

ADVENTIST Review

April 1998

NORTH AMERICAN DI

Can He Reach Gen Xers?

(and still reach everyone else)

Dwight Nelson's Plan for NET '98

LETTERS

Judge Anderson

Roy Adams' "In Judge Anderson's Courtroom" (Feb. NAD Edition) made



quite inspirational reading. I was rather surprised at the racial politics practiced at our most prestigious Adventist schools in the Washington, D.C./Maryland area. As a student of the Black civil rights struggle in the fifties and sixties (e.g., Ruby Ridges in New Orleans and the Little Rock Nine in Little Rock, Arkansas), I hardly expected what appears to be un-Christlike attitudes to have been institutionalized in our schools—especially in the North.

—Mervyn R. Joseph

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

I loved this story about Judge Anderson, especially her thoughts at the end: "So far in my life, I've left it up to God. . . . Whatever I can dream is nothing close to what God dreams for me."

It's lovely and so true. "As long as I listen to God's voice, then I'll be where I can't even imagine."

—Lometa Fitzrandolph

TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS

All Who Pastor

I was touched by Bill Knott's "Pray for All Who Pastor" (Feb. NAD Edition). I know that there have always been

those who find fault with the pastor, but I wasn't aware of the increase in hostility and criticism.

In my 51 years of membership in the church, 42 years were spent in a tiny church in southern Missouri.

We were shepherded by a succession of district pastors who were kind, goodhearted, patient, dedicated, overworked, and run to death. The pastor of the larger church I now attend exhibits the same qualities.

Are You Free Next Friday Night?

The *Adventist Review* is a weekly magazine, yet most of you receive only the (free) monthly North American Division Edition of the *Review* . . . meaning you *don't* receive the:

- World Edition—bringing Adventists continents away before your very eyes.
- Cutting Edge Edition—targeting the younger generation with reality and authenticity.
- AnchorPoints Edition—emphasizing the timeless message and mission of the church.
- Special Editions—going deep into four subjects a year, including last-day events in October, money in July, and Adventist profiles later *this* month.

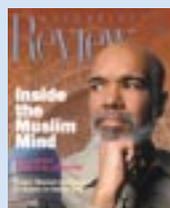
Put us to the test:

Spend 15 minutes with the *Review* every Friday night for a few months. Read the articles that speak to *your* heart. Share the Give & Take anecdotes with your family. Search for Herald's trumpet with your kids.

If you don't feel spiritually filled, call and cancel—and we'll refund the cost of any unreceived issues.

To order the weekly *Review* for yourself—or someone you love—at a discounted \$33.97 for 40 issues, call 1-800-456-3991. (Ask for the free book *God Answers Prayer!* written by 20 well-known Adventist writers.)

See you Friday.



World
Edition



Cutting Edge
Edition



AnchorPoints
Edition



Special
Edition

I've never had anything but the highest admiration and respect for our ministers. My heart goes out to them for their commitment to the awesome task they have undertaken to keep God's people strengthened, comforted, and spiritually uplifted. They don't need people on their back, but people who will hold up their hands and support them as Aaron and Hur did for Moses.

God bless you, dear shepherds, and keep up your courage!

—Verna Dye

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Like the Bee

Thanks to Mike Peterson's ("O to Be Like the Bee!" Feb. NAD Edition) for the color and humor in describing light and truth—the essentials of the kingdom. His words were thought-provoking and well expressed.

—Ralph A. Willard

LANCASTER, MASSACHUSETTS

People of Hope Special



Congratulations on your "People of Hope" special issue (Jan. 29). I could not lay it down until I had finished everything, even the ads. I trust they

will be available for distribution.

—Bill Ring

VIA E-MAIL

Extra copies of this 64-page issue can be ordered by calling 1-800-600-7197. —Editors.

A message that some may have missed was tucked away in William Johnsson's "Jesus: Center of All Our Hopes," specifically the sections on pages 18 and 19: "What Did Jesus Do?" and "What Jesus Means Today."

Many are calling Christians to focus on the Father or the Holy Spirit—even on humanity—rather than on Christ. The Father's greatest glory is in His Son, and where Christ is the center of focus, the Holy Spirit is most mightily at work. Paul's appeal to Corinth fits us today: "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10, NKJV; 2:2). This is worth praying for.

—Norman L. Meager

SONORA, CALIFORNIA

"Jesus, Center of All Our Hopes" was the first major article in this issue for a reason.—Editors.

I think it is unfortunate that the Loma Linda young adults chose to use "Young & Restless" as the title of their Sabbath morning ministry (see T. Lynn Caldwell's "The Young & Restless"). *The Young and the Restless* is the title of a soap opera that has been on television for many years.

(I'm at greater fault because I watch the program whenever I can, which isn't terribly often. It is a time waster, but intriguing.)

—Name Withheld

Letters Policy

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

ADVENTIST Review

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ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

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

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It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This

Write me down as a happy man. If my life should end today, I would feel that it was all eminently worthwhile, that the Lord of grace had filled my cup to overflowing and crowned my head with blessings.

Sixteen-month-old Madeleine waves her hands up and down as we set out with the stroller. Because her parents live on the opposite side of the world from us, we haven't seen our granddaughter for nearly six months. What better way to bond again than a walk in the bright, warm morning sun?

Out on the street men are collecting the garbage. They sprint from house to house, hauling the bins to the truck and emptying them into the churning maw. Madi watches intently, pointing little fingers, uttering cries of delight. She jigs up and down, signaling me to follow the work crew down the street.

As we pass by a closed gate, a large dog roars out a warning. Madi shrieks with joy and her arms flail. "Woof, woof!" she says back.

Overhead are tall trees, and the birds are making a noise. She makes me stop as she tries to find them among the branches.

We turn into another street, and suddenly the clear blue expanse breaks through. Madi is looking up, pointing, wild with excitement: the arms are going crazy. I look up and see a half moon.

It's a new sight for Madi. Where she has come from the air is too polluted for her to see the moon during daytime. She sits perfectly still, eyes riveted on the moon.

"That's the moon, Madi," I tell her. "The moon. Moon."

"Moo . . . Moo . . ." she says, still looking up and pointing.

Does life get any better than this?

The General Conference auditorium, venue for Annual Councils and assorted heavy agendas, never witnessed an evening like this. More than 200 young adults have come out for Friday worship and fellowship.

Organizers of the event are my colleague Andy Nash and his friend Gary Krause, who directs the church's Global Mission communication here at the world headquarters. Several months ago these sharp young leaders saw a need and devised a plan: they would start a monthly program geared to young adults, and call it "Friday Hope." All week groups have been up late, practicing the music, perfecting a drama, getting the word out in the

Washington, D.C., area, videotaping interviews, organizing refreshments. And Gary has been praying and preparing his message, on "belonging."

It's a time of true worship, of the Spirit's moving. Gary finishes his message and prays, and the meeting is over. We wish there were more.

We step out into the cold, fresh air, hearts aglow.

Does it get any better than this?

It was 40 years since I last saw her. She was tall and gangly and full of teenage insecurities.

We sat in her office, and she wanted to talk. Not about her business, but about people we had known and happenings in the church.

And about herself. Three marriages, all to Adventist partners: the first husband physically abusive, the second gay, the third verbally and emotionally abusive. With each failed attempt to find a loving relationship her self-esteem sank lower. Then theological controversy wracked the church, and she dropped out. That was 15 years ago.

One night, after an emotional shredding by her third spouse, she could take no more. She left him and walked until the light came; walked 20 miles. Then she swallowed sleeping tablets and, collapsing, called a friend from a public telephone to ask forgiveness.

The friend called the police; they traced the call, rushed an ambulance, snatched her from the jaws of death.

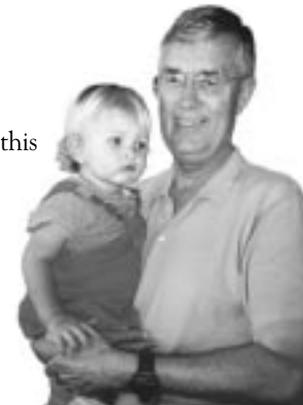
Four more times she tried to take her life. Four more times help arrived at the last moment. "I realized Someone was looking out for me," she said with a smile, "and decided to go on living."

We talked about the church. And especially about grace.

It's got to get better than this.

Yes, it will get better. Every delight that fills our soul in this life is but a taste of what God has in store for His children. We haven't seen or heard, we can't imagine, what the Lord of grace plans for us forever in His presence (see 1 Cor. 2:9).

The best is yet to be. Believe it, cling to it, wait for it.



Let's Talk About Courage

ALFRED C. MCCLURE

There are great moments of courage in our church's history. Remember Rachel Oakes Preston? In the 1840s she shocked a handful of Advent believers in Washington, New Hampshire, by daring to suggest that they were worshipping on the wrong day of the week. They sat down to prove her wrong—and stood up as a band of Sabbathkeepers.

Our spiritual forebears didn't cast about to see if there were others keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. They didn't establish truth by a majority vote. They discovered God's will and seized it.

The Sabbath is a good setting in which to discuss courage—theirs and ours. One hundred fifty years ago this month a number of believers met in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, to establish the validity of the Sabbath. We weren't even a denomination then. We were just a group committed to truth.

Standing for the truth isn't as hard as it used to be. Look at how our church has become "respectable" in 150 years:

- Adventist health-care institutions have received worldwide acclaim and treat millions of patients annually.
- Our radio and television programs rank at the top of media surveys throughout North America.
- Graduates of Adventist schools regularly score in the seventieth and eightieth percentile in scholastic achievement tests.
- ADRA and its army of volunteers is recognized all over the world.

There was a time when being a Sabbathkeeper was as unusual as being a tomato in a basket of lemons, when it took great courage to proclaim the Sabbath. Yet our spiritual forebears were willing, in the words of Ellen White, to "stand for the right though the heavens fall" (*Education*, p. 57). Courage has been one of the identifying marks of God's people throughout history.

The passing of time and the secular influence of society can make strong incursions into our spiritual values. Truths observed but not rediscovered tend to become simply part of the culture. It's not far from being a cultural Adventist to being a lukewarm Adventist.

My question is Do we have the courage to confront—in our lives and practices—subtle compromises that can steal into our hearts and rob us of the Christlikeness we all covet?

I'm not suggesting that we cast ourselves as reformers of the

lives of others, but that we ask God for the courage to confront personally the secular mind-set that shrinks from receiving all He wishes to give us.

Standing for the truth isn't as hard as it used to be.

How prominently does the spiritual significance and joy of the Sabbath register on our list of priorities? I'm not talking about the Seventh-day Adventist who refrains from working on Saturday because it's a "day off." I'm describing that earnest seeker after God who is determined to draw every blessing the day can provide. I'm talking about guarding the

edges, not as a legalistic requirement, but in an earnest desire not to waste any holy time in mundane activities; about watching the subtle influences of business and media that can invade Sabbath space.

God invites us to move into a close bond with Him on His day in order to deepen the family resemblance. He's the one whom to know is life eternal. This is what God meant when He said, "I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy" (Eze. 20:12, NIV).

The Sabbath is a weekly anniversary that reminds us of God's power to create and redeem us. It's the glue that holds together our friendship with God and each other. It's the knot in the end of the rope that keeps these relationships from unraveling.

It's no wonder that throughout history devoted believers have been willing to risk loss of employment, strained friendships, imprisonment, even life itself, because they valued so highly the relationship with God they cultivated especially during the sacred hours between Friday sundown and Saturday sundown.

The Sabbath is not simply a rule to be kept—it's a reservoir from which we can drink the water of life. It's an oasis where we can rest secure from six days of travel in the fast lane.

It's a quiet place where the distractions of life are muted and we can hear God's voice more clearly.

We simply need the courage to make God the Lord of our lives, and during the Sabbath hours tune out the world's static and tune in to God's communication frequency.



Alfred C. McClure is president of the 850,000-member Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

GIVE & TAKE

CHURCH SIGN CONTEST



The art of the concise message.

The *Review* invites you to create—and photograph—a compelling message on your church sign. (This is assuming your church *has* a sign. Please don't create a compelling message on *another* church's sign.) In a few months we'll run some of the best ones on Give & Take and award a \$100 grand prize.

Send entries to Church Sign Contest at the Give & Take address below.

Photo by Cherelyn Strickland, Sunnyside, Washington.

HERALD'S TRUMPET

Hey, kids! Aren't you glad that spring has sprung?

Back in the January Cutting Edge Edition of the *Review* we had one of our most difficult Herald's Trumpet contests ever. People looked and looked for the trumpet, and several of them (including some of your parents) got very frustrated that they couldn't find it. Classes were skipped, jobs were lost, vacations to Minnesota were canceled. And people continued to scour the pages of the *Review*. (Occasionally they would even stop to read an article.)

If your parents don't receive the weekly *Review* (call 800-456-3991 to order), here's where the trumpet appeared—in the right window of the left church on page 13.

Since then we've had another Herald's Trumpet contest (in the February 26 AnchorPoints Edition). Our three winners were: Victoria Kunding, from Maitland, Florida; Blake Martin, from Janesville, Wisconsin; and Kendra Woulridge, from Springfield, Massachusetts. Victoria, Blake, and Kendra received *Guide's Greatest Stories*, compiled by Randy Fishell.

If you can find the trumpet this time, send a postcard telling us *where* to: Herald's Trumpet at the Give & Take address below. The prize is *Bible Word Search and Sort*, by Anita Marshall.

Have fun, and don't cancel any more vacations!



Can you find the trumpet?

ADVENTIST LIFE

My mother-in-law was born Marguerite Priest. One Sabbath her three married sisters were going to visit the Downey church, where her husband, Dave Olsen, was pastor. The preceding Sabbath, to pique his congregation's interest (and to have a little fun), Pastor Dave told them that the next week there would be four former Priests in the congregation.

—Timothy P. Wieder, Loma Linda California

Holding forth in a recent sermon on the Second Coming at the Sligo church in Silver Spring, Maryland, General Conference secretary G. Ralph Thompson carried the imagination of his listeners forward to that climactic day when heaven comes to earth. "And," he said, "we shall see the Holy City coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her children."

"That kind of bride ain't dressed in white," some chuckler whispered in a nearby pew.

Thompson assured us afterward that he did not mean to signal a change in the church's policy on marriage.

—Roy Adams, Upper Marlboro, Maryland

WE NEED YOU

Send Give & Take submissions to . . . Give & Take, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74532.2564@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.

NET '98: *Getting Relational*

In six months NET '98 speaker Dwight Nelson will bring a fresh, relational approach to a six-continent audience. Outside of an honest friendship with God, says Nelson, nothing else matters. He speaks from experience.

ANDY NASH TALKS WITH DWIGHT NELSON

NASH: For those who might still be wondering, who is this Dwight Nelson guy?

NELSON: Well, this Dwight Nelson guy is a dad, a husband, a kid who has grown up in the church as a fifth-generation Seventh-day Adventist, a missionary's kid as well, and he finds himself for the past 15 years very blessed to serve as a pastor at the Andrews University church.

From what I understand, you went through something of a deepened conversion when you were in the seminary there at Andrews.

No question. Karen and I came here after a year of internship out in Oregon. And I was a cocky guy. I felt like I had the world by the tail, the church by the tail as well.

At the end of that fall quarter, Karen is working nights, 11:00-7:00, and as I'm getting ready to go to bed, I'm feeling this unsettledness, as though something is missing in my life. So like a good SDA boy I pray before going to bed, and I'm

remembering something my theology professor had said in his lectures: "Fellas, we need to ask God to reveal to us our true sinfulness."

So I prayed the prayer, felt great, went to bed. Forgot about it. Went down to Carolina, where Karen's folks were to spend Christmas. Coming back—and I can tell you the spot on the Kentucky/Indiana border—it just seemed as if the heavens became like a black night and just came crashing down on my heart, and I couldn't shake it, man.

It began a spiritual crisis. I started thinking about little sins from college days at Southern—turning in reading reports when I had just flipped through the pages. That kind of thing came back. Little things just laughed off, but now, in all their dark guilty array, they're marching in front of me, and I'm waking up in the middle of the night in a sweat, and I start wrestling with God. *Is He there? Is He alive?*

And so I go back to this theology professor and tell him, "I am dying. I need somebody to talk to. My heart is about

exploding with guilt.” And this gentleman looks at me and says, “Go read *Steps to Christ*. Go read *Steps to Christ*.” So I stumble back to the apartment, pull out my little Army/Navy edition I had to read in eighth grade to get baptized, and read it; and Andy, the title of that book became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Were you converted that night?

Well, you know, I have godly parents and godly teachers who taught me the story of Jesus. But I guess at 22 years of age I finally came to the place where Dwight realized he wasn't enough for himself . . . and that a personal friendship with God is the only thing that is going to matter in my life.

What kind of walk has your spiritual life taken since you accepted the NET '98 speakership?

First, I believe that God has been creating an intensification in my spiritual walk. I believe He's at times gotten in my face and said, “Listen, boy, do you understand what we are doing here? Do you understand what I am asking, what I am calling you to do?”

Second, there's been a sense that God has been dealing with me in the issue of humility and calling me to come to the place in my life in ministry where He is all-in-all. He's saying to me, “Dwight, unless I am front and center, I will never be able to do what I have always dreamed of doing.”

I am sensing that there is a release coming. There are people all over this country praying for me. More than anything else, I want it to be as John the Baptist said: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Every Sabbath you speak to a few thousand people in one community. Beginning Friday night, October 9, you'll be speaking to hundreds of thousands of people on six continents. Don't you just want to scream?

Yes! You couldn't have put it more succinctly. Yes, it is awesome. It just boggles and blows the mind. And I would panic and just walk away from

If ever a generation was positioned by God to hear His passionate pleading for a personal friendship, this is the generation.

this thing save for this one line stuck in my mind. Ellen White: “All His biddings are enablings.” The *only* way NET '98 is going to succeed is if God empowers NET '98. . . .

I am deeply indebted and I believe the SDA Church is indebted to Mark Finley and the vision and the passion through which he has called this church to the world. There is no question that NET '98 has the honor and privilege of building on the strong shoulders of that man and his two previous teams.

Eschatology has traditionally been a significant part of Adventist evangelism, and some have criticized the heavy, sometimes sensational emphasis on current events. Do you share that concern?

The evangelists who are out there using the apocalyptic beasts and the prophecy emphasis—God is mightily using them, and it is not my place to second-guess them for a single moment.

NET '98 is going to go to the same world, the same civilization, but is intentionally going to shift the focus from the apocalyptic to the relational simply because I believe that we are living now in the most broken generation in the history of this planet, bar none. I took a summer sabbatical to study this generation, Generation X. The generation that comes from the most broken homes. The generation that comes with the most latchkey kids. The generation that comes with the most dysfunctional families. The generation that comes with the most economic instability tied in with the social dysfunction. And by the way, because of MTV, the entire planet is into the same mind-set—the brokenness, the sense of relational longing, is not unique to the United States.

PHOTO BY DAVID SHERWIN

NET '98 at a Glance

Title: “The NeXt Millennium Seminar: Finding a Forever Friendship With God”

Dates: October 9–November 14, 1998, five nights a week

Speaker: Pastor Dwight K. Nelson

Uplink Site: Pioneer Memorial church at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Message: “The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415).

Meeting Length: 60 minutes

Broadcast Time: 7:15 p.m. ET Optional praise segment and announcements
7:30 p.m. ET Main program

Satellite Footprint Coverage Area: NET '95 North America

NET '96 North America, Western Europe, South America

NET '98 North America, Western Europe, South America, Australia, Asia, Africa, Russia, India

Registration: Contact your conference NET '98 coordinator, or register online at <http://www.net98.org>

Offering: April 25 (United States) and May 30 (Canada)

It is global. It is Tokyo, Beijing, Moscow, and Bonn.

If ever a generation was positioned by God to hear His passionate pleading for a personal friendship, this is the generation. The time has come for us to get serious about what Ellen White wrote in *Christ's Object Lessons*: "The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love" (p. 415).

NET '98 is going to build the relational portrait of God, and from that portrait, having established a personal relationship, will then move across some of the windswept apocalyptic summits of Scripture and find this God of love at the heart of every major teaching and at the heart of every major prophecy.

So you'll start with the relational side?

We'll stay with the relational side. What has to get trumpeted is the theme: "Finding a forever friendship with God."

How important is the first week of this series?

Absolutely critical.

Are your messages primarily designed to reach the person who already believes in the Bible as the Word of God and in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?

No. The message will lead to that embrace. The appeal to accept Jesus as Saviour won't be given until the end of that first week. I'm going to say, "Who is this God? This God who is not someone to be afraid of, but someone to be a friend of."

The first NET event, NET '95. You have said that when you first heard about the concept, you didn't think it would work. Why did it work for some people?

Well, when we thought about doing it at Pioneer [Memorial church, on the Andrews University campus], I said, "Listen, who is going to come to a screen? Nobody!"

Two reasons for why people came. Number one, the overriding reason is the power of the Spirit that drew. We are drawn only when God draws us. But number two, apparently in this

high-tech age people are no longer put off by what we would have thought of as the impersonal medium of a video screen. It could be that the flip side in fact is true—that people are actually drawn to the technology and prefer an "anonymity" with the person up front, but are still able to enter into the lecture material intellectually.

I didn't think it would work, but it worked.

Now, you don't expect this medium to work for everyone.

Absolutely not. One size does not fit all. Not in Christianity. Not in Adventism. Not in evangelism.

Certainly there are many positives about NET evangelism—the chance to reach massive audiences, the chance to rally together as a world church, and frankly, a chance to bring some continuity and balance to a lot of churches that don't have either. Are there any negatives about NET evangelism?

Yes. The biggest negative that I can think of is that we rely on technology to save souls. And I quite frankly am concerned that our community of faith

Gearing Up for NET '98

Here are some resources that will help you and your church make the most out of this fall's series.

Reaching Children

The first NET '98 children's materials package will be available for churches to help children ages 4-7 and 8-11



EXPLORING THEIR WORLD: A treehouse is the setting for the video portion of the children's package. Photo by Dick Dower.

learning styles so every child will feel welcome and involved.

establish a loving, grace-oriented relationship with Jesus, their "forever Friend." The 27-session package includes both printed and video materials geared to lively, action-oriented learning using different kinds of intelligences and

For more information or to order, contact Seminars Unlimited, 1-800-982-3344 or the NET '98 Web site (<http://www.net98.org>; user name—church; password—89 ten).

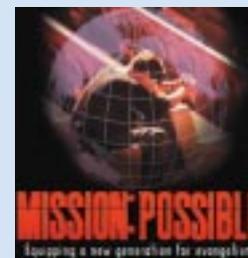
Also, three children's ministries conventions planned by the NAD will feature training seminars by Donna Habenicht, Ed.D., on conducting NET '98 for children. To register, call 1-800-328-0525.

Reaching Young Adults

Seeing is believing.

Are the youth and young adults doing evangelism at your church? For those who see the need but don't know where to start . . . It's here! Youth and young adult leaders now have access to suggestions and answers in a print and video kit, *Mission Possible*. This video will feature "on fire" young adult ministries from across North America.

Call now for your video package at the great price of \$25, plus shipping and handling. 1-800-328-0525 or 1-800-982-3344.



The Program

- 7:15 p.m. ET: Optional 10-minute upbeat praise segment (singers, keyboards, and guitars), plus announcements.
- 7:30 p.m. High-tech intro with music.
- Welcome from a young adult host.
- Music.
- Video vox pops: "On the street" interviews about the evening's subject with people in the world's major cities.
- 7:55 p.m. Message from Dwight Nelson (35 minutes).

called the Adventist Church could be lulled into a sense of fatal reliance on technology.

So there's a danger that local churches might think that by purchasing satellite equipment they have done their evangelism for that year?

Absolutely, that's my point. If we think that by putting up a screen in our churches we are reaching our communities, we've got another thing coming. It's time to wake up and smell the roses. And the fact of the matter is that nothing can ever supersede or replace one-on-one radical Christ-loving of our neighbor. The parable of the good Samaritan, the parable of the sheep and the goats—both parables are God saying to us, "Folks, what matters most is how you treat people."

Twenty-seven nights. Why so many? Why not just lead a good study on Jesus Christ for a few nights and then let local churches cover some of the finer points of Adventist beliefs?

Well, that's certainly a viable option. My friend George Vandeman mastered that particular technique.

On the other hand, there are times in the life of the corporate community when a systematic retelling of the old, old story not only effectively communicates to our friends and neighbors but also reminds us and refreshes us with the systematic beauty of the truth about God.

But couldn't local churches do that? Is the problem really that the local churches can't be trusted to fol-

low up on what you would lead with?

I hope that is not the problem. I hope nobody in the planning stages ever thought that kind of a thought. I certainly do not subscribe to any premise that

would suggest that somehow the local church is incompetent in being able to be a shining light for God in its community.

What's the best way that local churches can retain those who will make decisions for Christ during NET '98?

The one best way—the vital first step—has got to be instant bridging and bonding with the attendees. If the local church sits back for 27 nights, watches the screen, enjoys the program, sees people come forward, and celebrates on the sidelines, we have set ourselves up for just as instantaneous a revolving back door.

It is vital—absolutely essential—that the local church bridge and bond immediately. As pastor of a local church, my task is to make certain I am creating opportunities for relationship building between my members and the new guests who are coming. NET '98 is a relational message. How tragic it would be if there is not a concomitant relational mission. Jesus always preceded His relational message by His relational mission.

Mark Finley spoke at the previous two NETs. Compare your speaking style to Mark Finley's.

The old analogy about snowflakes is just as true about the disciples of

Jesus. Mark is a professional evangelist, and God has used him to open up countries around the world. Dwight is a pastor who does evangelism, but who lives night and day in the bloodied-up trenches of parish survival. I live with people, 3,000 of them, and I've lived with them for 15 years. So this isn't a good and a bad, a better and a worse. It's what's different.

Apart from the speaker, what else will be different about NET '98?

We're going to 60 minutes. We're cutting this program down. We want this to be fast-paced, power-packed, but limited. If CBS can tell the news on Sunday nights in 60 minutes, why can't we?

Are you cutting out elements like health tips and skits as well?

Yes. For that reason. The lecture will be the dominant focus. As a consequence of the shortened time, music will be decreased.

Whether intentionally or not, any event like this will reach one age group better than any others.

Statistics show that previous NETs seem to have best reached the silent generation—ages 51 to 66. There's been a lot of discussion—in some cases, confusion—about what age group NET '98 is trying to reach most. In last summer's promotional materials and offering appeals Generation X was specifically mentioned. Have the plans changed?

The plans have not changed; the

NET '98 Web site

Features on the rapidly expanding NET '98 Web site (<http://www.net98.org>) include: pastor's manuals, NET '98 news and information for churches, materials for youth and young adult evangelism, children's ministry, a message board, and link features to acquaint secular online users with NET '98 speaker Dwight Nelson.



Of Baseball, Statistics, and Gen Xers

BY GLENN AUFDERHAR, NET '98 COORDINATOR

It is said that “figures don’t lie, but liars do figure.” The problem with that statement is it tends to impugn the motive or character of anyone who makes a mistake interpreting statistics. Within church circles more mistakes may be made by honest but unformed interpreters than by those who intend to mislead.

If you have no background in baseball and don’t like the game, you could get really negative about Ken Griffey, Jr. Last season he played in 157 games, got paid \$7.5 million, came up to bat 608 times, struck out 121 times, committed six errors, was thrown out four of the 19 times he tried to steal bases. And he hit only 56 home runs.

To the uninitiated who has never swung a bat at a 95-mile-an-hour fastball, to a person who is not a baseball fan, to the pessimist who sees a “half empty” glass, those stats may appear dismal.

However, when one learns that only four people in the history of baseball have ever hit more home runs in a single season, even the uninitiated can begin to understand why Ken Griffey, Jr., is one of the premier players of the game. Even the pessimist can appreciate the fact that though he hit just 9.2 home runs for every 100 times at bat, he deserved being voted the Most Valuable Player for the American League last year.

Some have wondered if NET '95 and NET '96 were useful in reaching youth and young adults. Some have pointed out that 17 percent of America’s population is in the age range of 19-30, and that in an earlier NET only 13 percent of the baptisms came from this age group. Before interpreting the statistics negatively, one might do well to look around to see if anyone is doing anything on a large scale that is more successful.

A little careful evaluation may prove that those are Hall of Fame numbers. Yes, the latest action thriller that spends \$50 million on special effects and advertising can pack the theaters—sometimes. The latest rock craze can cause a stampede. But both carry a strong appeal to the natural inclinations. And both environments may be associated with other enticements that are addictive.

But look at Christ and those reformers who have attempted to lift Him up. In John 6, when Jesus shared the

reality of the challenge has grown. When we started out, NET '98 was going to have the same satellite footprint as NET '96, that is, the U.S. and Canada, a few nations in Europe, maybe a few down in Inter-America. Then Australia came on board, then the entire continent of

Africa, then the entire Far East, then India, then Russia, and perhaps other countries. So now, instead of looking at the Western world, we are looking at six continents, 40 languages.

Now, there is no question that NET '98 brings a younger speaker to the lectern this time around. There is also

test of discipleship, “many . . . walked no more with him” (verse 66). In the educational world we are keenly aware of progressive maturation and the readiness for learning. Is it possible the same exists in spiritual matters?

If Christ Himself were here, I’m not sure what percentage of His baptisms would come from Gen Xers. I know how many He would try to attract—100 percent. We can also be sure His efforts would include only methods beneficial to spiritual growth.

That the baptismal candidates in NET '95 included 13 percent from the Gen Xer age group testifies to several things:

1. There are still young people who will defy peer pressure and turn their backs on the appeals to self-interest and follow Christ.

2. There are churches where simple Christian love and fellowship assimilate youth into the church family and offer leadership opportunities.

3. The power of the simple, straightforward gospel of Jesus is timeless and appeals across the spectrum of generations—it is, in fact, the *everlasting gospel*.

I suspect Ken Griffey, Jr., is going to try to surpass 60 home runs in the 1998 season. He’ll fine-tune, study minute details of the delivery of opposing pitchers, yes. Radically change his hitting style? Probably not.

Can we as a church do a better job reaching the youth and young professionals? Of course. Should we radically overhaul the message or the most successful methods? Probably not.

As a church we should be able to make NET '98 more effective in reaching all ages because through experience we have learned much that works and identified some things that need to be improved. But the first two NET events were the most effective tools to date in reaching the largest number of men and women for Jesus—including Gen Xers. Suggestions for improvements are welcome from all sources. The suggestions that have the best chance of being genuine improvements will probably come from those who have been active advocates for Jesus—bringing friends and family into a deeper relationship with Him.

Greater success will come not so much from new innovations, as from better execution of the basics: making friends for God, prayer walks, and Discover Bible schools. Churches that do all three will be winners of the triple crown when the fall classic ends.

no question that the leadership of the Adventist Church chose as a host site for NET '98 a campus congregation with 3,000 Gen Xers swirling around.

Obviously, NET '98 will tap into younger participants. The musicians are going to be younger. That’s who we are as a campus congregation. NET '98

Photo © PhotoDisc

is going to reach Gen Xers. I am convinced of it and praying with all my heart that the Lord will strengthen that bridge to this most broken of all generations. But NET '98, because of its global scope, cannot be narrow-banded, demographically speaking. We are going to be user-friendly for the young, but what we share together is going to be life-changing for all ages.

Music—it's such a fun issue. During the November 15 kickoff rally, you said, "The music won't embarrass you." Whom were you speaking to when you said that?

Everybody.

Is that realistic?

I think so. We are going to be sharing night after night the most compelling picture of God anybody can see. It won't be coming from me. It's from Scripture. As we put that picture together piece by piece, the music must accentuate the picture.

I don't want young adults to come and hear music that has absolutely no interface with life today. I don't want senior citizens to come and hear music that totally blows them away so that when I get up to speak they are not even ready, they are so distracted.

[The music] will be fresh and contemporary. The community of faith, of which you and I are a part, is a very gifted and creative community. There is new music coming out of the Adventist soul. Why not let some of that have expression as a fresh, new depiction of God that we'll be pursuing? Hey, I'm not going to say that it can't be old—have mercy. Some of the greatest music on earth is dusted with time.

Let me come from this direction. Of the young adults familiar with you, I haven't talked to any who aren't excited that you are speaking for NET '98. Your gift seems to cross the generations. Given the standard controversy about music and the fact that the music never sounds that great at the downlink

We have got to start building bridges with [non- Adventists] now.

sites anyway, have you considered just removing music from the program altogether and sticking with the other elements?

At some point along the way I am sure that thought has crossed more than a few of our minds. But I am a musical being, and I believe most of us are. Music is within us. It flows within our spirits. So we go to this picture of God—a God by the way who loves music. What is it in Zephaniah—"He rejoices over us with singing"?

When Jesus tells the stories of the lost, all three stories have a celebration of joy when the lost come back. So heaven is into music, and in that context, let's have music. Music is not land mines that we have to run from. It is a gift from God, so let's tap into it.

This interview will be printed six months prior to opening night. What should Adventists be doing to prepare for NET '98?

A vital question. Two responses.

First, we have got to start building bridges with [non-Adventists] now. You cannot wait until opening night and drag them in and say, "Here's Dwight." You've got to go out and love people. And then let me come in with the relational paradigm.

Second, along with the loving there must be an intense praying. There is no question that God is setting the Adventist Church up for the most significant opportunity in the history of this movement. We have never before been given the six continents simultaneously. There may be 100 times after this, but this is the first. Who can say how long time will last? What we know is that God has earnestly called us to earnestly seek Him. So prayer, prayer, prayer.

Forward on our knees—that's the only way we can go. ■

Andy Nash is an Adventist Review assistant editor.



Defeat Is Impossible

BY ANDREA LUXTON

The following is a condensation of a devotional presented at the 1997 Annual Council of the General Conference.—Editors.

AS A TEENAGER I HEARD THE STORY of Eyam, a small village in north England. The time was the Middle Ages, and the plague had already swept through the south of England, leaving desolation and destitution in its wake. Thousands had died, and whole villages and small towns had been left almost empty. Eyam, however—with the rest of the north—had remained comparatively plague-free.

But one day an Eyam tailor received a bale of cloth from London. The stuff was wet, and so he hung it up to dry by the fire. Within days he was ill. And when he died, the village knew that the plague had finally reached them.

As one or two others became sick, many packed their bags in preparation to escape. But the local priest called the villagers together and reminded them what would happen to other villages if they left, taking the plague with them. He pleaded with them to sense their responsibility for others whom they didn't even know. Nobody should leave, he advised, and nobody should come in—until the plague had passed.

Almost every villager stayed, and in the year that followed, hundreds died, including the priest. *But the plague did not spread to other villages from Eyam, and thousands of other lives were saved by the villagers' self-sacrifice.*

I heard this story at a time when I was trying to understand and internalize the sacrifice of Christ and the reality of salvation. And it has stayed with me. In a very simple way, the parallels between this story of personal sacrifice for people unknown helped me to comprehend a little more of the mystery of God's salvation.

As I searched the Bible in connection with this message, I was struck by the way the theme of salvation is interwoven

throughout in a rich tapestry of images, relationships, actions, and words.

Three examples:

1. The Life of Moses

In the impetuosity of youth, Moses fell into the easy trap of thinking that *he* was the one to bring salvation to his people. Not that he consciously excluded the Lord—he didn't. But when he saw injustice he took action to “save” his fellow Israelites. But as his action became known, he fled to Midian.

How did Moses feel during those years of tending sheep in Midian? Was he angry at what he'd done? Did he feel he'd failed God? We do not know. What we do know is that when God appeared to him on Mount Horeb he was not ready to be part of another act of salvation, and found every excuse in the book to deflect God's purpose.

Fast-forward now to Exodus 32. The Exodus has taken place, and Moses, now a great spiritual leader, returns to that

Touching base with the Source

same mountain, this time to receive from the Lord the essence of the story of salvation. But as he descends the mountain, he discovers that the people, instead of seeing the current manifestation of divine power as the high point of their relationship with God, instead have fallen into total rebellion. They're dancing around a golden calf.

What I find most remarkable took place the following day. Approaching the Lord for the people, Moses uttered a most heartrending prayer: “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (Ex. 32:31, 32).

Moses' love of his people at this point is amazingly reflective of God's love and sacrifice for us. Yet his words also suggest that the great leader still does not quite grasp the fact that though he can work with the Lord—even reflect the care of the Lord—he cannot bring about salvation by offering up himself. And so God gently reminds him: “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book” (verse 33). Eventually Moses would realize that the Israelites could never succeed—either physically or spiritually—unless God was with them.

Thus we find that notwithstanding the great truths of salvation revealed to him through the sanctuary and the laws given on the mount, Moses still needed to learn the meaning of this great theme on a personal level: that salvation can finally be accomplished only through the Lord. All he could do was reflect the glory of the Lord. His own actions could save no one.

2. The Experience of Job

Job was a good man, as God makes clear (Job 1:8). So it shouldn't surprise us that his troubles seemed to him quite undeserved. Yet through it all, Job maintained his faith in God's redeeming power. “I know that my Redeemer lives,” he says, “and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God” (Job 19:25, 26).

Notwithstanding such a ringing confession of faith, we see hints that Job's understanding of God and salva-

tion was still limited. For apart from seeing God as the cause of his distress, Job also believed that his deliverance would come from the righteousness of his own actions. “I will surely defend my ways to his face,” he says. “Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before him! . . . Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated” (Job 13:15-18).

God's response to Job and his

friends is one of the most far-reaching pictures of Deity in the Bible. Image after image of His creative and protective powers emerges, speaking both of His strength and His personal care. And in that context God throws out a challenge to the patriarch: “Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?” (Job 40:9). If Job can answer in the affirmative, then God will admit that Job's own right hand can save him (verse 14).

Job's response comes at the end of the book: “My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5, 6).

The experiences of Moses and Job are not difficult to relate to. As a church we know that salvation is due to God's action only, and not our own. And yet how many good church members still struggle with these basic concepts when they move from theory to experience! Although we know salvation is a gift from God, how often do we still find members in tears because somehow they don't feel good enough! So they try harder and still feel they've failed.

All this leads me to the third Old Testament character I want us to visit.

3. David

David's experience of salvation was very personal, arising both from being forgiven and from *accepting* forgiveness.

For me, one of the most beautiful of David's psalms is Psalm 51, written after the prophet Nathan's visit. It is at once a cry for forgiveness, a recognition of the sinfulness of human nature, and an acknowledgment that it is only the Lord who can remove our guilt. God is a God of “unfailing love” and “great compassion,” he says. His judgment is just and His desire is for “truth in the inner parts” (verse 6). Ellen

base with *the Source of our salvation*

White often used this psalm as an example of true contrition, an experience of repentance that comes from the soul.

Salvation involves an honest recognition of guilt. But then must come freedom from that guilt, newness, cleanness, and joy.

To accept Christ's sacrifice must mean to let go of guilt, to accept the power of forgiveness, and in turn, to find the power to forgive. How simple and yet how difficult. "Here is where thousands fail," says Ellen White. "They do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His word. . . . None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them" (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 52, 53).

Have we as a church truly learned to sing of the joy of God's salvation?

The last section of Romans 8 captures for me the total spirit of salvation, showing how the past gives focus to the present and how the present

sets direction and opens possibilities for the future. It is a passage that boldly declares that *defeat is impossible*.

The importance of the past is expressed very simply: "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (verse 32).

But the past also gives evidence of the power of God in the present: "Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (verse 34). The power of Christ's present role lies in His earlier acts—His death and resurrection.

The present picture for Paul is one of confidence and assurance. In the context of Christ's past actions and what Christ is doing now, nobody can speak against the Christian. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (verse 31). Nowhere is there a sense of unworthiness. Christ's salvation is sufficient.

But this confidence of the present

also affects the future: "For I am convinced," Paul says, "that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verses 38, 39). The confidence that comes from this assurance of salvation must stretch into the future, encompassing all barriers to assurance.

How has our salvation transformed us? If we believe with Paul that defeat is impossible, we should show a corresponding confidence. There should be a difference about us. ■

* All Bible texts in this article are taken from the New International Version.

Andrea Luxton is president of Newbold College in Berkshire, England.



Following Directions

ROSY TETZ

Have you ever made popcorn in the microwave oven? It tastes pretty good. But the best thing about microwave popcorn is that you just put the package in the microwave and in a minute you have popcorn.

Yes, it's quick and easy—but *only* if you follow the directions. The directions aren't hard, but they are very important.

For instance, the directions say that you should remove the plastic wrapper before you put the package in

the microwave. If you don't take that plastic off, it might melt or burn.

The directions also say that you need to listen while the popcorn is in the microwave. You can hear the noise the popcorn makes, and when the popping noises slow down, you need to take the bag out of the microwave, even if the time isn't over yet. If you let the popcorn cook too long, it will scorch. Then you'll have to throw the whole thing in the trash.

And somewhere on the directions it always says "This side up." You have to



put the bag in the microwave with the correct side facing up. There is a special coating or lining on one side of the bag. That side has to be on the bottom of the microwave for the popcorn to pop.

There are several other directions about opening the bag carefully and having adult supervision and stuff like that. They are all there for a reason.

There is a psalm in the Bible that says, "Lord, you gave your orders to be followed completely" (Psalm 119:4, ICB). The person who wrote that understood how important it is to follow God's directions. The Bible is full of stories of people who followed directions. And there are also stories about people who didn't. We can see how much better things turn out when people follow directions.

The Bible says, "Happy are the people who keep his rules. They ask him for help with their whole heart" (verse 2, ICB). Jesus wants you to be happy. He wants you to follow directions. He will help if you ask Him.

Sins Washed Away at Clearstream Prison

BY HEATHER TREDOUX, DIRECTOR OF THE VOICE OF PROPHECY BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Set among the beautiful mountains of the Western Cape province, 95 miles (150 kilometers) from Cape Town, South Africa, this isolated prison has an unusual Adventist family within its walls. Brother Joel Mgcotyelwa (*M-goh-tye-lwa*), a Global Mission pioneer, started working among the prisoners four years ago. He used the Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School (VOP) lessons.

It was not easy for Adventists to gain access to the prison. Religious workers could visit only inmates who belonged to their church. After much perseverance, Adventists were permitted to visit VOP students.

Joel arranged a graduation of VOP students in 1996, assisted by Pastor S. B. Baduza and me. M. G. Steyn, head of prison chaplains in the Western Cape province, gave the welcoming address. After further study with Joel, several prisoners requested baptism.

The prison authorities required the inmates to write a letter to their former pastor requesting permission



CROSS EXAMINATION: The inmates were questioned by Pastor S. B. Baduza.

PHOTO BY HEIN VON HORSTEN

to be rebaptized. Some of the prisoners said that this would be difficult, as they had not belonged to a church when they came to prison, but had simply written down the name of any church because they were told to do so. Finally permission was given for the baptism to take place.

A suitable location for the baptism was also a problem. Other faith groups had used a bath at the prison. Joel and the prisoners earnestly sought another site. They wanted to stand with the minister in the water. They wanted to be baptized just as Jesus was baptized.

On previous visits I had noticed a clear mountain stream rushing through the valley near the prison. The correction facility took its Afrikaans name, Helderstroom (Clearstream), from this stream. I suggested that Joel ask prison authorities to use the stream for the baptism. But Joel pleaded with me, "You ask them. They won't say no to a woman."

It took some gentle persuasion, but permission was given. Prison officials asked that the baptism be conducted on a weekday rather than Sabbath or Sunday, because more guards would be available to accompany us. Authorities feared that the prisoners might use the



STARTING LIFE ANEW: The inmates had their sins washed away in baptism.

PHOTO BY HEIN VON HORSTEN

baptism as a "breakout" opportunity.

Finally the date was set for October 19, 1997. What a beautiful day it was! The prisoners indeed felt that their sins were washed down the stream and they were beginning a new life in Christ.

The Bible school received funding from Global Mission just in time to purchase Bibles for these new brothers in Christ. Many of the inmates had completed their VOP lessons by using borrowed Bibles. They were overjoyed to receive Bibles of their very own.

Surely these captives were set free at Helderstroom. With 31 new Adventists in the prison, Joel is teaching them hymns and the Adventist way of life so they will feel at home upon their release. Some have asked, "Is there an Adventist church at Hermanus or Cape Town? Where is it located? Will church members want us?"

Seventh-day Adventists Support Tobacco Tax Initiatives

BY WENDI SHULL, AN ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK CORRESPONDENT
WRITING FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recently joined with 22 denominations and associations supporting the Interreligious Coalition on Smoking and Health in urging United States president Bill Clinton to raise taxes on tobacco.

This is the single most effective method of discouraging some 3,000 young people each day from starting a drug habit that will prematurely kill 1,000 of them, according to a statement issued by the coalition.

Roy Branson, cochair of the coalition and a member of the Sligo Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland, called the imposition of the tobacco tax "an urgent moral imperative." "Churches

have historically led the fight against slavery and racial discrimination," said Branson as he challenged America's religious bodies to take an interest in saving the lives of a half million people a year.

In its statement, the coalition commended President Clinton for encouraging the 105th Congress to raise taxes on tobacco. However, it expressed concern that the tobacco tax increase will be spread out over the next 10 years, as was suggested by the president in his State of the Union address. In the view of the coalition, this would dissipate the public health impact of raising the price of tobacco products.

Along with the representatives from other religious groups, the Interreligious

Coalition urged the president to propose an immediate federal tax on tobacco of at least US\$1.50 a pack, and to earmark revenues from tobacco taxes for public health initiatives.

On January 21 the White House welcomed concerned religious leaders to the first national conference on religion and tobacco control. Participating in the conference was the Interreligious Coalition, comprised of 22 denominations and associations.

Meeting in the United Methodist Building, denominational officials from all regions of the United States heard Philip Wogaman, pastor of the Foundry Methodist Church (regularly attended by President and Mrs. Clinton), denounce the cynicism of tobacco executives in targeting children as young as 12. Brian Williams, legislative aide to Representative James V. Hansen of Utah, outlined the importance of religious communities communicating with members of Congress.

NEWS BREAK

NAD Supports Religious Freedom Bill

Adventist religious liberty leaders in North America are supporting the United States Congress's efforts to help stem the tide of religious persecution around the globe.

In a letter to U.S. representative Frank Wolf of Virginia, Clarence Hodges, North American Division vice president and director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, expressed support for religious freedom measures included in the Freedom From Religious Persecution Act (House Resolution 2431).

In his March 4 letter Hodges urged inclusion of a strong educational arm to help all nations see the benefits of true religious freedom. The proposed legislation includes provisions for economic sanctions against countries that enact or allow religious persecution. Hodges' letter stated, "An effective educational program can minimize the need for sanctions and other activities which may be more costly."

In response to Hodges' letter, representative Wolf stated, "HR 2431 will not eliminate religious persecution, but it will go a long way toward letting governments know that the United States government cares about this important issue. We cannot continue business as usual while men, women, and children are suffering for their faith around the world."

The sanctions proposed include withdrawing U.S.

taxpayer subsidies from the world's most murderous and brutal regimes. It applies to governments engaged in widespread persecution and provides for a ban on exporting instruments of torture and materials that would be used in prisons holding individuals for religious persecution.

"This bill is supported by a large number of religious organizations," Hodges says. "It provides for an office in the State Department to monitor this issue and report regularly to the president and Congress."

The bill comes in response to Congressional hearings that revealed that religious persecution continues around the world today. Current practices include abduction, enslavement, killing, imprisonment, forced mass relocation, rape, crucifixion, and other forms of torture.

"I have seen some of these victims," Hodges says. "I have seen destruction of churches. According to some reports from Sudan, children are taken from Christian families and given to non-Christians. Women and children are sold into slavery for as little as \$15 each. People are starving, hundreds of thousands are homeless and displaced because of their religion."

"We support this bill and every effort to enforce Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. All nations have signed this United Nations document, which promises the right to freedom of religion,

Wither Promise Keepers?

BY BILL KNOTT, AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE ADVENTIST REVIEW

It's something God raised up for a particular time, and He will take it away," Rev. Steve King predicted of the Promise Keepers movement last September 13, just three weeks before the Christian men's organization hosted a huge rally on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

A February 18 news release from the Promise Keepers' Colorado Springs headquarters caused some to wonder if the pastor's prediction of divine removal is already coming true. The statement announced the termination of all 452 employees as of March 31, 1998, with re-staffing only as "stable and sufficient donations are received."

Though Promise Keepers rallied more than 700,000 men to the nation's capital on October 4, 1997, for what was probably the largest religious event in American history, the future of the national organization is in doubt just six months later. Heavily dependent on millions of dollars in registration fees from its 15-18 annual "stadium events," the

organization nonetheless announced in October that all such events would be free in 1998. According to the plan voted by the PK board of directors, contributions and financial covenants with churches across North America were supposed to replace fee income.

Adventists who applaud the PK movement and those who are troubled by its potent mix of spiritual fervor and nationalism will find little to cheer in the recent announcement. The renewal of American families and the consecration of husbands and fathers is a work to which every Christian must be committed. And much remains to be done.

The spiritual hungers and adroit imaging that produced the Sacred Assembly have likewise not disappeared. Whether Promise Keepers or some successor organization "stands in the gap," Adventists will be appropriately cautious anytime we see emotional religion and political calculus converging to influence the course of the nation.

NEWS COMMENTARY

NEWS BREAK

freedom of worship, and freedom to change one's religion. We recognize persecution can come to any land and that no country has a perfect record. We call upon America to lead by example and call upon God's people to do His biddings while we can."

News Notes

✓ **Needed: Regional coordinators** for the North American Division's tutoring and mentoring project. The project requires a one-year commitment to develop tutoring programs in various cities in North America.

Applicants should have excellent written and oral communication skills, knowledge of community development, computer skills, ability to juggle multiple tasks, and willingness to travel. For more information call YouthNet at 1-800-331-2767.



Adventist Communication Network Broadcasts

Here are a few of the programs planned by the Adventist Communication Network for May 1998. Call 1-800-ACN-1119 for complete program listings, time, and channel information. All times shown are Eastern time.

May	2	Cross Training —family ministries, 6:00-8:00 p.m., satellite TBA
May	2	Together Again —roundtable discussion, 4:00-6:00 p.m., satellite TBA
May	6	First Wednesday —church news, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Galaxy 9, channel 2
May	9	Cross Training —children's ministries, 4:00-6:00 p.m., satellite TBA
May	9	Cross Training —Sabbath school teachers, 4:00-6:00 p.m., satellite TBA
May	13	Creating Health, Part I —"Nutrition Matters," 4:30-6:00 p.m., satellite TBA
May	20	Creating Health, Part II —"Prevention Matters," 4:30-6:00 p.m., satellite TBA
May	23-31	Florida Conference Camp Meeting , times and channels TBA

What's Upcoming

Apr.	1	Monthly Focus—Stewardship
Apr.	4	Missionary magazine promotion (<i>Signs, El Centinela, La Sentinelle, Message</i>)
Apr.	4	Stewardship Day
Apr.	11	Literature Evangelism Day
Apr.	18	Education Day
May	2	Community Services Day

The Language of Love

LESLIE KAY

We should have known better—Jennifer is our second child. But parents have short, sentimental memories. As the usual “kitty cats” and “bow-wows” dribbled from Jenny’s verbal faucet for a year and a half, my husband and I waited anxiously for the real thing. For sentences, for phrases, or at least English as a second language.

The wait is over. Primed by the hands of some mysterious inner clock, the faucet is suddenly gushing with verbiage, loud and unabated. Silence is forsaken, listening passé. Our soft-spoken sweetie has become an avid fan of the frequent filibuster.

Toddler instinct compels her to spring her most cryptic pronouncements on us when we are least capable of comprehending them. She approached me this morning while I was preparing breakfast.

“When Becky have birdie pottie?” she asked, peeking over the counter.

Preoccupied with a grill full of sizzling pancakes, I replied, “Sweetie, I don’t know anything about Becky having a birdie pottie.”

Jenny saw my difficulty and quavered, “Happy Birdie to you . . .” I told her it would be this Sunday.

It’s a well-documented fact that moms are incapable of conjuring a single coherent thought after 6:00 p.m. We try, but the rigors of the day have turned our brain cells into grape jelly. We should be taken off duty promptly and replaced with fresh reinforcements, say, an idle dad.

This is a fantasy, of course, so 6:01 found me standing at the sink washing dishes, my concentration impaired but my body still upright. Jenny sidled up and looked deeply and earnestly into my eyes. “Me hick,” she said solemnly.

I sighed. Who could have introduced this innocent child to the evils of class consciousness? True, we don’t live in an upscale suburb, and our front yard is not exactly manicured. It’s not even pedicured. It sports an ancient Caterpillar loader, rusting where it died six months ago, dirt dribbling from its lifeless bucket. And those Ford truck innards and bodies lying around in various stages of decay—my husband has promised me all that stuff is good for something. But does this make us hicks?

“Honey,” I comforted, “always remember—you’re not inferior to other children just because you live in the country . . .”

“Me tummy hick,” Jenny clarified.

One of these days I’ll catch on.

I sometimes wonder if our awkward, lisping forays into the language of heaven sound like toddler talk to the Lord. If so, He is a more skilled interpreter than even the most attentive mother. With divine empathy He “helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26, RSV).

I am too seldom appreciative of this intercession. Like a self-absorbed toddler, I’d rather hear myself talk than let God speak; dependence is not easily reduced to attentive silence.

A few years ago my husband and I became overwhelmed by the circumstances of our life. A new baby, a new job, a new home, too

much debt, too little sleep, too little time with God and with each other. We had become fragile; he withdrew, and I grew lonely and bitter.

One night after another interminable and fruitless “discussion,” I collapsed into bed in an agony of sorrow. This marriage of nine years was disintegrating before our eyes, and no amount of words was putting it back together again.

I could only whisper, “Oh, God, I don’t even know what to ask for anymore—that You change Don or change me. That You bring us back to our first love or take us through this to where You want us to be. You bring about what You know is best. Only let us fall into Your hands.”

It wasn’t eloquent, but I think this was language from a heart that was finally willing to listen to its Interpreter. Maybe I was ready at last for God’s kindergarten course in the language of love.

Jenny’s getting ready too. Tonight, as my husband and I deposited our little chatterbox into bed and kissed her good night, she reached out her soft arms and lisped, “Me hug and kiss Mama. Me wuv Mama.” No translation needed, honey. I happily submitted to her sweet embrace and left her room, subdued by the undeserved blessings of God.



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

Leslie Kay, her husband, and two children speak the language of love on a 20-acre mining claim near Chloride, Arizona.



They Shocked the Coaches and Stunned the Public

The story of two cousins

BY DAVID GROSSMAN

The following story is reprinted with permission from the Toronto Star of August 28, 1997. We present it as a testimony to the often unsung witness that Adventist students bear on the campuses of public colleges and universities all over North America and around the world.—Editors.

LAVELLE LINDO AND ELDEN FORSKIN LEAVE no doubt about where their priorities lie. The cousins and highly touted football players will not play for the York Yeomen* this season because, as Seventh-day Adventists, they strictly observe the Sabbath for 24 hours beginning at sundown each Friday and the York schedule includes eight Saturday afternoon games.

Seventh-day Adventists refrain from work, play and social activity during the Sabbath.

"Religion and God have to be put before football," said Lindo, a 19-year-old Mississauga [Ontario] native and psychology student who plans a teaching career. "I'd love to play football, but certain things, like holy days, take precedence, and as long as games are on Saturday afternoons, I'm out."

Lindo, a Toronto Star all-star wide receiver at Lorne Park Secondary School, said he and Forskin told York coaches Tom Arnott and Tom Gretes they wouldn't play after one day of practice.

A Misunderstanding

"There must have been some kind of misunderstanding, because we told the coaches that we weren't going to play on Saturday," said Lindo. "Maybe they thought we'd change our minds, but I guess we also thought something could be worked out with evening games or adjusting some games for other days."

Forskin, a highly recruited 20-year-old running back, said a choice had to be made.

"It's either my soul, my beliefs, and my religion or football . . . there's no option," he said.

"It was a very, very tough decision. I wanted to play and hoped some kind of miracle would happen, but realistically, it looks like my football career is over."

Both say schools need to examine options for devoutly religious athletes.

"It's unfortunate and a bit unfair for those who may not be able to participate or want to sacrifice religious beliefs," said Forskin, a kinesiology student. "It didn't really sink in until I got home, looked at my cleats, and realized that it was over, I couldn't play at the next level."

Arnott said he "respected and admired" the decision made by the two athletes.

"We're always disappointed when someone you expect doesn't come, but this is a different situation. They had a decision and at one time thought they could play, but their

*"Realistically,
it looks like my
football career
is over."*



NEVER ON SATURDAY: Elden Forskin and Lavelle Lindo as pictured in the *Toronto Star*.

commitment to religion was stronger than football, and there are lines you just don't cross. They have beliefs, and things just didn't work out," he said.

This situation isn't a first for Forskin. While at Lorne Park, he refused to play in a playoff game scheduled on a Saturday. The game was rescheduled.

Postscript: While pastoring in Toronto in the seventies, I became personally acquainted with the parents of Lavelle and Elden—Silford and Gloria Lindo (currently pastoring in Toronto) and Martin and Elaine Forskin. The parents, all members of my church at the time, were among the most supportive, affirming, and dedicated. Evidently, they have passed on the same spirit to their boys.

Apart from being featured in the Toronto Star (circulation about 500,000), the young men also appeared on radio to explain their unusual stand. In all their encounters with the press, they spoke without prior coaching, simply sharing with their interviewers and audiences from the heart. Listening to a tape the parents sent me of a call-in show on CFRB, the largest local radio station in Toronto, I could sense the enthusiasm—and admiration—in the voices of the two moderators as Lavelle and Elden fielded questions from the citywide listening audience.

When I called the Toronto Star last January to make arrangements for running this story, all I had to do to identify what I was after was to mention "the two fellas who would not play ball on Saturdays." And they knew immediately.

With sports commanding the attention it does today, I would doubt there are many people in Toronto (population 2.2 million) who did not follow the story of these two Adventists. Let's hope that the memory of their witness will still be fresh in the minds of many when the General Conference session convenes in the city's huge SkyDome just two years from now.—Roy Adams, Adventist Review associate editor. ■

** This is the football team of Toronto's York University, a school with an enrollment (on its two campuses) of a little more than 38,000 students.*

David Grossman is a sports reporter for the Toronto Star in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Photo credit (The two cousins): Paul Hunter/Toronto Star

A Letter to My Congregation

BY RICHARD HEATH*

I sit among you each Sabbath as we worship together and marvel at how different the experience is from years past.

>>Middle-aged now, I cannot recall a time when church was not in my weekly ritual. Born and raised an Adventist, I never really had the strength or the reasons to stop attending. More from habit than conviction, I was a product of my Adventist subculture. Not knowing any other system, I settled into a more or less comfortable routine. On Sabbath, when it was convenient, I would go to church--if I felt like it.

>>After many years of this charade, this lukewarm going through the motions,

Christ woke me from my spiritual slumber. But it was painful to discover that although I had awakened to new life in Christ, those years of ambivalence, wrong attitudes, and impure motivations hadn't just disappeared. I brought some unnecessary and even harmful baggage with me, including a large bag labeled "unrealistic expectations."

One of the first difficulties I encountered was a church "full" of people who seemed frighteningly unable to talk about spiritual things—at least to me. It amazed me that God's gift of grace through Jesus our Saviour wasn't talked about in those hallway conversations. But food and fashion, work and play, politics and parties, were. Was this "shyness" at discussing personal meaning in life just social convention, or was it being "ashamed of the gospel" (Rom. 1:16)?

Another difficulty that became apparent was that I didn't know how to serve you, the people with whom I worshiped. I have a deep aversion to doing or saying anything in front of more than three or four people—even if they're kids! This may seem ridiculous to those who haven't experienced this fear, but it is very real for me. Perhaps it stems in part from being "made" to perform up front as a child—something I greatly resented.

More ominous, though, were the many memories I had of critical remarks made by churchgoers about each other. These harsh comments, while not directed at me, served to gradually make me withdraw from helping out for fear of not measuring up to everyone's expectations. Why risk the wrath of a fellow member when it was "safer" to sit on the sidelines?

With my new appreciation of a personal God, however, came the inner

PHOTO © PHOTODISC

longing to share my new love of spiritual things. More than this, I also began to feel the desire to share by serving you—my newly cherished church. But I was frustrated by the barriers I felt.

Then God, in His patient mercy, started to teach me the meaning of community in my church. It began to occur to me that with these old attitudes I was in essence judging you—my fellow church members—and holding you to a standard that I didn't apply to myself. Now I realize it was *I* who was accusing you of being critical and it was *I* who must seek to initiate and guide conversation toward spiritual things.

This awakening into the true meaning of Christian community has opened a whole new way of perceiving you. Now we are fellow travelers on the road to the kingdom. I want never to add to the burden of one of you walking beside me; my deep desire is to help bear your burden and encourage your weary soul. I look at each one of you in a new and more holy light. I now see that God is leading each of you through the twists and turns of your lives toward the same goal He is leading me—unity with Him. Understanding that brings a profound sense of meaning to our fellowship.

I have humbled myself before God, and He has revealed to me much about you. Where once I saw you as just faces in the crowd, I now see you as searching, struggling children of God—just like me. I listen to your prayers before the whole congregation, and I'm moved deeply. As you, Tom or Kathy or Richard, open your hearts before God in adoration and praise and gratitude, the silent prayers of my heart are joined with yours and ascend to heaven together. As you pray for grace, mercy, deliverance, forgiveness, and guidance, I feel my life blending and bonding with yours, since I am pleading for those very things myself. I thank God for His witness through your lives.



And I feel the Holy Spirit near.

I watch you, Diane and Larry and Jennifer, as you teach my precious children in Sabbath school. So gentle and kind and warm to them, I see Jesus in your faces as you serve in this often unappreciated role. And I thank God for your selfless joy at doing this.

I stand next to you as we sing great hymns of faith and praise—every hymn a sermon—and find deep meaning in this expression. We sing of the place of quiet rest near to the heart of God, and I sense the longing in our hearts to be there. We sing of serving a risen Saviour, and I am blessed to know that He lives within you. I sheepishly admit that I may not even remember your names, but coming closer to God together brings me closer to you.

I listen to the message with you, immersing myself in a search for meaning, seeking with you the truth that God is trying to teach through the speaker's words. There is something in that sermon that God wants me to hear. I won't allow myself to be distracted by the style of delivery, poise of the presenter, or apparent time spent in preparation. No matter who the speaker, I lift my heart to God with you to ask that God will use the words to His glory and for His purpose.

With my new vision of community, I've discovered meaning even in those awkward moments when a critical remark is heard. This is no opening to point out mistakes and weaknesses in others. I now realize this awareness of failing is an invitation from the Holy Spirit to intercede on behalf of that individual for grace and understanding. This new attitude frees me from the temptation to judge (after all, our Lord is both judge and standard—not me) and calls me to the privilege of prayer. The focus is changed from condemnation to reconciliation, from self to the cross. This must please Jesus, as opinions and agendas become lost in His call to oneness and unity.

My new view of the body of Christ

is much larger now. It includes all who claim the blood of Christ as their only hope. This group obviously extends far beyond the physical walls of my church to embrace those from all faiths and levels of understanding who have surrendered to the call of Christ.

With joy I discovered that you *are* having hallway conversations about how much Christ means in your life. And I understand now that it was often your gentle unwillingness to offend that caused you not to speak to me about this reality. Now I have a widening circle of fellow believers with whom I share intimately the joy and peace that Christ has brought to our lives. And the sense of community with you, through the Holy Spirit, grows.

Worship now has nothing to do with being entertained. It has become an ever-deepening expression of gratitude and adoration to the One who created, sustains, and saves me. Worshiping with you each Sabbath is simply the highlight of a week in which each moment, each activity, and each thought is itself worship, for worship is a state of mind and existence, not a place. And each Sabbath when I join with you to express and to share this experience, on this unique day that God Himself has blessed for this very purpose, our hearts are drawn to each other as we draw nearer to the very heart of God.

I was won to Christ in the lonely confrontation with the living God. The walk with God often feels isolated, and the vital union with Him is intensely personal. But there is strength and comfort and community in knowing that as you and I live each moment by the power of the Spirit and the shed blood of Jesus, we travel *together* to the eternal kingdom, to the very presence of God. ■

* The congregation and people are real. The names, including the author's, are not.

Richard Heath is a pseudonym.

The New Community: Targeting Atlanta's Unchurched Xers

As I drove the two hours on Interstate 20 from Gadsden, Alabama, to Atlanta, Georgia, I eagerly anticipated worshipping with The New Community (TNC). Although this was my first visit to this freshly planted Gen X-targeted Adventist church, I was no stranger to some of the young adults in attendance, including my own brother.

Before becoming involved in TNC, he and his wife had not attended church regularly in more than three years and had no plans to return unless they found a church that was relevant to them and would use their spiritual gifts. But through their friendship with Alex Bryan, TNC's 27-year-old pastor, they gave church another try. They are now both worshipping weekly and are actively using their spiritual gifts for the church's benefit.

I walked into the foyer outside the Holiday Inn conference room where they met,* and chatted with Alex. He first envisioned this church in 1991 while attending Southern College (now Southern Adventist University) and later proposed the idea to Georgia-Cumberland Conference leadership while attending the seminary at Andrews University. "If you ever want something to be accomplished," says Alex, "you have to make it happen."

TNC's stated mission is "helping friends become fully devoted followers of Christ."

After mingling a few minutes, I noticed a table with various fruits, crackers, and cheese. Since the service didn't start until 11:30 and I had just driven two hours, food wasn't a bad idea! But physical food wasn't the only item on the menu. I was drawn inside to the praise music led by keyboardist David Bryan.

During the announcements I was impressed to hear that the spiritual gifts class was totally full and will be taught again in two months. TNC is building ministry teams with the aim of involving each member to use their particular talent, passion, or spiritual gift to branch out and minister to the unchurched Atlanta community. Later I learned that knowing and utilizing your God-given gifts may be a prerequisite for church membership. The idea makes sense: Why go to church if all you are doing is filling a pew and then going home? Scanning "The Lowdown" (the service program), I noticed that TNC had many activities for everyone: women's ministry meeting, Kids' Community (children's ministry),

weekly small group meetings, a Thanksgiving dinner, etc.

Clad in corduroys and cardigan, Alex was one of the first pastors I'd seen who didn't wear a tie while delivering the message. The room was a potpourri of different dress—some sporting jeans and tennis shoes, others wearing suit and tie. I soon forgot about apparel as Alex spoke passionately about "living life for the long haul."

He relayed the parable in Matthew 13 about the pearl of great price, which for the believer is ultimately the kingdom of heaven. He described how some people are searching for the pearl but get so caught up in the search that they lose sight of the goal and aren't happy unless they continue searching. Others are fed a false pearl, or false religion. Some people in and out of the church are just window-shoppers. "That's the problem," he said. "There is a difference between finding and discovering and buying and owning; the satisfaction comes with the purchase. . . . Christianity is a lousy hobby, but a great life."

I really gained a blessing from the service and wanted to see how others felt. Said Frank

Small: "It [TNC] is the best thing that ever happened to my Christian experience." Frank grew up Adventist and always went to church, but "never got much out of it." After attending a church leadership seminar at Willow Creek Community church near Chicago, Frank and other members are fired up about using their talents. Frank involves himself by keeping the member database and running the sound system.

This growing church appears to have a strong sense of community and is seeking to involve each member with the ultimate goal of reaching Greater Atlanta's unchurched with the saving grace of Christ and the Advent message. From a small core group last year to nearly 100 now, they are well on their way. I look forward to visiting again.

* TNC now rents a church facility for Sabbath services from another denomination.



Mystery Visitor A is a twentysomething male.



The Church in Session

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG

In last month's column we looked at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), one of the first examples of New Testament Christians working together to deal with issues of the "universal church." This council wasn't convened to deal with local problems. On the contrary, once a decision was reached, the book of Acts records that messengers went from Jerusalem to communicate that decision to churches everywhere. Acts 16, for example, says that as Paul and Silas "went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem" (verse 4, NKJV). Everywhere they went they gave them "decrees to keep." It appears that the council's decision was not only binding; it was binding everywhere.

Seventh-day Adventists view the Jerusalem Council as "a most valuable apostolic model for the exercise of authority within the church at large" (*Ministry*, supplement, May 1995). What happened at that Jerusalem meeting is a biblical example of how we as a church should deal with issues that affect us on the worldwide level. And in fact, we use that model every five years at General Conference sessions, and for matters of a more regional nature, at every conference and union session.

Of course, the General Conference session doesn't claim to mirror perfectly the early form of ecclesiastical authority, if for no other reason than that the New Testament doesn't provide us with a fully developed system of church government. It lays out only a broad pattern, one that we attempt—through God's grace—to follow. But just as the Jerusalem Council showed a type of "representative" government (people representing various congregations came to the meeting to speak for their constituents), we seek to do the same. This is essentially what happens at church sessions on every level.

At the General Conference session every five years, church members, speaking through representatives from the world church, exercise their authority on matters of concern to the worldwide body of believers. Because not every member can go to the General Conference session and directly make his or her views known, churches select spokespersons who represent these congregations.

The process begins at the local church, which sends delegates to the conference constituency meeting. At these meetings delegates elect their executive committee and conference officials.

Similarly, the conference executive committee and elected officials select delegates to represent their congregations (constituencies) at union sessions, where the executive committee and leaders for the union are elected. At the General Conference session, delegates who are selected by the unions and represent the members in those unions discuss and make major decisions regarding the world church. In fact, vital issues such as changes to the *Church Manual* can be decided only by a General Conference session, because of its impact on the entire church.

The process begins at the local church.

Because the General Conference in session is made up of delegates representing all the unions around the world, unions are, in one sense, the highest constituent body in the church. Divisions don't have their own constituencies, but are rather geographical divisions of the General Conference. For that reason, division officers are not elected by division executive committees, but rather by the world church at a General Conference session, or between sessions by the General Conference Executive Committee.

The General Conference policy book states: "It is therefore understood that all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world will recognize the General Conference in session as the highest authority under God."

Far from being some sort of tyranny, the most crucial decisions regarding the denomination as a whole are made by people like you—the member in the pews—selected as delegates to a General Conference session; not by a few "higher-ups" with "kingly authority."

How important it is, then, for all members to make sure that solid, Bible-believing Christians are elected to positions of authority in the church's organization and its institutional boards. Those whom you choose will make a major impact on the decisions made.

Since lay members have a far greater responsibility than is frequently understood, my appeal is to take that responsibility seriously.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference.



NAD Camp Meeting Schedule for 1998

Atlantic Union Conference

Bermuda	June 26-July 4
Greater New York	
English	June 26-28
Spanish	July 18-25
United	September 12
New York	June 19-June 27
Northeastern	June 26-July 4
Hispanic	May 24-31
Northern New England	June 26-July 4
Southern New England	June 19-27
Union: Franco-Haitian	July 31-Aug 9

Canadian Union Conference

Alberta	July 3-11
British Columbia	July 24-August 1
Manitoba-Saskatchewan	July 3-11
Maritime	July 24-August 2
Native American	
Alberta (Bowden)	July 3-11
British Columbia (Litton)	July 24-August 1
British Columbia (Port Hardy)	May 22, 23
Newfoundland	July 20-25
Ontario	July 2-4
Quebec	July 14-18

Columbia Union Conference

Allegheny East	June 25-July 5
Allegheny West	June 24-27
Chesapeake	June 16-20
Mountain View	June 19-27
New Jersey English	June 19-27
New Jersey Spanish	June 28-July 4
Ohio	June 14-20
Pennsylvania	June 12-20
Potomac English	June 23-27
Potomac Spanish	July 1-5

Lake Union Conference

Illinois	
Central	September 4, 5
Hispanic	August 28-30
Northern (Broadview Academy)	June 12, 13
Southern	September 11, 12
Indiana (Indiana Academy)	June 7-13
Indiana Hispanic	June 19, 20
Lake Region (Camp Wagner)	June 19-27
Michigan	
Hispanic	May 22-25
Lower (Cedar Lake)	June 26-28
Upper (Camp Sagola)	August 7-9
Wisconsin	June 19-27
Wisconsin Hispanic	August 20-23

Mid-America Union Conference

Central States	June 9-13
Dakota	June 12-20
Iowa-Missouri	May 26-30
Kansas-Nebraska	May 29-June 6
Minnesota	June 19-27

Rocky Mountain

Western Slope	May 26-30
Eastern Slope	June 9-13
Wyoming	July 14-18

North Pacific Union Conference

Alaska (Interior)	June 19, 20
Alaska (Palmer)	August 11-15
Alaska (Prince of Wales)	August 20-22
Alaska (Vank Island)	June 12, 13
Idaho	June 9-13
Idaho Hispanic	June 12, 13
Montana (Mount Ellis Academy)	June 24-27
Native American	
Alaska (Dillingham)	January 22-24
Alaska (Nome)	January 29-31
South Dakota (Pine Ridge)	May 29-31
Oregon	
Valley View (Gladstone)	June 19, 20
Hispanic (Gladstone)	July 15-28
Upper Columbia (Walla Walla College)	June 17-20
Black Convocation	May 13-17
Family Fellowship Festival	
(Upper Columbia Academy)	November 13, 14
Hispanic (Walla Walla College)	June 19, 20
Washington (Auburn Academy)	June 18-27
Black Convocation	
(Camp Berachah)	May 13-17
Hispanic (Auburn Academy)	June 18-27

Pacific Union Conference

Arizona (Prescott)	June 12-20
Central California	July 16-25
Nevada-Utah (Lake Tahoe)	August 10-15
Nevada-Utah (Springville)	June 22-27
Southern Nevada Convocation	
(Las Vegas)	May 15, 16
Northern California	July 23-31
(Camp Sagola)	August 7-9
Southeastern California	August 1

Southern Union Conference

Carolina	May 24-30
Florida	May 22-31
Georgia-Cumberland	May 27-30
Gulf States	May 22-30
Kentucky-Tennessee	May 29-June 6
South Atlantic	June 7-13
South Central	June 5-13
Southeastern	June 18-27

Southwestern Union Conference

Arkansas-Louisiana (Gentry)	June 2-6
Arkansas-Louisiana	
(Southern Louisiana)	March 19-22
Arkansas-Louisiana Filipino Convocation	
(Nameless Valley Ranch)	April 3, 4
Oklahoma (Wewoka)	July 17-25
Southwest Region (Lone Star Camp)	June 12-21
Texas (Austin)	July 25
Texas (Houston)	March 21
Texas (Jefferson Academy)	May 16
Texas (Keene)	May 29, 30
Texas (San Antonio)	February 21
Texas (Valley Grande Academy)	April 25
Texas Korean Convocation	June 12-21
Texas Spanish	
(Nameless Valley Ranch)	May 27-30
Texico (Albuquerque)	June 3-6
Texico El Paso Convocation	August 21, 22
Texico Northern (Lake Hopewell)	July 17, 18

You Got the Love?

JOHN S. NIXON

It's easy to tell which major sport is in the ascendency in America—just check the endorsements. There was a time when baseball was the national pastime, but basketball has now become the most popular sport. Round-ball players are everywhere you look.

A few years ago the Reebok shoe company aired a commercial that featured a group of unknown amateurs on a nondescript basketball court with the following voice-over:

"The scouts can get you a scholarship, the coaches can get you on the team, the playoffs can make you a star, but only the love can make you a player. You got the love?"

To anyone who has ever played basketball, there's something about the game itself that captures you. It's nice to win, and consistent losing can be hard to take. But there's something more.

When I was growing up in the inner city, I was infected with "the love." There was an element of personal devotion about basketball, and it wasn't confined to the playground or the gymnasium. Every sphere became a makeshift ball and every cylinder an impromptu basket. Scrap paper wasn't safe around me, and empty trash cans held secrets others didn't seem to know. It was sometimes difficult to get up in time to make Sabbath school, but on Sunday mornings we were up early to get to the courts before they were taken.

It wasn't the glory of playing before spectators or the competition with others; it was the love of the game itself, the speed, the artistry, the coordination—eye to hand and player to player. It was the awesome power of a breakaway dunk, the perfect timing of a blocked shot, the intuition of a no-look pass, the sheer precision of a pick-and-roll, the feel of the ball as it leaves your hand when you know it's going in, the sound of the cords congratulating you with "string music" as sweet as any symphony. The crowd gets caught up in the excitement, but only a player knows "the love."

And he or she recognizes it in other players, even on the opposing team. They may be scoring against you, but you watch with a strange mixture of respect and regret, both anticipating and dreading the next time they get the ball, loving and hating them at the same time.

Some years ago the Atlanta Hawks fined their own

players for applauding from the bench while Larry Bird scored 63 points against them. They couldn't help themselves. It was "the love."

Still, games and sports are too much with us as a society. We devote far too much time and money to the pursuit of athletics in general. After all, it's only a game. You may love it, but it cannot love you in return. It can occupy your time, but it cannot fill your need. As we mature in Christ, we learn to set our affections on more meaningful

things and keep the lesser things in their proper place.

Yet the pattern of the love of sport becomes instructive when applied to things that really matter, things that can change people's lives. Especially in the context of a church with a strong legal history, this emphasis is important. We are commended to the words: "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:37-40, NIV).

For Jesus "the love" is the principal thing, not the law or the prophets. In God's kingdom it doesn't only matter *what* you do, but *why* you do it. Motives count with God. So Jesus gives us this principle and holds it up for all to see—love to God just because of who He is. Whether there's a crowd or no crowd, whether or not anyone is there to keep score, love God. Whether or not He answers your prayer the way you hoped, whether you are prospering or suffering, love God.

The second commandment is staked on the first: love to others because of God. "The love" is the principal thing. It's like the Reebok commercial: profession of faith can make you a church member, the nominating committee can get you on the board, the praise of people can make you feel like a star, but only "the love" can make you a Christian.

You got "the love"?

For Jesus "the love" is the principal thing.

John S. Nixon is senior pastor of the Oakwood College Seventh-day Adventist Church.



BY JOYCE NEERGAARD

Another Place, Another Time

The place is somewhere in Israel. The time: Sabbath morning some 2,000 years ago. You are preparing for the walk to the synagogue. Your movements are slow and deliberate. Pain is your constant companion. With great effort, you move out into the street and shuffle up the hill to the synagogue.

It seems everyone is talking about Jesus, and you wonder how much of the talk is merely idle rumor. He challenges the priests and religious leaders? He feeds crowds of people with just a meager supply of food? He makes blind persons see, those with disabilities walk, lepers clean—He even raises those who have died? Then certainly He can heal you.

You enter the synagogue, and over the heads of the crowd you hear a clear, resonant voice reading the scroll of Isaiah. With difficulty you push along the wall toward the women's section. In one corner you recognize a nest of regally attired religious leaders. The voice pauses, and as you turn your face upward you lock eyes with the Man reading the scroll.

You see sympathy in His eyes. No one has looked at you that way in a long time. For 18 years you have been told by religious leaders and physicians alike that your affliction is caused by a demon. It follows that you must have done something very wicked to deserve this punishment from God.

Then Jesus interrupts the service to address you, a woman. He calls you to Him. There is a deathly hush in the synagogue. You hear the words "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity" (Luke 13:12).^{*} You feel His hands on your poor bent back. A warm tingle shoots along your spine as you snap upright as if on a spring. There is no more pain! You can move! You praise God!

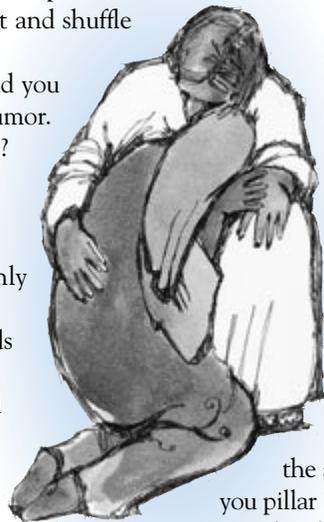
You turn to Jesus to thank Him, but you cannot speak. All you can do is kneel before Him and kiss His rugged hands. Suddenly the solemn quiet is broken by the accusing voice of the synagogue ruler addressing you.

"There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath" (verse 14). You shrink beside Jesus; He pulls you up until you stand straight at His side.

"You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?

Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" (verses 15, 16).

The congregation laughs with joy and sings praises to God. And your life is changed forever.



The place is here. The time is now. Although you do not live in the days of ancient Israel, in a sense you too have a bent back—some affliction to which you have become accustomed, but which brings continuous pain.

Perhaps it is the affliction of a painful relationship, the burden of a habit that is sapping your physical strength, a sin you want desperately to rid from your life, possibly the agony of a past mistake for which you refuse to forgive yourself.

You enter the Sabbath with anticipation, but the accuser of the brethren taunts you, "No rest for you, you pillar in the church. You do not deserve to be healed. You are such a fraud—you lead out, you teach, but you are a sinner too. Why should God heal you? Why on Sabbath? There are other days."

You shrink in despair at those words, for they are partly true. You are a sinner. But Jesus comes to your defense: "Should not this daughter of Abraham, this son of Abraham, be set free on the Sabbath?"

Satan cannot answer. He just fades away.

Jesus has come to spend Sabbath with you. Will you let Him heal you? Will you let Him give you rest? You move toward Him. He is putting His hands right over that affliction. Jesus is saying, "Daughter of Abraham, son of Abraham, you are free from your infirmity."

You are healed! All you can do is bow down before Him in gratitude. All you can do is praise His holy name. All you can do is give Him your heart forever. ■

^{*} Texts in this article are from the New International Version.

Joyce Neergaard is a nurse currently working on her M.P.H. She writes from Redlands, California. This article is condensed from a presentation made at the Southeast Asia World Ministers' Council.



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS



The Soul of the Sahel

ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

A PIONEERING FIELD

The Sahel Union Mission is a kaleidoscope of dialects, customs, tastes, and traditions. The majority of this area is Islamic, with a “missionary-minded, fundamentalist drive.” The second-largest belief segment is animist. At the bottom of the scale is a minority of Christians.

We’re trying tactfully and boldly to share the everlasting gospel. Global Mission is at the heart of our planning and action. The pioneer program is doing a remarkable work, and last year we had the joy of baptizing 2,182 people in the Sahel.

Women have been conducting literacy programs, health projects, and evangelistic campaigns. In the Togo Mission alone they won 179 precious people last year. The Sahel Union has had remarkable growth, and we really praise the Lord for the wonders He is doing in this challenging territory.

Please pray for the Global Mission work in our Islamic territories.

—Siegfried G. Mayr, president,
Sahel Union Mission



TELL ME STRAIGHT

In West Africa’s Sahel Union, there’s only one Adventist per 5,000 people.

A SANDY MISSION FIELD



GLOBAL MISSION TARGETS THE SAHEL: The Sahel, the semi-arid area of western and north central Africa, encompasses 2 million square miles. In these 11 countries bordering the Sahara, there are fewer than 14,000 Adventists in a population of 74 million. Among the people of Mauritania (left) the only Seventh-day Adventists are Hans and Sylvia Obenaus (above), who are setting up medical work on behalf of ADRA.

Adventist Health Ministry

The *Adventist Review* on-line is made available free through the sponsorship of the North American Division Adventist Health Ministry Department—coordinators for “The Year of Health and Healing.”

During this year, Adventist Health Ministry invites each Adventist congregation to reaffirm the church’s health principles and share them throughout their communities.

For more information and materials on the Year of Health and Healing, call the Adventist PlusLine at (800) SDA-PLUS or Adventist Health Ministry Department at 301-680-6733.