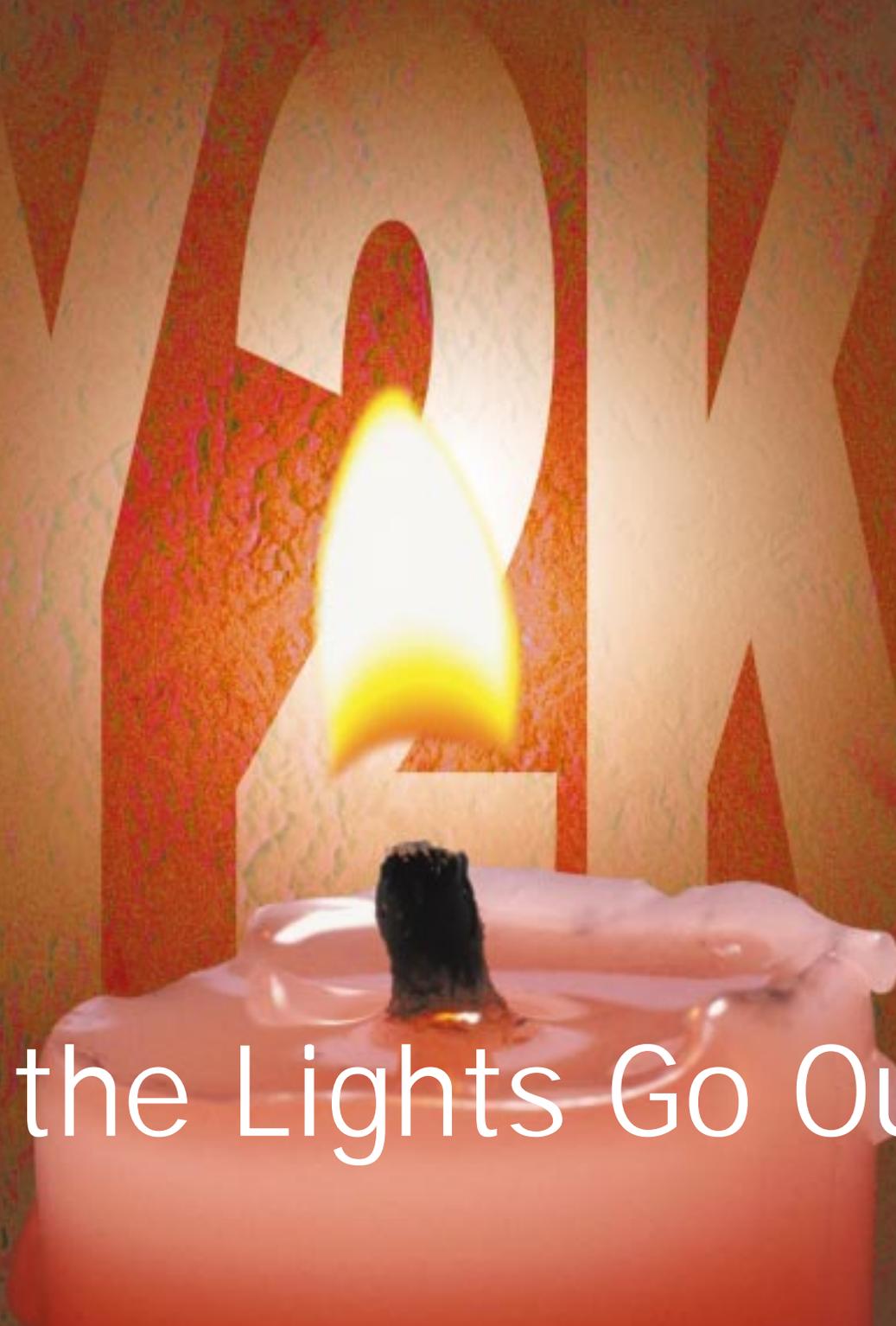


ADVENTIST  
ADVENTIST

February 25, 1999

AnchorPoints

# Review



If the Lights Go Out

# LETTERS

## The Sabbath Trail

Thank you for Bill Knott's wonderful article on the Sabbath Trail ("A Witness in the Stones," Dec. 24 AnchorPoints Edition) and for the attention it is bringing to the Washington Web page. While

working on the trail the better part of six weeks this past summer, we met many people walking the trail—the enthusiastic response was exciting to see. Several visitors indicated that they would come back and bring their friends. One non-Adventist family of four found the trail from surfing the Internet. For those who cannot make it to Washington to walk the trail physically, we encourage them to take a virtual walk at [www.tagnet.org/washington/](http://www.tagnet.org/washington/)

—Ed and Joan Fortmiller  
SABBATH TRAIL WEBMASTER  
HUDSON, MASSACHUSETTS

What an afternoon! I read the *Review*, was intrigued by the cover story, sent three e-mails to my children about it, and decided to "walk" the trail for myself. What a fantastic journey! I could almost smell the flowers and the woods!

—Rita Kiley  
HENDERSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

## 27 Fundamental Disbeliefs

In his "27 Fundamental Disbeliefs" (Dec. 24), Clifford Goldstein states,

"The 27 fundamental beliefs are not an attempt to express opinions . . . , but facts." The 27 beliefs are, in truth, beliefs; they are not facts. Facts are objective reality, and they are not by nature "polemical," as Goldstein states. People do not debate facts; they debate the implications they see related to what facts are available.

—Ron Corson  
CLARKSTON, WASHINGTON

## The Birth of Jesus

In "At First Glance" (Dec. 24) Myrna Tetz follows what many have done in placing the Christ Child in the *stable* at the time of the Wise Men's visit to Bethlehem. Matthew 2:11 reads: "On

coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him" (NIV).

—Donald J. Keeler  
NAPA, CALIFORNIA

The mention of Jesus' birth in a "filthy" stable was annoying to us. Our dads were farmers all of their lives. The barns and stables were always kept clean, with fresh straw, sweet-smelling hay in the manger, and a generous scoop of grist or grain for a treat. The manure pile was outside of the barn or stable. The barn or stable was cleaned every day and was always warm, comfortable, and clean for the animals in the winter. In the summer

## Welcome to the *Review*!

Chances are you are one of many thousands who have picked up the *Adventist Review* for the first time. You already were welcomed as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but I want to give you my personal greeting.

The *Adventist Review*—the "good old *Review*," or simply "*Review*," to many Adventists—is the general church paper of our movement. It goes back to the earliest years, right back to 1849. Yes, the *Review* turns 150 this year.

But the Adventist Church is fresh, dynamic, and growing fast. The editors work hard to give a sense of the vibrancy of our worldwide fellowship.

This issue and the others that you will receive each week for 12 months come to you as a love gift. *Review* readers and conference leaders across North America donated and made funds available to make it happen. They want you to enjoy the *Review*, to feel the pulse of our remarkable church, and to grow in the joy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many Adventists read the *Review* Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon. Some read it together as a family, some individually. Read it any day, whenever seems best for you. And may the Lord bless you as you read.

In His love,

William G. Johnsson  
Editor

# ADVENTIST Review

## COVER STORY

### 8 If the Lights Go Out

*Either the Y2K bug will alter life as we know it, or it won't. But what should we do in the meantime?*

BY HENRY FELDER

## ARTICLES

### 12 A Hunger for the Spirit

*Headlines come and go. But eternal values are always timely.*

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

### 14 In the Laundromat

*The atmosphere suddenly changed when they swaggered in.*

BY TANITA S. DAVIS

### 16 A Night in Heartbreak Hotel

*Is the Bible for real when it talks about having joy at all times—and in all places?*

BY ELAINE HAGELE

### 24 The Other Side of Introversion

*We all have different gifts. Surprised? Don't be.*

BY KIM ALLAN JOHNSON

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Letters
- 7 Give & Take
- 13 On the Home Front
- 19 Clifford Goldstein
- 20 World News & Perspectives
- 28 It Seems to Me
- 29 Children's Corner
- 31 Reflections

## EDITORIALS

- 5 Taught by Love
- 6 It's a Family!

the windows and doors were open to let the sunshine and fresh air in.

Would our God have chosen a "filthy" stable for our dear Saviour's birth? We think not.

—Martin and Joan Smith

BELLEVUE, MICHIGAN

## Keeping in Touch

I get the *Review* when my parents send their copies in a monthly shipping service. I really love to keep in touch with the world church this way—I feel as though it's my "family." I really appreciate the "new" *Review*—especially the content. I'm in my late 20s and many times enjoy reading it from cover to cover. I've really appreciated a seemingly recent emphasis on committing ourselves *fully* to living our Christianity—even to the point of committing ourselves fully to service.

—Esther Farley

CENTRAL ASIA

*Note: In the November 12 Bulletin Board Esther Farley was listed as serving with Adventist Volunteer Services in central Asia. Esther's husband, Ira, also took a post at the named English language center and should have been listed. Both Ira and Esther Farley most recently worked at Weimar Institute in Weimar, California.*

## Adventists and Spiritism

After reading Roy Adams' December 10 editorial, "Reckless," I tracked down the article "Spiritism Engulfing the Seventh-day Adventist Church" to see if the authors had actually been as irresponsible and reckless as Adams charges.

I agree with Adams that the title was misleading. But the intent of the article itself was not irresponsible or reckless. The bulk was a straightforward Bible and Spirit of Prophecy presentation on the state of the dead and ended with an appeal not to feel safe from deception in this area. It never charged the church or its leadership with a shift in doctrine on

the subject. If the title had read "Could Adventists Be Deceived by Spiritism?" the article could stand unchallenged. The real problem was weak editing. I called the editors, and they agreed that they had goofed.

But isn't Adams being reckless when he implies that what Adventist youth say about the state of the dead is not important? Isn't *he* being irresponsible to assume that the absence of sermons on the topic indicates that all is well in Zion? Many young people do not go to Adventist schools. Where are they going to hear our doctrines if they don't hear them at church? Where are new members going to be grounded if not in church? Faithful Adventist preachers will regularly review doctrines in their sermons, for they know that Satan is eager to make us feel invulnerable to his deceptions.

—Betsy Mayer

RAPIDAN, VIRGINIA

Thanks for Roy Adams' editorial regarding the article in a certain unsolicited magazine. It was alarming that the article was published. After quickly glancing at it, I thought to myself: *I hadn't realized the young people were so influenced with the New Age, life-after-death theology!* And I made a mental note to be more on guard in watching what sort of untruths my 10-year-old is subjected to in his life. It was a shock to realize I had not noticed the unsound journalistic procedures used—and I usually catch such nonsense. Especially with that certain magazine. Thanks for being my eyes and ears.

—Becki Timon

LAUREL, MARYLAND

*Correction: In our January 14 issue Dr. William A. Moreno's letter was incorrectly edited, leaving the impression that Moreno was sharing his opinion about Viagra. Moreno's original letter notes: "I am not contesting his [Rock's] opinion or expressing my own about Viagra."*

# ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

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

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# Taught by Love

BILL KNOTT

She brushes last night's six-inch snowfall off the rusting Civic in the driveway, wreathed in circles of frosty vapor that wrap around the lamppost. Dawn is still an hour away, reluctant like a student on the way to school.

The lesson plans are mostly done, faint scribbles only she can read across the worn-edged calendar that rules and regulates her life. The green-and-yellow pieces of the spring theme bulletin board are tucked securely in the plastic grocery bag in the back seat, promising unlikely warmth and light amid the drifts and drabs of February.

The minutes from the last school board meeting are typed and ready for mailing to the chairman, who will be sure to call her if she inadvertently omitted even a whispered "second" to the motion.

She is ready for her day—a 16-hour marathon of determined cheerfulness and grit. Today she will teach fractions, break up scuffles, search for mittens, open Scripture. She'll supervise two frozen games of Prison Dodgeball, played with fierce abandon in the gravel parking lot. She'll visit foreign capitals, diagram unwieldy sentences, plan a science fair, and spend her unplanned moments with beginning readers.

At 3:00, she'll silently bless the bell that ends the public portion of her day, even as she waits for dawdling parents to arrive. By 6:00, she'll stop for mushroom-laden slices at the local Pizza Hut, guiltily wondering if this small luxury is one she should continue. At 10:00, she'll put the graded papers in a pile and watch the first 10 minutes of the early news, just in case the world has ended while she taught.

A thousand miles away her former classmates plan their weekend getaways to Tahoe or the beach. Good food, good friends, inspiring worship services, short sleeves—their world is growing daily more remote, even as she clings to notes and e-mail. Somewhere—half a life ago, it seems—she wrote down on the job-fair form that she "wanted to work with children," imagining a colorful kindergarten classroom filled with healthy, tranquil kids. She didn't count on broken hearts and runny noses, dyslexic spellers, or heads chock-full of *Rugrats* scripts. Were it not for the children—eager, frustrating, distracted, clinging—she could easily give it all away.



But still she stays, a testament to love worked out in half a dozen roles. The kingdom that she brings is measured more in syllables than sermons, built one sentence at a time as students breathe her faith and replicate her choices. Thirty-five hours of contact faith each week help keep the hounds of hell and Hollywood at bay, creating space from which some wise and countercultural Christians may yet emerge.

Across the land her story has a hundred poignant echoes. The thousands of selfless women and men who offer up their lives in Adventist elementary schools deserve far better than they get, though tact and modesty assure that they will rarely say so. While they build our children's faith one crucial minute at a time, we laud the distant worldwide initiatives. We shine the spotlight on those who preach, win souls, administrate, as if it were no special work to shape a child's character or comprehend a verb.

It isn't only higher pay they need, though that would surely help. Only in the past few years have salaries for Adventist elementary teachers in North America slowly begun to approach the level of their pastoral colleagues, and then with many grumblings from straitened church and school boards.

They need the certainty of our respect, made evident by how we speak of them and how we back them up in classroom skirmishes.

They need the assurance that the value system they work so hard to inculcate from 8:00 to 3:00 won't be casually undermined by parents' inattention or unregulated TV viewing when school is finished for the day.

They need the knowledge that we will lift them up before our children as men and women worthy of both prayer and admiration.

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was Jerusalem. Raising wise, resilient Adventists is a task our homes and teachers share. Let's covenant to do it better than we have, with deeper trust and deepening respect.



# It's a Family!

I'll never forget the terror I felt that February morning as I stood in the hospital parking lot. Nearby, my wife sat in a wheelchair. Before us sat our 1973 VW van, doors opened invitingly. In my wife's arms was our daughter, our first child, born just a few days before.

As Linda got out of the wheelchair to get into the car, the nurse took our daughter and handed her to me. The thought *My life is never going to be the same again!* came thundering through my mind like a runaway freight train. Suddenly ominous images of drunk drivers, multicar pileups, and gang members with automatic weapons overflowed my imagination. *How am I going to protect my daughter from all the evil in the world?* I thought.

Well, the past 21 years have been fairly uneventful (but not uninteresting). Over the years Erica has survived an auto accident—at age 2—that totaled our car; she served a 16-year sentence as a preacher's kid; she managed one cross-country move; and she spent a year as an exchange student in Spain. The years haven't been without their sorrows and frustrations, but all things considered, we think ourselves fortunate to have such a delightful daughter (and son—"Hi, André!").

At first having kids was all-consuming. Our whole lives revolved around them: dressing them, feeding them, cleaning them, dressing them again, cleaning them again. It never ended. Gradually, however, as the newness and awkwardness wore off, taking care of them became part of our routine and they truly became part of the family.

By most accounts, there's a huge number of congregations throughout North America having panic attacks wondering what to do with the new members who have joined the church over the past few months. The NET events are great, but when the excitement dies down, you still have to look after those who have dedicated their lives to Christ—many, perhaps, for the first time.

From my years as a pastor (and a father) I offer these few suggestions for nurturing your spiritual newborns:

**Feed them.** Pastors, don't go into the pulpit with a few "oughts" and a pocketful of quotations. Preach the Word. Go

beneath the surface. Present truth that makes a real difference in the lives of real people who live at the end of the twentieth century. You're competing with television; make it interesting.

Sabbath school teachers, get off your hobbyhorse. Make your lesson studies practical. Be authentic; share your trials as well as your triumphs. Ask open-ended questions and listen to the answers you hear. Be prepared to scrap your lesson plan if the Holy Spirit leads the discussion into uncharted territory. Lose the quotations: keep it biblical.

### **Don't expect perfection.**

Newborns need time to develop. Don't load them down with 150 years of Adventist traditions all at

once. Stick with the basics—Jesus, Bible study, prayer, discipleship—before you get into matters of tastes and preferences.

If some of your charges are still struggling to overcome some of their destructive old habits, keep them in prayer; let them know that you're on their side.

**Give them a job.** Help them to explore their spiritual gifts and develop their talents for God's glory. Give them opportunities to experiment with some of the church's ministries before asking them to make long-term commitments. Affirm them, even when they make mistakes. Teach them that they're serving Christ, not an institution.

**Keep them engaged.** Just as you wouldn't think of leaving your child home alone, keep in touch with your new members with short informal visits, phone calls, invitations to meals and social events. Don't smother them, but don't let them feel that your primary interest was in seeing them baptized.

Raising children (spiritual or otherwise) in this day and age is no mean feat. It's a full-time job, and it requires a constant connection with heaven. We may not always be successful. But when we are, it's great to be part of God's big family.

*Raising children  
(spiritual or  
otherwise) is no  
mean feat.*



# GIVE & TAKE

## LET'S PRAY

Have a prayer need? Have a few free minutes? Each Wednesday morning at 8:00 the *Adventist Review* staff meets to pray for people—children, parents, friends, coworkers. Send your prayer requests and, if possible, pray with us on Wednesday mornings. Let's share in each other's lives.

## WE NEED YOU

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.

## ADVENTIST LIFE

My 6-year-old daughter, Jessica, sat with us in church on Sabbath as the pastor was getting ready to ordain an elder. All the elders of the church were to come forward to lay their hands on the new elder during prayer. As the pastor urged all elders present to come forward, Jessica, with urgency, said to me: "Go on, Dad—go up there! You're a welder!"

—Jeff Trubey, welder for Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

With the advent of a new phone system at Pacific Press, outside callers are asked to select from the directory by pressing the first three letters of a person's last name. The first three letters for Marvin Moore, editor of *Signs of the Times*, turns out to be 666!

—Helen Stiles, Nampa, Idaho

We have been reading the Gospels to our 6-year-old, Raquel, and our 4-year-old, Raphael, for morning worship and have wondered if our antsy 4-year-old was learning anything.

A couple weeks ago the kids were role-playing Bible characters with me one Sabbath afternoon. We played Moses and Pharaoh first, then went out for a walk. Later, while I was resting on the couch, Raphy was ready for another round of role playing. "Daddy," he said, "I'm Jesus. Follow me." Not exactly what I had in mind at the moment, but to humor him I said that I'd be a disciple as long as I didn't have to get up. Raphy seemed OK with that and promptly went off to recruit other disciples.

Apparently his sisters were not very cooperative, so he came back around to me, insisting, "I am Jesus—follow me." A bit ruffled now, I reminded him that I was not available if it meant getting up. Then he paused for a few seconds and, considering his options, suddenly struck an authoritative pose, looked me in the eye, pointed his finger at me, and commanded, "In the name of Jesus, get up and walk!" What else could I do but get up?

—Samuel Soler, Somerset, Kentucky

## SPLIT PERSONALITY



**HE WHO HAS EARS:** Not everyone would share the spotlight in a self-portrait—but that's exactly what Adventist artist Greg Constantine does in *Vincent and Me II*. The painting is part of a "split image" series by the Andrews University professor of art. Paintings from the series were displayed in the O. K. Harris Gallery in New York City. It was Constantine's eighth show in the prestigious SoHo-based gallery and his fifteenth New York art show overall. His forte? Visual ironies and "art about art." His identity? "I am an Adventist-Christian artist." Nothing split about that.

# IF THE LIGHTS GO OUT

*Being Wise About Y2K*

BY HENRY E. FELDER

**A**IRPLANES FALLING OUT OF THE SKY. Families shivering in the dark because of massive electrical failures. Marauders roaming the darkened streets, while homeowners sit with loaded guns behind bolted doors, protecting their hoarded food. Governments using societal disruptions to alter national constitutions and usher in the final days of earth's history, fulfilling Bible prophecy.

These and even worse images have become part of the growing mystique of the Y2K (year 2000) computer problem. Make no mistake about it: the dislocations that will occur on January 1, 2000, are likely to be real and far-reaching. The problems are truly global: hardly any aspect of commercial and private life will be unaffected. Governments, corporations, and families that have not prepared are likely to be in for a very rude awakening, not only on the first day of January but throughout much of the year. To make matters worse, no one can credibly predict the magnitude of the dislocations, the economic costs, or just which sectors of society will be worst affected.

In short, the Y2K problem has the potential to be the greatest technological disaster in recorded history.

## *"Give a Person Enough Rope . . ."*

The Y2K problem exists because the world has embraced computers in ways that make them integral to virtually all aspects of human life. From the humblest village in a developing country to the most sophisticated urban community, the computer has become integral to modern existence. Our food, transportation, energy, medical support systems, communica-

tion, financial transactions, and most other corners of our lives are dependent on computers. Few of us are independent of a vast economic structure that keeps us alive and functioning—and that structure is fully dependent on computers.

In the early days of room-size computers, information space was at a premium. The decision was made to represent dates by the nomenclature MMDDYY, where the month, day, and year were each represented by two digits, thus saving expensive computer memory space. Dates in a computer perform numerous functions. They turn on switches to operate machinery, identify critical dates, signal maintenance schedules, are used to place events in a proper date sequence, and play a critical role whenever there is a date sequence that governs the function of the computer. When January 1, 2000, arrives, the computer could translate this into 01/01/00 and assume that the correct date is January 1, 1900.

The heart of the computer is a software program that tells the computer what to do. In computers around the world, billions of lines of software code have been written that control the date functions. Much of this software was written years ago in a computer language that isn't used anymore. These billions of lines of code must be identified and corrected before the big day—January 1, 2000—arrives.

In addition, many devices contain complex microprocessors (sometimes called "computers on chips") with "read-only" codes that cannot be rewritten: the microprocessor must be replaced. Many of these microprocessors are embedded systems located in airplanes, telephone PBX systems, fire safety systems, heart defibrillators, medication pumps, cellular telephones, military weapons systems, automobiles, and a

thousand devices. Some systems that control energy resources are even buried underground in cables.

It's estimated that by the time the big day arrives, there will be four microprocessors for each man, woman, and child on the planet! No one can be certain how many of these microprocessors will need to be changed to be date-compliant, or how they will function if they aren't changed.

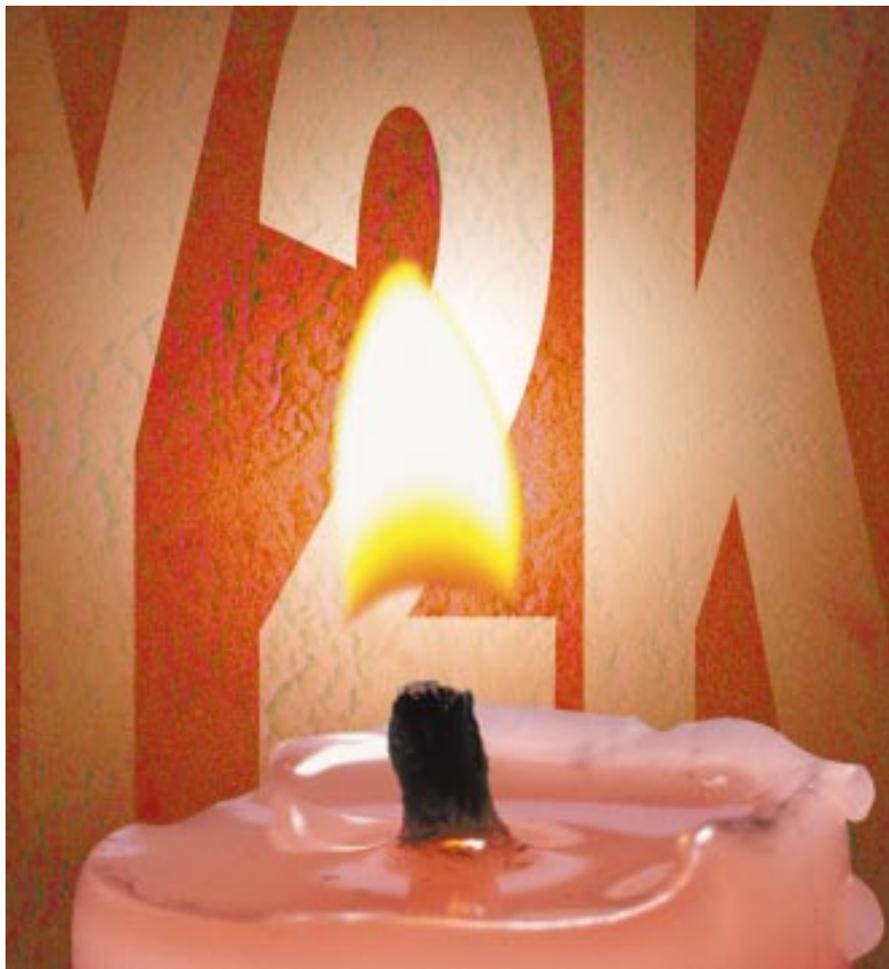
Computers on which software hasn't been changed to be compliant with the year 2000 dating may experience malfunctions that will vary from program to program. In some instances the computer will shut down the system when it encounters the "00." In other situations, it may perform as if the year is indeed 1900. A person born in 1911 could thus be treated as being only 11 years old and ineligible for much-deserved Social Security income.

### Understanding the Scope

The major actors in the drama of the next 10 months will be governments, corporations, and individuals.

The U.S. General Accounting Office reports that some federal agencies may not be ready, even though more than \$7.2 billion has been spent by the federal government to correct the problem. The GAO head has reminded the public that there is no comprehensive picture of U.S. readiness because some agencies are more ready (and more critical to daily functioning) than others. While President Clinton has announced that the

Social Security Administration is already Y2K-compliant, the Internal Revenue Service may not meet urgent deadlines and could conceivably send some individuals tax bills that date back nearly 100 years! The Federal Aviation Agency and more than 10,000 air traffic controllers are not entirely sure what will happen to the FAA control system on January 1,



2000. Some experts are already advising that flights will be grounded, but no credible person believes that the Y2K problem will cause in-flight jets and airplanes to malfunction.

Corporations face a special Y2K problem because of their dependence on vast and far-flung supply chains. Even if a company fixes its computers, it cannot be certain that its vendors will have done so in time. The supply chain connection could create a "domino effect" across companies, resulting in mass slowdowns in economic activity and personnel layoffs

ranging from a few weeks to months. Some companies are likely to go out of business because of the disruptions. Prolonged business slowdowns and declining productivity could lead to economic recession, even without factoring in the costs for corporations to fix their software, now estimated to be as high as \$600 billion. As Senator Everett Dirksen used to wryly observe:

"A billion here, a billion there. Pretty soon it adds up to real money."

Even basic and emergency health-care services could be affected. Hospitals could run short of much-needed supplies, as well as experience critical failures, if their medical devices are not all Y2K-compliant. The death of even one patient because of Y2K-non-compliance would be heartbreaking to all concerned and traumatizing to the community.

Public attention in recent months has focused on the utility companies, since they are wholly dependent on computers to provide gas, electricity, and

water to their customers. A major disruption or shutdown in the nation's electric power grid, if combined with a cold winter, could lead to personal and economic disaster for millions. Utility companies around the U.S. are feverishly working to make necessary changes; electric power companies have been given a government deadline of June 30 to be Y2K-compliant. U.S. Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson reports that he is cautiously optimistic that the U.S. will be ready. "There are no showstoppers that would threaten the nation's electricity supplies," he states.

Governments and corporations in the international community vary tremendously in their state of readiness for the Y2K event. While some countries have moved aggressively to bring their computers into compliance, others have done little or nothing. Because of economic "globalization," conditions in the United States may be negatively impacted by the failure of some countries to become Y2K-compliant. Recent economic crises in Brazil and Southeast Asia have caused major disruptions in the U.S. and European stock markets and the import-export sector of the economy, further illustrating how interdependent national economies have become. If Y2K events trigger economic recessions abroad, the impact will certainly reach the United States. Vital international connections, including air travel and air traffic control, could also be dramatically affected.

### How Should We Cope?

In the face of a coming crisis of unknown proportions, Christians should surely be prudent, but should just as surely not panic. It isn't our responsibility to ascribe apocalyptic meaning to singular events. While

some Christians have dubbed the Y2K problem "the millennium bug" and have suggested that the crisis implies divine judgment on human sin and the imminent end of human history, responsible believers are thoughtfully planning for the days and months that will follow January 1, 2000.

Prudence alone would suggest that Christians plan for the probability that there will be many system failures around January 1, 2000, and that there could be a period of uncertainty and even instability in the immediate aftermath of the calendar change. Where there are critical needs, the crisis should find no believer unprepared.

If, for example, there is a person on medical support living at home, care should be taken to provide alternative electrical power should there be an interruption in regular electric service. Likewise, a prudent person may want to make sure that he or she has access to at least modest amounts of cash in the event of disruptions to banks and financial institutions. Selected food stocks may be low if supply chain interruptions occur, but more likely may result from panic hoarding by individuals during the weeks preceding January 1, 2000. Many experts are rec-

ommending having two weeks' extra food supply available for each family. Travel, especially air travel, may be delayed or difficult for those flying on January 1 or during the following few days, even though the FAA will likely maintain a viable air traffic control system.

Biblical Christians have long viewed Jesus' command to go and tell the world about a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour (Matt. 28:19, 20) as their primary responsibility to their neighbors. But another of Jesus' statements may be at least as appropriate to the months immediately ahead of us: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

The coming Y2K crisis presents a wonderful opportunity for the Adventist community to give the world a look at a compassionate church in action. When the Y2K crisis hits, there will be many in need who will look to the church for assistance. The church is challenged to be a caring, supportive community for those in need. It must act decisively to counter some popular images of Christians arming themselves, running to the hills, and

## A Pastor's Take on Y2K

BY GEORGE GAINER, PASTOR OF THE PLEASANT VALLEY CHURCH IN BORING, OREGON

So what's a believer to think? to do? Is it time to load the granola, the tofu milk, the family, and the dog into the RV and start driving for that hideaway in the Idaho outback? Or is there a better way?

The book *Experiencing God* begins with a simple but profound proposition: "God is always at work around us." If that is true (and I believe that it is), then the right question to be asking is "God, what are You doing today? How can I join You in Your work?"

God has a heart for lost people. And it's His purpose that the church become "a grace place, a welcome table" for men, women, and children who are hungering for True Bread.

That's why what God is doing in local congregations on the verge of Y2K is so vitally important. Where else will seekers hear the stories of Jesus and learn to trust Him and

to love Him and to say "Yes!" to Him?

The year ahead will undoubtedly stretch us. And that's good! God, like an archer with bow and arrow, is stretching us so that we may hit the bull's-eye: God-honoring, gospel-proclaiming, Jesus-following, Spirit-led, praying, truth-telling, healing-touch, welcome-table congregations.

So what do we do next?

1. Proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Individual Christians and congregations become healthy, life-giving channels of His grace by unambiguously embracing the gospel and intentionally shaping life around that reality.

2. Prepare as prudently as you would for a forecasted natural disaster, with basic food, water, and emergency supplies.

3. Repudiate the way of self-serving—hoarding, hunkered-down, camouflage-jacketed fear.

4. Plan as an individual and with your congregation to respond in loving, compassionate, and unselfish ways to serve the needs that may arise in your community. Have you noticed how storms tend to bring out the best—and the worst—in people? We have a choice here.

## What the Corporate Church Is Doing

BY NANCY LAMOREAUX, DIRECTOR, DATA MANAGEMENT SERVICES,  
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

The North American Division office has tested all the software developed in-house that is distributed to the unions, conferences, and churches. All of that software is Y2K-compliant. Programs tested include:

Adventist Personnel Manager (Win95/NT service records and credentials)  
NADSys95 (DOS service records and credentials)  
Higher Education Data Manager  
K-12 Education Data Manager  
Tithe and Remittance Reporting System  
Equipment Inventory Management Systems (depreciation software)

The church also has an official Web page to help. Hosted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, it is updated regularly on Y2K issues that affect the organization. The address is: <http://www.sdacc.org/year2000>.

Topics on the Web page include Y2K explained, Adventist software reviews, compliance statements from hardware vendors, operating system information, and free tools and resources. There are even presentations you can use to raise awareness within your organization.

The North American Division is reporting in detail to the General Conference on readiness for the year 2000. Year 2000 readiness certification is also being requested from union offices, and general statements from local conferences and senior academies. Vendors, suppliers, and banks also will be requested to state their compliancy.

becoming insular against their neighbors.

### Anchored in Hope

The Adventist Church is not a single, monolithic operation, but manifests itself in various levels and institutions, including churches, hospitals, schools, and publishing houses. Each of these entities has its own set of challenges regarding the Y2K problem, and each has its own opportunity to witness and be a good neighbor. The call to mission can be answered by the corporate church, the local church, Adventist institutions, and individual members.

The corporate Adventist Church can be a role model for how private institutions prepare for the coming technological crisis. This requires that the church be Y2K-compliant in its own operations (see sidebar), including a thorough review of the status of its worldwide readiness and its ability to make a smooth transition into the new millennium.

Adventist institutions have a special

role to play in maintaining and even expanding their mission during this period. Adventist hospitals, for example, should model how hospitals ought to respond to the Y2K crisis. Each hospital that claims the name of "Adventist" should certainly review its procedures for Y2K compliance to ensure continued safe operation. But more important, each hospital ought to also study how it can become a community resource in the event other health-care facilities are experiencing difficulties. Something about the name "Adventist" implies wise, compassionate preparation for whatever the future holds.

The local church can claim a special mission of preparing to house and feed individuals who may need special assistance, even if that assistance is never used. How much more powerful is the image of a church opening up its doors to meet needs rather than that of a church with bolted doors. The local church can also be an important resource for credible information about preparedness and assistance. A "good

neighbor" campaign can be mounted to let people know that the local Seventh-day Adventist church stands ready to assist.

A recent *Time* magazine cover about the Y2K problem showed a bare-foot "Christ" figure shouting about the coming end of the world. Many Christians have been portrayed as pandering to the worst fears of the community, with some groups advocating that Christians store months of food stocks and even arm themselves to ward off the unprepared. How refreshing it would be if the Adventist Church took this opportunity to tell the community about the blessed hope of Christ's soon return.

This is a time to tell our neighbors, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). These words of our Saviour remind us that it is foolish to point to the Y2K crisis or any similarly singular event and then prophesy that the end is near. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on a people who are ready to meet a returning Lord, whenever that moment is.

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). Knowledge has truly been increased in our century, and the human family stands blessed because of it. Computers, while helping to make the lives of hundreds of millions of people safer, cleaner, and more comfortable, have also brought us to an unmatched moment that may tax all our God-given creativity and ingenuity to manage.

Beyond our reliance on network gurus and specialists, however, must be our trust in the God who still lovingly watches over this wayward planet. Whatever happens on and after January 1, 2000, we will still praise God for His blessings and count on His help to weather the storm. ■

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*Henry E. Felder is the dean of the School of Business and Management at La Sierra University.*

# A Hunger for the Spirit

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

**T**o us today, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the Day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word.

Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away. And the testimony borne of them after the Spirit had been given is the same. Mark the word: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). The Spirit of Him who died that sinners might live animated the entire congregation of believers.

The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the ends of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.

So it may be now. Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was "the former rain," and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant. What is the promise to those living in these last days? "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee." "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zech. 9:12; 10:1).

Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. But the promise is not appreciated as it should be; and therefore its fulfillment is not seen as it might be. The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—

spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plenitude.

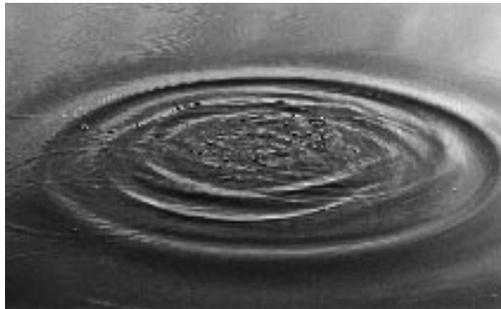
It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless. Learning, talent, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but, without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them channels for the out-

flowing of the highest influence in the universe.

Why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit, since this is the means by which we are to receive power? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to us than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the baptism of the Spirit every worker should be pleading with God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should men pray that God will baptize His missionaries with the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the presentation of the truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the unfriendliness of relatives, the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own imperfections and mistakes. ■

*The above selection is from Testimonies for the Church (vol. 8, pp. 20, 22) and was published 95 years ago in March 1904, when the church was experiencing a grave theological crisis. Ellen G. White (1827-1915) was one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Seventh-day Adventists believe that she exercised the biblical gift of prophecy through more than 70 years of public ministry and service.*



# Counting the Cost

BY LESLIE KAY

**H**e sat stiffly straight by the side of the road, eyes riveted to the crest of the hill, searching for the return of the one whose tire tracks veered onto the gravel shoulder, paused, then cut a sharp U-turn. His muzzle was soft and yielding, his paws large and still unwieldy, his unkempt coat a mass of strawberry-blond curls; a half-grown, haphazard stew of Irish setter, golden retriever, and Lord knew what else. The girls and I passed him on our morning drive to the post office.

When we returned, he had taken up his vigil in the middle of the road. Alarmed, we tried to coax him off, but he yapped and shied and parked himself a little farther down the center stripe. We prayed as a speeding truck barely missed his resolute form.

Later that day we spotted him again, now sprawled motionless at the base of a sign. *He's dead*, I thought angrily. *Why didn't I do something about him sooner?* I crept up to check on him. Asleep but still very much alive, he startled and leaped away, barking furiously. Sensing that he was all bluff, I grabbed him in a bear hug and wrestled him into the wagon. We hauled him home and named him Ben.

Truth be told, I was rather proud of myself for executing such a noble rescue. In my Walter Mitty-ish inner life I thrive on ascribing to myself such grandiose titles as Defender of the Underdog and Deliverer of the Downtrodden. But my downtrodden underdog quickly reminded me that even the noblest fantasy is a poor preparation for the rigors of real life.

Bathed, brushed, and happily gorged on puppy chow, Ben addressed his duties as family puppy with gusto: he rolled in the raised beds; he lay in the pinks; he trounced on the hearts-and-flowers. He not only chewed but ate anything that was not reinforced with concrete and steel. He bayed at the coyotes until I was nearly comatose with fatigue. And for an unforgettable encore, he managed to get himself almost fatally run over—by me.

Came the day I'd had enough of this expensive cyclone. I told the girls in my flintiest don't-even-try-to-change-my-mind tone, "Ben has to go. I'll try to find him a new home in the morning."



They were devastated, but I was undeterred. I called every animal placement person in Kingman, who, wouldn't you know, couldn't think of anyone in need of a nondescript red puppy with a bad case of destructivitis. They'd call me if anything turned up.

I berated myself for my stupidity: *Why did I ever bring this mongrel home? What was I thinking? Why do I feel compelled to save every stray dog in Mohave County?* I prayed that a home would be found, but the call never came. Unwilling to take Ben to the pound, I reluctantly allowed him to stay. But I refused to like him.

Into my dark mutterings a new voice slowly crept, a voice that matter-of-factly convicted: *This is your pattern, you know. Thoughtlessly plunging into lives and affec-*

*tions; playing savior on a whim—then opting out when things get tough. When will you learn that love requires sacrifice? When will you learn to count the cost?*

This was more self-realization than I'd bargained for, but the facts spoke clearly: a marriage that had suffered from my impulsiveness; children who had been disappointed by my inconstancy; a Christian experience littered with unsummated fair-weather resolutions.

Somehow I'd thought I could just sail through it all on dumb luck and enthusiasm and escape the inevitable cost—escape the sleepless nights and anxious prayers, the needs and dreams deferred; escape the plain hard work of it all. But the truth confronts like a sheer, impassable rock: wherever there is love, there is sacrifice; where there is great love, there is a crucifixion.

Though it cost all, surely the reward is more than worth it—a marriage that stands the test of time; children who "rise up and call [us] blessed"; a Saviour who "shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied" (Prov. 31:28, RSV; Isa. 53:11, RSV). And a pesty red dog who will never again know the pain of abandonment.

*Leslie Kay and her family observe God's creatures, great and small, from their home in Chloride, Arizona.*



# In the Laundromat

*You don't go there unless you have to.*

BY TANITA S. DAVIS

**R**AIN SPLASHED DOWN THE FOGGY windows in dispiriting torrents. The asthmatic wheeze of the dryers was accompanied by the rhythmic *ch-clunk, ch-clunk* of the washers. Small children with dripping noses and grime-smearred faces careened around the grungy laundromat floor until they were caught short by hard-faced mothers who screamed at them to cut out their noise. Each time the door opened, billows of cigarette smoke rushed in on the clammy air. I sat silent and withdrawn; cold, damp, and depressed.

## Surrounded

Burnout and an ulcer at age 24 had ended my job as a remedial teacher for a state group home. David and I had been out of college and married for only a year, and our slender finances dictated that we spend every other Sunday in a laundromat, trying to keep up with our housekeeping chores. The cheapest laundromat we found was dirty and filled with people from all walks of life. A timid Latina who spoke little English peddled personalized embroidered ink pen covers for "only four dollar." Clunking over the floor in his sharp-toed cowboy boots, a tiny dark-eyed boy played peekaboo with his sister, showing his silver-capped front teeth in a happy smile. In the eyes of the faces around me I saw my students, and my insides shriveled.

I had loved teaching. My students had caught my heart with their stories. There was Evangeline, a 12-year-old prostitute who was a math whiz but could not read. Jaime was a gang member with bullets still embedded beneath the skin in his arm and in his leg. He had started cutting school in the fourth grade to be a police lookout for his older brothers; now, at age 15, he didn't know his multiplication tables. Seventeen-year-old Shequani teetered between wanting to be a chef and wanting to be a nurse. She studied hard and screamed with rage and frustration over the fractions she had missed in the sixth grade. Tracey had been convicted of involvement in a drive-by shooting at age 16. Her tough mouth and mean exterior almost hid her wide blue eyes that often filled with tears.

These children had needs I idealistically thought I could help fill, but they overwhelmed me. Their needs cried out to me, even in my sleep. And soon I was capsized, a small craft

on high seas, with no shore visible and no lighthouse. Between the overwhelming indifference of the state, the often terrifying incompetence of some of the other teachers, and the sheer stamina it took to deal with the students some days, I lost sight of my vision. I ran away to save what was left. And now sadness, guilt, and anger sat with me in that laundromat as I wondered again if I had made the right choice.

## What Now?

A whoosh of stale air announced the laundromat's next patrons. Three teenage boys sporting oversized jeans, shaved heads, and tattoos burst in. The atmosphere tensed as parents pulled their children closer. The teenagers swaggered in, leering at the women and staring challengingly at the few men who were there.

*Oh, God, why do I have to be here when they're here?* I moaned to myself, feeling a mixture of panic and irritation. *Haven't I seen this kind of kid enough?*

Their loud talk and expletives became the center of attention. Two of the boys had ridden to the laundromat on BMX bikes and had garbage bags full of dirty clothes balanced on the handlebars. The third boy fished around in the pockets of his Army jacket for change to purchase a small box of Tide.

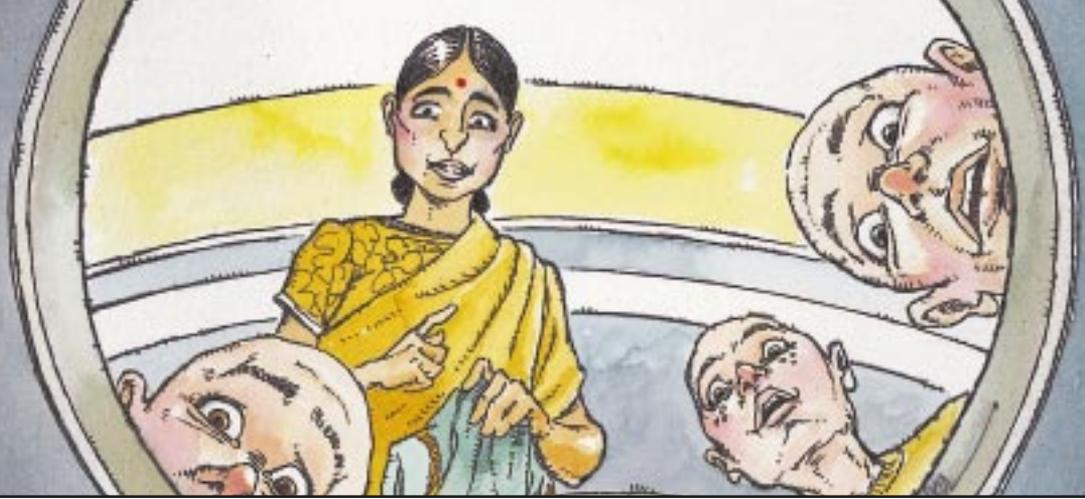
They packed all the dirty clothes into one washer. I caught amused glances all around me; these boys obviously had no idea what they were doing.

As they went outside to smoke, the amused looks became conversation. "Did you see that? There's no way those clothes will get clean," a gap-toothed woman with blue curlers in her thinning red hair chuckled to the woman next to me.

"Serves 'em right," the woman snarled back, filing her curved red fingernails. "Coming in here like they owned the place. Kids these days got no manners."

I transferred my loads to the dryer in silence.

The boys trooped back in, their clothes carrying the acrid, bitter smell of the cigarettes they'd been bumming. In search of a dryer, they circled the room, intimidating people into taking their clothes out when the machines stopped instead of adding additional quarters. I shrank back into my corner, folding laundry, pretending that I didn't see them.



But I had to notice them when they were right next to me, showing their things into the dryer. Gray water dripped from a shirt, and pieces of twigs and leaves fell onto the floor as they crammed in the clothes. Couldn't they see that the clothes weren't clean?

Where have these kids been living? Outside? I frowned and turned away, feeling troubled. *Somebody should've taught these kids how to take care of themselves*, I thought.

A voice from across the room caught my attention.

### To the Rescue

"Boys? Boys! No, those aren't clean." I turned in surprise. A short Indian woman wrapped in a patterned tan sari waved her hand to the boys.

"Bring those back, the clothes," she said. "They're not clean."

The laundromat patrons stared at the diminutive woman with her foreign clothes and the red dot on her forehead. I glanced at the boys.

Reluctant eyes met. I suddenly realized that the boys knew all along that their clothes were still dirty.

"Ain't got enough money," the tallest boy in the camouflage jacket muttered, sticking out his chin, his eyes hooded.

"Bring them back," the woman insisted. "I show you how to fix them."

Tentatively the boys slouched back, carrying armloads of wet clothes. The Indian woman briskly instructed them how to separate loads. She touched their muddy gar-

## Three teenage boys sporting oversized jeans, shaved heads, and tattoos burst in.

ments. Their one huge load became three smaller ones.

She wiped out the washer and got them started again, measuring out her own soap and sliding in her own quarters when theirs ran out. The boys' hunched shoulders and aggressive stances became relaxed. Light shone in their faces where there had been no light before.

"You'll show us how to work the dryers, too?" I heard one of them exclaim in a boyish voice that cracked and skipped. "You're really nice. I've never met anyone as nice as you."

### New and Improved

Suddenly the teenaged "hoods" turned into respectful young men who called everyone "ma'am" and "sir," offering to play with small children and carry clothes out to people's cars. Their pale young faces, which had looked so identical when they walked in, took on character—dimples, crooked grins, bright eyes. The rain-damp, smoky-stale air in that laundromat turned into a place filled with the breath of God.

In an instant I was reminded of the psalmist's request to God, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7). I realized that never had I needed that washing so much. I was soiled and stained with worldly cares; and while Jesus had offered to take the pain and guilt from me, I had been holding on to them. In clutching them to my chest, I had been blinded to the needs of others around me. Maybe if I had let God do my laundry, I could have helped those boys with theirs.

In the Gospel stories Jesus showed us that He wants to make us clean. But the idea of letting God do our dirty laundry is unsettling. Do we let Him see all the stains and smears on our souls? He wants to. He has to. We can't get clean by ourselves.

Whether we recognize it or not, we're all in need of cleansing. And there's no stain so permanent that it can't be removed by the cleansing power of faith in Jesus. It may seem daunting to us, but it's really a simple thing. All God needs is an invitation.

It was such a small thing, so tiny an act, to help someone learn how to do laundry. In the grand scheme of things, it may seem insignificant. But you can't tell those boys that. And by God's grace, having experienced something of the cleansing power of God's love, maybe the next time I'll be able to extend the hand of God to someone else. ■

Tanita S. Davis writes from Vacaville, California.



# A Night in Heartbreak Hotel

*How was I supposed to be joyful here?  
I had a thing or two to learn.*

BY ELAINE HAGELE

**A**BOUT A YEAR AGO I WAS WAITING in the Montgomery, Alabama, airport for some of my auditing colleagues to arrive. Their plane had been delayed, and I sat down in the boarding area across from a rather dignified gentleman. He immediately engaged me in conversation and soon knew why I was there; while I, for my part, learned that he coordinates the drug rehab program in the Alabama prison system.

It wasn't long before we'd gone by the small talk and settled down to discussing religion. Mostly I listened to what he thought being a Christian means. Real Christians would not be amassing possessions, he said; he was distraught that members of his Sunday school class were moving from 1,600-square-foot homes in which they'd raised three children to 6,000-square-foot homes after the children were grown and gone. How does that fit with being a Christian? he wondered.

He then identified yet another distinguishing mark of the real Christian: *joy*. With that, our conversation was interrupted by the announcement that the plane had arrived.

"Have you met the auditors you're waiting for?" he asked. Not waiting for an answer, he continued: "If they are Christians, that should help you identify them—they'll be joyous." Then he proceeded to watch the people coming off the plane and commenting on which of them might be the auditors. He was looking for joyful Christian professionals.

## Food for Thought

I've been thinking ever since: *Could he have identified me as a Christian by my joy?*

Sometimes it's been easier to practice joy than other times. I thought about it, for example, one night as I lay between "holey" sheets in a depressing stinky motel room. I'd been a little concerned about my motel reservation that morning, since someone else had made it. So I took the time to call. Jonathan, the man I spoke to, said they couldn't find any reservation for me, but that they had a remodeled non-smoking room next door to the one I had had the previous week, and that it was still available. I gave him my credit card number to hold it, and went about the day's work, unconcerned that we would be checking in somewhat late.

When another auditor and I got to the motel that evening, the woman at the desk claimed they had never heard of me or my reservation. After I mentioned that I had talked with a man at the desk that morning, she argued that they didn't even have any men working at the desk. When I mentioned I had talked with Jonathan, she eventually admitted that he had started working there recently, but that that didn't change the fact that they had no rooms.

This being the only motel in the area other than the eight-unit, \$42 per week variety, I was wondering where to go next. The other auditor had also reserved a room for the night in the same motel. His was ready. But then he also had the car. So I just stood there dumbly. What to do?

The clerk finally figured out that they did have a room left, but apologized that it would be somewhat cheaper than the one I'd asked for. And it was a smoking room. I looked at it very briefly and decided I could stand it for a night, since there weren't a lot of other options and I was very tired.



### Putting Joy to the Test

When I moved into the room, I noticed the walls were decorated with squished mosquitoes. Later I found the bathroom carpeted with broken glass. I struggled to get the ground-level window locked and checked that the flimsy door was chained. It had been a long day, so I tried to settle in for the night.

Then I heard a key in the door lock. I wasn't about to say anything to let anybody know that I was a woman alone in the room, so I quietly waited for the two men to decide they were at the wrong door. However, frustrated that their key wouldn't work, the men probably figured that banging would help. So they banged and shouted and banged and cursed while I picked up the phone to call. But by the time somebody came to see what was happening, they had gone elsewhere. I was completely unnerved.

I finally decided I might as well try to sleep. But when I pulled back the

stained blankets, I was completely repulsed by the sight between the bed and the wall. Cigarette butts by the dozens, and dust several years thick filled the space. At that moment, if there had been any place to go, I would have gone there.

I lay down on the bed and considered my options. The first was to sit there and cry. And for me to do that you'd know I was desperate. The next option that came to mind was to quit auditing and go home to my own clean bed and stay there. I didn't deserve these surroundings, and certainly my General Conference wages weren't enough to pay me to be there—not even with per diem!

But then I was impressed that Jesus was right there in that filthy room with me; and if He could be there—He who deserved the glories of heaven—certainly I could stand the place for a night. He had come to a stable that probably wasn't as clean and fresh as

the pictures would make us think, and such humble surroundings weren't beneath Him.

The thought of Jesus and me together there in that dismal room started me laughing. If you had seen me there chuckling out loud in that gross, stinking place, you'd have thought I'd lost my mind. On the contrary, however, I'd really discovered the truth—that wherever I am with Jesus Christ, there is joy. Together we got through that night—maybe not sleeping soundly. But I knew I wasn't alone.

### Where Jesus Is

*Wherever Jesus is, there is joy.* It was this thought that made me feel like singing one dismal Nebraska winter night on the edge of a cornfield in the middle of nowhere. As wind-driven snow obliterated the road and everything around me, I had pulled my car to what I hoped was the side of the road, all the while being rocked wildly by a fierce

blizzard. Soon, however, a car headed straight for me on the ice-paved highway and then, at the last moment, slid by, just a half inch away from me and into the darkness on my side.

It was several hours before the highway patrol came by. But with Jesus there, I had no fear.

And that's how it ought to be—whether beside a dangerous highway on a stormy night, or in some boardroom or closet as we spread out our work papers. Yes, I know—auditors are not normally associated with joy. But if Jesus is with us, we will not be dour, demanding, joyless—whether in the boardroom or closet, or wherever else we happen to work. I know for certain that Jesus Christ is with me in the midst of audits, because without Him I'm totally inadequate for the job, totally overwhelmed by the volume of work to be done. But I rely upon His promise: "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. . . . I will strengthen you; I will help you. I will hold you with my victorious right hand" (Isa. 41:10, NLT). With Jesus beside me, I can work with joy.

In the book of Philippians we find this strong admonition from the apostle Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always." And then for emphasis he added: "I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4, NIV). "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances," he said. "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry. . . . I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (verses 11-13, NIV).

### Jesus Shows Us How

I know Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But I think that He was also a person of joy. I see Him rejoicing whenever the power of Satan was thwarted. When the lame man leaped. When the blind saw. When the deaf heard. When the doubting believed. When sinners repented. Jesus rejoiced in His Father.

Wherever Jesus was, there was joy.

## *I lay down on the bed and considered my options. The first was to sit there and cry.*

"Do not weep," He said to the mother of a dead man among mourners at the gate of Nain. I hear joy in His voice as He says, "Young man, I say to you, arise." What delight to give that son back to his mother again! With Him even death has no victory. That's real joy.

I see the delight Jesus had in showing people that they had value, that self-esteem is rooted in His love. Jesus valued the children, taking them in His arms and blessing them. He reached into the soul of the Samaritan woman

at the well. He honored the widow who gave the insignificant offering. And I think He almost chuckled at Zacchaeus in the tree, because He saw what others didn't see in him—a person He would die for.

We can rejoice today that God loves us enough to save us. We can rejoice that His promises are reliable. We can rejoice that He has chosen us to work as His servants.

I wonder again if that man at the airport would recognize us as Christians by our joy. Said the psalmist: "Let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You" (Ps. 5:11, NKJV). ■

*Elaine Hagele is a senior staff auditor for the General Conference Auditing Service, Mid-America district.*



# The Rough Edges

**W**hy does God allow us, mere packets of flesh and bone, blood and spirit, to be ravaged by the evil that sears flesh, crushes bones, embitters the blood, and exiles the spirit to wastelands of despair?

Who among even the most “remnant” of us hasn’t wrestled with such a question? Each of us (if honest) would admit that it can, even if for only a few raw naked moments, bend our faith almost to the breaking point.

Even though we can jam ceaseless and macabre vignettes of death, pain, and mindless desolation into the overarching template of the great controversy between good and evil, the edges still appear rough enough. Clouds of darkness to slip by and infest our tattered souls like some sort of metaphysical parasite of doubt.

The following words, slammed with ink into the page in your hands, attempt, however feebly, to help smooth those edges.

In his suicidal novel *Reader’s Block*, David Markson (who also happens to be my uncle) quoted Nietzsche: “In the end one experiences only one’s self.”

Nietzsche’s right. When we grieve with the grieving, sorrow with the sorrowing, and suffer with the suffering, it’s still only our own grief, our own sorrow, and our own suffering we experience, never anyone else’s. The “compassionate” catchphrase of the nineties, “I feel your pain,” is a lie. We feel no one’s pain but our own, even if that pain is over someone else’s pain.

“What were you doing,” asked Anne Dillard in *Harper’s*, “on April 30, 1991, when a series of waves drowned 138,000 people? Where were you when you first heard the astounding, heartbreaking news? Who told you? What, seriatim, were your sensations? Who did you tell? Did you weep? Did your anguish last days or weeks?”

If you wept or anguished, it was still your own tears and anguish, not the tears and anguish of even a single one of those 138,000 victims; and not one of the 138,000 experienced a spark of the pain from any of the other 137,999 individuals. Whether starving alone on a deserted island, wasting away with leprosy, or gagging to death with dozens

of others in a Nazi gas chamber—it’s all the same. One experiences only oneself.

It’s a Christian maxim that whatever we suffer now—divorce, death, job loss, health problems—God suffers *with us*. A fine thought, no doubt, and true; God is not indifferent to our fate. On the contrary.



But how does the Creator of the universe, on His throne in all His unsurpassed majesty, might, and glory—guiding the stars in their appointed paths, surrounded by “thousands and thousands times ten thousand times ten thousand” worshipful angels—relate to, for instance, the tormented and shattered world of a child as mommy and daddy divorce? How can the One sustaining Orion or spinning the Milky Way know the anguish of colon cancer?

Then there’s Jesus: God as flesh, blood, bone, and spirit on the cross, dying a death, suffering a fate, and feeling an anguish so much worse, so much more intense, so much deeper, than anything any other individual—knowing only his or her own personal anguish—ever has or could. Jesus died the “second death,” a trauma so much worse than anything the bitterness of life and the first death could ever bring to an individual’s existence, no matter how wretched.

Jesus never had colon cancer. He never watched His parents divorce. He was never swept away on a “series of waves.” These and endless others’ woes were experienced by individuals who suffered only as much as individuals can. And nothing anyone has suffered individually was worse than what Christ, the Lord Himself, suffered as a human being punished for all the sins that produced these woes to begin with.

God Himself, embodied in our flesh, wired with our nerves, went through more pain, anguish, and despair than any of us individually ever could—a truth that may not answer all the questions about pain, but can at least help smooth some of the rough edges.

*Clifford Goldstein is the newly appointed editor of the adult Sabbath school quarterly.*



# New Union Forms in Eastern Europe

BY REINDER BRUINSMA, TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION SECRETARY

**O**ne hundred fifty delegates from Croatia, Slovenia, and Albania assembled in the auditorium of Marusevec Adventist Seminary in Croatia on December 20 to vote the new Adriatic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists into existence.

A five-year process led to the endorsement of the creation of a new union by the General Conference and the Trans-European Division.

The union will consist of the Croatian Conference, the Slovenian Conference, and the Albanian Mission.

Delegates to the inaugural session of the Adriatic Union began with meetings concerning the dissolution of the Croatian-Slovenian Conference, which had been directly attached to the Trans-European Division. As a result, all assets had to be transferred to the division, which will oversee the distribution of the assets and liabilities to the new administrative entities to be created.

A new constitution was accepted and the new union officially established. The delegates voted a nominating committee to deal with the election of several officers. It was decided that the election of the leaders of the former conference, which took place only a month ago, would be respected. Dragutin Matak and his team were elected to lead the new union.

Nenad Brkic, a Croatian business graduate from Newbold College who

now lives in Canada, was elected treasurer. Telephone contact with him established that he was willing to accept the challenge. He will also

serve as the treasurer of the conferences within the union. Several persons will serve both in union and conference positions in order to reduce the number of people involved in the administration of the church.

Having dealt with this important business, the delegates from Croatia and Slovenia met in separate rooms to adopt their

respective constitutions officially and to vote the two new conferences into existence. The Croatian delegates elected Miroslav Lorencin president, while Drago Marin was chosen as Slovenian Conference president.

Miroslav Lorencin will also serve as union secretary, while Drago Marin will be a vice president of the union.

Maurice Battle, an associate secretary of the General Conference, congratulated the dele-

gates on the establishment of the new administrative structure and emphasized that any organizational change should have a greater efficiency in the preaching of the gospel message as its ultimate goal.

Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division, led out in the establishment of the new union. Other division representatives who had been involved in the preparations of the administrative changes and who actively participated in the proceedings of this day were Reinder Bruinsma, division secretary; Graham Barham, division treasurer; and James Huzzey, division field secretary.

The new union of a little more than 4,000 members faces many challenges in all three of its countries. By the grace of God and through the vision of the leadership teams and pastors, the Adriatic Union can have a bright future.



TED President Bertil Wiklander



**HISTORIC GATHERING:** Delegates Croatia and Slovenia first discussed the Croatian-Slovenian Conference and the establishment of separate entities for these territories.

# Newbold College "Acts" With a Full House

BY JOEL LIPMAN, WHO WRITES FROM BRACKNELL, ENGLAND

**M**ore than 1,000 young persons from all over Britain participated in the British Union Conference's youth day of fellowship, held at Newbold College, near Bracknell, England, on November 28. The day was called ACTS 98, with ACTS being an acronym for Active Christians Together in Spirit.

The entire day aimed to provide British youth an opportunity to experience different styles of worship, meet other Adventists, and acquaint themselves with Newbold College. The event brought young people from as far

as Ireland and Scotland.

"The program for the morning involved a delightful medley of worship services that proved to be very popular, with each service presenting a different style: African, contemporary collegiate, creative arts, back-to-back preaching, and a family worship service," said Susanne Kirlew, president of the London Youth Foundation.

A series of workshops conducted in the afternoon addressed a number of relevant, practical issues, including relationships and sexuality, missions, Bible study, street witnessing, and

Internet witnessing. In addition, about 35 young people witnessed on the streets of Bracknell, where a collection was taken for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

A praise concert held in the evening featured an interesting array of musical performances. "The concert was very enjoyable," says Kirlew. Everyone got a glimpse of Adventist performing arts from around the U.K. There was even some poetry and mime included that added to the variety of the evening."

Many young people who participated in the day had a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. One young person from London said she enjoyed worshipping and meeting with people from all over Britain. "It's been really good having all the BUC youth together," she said. "This is a good place to have it, because we can find out more about Newbold College."

## N E W S B R E A K

### Anti-Tobacco Campaigner Speaks Out on "Global Epidemic of Nicotine Dependence"

**D**r. Linda Hyder Ferry, tobacco control campaigner and smoking cessation specialist, highlighted the dangers of what she termed the "global epidemic of nicotine dependence."

Speaking at the Adventist Ministries Convention in San Diego, California, on January 20, Ferry called for the world to "get serious about smoking cessation, a question of life or death for hundreds of thousands in the United States and 3 million around the world who die every year."

As primary researcher of a new medication treatment for quitting smoking and adviser to the proposed national certification program for tobacco dependence specialists, Ferry is well placed to identify the massive worldwide problem of nicotine dependence.

"The percentage of smokers in the United States has not declined for several years," says Ferry. "Over 50 million Americans smoke, and more children under 18 are smoking now than in the 1960s. The tobacco industry spends around \$5 billion in advertising each year—more than is spent in prevention and public health budgets across the

nation. Cigarette makers need to have their ads wiped off the billboards and magazines across the planet. For the truth is that nicotine is addictive and tobacco is lethal."

Ferry, chief of preventive medicine at Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans Administration Medical Center and associate professor at Loma Linda University, both in Loma Linda, California, initiated research into bupropion (Zyban), now the first nonnicotine, nonaddicting medication approved for use in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Her pioneering work has led to many hard-core smokers successfully quitting, and the treatment is soon to be expanded to other areas of the world.

Her latest research investigates the link between spiritual values and success in quitting. "Aspects of spirituality and faith have been shown to have a positive impact on health and medical treatments," says Ferry. "We are now researching the relationship of spirituality to smoking cessation."

Preliminary results in a pilot study being completed this month confirm a positive association and have prompted the planned development of a smoking-cessation program that will highlight the importance of involving the spiritual component.

Referring to the very first smoking-cessation program ever, the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, developed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1950s, Ferry

# Where Does Freedom Start (and End)?

BY STEPHEN PAYNE, VICE PRESIDENT, CANADIAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

There are all sorts of storms in British Columbia, Canada, these days. One windstorm last Friday knocked out power for 70,000 and blew a few mobile homes off their foundations.

But the biggest storm surrounds British Columbia Supreme Court justice Duncan Shaw. Two weeks ago he struck down section 163.1 (4) of the Criminal Code.

Here's what caused the storm:

The code said it was illegal to possess child pornography. Justice Shaw argued that the code was a "profound invasion" of freedom of expression and the right to privacy guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A civil liberties lawyer in Toronto said that the ruling "returned a little bit of the balance to privacy, freedom of conscience and belief."

But many of those who advocate a broad interpretation of rights and freedoms are appalled. Most agree that

possession is as significant a problem as production. Law professor Kathleen Mahoney suggests that every time child pornography is viewed, "the child is offended against time and time again."

Iain Benson suggested in a *National Post* editorial that "our life together would be a pitiful thing if we had only 'rights' to assert against each other. Surely many of our richest relationships and encounters are based, not on 'rights,' but on such things as generosity, compassion, kindness, self-sacrifice, and, most important, love."

Sin first began with a selfish exertion of individual "rights." The furor over this legal ruling is a heartbreaking reminder that our own rights should never be put above the concerns, needs, and love we express to others. And it reminds us that there is no way to separate selfishness and sin from the impact it has on others and the impact it has on God.

## NEWS COMMENTARY

### NEWS BREAK

comments that "we as a church need to update our legacy of smoking cessation for the twenty-first century." This Christian or Christ-centered approach should be based on acceptance, be redemptive and supporting, and recognize the value of medical treatment to "undo the neurochemical changes caused in the addiction center of the brain by nicotine," says Ferry.

DeWitt Williams, director of health ministries for the Adventist Church in North America, applauds the call for action. "Smoking kills more than 400,000 people a year in the U.S., more than those who die in accidents, fires, suicides, and AIDS combined," says Williams. "Smoking is the biggest killer—yet it's legal. Our society and our church must do something to stop this, the most preventable cause of death."—*Adventist News Network*.

#### New Breakthrough in Midwest Brazil

As a result of a year of ministry by Global Mission volunteers, 10 Cadwell Indians were baptized on November 22 in midwest Brazil. The new Adventist believers were the first from Cadwell reservation in the Bodoquena Mountains.

Two years ago the first Cadwell tribe member, living outside the village, was baptized. Members of the Adventist church in Aquidauana, Mato Grosso do Sul,

launched an initiative to reach the Bodoquena Village. Led by Vergilio and Antonio Vihalba, an evangelistic team reached the village. Only four meetings were held each month. After one year the first baptismal candidates were prepared.

A new church is being organized in the Bodoquena Mountains. The congregation meets in a chapel built through the efforts of volunteers and financial assistance from the South Mato Grosso Conference, reports Melchiades Soares, South Brazil Union communication director.

#### Veteran African Adventist Leader Dies

Bekele Heye, former president of the Eastern Africa Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, died in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa on December 31, 1998. He was laid to rest on January 3.

Heye, 65, gave 40 years of service in the Adventist Church before he retired in 1992. He had worked as a teacher, dean of students, union and division departmental director, union president, and Afro-Mideast Division president before becoming president of the Eastern Africa Division, where he served until retirement. Heye died from complications brought about by a stroke.

Commenting on the death of Elder Heye, former Eastern Africa Division youth director and General

## Religion in the News

### First Interfaith Group Forms in Russia

Representatives of Russia's major faiths have organized a new interfaith council that they hope will foster cooperation between the groups.

Meeting in December 1998, Russian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist leaders created the Permanent Interfaith Council—reportedly the first such organization in Russian history.

According to Vsevolod Chaplin, a spokesperson for the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, the council's goal is to "ensure contacts and avoid conflicts between believers of various denominations," the Jewish Telegraphic Agency news service reported on January 5.

Zinovy Kogan, the council's Jewish representative, said the organization will endeavor to present a unified voice in opposition to anti-Semitism, signs of which have increased in recent months as Russia's deep economic and political troubles have worsened.

The council is expected to add Roman Catholic and Lutheran representatives in the near future.—*Religion News Service*.

## Historical Note

### 100 Years Ago . . . Generous Delegates Bless the Work "Down Under"

Though most were living on a sacrificial wage, delegates to the February 1899 General Conference session in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, responded generously from their own pockets to an appeal for funds to expand Adventist work in Australia.

During a break in the session agenda the daily mail was brought in and promptly read. Included was a letter from Ellen White, who for the past eight years had been ministering in Australia. Her written appeal for special funding was soon met with a "pass the hat" suggestion that the General Conference delegates themselves start the contributions.

As fast as names could be written down in shorthand, \$8,400 was given in cash and pledges, an amount equivalent to more than \$140,000 in 1999 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Combined with the \$5,000 contribution of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and another \$500 raised by members in Battle Creek, Michigan, the \$13,900 raised (about \$250,000 in 1999 dollars) gave a giant lift to Adventist efforts on the Australian continent.

## NEWS BREAK

Conference youth director Baraka Muganda said, "I have worked with many presidents, but Bekele Heye was simply a star."

Eastern Africa Division executive secretary Bekele Biri described Heye as "a humble giant whose skill in human relations was simply unmatched. He was as at home with the man in the palace as he was with the man on the street. His humility and his sensitivity to human needs endeared him to many people inside and outside the church."

Heye is survived by his wife, Haregewine Bekele, and four children.—*Adventist News Network*.

### Sonora Community Hospital Among Top 100 Hospitals in North America

Sonora Community Hospital (SCH), an Adventist hospital in California, was recently ranked among the top 100 acute-care hospitals in North America, according to a report released by HCIA/Mercer. The report was published in *Modern Healthcare* magazine.

The annual study, "100 Top Hospitals: Benchmarks for Success," identifies hospitals that deliver the most cost-efficient and highest quality medical care. SCH is the only Adventist hospital on the list and the only rural hospital ranked by the study.

HCIA/Mercer studied the performance of 6,000 hospitals in North America to arrive at their findings, including large, small, and teaching institutions. In its peer group, hospitals with 25-99 beds, SCH was ranked first in the study's clinical indicators—quality of care, efficiency of operations, and sustainability, reports Paul Tharp, (SCH) community relations director.

### News Notes

✓ **Willie Taylor**, executive secretary for Southeastern Conference, based in Altamonte Springs, Florida, was elected conference president on January 31. Taylor replaces Roy Brown, who retired on December 31, 1998.



Willie Taylor

### What's Upcoming

- Mar. 6** Women's Day of Prayer
- Mar. 13** Adventist World Radio Offering
- Mar. 13** Tract Evangelism
- Mar. 20-27** Youth Week of Prayer
- Mar. 27** Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division

# The Other Side of Introversion

*I was a round peg in an unyieldingly square hole.*

BY KIM ALLAN JOHNSON

**T**HE FIRST TIME, I REMEMBER PICKING up the phone and only putting it to my ear with no real intention of dialing. I tried to imagine what it would be like to actually make the fateful call. Even that safe charade made my heart race and my fingers tremble. Three or four times over the next couple years I inched ever closer to that defining phone conversation by actually pressing the numbers and hanging up quickly after the first ring. Finally the stress level from my pastoral career became so intolerable, so debilitating, that I mouthed a quick prayer, dialed the conference president's number, and this time let it ring without interruption. He answered, "Hello, may I help you?"

"Hi, this is Kim . . . Kim Johnson. I'd like to see you privately, if I could. *Soon.*" Within three days I mailed out notices to all my parishioners informing them of my decision no longer to be a pastor, anywhere.

I do not regret the dozen or so years I shepherded two medium-sized church districts. I met wonderful people and grew tremendously. But I was a very round peg in an unyieldingly square hole. I looked outwardly successful but was slowly self-destructing. I who loved the quiet world of ideas, words, and things had become immersed in a career of unending people needs, sanguine situations, and up-front responsibilities. Finally my true temperament and personality elbowed their way past my guilt and confusion, making their views known through the attention-getting language of physical and emotional pain. They insisted that I start making more appropriate life choices.

Night school, accounting classes, and a new career as

associate treasurer in the same conference eventually brought my life more into balance. Yet surprisingly, it still took a lengthy period of digging through layers of masks and misunderstanding to get to bedrock me.

One day my counselor looked me in the eye and said, "Kim, I believe you are fundamentally an *introvert* at heart." I leaned back and wrinkled my brow. I had run from that dark label many times before and felt as though he had just diagnosed me with a debilitating disease.

He continued, "And you know what? It's a beautiful thing to be an introvert. Introverts are some of the most insightful, creative, sensitive people on the planet." My mind did a double take. Did he say "beautiful"? And in those few, well-informed words, he suddenly turned an ugly duckling label into a graceful, white-plumed swan.

As we explored the topic further, I found the following definition and distinction helpful: "The introvert's main interests are in the inner world of concepts and ideas, while the extrovert is more involved with the outer world of people and things."<sup>1</sup> I realized that even though introversion and extroversion are very different, they are equally valuable. I saw that my being an introvert was not a weakness, but a great source of strength. As the result of that new perspective, I began, over time, to feel more integrated and whole. Eventually the inner and outer me shook hands, stopped competing, and agreed to be friends.

I also began to reconnect with who I was during my shy childhood. I remember, for instance, never having a name of my own during most of my growing-up years. Until age 14 everyone except my parents knew me as "Barry's brother."

My older brother was so outgoing that I thought he lived downtown somewhere and chose to visit us whenever he had time. In public I either walked in his considerable shadow or happily flowered the nearest wall. People thought of me as the “deep one,” the “silent one,” who dispensed words with the miserliness of a Buddha. The only dates I had in high school were in my mind, unless, of course, you count the time I asked a girl if she needed a ride home (she didn’t). During

## If I’m not me, who will be?

thought of the apostle Paul’s admonition “If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in

the body, each one of them, as he chose” (1 Cor. 12:17, 18, RSV). There is no one else in the whole world who can fulfill my unique place in the body of Christ. If I’m not me, who will be?

My newfound joy was tinged with sadness, however, as I reflected on all the frustration that I and others could have been spared if only we had understood sooner. I thought of an introverted friend who ruefully reflected on his days as an

evangelist. “People kept telling me what a great job I was doing,” he said, “but they had no idea what a wrenching experience I endured emotionally and spiritually. After each presentation I hid in a church closet so I wouldn’t have to visit with those who came to my meetings. I kept pushing myself out of some warped sense of duty.” If only someone had told him, “You’re beautiful being exactly who God intended you to be, and not what others think you should be.”

The authors of *Type Talk* have written, “The division between Extroverts and Introverts is the most important distinction between people, because it describes the source, direction, and focus for one’s energy. . . . The Extrovert is energized by the outer world and, as a result, all those activities that Extroverts find exhilarating, uplifting, and exciting drain the Introvert. And

spirit in the disciple Andrew. He is repeatedly referred to as “Simon Peter’s brother.”

Andrew played second fiddle to his boisterous sib-

ling, but nonetheless relished his God-given role. Philip and Nathanael also seem to have been rather retiring. But God selected them, and they ministered effectively in their own way. I

college I originally chose a career track in mechanical engineering, a profession not particularly overcrowded with bubbly socialites.

From Scripture I found a kindred

the reverse is equally true: the reflection, introspection, and solitude that produce energy, focus, and attention for the Introvert are a drain on the energy of an Extrovert. So, at home, school, or work, the degree to which one is allowed to resort to the preferred source of one's energy has a fundamental effect on the quality of one's day and one's life."<sup>2</sup>

We need to monitor the effects on ourselves of participating in either introvert or extrovert activities. Reading and writing are some of my primary sources of renewal. Preaching and presenting church seminars, on the other hand, are enjoyable but draining. The key for me is to recognize what endeavors build up or deplete my energy and to make choices that maintain an overall sense of inner health and balance. Time invested in energy-sapping endeavors must be followed by significant time feeding my needy inner world. If I don't take time to be centered, I can be a real crank. Just ask my wife!

This is where introverted pastors need to pay careful attention in order to succeed as clergy. I strongly recommend that they integrate their introversion into their ministry, negotiate with local church leadership on how their needs can be met, and develop a support network to keep their emotional energy at a healthy level.

The labels "Introvert" and "Extrovert" are not exclusive. They are like right-handedness and left-handedness—most people have a definite preference for one, but can also develop varying degrees of facility with the other. Isabel and Peter Myers observe, "The best adjusted people are the 'psychologically patriotic,' who are glad to be what they are. The ablest introverts achieve a fine facility at extroversion, but never try to *be* extroverts. Through good development of an auxiliary process, they have learned to deal competently with the outer world without pledging any allegiance to it. Their loyalty goes to their own inner principle and derives from it a secure and

unshakable orientation to life."<sup>3</sup>

Consciously investing in certain extrovert activities helps round out my personality, as long as I make those choices free from guilt or manipulation. For example, among other speaking appointments, I've journeyed outside my comfort zone the past three years to speak to 150 young Adventurers at their annual conference-wide retreat. My family and I acted out Dr. David Livingstone hacking through thick jungles, Dr. Ben Carson doing delicate brain surgery, and Rahab and the spies

## The church can make introverts unnecessarily insecure about their own spirituality.

narrowly escaping hostile Jericho. I also currently attend a small group every Thursday evening because I know that left to myself I am inclined to become an island.

Estimates indicate that in the United States introverts are outnumbered by extroverts about three to one.<sup>4</sup> My guess is that the numbers are even more lopsided within Adventism. The general lack of an intentional assimilation process in our churches can leave reserved introverts wandering around the edges of church life and eventually out the back door. Creativity and planning, the specialty of many introverts, are vastly undervalued and their proponents underutilized. Our outreach emphasis often seems geared to a door-to-door confrontational

style that gives introverts heartburn.

If we are not careful, the church can also make introverts unnecessarily insecure about their own spirituality. From my vantage point it seems much easier for extroverts to look like good Christians. They are more naturally outgoing and upbeat, less prone to brooding and worry. They may have no closer walk with God than the introvert, but their innate personality type, their smile, glad handshake, and easy conversation make them appear more in tune with heaven. Well-meaning church members have interpreted my deeply reflective moods many times as sadness or depression. They usually slap me on the back, tell me to "perk up," then unload a string of slogans such as, "God is bigger than all your problems;" "Let go and let God;" "Smile: God loves you!" I'm not impugning the genuineness of the extrovert's Christianity; I'm writing to keep introverts from doubting their own walk with God simply because they don't express it in the same way as others.

The psalmist has written, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). That verse applies not only to my gazillion body parts, but to the talents, personality, and abilities that make me uniquely *me*. I fully recognize that the Holy Spirit needs to take a wrecking ball to my sinful attitudes and motives. But I am slowly learning to look in the mirror, appreciate what God created, and humbly breathe the word "wonderful." ■

<sup>1</sup> Isabel Briggs Myers and Peter B. Myers, *Gifts Differing* (Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1989), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1988), p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Myers and Myers, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, p. 33.

Kim Allan Johnson is the associate treasurer of the Northern New England Conference in Portland, Maine, and the author of a small-group Bible study series called "Spiritual Body Building."



# Friends

R. LYNN SAULS

**H**elen and I have been members of 10 different Adventist churches through the years—from the small rural Floral Crest Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sand Mountain in northern Alabama to the large Pioneer Memorial church on the campus of Andrews University. We are currently members of the mid-sized Naples, Florida, Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose attendance nearly doubles every winter. Four types of members make up each of the 10 congregations, it seems to me.

■ The *unknowings* never call, never come to see us, seldom speak to us at church. They do not know us. And we have not had the opportunity to know them.

■ The *acquaintances* smile, shake hands, call us by name, and in some churches, give warm hugs. But they never call and never come to see us. Their friendliness at church is a nice ritual. But it is little more than a formality.

■ The *telemarketers* call frequently. They always want us to do something—bring a salad to the supper, tell the children's story next Sabbath, teach a Sabbath school lesson, order a cherry pie from Pathfinders, contribute to the building fund. These are all good things. And the telemarketers are effective in getting others involved. They themselves are very active in the church. I admire their dedication. But the only time they call is when they want something.

■ The *friends* smile, shake hands, call us by name, and give warm hugs at church. They call on us when they want something. But they also call or drop by to encourage, to affirm, and to invite us to do something with them.

"We missed you last Sabbath. Are you OK?"

"Lynn, I really liked your children's story about the peanut butter sandwich."

"Helen, when you were one of the elders on the platform last Sabbath, your pastoral prayer meant so much to me."

"Your 'Company's Coming' article in the *Review* helped me understand how being ready for Jesus makes life better now."

"Let's get together on New Year's Eve for a game of Scrabble."

"Come over and have supper with us Friday evening."  
"Let's go walk the pier and watch the sun go down Sabbath. We'll drop by for you."

*What a hard  
time members  
would have  
without friends.*

"I heard that you have been quite sick. Ted and I are praying for you."

Thank You, Lord, for the friends in the church. I love the message. I love Jesus and the blessed hope. But if the church were made up of just the unknowings, the acquaintances, and the telemarketers, something special about being a member of the church would be missing.

And what a hard time new members would have without friends in the church. Some of them are having

problems at work because they are now keeping the Sabbath. Some are facing pressure from relatives who feel they have been brainwashed by a cult. Some are lonely because their new lifestyle has alienated many of their old friends. The unknowings, the acquaintances, and the telemarketers aren't helping them cope. But the friends in the church are.

We don't all have the same spiritual gifts. But we can look for the spiritual gifts in others and let them know how we appreciate what they are doing. Paul counsels all of us to "be kindly affectioned one to another." To be "given to hospitality." To "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:10, 13, 15).

More encouragement, expressions of appreciation, and gifts of time and fellowship instead of apathy, criticism, and accusation would do a lot to bring unity to our churches. If the unknowings, acquaintances, and telemarketers could become friends, others would be led to a closer walk with Jesus and be bonded to the church.

Come to think of it, I should be a friend to some of the unknowings, to some of the acquaintances, and to some of the telemarketers. I should phone them tonight.

So it seems to me.

*Lynn Sauls taught English and journalism at the college and university level before his retirement.*



# The Phantom Search

BY BARBARA ROBERTS

**W**e began to search for the phantom when I was 12 years old. My mom, two younger sisters, and I looked in the dark woods, in remote areas, and in other spooky spots (all the places it was reported to be). We imagined it calling from shadowed corners and secluded places where stealthy cougars lurked.

When our interest in the phantom diminished, Mom offered an incentive to anyone who found it—a whole batch of homemade fudge.

A shared hobby of gathering and pressing wildflowers led us to tramp the hills around the little logging town of Falls City, Oregon, searching for specimens to add to our growing collection. We especially wanted to find all of the dozen or so native orchids that grew in our locality. Our flower book had photographs accompanied by vivid descriptions of each species. One of them was the phantom orchid.

The depiction in the book was tantalizing. It suggested one might look for the phantom for years and then someday come upon it unexpectedly in some cool green forest. Its feet would be buried deep in the duff at the base of evergreen trees. The book pictured an all-white orchid with just a touch of yellow in the throat. Finding it was the challenge.

The years, filled with school and work, marched ahead, and the phantom remained just that—a phantom. My dream of finding just one of those flowers, while a bit faded, was not completely moribund.

One June day I was picking strawberries to earn money for school. It was hot, and the sun burned through the shirt on my back. Sweat beaded up on my face and ran down my chin. At lunchtime we strawberry pickers made a beeline to the welcome shade of a fir grove near the field and sat on logs while we ate our sandwiches.

As my eyes adjusted to the dim light in the fir tree grove, I noticed what looked like dried oat stalks. I inspected them more closely and realized that each segment clinging to the top of the delicate stem was a tiny white orchid flower. In that magic moment my search for the phantom ended, not with one flower, but a spectacular

display of hundreds of those elusive blossoms.

Now I have nearly 200 tropical orchid plants growing in a small greenhouse just off my living room. I consider growing orchids (a lifelong joy) a special and unexpected gift from my Creator.

In the 45-plus years since that experience I have searched for other phantoms. I looked for happiness—if only I had this, did that, or went there, I would be truly happy. How disappointed I was when it eluded me. Then one day I recognized a quiet gladness pervading my life and realized I had done nothing to produce or deserve such a blessing. It was a gift from God.

I have tried to locate peace and contentment, only to find myself on a lonely journey to nowhere. I have

endeavored to love and discovered much of what claims to be love is an apparition. I now know the Author of love alone provides the genuine.

Some of the phantoms I have entertained turned out to be truly sinister. One of the most devastating is believing that I know what another person is thinking or what their motives are. Another is the specter of gossip that walks a disastrous trail of complaint, speculation, innuendo, and outright falsehood. Only God can keep me from that path of self-destruction. The value I have placed on possessions is also a phantom, as I found out at the bedside of my dying son. Things are worthless when compared to the preciousness of a life and the reality of a loving relationship.

I do not always recognize when I am chasing a phantom, because a mirage can be very deceptive. I have learned to stop and ask God to show me what is real. I ask Him to guide me, and then I thank Him for His grace that exposes a phantom for the fake it is. His reality is authentic—a gift. It doesn't require years of searching—only an open heart to receive it. ■

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