ADVENTIST CONGREGATIONALISM

Wake-up Call or Death Knell?
Thanksgiving Cover
I was terribly disappointed by the cover of the November 26 AnchorPoints Edition. At face value, one would think that the only people due honor for “making a difference” are a group of 50-plus Caucasians. Out of the 27 people on the cover, only one was non-White and two looked under the age of 30. As a 34-year-old woman of color, I found the cover to be offensive.
—Linda Scales Mercer
Silver Spring, Maryland

Your concern is well taken; here’s what happened. When, for the third consecutive year, we invited Adventists to thank someone who had influenced their life, we also invited photos of the persons being thanked. The photos used on the cover were the only ones we received. In our work here—staff mix, author mix, illustrations—we try very intentionally to reflect the wonderful diversity of the Adventist Church, but not at the sake of accuracy. In the case of a news or feature item (like this one), we must honestly reflect what we receive. —Editors.

The Reasonable Observer
Kudos on the excellent article by Clifford Goldstein. “The Reasonable Observer” (Nov. 26) should give all thinking Adventists confidence in our roots. After three rather tumultuous years in my personal life, it has been a wonderful experience to revisit the biblical principles upon which our

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Final Reminder: An Invitation to Grown-ups and Kids

While we always welcome reader contributions to our magazine, we especially welcome your contributions to our special April edition on the 27 fundamental beliefs.

Here’s what we’re thinking—27 colorful two-page spreads, each expressing a particular belief in a variety of forms: brief testimonies, anecdotes (serious or funny), photos, paintings, you name it. The more creative, the better. We’ll award a Review cap to all published submissions.

And kids: We’ll also award a Review cap to the 27 best drawings/colorings of a fundamental belief. Your parents can help explain the beliefs, but real quick—here’s the list:

1. The Holy Scriptures
2. The Trinity
3. The Father
4. The Son
5. The Holy Spirit
6. Creation
7. The Nature of Man
8. The Great Controversy
9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ
10. The Experience of Salvation
11. The Church
12. The Remnant and Its Mission
13. Unity in the Body of Christ
14. Baptism
15. The Lord’s Supper
16. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
17. The Gift of Prophecy
18. The Law of God
19. The Sabbath
20. Stewardship
21. Christian Behavior
22. Marriage and the Family
23. Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary
24. The Second Coming of Christ
25. Death and Resurrection
26. The Millennium and the End of Sin
27. The New Earth

Rush submissions to: Fresh 27, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; fax 301-680-6637; e-mail: 74532.2564@compuserve.com. Please include address and phone number.

JOIN THE TEAM: Help us with “Fresh 27” and get our famous Review cap.
thou shalt not kill commandment as "you shall not murder."
—Mitchell Nicholaides
Fletcher, North Carolina

The first four commandments have to do
with man's relationship to God, the last
six with his fellow men. There's nothing
in the Decalogue about his relationship
with animals, bugs, or rattlesnakes.
—Adriel Chilson
College Place, Washington

I just wanted to add a hearty amen to
the sentiments Eric Knapp expressed. I
thought I was the only one who felt
this way. Also, while eating animals
for food is acceptable, the conditions
many of those animals are raised in
and the cruelty they face every day do
not justify this practice longer.
—Lisa Doll
Graham, Washington

In "Reckless" (Dec. 10) Roy Adams
assures us that spiritism is not engulf-
ing the Adventist Church, but in the
same issue is a letter regarding the
killing of insects and snakes, which the
editors didn't even bother to address—
thereby condoning that kind of false
reasoning. To put into print this kind
of false reasoning is to allow your read-
ers to assume that God's Spirit is also
in insects. This kind of reasoning is
pantheism, and is not pantheism just
another form of spiritism? The Review
reminds me of the god Janus—looking
both ways and still not seeing.
—Lindsey Greene
Via Email

We don't condone all published letters, and
as much as possible we avoid printed
responses. (Readers can make up their
own minds.) In this case, though, we prob-
bly should have included a note about rat-
sach, just as some letters should include a
city and state/country. Touché! —Editors.
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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4 A D V E N T I S T R E V I E W , J A N U A R Y 2 8 , 1 9 9 9
Where Have All the Heroes Gone?

In a recent poem Stephen Dunn powerfully describes the impact of his daughter’s visits to a local church.* Dunn and his wife had abandoned faith, but they didn’t have a problem in sending their little girl to learn arts and crafts for a week. However, when she came home with a “Jesus Saves” button and singing “Jesus Loves Me,” Dunn’s world began to unravel.

After parents’ night, their little girl beamed and sang and went through the action songs about Jesus as they went home. Dunn was thinking about evolution—devoid of heroes and reeking of death. He couldn’t say to his little girl, “Evolution loves you.” He drove in silence.

Many people are like Stephen Dunn: the heroes have vanished. They have vanished for the media, also—the four th estate hovers like a hawk waiting to point out flaws, impugn motives, and unmask back-room shenanigans, secret book deals. Who would want to be a hero and fall prey to this searching scrutiny?

So instead of the hero we have the antihero. We try to satisfy our craving for models by focusing on the fleeting exploits of actors and the play of the day. Once “heroes of old” (Gen. 6:4, NIV) walked the earth, but no more.

The Bible is a book of heroes. We read of the noble Jonathan—every inch a prince—and his routing of the Philistine oppressors. David himself gathered a band of “mighty men”: Josheb-Basshebeth, who slew 800 of the enemy; Eleazar, who stood his ground when all around him fled, and wielded the sword until it froze to his hand; Benaiah, who went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion; and many others (see 2 Sam. 23:8-23).

We find also the story of Joseph, the youth of integrity who rises from prison to govern the land of Egypt. Daniel, true to principle and to his God, who dispenses wise leadership under three different monarchs. Noah and Abraham; Deborah and Esther. And the towering figure of Moses, the humbled one who leads God’s people to the borders of the Promised Land.

Here are stories to captivate the hearts of children, to inspire young men and women as they set the sails of their lives, to encourage the followers of God into their sunset years. These mighty men and women knew their God, knew that He was real, knew that He loved and cared for them, knew that He desired a high and holy purpose for them in this life and eternally. “These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth” (Heb. 11:13, RSV).

One story stands out from all the others. In this saga we find no battles and no throne; no daring feats of physical prowess that wow the multitudes; no pomp and circumstance, no politics.

Instead we see a garden. There in night’s deep hours as the full moon shines bright and the dew falls silently, a Man labors in prayer. He struggles and groans as He contemplates the fearful morrow; He cries out in agony to be delivered from the cup of woe that trembles in His hand.

God hears, but God does not release Him. And Jesus of Nazareth rises to His feet and goes out to meet His fate. Within hours He hangs on a Roman cross and dies for the sins of the world.

Jesus is the antihero supreme. And yet He is the ultimate hero, the one alone by whom true greatness can be measured. Only as a life—any life, my life, your life—begins to reflect the pattern of Him who said and lived “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28, NIV) does it approach eternity.

No stench of death and decay here! Our Hero rose from the dead. Jesus is alive!

Let’s tell this story, and tell it again and again. To our children. To the world. To ourselves.

Pilate said it right: “Behold the Man!” (John 19:5). Jesus is our hero for this and every new year.

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We’ve reached the point in the history of our movement where we spend considerable time highlighting our milestones. (Later this year we’ll commemorate the inauguration of The Present Truth—forerunner of the Adventist Review—by James White 150 years ago.) And on all sides we’re treated to reports of people and institutions celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of this or the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of that.

In the course of those celebrations we’ll honor the vision of our pioneers and praise the strength of the institutions they left behind.

But there’s an odd bit of counsel from the book of Isaiah for all of us who are tempted to be infatuated with the past: “This is what the Lord says . . . : ‘Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!’” (Isa. 43:16-19, NIV).

In verses 16 and 17 God is identified as the one who brought Israel out of Egyptian captivity with a marvelous deliverance through the Red Sea. Yet God urges His people to forget it. Why?

The fact is that Israel’s fixation on God’s past activity on their behalf had made them complacent about the present. In their minds no future event could compete with Israel’s experience at the Red Sea. Indeed, much of the tension in the Bible had to do with those who revered the past (to the point of wanting to retain all its empty rituals and ceremonies), and those who wanted to go boldly into the future guided by God’s dynamic leadership.

Yet at some point Jesus’ followers realized that the ceremonial rituals (including circumcision) that characterized their past were ineffective and unnecessary in taking the gospel to the world. There also came a time when the Holy Spirit helped them understand that God’s kingdom is not exclusively Jewish, but that people of every age, gender, and ethnic origin who accept Jesus as their Saviour are members in full.

More than a few people were uncomfortable with these developments (change is never embraced without a certain amount of tension). And the apostle Paul spent much of his ministry trying to preserve the integrity of the gospel while at the same time protecting the fledgling church from those who insisted on trying to turn back the clock to the “glory days” of the past.

In today’s Adventist Church more than a few people would likewise prefer to turn back the clock 80, 90, or 100 years (failing that, they’d settle for 30, 40, or 50 years). But that’s not going to happen. The church has changed too much, and so has the world. Fashions, musical preferences, cultural changes, and modifications in theological emphases are inevitable. And I don’t understand how a movement can expect to stay viable if it stops moving.

From today’s perspective the Adventist Church of the past may have placed too much emphasis on law and not enough on grace; too much on rules and not nearly enough on relationships. And today, even with changes in emphases, the church is far from perfect. That’s why we need to study and pray so that we’ll always be guided by the Holy Spirit. And if we’re still moving, we can look forward to cooperating with God in His “new thing.”

Just as our pioneers would find the church’s progress over the past century mind-boggling, so our imaginations can’t begin to appreciate what God has in store for us. His “new thing” will make (is making) all our past accomplishments seem puny and paltry in comparison.

Now, there’s certainly nothing wrong with celebrating our past. There’s much we should remember: lessons to be learned, mistakes to be avoided. But we have to keep growing, moving, evolving. And there are a host of things we should gratefully leave behind as we enthusiastically follow God into the future.

Although world conditions will get worse before Jesus returns, notice God’s promise regarding those who follow Him: “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (Prov. 4:18, NIV).

The past is a nice place to visit, but you wouldn’t want to live there. The “new thing” that God is doing for us—as a movement and as individuals—is much too exciting.
In this new feature, Adventists share their church-related dreams.

**Travelers’ Clearinghouse:** I would like to see a clearinghouse that matches travelers with people wanting to send things to overseas Adventist groups. Many of us who travel do not fill our international flight weight limit and would be happy to transport things.

Brainstorming idea: an institutional Web page that listed (1) overseas needs and mailing addresses and (2) travelers with destinations, dates, and amount willing to take.

Is someone already doing this? If so, please send me an address or phone number. If not, is anyone willing to start? I’m willing to help, but I don’t think that www.ridgecrest.ca.us would be an appropriate Web address.

— Earl Furman, 920 E. California, Ridgecrest, California 93555; efurman@ridgecrest.ca.us

**TRIVIAL PURSUITS**

We turn like dachshunds in our skin
And look behind us Wondering if where we’ve been Means something to us? to them?
If now— If then— We’ll catch this rodent we pursue This rat of time That leads us blindly on a merry chase.
This future— This black hole we face— Could swallow us Could terminate the Race!
Yet softly in our minds we know That trust is all there is to life and trust must grow A nd not stand hesitant But go to face the unknown Calm, serene— We turn like dachshunds in our skin and look behind remembering Who sent us in.

— Joy Cassano Coleman, Glen Burnie, Maryland

**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.
HAS IT EVER SEEMED TO YOU that life is a struggle to go beyond your limits to attain something better, to make yourself into something that you're not?

Most of us learn very early what it takes to reach the world's standard. We've learned that it's smart to pay attention to grade-givers; that when we give the right answers, we're considered intelligent. When we do the right things, people think of us as friendly, helpful, likable, or successful. When wearing the right clothes, we become attractive, sexy, or desirable. When we own enough of the right things, we can think of ourselves as wealthy. In short, we become what others think of us.

In fact, we're living on the brink of an abyss, because our lives are spent in creating something that can be unmade in an instant. Theologian Henri Nouwen put it this way: "The more we allow our accomplishments—the results of our actions—to become the criteria of our self-esteem, the more we are going to walk on our mental and spiritual toes."¹ We're never sure if we'll be able to live up to our own expectations, let alone those of our family, our friends, our church, or our society. Without being entirely aware of it, we are driven closer and closer to the precipice of failure. We're afraid that someday our masks will slip and people will discover that we're not what we claim to be.

Even success comes at a price: every accomplishment at school, at home, at work, and in our community calls for at least an equivalent, if not greater, achievement. Our goal-oriented society tells us that we can do it if we just try a little harder, buy a little more of this or that, get the newest, most-up-to-date car, clothes, computer, food, golf clubs, hairstyle, makeup, music, etc. The world tells us that going to the right places, cultivating the right contacts, reading the right books, seeing the right programs, holding the right opinions, and owning the right possessions define who we are.

So what we think about ourselves becomes dependent on what others think about us. But when that happens, "we have sold our identity to the judges of this world."²

The result of this restlessness is that we need more and more affirmation and praise to neutralize our self-doubt. Materialism, possessiveness, and defensiveness permeate society in general, and on a personal level we often experience deep isolation and loneliness because friendship and love are impossible without mutual vulnerability.

How we live is determined by whom we're trying to please.
How can we afford to be vulnerable when we see others as competitors and judges?

So Many Voices
The poisons of materialism, possessiveness, and defensiveness surround us. Without a belief in something bigger than ourselves, we are trapped in lives that are context-bound. All we can hear are the voices of the world’s grade-givers. In fact, we have internalized their criteria, becoming grade-givers to ourselves. There’s a seductive appeal in thinking, “If I try hard enough and long enough, I can be more important, more liked, more happy.”

To the prophet’s question “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard change its spots?” (Jer. 13:23) the world answers, “Of course, with the right motivation and the right products; maybe not permanently, but appearance is reality, and appearance is all that matters.” So the world claims its right to judge us by the results of our actions. And when we forget the essence of Christianity, we allow that “What I do is what I am” attitude. Thus we have essentially sold our souls...
to an alien notion of how God sees us.

**The Christian Life Means Freedom**

Jesus came to free us from this seemingly inescapable trap of believing that what we do is what we are. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31, 32). Christianity redefines us; it gives us the freedom first to be, then to do. And that's exponentially different from doing in order to be.

Christ modeled the reality that our identity and worth are not dependent on what we do.

- In the parable, the prodigal son was accepted, not for what he did, but because of his father's undying love for him.
- The woman caught in adultery was accepted, not for what she did, but because she realized her hopeless condition.
- The widow's son was raised from the dead, not because he was deserving, but because he was needed.

Christ's authority wasn't dependent on what others thought of Him; His authority and power came from the Father. "I do nothing on my own, but speak just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28). And again: "By myself I can do nothing... I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:30); "It is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work" (John 14:10).

Likewise, Christianity frees us to be what God designed us to be: His children by virtue of creation and redemption. Christians can claim the power to live in the world without being of it (see Christ's prayer for His disciples in John 17). We can act out of what God has already given to us—even if the ideal is not yet fully realized. We can afford to fail and learn from our failures. We can dare to live for God without being deterred by the apparent lack of results. Our identity is found in, and has meaning through, God; our self-worth no longer depends on our own successes. You and I have choices. We are empowered. We are free.

**I Believe**

Sadly, most of humanity has lost the reality of our God-given identity as His children. Without Him the human condition is one of destructive illusions, of looking to outside influences to achieve happiness and fulfillment, rather than finding it as part of our God-given birthright, our heritage. Christ came to demonstrate just how far God would go to bring us back to that reality.

A life without God is a broken life that we cannot heal by ourselves—regardless of what we do. Only as we rediscover our identity in God can we become whole in mind, body, and spirit. God is the mainspring of our being. Lifestyle is important, but it doesn't define us. Lifestyle is merely the body language that says loudly, "What we do is not who we are; rather it is the result of who we are: children of the Ruler of the universe."

Such a liberating reality gives us hope and courage. It gives us a meaning greater than ourselves. We are worth more than the results of our efforts. Our successes and failures can lose some of their power over us; we can afford to let go of our defensive ness and materialism. We can love with an authentic, God-given response, rather than with a grasping possessiveness that arises out of our own needs.

Every Sabbath, then, is a celebration and reminder that we have our identity in our Creator. The transcendent reality we accept by faith soon becomes a physical as well as a spiritual reality. Now we understand that reality only partially, but when God makes all things new, we shall come to a fullness of knowledge (see 1 Cor. 13:12). We live with that expectation. And a life lived in expectation is a life of deep joy and hope. Who would not welcome such joy and empowerment?

**Freedom's Promise**

Most people find it possible, at least in the short term, to gain some approval part of the time using the world's standard of acceptance. But the approval of a scorekeeper God doesn't bring freedom. And it's often even more difficult to gain the approval from some of Him is "saints."

If in our preoccupation with styles of worship and standards of dress and behavior we have presented a God who holds a scorecard, we have contributed to the illusion that what people do is more important than who they are. We have denied Christ's promise of freedom—the freedom that lies at the very heart of Christianity.

The church must teach first and loudest that freedom is inherent in being one of God's children. Our voices must be loud and clear, unashamed and unequivocal, so that we may be heard above the claims of the world that would seduce us to be part of it again. The struggle is over our souls, over who we are.

We must proclaim freedom in Christ.

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1 Henri J. M. Nouwen, Out of Solitude (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria, 1974), p. 19. Nouwen's thoughts on the freedom we have from the world's grade-givers have been invaluable in giving shape to this article.

2 Ibid., p. 20.

3 All Scripture references in this article are from the New International Version.

Renate Krause lives in Angwin, California. She wrote this when she was professor of English at Canadian University College.
The Curse of the Law

In The Spirit of Prophecy Ellen White wrote: “The law of God could condemn, but could not pardon” (vol. 1, p. 30).

The law could not pardon? Most of us would say we believe that line—but how many will take it to the logical conclusion?

To do so is to believe that no matter how much one proclaims the immutability of the law, or seeks to obey it in spirit and in truth, the law still condemns. It means that Abraham, Moses, Paul, Ellen White—like us—stand in only one relationship to the law, and that is in condemnation. It is to conclude that there is no pardon, justification, or salvation, but only a curse, guilt, and death in the law.

If the law cannot pardon, then Sabbathkeeping, then not taking the Lord’s name in vain, then not lying, then not stealing, then not murdering, then even loving God with all your heart and with all your soul and loving your neighbor as yourself, cannot pardon sin. All they can do, in and of themselves, is curse and condemn, because “all who rely on works of the law are under a curse” (Gal. 3:10, RSV).

Notice, Paul didn’t write that all who do the works of the law are under a curse, for that would contradict many texts regarding God’s clear commands for obedience to the law (Rev. 14:12; 22:14; 1 John 5:2, 3; James 2:10); instead he says that those who rely on these works for salvation are under the curse—because (as the woman said) “the law of God could condemn, but could not pardon.”

Because the law—and works thereof—can only condemn, another means of pardon was necessary, and that was provided by Jesus Christ, who alone met the demands of the law. The law was fulfilled in Jesus in that He met its claims completely, something no one else has done or could ever do. Forgiveness, therefore, can be found only in Jesus, because only His obedience was sufficient for the absolute claims of the law. Jesus alone has what Paul calls “the righteousness of God,” the only righteousness that can pardon us, “even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:21, 22).

It has to be only by faith, because our works will never procure the “righteousness of God” for us. It’s way too late for the law to do anything except condemn, which is why Paul wrote: “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

Either salvation is by faith alone or it’s by works as well. And if it’s by works too, then let’s take that position to its logical conclusion. If salvation is based in any way on our obedience to the law, then God the Son’s becoming human flesh, living a life of perfect obedience to the law, and going to the cross, where He faced the Father’s wrath against sin, where all the sins of the world fell upon Him, where He became sin for us, where He was judged and condemned in our place, where He died the second death as a substitute for the transgressions of the whole world—all that still wasn’t good enough? It wasn’t sufficient to pardon us? It was lacking something that can be made up by our “works of the law”? Please! And yet that’s the only logical conclusion of any theology that attributes merit to lawkeeping. It’s like trying to make Bill Gates richer by hurling cow dung into his bank account.

E. J. Waggoner, in The Glad Tidings, wrote: “People take the sign for the substance, the end for the means. They see that righteousness reveals itself in good works. Therefore they assume that the good works bring the righteousness” (p. 53).

They’re wrong. Good works, “the works of the law,” are the personal manifestations of a person who has been born again; works are the outward, subjective expression of a life changed by “the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ.” But they can never, under any circumstances, save us; on the contrary, all they can do, in and of themselves, is kill us—because again, as the prophet said, “the law of God could condemn, but could not pardon.”

Clifford Goldstein is editor of Liberty, a magazine of religious freedom.
There are only two truly Catholic churches in the world today: the Roman Catholic and the Adventist Catholic. 

Now that I have your attention, I trust that you realize that the primary meaning of the word “catholic” is “universal.”

Adventism is Catholic in the sense that it has a worldwide commission to fulfill the mission of the three angels of Revelation 14; to take the end-time message to every nation, tongue, and people.

But some Adventists have come to believe that in the area of church organization Adventism has gone too far. Some even hold that Adventism has organizationally “out-beasted the beast.” The reaction for some has been the congregational option.

Learning From the Past

Congregationalism is deeply rooted in Seventh-day Adventist history. James White and Joseph Bates came into Adventism from the Christian Connection, which had a congregational polity. The Connectionist movement was held together by a loose association of churches (somewhat like today’s Baptists) that shared common periodicals.
Congregationalism has more than one face.
Paul made it explicit that the head of the church was no person or group of people, but Christ Himself. Thus all ecclesiastical authority at the human level is delegated authority, and that authority, unlike the model of the world, is not masterly authority, but servant authority. As one scholar put it, human church leaders have authority to sacrifice and serve as the Holy Spirit seeks to use them to bring about the rule of God on earth. The New Testament leaves no doubt as to the servant leadership ideal, yet servant leadership is probably the easiest thing in the world to abuse and neglect.

Beyond the headship of Christ, the New Testament pictures a church that was consciously led by the Holy Spirit. The church was not structure-centered or person-centered, but was centered in the divine Godhead. Whenever the church forgets that fact, as it often does, it soon leads itself astray. And that problem holds just as true for Seventh-day Adventists as it does for Roman Catholics, Methodists, or Baptists.

**Finding Our Knees**

The church to be faithful must be a church on its knees. It is not the church’s leading that counts, but the leading of God. It is not our programs or structures that count, but the mission of God. It is not even our ecclesiastical position as leaders and members that counts, but the position of God both in the church and in our hearts. The church, to be God’s church, must have God at the center, not its own well-being or the status quo. The church must always have ears to hear what its Lord is seeking to tell it.

In the actual world of the New Testament church, the Bible indicates a structural model that certainly transcends the congregational. The fullest example of that model is illustrated by the mission associated with Paul. The apostle definitely functioned under Christ’s leadership as a sort of superintendent over the workers in the areas he had opened up to the Christian message. Beyond that, Paul had lieutenants, such as Timothy and Titus, who not only did the work of evangelists (2 Tim. 4:5), but also functioned in leadership roles across various congregations.

Thus Paul sent Timothy to such places as Corinth, Philippi, and Thessalonica. Timothy had authority to lay hands on local church leaders, rebuke local church leaders who persisted in sin, and to determine which local leaders were worthy of “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17-22). In like manner, Titus exercised a God-given authority to appoint local elders in every town (Titus 1:5).

From the descriptions given of the work of Timothy and Titus it does not appear that they were functioning as what we would call conference presidents or what others in modern terminology might call bishops. Rather their function appears closer to that of the Methodist circuit riders, who not only did evangelism but also had the responsibility of a score of congregations. They appointed local elders and cared for the churches as they made their rounds. In early Methodism you had traveling elders (pastors) and local elders (lay leaders) under the direction of an area superintendent or bishop.

A dventism adopted aspects of that model for about 60 years. Until the early twentieth century A dventism did not have settled pastors, but traveling pastor/evangelists who appointed local leadership.

While Paul may have functioned as a general superintendent in his geographical area of mission, he did not operate as a free agent. Rather he worked in harmony with leaders in other parts of the Christian mission.

The best illustration of such interlocking leadership is found in the general council of the church reported in Acts 15. That council definitely reflects the international/interdistrict leadership of the early church coming together to settle a problem that was disrupting the body of Christ; namely, the membership and behavioral requirements of Gentiles who desired to join the church.

In Acts 15 we have an international ecclesiastical body performing the loosening and binding function placed upon the church by Jesus in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. In essence, that function had to do with “the regulation of conduct and the setting of acceptable standards.” That function became essential in the Christian movement as it separated from Judaism and its way of life. The Christian community needed to set its own standards.”

That loosening and binding function, however, was not to be on the basis of earthly ecclesiastical authority. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary seems to have it right when it remarks that the meaning of the binding and loosening is that “the church on earth will require only what Heaven requires and will prohibit only what Heaven prohibits... Christ’s representatives on earth have the right and the responsibility to ‘bind’ whatever has been ‘bound in heaven’ and to ‘loose’ whatever has been ‘loosed in heaven,’ that is, to require or to prohibit whatever Inspiration clearly reveals. But to go beyond that is to substitute human authority for the authority of Christ... a tendency that Heaven will not tolerate in those who have been appointed to the oversight of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven on earth.”

**Acts 15 shows the Jewish and Gentile church leaders acting in harmony under the leading of the Spirit in making certain decisions regarding Christian conduct. They not only made...**
such decisions, but the leaders of the Gentile sector of the church made the rulings known to the various churches they had contact with in the wider Christian community. We read that as “they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observation the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4, RSV).

This evidence, while not indicating a developed hierarchical system, does indicate much more than a congregational form of church government. That does not mean that congregations did not have authority in many or even most matters. The congregation was extremely important in Paul's eyes. The Corinthian correspondence, in particular, indicates Paul's respectful treatment of a troublesome congregation. He did not take a high-handed approach to their need to clean up their mess (and it was truly a mess), but he certainly counseled them firmly from the light of God's principles to disfellowship at least one of the dissidents (1 Cor. 5:4, 5) and to make moves in other ways that would put them in line with the Lord's leading and will.

Exploring Advantages

There are some very positive things to be said about certain aspects of congregationalism. First and foremost is the important fact that the local congregation is where the members “do” church. If the congregations are healthy and contented, then we can expect the other levels of the church to be vibrant and healthy. But the converse is not necessarily true. It's possible, through the proper types of engineering (or manipulation), to have a very healthy and vibrant structural and institutional system, as long as the people remain convinced to support the larger system, while having a majority of listless congregations. There is, however, a time bomb built into the latter scenario. The fact of the matter is that health at the congregational level is the only way to guarantee long-term health at other structural levels.

Another thing to note about a healthy congregation is that no one can stop it. If members have excitement about their mission, there will be initiative toward mission and outreach. A local sense of responsibility is priceless. Beyond those advantages, a local congregation knows the needs of its community in an intimate way and can create a diversity of programs to meet those needs.

Hierarchical models of church structure also have their advantages. Perhaps the first and foremost is that they provide the essential framework for concerted action. A worldwide church can target money and personnel into needy areas of the world that would be beyond the potential of a local congregation. Larger structure not only provides concerted action but also a global vision. Beyond those advantages, a hierarchical model provides for continuity and somewhat of a unity for its constituent parts.

Both congregational and hierarchical models of the church have their downsides, of course. Congregations, for example, can easily become focused on merely the needs of their local community and forget the larger mission of the church. Without any accountability, it is easier for them to wander from their theological moorings, and it is also easier for them to come under the sway of a charismatic leader and his or her peculiarities. Hierarchies, for their part, as William Johnsson so nicely puts it, “may become bureaucratic, an end in themselves, and a drag on innovation.” Imposed rigidities provide the death knell for local initiative, responsibility, or even caring about what happens. Neither system has all the advantages or disadvantages.

Congregational Thinking on “Other Levels”

To be fair to the topic, we also have to ask to what extent “congregational” thinking takes place at levels of church organization apart from the local congregation. Here, of course, definitions are critically important. An example could be a type of thinking that focuses, for instance, on individual projects as a target for giving rather than merely giving and letting the proper authorities decide how the money is to be spent.

It’s no secret that just this kind of project giving is on the increase in Adventism and that this form of congregational thinking is fostered all the way from the local church down to the General Conference president.

The benefit of the project approach is that people really like to know what they are giving to. They want to see where their money is going, rather than merely throwing it into the big “black hole” of the church’s administrative machinery in trust that it will do some good. Members tend to give more to projects than to more nebulous targets.

The downside of project giving is that as more people give more money in this way, they will eventually give less to general funds. Administrators are then forced to appeal even more to the project giving mentality. This sort of congregational thinking can be viewed as positive from one perspective and detrimental from another. In the final analysis it is merely another form of localism that is challenging an entrenched globalism.

Is Uniformity Essential to Unity?

The challenge of congregationalism also requires that we ask and answer important questions about the differences between unity and uniformity.
To remain viable, the church should not only respect change, but anticipate it.

Must all parts of a global church do things in exactly the same way, or are some variations possible?

In terms of church structure itself, there is no compelling argument for exact uniformity. The structure for Seventh-day Adventist Church organization, as has been amply demonstrated by the published doctoral studies of Adventist scholars Andrew Mustard and Barry Oliver, has not been based on some theoretical ecclesiology, but rather on functionality for mission. We do well to note that it is the mission rather than the structure that is inspired.

As Oliver so nicely puts it: “While Seventh-day Adventists have become one of the most ethnically diverse Christian denominations in the world, they remain not only in danger of failing to respond adequately to the change that cultural diversity has brought, but they are even in peril of refusing to acknowledge that diversity necessitates structural adaptation. To remain viable, change should not only be respected, it must be anticipated.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has not been the first religious organization to face the challenges of unity on a worldwide basis. The history of the Christian church indicates two solutions that have been tried by other churches. The first is the Roman Catholic solution, which resolved the cultural diversity dilemma by permitting a wide range of variation under strict hierarchical control. The second is the Protestant and Orthodox solution, which encouraged the formation of national churches.

This problem of unity in diversity was faced even earlier, as noted above, by the first-century church at the Jerusalem Council, described in Acts 15. There the tectonic plates of Jewish and Gentile church memberships clashed with each other, with the majority in the Jerusalem faction clamoring for universal homogeneity. The brethren “in session,” under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, finally formulated a ruling whereby there were only four things with which the Gentile.

...even those regulations, it should be noted, were not universally enforced. Paul certainly took a separate course of action in 1 Corinthians 8. A gain, it seems strange that he didn’t cite the Acts 15 ruling in Romans 14 (which presumably deals with the same idol-related eating) if the Acts 15 legislation had been universally binding. It appears that even the Acts 15 legislation was either somewhat of a localized ruling to the eastern part of the Mediterranean or that, more likely, it was only binding in time until the worst of the crisis had passed.

There is a difference between unity and uniformity. Some have argued that Adventism must be united in mission, its core message, and in servanthood, but not in everything. In fact, these persons suggest that many issues need to be decided by locality or even by individuals.

Nine Appealing Features of Congregationalism

As some Seventh-day Adventists see it, there are many appealing features to congregationalism, though not all “congregational types” would find all points in the following list attractive. The aspects of congregationalism that some perceive to be appealing are listed in no particular order, but have been gleaned from various types of members dissatisfied with the present order of things. These are the concerns of some of the brightest, most capable, most innovative people in the denomination—the same kind of people who initially founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These persons are not on the “lunatic fringe” of the church, but are some of its most capable members, some with the greatest potential.

1. Perceived and real abuses of power. Many wonder where the servanthood of leadership has gone, even though the rhetoric has remained. Too many see a two-level clergy model, somewhat like the medieval church, with General Motors-type bosses at the “top” and the servants on the “bottom” in the local churches.

2. A lack of resources at the congregational level. The institutions that raise the money have the fewest discretionary funds in the ecclesiastical “financial heap.” Many are tired of hearing that a large portion of the funds come back through appropriations from higher levels. Such people don’t want earmarked funds for a given program, but funds that they can put to use in their local area to implement programs that will promote mission opportunities that are especially inviting in their local community.

3. The problem of a church structure with four levels above the congregational level. Some are calling for a trimmed-down institution that puts more money and personnel on the front lines, where “doing church” actually takes place. They point out that no other church in the world, including the Roman Catholic Church (which has two levels above...
10 Ways for Leaders to Foster Congregationalism (If They Really Want To)

BY GEORGE KNIGHT

1. Confuse the present structures and ways of doing things with the only way to do things or with God’s only way of doing things.
2. Be inflexible.
3. React quickly rather than with careful analysis.
4. Confuse uniformity with unity.
5. Treat structure as if it is more important than mission.
6. Continue to send (especially in North America) young ministers to non-Seventh-day Adventist seminaries for pastoral training. Sending them to seminaries that are non-Adventist in theology and also congregational in polity will certainly speed up the process.
7. Neglect the reality that congregational thinking takes place on the individual level even more than with entire congregations.
8. Continue to downplay the perceived need to seriously downsize the denominational system.
9. Persist in the belief that things will get better or issues go away if leaders just talk louder or ignore concerns.
10. Fail to listen.

Other pastors see their role as running Adventist dairy farms. Get as many cows as possible, grow the largest possible udders on them, milk them as often as possible, send the milk upstairs as soon as possible, and above all, keep the cows as quiet as possible. This perception is matched by the fact that too many members feel that they are valued chiefly by both their pastors and the organization for their ability to give.

In some world divisions of the church, the pressure is not so much on raising money as it is on producing baptisms. I have had pastors tell me that in some places they can’t even take their vacation unless they reach their baptismal goal. The solution for some is sadly simple: just invent a few names.

8. THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES. Some individuals and groups, who seem to be in the minority, feel no need or desire to preach the eschatological implications of the Sabbath, although they still desire to preach the Sabbath itself. Beyond that, they object to the sanctuary doctrine and to calling the Seventh-day Adventist Church the exclusive remnant. It appears that they have less problem with the modest and biblically grounded statement of the remnant doctrine in the 27 Fundamental Beliefs, but believe that the baptismal vow on the topic moves beyond the evidence. Some
The best option would be to develop a church that uses congregational initiative while also employing a structure that can focus worldwide assets on mission.

The denominational legal corporations could be abused. After all, the history of Christianity has many times witnessed theological minorities wresting control from the majority and taking their property and movement down strange paths. Concerned individuals fear that the denomination may have confused its structure with its mission. They are attracted to congregationalism by the truism that the denomination can only be healthy if it is healthy at the congregational level.

I have looked rather extensively at what causes congregationalism to be appealing to some Adventists. Fears of the movement may be more quickly summarized.

Many concerned members fear that as congregationalism increases, Adventism might disintegrate structurally. In that scenario it would no longer be able to focus its “firepower” in the effective employment of people and finances to the entire world.

A gain, once central authority is gone, there could easily develop a diversification of theological perspectives along with a localism that has not only lost its world vision, but has lost the vision of Adventism as apocalyptic people with a mission to the entire world (Rev. 14:6-12).

Other genuine fears relate to the possible rise of regional charismatic leaders who could dominate congregations in the same way that some Protestant pastors have abused their positions.

There is also the danger that the establishment of independent congregational legal corporations could be abused. After all, the history of Christianity has many times witnessed theological minorities wresting control from the majority and taking their property and movement down strange paths.

W hile the development of such a problem at the denominational level is not impossible, the weight of an entire denomination does provide a stabilizing factor not available to a loose cluster of congregations.

Options for the Future

The obvious or preferred option would be to develop a church that utilizes congregational initiative, responsibility, and diversity to the fullest while at the same time capturing the advantages of a structure that can amass and focus worldwide assets for the purpose of mission. It is easier, of course, to state the ideal than it is to actualize it.

It is even easier to maintain the status quo. A nd that is another possible option, though hardly a good one.

Instead, it seems vital that Adventist leaders on all levels, from the local church down to the General Conference, begin to listen to the varied but responsible voices within the church that are calling for a new season of focus and initiative. I can only urge that each of us stop talking long enough to truly listen—listen with the ears of our minds and the ears of our hearts turned up to their most sensitive level.

Listen to the Adventist dissidents: they may have some valid points.

Listen to the medieval Roman Catholic Church, which didn’t listen and made Luther into a hero. Remember that Luther never wanted to break away.

Listen to the message of our Protestant heritage at its best, which is one of protest in the light of Scripture.

And listen to Lord of the church who still guides His people from His throne in the Most Holy Place.

It is in the power of denominational leadership to determine whether Adventist congregationalism will be a wake-up call or a death knell.

If we hear the wake-up call but merely hit the “snooze” button, we may end up being responsible for turning a troubling trend into a full-scale disaster.

Frequently I receive questionnaires. A marketing company wants to know how airlines can improve their frequent-flier programs. A professor is doing research for her next book. The Christian Coalition is taking a poll, hoping to influence Congress. I’m asked to respond with Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree; Yes, No, or Uncertain. Some of the answers can be N/A (Not Applicable). Often that’s the only answer I can give.

When we moved to Florida, I learned that N/A is a response I give to choices other than those on questionnaires. Finding a good gardening book was hard when we lived in Tennessee. Most are written for people living near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I amassed quite a collection of such books and tried to adapt the information to Tennessee. How exciting to find a title such as Gardening in the South. I learned that for peonies to bloom, the root crown should go through a freeze. Growing peonies in the Midsouth required that the crowns be planted nearly even with the surface—not two inches below, as all the regular garden books tell you. If the crown is planted two inches below the surface in Tennessee, it would likely miss getting frozen and fail to bloom.

Gardening in southern Florida is even more different. Instead of planting a vegetable garden in April and May, one plants in September and October. The summers are too hot and wet for most vegetables to do well. It is November as I write this, and our garden is in—tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and others. I broke my resolve never to buy any more gardening books. I now have 19 devoted to Florida gardening. The others were N/A.

Direct-mail advertising is seldom useful to me. It is less so in Florida. Catalogs feature winter clothes, warm coats, cashmere and cable-knit sweaters. N/A. Catalogs invite us to order oranges and grapefruit from California or Texas. N/A. We have our own trees.

When Helen and I were students at Southern Adventist University (then Southern Missionary College), we had a teacher who frequently paraphrased Romans 12:2: “Be not conformed to the Tennessee way of life,” Prof. Leif Tobiassen would say. “Don’t let the Tennessee way of life squeeze you into its mold.” To the Christian, the way of the world is N/A.

Catalogs of pornographic videos are pitched into the trash. N/A.

“Mrs. Sauls, how are you today?” the telemarketer from Jacobson’s Department Store gives herself away (no friend ever begins a phone conversation that way). “We’re offering all newcomers to Naples a complete makeover—rouge, lipstick, eye shadow—free.” N/A. We’re not new to Naples anymore. And to Helen the rouge, lipstick, and eye shadow are N/A.

“We’ll give you a coffeemaker if you try our coffee for one month.” N/A.

“We’ll send you a free carton of cigarettes for filling out our questionnaire.” N/A.

A discount coupon for jewelry comes in the advertising section of the Sunday paper. N/A.

“Today we’re giving a free bottle of wine with every two entrée orders.” N/A.

Some things are always applicable: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps. 84:11).

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold,” writes Paul, “but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good” (Rom. 12:1, 2, Phillips). We should cling to the applicables, but not be conformed to the nonapplicables.

So it seems to me.

R. Lynn Sauls is retired from teaching English and journalism at the college and university level. He and his wife respond to marketing gimmicks from their home in Naples, Florida.
More than 80 administrators, pastors, and lay members from 38 countries converged in Slovenia for the Trans-European Division (TED) executive committee’s annual winter meetings November 16-19.

The theme of the meetings was “Experience the Fellowship of His Family” (1 John 1:1-4). In his keynote address, TED president Bertil Wiklander said, “God has not left us alone with our fragile human longings and hypotheses, as if our faith were a mere dream or imagination. We too can experience Jesus, love Him, believe Him, as a solid fact.

“All of God’s gifts center on the concept of the ‘fellowship of God’s family.’ This is the context in which faith can become more than just a defense of true propositions about reality. Consequently, we as leaders must protect this fellowship and ensure that it functions as a healthy fellowship where people can ‘know God and the power of his Spirit.’

“We must activate it, release its spiritual potential, ensuring that, in the fellowship of the church, the life-giving powers of the Holy Spirit are able to work. We have the task of preparing the way for the coming of the Lord! This is the vision we must share with our pastors and elders. May God help us bring this vision home!”

TED secretary Reinder Bruinsma reported that division membership currently totaled 92,216, marking a decrease of 260 members as compared to the same period last year.

Division treasurer Graham Barham reported that division finances were sound and that the organization was better able to deal with crises that may arise in the future.

The division meeting included intensive discussions on proposed Church Manual changes, reports from union presidents, the adoption of various policy items, and the approval of the 1999 division budget. Here are a few highlights:

**Strategic Plan.** Wiklander informed the committee that most of the action plans of the TED strategic plan were accomplished. In addition to that, the TED has produced a videotape entitled Until the Lost Be Found to help conferences and missions to implement their strategic plans. As part of the strategic plan, division leaders promoted Bible reading. Several ideas were suggested on how members can make Bible reading a part of their everyday life.

**New Union.** Division leaders announced the establishment of a new union structure to oversee the church’s work in Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia. Starting this month, the Adriatic Union will be comprised of the Albanian Mission and the Croatian-Slovenian Conference.

**New Ingathering System.** Final approval was given to a major overhaul of the annual Ingathering program. Major adjustments were incorporated into the new system. Ingathering funds will no longer be regarded as General Conference funds, but will fall under the responsibility of the division. Money will flow directly from the division or from home unions to overseas projects, enabling speedy transfer to points of need. “The new system will generate greater confidence in the minds of our members in the integrity of the Ingathering program and hopefully lead to increased participation in the collection of funds,” says Martin Anthony, division personal ministries director.

**Evangelistic Tools.** “In our division there were four unions that took part in NET ‘98. Over 20,000 members attended, and up to 7,000 non-Adventists,” reports Miroslav Pujic, TED NET ‘98 coordinator. “Most of the unions will use NET ‘98 videotapes as an evangelistic tool next year,” he continues.

“The division leadership is adapting NET ‘98 in order to maximize its effectiveness,” says Philip Follett, General Conference vice president. “By using these attractive, winsome presentations of Adventist Bible teachings, combined with powerful appeals to follow Jesus, churches throughout this...
division are sharing the benefits of this series.”

TED is fostering the understanding that NET ‘98 is the first part of discipling and therefore equally important is a commitment to nurture and keep the new believers in communion with God.

New tools for evangelism, nurture, and instruction are being developed: the TED website was inaugurated (www.ted-adventist.org) as a cyber-source of information; an evangelistic CD was presented, with 4,400 slides from Bible sites in the Middle East, for pastors and laypersons having evangelistic series using slides. The Search video series was also introduced. “The Search has all the excitement of a live mission, plus the added attraction of on-location pictures, expert interviews, and special effects,” says Pujic. “We believe it will be a powerful tool for winning souls,” he says.

**Mission Emphasis.** The theme for the “Message and Mission” emphasis for 1999 will be “Experience the Fellowship of God’s Family” and will center on the blessings made available through church life and witness. In the year 2000 the emphasis will be “Experience the Certainty of His Coming.”

In July 1999 a Festival of Faith convention will be held in Protoroz, Slovenia. The festival will focus on methods of evangelism and sharing of faith in an increasingly secularized society and will present several models for planting new congregations and strengthening existing ones. “Emphasis will be placed on personal testimony and sharing experiences,” says Martin Anthony. “We hope to find great encouragement from the stories of God’s providential leading in the work of soul winning.”

The General Conference program Walk A Round the World 2000 was presented by Orville Woolford, TED director of education and health ministries. The committee voted to support his request for leaders to promote the walk among their youth, giving them the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to a drug-free lifestyle by walking 10 kilometers before June 2000. The Hope 2000 initiative was also presented to the committee with ideas for local congregations that will enable them to become centers of hope and love in their communities.

**General Conference Session Offering.** Division Global Mission coordinator Peter Roennfeldt promoted a special offering that will take place during the GC session in the year 2000 in Toronto to aid countries in North Africa, Southern Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. The purpose of this offering is to help people who live in these areas to have a deeper understanding of the gospel.

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**Satellite Evangelism Reaches High Arctic**

The recent NET ‘98 telecasts have reached remote areas accessible only by satellite downlink.

Judy and Olav Falsnes live in the isolated town of Inuvik, 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle in Canada’s Northwest Territories. But even there they were able to receive the transmissions.

“The broadcast satellite is so low on the horizon that our dish actually points down,” says Olav Falsnes. “We live 850 miles from the nearest Seventh-day Adventist church, so this series was really helpful. Though attendance was of course small, the opportunity to share what we believe in this way was wonderful.”

The Falsneses operate a guest house for visitors to the region, which is often totally isolated in winter by severe weather. Olav works as a pilot and mechanic, and has landed four times at the North Pole.

Working with local Inuits, they have arranged for religious books and tapes to be produced in the Inuit language.

The satellite outreach programs add another welcome tool to their ministry in the High Arctic.—Aventist News Network

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**Female Pastors Inducted in Finland**

For the first time in Finland Seventh-day Adventist female pastors with commissioned minister credentials were included in ministerial induction services.

Anna-Leena Jaakkola of Helsinki and Sibrina Kalliokoski of Tampere were included in separate induction services for pastors with commissioned minister credentials on December 13.

In Helsinki, Finland Finnish Conference president Erkki Haapasalo conducted the service with local pastors, and in Tampere, Finland Union Conference president Pekka Pohjola and Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division, officiated.

Anna-Leena Jaakkola is the youth director of the Finland Union and Finland Finnish Conference; Sibrina Kalliokoski is a local pastor in the Tampere church, and also a member of the General Conference Executive Committee.

“I am delighted that these services have been conducted for two very effective pastors,” said Peter Roennfeldt, Trans-European Division Ministerial Association secretary. Even though the induction service was conducted for the first time in Finland, one of the unique characteristics of the church in Finland has always been the prominent contribution of women...
Who Feeds the Homeless in March?

BY DICK DIERKSEN, DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT, FLORIDA HOSPITAL

Givers, poor and rich, tend to donate resources quickly and generously when an ugly catastrophe hits. For instance, the “once-in-a-century” floods in North Dakota and Central America’s soggy hurricane Mitch brought out the best in givers. For a brief moment, service agencies were flooded with funds and offers of “anything you need.” Unfortunately, the giving moment is brief. Eager donations are speedily replaced by a time of compassion overload, a time when piggy banks can be cracked only by photos of thinner children, deeper floods, or more desperate mothers. This compassion overload challenge is real, except at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

On one November Thursday, and during one December week, thousands of Americans bring cans to work, drop coins into Salvation Army cauldrons, and donate to the Red Cross. Politicians shoulder each other to be photographed serving soup to bristly men and patchwork women. Families volunteer at shelters, “so the kids will know what it means to give.” Sidewalk beggars, wise to reality, hoard their holiday coins against the coming drought.

The scarcity begins in January as holiday helpers go home to serve soup at their New Year’s parties. Memories of hurricanes, floods, fires, volcanoes, tornadoes, hunger, plague, and shivering families are replaced with plans for Valentine’s Day, spring break, and school recitals.

It’s too bad that compassion is not a constant commodity, something that can be depended upon regularly rather than hoped for in response to emergency needs or guilt-ridden holidays. Maybe the U.S. government ought to move Thanksgiving to March. Maybe milk cartons should carry photos of starving babies. Maybe W-4 forms should include a box for monthly donations to the United Way. Maybe Nike should advertise NEEDS rather than WANTS. Maybe Santa should work all year.
Religion in the News

Bread for the World: The End of Hunger Is “Within Reach”

In its annual hunger report called “The Changing Politics of Hunger,” Bread for the World has come to a startling conclusion: “The end of hunger is within reach.”

But if the goal of ending hunger at home and abroad is to be reached, the group said, the national and international community must muster the political will to do so.

In making its assertion, officials of the grassroots anti-hunger lobby noted that over the past 25 years—since the first United Nations-sponsored world food conference, the proportion of hungry people has dropped from one third to one fifth of the world’s population—and that despite increases in the world’s population.

In the United States, the report said, 11.2 million people live in households that cannot afford enough food for their families.

“Christians have not, for the most part, even begun to use their influence to insist that their own churches and their own countries lead a worldwide campaign to end hunger,” said Arthur Simon, the founder and president emeritus of the group. “So hunger is a scandal—not only in the sense of moral outrage, but also as a failure to give evidence of God’s love.”—Religion News Network.

Historical Note

100 Years Ago . . . New England Sanitarium Announced

The region of the country that gave birth to the Advent movement was by no means first to establish health-care institutions to strengthen “the right arm of the message.”

More than 30 years after the Western Health Reform Institute opened in Battle Creek, Adventists in New England rejoiced at the January 24, 1899, notice in the Review and Herald that a sanitarium would soon be planted in their region. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg announced the decision to buy a newly built dormitory from South Lancaster Academy, in Massachusetts, to use as the principal building for the new enterprise.

The New England Sanitarium was not destined to be long on its original site, however. By 1902 a wealthy landowner in Lancaster, John Thayer, purchased the property, but allowed the building to be taken down and reassembled 40 miles east on the shores of Spot Pond in Stoneham, Massachusetts.

There the “San” evolved into New England Memorial Hospital, and more recently, into Boston Regional Medical Center, in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to hold a minority interest.

NEWSBREAK

Retired GC Director Dies

Walter W. Fordham, a retired pastor, evangelist, administrator, and General Conference departmental leader, died October 27, 1998, in Pine Forge, Pennsylvania, after a long illness. He was 87 years old.

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, Fordham began his ministry in the New Jersey Conference. He later pastored in Pennsylvania, Florida, and other Southern states, where he became known as a spokesperson for racial equality.

In 1946 Fordham became secretary and evangelist for the Southwestern Union Conference. He later became the first president of the Southwest Region Conference. He also served as president for the South Central and Central State conferences before joining the General Conference as associate director of the (old) Regional Department in 1966. Fordham became department director in 1975 and served until he retired in 1979. In this position Fordham played a major role in the development of the Adventist Church’s official position on human relations.

AWR Appoints New Vice President

In an effort to expand its ministry into new media Adventist World Radio has appointed Max Church, Jr., vice president for development. In the newly created position, Church will be responsible for the worldwide areas of development and public relations for AWR, but will focus on relationships with sponsors through events and personal contacts.

Church had been serving as Adventist Development and Relief Agency director in Malawi.

What’s Upcoming

Jan. 30 Religious Liberty Day
Feb. 6 Bible Evangelism Emphasis
Feb. 13-20 Christian Home and Marriage Week
Feb. 20 Youth Temperance Day
Alone
but Not Lonely

Beating back the isolation blues

BY MORNIS CHALFANT

CHICAGO TRIBUNE COLUMNIST BOB Greene once told of a 78-year-old widower who wrote to him requesting information about an obscene telephone “club” that Greene had criticized in his column. The letter intrigued Greene. He sensed a tone different from the deluge of letters received in response to the column, and his journalistic instincts told him that there was more behind the request than a desire to be titillated or erotically aroused.

He called the man, though he was half a continent away, and found himself talking to a sincere, gracious, intelligent individual who, it turned out, had never made an obscene telephone call in his life. Why had he written Bob Greene with a request for information? The answer was sad and moving.

“Well, I’m alone,” he began. “I’m past the age when I could go out to a bar and play kneesies with the girls. I watch the tube, I cook my own meals, I do my own housekeeping—I sit here like a piece of cheese. I drink almost nothing. I exercise, and I try to live a healthy life, and I hope to live another 10 years. But I am very lonely.”

Loneliness permeates the culture. Look at the ads: New York telephone says “Don’t be lonely, pick up the phone.” AT&T’s ad campaign of a few years ago urged people to “reach out and touch someone.” In beer ads people don’t drink by themselves; they’re drinking with others. The ads aren’t selling alcohol; they’re selling friendship. Sellers of goods are increasingly aware of how vulnerable we are and how loneliness is a button to be pushed to make people buy.

Although loneliness comes sometimes to all of us, it is, in particular, one of the blights of old age, far worse than for those in youth or middle age. Almost a quarter of the elderly in the US and Great Britain live alone. But the two facts are not coincident. Living alone does not by itself mean that an old person is lonely; the losses he or she has suffered in family, friends, and the social world through the years contribute to loneliness more than the simple fact of physical isolation.

This is one of the most important findings of a major survey of living conditions and behavior of elderly people in Denmark, Britain, and the US. The report, “Old People in Three Industrial Societies,” may be the single most revealing document of the past decade explaining scientifically what it’s like to be old.

“Old People” makes the distinction between living alone and age-related isolation, or “social isolation,” which usually is the cause of loneliness. “A person who has lost a social intimate (usually someone he or she loves, such as husband or wife, a relative, or a close friend) is isolated relative to a previous situation,” the report says. This is “desolation.” Time “heals” the loss more easily for young people than it does for the old, as the young have more opportunity to remarry or replace the lost close relative or
friend. But for the old, the substitutes—when they find them—“tend to fall short of former intimates in the roles they play in their lives and affections.”

**A Generation at Risk**

Observation and experience tell us that loneliness is a major problem for the aged. Everyone feels lonely on occasion, and some are forever disturbed by feelings of isolation, but feelings of loneliness appear to be more intense and more frequent with age.

Longing for people who were dear and for days that are gone sweeps over us pilgrims of advanced journeys. When such feelings inevitably come, I use activity as an antidote: I go to work, play some golf, take a walk, write a poem, or call a friend.

Enthusiasm, courage, optimism, and zest for life are the traits of the veterans who have learned how to live and provide some enjoyment for those around them. Confucius once said, “The sin of youth is lust; the sin of middle age is struggle; but the sin of old age is avarice.” Yet many oldsters have bucked the trend. People of goodwill who know how to live, to love, to think truth, and to trust God are always in demand. The person who exemplifies such civil and humane values as gratitude, loyalty, compassion, and generosity is immortal—like fine art and violins, which get better with age. I want to be that kind of person and prove that, for me at least, life begins at 70—or maybe 80.

When poet Robert Frost was asked at his eightieth birthday party what he had learned about life, he answered, “I can tell you in three words: it goes on.”

When Helen Keller celebrated her eightieth birthday, she was interviewed by Ann Caban for This Week magazine. One question was “Are you ever lonely?” Miss Keller’s answer: “Sometimes a sense of isolation enfolds me like a mist. But I no longer feel I stand alone. I now need solitude to write and so much has been given me I have no time to ponder over that which has been denied.” Keller had learned the art of being alone—alone but not lonely. Alone with great thoughts, great dreams, great truths—alone with God.

This is the ultimate conqueror of loneliness: companionship with God. Will you know that Companion and cultivate that friendship?

A prayer: A lone but not lonely, because we are alone with Thee. Give us this blessed experience, our Father. Amen.

Morris Chalfant is a retired pastor, evangelist, and missionary who writes from Bourbonnais, Illinois.
The following article, intended primarily for pastors, offers good counsel to all members of the church.—Editors.

Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven’s arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality, that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man’s say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan’s special work to lead men to feel that it is God’s order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course independent of their brethren.

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. . . . We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. A long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.

When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word. “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:24, 25).

This article is excerpted from Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (pp. 29-31) and was written in 1901 at a time when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was studying reorganization. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.
At Rest

CANTRELL, Donald R.—b. Mar. 9, 1933, Panhandle, Tex.; d. Mar. 5, 1998, Clinton, Mass. He served in the church as an educator in South Dakota, Minnesota, Washington, and Missouri. In 1967 he went to Atlantic Union College, where he served from 1967 to 1985. He was a trustee of Clinton Savings Bank for 19 years. He is survived by his wife, Gaylah; one son, Wayne; his mother, Iva; one brother, Wilbur; and three grandchildren.

CASLER, Mary L.—b. Jan. 3, 1925, Olean, N.Y.; d. Oct. 10, 1998, Ukiah, Calif. She graduated with a theology degree in 1947 and served as dean of gifts at Arizona Academy, Broadview Academy, and Atlantic Union College. She later became a family counselor in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and then in Madison, Tennessee. In 1979 she established the Department of Pastoral Care at the Adventist hospital in Ukiah. She is survived by her husband, Wilbert; one son, Wayne; one daughter, Ruth Wiebe; two brothers, Percy and Raymond M anuel; three sisters, Elsie Michaels, Ena Piligreen, and Mae W Horten; and three grandchildren.

ENGLISH, Gervie—b. Jan. 18, 1917, Thorburn, N ova Scotia; d. Sept. 11, 1998, N ap a, Calif. She served at Pacific Press Publishing Association for 19 years. He is survived by his wife, Jean O’Hara English; two daughters, Sharon Sue Christensen and Ivanette Beth Osborn; one sister, Elinor Wilson; and six grandchildren.

FORDHAM, Henry Joseph, Jr.—b. A pr. 4, 1914, Charleston, S.C.; d. Nov. 25, 1998, Pine Forge, Pa. He served as a pastor in Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, Michigan, Georgia, and other areas. He is survived by his wife, Gene; one son, Henry III; one sister, Jessie R. Wagner; nine grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

FORDHAM, Walter Wraggs, Sr.—b. Oct. 20, 1911, Charleston, S.C.; d. Oct. 26, 1998, Pine Forge, Pa. He served in the denomination for 60 years. He began as a pastor in the New Jersey Conference and four years later went to Pennsylvania and then Florida, where he became known as a spokesperson for racial equality. He served as the first president of the Southwest Region Conference and later as president of the South Central and Central States conferences. He came to the General Conference in 1966, where he played a major role in the development of the church’s official stand on human relations. He is survived by one son, Walter, Jr.; three daughters, Lois F. Lester, A udrey E. Booker, and Kathryn A dams; one brother, H enry J. Fordham, Jr.; one sister, Jessie R. Wagner; 11 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

FOUSTON, A da Louisa Manuel—b. A pr. 11, 1911, Fenelon Falls, Ontario; d. Oct. 21, 1998, St. Helena, Calif. She served in the denomination for 14 years as a secretary in the Canadian Union Conference and 30 years with her pastor-husband in Canada and northern California. She is survived by her husband, Wilbert; one son, Wayne; one daughter, Ruth Wiebe; two brothers, Percy and Raymond Manuel; three sisters, Elsie Michaels, Ena Piligreen, and Mae Morton; and three grandchildren.

LARSON, David J.—b. June 20, 1930, Bemidji, Minn.; d. May 18, 1998, Bemidji, Minn., with his wife, as a result of an auto accident. She taught many years in church elementary schools in North and South Dakota, Missouri, and Minnesota. He is survived by his wife, Rocky; one brother, Virgil; two sisters, Aline Frishman and Judy Bodner; and three grandchildren.

LARSON, Eleanor—b. Sept. 19, 1931, Omaha, Neb.; d. May 18, 1998, Bemidji, Minn., with her husband, as a result of an auto accident. She served with her husband, David, a church elementary school teacher. She is survived by one son, Rocky; three sisters, Dorothy Jewell, Jean Cooper, and Beverly Reynolds; and three grandchildren.

LEMON, Elizabeth Priscilla—b. A ug. 21, 1919, Takoma Park, Md.; d. Aug. 16, 1998, Buena Vista, Va. She served for 41 years with her husband, Philip Lemon, in pastoral, departmental, and administrative work in the United States, Canada, and the former Belgian Congo/Zaire. She also worked as a secretary in the General Conference and later for the president of Andrews University. She is survived by her husband, Philip; two sons, Bob and Wayne; one daughter, Jean M abuto; and seven grandchildren.

LOEWEN, Marvin Eflert—b. Aug. 17, 1907, Texas County, Okla.; d. Oct. 24, 1998, Loma Linda, Calif. He served for 45 years as a pastor-evangelist, missionary, administrator, and departmental director in California, China, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland. For 15 years prior to his retirement in 1975 he was director of the Department of Public Affairs of the General Conference. For eight years he was a missionary in China and the Philippines. He is survived by one daughter, Maryloen Loewen-Sturdevant; one brother; one sister; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

MANCHUR, Michael—b. Mar. 12, 1916, Gilbert Plains, Manitoba; d. Aug. 26, 1998. He served as a literature evangelist in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. Later he became the Loma Linda Foods representative for Canada. He is survived by one son, Freddie; one daughter, Shirley Reimche; two brothers, Tony and Joe; two sisters, Francis Axwell and Olive Boggs; and four grandchildren.

MARTIN, Cecile Elaine—b. Dec. 8, 1930, Florence, Ala.; d. May 24, 1998, Orlando, Fla. She served as staff nurse and director of nursing at Pewee Valley Hospital and later as a nurse in rehabilitation at Florida Hospital, where she worked for more than 20 years. She is survived by one brother, Carlton Martin.

NEUMANN-MIKLOS, Sue—b. Dec. 19, 1916, Chicago, Ill.; d. Oct. 20, 1998, Yountville, Calif. She served with her pastor-husband, John C. Miklos, and also was a nurse specializing in obstetrics at Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Maryland; Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, Michigan; and St. Elena Hospital in California. She is survived by two daughters, Sharon Sue Christensen and Ivonette Beth Osborn; one sister, Elinor Wilson; and six grandchildren.

SANIDAD, Benjamin C., Sr.—b. June 6, 1919; d. June 22, 1998, North York, Ontario. He served as a youth and educational superintendent of the Northern Luzon Mission in the Philippines. He was an educator in three academies in the Philippines and later was a Bible teacher at Philippine Union College in Manila. He is survived by his wife, Esther C. Roda; two sons, Ben and Orlie; three daughters, Amy Romero, Paz Ravadilla, and Alma Esmin Macaraeg; 15 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

SCZEKAN, Michael—b. June, 1954, Denver, Colo.; d. Mar. 28, 1998, Cumberland, Maine. He served in the church for more than 17 years as a pastor and evangelist. At the time of his death he was associate treasurer for the Northern New England Conference in Portland, Maine. He is survived by his wife, Nicole; one son, Bryce;
SHOUP, Max Wallace—age 87; d. June 11, 1998, Beaver Dam, Wis. He served in the church for more than 35 years, first in the Treasury Department of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and later as treasurer of the Southern Publishing Association. After retiring, he served as bookkeeper for the Adventist Book Center in Madison, Tennessee. He also logged more than 1,000 hours as a volunteer at the Tennessee Christian Medical Center. He is survived by his wife, Irene; four daughters, Jackee Golick, Tina Shoup, and Laurie Herr; one sister, June Omans; seven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

SIMPSON, James M.—b. Nov. 5, 1913, Ludlow, Mo.; d. Oct. 24, 1998, Salem, Oregon. He served in the denomination for 27 years as furniture factory manager and sales manager at three different academies. He is survived by his wife, Effie; one son, Dennis; two daughters, LaRea Thompson and LaNell Sullivan; one brother; one sister; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

WIST, William Vernon—b. Sept. 29, 1923, Henrietta, Tex.; d. Oct. 7, 1998, Keene, Tex. Beginning as business manager of Sunnydale Academy in Missouri, he later served as a treasurer in Inter-American and Texas. He was administrator of A remore Adventist Hospital in Oklahoma and then became the first administrator of Huguley Memorial Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas. After 38 years of denominational service he developed the Lifestyle Center of America, near Aremore, Oklahoma. He is survived by his wife, Arlene; one son, Michael; two daughters, Linda Knutson and Debbie Speyer; one sister, Nell Tammen; and four grandchildren.

WILLIAMSON, Jesse James—b. Mar. 25, 1905, Willow Springs, Mo.; d. Aug. 3, 1998, Nixa, Mo. He served in evangelism in the Midwest and Canada. After continuing his education and receiving a doctorate in education, he chaired the Graduate Department of Education at the Inter-American University in San German, Puerto Rico. He returned to the States to work in administration and finance until his first retirement. Coming out of retirement, he became an administrator and auditor for Loma Linda University and retired again at age 75. He is survived by his wife, Marjorie; four sons, James, Philip, Wayne, and L. Scott; one daughter, Teresa Williamson; 19 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

ZINK, Maxine—age 77; d. Oct. 5, 1998, Hendersonville, N.C. She graduated from the School of Dietsetics at Loma Linda University and served with her husband as a missionary in Montemorelos, Mexico, for four years. She is survived by her husband of 54 years, Dr. David Zinke; three sons, David E., Ed, and Dan; one sister, A nita Kolstad; and 12 grandchildren.

There is no system in place to notify us of the deaths of denominational workers. Only one conference shares this information with us. Most of our announcements come from notices and e-mails from family members and friends. Often they do not have complete information. Please send in obituaries as soon as possible and include standard dates, denominational service records, and names of survivors.

Moving On

ROSY TETZ

have you ever found the shell of a bird's egg? Maybe you were playing in the yard and you saw a bit of blue in the grass. When you went to check it out, you found a piece of a robin's egg. That's a good sign that there's a baby bird in a nearby tree.

It also shows that birds don't save their old eggshells. When they come out of their egg, they stay out of their egg. They get rid of the shell. They move on with their lives. They open their mouths for food. They learn to fly. They learn to sing.

Sometimes people need to come out of their shells too. Sometimes they need to move on with their lives.

During the Flood, Noah and his family and the animals were safe in the ark. When the land was dry again, God said to Noah, "You and your wife, your sons and their wives should go out of the boat. Bring every animal out of the boat with you" (Genesis 8:16, ICB).

And that's what they did. They left the ark behind. They didn't stay near the ark in case there was another flood, because God promised them there wouldn't be another flood. They moved on.

Some people say the church is like the ark. When they get annoyed at other people in the church, they might say, "If it wasn't for the storm without, we couldn't stand the smell within." With all those animals cooped up like that, the ark must have smelled pretty bad, but it was better than being in the water. And even though other church members aren't perfect, it is better to be together in the church than to be alone in the world.

We say the church is God's house. It is a special place where we go to meet God. It is the symbol of God's presence.

A dam and Eve didn't have a church because they got to meet with God face-to-face. And when we go to heaven, we won't have a church anymore either. When John saw a vision of heaven he wrote, "I did not see a temple in the city. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the city's temple" (Revelation 21:22, ICB).

We won't need a church because we will be in the presence of God and of Jesus. We will move on. We'll leave the shell behind. We will learn to fly and sing.
Economy Remains Strong," trumpeted the headlines, but as far as my husband and I could tell, the patient was anemic and fast becoming comatose. As Asia slid deeper and deeper into recession, it inexorably dragged the scrap metal market down with it. Every week our hearts sank with the sinking price of aluminum, copper, and brass. And Don’s flatbed returned empty more and more often as suppliers chose to hang on and wait for better days.

Then in July a breakthrough: the 500 transmission cases Don had been trying all year to pry out of Izzy at Gibraltar Transmissions had finally come through. Five hundred cases meant 14,000 pounds of aluminum ingots. And although 16 cents a pound profit paled in comparison to 26 cents the month before, for now we would pay the bills and put food on the table.

The girls and I were in a celebratory mood as we waved Don off to Vegas. “Daddy’s getting scrap—now we’ll have money!” Becky chirped to 4-year-old Jenny. Giddy with optimism, we fairly danced through the round of prosaic details that make up our simple, satisfying days.

After worship it was off to do chores while the temperature still hung comfortably in the nineties (it’s a dry heat, you know). First stop, the rabbit cage.

Any naive soul who has bought into the fantasy that rabbits are cuddly, harmless little morsels of velveteen has never made the acquaintance of Daisy. We fell for the cinnamon—colored cutie at the feed store and carted her home on the assurance that “Holland Lops are the most docile of all the breeds.” I’d hate to know what the other breeds are capable of. The first time we snuggled Daisy into our laps we found that beneath her fleecy charms beat the savage heart of Amazon Bunny. She grumbled and thrashed, gnashed her great teeth, and slashed us with talon-sharp claws. As time mended our wounds, but not Daisy’s ways, we settled on a policy of appeasement: we would provide the carrots and greens, and Daisy would get to hop around her yard and look cute.

That done, we tossed the yucky kitchen scraps into the earthworm composter and the tasty scraps to the chickens. Fluffy, the cute little gray “hen” who grew up to be a big gray rooster, presided stiffly over the dispersal. Then back up to the garden we climbed, followed by our dogs, who hoped we’d drop an egg or two along the way.

And so our day passed, as we cleaned and played and cooked and read, until evening found us water our precious few flowers and we caught the familiar rumble of an aging Ford pickup.

“Daddy’s home!” the girls cheered, and they raced to greet him as he pulled up the drive. But when he emerged, his careworn face told the tale as plainly as the empty flatbed. “I never made it to Izzy’s,” he sighed wearily. “I spent all day trying to fix the truck.” I finally just hot-wired it and came home.” And then this doleful news: “I won’t be able to get with Izzy again for a month.”

And so it settled upon us, that bleakness we had come to know so well. We fretted and fussed and barely heard Becky’s piping voice, “Come take my training wheels off, Dad. I think I can ride without them.”

Reluctantly we broke off our commiserations. As I watered last year’s Christmas tree I watched my husband run alongside our daughter’s wobbly bike and give it a mighty shove; watched her face become radiant with the realization that she was free, gliding on two wheels, growing up.

I knew as I watched that somehow it would all work out. The bills would be paid. The truck would be fixed. The kids would be fed and clothed. And so it has been. Wobbly and often insecure, unused to being stripped of all that would prevent us from depending solely upon our Lord, we step gingerly into our unaccustomed freedom. Trusting in Him, growing up into Him, we’re learning to savor all the more this simple life, this good life, together.

* Thank you, Elder Hancock, for sticking with him through it all and being the true friend you are.

Leslie Kay, her husband, Don, and their two children, Becky and Jenny, live on an abandoned mining claim near Chloride, Arizona.
Semidarkness enclosed me as I gazed at the outline of my skeleton on the screen above me. Slowly the image filled with tiny dots of light, like randomly blinking stars. I searched the screen for a clue to my desperate quest. Had the cancer spread to my bones? Would I die?

Throughout the lengthy procedure I groped through cold reality, searching for hope. Would God heal me? Could I possibly be one of the few who beat the odds? Very unlikely. How could I even dare to hope? Three of the most godly people I knew, remarkable pillars in the Lord's work, had just succumbed. If God hadn't healed them. . . . I seemed so much less worthy than they.

Scenes from my past filled me with deep sorrow. Why had I been so careless? lived so foolishly? I had known better. Again and again I had confessed my sins to God. I knew He had forgiven me; He had given me victory years ago. But I knew that God is not one with whom to trifle. What we sow, we reap. Always.

Usually?

Sometimes?

And there was the glimmer of hope. Didn't Jesus heal some who had brought their tragedies on themselves? Would He consider releasing me from my own bitter harvest? Certainly not. I had no excuses, no reason to hope. But maybe, just maybe. A nd so, clinging to that slender hope, I pleaded for my life with a deepening repentance and the desperate tenacity of the dying.

Searching, pondering, praying, I agonized in silence when suddenly a new thought arose—steady, distinct, compelling: “This is My body, which is broken for you.”

Broken body? Yes. Exactly. My body was broken, with little hope of repair.

Broken for you? But that was Jesus' body. As I pondered those words, new thoughts sprang to my mind. Could this possibly mean recovery? A sense of sacred awe and joy filled me. But just as quickly another realization broke through. If I recovered, it would be only because Jesus Himself was offering His broken body in my place. He would face the grave from which I was shrinking. Conviction deepened as I realized that this was my only hope. No healing could be mine unless He was broken by the penalty I deserved for the sins I had willfully committed.

Never before had Jesus' sacrifice meant so much to me. Never before had I felt so clearly the significance of the words “He died for me.” It is impossible to describe the mingled sorrow and joy that welled up within. Sorrow because of a deepened sense of the suffering my sins had brought to Jesus. Joy because He had forgiven my iniquities and was combining that forgiveness with healing for my disease. What if that healing should not come until the resurrection? It did not matter; Jesus had spoken to me. His love was enough.

I fought to maintain my composure because of the technician attending me. But when I reached the car and began to tell my husband of the wonderful Visitor who had spoken to my heart, my composure melted. He reparked the car and listened as I poured out my story, broken with sobs I could not stop. All the pent-up tension and strains of that week of diagnosis were released in tears, not of despair, but of joy and praise. Jesus had heard my prayer! It seemed He had stopped His activities in heaven to speak a word of healing, hope, and forgiveness to one frightened, insignificant young woman.

In the five years that have passed since my surprisingly successful surgery I have sat many times in church fingering a little piece of unleavened bread. How precious, how rich, how personal, are the words that ring through my consciousness: “This is My body, which is broken for you.” But now, instead of dry words spoken long ago and far away—periodically intoned to celebrate a church ritual—they have become living words. A poignant reminder to me of the reason I am alive today—because His body and heart were broken for me.

Elizabeth Jones sent this from Clintonville, West Virginia, with the hope that it would be a blessing to any with a critical disease and to all who partake in the service of Communion.