A Tale of Two Teens
Adventists and LSD Addiction
A Heaven for Real People

Heaven will be a real, physical place with real, physical people inhabiting it! Samuele Bacchiocchi’s “Heaven in 3-D” (Nov. NAD Edition) was very profound and deep—yet so simple, clear, and comprehensive. His reasoning about how God will restore this earth to its original physical perfection was so simple that even a child could understand it.

—Helen L. Self
Morganton, North Carolina

Muslims and Jesus

In “Let’s Help His Love Break Through . . . in Bangladesh” (Global Mission, Nov. NAD Edition) that country is described as “an Islamic republic [of] some 130 million people,” which it is. Then of those 130 million, the writer says, “Most have never heard of Jesus.”

Since in Islam, Jesus—along with Abraham, Moses, and others—is considered an important prophet, why would the writer say that “most have never heard” of Him?

Perhaps the writer, instead, should have said, “Most of us have never heard anything we were ever told about Islam.”

—Harry Allen
New York, New York

1999: Columns and Features

It’s our 150th anniversary, and along with all the articles and special issues we have planned, you’ll find these regular columns. Don’t miss them.

North American Division Edition
Dialogues, by Sandra Doran
Cityscapes, by Royson James
From the Heart, by Robert S. Folkenberg
World Edition
Faith Alive! by Calvin Rock
Bible Questions Answered, by Angel Rodriguez
Cutting Edge Edition
Leaving the Comfort Zone, by Chris Blake
The X-Change, by Allan and Deirdre Martin
AnchorPoints Edition
Clifford Goldstein, by Clifford Goldstein
On the Home Front, by Leslie Kay
It Seems to Me, by R. Lynn Sauls

Also, look for these special features:
Tuesday’s Child, a full page of family worship material
Bookmark, a review of books
Cutting Edge Conversations, fast-paced interviews with interesting people
Cutting Edge Meditations, brief spiritual insights from Adventists of all ages
Reprints of Ellen G. White articles

Plus: letters, editorials, Give & Take, Reflections, and much, much more.
Remember, if you don’t receive the weekly Adventist Review, you’re missing three quarters of the magazine. Call 1-800-456-3991 to join the whole conversation.
Hitting Home
The best thing to happen to the Adventist Review is Leslie Kay’s column, On the Home Front. I find myself thumbing until I reach her familiar place. She brings a refreshing and enlightening approach to so many topics that affect our everyday lives as Seventh-day Adventists. A sincere thanks and God’s blessing to Leslie Kay and her writing ministry.

— Gloria Neidigh
Tillamook, Oregon

Family
I was frustrated with all the important things I had to do, and I did not want to take time to read the Review. There were people to visit, evangelism to plan, intercessory prayer to address, a sermon to prepare. OK, I thought, I’ll speed-read it.

It is now an hour later. As I lay the Review aside, there is a warm feeling in my heart; there are tears in my eyes. Ideas I have never considered have broadened my perspective. People I have never met I now feel a love for. There is a new joy in my life in identifying with the great Adventist family, for we really are a family. I sense God’s presence closer to me through this magazine. Thank You, Lord, for this gift.

Renew my subscription! The weekly Adventist Review— an excellent investment.

— Kelly Schultz
Alberta, Canada

Forget Lunch
The November 19 Cutting Edge arrived at lunchtime. The “I Remember the Sixties” cover caught my immediate attention. Flipping open the cover, I just had to read the letters. Then of course, Andy Nash (“Bogey Five”) is compulsory reading. (Lunch can wait.) Ella Rydzewski (“Health Versus Faith?”) got me with her opening sentence, and finally I got to Roy Adams (“I Remember the Sixties”). What a spectacular example of quintessential Roy at his finest! What an issue! Forget lunch!.

— Fred R. Thomas
Courtice, Ontario, Canada

Letters Policy
The Review welcomes your letters. Short, specific letters are the most effective and have the best chance at being published. Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: Reviewmag@Adventist.org CompuServe network: 74617,15.

Note: Occasionally we’ve had some confusion about whether received letters are meant for publication. For example, Bruce N. Cameron’s November NAD Edition letter was intended as personal correspondence and should not have been published. (Our apologies to Mr. Cameron.) If you send a letter to our general staff account (see above) and don’t want it considered for publication, please state “not for publication.” I ideally, letters intended for publication should be marked “Letters to the Editor.” Thanks for your cooperation.— Editors.

Reading Again
Thanks to my daughter in Michigan, I received a gift subscription to the Review. The new format sure is great! Leslie Kay’s articles are absolutely hilarious and to the spiritual point. Thanks for the good production—I really enjoy it.

— Gordon A. Gilkes, M.D.
Blythe, California

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“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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Jesus loves the city.

See Him looking down on Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives as He visits it for the last time. He weeps as He thinks of its impending doom:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing” (Matt. 23:37, NIV; see Luke 19:41-44).

How long has it been since we wept over New York? Chicago? Los Angeles? Toronto?

Most people today live in an urban setting, and the trend will only accelerate as we draw nearer to the return of our Lord. But the sad fact is that, with some notable exceptions, Adventists are failing to address the challenge of bringing the gospel to the city.

I have lived and worked in three countries—Australia, India, and the United States. In each place Adventists’ impact on the city has been small, in some places nonexistent. We are a fast-growing movement, but not in the city. Unless we catch a new vision of the needs of the city, we will never fulfill the special mission that we believe the Lord entrusted to us.

The one notable exception of which I am aware is Brazil. I first visited São Paulo, one of the world’s metropolises, 12 years ago. At that time we had more than 400 churches there; today the number has passed 600.

São Paulo has all the attractive features of North American cities, as well as crime, pollution, filth, and degradation. But Brazilian Adventists live and work and share their faith there. I saw firsthand how and why our church grows so fast in that city: laypeople, most of them in their teens, 20s, and 30s, invite neighbors and friends to their homes for simple worship services. They erect a covering in their backyard and put out chairs, and the people come. Before long another new church has been planted.

In North America African-Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities have worked hard and established Adventist beachheads in the large cities. Among Whites, however, we hardly have a presence.

Adventists’ attitudes toward the city spring from our history, understanding of Ellen White’s counsels, and personal concerns.

We started as a rural movement, changing in the twentieth century to an institutional one. Now many of us in North America worship in attractive churches with fine choirs and reasonably safe surroundings. We emphasize Ellen White’s instruction about the benefits of country living.

But we have misused the prophetic counsel. We all but ignore her call for us to take the three angels’ messages to the city. We forget that once she refused to speak to then General Conference president A. G. Daniells until he acted on her instruction to start work for the cities of America.1

During the recent North American Division year-end meeting I heard an impassioned appeal that cut to my soul. Elder Ron Halvorsen, who grew up in Brooklyn, New York, challenged leaders to make the urban areas of North America our focus. We reprint his message on pages 8-13 of this issue, and I urge you to read it prayerfully. Better yet, get a copy of the audiotape and catch the weeping passion of Christ.2

Could the Adventist Church in North America become an urban church? Yes, by God’s grace, but it will take a sea change in our attitudes.

Instead of fleeing the city we will go back to the city as we individually sense God’s call. We will walk its streets and mingle with the people, just as our brothers and sisters are doing in São Paulo.

That sounds scary—the city can be dangerous. So the issue becomes: Will we put mission above our own comfort and safety? Will we focus on ourselves or on the needs of broken men and women?

Two centuries ago Oliver Goldsmith wrote: “God made the country, and man made the town.” Not quite correct—in the Bible the story of humanity begins in a garden, but it ends in a city made by God Himself.

We are bound for a city.

2 Send $2.50 for a cassette tape to Elizabeth Bediako, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.
Recently I reread the four Gospels, using A. T. Robertson’s *A Harmony of the Gospels*. I studied the gospel narrative in terms of four questions I wish I could ask Jesus as we wait for His return. I read nothing that was new to me, but bringing the following four questions into my reading brought new meaning to some familiar passages.

What do You want us to know? Jesus said to Nicodemus: “No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above” (John 3:3, NRSV). This is where it all begins. It doesn’t matter how old we are or how long we’ve been believers; we have to begin each day with the understanding that a new-birth experience is a prerequisite to living the Christian life.

What do You want us to have? In His teaching about prayer Jesus said to His followers, “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:11-13, NIV).

Earlier in the passage Jesus promised that God would provide for our material and spiritual needs; but He emphasized that just as earthly parents delight in satisfying their children’s needs, so our heavenly Father wants to fill our lives with arguably the most important gift—salvation—the gift of the Holy Spirit. I don’t know of a commodity more essential or beneficial than having the Holy Spirit motivating us at the end of the twentieth century.

What do You want us to be? In a world that seems to tug us in several directions at once, Jesus’ imperative is all-encompassing: “You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Luke 12:40, NIV). Rather than trying to accommodate a society that is hopelessly out of step with eternal values, we need to focus on living in harmony with the principles that are the foundation of God’s eternal kingdom.

What do You want us to do? Beyond being born again, receiving the Holy Spirit, and cultivating unity among our fellow believers, Jesus urges us: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33, NKJV). Our twentieth-century lifestyle would bury spirituality under a host of other “important” things on our to-do lists. But putting God first in our homes, our workplaces, our churches, and all our extracurricular activities makes us truly centered, balanced, and effective in all that we do.

And when the pressures of life seem overwhelming, we have Jesus’ own promise: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:28, 29, NIV). What a precious promise for those of us who have more to do than we have time to do it.

Jesus’ answers to these questions are good news. Joy and gladness pervade His answers. From Eden lost to Eden restored, these simple yet all-encompassing challenges and promises have guided God’s people. And they’re as valuable and useful now as they have ever been.

Let’s claim these promises as the coming of our Lord approaches.

Dennis N. Carlson is president of the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

For centuries God’s people have looked forward to Christ’s return. Many things indicate that we won’t have long to wait. Yet even in the time of waiting, Jesus prayed for His followers: “That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21, NIV). Unity demonstrates the genuineness of our fellowship and also indicates the authenticity of our rebirth as God’s children.

Dennis N. Carlson is president of the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
AN INVITATION: FRESH 27

Hey, Give & Take readers:
Do you have a real-life anecdote (serious or light) pertaining to one of the Adventist Church’s 27 fundamental beliefs? How about a short testimony, photo, drawing, painting, or (tasteful) cartoon?

And kids: Do you like to color? The best coloring of each fundamental belief will merit a free Review cap. (For that matter, we’ll award all published contributors with a free cap.)

We invite your contributions to our blockbuster April issue highlighting our beliefs—but we need them by February 1. Send to “Fresh 27” at the Give & Take address below. Help us make this one of the most creative, interesting treatments of Adventist beliefs ever produced.

ADVENTIST LIFE

The first week of NET ’98 my husband was talking on the phone with our 3-year-old granddaughter. When he asked her if she was coming to his birthday party, she replied, “I have to go to NET ’98 first.”

— Barbara Hales, South Bend, Indiana

During the NET ’98 series we had Communion at our church. As people were breaking up from their Sabbath school classes and taking their seats for church, I sat quietly, reflecting on the wonderful program, with a young girl playing her harp and the terrific lesson study we had just enjoyed.

Just then I heard a young boy, maybe 10 or 12 years old, come bouncing through the vestibule doors into the sanctuary. Speaking with a loud yet hushed voice, he said, “Whose body is that laying up there on the table?”

Perhaps this boy was visiting church for the first time—after coming to NET ’98. I am sure he had never seen a Communion table set up before. I just hope he learned what the “body” and “blood” meant before Communion was over. And I pray I may meet him in heaven.

— Dorothy E. Brewer, Crescent City, California

KNOWN BY OUR . . . TECHNOLOGY?

In this week’s cover story, Ron Halvorsen cautions us against relying on technology to fulfill the gospel commission. The following cartoons, sent to us independently of each other, echo that same caution.

— Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria, Australia

— German-Swiss Conference Communication Department

WE NEED YOU

Send Give & Take submissions to . . . Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74532.2564@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.
Unparalleled problems in society and the church mean that we’re fighting the fight of our lives.

BY RON HALVORSEN, SR.

Material in this article originally came in a sermon delivered to the North American Division’s year-end meetings last November. Although the target audience was made up of mostly pastors, administrators, and other church leaders, the challenge of reaching our cities in North America should resonate with Adventists at every level and in every location.—Editors.

Along with the novelist I must admit that this is the best of times and it is the worst of times. We face tremendous problems as we approach the twenty-first century. When you consider the problems of overpopulation, pollution, drugs, ozone depletion, new and deadlier diseases, poverty, and lawlessness, it’s the worst of times. It truly is a post-Christian era.

It is the worst of times in the church of Jesus Christ as well. A nd before God can deal with a careless culture, He must deal with a careless church.

First, the Church

No one would deny that the church needs reformation, revival, and spiritual revolution if we are going to revolutionize the world for Jesus Christ. A nd we leaders must recognize that the spiritual life of the church rises no higher than the spiritual life of its leaders. That fact forces us to reconsider our own spiritual lives, our own walk with God, our own prayer and study life, and our own experience in worship.

Two agendas are being forced upon us in the church, one from the Left and one from the Right.

The Left, with its cunningly devised fables, has robbed us of the idea of the remnant, the idea of the gospel commission. There’s no urgency in our evangelism, there’s no urgency to go out and seek and save that which is lost. We stagger and stutter from one idea to another, never focusing on the fact that we truly are the church of God, that we are living in the age that God would have us live. There’s more socialization than evangelization. The gospel of the Left is theory and not practice. There is no outreach in its theology or thinking, nothing to offer lost men and women. It presents issues but not solutions.

On the other hand, the sanctimonious Right has stolen grace from us and would take us back to the legalism of the Pharisees by proclaiming another gospel. They call themselves historical Adventists; they seek uniformity but not unity. A rchaic Adventism clings to the past when it should be moving toward a promising future. Its self-righteousness exceeds even that of the Pharisees. With their “ascension suspenders” and their dresses dragging the ground, they go forth with a message to the twentieth century that is not heard, nor is it responded to. They have done more to impede progress than to encourage it. Living a monastic lifestyle, they don’t understand the needs and problems of our culture, and they’ve tried desperately to force a nineteenth-century culture on the twentieth-century church.

Thus we find the church in crisis as we find the world in crisis. It is the worst of times.

So how should we act as a church? Shall we continue taking irrelevant messages to an irreligious world? The world has lost its values, its focus. How shall we react to a world that doesn’t believe the Bible, a world that is spinning
through space doomed, damned, crushed, bound for hell?

Prophet of Compassion

If ever there was a prophet to the cities, it was Jeremiah. He lived in a different time and place, but things were not really that different. The future looked bleak, and the challenges were great.

Who is this prophet whose pen is dipped in the salty tears of sorrow for Jerusalem, whose tears wet his pillow at night for the people, the innocent victims?

Jeremiah is his name. Some translate his name “sent forth of the Lord.” He is sent as lightning from the cloud, as an arrow from the bow. Jeremiah came to his prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign. The dust of death falls everywhere upon the city of Jerusalem. But Jeremiah was one sent.

Listen to his lamentation: “How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave. Bitterly she weeps at night, tears are upon her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is none to comfort her; they have become
They searched for food to keep themselves alive (Lam. 1:1-19, NIV).

The result: “Slaves rule over us” (Lam. 5:8); women raped (verse 11); leaders imprisoned (verse 12); totally forsaken by God (verse 20). What did God’s people do? What did God’s leaders do? They fled the cities. And Jeremiah the prophet weeps.

In Lamentations I see two things about the cities: (1) the hopelessness of the people, and (2) the helpfulness of the prophet. In Jeremiah’s day—like in our own—there was the death of the city.

Reaching Out to a Dying Culture

You can’t evangelize the dead. This isn’t an ancient story; it’s a present reality. Have you walked in the cities lately? Have you seen the people? I’ve spent a good part of my life in the cities of North America. I’ve spoken to the young and the old, the good, the bad, and the beautiful. I’ve walked among the living dead in the streets, in the apartments and tenements. I have discovered their hopelessness, their despair, their dying.

Once while visiting in Harlem I was alone, it was dark, and I was there with my Bible covering my heart—in case they shot me. I came up a stairwell and found an 8-year-old boy with a needle stuck in his arm. I picked him up in my arms, and he died there in my arms. Eight years old!

What are we doing? Making stamps (“Say no to drugs”)? That won’t do it. Six hundred thousand babies are being born each and every year addicted in the womb. The church has failed them. Our efforts in the area of temperance and health consist of counting calories and selling soybeans while children die from drug overdoses.

We send student missionaries from North America to all parts of the globe to minister and build churches. Have you seen some poor Black and Hispanic churches in the inner city lately?

We teach English in foreign lands so that a few influential families can get choice jobs, while in some of our cities one fourth of the children in public schools cannot speak English. We have an obligation from God, North America.

Our youth and ministers run to a city in a remote corner of the world to hold a crusade, while some cities in their own conferences haven’t had a meeting in years.

Worship Worth the Risks

BY TAMARA TERRY

Crime is no stranger to the members of the Trinity Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newark, New Jersey: “It goes with the territory, and it’s part of the mission field in which we work,” says church elder Ronald Sullivan.

Before their new church building opened in November 1986, the congregation had to use on-street parking. Break-ins and thefts over the years necessitated secure parking lots with the opening of the new building. “The guarded parking lots simply increase our level of security,” says Sullivan. “It’s especially helpful for evening programs and services in which members must leave their vehicles during church outings.”

Sullivan seems unfazed about the higher likelihood of thefts and break-ins in the neighborhood. He believes the greatest hazard is “ignoring Christ’s call for us to address those needs so plainly evident around us.”

I didn’t understand until just recently how pathetic the situation has become. I went home. Like Jeremiah, I wanted to see it up close again, to feel it, to smell it, to sense its need. I went to the old neighborhood. I walked the streets; I looked at the empty buildings. Vacant tenements lined the streets like beaten old men, bent over from years of hardship. I saw sad, lonely faces in the crowds. I saw the walking dead—drug abusers, pimps, prostitutes.

Downtown I saw 12-year-olds carrying guns, old people afraid to leave their apartments.

I walked uptown. I saw the Gen Xers—sophisticated, well-dressed, smiling, clean-shaven, the BMW crowd. Yet empty, sad, sick lives falling apart, having everything but the real thing.

A fter that little excursion I finally began to understand the death of the city. How do you speak to dead men and women? How do you share with the walking dead? What kind of advertising will appeal to them? What kind of software multimedia program will change them for the better? What kind of books do you share with the illiterate?

Today’s Reality

A merica was founded by godly people. God was incorporated into our Constitution. But like Jerusalem we have turned from Him. And because of that, our cities are under siege.

Why are we surprised by the conditions that caused Jeremiah’s lament? “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Prov. 14:34, NIV). If our cities are deteriorating, it’s because the saints have run from them; it’s because righteousness has not ruled in their streets.

Righteousness has not ruled even in our own homes. City people can’t look at us and say, “They are the people of God.” Jeremiah put the blame on God’s people, and I must also.

Two reasons are given. One is immorality: “Her filthiness clung to her skirts” (Lam. 1:9). And second, she didn’t remember that judgment was inevitable: “She did not consider her future” (verse 9). When people forget their purpose, they forget who God is and what life means.

It was my generation and the previous generation that forgot; this generation cannot be blamed. They are living out the fantasies of past generations. We are left with a religion and a church seemingly without meaning. That’s why our generation thinks there is nobody home in the universe, nobody to comfort. That’s why the Gen Xers don’t understand that there’s
a God who seeks us, a God who wants to comfort us.

Rather, people seek other gods. They seek comfort in the arms of whores, in horizontal relationships, in finite solutions, when they should be seeking comfort in the arms of the Almighty. But who will tell them?

We see the results of that monastic philosophy of Adventism that says “Run to the country and hide in the hills.” Even what the church shares is created by archaic rules and standards that reveal no gentleness or love. The church spends more time on the wedding ring than it does on the wedding.

The city hungers for love, for a God who made His creatures for love. But they’ve turned to sex, hoping they may find a meaningful relationship. They try and try again, but they go away empty and hungry.

They try money. They earn and earn, feeling secure until the market turns down and they lose and lose and lose, and they’re empty. Full pockets, empty hearts. That’s the problem we face.

They try recreation and leisure. And so they run and run and run, but they have no destination. They play until they’re bored and tired, and still life is meaningless.

The First Step

The solution is simple and specific in Lamentations. The prophet sees it all and laments. That’s where it begins: a caring people who weep for the cities. For Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Miami, New York.

In my visit back home to the ‘hood I read on a wall the epitaph of the city: “No one cares, man. No one cares. ——— it, no one cares.” The pity is Who really cares? There are a few ministers who work the cities, and a few administrators who try. But really, who cares?


Weeping represents a burden. Have you wept for your kids? Every parent has. Jeremiah wept for Jerusalem. It begins with a burden. We need

Do the Math

BY MONTE SAHLIN

The four North American cities listed below are the primary evangelistic targets for the next two years.* But throughout North America more than 40 metropolitan areas will see major evangelistic outreach efforts.

NEW YORK

This massive metropolitan area—the largest in North America—covers more than 50 counties in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. Total population is nearly 20 million. One third of the citizens do not claim any religion. Ethnic profile: 6 percent Asian, 19 percent Black, 17 percent Hispanic, 57 percent White.

There are 202 Adventist churches with a total membership of 76,000 (in five local conferences, which are part of two union conferences), two secondary schools, three bookstores, four Adventist Community Services centers.

Less than 5 percent of the Adventist membership is in the Anglo ethnic group, making the 11.4 million Whites in this metropolitan area one of the largest unreached people groups in North America.

LOS ANGELES

This is the largest metropolitan area on North America’s Pacific Coast—center of the aerospace and movie industries for the world. Total population is 15.4 million. Nearly half (45 percent) do not belong to any religion. Ethnic profile: 11 percent Asian, 8 percent Black, 38 percent Hispanic, 42 percent White.

This area is served by nearly 150 Adventist churches with a total membership of 53,000, five secondary schools, one bookstore, 11 Adventist Community Services centers, three hospitals, an English language school, and a retirement center. The Adventist Media Center is located here.

This region has the largest Adventist presence of any of the four metropolitan areas. The entire area is contained in the Southern California Conference.

CHICAGO

The largest metropolitan area in the U.S. heartland, with a total population of 8.6 million; 39 percent do not belong to any religion. Ethnic profile: 4 percent Asian, 19 percent Black, 13 percent Hispanic, 63 percent White.

The region has 75 Adventist churches with a total membership of 16,000 (includes churches in three local conferences), three secondary schools, one bookstore, two Adventist Community Services centers, and one hospital.

The 5 million Whites in this metropolitan area constitute one of the largest unreached people groups in North America.

TORONTO

The largest city in Canada, with a total population of 3.9 million. Two thirds do not belong to any religion. Ethnic profile: diverse, cosmopolitan.

Some 43 Adventist congregations with a total membership of 12,000 belong to one local conference—the Ontario Conference. It operates one secondary school, an Adventist Community Services center, and a hospital.

Less than 15 percent of the Adventist membership is in the White, native-born Canadian ethnic group, although this is the largest segment of the total population in the metropolitan area.

* Source: Center for Global Urban Mission.
100,000 weepers for the cities of North America, intercessory prayerers who will pray for a burden. We need a Mission Spotlight program depicting the plight of our cities sent to the Sabbath schools and churches across this land so that Americans will finally understand that although the world’s needs are large, the spiritual life of our cities is also vital.

The Second Step
Second, we walk. We need 100,000 prayer walkers in America. I’m a prayer walker. A man came to me recently and said, “I live in a terrible neighborhood. A cross the street is a crack house. Then there’s a residence, then there’s a house where all the addicts and drunks meet.” He said, “I’ve been mugged three times on this street. What should I do, Ron Halvorsen?”

I said, “Walk it!” He exclaimed, “I’ve been mugged three times!”

“Walk it!” I said, and he started prayer walking. A month went by; he wasn’t mugged. He was praying for his street. One morning he opened the venetian blinds and looked out, and the crack house had been bulldozed. They went around the residential house, and they bulldozed the other place.

Jeremiah walked the streets with a burden. He wept and then walked. When walking, one sees the problems close-up. Close-up we see the hopelessness of the cities without God. The specific city in Lamentations is Jerusalem. But the Word of God extends further. The Greek word for “city,” polis, means sociological group or culture. Jeremiah speaks of the death of an entire culture.

What had made Jerusalem, the “City of God,” a culture created by faith? Their music, art, and drama were at one time the result of a reflection of their faith. Now faith is gone, and soon everything else will die with it.

With any city, anytime in history, that is the result. We’re seeing the death of our culture. In Jerusalem death was violent; so today. In Jerusalem women were cheapened by men’s perversion; and so today. In Jerusalem marriages were dissolved over burned meals; now it’s burned toast. In Jerusalem sex was a technique, not a touch of love. Jeremiah’s Jerusalem was in the last stages of death.

He wept.
He walked.
He spoke the Word. He said, “God does care.”

The Third Step
In the church we fight over insignificant theological issues while God’s people and the people in the cities perish. We need to take an aggressive stance. There were some back in the seventies who had a vision for New York. They called me from a safe little place down in the Carolinas to go back to the city. I went and conducted nine crusades a year for six years. (Now if evangelists do five crusades a year, they come out panting. But in those days, nine crusades.) “Reach the city, Ron Halvorsen,” they said. And what did they give me? Three thousand dollars a crusade.

But God worked. What we need to do is begin with weeping; we need to form teams of people who will pray for the cities, and then we need training centers in every city to train people to stand up and preach. The Bible still changes lives. This Bible still works.

Sabbath in the City

BY ROYSON JAMES

As the call to sacred rest ricochets off skyscrapers and echoes across the urban landscape once every seven days, Adventists turn from the rat race to find divine rest. It’s Sabbath in the city.

See them hop a bus for that ride to the oasis. Along the route other pilgrims join the secular moving masses. The good news—Bibles, hymnals, and quarterlies boldly clasped—competes with the bad news headlines of the Saturday morning paper. Hats and well-pressed dresses stand out against the shoppers’ casual gear—a silent testament of the call to “come ye apart and rest awhile.”

Parking is a problem. Increasingly Gen Xers turn their cars toward the plush pews and big parking lots of the suburbs, leaving behind innercity congregations where the sound of the organ, drums, guitar, and heavenly singing compete with the hip-hop vibes from the club next door.

Strangely enough, it’s during this time of rest—when God’s people pause for a 24-hour refueling—that His love puts on a human face and the Saviour soothes the city’s wounds, using Adventist hands.

By the time Sabbath school begins, a group of youth have returned from feeding the homeless. A young Pathfinder has seen the face of hunger in a woman rummaging through a garbage can for breakfast.

Filled with the Holy Spirit after almost four hours of Sabbath services, the prison ministry team prepares to do the Master’s bidding and visit the incarcerated. Another group grabs a quick lunch and hustles off to the nursing home for its outreach to shut-ins.

In the church basement the seniors enjoy the fellowship of a potluck lunch. Some families, commuters from the suburbs, pool their goodies for a scrumptious feast.

It’s Sabbath in the city. A little boy feeds the ducks at the civic gardens while daddy savors the bed of roses and mommy watches as the procession of bridal parties goes snap, snap, snapping by. A street party is in full swing a block away. Michael Jordan is in town. So is Janet Jackson. Boyz II Men plays the Forum. Les Mis, Phantom, and Ragtime beckon from the stage. And there are 62 movies showing at 400 cinemas.

Sabbath in the city. A call to observe a time out of synch with the pace of the place. Sabbath in the city. The challenge of a people out of step with the rhythms of the marketplace.
Church in a Commuter Society

BY MARILYN THOMSEN

For the past decade Bill and Kathy Glennie have gotten up a little early on Sabbath mornings and driven a half hour down southern California’s 101 freeway so they could attend morning services at the Vallejo Drive church. Along the way they pass at least four other Adventist churches—one of which is within walking distance of their house. “We started going to Vallejo because of the music program, the choir, the organ,” Kathy explains.

The Glennies are not alone in driving a distance to attend the church of their choice. An estimated 600 people attend worship services at the Vallejo Drive church, which, in addition to regular Sabbath morning services, includes Friday Night Live (biweekly) and a monthly Praise Church. Head elder Myron Counts estimates that half or more drive past at least two churches to get to Vallejo Drive, which is located adjacent to Glendale Adventist Medical Center. Given the concentration of churches in the Glendale area—eight other churches are located within a five-mile radius—it’s inevitable that people will make attendance and membership choices based on factors other than geography alone.

For young adult Kristina Haynal, family is a major reason she drives from Redondo Beach, in Los Angeles’ South Bay area, 25 or 30 miles up the Harbor Freeway to Vallejo Drive. Her parents are members. She’s been attending since early childhood, “and it still feels good,” she says. “I’ve gotten to the point where I enjoy people of multiple ages, not just [my own]. I have something to offer them, and vice versa.”

“Churches have a culture,” says Counts, who drives past at least four other churches to Vallejo Drive from his home. “I like the subculture at Vallejo Drive. It’s big enough to offer the kind of music program it does. It has a high educational level, but the people are genuine, sincere Christians.”

Distance from the church does have its downside. “The only time it’s a problem is for extra meetings,” says Glennie. “We can’t be as active during the week.” For Kathy and Bill, though, the commute is worthwhile. “The draw was the music program,” she says. “But I really, really like the people there.”

This is the Word of God!

Yet we see an evacuation of the cities. We even have a theology: we grab a quotation and say, “We can’t live in those terrible cities.” Listen to me; if we don’t get there and touch their lives with our lives, we will never touch them. You can’t touch them by a video. You’ve got to touch them with a heart. A heart touches people. Ellen White said, “Those who bear the burden of the work in Greater New York [she uses that as a symbol for all cities in North America] should have the help of the best workers that can be secured. Here let a center for God’s work be made, and let all that is done be a symbol of the work the Lord declares to see done in the world” (Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 37).

The Final Victory

There’s an evacuation now. But wars are not won by evacuations. Such was the sober warning sounded by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Great Britain’s House of Commons during World War II.

With the fate of France hanging in the balance, there came a massive evacuation of British and Allied troops from Dunkirk. Nearly 350,000 armed forces escaped from Europe back to England. It was one of the greatest miracles of deliverance since Israel’s escape from Egyptian bondage. Outnumbered, outgunned, outmanned, they fled. Small boats, ferries, everything that could float, were used to evacuate Dunkirk.

In the aftermath England was in a state of euphoria. The British people celebrated as if they had won a great victory. But victory had not been won; defeat had only been avoided. Sir Winston Churchill stood at the podium of the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, and sounded a note of reality: “Wars are not won by evacuations.”

It’s a sober warning to the church of Jesus Christ, to those of you who make decisions for the cities of America, to every one of us.

It was considered the finest speech in a thousand years. Many said that speech was worth a thousand guns. The typically stoic English went. So did the manly Churchill. Listen as he speaks to us today: “We shall not flag nor fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

Exactly two weeks later, on June 18, 1940, England braced itself for the inevitable Battle of Britain—Hitler’s invasion by air. Churchill addressed Parliament again: “Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. . . . The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. . . . Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say: ‘This was their finest hour.’”

If this church lasts for another decade or two and looks back to this year, to this year-end meeting, may they say, “This was the church’s finest hour.” May we take hold of the task, and by the grace of God, may we see the victory.

Ron H Alvorsen, Sr., is church growth coordinator for the Southern Union Conference.
Lillian had just graduated from a Seventh-day Adventist academy. She was now enjoying the freedom from dormitory constraints that came from living with an older sister and working as a nurse’s aide. Lillian attended the local Adventist church, but she occasionally went to the movie theater when she had the opportunity. Because she worked in a hospital, she frequently had to work Sabbaths.

No Mercy

One Sabbath she discovered that she had a run in her last pair of white nylons. Because she was required to wear white nylons, she stopped at a store on the way to work and bought a pair. She was observed by a church member. After she moved to another state, Lillian received a letter from her former congregation informing her that she had been disfellowshipped.

Lillian always considered herself a Seventh-day Adventist, although she never came back into full fellowship with the church. She saw the church as legalistic and hypocritical, yet she believed its doctrines. Under those circumstances, how could she join another church? But how could she return to the church that had rejected her?

From that time Lillian lived an exemplary life. Her two children are dedicated Christians who seem to have avoided the tumultuous years of teenage rebellion that are often so common.

Young and Wayward

Sally was a teenager in rebellion. She didn’t wait to be disfellowshipped. During a pastoral visit she simply asked for her name to be removed from the church’s membership list. When the pastor gently inquired as to the reason, Sally explained her conviction that the church was made up of hypocrites, and she wanted nothing to do with them.

This particular pastor had a daughter who was going through difficult times herself, so he wasn’t prepared to comply with Sally’s request immediately. “It isn’t easy to have one’s name removed from the church books,” he said. “The church doesn’t take that action lightly.” He agreed that the church board would consider Sally’s request—if she would come and explain why she no longer wanted to be associated with “those hypocrites.” She never got around to making an appointment with the church board.

Frustrated that the pastor had made it so hard for her to leave the church, Sally completed her journey over “fool’s hill.” Later she reflected on what had happened. The church had not rejected her, how could she reject the church? She returned to full fellowship with a special burden for wayward young people because she understood what it’s like to be young and wayward.

As she has matured over the years, Sally has been surprised to discover that her values have become similar to her parents’. Over the years she has been published in the Adventist Review, Guide, Women of Spirit, and other church and nonchurch publications. She has written a series of primary Sabbath school program helps. Two of her books have been published, and more are on the way.

What would have happened if Sally’s situation had been treated as Lillian’s, or if Lillian’s had been treated as Sally’s? Is discipline a means of punishment or a means of redemption? Does God make it hard for us to be saved, or hard to be lost?

The Gospel of Another Chance

Sally is my daughter, and I have written this with her permission. I’ll always be grateful to the pastor who made it difficult for Sally to have her way as a teenager.

Lillian was my sister. She had serious health problems for most of her life. About five years ago she was given three
months to live, but her strong will kept her going.

Not long ago I related Lillian’s story to a union conference president. Unknown to me, that administrator then wrote her a letter, part of which read, “I am sorry for the action that the members of the church took, and I am sorry—especially sorry—for the fact that they didn’t even discuss the proposed action with you. I offer no defense for their action and insensitivity. It is not in harmony with church policy to drop anyone without having a discussion with them before taking any action relating to a person’s membership. I know I can never make right what was done more than 40 years ago, but at least I can tell you I’m sorry. And whether or not you can attend or would choose to attend, you would be most welcome as a member.”

That letter made a real impression on Lillian and her family. One Sabbath afternoon I telephoned Lillian, and we had a long chat. She was in good spirits, and she assured me that she was doing “just fine.”

She mentioned the letter she had received from the union president and how amazed and pleased she was to receive it. It seemed as though a load she had carried for more than 40 years had been lifted. We did some reminiscence about childhood and even shared a few laughs. Then I was shocked a few hours later to receive a telephone call informing us that Lillian had passed away peacefully in her sleep.

Never Too Late

I believe God inspired the union president to write to Lillian, and I believe God impressed me to telephone her at just the right time. Lillian had already made arrangements with a local pastor to conduct her funeral service. She revealed to him that she had a very personal relationship with God and that she was praying for her family. She also explained what she believed about death and the resurrection.

At the graveside service the pastor read the familiar text from 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

And we are comforted. We know that even though Lillian was out of touch with the local church during many years of her life, she was never far from the Lord’s heart, and we sincerely look forward to seeing her when Jesus comes again.

Hindsight, as they say, is always 20/20, and many are the episodes that shape our life experiences. While we aren’t allowed to unmake the decisions we’ve made or undo some of our mistakes, we can be sensitive to the Spirit’s leading so that our actions in the present may mitigate some of the heartaches of the past.

Our actions should always reflect this great truth: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15, NIV). And when we make it our highest priority to reflect Christ’s compassion for sinners, the church will be a place where people can catch a glimpse of God’s unconditional love.

Donald R. Pierson is retirement plans administrator for the North American Division. He and his wife, Betty, live in Burtonsville, Maryland.
I'm tired of pastors railing against the "evils" of television. TV is simply a medium—like books, audio-cassettes, and Internet access—through which a message is conveyed. Why the continued tirades from the pulpit?

I agree that television is a medium through which a message is conveyed. However, I believe you underestimate the extent to which this "medium" has taken hold of society. Unlike books, tapes, or even computer time, TV viewing is now the primary leisure activity of Americans, consuming "about 40 percent of all the hours not committed to working, eating, sleeping, or doing chores." According to recent polls, "Americans spend more time watching television than working out, reading, using the computer, working in the garden, and going to church combined." In fact, if you fall into the pattern manifested by the typical American, you will have spent 10 years in front of the television by the time you die.

I don't know about you, but I'm enough of a rugged individualist to feel bothered by the idea that I might passively succumb to anything that will consume my free time, do my thinking for me, and gradually shape my ideology and outlook into a carbon copy of that of millions of other people under its power.

While I could fill this column with thunderings about the violent and lurid content of much of what is on television, I will resist the urge. I can tell from your letter that you've "heard enough" on that topic. What I would like to suggest is that you examine the dreams and goals you have for your life, against the ways in which you spend your leisure time. I have found that most people have some unfulfilled dream buried deep beneath the layers of their existence.

I can't count the number of people who have asked me to write up their "perfect idea" for a book. When I suggest that they begin writing it themselves, the answer is almost universal: "I don't have time." With all due respect, I wonder if reducing the per capita lifetime commitment to television from 10 years down to five years might be a good start.

I can understand your aversion to negative tirades from the pulpit. After a week of fighting traffic, fielding stress from coworkers, and scrambling for supper, it might be nice to settle back into an affirming atmosphere and listen to an uplifting sermon. However, the prophets of God do not answer to the same guiding principles as the entertainment industry. Their purpose is not to entertain, but to facilitate contact between the divine and the human.

As creative beings formed in the image of God, our role in worship is active, not passive. Engaging our minds, opening ourselves to the filling of the Spirit, we are called not to occupy a pew in a euphoric state of relaxation, but to consider what we hear and see with an openness that pierces through the layers of our lives. We may agree or disagree with the content of a sermon. We may feel soothed or disturbed by a message. We may find material to be uplifting or depressing. But since our role in worship is active, not passive, all such reactions are irrelevant to our personal and spiritual growth. We move forward as Christians when we reflect, consider, meditate, apply, change. These actions are not dependent upon hearing a sermon with which we agree or which makes us comfortable.

Frankly, I would not want to change roles with a preacher these days any more than I'd welcome the opportunity to relive the life of Jeremiah. In an era when "every movie, every ad, every show, is supposed to entertain, shooting out one blaring, fun-filled image after the other, allowing no one any time to think about the last one," the voice of the preacher can hardly compete. Perhaps all of us need to rethink not only the ways in which we spend our leisure time, but the sense of entitlement we feel when we are part of a congregation. If we come away from church feeling less than blessed, perhaps the onus should be put not on the preacher, but on ourselves.


Sandra Doran is an author and educator who writes from Attleboro, Massachusetts.
As a boy, I had never heard of a Nasty Fasty until I bought one. Here in England we don't have real ones. Nasty Fasty is another name for a scorpion, which lives in the desert.

The Nasty Fasty I bought was only a plastic toy. But it looked like a real chocolate-brown scorpion with four pairs of legs like a big spider. Nasty Fasty also has two short arms, and its hands are like a crab's big claws. It has a long thin tail that hangs over like a question mark. On the tip of the tail there is a sharp needle. When a scorpion attacks, it stings like an angry wasp.

I once lived in the desert, and every morning I turned my shoes upside down and tapped their heels. This was to make sure that Nasty Fasty was not hiding inside!

Nasty Fasty hides under rocks. One boy I knew lifted up a stone, and Nasty Fasty stung him on a finger. He had to be rushed to the hospital. Nasty Fasty is fast and dangerous.

Jesus told a story about a Nasty Fasty. He said something like this: "If a boy asks for bread for breakfast, will his father give him a stone?" And all Jesus' hearers shook their heads and said "No!" Then Jesus asked, "If a boy asks for fish for his lunch, will his daddy give him a rattlesnake?" And all of Jesus' friends chorused, "No!"

So He asked them a third question: "If a boy asks for an egg for supper, will his daddy give him a Nasty Fasty?" And all of Jesus' friends said again, "No, never!"

Then He told them, "If you are a bad person, yet you give good gifts to your children how much more will God, your heavenly Father, help you to live a holy and good life?"

And Jesus' friends all smiled and said, "Yes! You are saying that God is love." And they never forgot His words.

Auditing Service Receives Professional Approval

BY SARAH COLEMAN, WHO SERVED AS AN ADVENTIST REVIEW INTERN WHEN THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN

The General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) in North America recently received high marks in a public evaluation according to standards set by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).

Although the Auditing Service has always sought to maintain independence from the Adventist administrative structure, it is still considered an internal practice and thus not subject to yearly “peer reviews” required by the AICPA. During peer reviews one auditing practice examines another’s system of quality control in such areas as independence, integrity and objectivity, personnel management, and monitoring—thus ensuring compliance with AICPA standards.

“We voluntarily submitted ourselves to a review,” says Eric Korff, GCAS director, “because we wanted to see how we stacked up against our profession outside [the church].” Aft er several weeks of evaluation, the Auditing Service was given a “clean opinion” by its external reviewer, Johnson Lambert and Company.

The General Conference Auditing Service consists of 220 employees worldwide, nine of whom work in the General Conference building. The Auditing Service provides an objective evaluation of the Adventist Church’s financial standards and policies. This task involves both routine financial auditing services and policy compliance tests to verify that financial operations abide by denominational guidelines.

Officially organized in 1975, the service has always sought to maintain a professional image. To enhance the credibility of its financial reporting, the denomination complies with generally accepted accounting principles rather than creating denominational measurements that could easily be manipulated or misunderstood.

The General Conference Auditing Service maintains a professional distance between itself and church organization. “We function totally independently of church administration,” Korff says. “We are not answerable to Treasury. . . . The church has granted us total professional independence.”

This separation between denominational administration and auditing provides the church with assurance that its financial reporting is responsibly monitored by individuals safe from any internal pressures. It also provides auditing employees with the freedom to report their findings in a completely objective manner.

Seventh-day Adventists can be confident that their Auditing Service stays on the cutting edge of public auditing standards. “If somebody looks at a financial statement from General Motors,” says Korff, “and then they look at a denominational financial statement, the same auditing standards have been used in verifying all the information.”

Staying abreast of constant public standards revisions is no easy task, but well worth the work for the assurance it provides. Silent watchdogs who strictly uphold Adventist financial standards, auditors deserve affirmation for their scrupulous work. “We feel humble that we have been able to provide that kind of service to the church,” Korff says of the department’s clean public review. “It’s really the auditors in the field who deserve the credit for this.”

In North America, 70 employees work to audit every denominational institution, sometimes traveling up to 70 percent of the year in order to fulfill their obligations. Without question, the Auditing Service seeks to fulfill its official mission to “conduct structurally independent financial audits of the highest quality, at minimum cost” to the church. For an organization whose assets are worth far more than $15 billion, a high-quality auditing service is invaluable.

Not surprisingly, a function that has provided credible, empowering assistance to the Adventist Church for almost 100 years looks beyond its official job to a larger picture. “Auditing is not an end in itself,” Korff observes. “We are here to strengthen the hand of the church administration in . . . spreading the gospel.”
Zimbabwe President Addresses World Council

BY ROY ADAMS, ADVENTIST REVIEW ASSOCIATE EDITOR, REPORTING FROM HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe president, His Excellency Robert G. Mugabe, addressed delegates to the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), meeting here in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare.

In his hourlong presentation, Mugabe recounted the troubled history of Zimbabwe’s colonial past, graphically describing how the Christian church gave sanction and comfort to colonialist imperialism.

Regarding A fricans “as children of a lesser God,” he said, missionaries in league with foreign empire-builders kept them in a state of subjection and subservience, “destroy[ing] African kingdoms and culture, as part of the proselytizing process.”

Throughout that dark period, however, prominent voices in the church dissented from the brutal colonialist alienation of the people from their own land, and decried the scandal of a church that had sold its soul to the colonial masters.

Highlighting the controversial financial and moral support given by the WCC to the independence struggles in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) in the 1970s, Mugabe suggested that the world body ought to take particular satisfaction in the political outcome we see today.

“Today, I present you the country toward whose liberation you struggled,” he told delegates, a free Zimbabwe whose people can now worship and rejoice without let or hindrance.”

Mugabe also made a passionate call to church leaders to help end what he called “a global conspiracy against poor nations,” and amid thunderous applause appealed to the WCC to use its influence to nudge the West to “write off [the] debts of Third World Nations.”

One sees no signs of trouble at the moment on the streets of Harare. But there had been considerable unrest here and in other parts of the country during the past 12 months, with trade unionists and students taking to the streets in demonstrations. In fact, the University of Zimbabwe, the site of the assembly, had been closed.
John Elway, the Failure?

By Dick Duerksen, Director of Spiritual Development for Florida Hospital

John Elway, quarterback of the National Football League’s defending Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos, has had a year filled with failures. He has thrown interceptions in the end zone. He has fumbled the football again and again. He has made terrible choices, botched plays, and overthrown receivers who were wide open. John Elway has failed—and failed often.

Yet the Denver Broncos were victorious in their first 13 games this season. Thirteen wins before their first loss. And that with a failure at quarterback!

Failure. We’re all failures. Every day we make mistakes, accomplish less than we are capable of accomplishing, and generally “fail” to measure up. Like Elway, we fail at perfection. Some of our failures are sins, but most are just poor judgment or foolish lapses. Sometimes we fail because we try to do things we have not been trained for or are not capable of doing. Sometimes we fail because we are doing too much or trying to do it all alone. Sometimes we just “blow it.”

When reporters ask Elway about his errant passes, he smiles and says, “I think I’ve learned not to throw that one again.” For this quarter back, failures are never disasters, just opportunities for growth. Fumble, learn, . . . and do better next time.

The same is true for us. Our failures must not be the end, but stepping-stones on the road to success.

John Elway’s Broncos produced 13 consecutive victories in 1998, every one of them filled with failures. Yet every one is in the records as a smile-filled “WIN!” You will fail in 1999. That’s OK. God is eager to help you turn each failure into a stepping-stone, a stepping-stone to eternal success.

Hispanic Adventists Commemorate Centennial

At a recent presentation at the church’s world headquarters, Manuel Vasquez, vice president for special ministries in the North American Division, and Jim Nix, vice director of the Ellen G. White Estate, unveiled the painting Baptism in the Gila River: The First Hispanic Adventists in North America.

The 48” x 38” oil painting by Elfred Lee records the baptism of Marcial Serna, a former Hispanic Methodist pastor who became the first Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist. The painting was unveiled at the church’s world headquarters in January 1999 to commemorate the centennial of Hispanic Adventism in North America.
Unreached Ethnic Concentrations in North America

1. 5,750,000 White non-Hispanics in Chicago
2. 6,468,000 White non-Hispanics in Los Angeles
3. 11,400,000 White non-Hispanics in New York City
4. 3,710,000 White non-Hispanics in Philadelphia
5. 5,852,000 Hispanics in Los Angeles
6. 3,800,000 African-Americans in New York City

NOTE: These figures were arrived at by subtracting the Seventh-day Adventist membership from the total population in each major ethnic group in the 25 largest metropolitan areas in North America. Source: NAD Office of Information and Research, with the assistance of the Adventist Center for Global Urban Mission.

AWR Letter Box

"Dear Friends at AWR: Your voice is an expression of the heavenly message of Jesus Christ, and is a giver of inspiration to us humans. . . . You gracious and generous ones, take the hand of me, who has been listening to your programs, and enter me into your circle of friendship. I know that in time the chain of our friendship will grow stronger, and we will know each other deeply."—Middle East.

"I must be completely honest with you. I am not a believer. I was raised this way, and this is the way I am. Nonetheless, I have always had a lot of respect for religion in general. I think that the combination of listening to your broadcast and getting to know new people will enable me to enter into this Christian world that is so foreign to me."—Mirna, from Cuba.

For information about Adventist World Radio, write to: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600; or call toll-free: 1-800-337-4297; e-mail: awrinfo@awr.org; website: www.awr.org.

NEWSBREAK

Aventist to be baptized in North America. Also pictured are members of the Sánchez family, baptized on December 9, 1899, by R. M. Kilgore, District 5 superintendent of the General Conference.

On February 27, in honor of the centennial of this milestone, the NAD’s Department of Multilingual Ministries will be placing three commemorative plaques near the site of the first Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church, near Safford, Arizona.

McClure Appointed Associate Publisher

Meeting December 15, 1998, the Adventist Review publishing board appointed Charlotte McClure as associate publisher of the Adventist Review.

In her new position McClure will spearhead the marketing program, oversee advertising, give input for editorial planning, help coordinate special events, and work with the global Adventist Church to make the World Edition of the Review available in more and more languages.

McClure is a communications specialist who has served as director of communication for the Columbia Union and managing editor of the Columbia Union Visitor, and who currently is an assistant vice president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Although McClure will spend most of her time at the Review editorial office in Silver Spring, Maryland, she will continue to be an employee of the publishing house.

“This appointment fills a major need,” commented William Johnsson, editor and executive publisher of the Review, to whom McClure will report. “Charlotte McClure is superbly qualified to help the Adventist Review in its rapidly expanding ministry to the world church.”

McClure has three children. Her husband, Dick McClure, is a satellite communications engineer.

McClure’s appointment resulted from an action voted at the December 15 board meeting spelling out the respective areas of management of the Review by the General Conference as publisher of the Adventist Review, and the Review and Herald Publishing Association as the vendor for various services associated with the Review.

What’s Coming

Jan. 1 Monthly Focus—Friendship Evangelism
Jan. 8-15 Religious Liberty Week
Feb. 6-12 Black History Week
Feb. 13-19 Christian Home and Marriage Week
ADVENTISTS AND LSD

BY ROBERT H. GRANGER

ADDITION TO LSD COULD NOT BE found in a more unlikely place—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What is more startling is that it is rampant among all levels of church membership, including teachers, health professionals, administrators, and others with leadership responsibilities. Nor is the problem confined to just North America, for other so-called developed nations are struggling under the burden of dependency to LSD.

Unfortunately, we are now exploiting developing countries with our products, and the results are devastating. If it weren’t for the serious health, social, and spiritual implications of LSD addiction, there would be little reason for concern.

Before you start prying into the lives of your pastor, your child’s schoolteachers, or your fellow pew partners to see if they are addicted, I have some explaining to do. When you are finished reading, you will recognize that you may have to look no farther than your own household. And the chances of being unaffected are pretty slim. You see, I am not using LSD as an acronym for the abused substance called lysergic acid diethylamide. Rather I am using it as an acronym for labor-saving devices.

Never in the history of this world has there been such an epidemic of inactivity as there is now. And with each passing year more of the population are being categorized as sedentary (we prefer that term over slothful). One out of every four adults in the United States of America does not engage in physical activity at all, and at least that many again exercise at less than recommended levels. A nd one of the major culprits is our dependence upon, or addiction to, devices that save us from having to exert effort.

In 1996 the surgeon general’s office released its first-ever report on physical activity and health. One of the concerns expressed in this volume was the increasing automation of society and its impact on exercise habits. One of the report’s major recommendations was to “recognize the need to balance the use of labor-saving devices with activities that involve a higher level of physical activity.”

The Adventist Health Study has tracked more than 30,000 persons living in California for many years. Among the questions asked were some pertaining to the type, frequency, intensity, and duration of usual physical activities. The findings: 40 percent have no-to-low levels of activity, 20 percent moderate levels, and 40 percent high levels.

In places such as the United States we demand and expect convenience. An indication of a community’s advancement, paradoxically, is seen by its introduction of drive-in banking, eating, and shopping conveniences. It is almost embarrassing to observe the pains to which we go in order to avoid moving our muscles. Think of all the LSDs that you use. Your list will probably include electric knives, bread machines, blenders, TV remotes, leaf blowers, self-propelled or ride-on lawn mowers, motorbikes, escalators, elevators, electric window lifts, cars, cars, and... cars. Many years ago when dishwashers were just becoming trendy (now they are indispensable), my father always boasted to our neighbors that he had the best belt-driven, kick-started dishwasher around. Me!

If you pride yourself on not being a smoker but you lead an inactive lifestyle, here’s a reason to let that halo lose...
The risk of suffering from premature death on account of physical inactivity is about the same as that of an active person who smokes one pack of cigarettes per day. (So we have more smokers in the church than you thought.) Just like the warning notices placed on cigarette packs, why not have notices like the following placed on the handle of that motorized lawn edger:

The U.S. Surgeon General Has Determined That Lack Of Physical Activity Is Detrimental To Your Health.

I support much of what Elaine St. James promotes in her Simplify Your Life books, but you can also simplify your life to the extent of becoming flabby. She suggests getting rid of your lawn, for example. I say keep it, and fire your gardener! Furthermore, get yourself a nonmotorized push mower (yes, the type great-grandfather used). And don’t use a grass catcher. Go back over it with a rake. Then sweep the hard surfaces with a broom, not a blower.

How about the car? Am I meddling yet? You might limit yourself to the use of your car for trips greater than a half mile. It is surprising how often we use the car when our feet would have done the job. It’s comical to watch the sons jostle for the closest parking space to the mall or supermarket entrance. Why not challenge yourself by finding the most distant space and then getting in a walk back to the entrance? As for the dishwasher, refuse to use it for anything but an emergency. Are you starting to see the point?

Now, I’m not about to get rid of my car, nor a ride-on mower if I had an acre of grass to cut. The issue is not one of exclusion, but of balance. If LSDs deprive us of physical activity to where we would be classified as physically inactive, then there is a problem. Here’s another way to explain it. When you buy enriched flour at the supermarket, it simply means that the mill has stripped many of the nutritional elements from the whole wheat, then added some (not all) back in to make us health-conscious persons feel good about what we are eating. In reality, there is a net nutrient deficiency, not enrichment. It should be no surprise that the refine-then-enrich mentality has corrupted many other areas of living. Without argument, LSDs have robbed us of the life-giving benefits of manual labor, which we then try to add back in by purchasing a membership at the local fitness club. If we could only integrate physical activity into all phases of our life, fitness centers might become as unnecessary as they were at the turn of the century.

In a study conducted by the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research in Texas, researchers demonstrated what we have known intuitively for some time: the benefits from lifestyle exercise (lawn-mowing, raking leaves, vacuuming, washing cars, etc.) are as effective as structured exercises in increasing physical activity and improving cardiovascular disease risk.
Major Conclusions of the Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health

- People of all ages, both male and female, benefit from regular physical activity.
- Significant health benefits can be obtained by including a moderate amount of physical activity (e.g., 30 minutes of brisk walking or raking leaves, 15 minutes of running, or 45 minutes of playing volleyball) on most, if not all, days of the week. Through a modest increase in daily activity, most Americans can improve their health and quality of life.
- Additional health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of physical activity. People who can maintain a regular regimen of activity that is of longer duration or of more vigorous intensity are likely to derive greater benefit.
- Physical activity reduces the risk of premature mortality in general, and of coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes mellitus in particular. Physical activity also improves mental health and is important for the health of muscles, bones, and joints.
- More than 60 percent of American adults are not physically active on a regular basis. In fact, 25 percent of all adults are not active at all.
- Nearly half of American youths 12-21 years of age are not vigorously active on a regular basis. Moreover, physical activity declines dramatically during adolescence.
- Daily enrollment in physical education classes has declined among high school students from 42 percent in 1991 to 25 percent in 1995.
- Research on understanding and promoting physical activity is at an early stage, but some interventions to promote physical activity through schools, work sites, and health-care settings have been evaluated and found to be successful.

See the official Internet site: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/sgr.htm.

So here are my suggestions:

1. **Identify** the LSDs in your life and determine how you can lessen your dependence upon them.

2. **Integrate** activity into your typical day. It makes little sense to work out on the stair-stepping machine at the gym, then catch the elevator at work.

3. **Be sensible.** For example, safety concerns may prohibit inner-city dwellers or solo females from doing certain activities that others may get to participate in.

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My New Year’s resolution has been a long time in the making, and it’s taken a path paved by the Holy Spirit Himself.

In 1978 Andrews University conferred on me a communications degree, and with it an abiding love of language and the arts. The late nights spent editing the campus newspaper, the Student Movement, have now blossomed into a job as columnist for a big-city daily newspaper. I can talk to the mayor at will and explain from memory the inner workings of city hall. And yet these daily dalliances with the famous and powerful do not provide the lasting joy one might imagine.

There’s still the urge to use one’s God-given talents to spark an interest in the Creator, to stir a dormant emotion, or to ignite an eruption of spiritual fervor. I should be writing books or magazines for our literature evangelists, or manuals on youth ministry, I tell myself. Surely, that’s a higher calling than lining the pockets of the Toronto Star shareholders.

Then God sent me to St. Lucia in 1994. It wasn’t my idea, really. All I did was tell my editor that a group of kids from Crawford Adventist Academy and Kingsway College were spending their March break digging ditches to run a water pipe on the Caribbean island. My editor’s response, during a time of budget restraints, caught me by surprise: “Go and write about it,” he said.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, ADRA, and the work of our committed youth were splashed on the front pages of the Sunday edition for its 1.5 million readers. The Spirit was gently reminding me, “Sometimes all I require of you is to tell the simple story of Christian love.”

Lately God has refocused my sights on the need for Christian love in a big alien city.

Toronto is Canada’s largest city, its financial core, manufacturing heartland, and richest and most diverse center of culture and commerce. A’s such, a mixed multitude of entrepreneurs, refugees, poor, and homeless flock to the shores of Lake Ontario each year.

This winter has seen an unprecedented crisis of homelessness. In the midst of vast riches people are dying on the streets. Beggars proliferate. Hostels are full. Churches—not ours—are opening their basements to the homeless on extremely cold nights.

And so I’ve set myself three goals as we approach the year 2000. First, I plan to budget $1 a day for the homeless street people in my city. Second, I pledge to confront my church and my city with the needs of the underclass. And third I pray that God will help me use my high profile as a columnist to project a positive Christian influence.

First, the budget. What can a dollar do? For one, it’s more than I can afford (that’s a miracle worth telling another day). And second, God does great things with small offerings. Who will get it each day? Whomever the Spirit wills.

Next, our church and its response to the growing number of the poor and the underclass. There is a painfully obvious need, especially for those of us in the cities, to be God’s instruments of hope and love, the salt of the earth, and the antidote to the harsh acid effects of cutthroat commerce and corporate greed. For example, an Adventist church cannot, in good conscience, own a house that sits empty while homeless people are freezing on city streets.

Finally, every day, unsolicited or not, we tell a story about the God we serve. Those who watch human sorrow in silence are living the lie that God doesn’t care. But the ones who actively care for the wretched of the earth—they give wings to God’s matchless love.

So if you’re searching for God this year, on the eve of the next millennium, Isaiah says that you should let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, share your bread with the hungry, bring the homeless poor into your house, and clothe the naked.

“Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am” (Isa. 58:8, 9, RSV).

Royson James writes from Toronto, where he is a columnist for the Toronto Star.
Martin Luther once said that if a man falls off a horse on the left side, someone will put him back on so hard that he will fall off on the right. Luther’s metaphor aptly describes the common human foible to overreact. If a person is deemed too far in one direction, the attempted correction often leads to the other extreme.

For instance, because Sabbath-breaking helped lead to the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish leaders became so imbalanced in their Sabbathkeeping that they accused the “Lord of the Sabbath” of violating it. The Enlightenment, with its extreme emphasis on reason’s ability to reveal all truth and knowledge, was an overreaction to the unreasonable supernaturalism and superstition of the Middle Ages. Today postmodernism—with its belief that we can never know anything for certain—is an overreaction to the Enlightenment’s belief that we can know everything.

As a church we’re not immune to this problem, as can be seen in the endless debate over faith and works. Those who emphasize faith can, in an attempt to remedy “legalism,” present an imbalanced understanding of salvation; those, meanwhile, who emphasize obedience and character development can, in an attempt to remedy “cheap grace,” present an imbalanced understanding of salvation.

Though tension does exist between salvation by faith and judgment by works, they are not contradictory concepts. How could they be, when the Word of God teaches both? The problem isn’t with what both sides of the debate teach (though exceptions do exist), because both sides do have precious, needed truth. Rather, the problem is emphasis.

However different the context, Solomon’s words “A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is His delight” (Prov. 11:1, NKJV), capture a crucial concept. What we need is balance. Error, more often than not, stems from an imbalance of truth rather than being an outright lie.

It’s tempting to use the analogy of a balance in which to get perfect equilibrium two equal weights would have to be the exact distance from the center. That analogy isn’t adequate, however, because human beings (not deadweights) tend to overreact. In other words, the moment someone on one side perceives an imbalance on the other, he or she moves the other way in order to gain an advantage. This in turn causes the one on the other side to move still farther to regain the advantage, which in turn causes the other one to go even farther . . . and on and on. This sadly is what has happened in the discussion of faith and works.

Faith and works are inseparable and harmonious parts of a whole, not conflicting elements. Pitting Paul’s words (“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” [Romans 4:2]) against James’s words (“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” [James 2:21]) ignores the validity of each. If taken alone, out of context and separated from the whole tenor of Scripture, these two verses could seem hopelessly in tension, if not in outright conflict. When “balanced out” with the overarching message of the Bible, and when taken in context with what issues the writers were specifically dealing with, these verses work together to create the foundation of biblical truth.

Scripture is clear: salvation must be by faith alone. The law can never save us because it was never meant to save us (Gal. 2:16). Yet obedience to the law is an inseparable part of living by faith (James 2:18). To overemphasize either one at the expense of the other is to corrupt both.

Most people in the church, I believe, understand these crucial distinctions. The key, then, is to keep them balanced so that as few as possible will fall off the horse.
Paul White tells the story of Grogi, a monkey in poor health. Grogi’s cousin Pilli was studying the book Medicines and First Aid for Monkeys and Others. He took a bandage from his black bag and bound up Grogi’s leg, exactly the way the book described. Meanwhile, Grogi was coughing and shivering.

“Can’t you do something for his cough, Pilli?” asked Twiga, the onlooking giraffe.

“How are you supposed to bandage a cough?” Pilli scoffed.

“The whole of health is not wrapped in bandages,” warned Twiga.

The next day Pilli returned to work on Grogi’s legs.

“Oh, monkey,” said Twiga, “do you not think medicines might be found to bring peace and comforts to the chest of your relation?”

Pilli wasn’t impressed, and continued with his bandaging.

Three days later Grogi was dead. Pilli was sad and angry.

“This cannot be so,” he said. “I bandaged his legs daily with skill.”

“Might it be that bandaging a leg is not the best treatment for pneumonia?” Twiga replied sadly.

Effective outreach always matches the medicine to the wounds. An atheist investment banker in New York City who believes that the Bible is a bunch of legends won’t suddenly believe in God after an in-depth Bible study with 500 convincing texts. A starving refugee’s first priority may not be a lecture on Daniel’s prophecies. A worshiping-on-Friday Muslim may not be overly interested in a lecture on why Saturday rather than Sunday is the Sabbath.

These may seem extreme examples, but how often do we really study our methods to see how well they match people’s actual needs?

Global Mission pioneers, laypeople who volunteer to establish a church in an unentered area, know the importance of using the right medicine. They follow Jesus’ example in mingling with other people, helping them, winning their confidence, and then sharing the good news. A ntony A lexander, a pastor in the war zone of northern Sri Lanka, says: “We can’t just give sermons; we have to work with people in their suffering. I don’t talk to them about religion. First, I make them friends. When I help them, they come to my house. I welcome them, and they feel comfortable. Once they are helped, they listen when we preach.”

Pioneers use a range of methods in their wholistic ministry: health seminars, teaching agricultural skills, public evangelistic meetings, literacy classes, tracts. But they know that the medicine must match the needs. There are some places public evangelistic meetings would be a total disaster. In other areas health seminars wouldn’t touch anyone.

“The apostle [Paul] varied his manner of labor,” writes Ellen White, “shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed.” She adds:

“The laborer for God is to study carefully the best methods,” and “they are not to be one-idea men, stereotyped in their manner of working, unable to see that their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people among whom they work and the circumstances they have to meet.”

In other words, let’s never use bandages to treat pneumonia.

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1 See Gospel Workers, p. 363.
2 Ibid., pp. 118, 119.
The Bench

It was a curious thing to find in the middle of the wilderness. A wooden bench nailed between two towering Douglas fir trees. A curious and yet a wonderful thing all at the same time.

The backdrop was the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana, with Lily Lake lying like a jewel within the mountains' crown. I had hiked for many hours to get to this spot, and now, tired and hungry, I stopped and spread out my lunch.

About 100 feet from the shore, on a grassy knoll, stood twin Douglas fir trees. They towered upward at an angle, spreading their lofty crowns far away from each other, with their trunks about four feet apart at their base. When the trees were young, someone, sometime, had also hiked to this location. I like to think that it had been a favorite spot for the hiker. Meaningful, perhaps, for the person had had to carry a hammer and nails and a 2' x 12' plank all the way up the mountain to this incredible location.

Painstakingly the person had nailed the board to each trunk, forming a bench between the two. And now, years later, with the continual growth of the trees, the board had embedded itself within the trunk of each tree, rendering it impossible to remove the bench from either side without cutting down the trees. Aged and covered with an inviting green moss, the board created a lovely place to stop and rest. Sitting on the bench and facing one direction gave an incredible view of the lake and mountains. Facing the other direction gave a wonderful panorama down the mountainside and into endless valleys beyond.

I sat on the bench in the shade of the two immense trees enjoying a cool summer breeze that fanned its way through my hair, wet with the effort of the climb. Then taking advantage of both views, I straddled the bench, my back supported by a broad tree trunk. For a while I enjoyed the quiet ripple of wavelets upon the green surface of the alpine lake. Later my eyes climbed the lofty summit of the mountains that stood as a proud sentinel behind. Looking down into the valleys below, I wondered at the varying shades of greens and purples that advanced to the horizon beyond. As I enjoyed the rustic simplicity of the bench, my mind drifted to familiar words:

“A bide in Me, and I in you. . . . For without Me you can do nothing. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:4-7, NKJV).

The seasons marching across the face of the years had taken the newly hewn plank and silvered it with age. The same rain, snow, and sunshine that had weathered the board had also caused the twin trees to grow. With the passing of years the bench abided so closely with the trees that it became one within them. It now serves to uplift others, offering to all who pass by a place of rest, a peaceful sanctuary for quiet contemplation.

As I thought about the Bible verse, I couldn’t help stopping right there on that lovely bench and closing my eyes in prayer. Oh, that I might gain as close a relationship with my Saviour as the bench holds with the trees. That I might choose daily to abide so closely with Him that through the progression of time His Spirit will surround me until it is impossible for me to be separated from His love.

When Christ walked this earth, He taught His disciples using parables gleaned from everyday sights and sounds that were familiar to them. At one point He used a grapevine to impress upon them the need for a close communion with Him, saying, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” Had Christ stood there in this very location, perhaps He would have said, “I am the tree, and you are the bench.”

Oh, dear Lord, make me the bench forever abiding within Thee.

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