast earth. They march up and surround the city.

It is the last showdown. All humanity, for the first and last time, stands before the Creator of heaven and earth. Good and evil face each other. Will the tables turn again?

Satan’s hosts outnumber those within the city. The great masterminds of military genius plot with their captain to bring down the Lord of heaven. But it cannot be. God will succeed. All the wicked and their mighty leader will perish.

The narrative is a little strange at

*Victory is coming.
The mourners
will rejoice,
the weak will
become strong.*

this point in Revelation 20, for apparently the wicked die twice (Rev. 20:9, 15). The key to understanding the passage is to recognize that it presents the same story from two different perspectives. Revelation 20:7-10 gives the perspective of Satan and the wicked. They are the main actors and focus of attention in these verses. From their perspective, hell is *eternal*—as long as they live they experience the pain of final separation from God.

On the other hand, Revelation 20:11-15 presents God’s perspective. He is the actor in these verses and the center of focus. He is the great judge before whom all stand. From His perspective the lake of fire is the *second death*. It is a definite and final end. Thus those who have wronged God’s people and not found salvation in Christ will experience the just reward for their crimes. The punishment is eternal; the punishing is brief—cleansing fire. It is a final, complete, and lasting eradication of evil from the universe. From that moment onward and forever all will be joy and gladness.

This message sets a bright light

before us. Are you worried about Satan’s hordes gathered on some Plain of Marathon in your life? Remember the message of Revelation 20. It is God’s guarantee that He will bring final victory for His people. He has not forgotten them in their time of need. He will save them and faithfully repay all wrongs. We are freed both from paralyzing fear of the devil and from carrying the oppressive load of anger and bitterness—freed to love our enemies back to God.

This message is for us a wellspring of healing and grace. Oh, thank God for this wonderful gift! ■

¹ See Joseph B. Mitchell and Edward S. Creasy, *Twenty Decisive Battles of the World* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 1-22.

² Some maintain that the millennium will begin in or about the year 2000, based on the idea that the world has been around for approximately 6,000 years and the millennium is the conclusion of earth’s history—a “Sabbath” of years (7,000). The book of Revelation does not teach this concept of a 7,000-year conclusion for our world, nor do the rest of the Scriptures.

³ Note, for instance, how verse 1 begins with “I saw,” as does verse 4. Verses 1-3 talk about Satan’s fate during the 1,000 years; verses 4-6 about the saints’ victory during the same period. As we will see below, the pattern continues in the last half of Revelation 20.

⁴ Interestingly, the same Greek word, *abussos* (abyss, bottomless pit), used in Revelation 20:1-3 is used in the Greek Old Testament of Genesis 1:2, referring to the chaotic world at the beginning of Creation week.

⁵ The word of God and the testimony of Jesus form a theme in the book of Revelation. They are linked with persecution and final victory. The phrase “the word of God” is sometimes replaced with “the commandments of God,” and the phrase “the testimony of Jesus” is linked with the prophetic Spirit. Thus God’s people through the ages keep His commandments and have the prophetic Spirit in their midst (see Rev. 1:2, 9; 6:9; 12:10, 11, 17; 14:12; 19:10; 20:4). This is our heritage as preachers of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14.

⁶ Jesus refers to the 12 apostles as judges. However, Paul notes that we all will judge the world and angels (see 1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

⁷ Cf. Daniel 7, where the beasts persecute the saints and God saves them.

Tom Shepherd is a professor of religion at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.



National Identity, Religion Affect Evangelism in Russia

BY RAY DABROWSKI AND DIXIL RODRIGUEZ, DIRECTOR AND NEWS ASSISTANT, RESPECTIVELY, FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Following the breakdown of Communism, Christian churches enjoyed religious freedom and made advances to establish themselves as a powerful moral force in society. Evangelism, as expressed by dozens of denominations, took Russia and parts of the former Soviet Union by storm.

For several years Adventists throughout the region could not fill all the outreach opportunities. The interest and response continues, but the demand is not overwhelming.

The fusion of national identity and religion has played a role in the public response to evangelism, says Gaspar Colón, who until recently served as Euro-Asia Division health and temperance director. The public response has slowed down, and the church is looking at new forms of outreach. Among these are the creative use of the public media, including radio, television, and addressing religious liberty issues.

"Response is still good," says Colón. "There is still interest, but it has become somewhat limited." Reports from different church sources indicate shifts in public response. Those involved in evangelism in Russia say that what was once seen as "international evangelism" is being successfully undertaken today by local evangelists.

Since the fall of Communism the Adventist Church has aggressively pursued ministerial training and successfully initiated local church members in witnessing activities as well as preaching.

The effect of a somewhat diminished public response to evangelism is also seen in the drop in the number of

baptisms throughout the Euro-Asia territory. In 1993 it was reported that 28,241 persons had been baptized. At the end of 1996 the annual baptism statistics stated that 15,945 persons had been baptized.

Though the current figures may be smaller, it should not be interpreted that there is less interest in God or the church. Some believe that the extensive nationalistic campaign promoting fusion of culture and religion, which has been linked with the Orthodox Church, is making religious events by minority churches less popular.

"The church needs to 'Easternize' its approach to evangelism," says Teofilo V. Ferreira, associate director of the Institute of Prophetic Studies, who recently visited the Ukraine and Kazakhstan. "Following *perestroika*, when the doors opened for public evangelism, many local people mixed Christianity with the values brought

by Western evangelists. But in essence, what is needed is to see 'Russian Christianity' preached from the Russian pulpits," Ferreira comments.

Keeping up with the cultural demands of society at large has also presented itself as an obstacle for the church. While congregations continue to grow, the great need for trained Russian-speaking pastors cannot be filled quickly enough to meet the demands of evangelism.

A lack of trained pastors has led to more and more lay members being recruited as pastors. Because of this, several churches that experienced a decrease in their membership rate have found that their membership growth has paced itself to a steady congregation, sometimes of 200-300 members.

Unfortunately, these newly recruited pastors do not have adequate theological training, but things are getting better.



PASTOR'S PREPARATION CENTER: The Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Zaoski offers pastors vital training in theology and pastoral practices.

Zaokski Theological Seminary has been functioning as a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning since 1988, when the first class of 40 pastors began a correspondence course. In 1989 classes of ministerial and music students were accepted into a full four-year course. Three classes have graduated since then, with 100 young people prepared to be involved in pastoral work and evangelism.

James Cress, General Conference Ministerial Association secretary, said, "Russian pastors need field-based instruction. They need good technical skills, slides, books, equipment, and a budget to accomplish their evangelistic goals. This means involvement with fellow pastors who are successfully coordinating both the winning of new believers and the retaining of those who come to the church, while keeping a nurture program active for

those who are long-term and generally much older members."

Social relevancy and cultural sensitivity are the two urgent issues church leaders face as the church responds to the fast-changing life in the communities it serves. Cress said, "the long-term growth of the church depends on the extent that the churches in the Euro-Asia Division take responsibility for ministering in their own culture."

The church continues to use the services of foreign evangelists, with 30 Western evangelists conducting public evangelistic meetings in the division. Yet Cress underlines that "now the church in Russia must become the church in the local culture. This is the only way to address the challenges of nationalism that cross all segments of society."

Despite these challenges, love and devotion to the Word of God

continue to attract thousands of new people to the Adventist Church who find satisfaction for their spiritual needs. Even though national identity and religion continue to affect evangelism in Russia, these factors are crucial to future church growth as Adventists continue to reach the post-Communist population with the gospel message.

The Euro-Asia Division is one of 12 world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. With the exception of the Baltic states, the division comprises all of the countries of the former Soviet Union. The division has been among the fastest growing in the world church. In 1991 the baptized membership stood at 37,455. The statistical report for the end of 1995 showed an increase of approximately 300 percent, or 114,868 church members who are worshipping in more than 1,000 congregations.

N E W S B R E A K

How Seventh-day Adventists View Roman Catholicism

The following statement, "How Seventh-day Adventists View Roman Catholicism," was recorded on April 15, 1997, by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee and released by the office of the president, Robert S. Folkenberg. It is designed for media release purposes.

Seventh-day Adventists regard all men and women as equal in the sight of God. We reject bigotry against any person, regardless of race, nationality, or religious creed. Further, we gladly acknowledge that sincere Christians may be found in other denominations, including Roman Catholicism, and we work in concert with all agencies and bodies that seek to relieve human suffering and to uplift Christ before the world.

Seventh-day Adventists seek to take a positive approach to other faiths. Our primary task is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of Christ's soon return, not to point out flaws in other denominations.

The beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists are rooted in the biblical apostolic teachings and thus share many essential tenets of Christianity in common with the followers of other Christian churches. However, we have

a specific identity as a movement. Our compelling message for Christians and non-Christians alike is to communicate hope by focusing on the quality of life that is complete in Christ.

As Adventists relate to Roman Catholicism in particular, both the past and the future enter into our thinking. We cannot erase or ignore the historical record of serious intolerance and even persecution on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic system of church governance, based on extra-biblical teachings such as papal primacy, resulted in severe abuses of religious freedom as the church was allied with the state.

Seventh-day Adventists are convinced of the validity of our prophetic views, according to which humanity now lives close to the end of time. Adventists believe, on the basis of biblical predictions, that just prior to the second coming of Christ this earth will experience a period of unprecedented turmoil, with the seventh-day Sabbath as a focal point. In that context, we expect that world religions—including the major Christian bodies as key players—will align themselves with the forces in opposition to God and to the Sabbath. Once again the union of church and state will result in widespread religious oppression.

To blame past violations of Christian principles on one

The Call of the Cults

BY ROGER HUNTER, TEACHER, STANBOROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL, ENGLAND

Cult activity," wrote *Newsweek International* (Apr. 14), "is growing worldwide, a pandemic of zealotry that draws on the rootlessness in many modern societies, both spiritual and geographic."

While the article, of course, focused on the now well-documented Heaven's Gate tragedy, it also noted that the cult phenomenon has hardly been limited to America. Europe has at least 1,300 cults—three times as many as the United States.

Meanwhile, *The Scotsman* recently reported that 26 percent of Church of Scotland pastors expressed serious doubts about one or more points of the Easter story. One in eight doubted the reality of the Second Coming. Said one pastor: "I would rather interpret what the church teaches about the second coming as the hope and values of the kingdom of God being realized."

As a European Adventist I find myself asking why

Christianity, with beliefs so reasonable, struggles (even among pastors!), yet cults that teach the bizarre and extreme seem to thrive. Maybe the answer is obvious: Modern existence is at best hollow, at worst rotten to the core.

Still, in an age where people flock to the dramatic, we also have a dramatic story to tell. Not of spaceships or UFO abductions, but of something much more grand. We

believe that the most powerful Being ever to exist is coming with millions of angels to our tiny planet. And when He does, He'll change everything forever.

When we proclaim this as though we truly believe it, people *will* listen. Because beneath the materialistic facade of self-dependence is a longing for something deeper, something long-lasting, something permanent. And only Jesus meets the criteria.

NEWS COMMENTARY

NEWS BREAK

specific denomination is not an accurate representation of either history or the concerns of Bible prophecy. We recognize that at times Protestants, including Seventh-day Adventists, have manifested prejudice and even bigotry. If, in expounding on what the Bible teaches, Seventh-day Adventists fail to express love to those addressed, we do not exhibit authentic Christianity.

Adventists seek to be fair in dealing with others. Thus, while we remain aware of the historical record and continue to hold our views regarding end-time events, we recognize some positive changes in recent Catholicism, and stress the conviction that many Roman Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Florida Youth Perform at U.S. Department of Justice

Adventist youth from Tampa, Florida, gave a strong message to employees of the United States Department of Justice on April 4. The dramatic presentation carried an anti-drug message that was targeted for troubled teens.

The acting troupe, called Friends Acting to Mentor, Inspire, and Lead Youth (FAMILY), has performed in South Carolina, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., as well as Florida.



FAMILY VALUES: Friends Acting to Mentor, Inspire, and Lead Youth (FAMILY) use drama to teach Christian values.

Based at the Mount Calvary Adventist Church, the message FAMILY portrays also focuses on orphaned children who remain homeless because of their age or physical differences. Approximately 60 requests for adoption have been made since the group started performing in 1995.

"I was touched by the performance of these young people," said one Justice Department official. "I wish that some of my family could get involved in such programs for youth."

131 Years Ago: Mustaches, Goatees Voted Down



J. H. Waggoner's facial hair was approved in 1866 . . .

face, as nature designed it, yet where any portion of the beard is removed, we think the brethren greatly err from the sobriety of the Christian in donning the mustache or goatee."

Charles Henry Watson, the mustache-wearing twelfth president of the General Conference (1930-1936), would not have felt much at home at the May 1866 GC session. Conversely, the bearded Joseph Harvey Waggoner, Adventism's "great law expositor," seemed affirmed.

A portion of one of the 1866 resolutions read: "While we have no objections to a growth of beard on all parts of the

Years later Ellen White reflected upon eternal, changeless principles and Christian tolerance: "If a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. . . . Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance" (manuscript 24, 1892).



. . . but Charles Henry Watson's would have been frowned upon.

—Bert Haloviak, GC Office of Archives and Statistics

N E W S B R E A K

Colombian Meetings Bring 428 Baptisms

An evangelistic series in Bucaramanga, Colombia, resulted in the largest number of baptisms for any Adventist series in the city, reports Leslie V. McMillan, Inter-American Division communication director.

The Better Living series, which ended April 14 with 428 baptisms, was held in conjunction with a field school of evangelism. The attendance—more than 3,000 each night—was so large that the meetings were held in two church buildings.

Some 35 pastors and lay church members took part in the evangelistic team. The team members attended classes in the morning and visited homes in the afternoon.

Bucaramanga, a mainstay of Adventism in Colombia, contains the headquarters of the East Colombia Conference, which has a membership of 36,901.

News Notes

✓ **Bjarne Christensen**, Southern California Conference president, was recently appointed assistant to the president of the Adventist Church in North America for administration. Christensen replaces Don Jacobsen, who became president of Adventist World



Bjarne Christensen



Gordon Bietz

Radio and General Conference field secretary.

✓ **Gordon Bietz**, Georgia-Cumberland Conference president, was recently appointed president of Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee,

effective May 31. He replaced Donald R. Sahly, who became an associate director of the General Conference Education Department.

✓ **The correct dates** for the Michigan Conference's Upper Peninsula camp meeting at Camp Sagola are August 1-3. The Central California Conference camp meeting at Soquel meets July 17-26.

What's Upcoming

May	24	Global Baptism Day
June	14	Women's Ministry Day
June	14	Multilingual Ministries Day
June	28	Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Euro-Africa Division
July	5	Vacation Witnessing Day
Aug.	2	Global Mission Evangelism Day

Love Lessons

*A teacher dedicated to teaching meets a boy
dedicated to misbehaving.*

BY ADELE JENNINGS

THE SCHOOL YEAR STARTED badly. I was trying to shepherd an overabundance of first and second graders who seemed to delight in doing things their own way, rather than working together with the rest of the class. Every day was a battle trying to get them to obey—even in the smallest things.

Great Expectations

I had begun the year feeling rather smug with the realization that I had 24 years of teaching under my belt. The previous years had been filled with great mission projects (and raising thousands of dollars for them), great parent-teacher support, interesting field trips, good academic success, and wonderful answers to prayers my students and I had prayed. I told my mother, "This is going to be my best year yet."

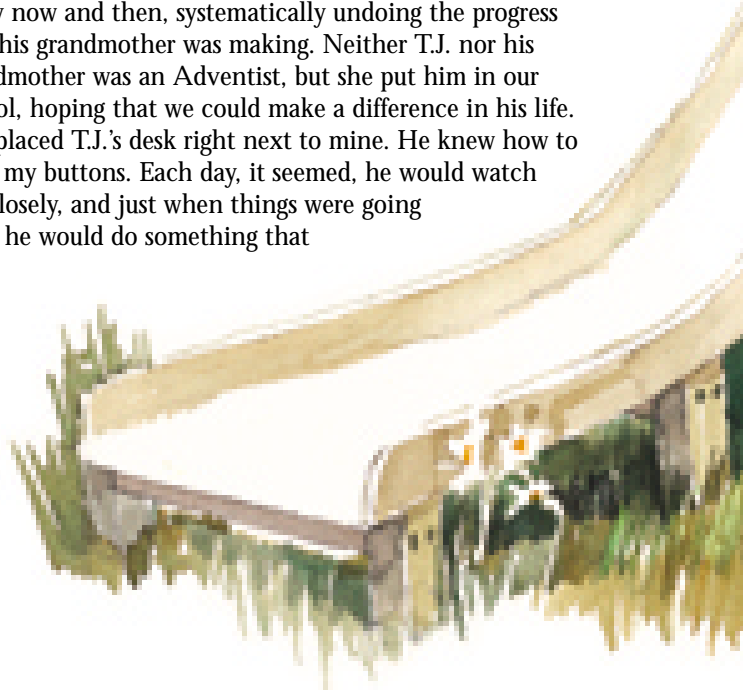
Now the school year was off to a rough start. It seemed that I was spending more time training the students to obey than instructing them in reading, writing, and math. Often I spent my evenings imagining

how I could have handled the situations differently.

The most difficult offender was a first grader named T.J. I had witnessed his bad behavior many times the previous year when he was in kindergarten. On one occasion he had gotten into my classroom unsupervised and taken one of the baby geese into the schoolyard and left it there all by itself. So I knew he was going to be a handful.

T.J. lived with his grandmother. His father would drop by every now and then, systematically undoing the progress that his grandmother was making. Neither T.J. nor his grandmother was an Adventist, but she put him in our school, hoping that we could make a difference in his life.

I placed T.J.'s desk right next to mine. He knew how to push my buttons. Each day, it seemed, he would watch me closely, and just when things were going well, he would do something that



would upset me or one or more of the other students. He did it all day long—no matter what method of discipline I used. As long as he got attention, he didn't seem to care whether it was positive or negative.

Desperation

As the weeks went by, things got worse. One night I came home weary. I could trace my weariness to T.J.'s disobedience. I had been praying for weeks that the Lord would change T.J., or that the Lord would use me to change T.J. But I wasn't seeing any progress.

That night, wondering what I was going to do about T.J., I realized that I was so tired of his constant disruptive behavior that I really didn't have any love for him.



This realization caused me to feel guilty. T.J. was one of God's children. And that evening I spent many hours praying that God would give me a heart to love T.J.—in spite of his behavior.

The next day at school I determined that, with the Lord's help, I would handle T.J. differently.

As I began to lead out in worship, T.J. began to act up—just waiting for me to get upset. So I walked over to where he sat, put my arm around him, and said, "I love you, T.J."

He pulled away. He didn't want me to touch him. (It was just as hard for me to hug him as it was for him to have me hug him.) But throughout the day, whenever he'd deliberately start doing something that he shouldn't, I'd hug him or touch his arm and tell him that I loved him. It was a difficult day for both of us. Every time I'd have to ask the Lord to give me love for T.J.

"This is going to be my best year yet."

But I continued this practice every school day for two weeks. By the end of the second week, T.J. started to "allow" me to hug him. The next week it got even better. And soon after that T.J.'s behavior began to improve dramatically.

Finally, an Answer

One day T.J. walked into the classroom, came over to me, hugged me, and said, "I love you, Miss J." Those words and that simple act

filled my eyes with tears.

After a rocky start, this has been a good year—both for T.J. and for me. And strangely enough, the whole class is now working wonderfully together.

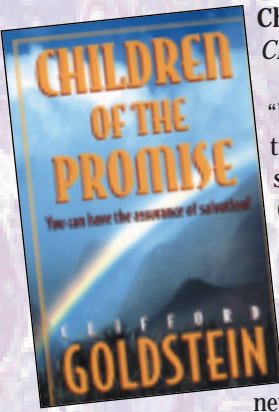
The other day when we were out for recess, T.J. came over to where I sat, leaning against the slide. He hopped into my lap and gave me a big hug. "You know what, Miss J.?" he whispered into my ear. "I think I must be your *favorite* student in our class."

I had to admit that after so many prayers, God had answered . . . He changed me! ■

Adele Jennings has taught for the past 13 years at the Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School in Port Charlotte, Florida. When she's not teaching, she enjoys snorkeling and traveling to different countries.



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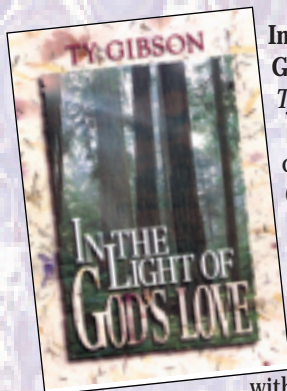
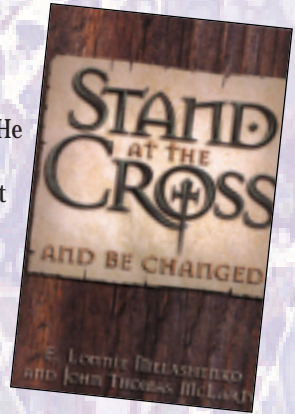
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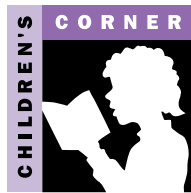
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Don't Be Afraid

ROSY TETZ



How do you feel about getting shots? I don't like it. When I get a shot, I close my eyes—for two reasons. First, I don't want to see the needle going into my skin. And second, I don't want to watch the needle as it gets near my skin.

For me, the worst part happens just before the shot. Thinking about getting a shot is worse than actually getting it.

The shot itself hurts only for a second, just as the doctor promises. But worrying about getting the shot can last from the time you find out you have to get one until you finally get it.

You have to get shots. If you didn't

get them, you could catch some horrible disease that could make you really sick. So getting shots is worth it. But it's no fun. And worrying about getting them is no fun either.

Some people worry about the end of the world. They look for signs. They try to figure out when it will happen.

When Jesus' disciples asked Him when the end of the world was going to happen, Jesus told them, "No one knows when that day or time will be" (Matthew 24:36, ICB). Jesus knew it would be better if nobody knew when the world would end. Maybe He knew we would worry about it, just as we worry when we have to get a shot.

The disciples also wondered what

the end of the world would be like. Jesus said that things would get tough for the people who obeyed God.

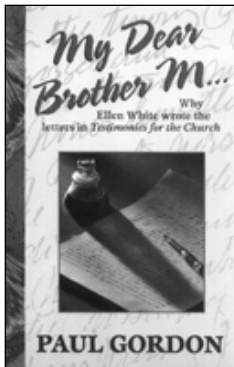
But He also said something else very important. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes" (Matthew 24:6, ICB).

All the bad and sinful things must stop happening before all the good and perfect things of heaven can happen. The end of the world has to happen before we can begin to live forever in heaven.

Jesus wanted His disciples to think about the good things, not the bad things. He wanted them to remember that He was coming again. He wanted them to realize that everything would turn out all right.

Jesus doesn't tell us when the world will end, but He tells us the important stuff about it. He tells us, "Don't be afraid. It won't last long. It will be OK; I will be with you." As your mom says to you before you get a shot.

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Why I Don't Pray for Jesus to Come "Soon"

Before you consign me, on the basis of the title, to permanent residence in the House of Heresy, please read to the end of the page.

About a year after my Christian conversion, I heard a gifted singer perform a poignant rendition of "Soon and Very Soon." After the service I thanked her for her graceful offering. Then I commented, "He can't come soon enough."

She looked at me oddly. "I still have loved ones who aren't ready," she said.

I am aware that atop the masthead in this issue (on page 4) stand Jesus' words "Behold, I come quickly . . ." I'm aware that three times in the final Bible chapter God trumpets, "I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20, NIV). I'm also aware that "quickly" and "soon" cry out for definition, because those words were written 1,900 years ago—at least 60 generations ago.

Recently I read Ellen White's words in *Testimonies for the Church*: "I know that we are near the close of earth's history" (vol. 5, p. 349). That testimony was published in 1885. Unfortunately, everyone who read it then is now dead.

"Quickly" and "soon" and "near," when applied to Christ's second coming, obviously mean something other than a literal "next week" or even "next decade." If *soon* means 20 or 50 or 100 years—frankly, any more than 100 years and *soon* soon loses its significance for me. When I hear Adventists lament "Jesus could have come 100 years ago," I often reply, "I'm sure glad He didn't! We wouldn't be here if He had."*

Briefly, how do we account for apparent time disparities? Common wisdom says, "How long a minute is depends on which side of the bathroom door you're on." Does a similar relativity hold true for heaven's door?

I believe *soon* is the beat after my next heartbeat. Adventists ought always to connect *soon* with *only a beat away*. Everyone understands the proximity and suddenness of death. Scan today's newspaper and you will discover at least 20 people who were yesterday surprised by death's knock. After a person dies, Christ comes a blink—a "twinkling of an eye"—later. Soon enough.

The nearness in terms of days and years of Christ's second coming does mean something to me, much as a sign that reads "Bridge Out, Detour Ahead" tends to focus my attention. But "soon-saying" in terms of any measurable time

or date carries at least three dangers.

1. We place listeners in danger of hearing timely cries of "wolf" too often, and we are left sheepishly discredited.
2. A runner who sprints for a mistaken finish line will have nothing left for the actual ending 50 yards ahead.
3. We ourselves are in danger of selfish, spiritual immaturity.

The Brazilian psychiatrist Keppe describes our basic human disorder as "the disease of theomania—the desire to be God . . . the desire to be the playwright instead of the actor in the drama." Let God be God, and leave the timing of soon-saying to soothsayers.

Our imploring Christ to come *now* smacks of thumb-sucking selfishness, especially when so many "aren't ready." Spiritual maturity reveals itself clearest in our attitude toward prayer: not in getting what we want, but in wanting what we get.

Do we imagine that God isn't suffering a trillion times more than we? Every fly-specked starvation, every screaming torture and rape, every suicidal pain, every unbelievably bleak loneliness, is His child's. Every one. Every *second*. What arrogance we fashion when we beg Jesus to come now because of our suffering.

Much as I long for Christ—my breath, my blood, my everything—to come "soon" so that I might see His eyes, His hands, that I might hear from His warm lips His words for me, that I might watch His spreading smile, that I might feel His sinewy arms squeeze me as I sob shuddering tears of relief and joy and gratitude, that I might smell and taste an atmosphere uncorrupted and deathless, I trust His timing.

Because I want others, particularly my close loved ones, to see and hear and feel and smell and taste God for themselves, Jesus can take His good time. That's part of the good news. He knows what time is best.

Come, Lord Jesus, when You're ready. I'll be living and working for You.

* Yes, there will always be the future unborn. Why Jesus chooses to come is another subject.



Chris Blake teaches and prays at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.





At Rest

LUUKKANEN, Elsa—b. May 20, 1916, Sortavala, Finland; d. Dec. 13, 1996, Kaarina, Finland. She served in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Finland as an evangelist for 43 years. During the war years she began her ministry holding evangelistic meetings and raising churches. In 1969 she founded the Adventist Community Services in Finland.

MCASKILL, Wilma—b. Mar. 21, 1914, Boyne City, Mich.; d. Sept. 26, 1996, New Port Richey, Fla. She served as a church school teacher. She is survived by her husband, Warren; two brothers, Glen Hart and Donald VandeBogardt; one sister, Norma Flick; one son, Kenneth; three daughters, Patti Yontz, Nancy Rutherford, and Judie Gardner; 11 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

NOLAND, Keylor—b. July 29, 1914; d. Jan. 17, 1997. He was a violinist, playing in orchestras and traveling worldwide for more than 50 years. He was with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra for 24 years before retiring in 1985. He taught strings at Andrews University and other colleges. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn Richards-Noland; and one brother, Boardman Noland.

NORMAN, Richard—b. Oct. 3, 1936, Hinsdale, Ill.; d. Nov. 23, 1996, Des Moines, Iowa. He was in the publishing work in the Mid-America and Lake Union Conferences from 1968 to 1984, when he began pastoring. At the time of his death he was pastor for the Albia, Centerville, Fairfield, and Ottumwa, Iowa, churches. He is survived by his wife, Joann; two sons, Greg and Jeff; two daughters, Debbie Holmes and Julie Koobs; three brothers, Donald and David Hilliard and Kenneth Norman; four sisters, Doris Cappicotte, Betty Fleenor, Anna Norman, and Bonnie Berry; and five grandchildren.

NORTON, William "Harry"—b. Aug. 25, 1920, Bend, Oreg.; d. July 25, 1996, Arcata, Calif. He worked for Harris Pine Mills in various locations as a mill superintendent.

OCHS, Irene—b. Aug. 14, 1904, Brooklyn, N.Y.; d. Nov. 23, 1996, Calistoga, Calif. She served as a medical secretary at St. Helena Hospital for 20 years and was the wife of Pastor W. B. Ochs.

ORSBURN, Donald A.—b. Dec. 17, 1925, Tulsa, Okla.; d. Oct. 8, 1996, Puyallup, Wash. He served in the publishing work in California, Idaho,

and New York from 1957 to 1970 and pastored in New York and Washington from 1971 to 1995. He is survived by his wife, Joyce; three sons, Michael, Don, Jr., and William; two daughters, Phyllis Walker and Donna Teachworth; eleven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

ORTNER, Abraham W.—b. Dec. 25, 1904, Psei, Russia; d. Jan. 11, 1997, Avon Park, Fla. He served as a pastor for 44 years in the Southern New England Conference, Pennsylvania, and Florida. He is survived by two sons, William and Donald; six grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

REMBOLDT, Reuben C.—b. Nov. 8, 1916, Gackle, N.D.; d. Oct. 6, 1996, Gresham, Oreg. He served as a pastor and church administrator in the Pacific Northwest. He is survived by his wife, Eva (Dunn); two daughters, Greta Jean Pellecer and Marsha Lee Grow; and six grandchildren.

SILVER, Phi Say—b. 1914, Burma; d. Sept. 5, 1996, Mae Sariang, Thailand. Her name became known to Adventist children through Eric B. Hare's story "Silver and the Snake." She worked with Hare in developing Christian education for Karen youth at Ohn Daw School. With her pastor-husband she dedicated her life to teaching and youth work in Burma and later for the Karen people in Thailand. She is survived by her husband, Ah Chu; four sisters, "Golden," "Sweet Sweet," "Little Little," and Ruth; six children; 17 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

SITOMPUL, Paul—b. Aug. 28, 1928, Padangpanjang, Indonesia; d. Jan. 5, 1997, Alta Loma, Calif. He served as a teacher, evangelist, and administrator in the West Indonesian Union Mission. He pastored in southern California, organizing the first Indonesian-Dutch Church in North America, where he served until his death. He is survived by his wife, Gladys; three daughters, Genevieve Nefwan, Minerva Sitompul, and Myrtle Valdez; his mother, Suzanna; seven sisters; five brothers; and one grandson.

TREADWELL, Winfield—b. June 20, 1911, Tampa, Fla.; d. Jan. 11, 1997, Hagerstown, Md. He was the retired owner of an excavating service in Takoma Park, Maryland, but had also served as a nurse at the Washington and Florida sanitariums. He cared for John H. Kellogg during the 1930s. He is survived by his wife, Mellicent; three daughters, Treodene Keightley, Janette Darnell, and Terri Millburn; two brothers, Harold and Harry; and four grandchildren.

TWING, Joseph H.—b. Aug. 25, 1917, Jamaica, Vt.; d. Sept. 12, 1996, New Port Richey, Fla. He served as a pastor and church school teacher in New York, Maryland, Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, and Florida. He is survived by his wife, Delores; one brother, Bill; one daughter, Sharon Gonyea; and two grandchildren.

VIXIE, Agnes—b. Aug. 18, 1901, Argyle, Minn.; d. Jan. 5, 1997, Porterville, Calif. She served with her husband in South Africa. She was Sabbath school secretary of the Cape Conference, taught church school, was matron at Helderberg College and gave Bible studies. She later served with her husband in Colorado

and other U.S. churches. She tutored children until the age of 90. She is survived by one son, Donald; one daughter, Joyce Rigsby; six grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

WALSH, Aimee—b. Feb. 12, 1932, Pittston, Pa.; d. Dec. 3, 1996, Altamonte Springs, Fla. She has served with her pastor husband, as well as working as a flight attendant and X-ray technician. She is survived by her husband, Horace E. Walsh; her mother, Ruth Hahn; one brother, Robert Hahn, Jr.; one stepson, Bryan; one stepdaughter, Bronwyn Jenkins; and two grandchildren.

WISDOM, Louis A.—b. Apr. 5, 1917, Jamaica; d. Sept. 19, 1996, Orlando, Fla. He served as a pastor in Canada, New York, and Florida. He is survived by his children, Jewel and Robin, and a number of grandchildren.

WOODRUFF, Linda J.—b. 1950; d. Sept. 19, 1996, Pennsylvania. She served with her pastor-husband in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. She is survived by her parents, LaMar and Jane Binkley; a maternal grandmother, Esther Buchalter; one brother, Dale; and two sons, Jeremy and Joel.

YEARY, Floyd Marnard—b. Apr. 6, 1930, Monroe, Mich.; d. Sept. 20, 1996, Avon Park, Fla. He served as a farm manager, boys' dean, and principal in Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, and in Newfoundland. He is survived by his wife, Joan; one son, James; one daughter, Kathy Blandford; and six grandchildren.

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What Do These Splinters Mean?

“Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:51, 52, NIV).

In these two verses we have an abstract of 18 years of Christ’s life. That’s more than half of Christ’s life on earth, and we can read it in much less than a minute. From the few days in the worshipful Temple, Jesus returned from Jerusalem to live nearly two decades in the workshop. From the nation’s religious fountainhead Christ went back to an orthodox backwater. Christ turned from stumping the spiritual leaders to sawing lumber, planing planks for a piece of furniture, sweeping the sawdust floor, and pulling splinters from His fingers.

The crown of thorns on Christ’s head, the spit in His face, the lashes on His back, the nails in His hands, the separation from the Father—I know something about these. I have read about them, heard sermons retelling the story, and have myself spoken concerning Christ’s suffering. But these splinters in His fingers—what do they mean?

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. But along the road from Bethlehem to Gethsemane He has been sacrificing much for us.

The Magi sought the King and found Him where He spent 90 percent of His life on earth—at home. You go searching for the Saviour of the world, and for much of His life on earth you find Him in a workshop cutting wood and receiving cuts Himself. Go searching for the Creator of heaven and earth, and you see Him handling wood, His fingers bloodstained from the slivers.

The last sliver I caught was last week. Testing a sanding job, I ran my hand down the board’s surface and ran a smooth, slender splinter up my thumb. I dropped everything, including the board. The momentary sting arrested my attention, and although it was not a real tragedy, I bled real blood.

Real misery exists, persists, and resists expulsion. I have had

some such sorrow. Still, I have many more splinters than knife wounds. Dull, careless statements and short remarks carefully spiked with spite do not wound as openly as gunshots. But they

are more common. How many face a death threat for refusing idol worship? How many endure the sapping allure of seemingly slight compromise?

In March 1995, 12 people died and more than 5,000 were injured in the Tokyo subway gas attack. The same day I traveled twice by rail through the city. The worst treatment I received was getting elbowed out on my way to a seat.

Normally I accept the minor results of sin as a matter of course. How can I compare a shove to murder? Small pains are not irrelevant. Not one will be in heaven. I do no good excusing them in others, nor pardoning myself. In the New Jerusalem “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain” (Rev. 21:4). “The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching

heat” (Rev. 7:16). Nor will there be any cold, or colds, or cold sores, “for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

Jesus suffered our petty pains not only to identify with us, but to firmly, finally bear them away. His sacrifice for us was not confined to one single event of inconceivable suffering. But throughout His life He bore immeasurable pains for us. He took our every hurt. And by His bruises—as well as by His stripes—we are healed.

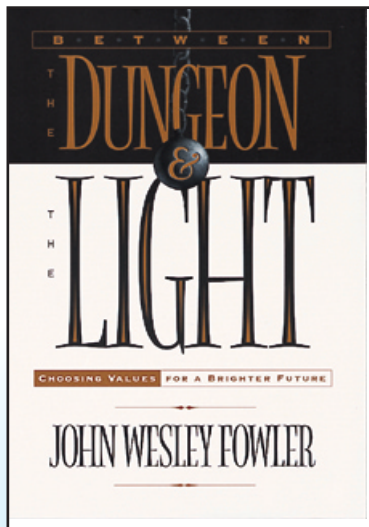
Christ’s cross reveals God’s love as nothing else. But the splinters in His fingers show some of Christ’s long-suffering love for us. In their own way, the splinters in His fingers mean as much to me as the nails in His hands. ■

Christ turned from stumping the spiritual leaders to sawing lumber, planing planks for a piece of furniture, sweeping the sawdust floor, and pulling splinters from His fingers.

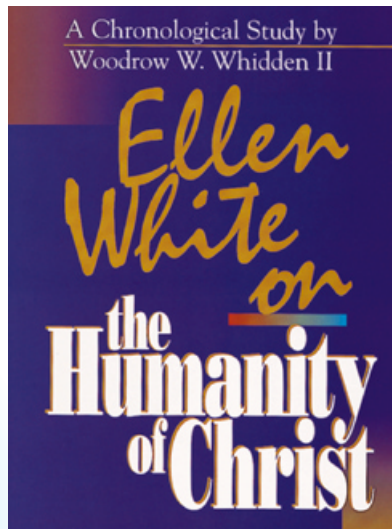
Richard A. La Com writes from Spokane, Washington.



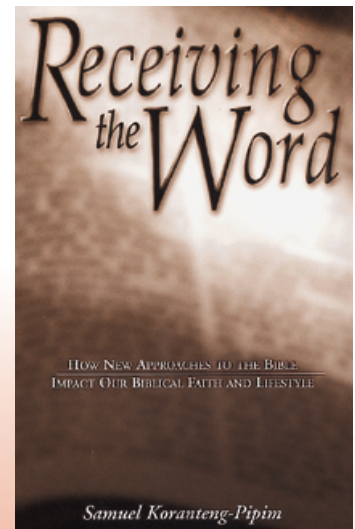
For Your Spiritual Growth



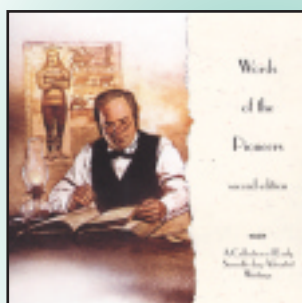
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