So How Are You Doing?

In the wake of NET ’98, Dwight Nelson checks in.
E. E. Cleveland
I applaud Stephen Chavez for such a wonderful article on E. E. Cleveland (“A Life in the Spotlight,” February NAD Edition). In my eyes he is the very best servant of the Lord in my lifetime. I am a product of that great 1966 Trinidad evangelistic event. My spouse of 32 years has since had the privilege of being in his ministry class at Oakwood College. One of Pastor Cleveland’s key sayings has stayed with me: Do not look at me or any other person in the church. Look to Jesus—He alone died for your sins.

—E. M. Caesar
Cameron Park, California

Cities Under Siege
Thank you for printing Ron Halvorsen’s sermon “Cities Under Siege” (January NAD Edition). In the midst of competing confusion secularly and within the church, he has stated the vision and purpose clearly, even pointing to the willful darkness and staining we have put in our hearts and minds. Thank you for reminding us of our need to repent from our divisive goals and follow the call and purpose of God in our lives. Even a housewife like me can pray through my neighborhood as I take my children for a walk in their stroller. Fellow members, we must not wait for the church to be problem-free before we start making an impact for neighborhoods and cities!

—Peria Dreibus
Temple City, California

“Cities Under Siege” was a very frank and honest assessment of the tension Adventists feel when discussing our mission to the hordes of unbelievers in the cities. Since it appears to be in the cities where the new and immoral norms of culture are being established, our lack of intrusion is alarming. However, it is really unlikely, short of a miracle, that Adventist thinking regarding living in cities will change materially in this generation.

In addition to Halvorsen’s three suggestions to sensitize us to inner-city work, I have another. Many Adventist churches use beautiful backdrops of snow-covered mountains, green forests, pristine seascapes, or fields of golden grain for congregational praise singing. I suggest that these be supplemented with images that depict the many faces and experiences of the city with its bustle, wealth, poverty, and pain. Imagine those images combined with “Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming.” This is really easy with multimedia devices. Christ-centered music has tremendous power to change attitudes and beliefs. Send your photographers into the cities!

—Robert Thomas
Portland, Oregon

Folkenberg and Paulsen
If you don’t receive the weekly Adventist Review, you might have missed our coverage of Robert S. Folkenberg’s resignation of the Adventist Church presidency and Jan Paulsen’s subsequent election. (See our February 11, February 18, and March 11 issues.)

President Paulsen’s inaugural sermon will be printed next week (in our April 8 issue), and we’ll have continuing news and perspectives throughout the year.

Remember, the issue you’re holding is the monthly North American Division Edition of the Adventist Review (sent free to most North American Adventists). To subscribe to the weekly Review (40 additional issues at $33.97), call 1-800-456-3991. Obviously, this is a pivotal year for the Adventist Church, and you’ll want to stay informed.

NEW PRESIDENT: Jan Paulsen
In this article we found a masterpiece of oratory, and we pray that it may stir the church to action. But it seemed to contain a contradiction to what we have been told these many years by God's messenger. Ellen G. White wrote that we should not live in the large cities. Christ spent many working days in Jerusalem, but did He live there? The writer seemed to urge us to move back to the large cities. Where does Ron Halvorsen live? Does he still live in the ruins of New York City, or has he evacuated to more healthful, comfortable, and respectable surroundings? Do we have to live inside a garbage can in order to clean it up?

—Warren Strawn
Hohenwald, Tennessee

Whereas God may call a modern Jeremiah to the city to meet a specific need, the truth remains that the call of an individual should not be projected as a call to the church in general. The God-given outreach model for the church, then and now, is Enoch—who from a rural country outpost, entered the inner city, “pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 23).

—Calvin J. Fischer
Appleton, Washington

Monte Sahlin’s sidebar “Do the Math” noted that there is one Adventist hospital in the Chicago area. Aactually, A Adventist Health System Midwest Region currently has four hospitals, three of which are in the immediate Chicago suburbs, and also the first free-standing emergency center in Illinois. Surgical centers, Health Care at Home sites, and outpatient clinics are also part of AHS Midwest Region. For more information, please contact me at cdelacruz@ahss.org.

—Crister DelaCruz,
MARKETING SPECIALIST
ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM MIDWEST REGION

Bringing Us Home
Betti Knickerbocker’s “Two Are Not Enough” (February NAD Edition) really tugged at my mother’s heart. We can’t be satisfied until all our children are safely back home. It gives us a little insight into God’s heart of love. He longs for His children who have been stolen away from Him. My heart swells with appreciation as I think of the expensive plan God initiated and is carrying on to bring us back home. Praise His name.

—Deloris Knecht
Washougal, Washington

Army of Youth
What a treat it was to sit down on the sofa Friday night with the Review and discover a picture of our daughter, Joy, along with Pastor Julie! (see Give & Take, Feb. NAD Edition). Thanks to their friendship, both of our children are now workers with the Washington Conference Youth Challenge summer program. We cannot say enough good about that program. It is a wonderful opportunity for learning Christian leadership, developing people skills, realizing a true walk with God, as well as earning money toward a Christian education. The miracles and answered prayers witnessed by the young people during the summer are transforming lives.

It was such a thrill this past summer to see Pastor Julie baptize our son, Jeremy, at the WCYC final program—because they first met when Jeremy was 4 and Julie was 7! We are truly seeing an army of “youth, rightly trained” (Education, p. 271) spreading the gospel.

—Stan and Brenda Muth
Paradise, California

ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 1999 (395)
"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).*

Today Christianity often seems cluttered up with politics, prohibitions, and platitudes, but in reality it is simple: Will I confess Jesus Christ as my Lord?

For the first Christians, that confession meant serious business. By publicly declaring the lordship of Jesus, they renounced all other claims to supreme authority—which put them in defiance of the state, as the Roman emperors became regarded as divine beings and took the title "lord" for themselves.

Who would it be, Lord Caesar or Lord Jesus? From time to time, as waves of persecution rolled over the Roman Empire, Christians went to the lions or to the stake because they refused to offer a pinch of incense to the image of the emperor or to say "Caesar is Lord."

The centuries have rolled on; the wheel has come around. Most of us who take the name of Jesus do not face threat to life or possessions because of our faith. But in these last days of earth's history the lordship of Jesus more and more emerges as the issue, the defining question for men and women of all ages and in all places.

As in the early years of Christianity, a multitude of deities clamor for our allegiance. Religions from the East, nostrums of the New Age, the gods of sex, money, power, sport, and possessions—they attract and command the devotion of the multitudes. Through and behind all stands the ultimate deity: God I. The exaltation of myself—my feelings, my wants, my desires, my gratification—reigns supreme.

Against this backdrop we hear the word of the Almighty: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). And we catch the response of the first Christians: "For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Cor. 8:5, 6).

The lordship of Jesus cuts across the grain of the age. It calls us to lay aside our plans, our will, our wisdom, our strength and let the Man of Galilee be our Master. That is radical stuff, the stuff of counterculture, a far cry from the listless, emasculated Milquetoast with which many people associate the Christian faith.

The lordship of Jesus seems like the path of denial, but it is the doorway to life in its fullness. The secret lies right here: He who challenges us to H is lordship is first our Saviour. He loved us with an overwhelming love and gave Himself up for us; now we gladly take up His cross and follow as His loving slaves.

This changes our entire living. It isn't a matter of whether the church permits us to do something or not, or what other people do or don't do, far less of what others may think of us if we do or we don't. The only question that counts is whether I will honor Jesus as my Lord. And that counts supremely.

The lordship of Jesus embraces the church, also. "He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" (Col. 1:18).

Because the church is a human organization it's easy for it to fall into the politics, grasping for position, pride, and prejudice that characterize any other earthly body. It's easy to rely on human wisdom and skill for solutions to problems, easy to focus on human leaders and forget who is really Head, easy to—even in the name of Christ—act like the devil. Jesus must be Lord.

When the waves mount up and the boat rocks, we need to remember who is our Captain. The church is safe in His hands; it is not safe in our hands. I think of the barque of Adventism—so small, so weak, so apparently helpless before the tempest—but then I remember how the Lord has brought us safely through more than 150 years.

He who has guided us all the days of our lives will bring us into His eternal harbor. Jesus is Lord.

* All Scripture quotations come from the New International Version.
newscast report the other day said that the average temperature of the earth has increased by one degree this century. One degree didn’t sound like much until the announcer started describing some of the effects:

- Glacial melting faster than at any time in modern history.
- More icebergs prowling the oceans.
- Ocean levels rising, causing erosion to coastal areas.

The announcer listed several more things that could result from an increase of just one degree, things I didn’t catch. My brain had started whirling, considering other things that could happen if one percent, one dollar, one day, or one of anything could be changed.

**One Dollar:** What would happen if each Adventist member gave just one dollar more each week for the work of the church—just one dollar a week. A dollar won’t buy two candy bars or rent one video. It might get you a gallon of gas, but not a gallon of kerosene for a space heater.

Yet one dollar from each of the almost 900,000 members of the Adventist Church in North America, for each of the 52 weeks in a year, would mean $45 million for God’s work in just one year.

Just one dollar. Forty-five million dollars, if all of us would do a little bit extra each week.

Think of the blessings for God’s work. NET ’98 cost less than $2 million. Our television and radio ministries spend less than $10 million each year. Our schools could provide tremendous scholarship help.

What a blessing just one dollar each week from each member would be.

**One Bible Study:** What would happen if each member gave just one Bible study each week? Just one Bible study with a friend, coworker, or follow-up interest. It takes an hour or so each week; about the time spent watching a television program or reading the newspaper.

One Bible study from each member each week would total about 45 million Bible studies per year. No doubt some of those folks would accept Christ. I’m sure some would find new meaning in their lives. Think of the improved quality of life many of them would enjoy. Can you imagine the eternal consequences?

Many of them would undoubtedly join the Adventist Church through baptism. Here in North America, we’ve hoped and prayed and worked to see more than 40,000 baptisms in a single year. We had more than 39,000 baptisms one year. More than 35,000 baptisms in many years. But never more than 40,000 in one year.

One Bible study each week given by each member would do it—and far more. What a blessing that would be to God’s church.

**One New Church:** What would happen if we planted just one new church each week for a year?

Well, we’re already doing more than that. This past year there were nearly three new churches planted somewhere across North America every Sabbath.

That’s the power of one: at least one child loved each week, at least one person ministered to each week, at least one kind deed each day, at least one caring word. Think of the awesome power of one.

**One More One:** There’s another One we must remember—the One who died and rose again. Jesus Christ is only one, but He is also the only One.

This time of year special attention is given to Christ’s death on the cross and the celebration of His resurrection from the grave. We should remember the incredible power of the One, the one Son of God, the one mediator between God and humankind. He is the reason for giving that one dollar more or one Bible study more, to lift up that One—Jesus Christ—and make Him known. He is the One.

And He can teach us better than anyone else about the tremendous power of one.

Alfred C. McClure is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.
ADVENTIST LIFE

My husband valiantly tried to hum along as I stumbled, by ear, through “Jesus, Take My Hand.”

“I’m sorry,” I apologized. “I didn’t play all the right notes.”

“That’s all right, dear,” he said philosophically. “I didn’t know all the right notes.”

— Lynda M. Tataryn, Kelowna, British Columbia

JOTS & TITLIES

In this feature Adventists share church-related tips.

THOSE OLD CHRISTMAS CARDS: The holidays are over—what to do with all those beautiful greeting cards, enriched by personal notes? Put them in a box, and each morning (perhaps at worship time) remove one, reread the sentiments, savor past remembrances, and pray for those dear ones. You might even choose to let them know that you are thinking of them.

— Lois May Watts, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia

READERS’ EXCHANGE

In this feature Adventists request correspondence on a specific subject. (Note: We will no longer be running general “pen pal” requests.)

CHURCH PLANTING: We are a family in the central part of southern New Zealand planting a church in a town of 5,000 that has minimal church presence. We are looking to correspond via e-mail with other laypersons involved in small-town church planting.

— Kim, Jenny, Jessica, and Jayden Heck; e-mail: kjjheck@xtra.co.nz

CONTRIBUTE TO GIVE & TAKE

We can especially use submissions to these categories: Adventist Quotes, Readers’ Exchange, Jots & Tittles, and Dream Center. A nd we can always use top-quality photos/captions, tasteful drawings and cartoons, brief poems, and other fast-paced items. Send submissions (which won’t be acknowledged or returned) to Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; fax: 301-680-6638; e-mail: 74532.2564@compuserve.com.

ADVENTIST QUOTES

We invite quotes of both the profound and spontaneous variety.

“God doesn’t care which generation you’re part of—just as long as you’re part of the regeneration.”

— Pastor Keith Hanson, Richlands, Virginia

“. . . And help Baby Sara learn to keep her eyeballs shut! Amen.”

— 4-year-old Bryan Pope, blessing a spring lunch in Kansas City, Missouri

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FISHERS OF MEN

MEMORABLE DAY: Committed to helping children understand “the importance of their decision and to have a wonderful memory to carry with them throughout eternity,” Shari Leader and others from the Raleigh, North Carolina, church planned a special program for the 22 children baptized by six local pastors. First, church decorations included a Nathan Greene painting of Jesus, flowers, two sets of candelabra, big loaves of bread, grapes, and goblets of grape juice. Then, following the baptism, the young people were visited by “Jesus” (Nathaniel Age), who passed out symbolic fishing equipment. Finally, a beautiful reception coordinated by Kathy Powers included a Happy Birthday cake and a red cross with the children’s signatures and handprints.

DREAM CENTER

In this feature Adventists share church-related dreams.

TRAFFIC CONTROL: Often my drive from home to work can be a pleasant 25- to 30-minute trip. However, during the tourist season it can turn into a two-hour nightmare. Gridlock along the highway becomes so common that listening to traffic control is more of a necessity than eating breakfast. My dream—indeed, my prayer—is that someday we will need to listen to traffic control to get to Sabbath school on time. Wouldn’t it be great to see our parking lots jammed and cars needing to use the Sunday church lot down the street? Help me fulfill this dream!

— Sidney J. Allwein, Virginia Beach, Virginia

PHOTO © PHOTO DISC
So How Are You Doing?

Whether it’s been weeks, months, or years since you invited Jesus into your life, it’s time to ask yourself some honest questions.

BY DWIGHT K. NELSON

REM EMBER HOW WE USED TO write letters as kids? Eager as we were to hear from that faraway friend and bursting with news of our own to share, it seemed that the cat had our tongue (or at least our pen), and we kept ending up with another of those yawningly predictable childhood exchanges: “Dear Bob, How are you? I am fine. Are you fine? I am. Write soon. Your friend, Dwight.”

When I think of you with whom it was my privilege to share a satellite journey called The NeXt Millennium Seminar, and all of you who began a forever friendship with God this past year—I still want to blur out the childish query, “How are you? A re you fine? I am. Write soon. Your friend, Dwight.”

When I think of you with whom it was my privilege to share a satellite journey called The NeXt Millennium Seminar, and all of you who began a forever friendship with God this past year—I still want to blur out the childish query, “How are you? A re you fine?”

Are you? Do you still awaken with a new song in your heart? Is the glow of your new friendship with Jesus still shining brightly?

Just last Sabbath here at Pioneer Memorial church I witnessed one of our seminar participants, a university student named Chad, rise up out of the waters of our baptistry with just such a joy-filled grin on his face. It’s called new life in Jesus, and that’s what it really is. Every time I witness another baptism I want to shout “Praise God!” and “Thank You, Jesus!” for the supernatural way He makes us into “a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). Your own newly baptized life is proof of that.

But how has it been since that happy day? How are you? I am fine. Are you fine?

Lloyd C. Douglas, in his book Time to Remember, recalls the youthful correspondence between his brother Clyde and a youngster named Sam Logan. The Logan boy once wrote: “Dear Clyde, How are you? I am fine. Are you fine? I am. Write soon. Your friend, Sam Logan. PS: Pap died last night.”

Can you believe it? The poor boy announces his father’s death in the postscript. The most important news of all got squeezed in at the end.

How many times are we like little Sam Logan, whether we’re new or not-so-new Christians? Does the most important news of all get squeezed in at the end? Does it even make the page?

A Wonderful Invitation

Just in case your time alone with God has become a hurried postscript in your life, let me share a stirring invitation straight from Jesus to you. Here at Pioneer we’ve been spending the first weeks of 1999 focusing our hearts on the quiet thunder of Jesus’ appeal in Matthew 11: “Come to Me, all you
who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (verses 28, 29).

My own heart has been drawn to that pair of three-word invitations: "Come to Me" and "Learn from Me." To keep me returning to them every morning, I've laid the ribbon of my Bible down beside those words.

Why? Because I sense for my own soul—and for yours, too—the compelling power behind Jesus' quiet appeal to sit at His feet and learn from His life. Hence, the "quiet thunder" of His promise. Where else can we turn daily to find rest for our frenzied lives, forgiveness for our guilty hearts, power for our tempted souls, companionship for our lonely spirits, hope for our discouraging days, faith for our doubting minds, and love for our struggling relationships? Jesus says, "Come to Me . . . and learn from Me."

We spent the final evening of The NeXt Millennium Seminar detailing how to grow our forever friendship with God through "A New Way to Pray." Let me reiterate that simple seven-point strategy for coming to and learning from Jesus:

1. Set aside time for a daily encounter with Jesus (20 minutes each
morning is a good beginning).  
2. Read only from the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).  
3. Read only one story (incident, parable, teaching).  
4. Reread the story to relive the experience (see, hear, smell, feel it).  
5. Ask yourself—What does this tell me about my Forever Friend?  
6. Write your reflections in a letter to Jesus or a letter from Jesus (in a prayer journal).  
7. Kneel in prayer to commit your day and your world to Him.  

There isn’t any magic in the method. What matters is that you and I keep on coming to Him and learning from Him. And what’s Jesus’ promise? “You will find rest for your souls.” And with the way 1999 is turning out, God knows we need Him—rest—not just on His Sabbath, but every day of the week.

On the Winning Side  
A few days later, that old serpent “called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9) hasn’t taken a day off since you gave your life to Christ. In fact, according to the testimonies of some of those I baptized at the end of The Next Millennium Seminar, he’s even decided to put in some overtime. (Good news, though—he’s going to get time and a half when this is all over!)

But guess what? Our Forever Friend went through the identical experience after His baptism. The muddy water from the Jordan River had hardly dried before Satan unleashed his demonic attacks on Jesus. Read the gospel story again. The author of The Good Book writes: “It is something of an irony that Jesus is tempted immediately after baptism and not before it. . . . The temptations in some very real sense are the consequences of a life set apart for goodness and God’s will. That is why they follow directly upon that moment of consecration and dedication; there is no one more desirable to Satan, more susceptible to Satan, than the one who has just given his or her life to God.”

Let’s not be surprised at the devil’s wrath—he has always been a sore loser, and he hates the thought of losing anyone. That’s why he was hot on the heels of Jesus immediately after His baptism, and why he has been blasting away at you, too.

One newly baptized couple here at Pioneer accepted God’s invitation to make Jesus their financial senior partner, and no sooner did they begin returning His tithe than the pipes in their home burst in our frigid winter freeze. A nother person found victory over smoking, only to be lambasted with that temptation a few weeks into the journey. Fairly tranquil marriages can suddenly erupt after a baptism. The devil takes no holidays. Not after a baptism. And that’s why we mustn’t either.

“Come to Me . . . and learn from Me” means don’t take a vacation from your daily pursuit of Jesus’ friendship. For it’s in that quiet time of daily reflection and prayer that Christ fortifies our minds and empowers our lives. No wonder Paul, another embattled follower of Jesus, kept exclaiming, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). Paul understood that Jesus alone “is able to

Life Lines

Scores of people have corresponded with Pastor Dwight Nelson in the wake of NET ’98. Here is a sampling of their comments.

I left the church when I was in my early 20s. The church had too many rules, and I needed to find myself. What I found was heartache and misery. But I’ve finally found a God and a church I can believe in. My 15-year-old son has also learned to love God and has chosen to follow Him.
—Arlington, Washington

I was born into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but my family split up and we moved to a town where there wasn’t a church nearby, so we stopped going. Then I came to school here and visited a church, but at the time I didn’t think I had time to go to church.
But I decided one day to go to church, and there in the sanctuary, up on a big screen, was Pastor Dwight. That’s how I learned about The Next Millennium Seminar. It came at a perfect time for me. It’s helped my commitment to attend church every Sabbath.
—Austin, Texas

My grandfather is an Adventist, and he got me interested in Jesus. NET ’98 came along at a perfect time for me. I am attending Sabbath worship services regularly now. My grandfather, NET ’98, and all the nice people at the church have changed my life—all for the better. I love you all.
—Daytona Beach, Florida

The members of the church were so welcoming on our first night. They remembered our names on the second night and really seemed to care if we were there or not. I’ve never met such a great group of people. After only a few meetings I was already calling them my friends.

We really want a forever friendship with God. We want to keep His commandments, and we want all of the great and wonderful things He has in store for us. We are now going to church and loving it.
—Chesapeake, Virginia

When I walk into the Seventh-day Adventist church I feel like I’m at peace, and that God is watching over me. My longing and loneliness have been lifted. I’m attending a Bible study that I find so exciting and wonderful.
—Ringgold, Georgia

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—Austin, Texas
keep you from stumbling” (Jude 24).

Victory Now
By the way, Jesus won’t keep us from temptation—He Himself wasn’t exempt from the enemy’s barrages—but He can keep us from stumbling. Because we have His promise that “with the temptation [God] will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13). Praise God, we have the ringing assurance of 1 John 4:4: “He who is in you—the same Jesus you invite into your life each new morning] is greater than he who is in the world [you know who].” With Jesus you’re on the winning side.

I love the way this truth is expressed in that wonderful classic on the life of Jesus, The Desire of Ages: “When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. . . . It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolting world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.”

I repeat, you are on the winning side with Jesus.

Ready, Set, Grow
A few weeks ago Karen and I took our daughter Kristin over to Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. In the giraffe corral we watched a video of a live birth. With a splat the newborn giraffe calf literally fell to the ground from its mother’s womb (the mother remained standing the whole time). Within minutes that lanky, long-legged baby giraffe was wobbling and stumbling, collapsing and wobbling up again, over and over, until, by the end of its first hour, it was walking on its own.

We couldn’t believe it. Why did it take our kids so long to walk? A h, because the way of the human is a journey of gradual growth and often imperceptible maturation. We’re not giraffes— we take time.

Please remember that spiritual truth. God is as loving and patient with your newborn Christian experience as are parents with their toddler who is learning to walk. Parents don’t walk away from their stumbling toddlers—and neither does God. We’re not giraffes—we take time.

That’s why God invites us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Growth takes time. But with every faltering step God stands beside you— scooping you up, brushing away the tear, lifting you back to your feet. That’s the way it is in a family.

And that’s the way it is in the church, God’s family. Every Seventh-day Adventist congregation is committed to demonstrating a loving environment in which spiritual newborns and toddlers can wobble and totter about, stumble, fall down, ask “dumb” questions (there really isn’t such a thing of course), and still be loved. A place in which when you do go down, you’re quickly hugged and helped back up by older brothers and sisters who know what it’s like to live with scraped knees and skinned-up hearts. A place in which you’re loved no matter what—no matter what you do or what you’ve done, how you look or how you act. In church you’ll find God’s forever friends at every imaginable stage of maturing— as did Peter and Mary and Judas and Paul. You’ll find that nobody’s perfect and that everybody stumbles sometime.

We in the church can sometimes seem unfriendly and unloving. Someone has said the church is like a family of porcupines in a winter storm—we draw together for warmth, but we keep pricking each other in the process. That’s us, saints with quills. But please know that we do love Jesus passionately and that we do want to love you unconditionally. Just as He does.

So keep going and keep growing with us Sabbath after Sabbath, Wednesday after Wednesday. Because I believe with all my heart that Jesus Himself led you to this family. It’s no mistake that you’re a part of us, and we’ll do all we can to stand by you and one another “until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4:13, NRSV).

Someday Soon
I have an amazing invention one of you gave me during the seminar—it’s called a Next Millennium clock. It counts down the days, hours, minutes, and seconds until the year 2000. Wouldn’t it be something if God gave us a clock that counted down the time until Jesus’ return? The fact is, we don’t need such a clock, because all of God’s clocks keep reading “NOW.” “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Can you think of a better time than right now to begin writing the next chapter in your journey with Jesus? One thing’s certain: when you travel with Jesus, you really can write “How are you? I am fine.” Because there’s nothing more satisfying than H is forever friendship.

That’s what I pray for you. That’s what I hope you’ll pray for me; until we’re together with Him, friends forever.

* Scriptural references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Letters From the $25 Club
From our heart to yours, and back again

Late last year, in two editorials (“Let’s Do It—The $25 Club,” and “Confessions of a Fiscal Conservative”) executive publisher and editor William G. Johnson challenged readers to contribute to a fund that would put a one-year subscription to the *Adventist Review* in the home of every family who joined the church in North America in 1998.

The response has been overwhelming, with approximately $105,000 in hand so far.

But at least as valuable as the financial contributions have been the letters and notes of support and encouragement that accompanied the donations. It’s clear that for many, the *Review* is an essential part of being an Adventist, and making new members a part of this ministry resonates with many throughout North America.

Below is a sampling of the letters we’ve received. We share these here to express our appreciation to the many who sent in contributions, and as an indication of the love and support our new members can expect from their church family. — Editors.

**Rome, Georgia**

I read your column, “Confessions of a Fiscal Conservative,” and I really don’t care so much about getting the Review into everyone’s hands as I do about your willingness to step out by faith. I think your commitment is wonderful. I’m sending this check to affirm you in your decision to do this $25 Club. God provides. Thank you for trusting God in the work you do. I’m really glad you’re the editor.

Berrien Springs, Michigan (from a seminary student)

I will be 90 years old my next birthday. I live on a pension and have enough, but not too much extra. If I’m careful I can get along fine. So I’m sending you $50. I’d really like to make it more, but I’ll pray for God’s richest blessings on “my” two families—and all the others too.

Colville, Washington

My husband and I decided not to exchange gifts this Christmas, but to use the money instead to send the message of God’s love to others.

Although we sent a check for one Review subscription in late October, we wish to use part of our Christmas money for more gift subscriptions. Our check is enclosed.

We are blessed by reading the Review, and we are eager for new members to share that blessing.

Worthington, Ohio

Thank you for letting me help with new members by giving them the *Review*. God has been good to me by letting me live beyond the “threescore and ten.” I’m

THIS PAST SABBATH I WAS SABBATH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, AND I CHALLENGED THE MEMBERS TO MAKE A SACRIFICE FOR CHRIST THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, REALIZING THAT THE GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN TO HUMANITY IS JESUS. I TOLD THEM TO PRAY, AS I WOULD, THAT GOD WOULD SHOW THEM WHAT HE WANTED THEM TO DO, THAT THEY SHOULD JUST BE WILLING, AND HE WOULD OPEN A DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY.

THEN YOUR EDITORIAL ARRIVED. I RECEIVED MY CHRISTMAS BONUS JUST A FEW HOURS BEFORE, SO I GLADLY, JOYFULLY SENT IT TO YOU TO USE SO THAT OTHERS MAY HAVE A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE REVIEW. IT’S REALLY NOT A SACRIFICE WHEN YOU LOOK AT ALL THE THINGS I’M BLESSED WITH. OH, YES, YOU CAN ALWAYS USE MORE, BUT GOD ALWAYS SUPPLIES ALL MY NEEDS AND LOTS OF MY WANTS.

HE’S SO GENEROUS WITH ME, I WANT TO BE GENEROUS WITH HIM.

FEA TURE

12 ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 1999

This past Sabbath I was Sabbath School superintendent, and I challenged the members to make a sacrifice for Christ this Christmas season, realizing that the greatest gift ever given to humanity is Jesus. I told them to pray, as I would, that God would show them what He wanted them to do, that they should just be willing, and He would open a door of opportunity.

Then your editorial arrived. I received my Christmas bonus just a few hours before, so I gladly, joyfully sent it to you to use so that others may have a subscription to the Review. It’s really not a sacrifice when you look at all the things I’m blessed with. Oh, yes, you can always use more, but God always supplies all my needs and lots of my wants.
still able to help in His work.

Rockville, Maryland

Your willingness to “go out on a limb” and confess it was indeed refreshing. To read about your heartfelt and already committed desire to use the Review as a tool to help nurture those who are new in the Adventist family is like a breath of fresh air.

This week I received some unexpected funds, and I wish to share them with you and the Adventist Review for this project.

Cherry Valley, California

Please be sure this helps a new member. I’m broke, but I’m proud to advance my Forever Friend’s kingdom.

Orlando, Florida

A great idea to make the Review available to everyone.

Glendale, California

We want to be a part of sharing the Review with new members. Thank you for this opportunity to forward God’s kingdom. God bless you for giving us a clearer picture of God’s love.

Ellensburg, Washington

I’m a simple person who believes wholeheartedly in our extraordinary God. I’m so pleased to have a small part in the aftermath of NET ’98.

Paynesville, Minnesota

We are lifetime Seventh-day Adventists, and we wish our check could be more. We’re both 89 years old, and we love getting the Review every week. Our eyes are dim, but praise God, we can read most of it. God bless you as this work advances.

Selma, California

This is a good idea. I’m all for it. I will send $25 as often as I can. I am 81 years young, and I’ve read the Review as long as I can remember.

Newberg, Oregon

This check comes at a sacrifice. I am 73 years old, on a fixed income. But I must have a part in the giving of God’s message to a dying world.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

I want to do my part to help new members be built up in the whole message. I know of no better way than through the Review. When people come into the church, we want them to stay until Jesus comes. May God bless you, and may the Holy Spirit guide you so that every Review will do just that.

Collegedale, Tennessee

I don’t receive the Review because I’m a senior citizen and money is scarce, but I’m able to borrow copies from my friends. Enclosed, please find a check so that new members may have the Review each week, something I cannot afford—but I cannot afford not to do.

Hendersonville, North Carolina

I have wanted the Review to be in every Adventist home for years, and believe it is possible. So let’s flood Elder Johnson’s office with checks of all sizes, and be a blessing to all our new believers. Years ago if we had established an endowment fund that would yield returns to finance the Review to every Adventist home, what a blessing it would have been, and then the appeal would not have been necessary today.

Collegedale, Tennessee

MAIL CALL: Chitra Barnabas (left), administrative secretary, and Linda Golden, volunteer, record some of the many letters received from members of the $25 Club.
Growing Churches

It's not a new idea—only a new emphasis.

BY ALFRED C. MCCLURE

LAST FALL WE BROUGHT ALMOST a dozen youngsters into a room and asked them how to plant a seed. We wanted to videotape their answers for a report we would show to the delegates at last year's Annual Council.

After we asked “How do you plant a seed?” there were a few moments of silence. They looked at each other. Some scratched their heads. Others shrugged their shoulders, the nonverbal gesture for “I don’t know.”

A few had answers. They described a process of digging the dirt, placing the seed in the ground, and watering the plant. These young Adventists knew the basics of planting and growing a garden.

One child described the process in a way that seemed inspired. The child listed all the things that human beings must do, then mentioned one last step in planting a seed: Wait for the sun to shine and warm the ground so the flower could grow.

There’s only so much we can do to grow spiritually. Then we must wait for the Spirit to warm our lives so that we—and others around us—can grow.

The point of our question to the children was actually about planting churches. That’s one of our important new initiatives for God throughout North America. Our pioneers were church planters. Early Adventist pastors planted a church, trained lay leaders to keep the church going, then moved on to plant new churches.

What Happened?

Somewhere along the way we in North America lost the vision of planting churches. We grew content to keep the lights shining in existing churches, but we stopped lighting the lights on new hills.

Some facts:
- Between 1990 and 1996 we had a net loss of six churches in North America—a net loss!
- Between the summer of 1996 and the summer of 1998 we planted more than 250 churches.

What a dramatic turnaround—from a division that was losing churches to a division that is planting churches at a rate of 10 every month.

It was a tremendous change, a God-inspired and God-blessed change. It was a change that I had personally longed for, prayed for, challenged leaders and pastors and members to work for. And it was a change that brought us back to our roots as a church-planting denomination.

What changed? Much of it had to do with a church-planting convention that the North American Division Evangelism Institute conducted at Andrews University in the summer of 1996 (an annual event, with Seeds '99 scheduled for June).

Look at the number in attendance at the Seeds conventions:
- in 1996—about 300 people attended.
Another change has taken place. In 1996 we had to ask a church-planting expert from another denomination to explain church planting to us. We didn’t have someone ready to train those 300 people who attended Seeds ’96. In 1999 the entire Seeds convention will be led by Adventists—Adventists who know church planting, who have done church planting, who have studied church planting, and who can explain it within the context of Adventism.

But even more of this change had to do with God’s rekindling a fire in the hearts and lives of Adventists to see His message taken to all the world, including North America. He wanted us to see His vision for His church.

Getting to Be a Habit

BY BETTY KOSSICK

Members of the Central church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, started church planting four years ago. “From the beginning it was our goal to start yet another new church,” says Bob Joseph, pastor of the Three Angels Fellowship. “Now there is the Kentwood Company, a group of about 20, who were with our church—and they have the same goal.” Pastor Joseph is leading out in the second planting as well.

Three Angels was established by mostly brand-new members brought in through evangelist Robert Wagley’s efforts. “We are constantly training small group evangelism,” Joseph stresses.

Head elder Larry Cruttenden and his wife, Marian, of the Central church, are with a third group being planted as a home church in the Lowell-Ada-Cascade area of Grand Rapids. “We looked for a blank spot with no churches,” Cruttenden says. “It was also the area where most of the people who had the burden [for church planting] live.”

Cruttenden notes, “Rick Douglas is the leader of this small-group based outreach, with the proposed name of Riverside Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist. We have an ‘every member’ evangelistic commitment.”
**A Biblical Plan**

Church planting isn’t just the heritage of our early Adventist pioneers; it’s the heritage of early Christians. Paul, the great missionary of the Christian church, was a church planter. Look at his first missionary journey, described in Acts 13 and 14:

- He went to Salamis, planted a church.
- He went to Paphos, planted a church.
- He went to Perga, planted a church.
- He went to Antioch, planted a church.
- He went to Iconium, planted a church.
- He went to Lystra, planted a church.
- He went to Derbe, planted a church.

Then he left Derbe and went back to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, encouraging the new congregations he had planted.

Paul was a church planter. His missionary journeys were really church-planting adventures.

But planting Christian congregations actually started before Paul. After the stoning of Stephen, the Christian believers scattered. Their motive was to avoid the persecution in Jerusalem, but the outcome was to plant churches throughout Judea and Samaria. Acts 8:4 summarizes what happened: “And wherever they [the believers fleeing Jerusalem] were scattered, they told people the Good News” (NCV).

Church planting turned the first-century world upside down. I believe it will turn the world upside down again in the twenty-first century. And I believe it is exactly what God wants us to do.

**By Their Fruits**

Ron Gladden helps plant churches throughout the Mid-America and North Pacific unions. He loves to tell the story of John Chapman. An ordinary fellow from central Massachusetts, Chapman thought everyone should have the benefits of eating the nutritious apple. So he planted trees in his yard.

John Chapman, however, soon realized how few people would be able to eat apples if the apple trees were limited to his yard. So he planted trees all around town, then all around his region, then across Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana.

We now know him as Johnny Appleseed. His missionary zeal for the common apple resulted in the planting of millions of apple trees throughout the world.

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**A Friendly Place**

Acceptance is the key to success for the Lighthouse of the Valley, a bilingual congregation meeting in Burbank, California. It began in April 1996, with 12 people sharing a passion for missing members, ages 18-40. Average attendance today is about 200, 85 percent of whom are former Adventists.

Pastor Gustavo Squarzon says, “We’re accomplishing our goal. This is a difficult generation to reach, but we feel that God is guiding us.”

Their greatest challenge? “The healing process for former Adventists is slow,” offers Pastor Squarzon.

BACK ON TRACK: Reuben Santana, a missing member for more than 32 years, is back.

We now know him as Johnny Appleseed. His missionary zeal for the common apple resulted in the planting of millions of apple trees throughout the world.

MAKING CONTACT: Pastor Gustavo Squarzon (center) encourages his members.
In the Footsteps of the Pioneers

BY JAY E. PRALL with contributions from EDWIN A. SCHWISOW

Oregon City was a city of promise, the original seat of territorial government, and a center of pioneer culture at the westernmost terminus of the Oregon Trail. Adventists in the 1870s itched to establish a church in this frontier town.

When the Oregon City church was officially adopted into the registry of Adventist congregations, it claimed only 20 members. The historic city would eventually be dwarfed by neighboring Portland, and the lure of newer congregations would take its toll. The church was disbanded.

Years passed, and though talk of planting a new congregation surfaced from time to time, it wasn’t until September 1997 that a group of nine families got serious about reestablishing an Adventist presence in Oregon City.

In a town of such historical proportions, the new congregation adopted the name Pioneer Christian Fellowship, a Seventh-day Adventist Congregation. In just a few months the group had outgrown its original meeting place. Rather than

A merica. Coincidentally, historians also tell us that Johnny Appleseed actively spread his religious faith wherever he went.

Think how few people would have eaten an apple as the result of his efforts if Johnny Appleseed had spent all his time pruning and fertilizing the lone tree in his yard. He could’ve said, “I need help to make this tree stronger and help it produce more before I plant other trees.” But he didn’t. He realized that he had to plant more trees if he were to introduce apples to more people.

Ron likes to finish this story by pointing out that the fruit of an apple tree isn’t only apples—it’s more apple trees.

The children in our video were also asked about how to plant a church. They shrugged. “That’s a hard question,” one said. No one had an answer. But one child made a profound statement: “You’d need help to do that,” she said.

She was so right. The good news is that we do have help. It comes in the form of having a connection with Christ. Jesus said, “Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine you are the branches. Those who abide in me and in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4, 5, NRSV).

I’m so proud of those in North America who are taking the gospel to everyone in our territory. Guided by the Holy Spirit, and demonstrating a living connection with Christ, they are reaching more and more people with the Bible truths about a loving God and His last-day church. New congregations are springing up, fulfilling Jesus’ words to His earliest disciples: “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8, NIV).

THE ADVENTure

BY ED GALLAGHER

“THE ADVENTure: a Seventh-day Adventist Ministry” has met each Sabbath in Greeley, Colorado, since last November. “The project has gone exceptionally well,” reports Pastor Roger Walter. “About 90 people attend, most of them young families. We are passionately seeking the lost while providing a safe place for them to investigate Christ. We are building small groups and want to launch a public ‘seeker service’ soon.”

Pastor Walter credits every-member involvement for success so far. “The members are the team; I serve as the coach,” he says. The effort is not without its challenges. “We have a deep pool of talent, but we’re mostly new to each other—we have yet to establish a history of worshiping and working together.”

Alfred C. McClure is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, where there are now more than 5,000 churches. People who want a copy of the video he describes can contact AdventSource at 1-800-325-0525.
Carnival cruise liner heading to the Bahamas is probably not where you’d expect to find a conference promoting temperance lifestyle. However, that’s where more than 70 Adventist believers from around North America gathered for the Listen/ICPA Summit.

The contingent included approximately a dozen of the remaining full-time Listen literature evangelists, some church leaders, and a wide array of laypersons united by a common desire to advance the principles of temperance and the particular ministry of Listen magazine, the Adventist Church’s journal for healthy lifestyle choices.

Their commitment translated into paying their own way, which created a largely self-funded occasion. The discounted cruise price actually came to less than comparable expenses for accommodations and meals.

Perhaps some were encouraged to join the historic summit because of the vacation atmosphere. It was a pleasant environment, but a very busy weekend of onboard meetings and a high day of Sabbath activities ashore in Nassau.

This, only the third-ever Listen Summit, was cosponsored by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, in Hagerstown, Maryland; International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism, based at the General Conference; and the North American Division Publishing and Health Ministries departments. Also participating was Inter-American Division Health Ministries director Elie Honore.

Ashore in the Bahamas on Sabbath, December 5, the summit group led out with full Sabbath school and church service at the main Centerville church in Nassau. It was a high day, marked by official greetings from division, General Conference, and conference leaders.

The Sabbath speaker proclaimed the need for our Seventh-day Adventist community to ensure that our young people are protected by use of Listen magazine.

After lunch summit attendees gathered at a nearby parade grounds with more than 600 Adventist Pathfinders. Marshals assembled clubs and with a brass band and two community service vehicles leading the way, we marched through the streets of Nassau to proclaim that Seventh-day Adventists stand for drug-free living.

Following the march, summit presenters and local civic leaders presented a community drug-free rally. It was a grand success and a great testament to the local organizational skills of Bahamas Conference temperance director John Carey.

As the 2,000-passenger cruise ship left port in the early hours of Sunday...
morning, all attendees knew that an indelible statement for temperance had been made in the Bahamas. And there were still approximately five hours of landmark discussions and presentations for temperance.

Leading the way was policewoman Yvette Saladino, from Florida, an expert in youth gang and drug behaviors. She painted a stark picture of need and the role that Adventist activists must play in protecting all young people, and in particular our own young people, from the ravages of the drug culture.

The summit accomplished its prime objective of reasserting our temperance message and the viability of Listen magazine. Beyond that, some important actions and initiatives were taken.

Recognizing the broad-based cultural needs of a youth temperance message, the group took some initiatives to set in motion an upcoming Spanish language Listen magazine. Attendees also endorsed a new design for a full-color, upbeat Winner magazine—the junior edition of Listen.

A attendee applauded when informed that Listen magazine had just begun publication of a very special spiritual themes teacher’s guide to properly facilitate Listen use in Adventist schools and Adventist churches. Perhaps the biggest initiative of the onboard meetings was taken by veteran Listen literature evangelist and trainer George Peterson, of Redlands, California.

Peterson, now in his mid-80s, is reminiscent of Moses—his strength is not diminished nor his vision dimmed. At a critical juncture and in ringing tones he proclaimed that he is making a solemn commitment to doubling his Listen sales in the year ahead (he currently sells nearly $40,000 per year part-time). This challenge was answered by others, and with the Lord’s help we look to considerable positive sales response in the months ahead.

The summit ended in the early hours of Monday morning. The seas had been so calm that few noted the gentle nudge of the big ship against the dock in Miami. And perhaps that is fitting, because in a very real sense the Listen Summit has not yet ended, and will not come to anything like a natural pause until the church has accomplished its goal of communicating temperance and drug-free values to young people of all ages and backgrounds.

Ellen G. White likened the challenges facing our ship of beliefs to icebergs and other hazards. We must face them head on and deal with the challenges. This is our opportunity to deal head-on with a very real threat to the security of Seventh-day Adventist young people.

Southern Adventist University Students Rebuild Communities in Central America

Students from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, spent their spring break holding medical clinics in hurricane-ravaged Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic from February 25 to March 8.

A group of 41 students joined volunteer doctors and nurses at clinics where a variety of infections, malnutrition, and malaria were treated. Students also held educational classes, teaching local community members basic health principles. Memorial Hospital in Tennessee and Bergen Bruvwig, a Chattanooga medical supply company, both donated medicines and materials for these clinics.

The student volunteers are part of a Frontier Mission nursing class, a mission-based senior nursing class in which students learn how to suture, diagnose infections and diseases, and deliver babies in a mission setting. This is the fourth year the class has taken mission trips.

A nother group of SAU students spent their spring break rebuilding a church destroyed by Hurricane Georges last September in the Dominican Republic. The students stayed 12 days in La Romana, which is 70 miles (110 kilometers) from the Dominican Republic’s capital city, Santo Domingo. Besides giving their time and energy to the church rebuilding project, students raised $575 each to cover their own expenses.

Hurricane Georges hit the Dominican Republic in September 1998, killing more than 500 and leaving 100,000 people homeless. In October, Hurricane Mitch pummeled Nicaragua, causing an estimated 10,000 deaths and more than $5 billion in damage, according to the United Nations.—Adventist News Network.

Avondale College Earns High Marks

Avondale College was recently ranked highest in Australia on studies measuring teaching quality and student acquisition of generic skills.

Conducted by Australia’s Federal Department of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs, the study also ranked Avondale as second highest in the nation on student satisfaction, reports Gilbert M. Valentine, college vice president. The report was published in The Australian, a national daily journal.

North America Has Largest Tithe Gain in a Decade

The North American Division posted its largest tithe gain in more than a decade in 1998, when tithe...
WORLD NEWS & PERSPECTIVES

The Shades of Humanity

BY ELLA M. RYDZEWONSKI, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, ADVENTIST REVIEW

A recent news report tells about Joann, the daughter of a Japanese mother and African-American father. Joann considers herself as belonging to two cultures. This growing awareness of one's true racial background is taking hold among young adults. They no longer see any stigma in interracial marriage. And the idea of one racial background predominating over another may one day disappear.

Joann visits the Japanese section of her city because she wants to get in touch with her background. Other African-Americans may be wondering about their White ancestors as well, for as much as racist society wants to make them fit the African-only mold, that is not their complete identity. Nor is White the only identity of many other African-Americans as they check their genealogies, as descendants of Thomas Jefferson recently discovered.

Leonard, a Japanese-Caucasian who is taking an interest in his father's roots in eastern Maryland, feels the same way. He has already been to Japan and researched his Japanese roots.

Interracial families can become divided or blessed (depending on how they choose to experience it). Many see this intermingling as a rich heritage that young African-Americans of the twenty-first century will embrace. An anthropologist teacher told our class years ago that there really isn't such a thing as race, for it is difficult to tell where one stops and another begins.

The shades of humanity stretch from one end of the spectrum to another in one magnificent blend of the Creator's brushstroke.

In the Old Testament, Gentiles who embraced the God of Israel did not need to meet any racial or ethnic qualifications to be adopted into the faith. God made both the Jew and the Gentile— but we divided ourselves into categories. Perhaps God is opening the way for a new generation to get over the hurdle of racism so that He may have a people who can more fully reflect His ideal.

NEWS COMMENTARY

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NEWS BREAK

grew 7 percent to almost $570 million.
“The gain is especially impressive when compared to the 1 percent increase in the cost of living,” said Kermit Netteburg, assistant to the president of the division for communication. “It says a lot about faithful tithe-paying members.”

The Atlantic Union had the largest gain at 12 percent, with the Southwestern Union showing the second-largest gain at 9 percent. Seven conferences had gains of more than 10 percent, including Northeastern, South Atlantic, Montana, Nevada-Utah, Indiana, Arkansas-Louisiana, and Lake Region.

The division also said that world mission giving through regular church offering channels increased 3 percent. Church officials attribute the tithe gain to an increased emphasis on stewardship education, positive feelings about the church in the wake of the NET evangelism events, and the healthy economy in the United States.

Former Conference Treasurer Pleads Guilty to Fraud

On January 29, in the Supreme Court of Adelaide, South Australia, Rob van Buuren, former secretary-treasurer of the South Australian Conference, pleaded guilty to 36 charges of fraud involving $648,250 over a seven-year period from 1989 to 1996, reports Pastor Don Hosken, conference president.

Also at issue are another 17 counts involving an additional $258,329. Van Buuren was disfellowshipped from the church in 1997. Some of the money ($121,700) has been paid back by the family. “Even though the church was the victim, it was the Department of Public Prosecutions who brought the charges, rather than the church,” Hosken says.

Van Buuren was sentenced on February 18 to seven years' imprisonment, with a nonparole period of three years.

Rotarians Support Adventist Hospital in Nepal

The Rotary Foundation has given generous support to Scheer Memorial Hospital, an Adventist hospital in Nepal, reports Ira Bailie, medical director.

The facility recently received three tons of equipment from the Modesto Rotary Foundation in California. The equipment included surgical lights, incubators, and operating room tables, as well as supplies, says Bailie. In the past, Rotarian grants enabled the hospital to get its first computers, monitor defibrillators, and electrocardiographs. “The equipment and supplies have helped us to upgrade the quality of care at Scheer,” Bailie says.

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For Your Good Health

Grow a Rose, Save Your Hip

Spending leisure time doing some gardening or following a light walking program may do wonders for your bones. A study of almost 10,000 older women found a 36 percent lower risk of hip fracture in women with higher levels of daily activity (at least two hours per week), household chores, and fewer hours of sitting.—Annals of Internal Medicine.

Smoking's Effects on Weight Minimal

Up to one third of university women who begin smoking do so in a misguided effort to lose weight. The tobacco industry even names cigarettes “thins” and “slims,” trying to sway weight-conscious young women. But now a new study shows that for people under 30, smoking does not prevent age-related weight gain. A seven-year project followed almost 4,000 people age 18-30 and revealed no significant difference in the amount of weight gained by nonsmokers compared to those who smoked for all or part of the study’s length.—Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology.

AWR Letter Box

“We are a small group who live in a remote part of Cuba. As the church is quite a distance from us, we meet in the home of one of the sisters. There we tune in to your broadcasts from PanAmerica and have our worship with AWR. We have learned many things that are valuable in our spiritual lives.”
—Lissette
Cuba

“My compliments for your beautiful programs, which, apart from shining in their content, are also to be appreciated for the message that they contain.”
—Fulvio
Italy

“A II your programs are educative, interesting, and useful, and they give me peace of mind. Keep up the good work!”
—Muhammad
India

News Notes

✔ Tyrone Backers, an Adventist who founded the Community Crusade Against Drugs, was among the eight recipients of the African American Achievers Award given by the Toyota distributors of southeastern Florida and JM Family Enterprises. Backers received the award for the nonprofit organization category. Based in Miami, Florida, CCAD works with youth to find positive alternatives to drugs, says Anne-Beth Nemeroff, a JM Family spokesperson. Activities include essay contests, camps, and drama.


What’s Upcoming

Apr. 1 Monthly Focus—Stewardship
Apr. 3 Missionary Magazine Emphasis (El Centinela, La Sentinelle, Message, Signs)
Apr. 3 Stewardship Day
Apr. 10 Literature Evangelism Day
Apr. 17 Education Day
I'm concerned that my daughter-in-law is a workaholic. She's always rushing— to her job, to church, to the store. Don't you think Jesus would rather have her slow down and spend more time with her children?

Before affixing the label “workaholic” to the sleeve of your daughter-in-law, you might want to consider the implications of the title and the possibility that the term is unfair.

The word “workaholic” was coined in 1968 by Wayne Oates, a counselor who used it to mean “a compulsive worker” or a person who, for some deep psychological reason, covers all of the empty spaces in life with time commitments. The workaholic, by definition, has opted to replace free time, leisurely moments, walks in the rain, with volunteer activities, extra hours at work, places to go, people to see.

Since its introduction into the culture, the word “workaholic” has reshaped the way we view busy people, leading to a yearly Workaholics Day, dedicated to those who can’t or won’t slow down. Workaholics are not too far removed in our minds from alcoholics, from whom they got their name, or chocoholics, who found themselves defined after Oates’s-holic ending began defining diverse groups within society. The -holics are addicts of one sort or another— people who cannot seem to extricate themselves from alcohol, chocolate, or 68-hour workweeks.

While I have heard “workaholic” loosely applied to many women whose busyness appears to be all-consuming, I am not sure that all pieces of the definition fit. The overcommitted, ball-juggling, pack-a-kid’s-lunch-while-answering-the-phone-and-drying-the-dishes women that I know would gladly exchange a frenetic afternoon for a trip to the Bahamas. They do not, either deliberately or subconsciously, fill their lives with things to do for the sake of things to do. They are not motivated by some driving Puritan work ethic that is inextricably tied into their self-esteem. They do not need a psychologist to probe into the deep, dark places that spur them on to add more and more layers of complexity to their lives. They are, pure and simple, women who do what has to be done to keep their families together, bills paid, orthodontic wires connected, science projects firmly glued down.

My sense is that your daughter-in-law does not need criticism in the midst of her hectic life, but support. It is one thing for a person to give of herself to the point of exhaustion so that all heads remain above water. It is another to do so in the midst of a judgmental and disapproving atmosphere.

My question to you is this: What can you do to help alleviate some of the pressure your daughter-in-law is feeling? I remember many an afternoon, as a newly married first-year schoolteacher, driving home, bone-tired, fantasizing about casseroles already prepared, offerings on my doorstep, tasks miraculously done, nothing but a couch and pillow awaiting me. I would have gladly walked in the door, accepted my slippers, and waited to be served. But such is not the lot of women. To imply that our busyness is motivated by a personal psychological need is not only erroneous; it is insulting.

Rather than scrutinize your daughter-in-law’s activities against a “What would Jesus do?” why not ask the same question of yourself? What would Jesus do if He encountered an overcommitted, struggling, frenetic, going-in-all-directions-at-once woman, striving to do the best by her family and her God? How might He lighten her load; gladden her heart?

As you look for ways to make this family member’s life easier, I would caution you to do so with no strings attached. A casserole with a hidden message as one of the ingredients is worse than no casserole at all. A window washed because it was “about time somebody did it” affords a dimmer view than a hand-smeared pane.

On the other hand, a gift from the heart, an understanding spirit, a pot of homemade soup handed off at the door between piano recitals and Little League, might be well received.*

* Sandra Doran’s new book, Gathering, coauthored with her sister, Dale Slongwhite, addresses many of the issues faced by women on the brink of the next millennium.

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Captivated by Love

Six ways the Edenic experience is a model for marital love.

BY ALBERTA MAZAT

As we study Scripture we often come to a phrase or sentence that is so familiar to us that it speaks volumes, and without any additional comment. “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16) is one that influences our ways of thinking and doing in this life, and provides a blessed assurance of life eternal.

A breadth of meaning that is also impossible to encompass mentally is contained in six words in Genesis 1:27: “Male and female created he them.” Our concept of self, our relationships, and our behaviors are profoundly influenced by these six words.

This was the crowning act of Creation, but why male and female? For the purpose of populating the earth? Too simplistic. God, being God, was not restricted to this creation by sexual means. He could have just spoken humans into existence. But a mechanical, impersonal creation does not sound like our God, who desired companionship and an intimate relationship with His creation.

An intimate relation between God and His Son had always existed. Jesus gave us a small window into the quality of this relationship. In His prayer before He returned to His Father, He used such phrases as “All I have is yours, and all you have is mine” and “That they may be one as we are one” (John 17:10, 11, NIV). This type of relationship could be experienced only by thinking, reasoning, free-to-choose individuals.

Since God made male and female “in his own image” (Gen. 1:27), which elements of His image did He bestow upon the male? Which on the female? Or did each have some qualities of both? We cannot know this, but since He created them equal, we can trust Him to have made this distribution fairly and appropriately.

God allowed Adam to experience his male personhood by himself long enough to realize he was not complete. God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18, NIV). A male and female creation had been planned long in advance. Perhaps this time spent without a companion of the same nature would deter Adam from ever feeling self-sufficient or self-satisfied.

Then God did four things that included both of them:
1. He blessed them.
2. He told them “be fruitful, and multiply” (Gen. 1:28), and that was a process in which both were absolutely essential.
3. He told both to “subdue” the earth (verse 28) thereby making them equals in implementing submission upon creation.
4. He told them to rule over God’s nonhuman creation as comanagers (verse 28).

“When a great and decisive work is to be done,” Ellen White wrote, “God chooses men and women to do this work, and it will feel the loss if the talents of both are not combined.” Certainly being coregents of this earth was the beginning of the many types of “great and decisive” works that God intended qualified men and women to carry out together as equals.

Unitive Aspects of Sexuality

Can we know what God intended the act of sexuality to contribute to marriage? We sometimes ignore the fact that God could have planned for procreation to be simply a biological event that carried with it nothing more than a physical blending...
of bodies for the purpose of impregnation. More was obviously involved. It was also to encompass unitive aspects including a sense of closeness for the enhancement of the love relationship.

All these aspects of sexuality would have been wondrous in themselves, if they had been the only qualities of sexuality—but there was more, much more. Pleasure and ecstasy in sexuality were also gifted to humans, not only initially, but throughout their lives. Solomon advised, “May you ever be captivated by her love” (Prov. 5:19, NIV).

We can only dimly comprehend the joy God intended to add to the lives of husbands and wives in their sexual experience. With perfect bodies, keen responses, every muscle and nerve attuned, this awesome gift was to remind them often of God’s plan for their love. Married couples living now are responsible for pondering the Edenic ideal and patterning their experience after it as nearly as possible.

Ellen White reminds us that Adam and Eve were created with a nature so that they could love and be loved, that “their existence should be a blessing to themselves and to one another, and an honor to their Creator.” There is no honor in a grudging, joyless, or demanding sexual experience, nor one that does not seek to give and receive pleasure or fulfillment.

A s God exhorts wives and husbands to love one another, He makes very clear what love entails. Married love will manifest itself by being patient, kind, unselfish, and protective. It will be courteous, optimistic, and slow to show frustration and anger (1 Cor. 13).

Ellen White makes this memorable statement: “Love can no more exist without revealing itself in outward acts than fire can be kept alive without fuel.” What should these “outward acts” consist of? She explains by using this charming statement, “little atten-

What can we do to rescue and restore sexuality in marriage?

1. Recognize that there are problems in our homes and churches, among married or single, parents or parishioners. We can no longer ignore these issues.

2. Dispense with the myth of “naturalism.” Sexual matters do not just naturally take care of themselves. Parents, educators, counselors, and ministers must educate our children, youth, and adults in sexual matters that have to do with their sexual choices.

3. Do not allow the ugly messages of perversions and violence to “taint” the whole area of sexuality in our minds. It can still be pure and beautiful in God’s plan as we prayerfully spend time in its study.

4. Control the radio, television, and videos that are invading Christian TV sets and spilling their off-color jokes, double entendres, and trivializations into our homes. Even when young people in surveys tell us that most of what they know about sex comes to them through the media, complacency seems to prevent the taking of a firm stand in not allowing the innuendos and explicit materials in soap operas and situation comedies, videos, and movies into our homes.

5. Combine physical intimacy with

PHOTO © PHOTODISC
Relationship Skills to Enhance Your Marriage

By Ellen White

- Be quick to recognize the good qualities of the other.
- Give love rather than exact it.
- Express appreciation; it’s a wonderful stimulus and satisfaction.
- Be gentle in speech; keep sharpness out of the voice.
- Don’t linger over mistakes and disappointments.
- Practice little courtesies.
- Watch for chances to evidence affection by tenderness and regard.
- Don’t always try to get the other to follow your wishes.
- Study to advance the happiness of the other.
- Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance.

The Adventist Home, chapters 4 and 5

The Original Eden Experience
A Model of Christian Marital Love

By Alberta Mazat

1. A setting of complete beauty, sights, sounds, and aromas—all united to delight their God-given senses. Modern lovers need to plan for beauty in the surroundings of their lovemaking.
2. Privacy—not only from mundane things, such as telephones, doorbells, and children, but also from messages that debase and trivialize this wonderful gift.
3. Interpersonal harmony—there was no discord until sin entered.
4. Equality—they experienced sexuality without elements of dominance and submission. Insisting on gratification was never consistent with their relationship.
5. Sexuality—experienced with the full assurance that what they were doing with their bodies was just exactly what God intended for them to do. There were no nagging concerns that this much pleasure might be questionable.
6. God as instructor—He always fully informs us of His purposes. Understanding “leaving and cleaving” gave their sexual experience knowledge and complete validation.

They are assured that God wants their happiness, and that they can apprehend His divine counsel and guidance concerning this part of their spiritual orientation. They know that the sexual oneness God intended for femaleness and maleness can indeed be a sanctified and at the same time a joyous delight.

Let married couples think of this, send them talk of this, and let them rejoice with the bride and groom in the Song of Solomon as they sing their song of songs:

“Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom—there I will give you my love” (S. of Sol. 7:12, 13, NIV).
Do you know one of the things I like best about people? I like the interest people show in things, and how exited they can get about them.

For instance, have you ever been to a band concert? Most of the people involved in band concerts are there because they love to make music. The director loves to wave her arms and keep everyone together and upbeat. The musicians can hardly sit still because there is so much music inside trying to get out of them.

When there are people like that in the band, there is a good chance the audience will enjoy the music. They will show their amazement and wonder by clapping. Some may even shout, “Bravo!”

People get excited about so many different things. It’s wonderful to watch them at dog shows and football games and stamp collector club meetings. It’s wonderful to listen to them talk about the stuff they’re interested in.

There are so many fascinating things to find out. There are so many cool things to do. There is so much we can get excited about. Our world is filled with things that make our jaws drop in a wonderful “Wow!”

This was all God’s idea. He says, “Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder” (Isaiah 29:14, NIV).

So there must have been some first wonders to wow Adam and Eve. Rainbows and elephants and apricots, maybe. We can never learn all there is to know about such wonders.

Do you ever think about the One who made these wonders? What kind of God made the first kangaroo and set it hopping? And who sprinkled fireflies in the grass at dusk? Was He trying to leave a trail for us to follow? Was He hoping we would notice and wonder and say, “Wow”?

When we wonder at things, that is a way to worship. When we wonder about the Creator, that really is worship!

In Psalm 17:7 David prays, “Show the wonder of your great love” (NIV). The more we discover about God’s world, the more we discover about God’s love.

Do you wonder what to do for worship? What sounds like fun? God is ready to astound you with wonder upon wonder.

Family Time

On Tuesday (or whatever day you like), invite your family to worship God together.

Ask the person with the newest watch to keep time while you all scurry around the house to find something that God made and that you can show and tell. Take three minutes. When you get back and show each item, see which one draws forth the longest “Wow!” from everyone.

Ask an adult to tell you about their most memorable “Wow!” experience. Ask them how they felt at the time. You might even figure out a family “Wow!” scale. You could give one point if it makes your jaw drop, two if you shiver, three if you get goose bumps, four if you . . . well, you get the idea.

Think what you like best about God. Then see if you can think of a song that expresses that thought. For instance, if you like God because He loves you, then sing a song about God’s love. Or make up the words so that they say what you like about God. Sing your song worshipfully.
FIRST BAPTISMS AMONG THE MARATHA CASTE

The first baptisms from among the Maratha caste of Marathi-speaking people took place recently in the village of Gurdolli, in southern India. “This people group has been very resistant to Christianity and our message,” reports Dorothy Watts, associate secretary of the Southern Asia Division (SUD). “All 12 are from the same family.”

These Hindus were baptized with 59 people from another distinctive cultural group—ethnic Africans (pictured). “Nestled in the thick teak jungles of western Karnataka, near the Goa border, are many villages of ethnic Africans,” says Watts. “They came to India 3 or 400 years back and have not intermarried with the local Kannada people.”

The baptism resulted from reaping meetings conducted by Edwin Charles, SUD youth director, and a team of African students studying in the university at Dharwad. For several months these students had been working in local villages with Global Mission pioneer James Marihal. Among those baptized were the village headman’s wife and three other members of his family. “If you are serious,” said the headman, “I will help you enter 35 villages with your message.”

“This man is very favorable to our message,” says Watts. “The headman is an influential political worker and well known throughout the area. Already he has given us three acres of land to build a church and a school. If we will establish ourselves in these three villages, then we will have entrance into dozens of other villages of ethnic Africans in the area.”

FIRST ESKIMO LEADER

ARCTIC EVANGELISM: Jeremy Koonooka, the first Eskimo Global Mission volunteer, has begun work in Selawik, Alaska. Jeremy prepared for working as a native messenger by attending evangelism training at the Black Hills Health and Education Institute for three months. Jeremy’s work in Selawik involves pastoring, working with new believers, and organizing new church companies. “The Alaska Adventist native work has never before achieved the goal of indigenous native leadership in any of its areas,” says Jim Kincaid, of Alaska Native Missionaries. “We are happy that finally we have an Alaska Yupik Eskimo ministering to his own people in the Arctic.”
What surprises me most about God is that I continue to be surprised by God.

The latest revelation involves one of the world's most powerful live theater impresarios, Garth Drabinsky; the collapse of his multimillion-dollar entertainment company, Livent, Inc.; a group of Adventist singers who got entangled in the international intrigue; and how God used the group's misfortune to get the name of His church plastered positively on the pages of Canada's largest newspaper.

The Seventh-day Adventist Choral Ensemble of Greater Toronto started singing in 1995 with about 25 members. A modern oratorio by Greg Nelson and Bob Farrell, featuring soloists such as Wintley Phipps, Steve Green, and Larnelle Harris, provided the perfect launching pad to take the stirring music of Saviour to churches in Greater Toronto.

The following year we dramatized the work and transformed it into Mi Corazon (My Heart), a full-blown musical production with pageantry, movement, and a voice choir. And, most satisfyingly, we presented it in one of the city's major concert halls, the Ford Center for the Performing Arts in North York, a city-owned arts center run by Drabinsky's company, Livent Inc.

While the press raved about Drabinsky's abilities to beat Americans at their own game, our audience was caught up in the "compelling portrayal of God's passion for His people." That success spawned the production Hush in 1997 and plans for Immanuel last December. But strange things happened on the way to the anticipated third straight sold-out performance.

It had become obvious after Mi Corazon that the group had created a monster, of sorts. The audience demanded bigger and more elaborate productions, with costumes, sets, and costly accoutrements. Non-Adventists were being introduced to our Saviour through the productions, but the price tag was high. Group members had families and major responsibilities in their local congregations. The demands, it seemed, exceeded our abilities to deliver.

Then God intervened. Reports filtered out that Livent had filed for bankruptcy protection. Aftershocks were felt in New York and Toronto among bankers, directors, set designers, costume makers, advertising agencies, and many in the industry owed an estimated $500 million.

There was little sympathy for a church group whose $3,500 deposit was now part of the funds frozen in Livent's account. If the Adventist ensemble carried on, any funds from ticket sales likely would be gobbled up by creditors with first call on Livent's funds. The only reasonable decision was to cancel the show.

In just three years the choral ensemble had built a reputation of excellent and varied music, a ministry that could reach non-Adventists, and a tradition of giving proceeds to institutions such as ADRA and the local Crawford Adventist Academy. Was this a sign from the Lord? Should we quit? Or did God have some other bold plan?

Two of our churches came to the rescue. A scaled-down production took place at the inner-city West Toronto church, and the main presentation occurred as planned at the Apple Creek church in the Toronto suburb of Markham. Offerings totaled an amazing $5,500, allowing the group to pay off its debts. But God wasn't through yet.

In commenting on the Livent scandal in one of my newspaper columns, I had mentioned the Seventh-day Adventist Choral Ensemble as one of the many nonprofit groups scarred by the high-flying entertainment moguls. Two weeks before the production, reporter Ashante Infantry picked up the story, and it ran as a front-page picture and a page 2 story in the Sunday Star.

A Christian production by amateur Adventist singers, once bound for a major concert hall and then doomed by the storm swirling around big-money entertainment, is rescued by a God who has already played in the biggest drama to hit the world stage, and thrust into the headlines for 2 million people to know that Jesus is God and we are His people.

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enjoy standing at my back patio door watching birds at a large feeder I made. Although the feeder attracts many kinds of birds, towhees and juncos are generally in the majority. All of them, though, show one predominating characteristic—fear.

They peck at the seeds provided but keep a wary eye for other birds. Always looking around, they are definitely aware of my movements. The slightest motion sends them scattering. Larger dominant-type birds chase smaller birds to the nearby cherry tree. Then a Steller’s jay, resplendent in its blue iridescent feathers, scares away all the birds. A sudden movement by me in the doorway sends it flying away.

Occasionally a crow comes to dine, raucously telling its mates of its good fortune in finding a handout. They are more wary than most birds, and a move to the door by me sends the scavenger to the top of a nearby fir tree.

As I watch these birds that God cares for so carefully, I wonder, “Has fear always had such control over them?” I think not. I’m sure that in the Garden of Eden the birds flocked around Adam and came to him fearlessly eating from his hand.

But fear of humans isn’t limited to birds. A large bobtailed gray cat rolls in the soft dirt in my garden, and if he sees me step out of the door, he quickly disappears. At the end of the garden I watch a squirrel on its rounds gathering food. It appears even more frightened than the birds. A ny sight of me, and it scurries up the fir tree where it makes its home.

But why all this fear, not only in the animal kingdom but most certainly among people? It’s part of Satan’s plan of control. Fear is a predominating emotion today. Animals fear people. People fear animals. People often fear people. It even goes further than that—nations fear other nations. Fear is used by repressive governments to squelch criticism and even to stifle religion.

Fear is often used in advertising. Subtly the message goes out: install an alarm system in your home or purchase this brand of automobile, and your family will be safer. Advertising effectively uses fear of rejection: use the right mouthwash to keep your friends, or the correct shampoo to eliminate dandruff.

Fear even enters into religious worship. The dread of hellfire is an often-used sermon theme for some fundamentalist preachers. Even Christians fear that they won’t be ready for the return of Jesus, and despite the promises of eternal life, almost everyone fears death.

People are afraid of the future. Jesus said that in the last days people’s hearts would fail them for fear in expectation of the events coming to earth.

But why be afraid? Fear is often an overpowering emotion that takes control of one’s senses. The psalmist wrote, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Ps. 27:1). And in the familiar words of the shepherd’s psalm he wrote, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” Most assuring are the words of Jesus in John 14:27: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Fear can be a paralyzing emotion. A person is told they have cancer, and immediately there is that sinking feeling in the pit of their stomach. In circumstances like these, fear takes many forms—anxiety, worry, depression, and stress.

According to the Scriptures, fear is a form of slavery. “You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship” (Rom. 8:15, RSV).

What can be done about fear? In 1 John 4:18 we read, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.” The answer is Jesus. The acceptance of Jesus and His love as Saviour is paramount. Then add to that the assurance that comes from the Holy Spirit coupled with the trust found by filling one’s mind with God’s promises in the Scriptures. Daily prayer for a calming spirit works wonders as an antidote for fear.

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