Our fundamental beliefs and day-to-day lives
Fresh 27

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

This issue of the Adventist Review is unlike any other in the 150 years of our history.

We Seventh-day Adventists think the teachings of the Bible are important. We believe the Bible is God's word to all humanity, telling us—if we will only listen—who we are, where we come from, and where God would like to take us.

Above all else, the Bible tells us what God is like—wonderful, all-powerful, in charge, and revealed in Jesus Christ, who was full of grace and truth.

Because the Bible teaches that the Sabbath, the seventh day, is God's command and gift, we Adventists set aside our work and play and worship on that day. Because the Bible rings with the assurance that Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again, will come back to this earth, we proclaim the Second Coming and live in hope.

So we Adventists from the beginning have been a people of the Book. Doctrines can't save us, but we take them very seriously because they encapsulate God's will—they pull together teachings that run through the Bible.

We also believe that truth is progressive, that God wants to reveal more of His will and to help us understand it more clearly. That's why the preamble to our 27 fundamental beliefs (see opposite page) keeps the door of knowledge open.

Those 27 were voted by the church in general session in 1980, when representatives from around the world met to consider and prayerfully discuss them.

The next year the Adventist Review put out a special issue, taking each article of faith in turn and elaborating on it.

In this issue we again devote the entire magazine to the 27. This time, however, we have changed the focus from theological to practical. Through artwork, poems, and comments, a variety of Adventists convey what the fundamental beliefs mean to them.

About 200 people contributed to this issue—the largest number by far of any issue in our history. You will see their amazing range—from researchers such as Tim Poirier of the Ellen G. White Estate to academy students and even young children. Frankly, I am delighted that so many wanted to get involved—it shows that our beliefs can be living reality, not dry dogma.

I thank everyone who helped. And especially Andy Nash, who took the initiative, and Roy Adams, who advised him.

What should you do with this issue? Read it, enjoy it, treasure it. Give it (or extra copies) to your neighbors and friends—it's so inviting they're sure to find much of interest.

The last word for creativity goes to Herman Roberts, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, who found a link with NET '98. Read that backwards and you get 89 Ten = 8+9+10 = 27! Dwight Nelson, are you there?

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Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church’s understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God’s Holy Word.

Ellen G. White:

“Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His Word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end.”—Counsels to Writers and Editors, pp. 38, 39.
1 The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

“Every man without the Word of God will become a law unto himself.”
—Pastor C. D. Brooks

 “[The Bible] becomes central...when it ceases to be a book and becomes a voice.”
—Jean-Claude Verrecchia, Mulhouse, France, in the January-March 1996 Collegiate Quarterly, p. 11

“You’ve got to know the Word if you want to sow the Word.”
—Pastor Ken Brummel, West Lenexa, Kansas

“Either the Bible keeps us from sin or sin keeps us from the Bible.”
—Pastor Raymond Khachatourian, Rialto, California

Grandpa’s Bible

I can remember seeing my great-grandpa Longway bent over his beloved Chinese Bible as he had morning devotions by the light of an old kerosene lamp. He would grip a small silver magnifying glass in one big, callused hand as he followed the script carefully with the index finger of his free hand. As he did, I would stand in the hallway and peer through the partly open door into his room, not completely understanding, but somehow sensing the sacredness of that scene—God and Grandpa walking together at dawn.

Later in the day I would tiptoe into the room and sit in the shiny wooden chair at Grandpa’s desk and slide his magnifying glass off the open Bible. I could see Grandpa’s crooked cursive handwriting in the margin; the funny-looking Chinese characters would be marked in red. The Bible was old, with a worn black leather cover and wrinkled thin pages. Well read, well used, well loved, it was a part of him. Through 50 years of missionary work in China, Grandpa had carried this Bible, preached from it, hit it, brandished it, cried over it. More than just a book, God’s Word had become a faithful friend.

I don’t know where Grandpa’s Bible is today, but his old silver magnifying glass lies on my closet shelf. I doubt I will ever read with it, but I plan on keeping it forever because it reminds me of my great-grandfather—his vision, his indomitable spirit, his love of the Bible. And it reminds me that no matter how old I get, God’s Word will always be new.
—Stephen Nyirady, ADRA/Cambodia

“Study of the Scriptures peels away the layers of self-deception we build up, each layer built on the premise that we are self-reliant and in need of nothing.”
—Faith-Anne McGarrell, Chicago, Illinois
2 The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

“I. Me. Myself. The unholy trinity.”
—Dick Duerksen, Orlando Florida

“My 6-year-old son, Billy, and I have been reading a book, Margie Asks Why, about the plan of salvation. We think the Trinity is pretty amazing. Imagine that God the Father and God the Son, able to have the same thought simultaneously, still have something to talk about! Billy is learning how God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit function as one unit and yet each has special jobs.
—Samantha Young, Columbia, Maryland

The Trinity and Phileo Love

The Trinity seems to cause a good deal of skepticism. “Christians don’t have a God,” laughed one of my philosophy professors at the University of Tennessee, “they have a squad!” A Muslim friend of mine once remarked that the idea of a God in three persons was “impossible” as far as he could see.

Of course, the Bible’s clear allusions to the Trinity are enough for Adventists. But since one truth links to another, a secondary supporting argument may be helpful. Such a line of thought may be adapted from The Four Loves, a book in which C. S. Lewis divides our catchall word “love” into four Greek words: storge (stor-gay), or affection, especially for what one owns; eros, which is desire; phileo, or friendship; and agape (ah-gah-pay), divine love shared with and among humans through grace.

The first point to understand is that all four loves are sanctified— and that God Himself participates in each. Yes, the first three are often twisted wickedly. But we must remember that all evil things are simply good things corrupted. Perversion of His gifts in some cases does not prevent their blessed use in others. For instance, God obviously feels storge for His people (Duet. 7:6) and expresses eros for them as His bride (Song of Solomon). Agape results when the Father and His people see each other through the lens of the Son (John 14:9), while the people practice agape among themselves by the same vision.

But what of God’s participation in phileo? Lewis reminds us that friendship consists of two or more people sharing love of something or someone. Phileo includes football fans yelling together for their team, two Christians affirming a Bible promise, proud parents of a child, and so on.

In its ideal form, phileo must have at least three points of reference: a perfect Lover joining another perfect Lover in adoration of a perfect Love Object. God could not attain phileo at all without being a Trinity. The Father and the Son join in phileo of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit and Father join in phileo over the Son; the Son and the Holy Spirit together celebrate the Father with phileo— three Persons united in mutual love.

Discarding the doctrine of three Persons in one would make ideal phileo impossible— God could take no part in it, even though He Himself has created it out of Himself. Instead we would be left with the hideous picture of a single Person infinitely self-absorbed. No; God is One in love, that love must include phileo, and it requires a Trinity.
—Jan Charles Haluska, professor of English, Southern Adventist University

Ellen G. White:
“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit— those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” — Evangelism, p. 615.
3. The Father

God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

“I’ll let God do the worrying for me. He stays up all night anyway.”
—Sheila Case, Delta, Ohio

“We work with addition. God works with multiplication.”
—Dan Purple, Jackson, Mississippi

“When did He become ‘always been’?”
—a small child in North Carolina (on behalf of millions of small children)

The Artist

Come and take away
The night.
My father,
Restore what is right,
And then there
Is a time and place
Where you will melt
the shadows
And erase
The horror of
the battles
We fight.

See us crawling
here.
We cry,
“Our Father,
Take away the
night.”

And then there
Is a hope and peace
That deepens all the colors
And repeats
The singing of the Lover
Sounding sweet.

Listen to the soothing voice.
The underlying plot
Is unraveling in a tapestry,
A work of art forever complete
Art to say the words of peace.
—Heidi Tompkins, Altamonte Springs, Florida
4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

One Friday evening during our family vespers, the phone rang just as we were kneeling for prayer. Our 6-year-old, Julie, volunteered to answer. As she picked up the receiver, she said, “Dear Jesus.”

Luckily the person calling was her Adventurers counselor, who quickly guessed where Julie’s mind was.

—Elba Rosano, Marietta, Georgia

“When I look at Jesus through my tears, I see His rainbow.”
—Geneva Hanson, St. Helena, California

“If you’re in prison, turn your eyes upon Jesus. If you’re in liberty, turn your eyes upon Jesus.”
—Noble Alexander, who spent 1962 through 1984 in a Cuban prison because the government saw him as a “dangerous religious fanatic.”

One morning my 2-year-old woke up with a sore throat. When I asked her how she got it, she said, “I talked to Jesus for a long time.”
—Jackee McCallum, Ocoee, Tennessee

“I don’t think people had to take dictionaries with them when they went to hear Jesus.”
—Harold Rich, Milton, Oregon

My Best Friend

My best friend is sweet and kind;
He helps the sick and heals the blind.
He made animals and every tree.
It’s neat to think that He made me!

Sometimes when I’ve done something wrong,
I stop feeling sad and sing a song,
Of praise to my Lord and King,
The One who created everything!

Dwight K. Nelson is teaching the gospel,
So people will know that it is possible,
To live forever, always free,
For Jesus is our friend, eternally!

—Ellen Naomi Coon, age 10, Waynesboro, Virginia

Ellen G. White:

“Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed for evermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.”—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 24.7.
5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)

While preparing a paper regarding God taking away his guilt, a student erroneously wrote, “The quilt was taken away.”

Upon receiving the paper, the amused professor wrote back: “Don’t be concerned that your quilt was taken away; a Comforter is promised (John 14:16).”
— Penny J. Nielsen, Weaver, Alabama

“The Holy Spirit is mentioned 88 times in 22 books of the Old Testament. He is first mentioned in Genesis 1 as brooding over the face of the deep at creation. The birth of Christ came before Pentecost, and it was made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.”
— Teacher Aids for Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

“We need to remind ourselves over and over that we are powerless without the Holy Spirit. That’s hard for most of us self-sufficient creatures. We want to do something to make it happen ourselves.”
— Myron Widmer, former Adventist Review associate editor, in “We Need the Spirit,” September 1996 N A D Edition of the Adventist Review

Ellen G. White:
“It is the Holy Spirit that brings to the darkened minds the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness. It is the Holy Spirit that makes men’s hearts burn within them with an awakened intelligence of the truths of eternity. It is the Holy Spirit that presents before the mind the moral standard of righteousness and convinces of sin. It is the Holy Spirit that produces godly sorrow which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of, and inspires faith in Him who alone can save from all sin. It is the Holy Spirit that works to transform character by withdrawing the affections of men from those things which are temporal and perishable, and fixing them upon the immortal inheritance, the eternal substance which is imperishable. The Holy Spirit re-creates, refines, and sanctifies the human agents, that they may become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.” — Signs of the Times, Apr. 17, 1893.
6. Creation

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made “the heaven and the earth” and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

Ellen G. White:
“The whole of the natural world bears testimony of the works of the living God. Nature is our lesson book, given to us by God, the Creator of all things.” — This Day With God, p. 273.
While telling the Creation story to my kindergarten Sabbath school class, I was trying hard to help them see the wisdom of God and the careful planning that went into each day's creation.

I felt successful when one young fellow observed, “God was sure a thinking man.”
—Patricia Germsheid, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

To the Chief Musician: Psalm 8

O God who put the music in the water,
O You, who paint the colors in the light,
Who, by the genius of olfaction pique the beauty of rose petals,
Author of succulence,
Designer of the palate for delight,
O You who forge the sinuous muscle of wild blizzards,
Who tilt and shift the jewels that so shimmer in the bright darkness of your silver-velvet night,
And You who speak the nothing into being,
Who turn and mold oblivion into sixteen myriad orbits of swift light,
Father of sense and Mother of the senses
And this universe of miracle—and by the kiss of brooding Spirit—bequeath us right:
To You the prayers of babes rise up in incense flight:
We thank You,
And we praise You, God of might.
—Lael Caesar, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Artistry

While tuning phrases up to vibrant pitch,
To white intensity of soaring thought,
My soul is harassed by the wildest itch
To capture what the Master Poet wrought
Within a violet that drives one mad
With sheer delight, and overwhelms the heart!
Although I drain my mind, I cannot add
One syllable to equal such an art.
Creator, Maestro, Artist, Poet—He has shown me how to make a poem of life.
He orchestrated nature's symphony,
And taught the katydids to play a fife.
What Nature has not said, in some wise way,
The mortal tongue is powerless to say.
—James E. Dykes, Huntsville, Alabama

Once when my son, Cleveland, was 5 years old, he prayed, “Thank You for the trees. Thank You for the flowers. Thank You for the grass. Thank You for the rain that makes the grass grow.”
Then, pausing for a few seconds, he groaned, “But then we'll have to cut the grass again.”
—Julie Boney, Maplewood, Minnesota
7. The Nature of Man

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

“...Rather, my grief is in my own slow progress in reflecting Christ’s character.”
—A. Leroy Moore, Adventism in Conflict, p. 73

“My deepest grief is not over corruption in the church. . . . Rather, my grief is in my own slow progress in reflecting Christ’s character.”
—A. Leroy Moore, Adventism in Conflict, p. 73

“A adult average 15 laughs a day; children average 400 laughs a day.”
—Joan Coggin, M.D., Loma Linda, California

“People rarely come to me because they want to be good; they want to feel good. They don’t want to change; they want relief.”
—Dr. Richard Nies, clinical psychologist, Redlands, California

“In the Garden of Eden, it wasn’t the apple in the tree that caused the problem, but the pair on the ground.”
—Pastor Ed Taranski, Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada

“We’re all exactly the same: we all respond to love, and we’re all afraid of rejection.”
—K hose M thombeni, Riverside, California

“We man must know his true nature so he may see his need of God as the only hope for life.”
—Jim Walter, Collegedale, Tennessee

DayStar

(a parody on the nature of man)

light unravels translucently within the center a form set free is briskly tossed spirally and meets the inquisitive Sea the turbulence is ecstasy a myriad eyes do not wait to see from whence the form did enter sea and anxiously jump in surging upward, crooked crests captive audience is now enmeshed shimmering light, ill-reflected, speaks to hearts that need be mended the dissipation is clear on top but on the surface it is not bold skirmishes in the water ensue until the last day some doggedly pursue and quicker yet, conditioned by time that form doth rise, leaving paths sublime inquisitive seas should not respect contentions of light ill-fondled, once met
—John Casillas, Franklin, Tennessee

Photo © PHOTO DISC
How Far We've Fallen

The man who deliberately injected his son with HIV-infected blood was just sentenced.

Man? One who heartlessly, callously delivered his own sentence of death on an innocent boy, just to avoid having to pay child support.

Man? One who symbolizes the most inhumane in what we call humanity.

Man? One who trivializes another’s life to the point of death for the selfishness of his own life.

Every commentator is agreed. This “person” has placed himself outside any mercy or compassion. “His own son! How could anyone ever do that?” Totally inhuman!

Now as the boy develops AIDS, as he slowly dies the death to which his own father has doomed him, comes the anger. The father is jailed. But, they argue, how can any prison sentence correspond to such a crime? And where, where was God?

If such a horrific slow killing of an innocent child shows us anything, it shows how far from human we have become and how far from God we have fallen. To blame God for our responsibilities and actions is surely the greatest irony in our inhumanity. Though we all experience revulsion at such a crime, in some ways we all reflect the results of our own sinful choices.

Instead of the mutual finger-pointing and the blaming of God, it’s surely time to admit our depths of evil, recognize our inability to fix our problems, accept our need of outside help.

On the brink of a new millennium with all the futuristic hype, we cannot look forward to a humanly devised golden age. Rather, we look forward to God and His transforming grace and power to make us truly human once more. We cannot rehumanize ourselves.

— Jonathan Gallagher, Laurel, Maryland
8. The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

Battle Cry

The games and conflicts of the world
Defeats—
And victories with flags unfurled
Constant in change from power to power
Give gold and glory to the hero of the hour.

But heaven has a crown for him who stands
Upon the slopes, his staff half-broken in his hands,
And sees through drifting mists, against the sky
The trackless snows he hadn’t thought to try:

The answer to his importunity
The unconscious guerdon of humility
From One who, dying,
Gathered all our losses
And made them gold
Upon a hill of crosses.
—Anna Maberry
9. **The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ**

In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God’s law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God’s triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)

“Jesus was more willing to go to the grave for you than to go to heaven without you.”
—Pastor David Melendez, Mount Vernon, Ohio

“Go out on a limb for Jesus, who went out on a cross for you.”
—Kerry Baldwin, St. Helena, California

**Wounds**

As I sat at my desk studying my Sabbath school lesson, my eyes fell upon the backs of my hands. They were all cut and bruised. I had been up in the attic a few days before, servicing the furnace and replacing the motor on the exhaust fan. The sharp corners on this equipment had made some pretty ugly wounds in my hands. But as I looked at them now, I noticed that they were healing nicely. Some of the injuries were still red, and others would likely leave scars.

Then it occurred to me that just as the healing power of the Lord was restoring my hands, so did healing power could heal the wounds in my heart. True, most of them were self-inflicted, just like those on my hands. But the cause was not important to Him. He was healing them in spite of the cause.

Thank You, Lord, for making me whole again—not only my body, but also my mind.
—Theron D. Collins, Joshua, Texas

**Can You Imagine the Face of Jesus?**

The face that brought the people flocking for healing. 
The face that smiled as He blessed the fish that fed thousands. 
The face that looked on as Adam found the first rosebud. 
The face so kind that children ran to be with Him (an adult). 
The face so accepting that lowly women came to Him. 
The face so strong that the devils ran. 
The face so inspiring that thousands proclaimed Him king. 
The face so full of wisdom that the learned were befuddled. 
The face so full of love that He gave each of us His life, His Godhood, His power and majesty, and His Father. 
He gave it all up. 
All just for you.
—Thomas B. Jacques, College Place, Washington
Offering
I wish I had an alabaster box to perfectly perfume my heart and make it sweet—
an alabaster box from which to pour my liquid life an offering at His feet.
—Kimberly Cortner, Colton, California

Healing
They must have winced—the twelve of them—as Jesus spat upon the ground and mixed the spittle with the loose dust of the roadway.
And then to dab it on the beggar’s eyes as if it were a poultice that some toothless old lady had told Him about.
He didn’t need the spittle-mud any more than water to make the wedding wine or the five loaves and two fishes to feed the milling multitude.
They knew that by now. But they didn’t know He was trying to heal their blindness as well.
—Gary B. Swanson, Silver Spring, Maryland

Beneath the Shadow
Born beneath a shadow long and pale across the sky...
Did it fall across a mother’s heart as she heard her newborn cry?

Two turtle doves, a Temple priest, required to register His birth...
“The sword shall pierce through your heart too, when He dies for those on earth.”

Through sunny days of childhood He learned at Mary’s side of One who loved the world so much He’d take its sin; be crucified.
The shadow grew as Jesus grew yet seemed so distant still...
Dark beam on the horizon reaching from a darkened hill.

Stained Glass
Bent in agony, shaping, fitting, grinding rough, square, unyielding, cutting edged,

blood from his hands mingled with his tears and mind, staining, creating a unique window for his light:

Midnight Sun through stained glass.
—Phoebe Watson Nilsen, Mule, Norway

Ellen G. White:
“Every soul may say: ‘By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness. He presents me to God in the spotless garment of which no thread was woven by any human agent. All is of Christ, and all the glory, honor, and majesty are to be given to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.”—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 396.
10. The Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God’s grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. A biding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

“We must not underestimate the power of sin; we cannot overestimate the power of grace.”
—Thomas A. Davis, Armstrong, British Columbia, Canada

“If God gave all you people what you deserved, I’ll tell you right now—there’d be about 30 grease spots out there.”
—George R. Knight, seminary professor, during a lecture on grace

“Jesus accepts you the way you are, but loves you too much to leave you that way.”
—Pastor Lee Venden, at the Auburn, Washington, camp meeting

“Salvation does not cost you anything, but discipleship costs you everything.”
—Pastor Tami McGrew, Azure Hills, California

“God is more anxious to forgive than we are to sin.”
—Richard Neil, Azure Hills, California

“God does not cite our sins to question our salvation, but He cites our salvation to question our sins.”
—Pastor Eldon Walter, Junction City, Oregon

Salvation

My wife and I made holiday plans to visit our daughter and son-in-law at their new condo. After giving us directions, my daughter said that if we arrived before they got home from work, we would find a key under the floor mat. We left early, beat the traffic, and arrived well ahead of time. But alas, no key under the mat. Being a builder, I decided I would find a way into the house anyway.

First, I tried to pick the front door lock. Then I tried to pry open the garage door. Neither worked. Next, I tried the sliding aluminum windows and (after I’d climbed onto the roof) the upstairs windows. Both were dead-bolted.

I couldn’t believe that a man of my training and skills couldn’t get into the house. I had to be satisfied with peeking in the windows and enjoying the Christmas decorations—which made me wonder if the doorbell had been wired to play...
“Jingle Bells” or “Silent Night.”

I pushed the doorbell, but got only a gong. Disgusted, I began to walk away when suddenly my son-in-law opened the door from inside.

I couldn’t help thinking of Matthew 7:7—“Knock and the door will be opened” (NIV)—and how I’m always trying to work out my own salvation instead of letting Christ take control.

—Arthur E. Westphal, Angwin, California

“The way of salvation is not to promise God things; it’s to say yes to God’s promises.”

—Pastor Dale Leamon, Battle Creek, Michigan

“Some of our young people have caught it, and we are suspicious of them.”

—John Kerbs, then-president of Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, in a tongue-in-cheek comment on the assurance of salvation

“I can’t think of a worse church in the world to be in than the Seventh-day Adventist Church and not be born again. On the other hand, I can’t think of a better church to be in if you have been born again.”

—Clifford Goldstein, editor, Sabbath school quarterly

The Prayer

Down in despair, no hope within,
Life laden with fear, anxiety, and sin.
With no hope for the future,
I could see no way;
So with tears in my eyes
I knelt down to pray.

I prayed, “Dear Jesus on high up above,
I need Your peace, forgiveness,
and love.
My life’s such a failure
I know not what to do.
My heart’s such a mess,
So I’m giving it to You.”

Before I finished this simple prayer,
I could sense God’s Spirit everywhere.
Such a peace came deep into my soul,
I knew Jesus had made me whole.
And as His hand brushed away the tears,
Away went my doubts and all my fears.
A heartfelt prayer I prayed that day,
When Jesus came in my life to stay.

Though trouble and strife still come to me,
And the way sometimes I cannot see,
I just close my eyes to heaven above
And thank Him for His peace,
forgiveness, and love.
—Roger Gillespie, Goochland, Virginia

Lord, Launder My Life

Lord, as I turn this dial to flood these clothes
with water,
May Your words of love and admonition flood
my mind.
As I use the stain remover, bleach, and detergent
to loosen and remove the stains,
May the blood of Jesus remove the stains of sin from my life.
As this fabric softener keeps the harshness from building up in the garments,
May the Holy Spirit soften the harshness of my disposition.
As the agitator stirs up the dirt and grime so it is all rinsed away,
May the activities of my life help me turn loose of the things of this world that will hinder my walk with You.
As the heat and tumbling of the dryer complete the laundering process,
May the trials and uncertainties of life polish my character so it will be fit for a place in Your temple—
“Without stain, or wrinkle, or any other blemish.”
—Lena Edsell, Deer Lodge, Tennessee

Ellen G. White:

“We must center our hopes of heaven upon Christ alone, because He is our Substitute and Surety. We have transgressed the law of God, and by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. The best efforts that man in his own strength can make are valueless to meet the holy and just law that he has transgressed; but through faith in Christ he may claim the righteousness of the Son of God as all-sufficient. Christ satisfied the demands of the law in His human nature. He bore the curse of the law for the sinner, made an atonement for him, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined.”—Faith and Works, pp. 93, 94.
11. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 5:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18.)

“We are a knowledge-addicted church. We have saints and sinners in our church who are faint with that overload. Our people are looking for an experience, an encounter with Jesus.”
—Charles Sandefur, Mid-America Union president

“The church’s problem today is not pews without people, but pews filled with empty people.”
—Howard F. Faigao, publishing director, Southern Asia-Pacific Division

“If you are happy, healthy, and holy—or sick, sorrowful, sinful—you are in the right place today.”
—Pastor Watson Southcott, welcoming his congregation to worship, Watford, Hertfordshire, England

When God runs the church, it will always be on solid ground. This can be illustrated by the blending of the words “God” and “run,” which will form solid “Ground.”

However, if “I” try to run the church, the result is “ruin.”
—Dr. Freburn L. James, Zillah, Washington

Recently a new Winn-Dixie supermarket was constructed in the block adjoining our church. When the road roller packed down the entrance for the trucks delivering building supplies, our building vibrated.

In the process of moving one of our water sprinkler lines, I got to talking with the site engineer. When I mentioned the vibration, he replied, “This proves that your church is on a solid foundation, or else you would not experience the vibrations.”
—Martin Russ, Deltona, Florida

During a family Sabbath dinner the conversation turned to several inspiring thoughts gleaned from the morning service.

Wanting to include everyone in the discussion, my son Steve turned to his 3-year-old daughter and asked, “Amy, what does church mean to you?”

She quickly answered, “Sit still and listen to the man.”
—Jeannette Knickerbocker, Alexandria, Virginia

“Since we’re going in every direction, one of them must be right.”
—Steven C. Timm, in a discussion about the church, on the Adventists Online Forum
12. The Remnant and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)

“ln our quest for saving souls for Christ, we must see ourselves as lifeguards and not sunbathers on the beach.”
— Pastor Alan DeSilva, Takoma Park, Maryland

“Are those of us who are part of the great Advent movement moving?”
— Dale Bratlund, Riverside, California

“Unlike those aboard the Titanic who locked the poor below decks, we should be busy unlocking the cells that have kept people confined their whole lives.”
— Eric David Starling, Berrien Springs, Michigan

“The Three Angels (Revelation 14:6-12)

They come from realms of glory, breasting Murky clouds of poison wrath, dark Doubt, fear, sorrow and grief unresting. On healing wings, swifter than a lark, To this blue, vapor-clad sphere they come; To this garden turned battlefield, Where each mouth’s a sword, each heart a drum, And but few, few to mercy yield.

They come—from lurid dreams to waken A race that trudges to its doom. They speak. Every stronghold is shaken, That Christ’s love alone may have heart-room. Down they come, with cleaving, clarion call: “Christ’s truth prevails; His reign is nigh; Flee Babylon, whose sins are her fall. Join, O faithful church, in this loud cry.”
— Pastor Brian Jones, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia

hiding under a name does not make us remnant. God’s purifying system quietly, individually continues even in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. God is still sorting the gold from the dross.”
— Tammy Smith, Dickson, Tennessee
13. Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)

My in-laws, who live in Topock, Arizona, recently adopted a 4-year-old girl named Shila. Since I am Black, my mother-in-law (who is White) wanted to make sure Shila (also White) had more exposure to people of color. So she bought Shila a Black baby doll.

“Mi Mi” quickly became Shila’s favorite doll. The two go everywhere together. Some people, however, have acted confused about a White girl carrying a Black doll. Even Shila’s day care playmates had a hard time accepting this unusual association.

One day someone asked, “Shila, what color is Mi Mi?”

“She’s not a color,” replied Shila. “She’s my baby.”

—Bernie J. Anderson III, Berrien Springs, Michigan

“I’m thankful to our Most High God for bringing me into the knowledge of truth written in His Word. I’m thankful for the Adventist friends He has given me—a diverse group from the East, West, North, and South. Very different cultures, races, and nationalities; however, we are one in the body of Christ. God has adopted us as His children, and in like manner, my Adventist friends have adopted me into their family. You are my new family, my new church of faithful believers.

We are all equal in Christ. We share the same faith and hope. Through many letters we have shared experiences, and I have received wisdom, knowledge, and encouragement despite my surroundings—prison. There is not a lot of unity here; however, I have found an abundance of unity in the body of Christ—my Adventist friends. You are truly a blessing from above, and the lovingkindness expressed toward me cannot compare to anything in this world. I thank God for all of you. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps. 133:1).

—Timothy A. Booth, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

“In the beginning, God created diversity.”

—Jerry Stanley, McBride, British Columbia, Canada

Wind Chimes

Just down the way my neighbor’s chimes sing sweetly in the breeze, and vibrate each to each, thus summon the note potential in each other.

Each yields a different note, but in diversity sweet harmony drifts down the breeze and charms the listening ear.

Within our house—our kith and kin—and in that other house which we call church—kin of another line—
each touches each, and vibrates each
to each,
and stirs the note potential in each
other.

Each yields a different note;
so were we formed, but all for
harmony.
Oh that our world were charmed
by what it hears.
— Thomas A. Davis, Armstrong, British
Columbia, Canada

Togetherness

No one would wonder why the birds
were black, yellow, or red.
Or if their coats were green or gold
or polka dot instead.

We never would discriminate
if pets were black or white.
Or if their coats were green or gold
they'd bring to us delight.

Think of the lovely songs we'd miss,
but for the mockingbird.
Or if we should the wren discard,
we'd think that was absurd.

A crazy quilt of flowers bloom
beside a garden wall.
No one cuts it down because
it's different one or all.

There's good and bad in everything,
in every breed and race.
Why judge a person's worth
by the color of their face?
— Louise Kinsey, Silver Spring, Maryland

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14. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)

After an evangelistic series at our church, 102 people were scheduled to be baptized. The men wore black robes; the women wore white robes. During the baptism the dye from the black robes began to make the water look dirty, and I heard two little boys behind me discussing the matter.

“How come the water is getting so dirty?” the first boy asked.

“That’s their sins being washed away,” replied the second. — Lynda Schroder, Alamo, California

After the baptism was held in church, one little girl quietly asked if we would pray that her daddy would be “baptized.” We did pray for him, and he did give his heart to the Lord and was “baptized.” — A nita Jacobs, Williamsport, Maryland

Ellen G. White:

“Every true Christian will say from the heart, When I was baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I was buried in the likeness of Christ’s death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection. I have taken a sacred vow to live in close communion with Christ. I am pledged to devote my life to His service. . . . As you openly renounced sin and Satan, the three great powers of heaven pledged themselves to help you to overcome. You were raised in newness of life by the power that raised Christ from the dead. You came forth from the watery grave pledged to devote your life to the Master’s service. You are henceforth to live a new life, as if reason, knowledge, affection, speech, property, and all else you have, had been anew entrusted to you, with a distinct intimation from heaven that they are to be used for God.” — Signs of the Times, Feb. 12, 1902.

One of the special times in our kindergarten Sabbath school each week is prayer time. The leader gives the children opportunity to talk about what happened to them during the week—happy or sad, funny or serious. Perhaps they know someone who was sick or lost a pet—anything they wanted mentioned in prayer.
The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of Communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The Communion service is open to all believing Christians. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Matt. 26:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

Communion

Bees drone in the begonia below my open window.
Lilacs spice the sky as jade wings rasp against the cracked glass, arguing with the wind.
I lean soapy elbows on the kitchen sink to watch the hummingbird drink from the fat red vat of a rose.
He looks like a flying green teaspoon as he pokes the long straw of his beak into the jar of petals.
He drinks in ecstasy, wings blinking like eyelids.
Joy flutters gently in my chest, and a prayer darts to heaven from the nest of my heart, beating its wings with this urgent desire:
Let me taste, Lord, the nectar of Your grace with the rapture of hummingbirds.
—Soraya Homayouni Parish, Highland, Maryland

Many years ago I excitedly visited an Adventist church.
I had recently learned it was the church I had always hunted for.
As it happened, I entered the church just in time for the foot-washing ritual.
Downstairs with the other women I noticed that an old lady had cut her finger and two friends were stemming the bleeding.
Mistakenly I thought, Oh, we’re here to return blood to Jesus.
Such was my childlike faith that day.
They could have taken a quart out of me.
—Mary E. White, Lopez, Washington

Last Supper Revisited

IN CHARACTER: During a springtime vespers service, the men of the Calhoun, Georgia, church participated in a tableau of Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper. Each “disciple” unfroze from the scene long enough to deliver a short soliloquy on his relationship with Jesus, wondering aloud “Is it I [who will betray Him]?” The disciples then served the Communion emblems to the congregation, topping off a moving and memorable service.—Joyce Young
God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

“Stop worrying about the gifts you don’t have and use the ones God has given you.”
—Charles Bradford, former president of the North American Division

“Spiritual leadership is God-appointed, not self-assumed.”
—Pastor Rob Vandeman, Silver Spring, Maryland

“God doesn’t call people who are qualified, He calls people who are willing, and then He qualifies them.”
—Elder Richard Parker, at an Upper Columbia Academy Week of Prayer

“Your gift is part of who you are, and burying it brings enormous personal consequences. Bury it and you bury part of yourself, a part of your personality, an expression of your individuality. You bury a part of your walk with Jesus. You bury a part of your witness.”
—René Alexenko Evans, Nashville, Tennessee
17. The gift of prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17, 19:10.)

“Prophecy is misapplied when it is used to create anxiety. Prophecy is given to produce security.”
—Des Cummings, Jr., Orlando, Florida

“They call these the ‘red books.’ They should call them the ‘unread books.’”
—Pastor Dwight K. Nelson, Berrien Springs, Michigan, on the Testimonies

“There is a great deal more to Sister White than some people thought.”
—Ellen White, on an undersized knitted vest (known in 1914 as a “hug-me-tight”) that she received on her eighty-seventh birthday from a friend in Japan

“It’s very hard to prophesy, and especially about the future.”
—Charles Bradford, former president of the North American Division

“I became a Seventh-day Adventist in Marion, Indiana, during the late 1930s, when I was a teenager. I tried to learn as much as I could about the terms used by the older members—Ingathering, Thirteenth Sabbath, Investment—but I could never keep up with them. One name I heard constantly in sermons and conversations was ‘Sister White.’

“The president of the Indiana Conference at that time was Elder S. E. Wight. Once when he came to visit, his wife accompanied him. I gazed at her in awe—I thought she was the Sister White I had heard so much about. How disappointed I was when she did not walk to the speaker’s desk to relate a vision!”
—Eugene Lincoln, Hagerstown, Maryland

“I will be eternally grateful to God for Ellen White. In her books I have found a wealth of encouragement, advice, and challenges that, although a hundred years old, is meaningful to young people like me.”
—David Hamstra, Shorewood, Minnesota

Ellen G. White:
“The fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. . . . The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed— to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. . . . In harmony with the Word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.”—The Great Controversy, pp. vii, viii

JOIN OUR PROPHET SHARING GROUP
Each Wed. 5:30 PM
Welcome!
18. The Law of God

The great principles of God’s law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God’s love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God’s covenant with His people and the standard in God’s judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellowmen. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 40:7, 8; Matt. 22:36-40; Deut. 28:1-14; Matt. 5:17-20; Heb. 8:8-10; John 15:7-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Rom. 8:3, 4; Ps. 19:7-14.)

Ellen G. White:

"Without the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour, fallen man could never meet the claims of the law, God could not sustain His holiness and justice, and justify the sinner; but how glorious is the truth of the atonement! what a firm foundation have the saints of the most high God upon which to rest their salvation! Not one of the promises can fail; the condemned sinner may be purified and made white through the righteousness of Christ. Those who love Jesus will love the law of God, because it is a transcript of His character. Through the merit of Christ the transgressor is freed from the charges the law held against him. The world’s Redeemer has carried the burden of guilt and woe that rested upon the sinner, and he is able to strengthen him for the conflicts he will meet day by day in his pathway to heaven."—Signs of the Times, Aug. 18, 1890.
“Sin is sin because it destroys our relationships by ruining our capacity to love and be loved.”
—Martin Weber, on the human impact of sin, in Wrestling With Reality, p. 49

“Self-discipline is less limiting than trouble.”
—Linden St. Clair, Sainte-Foy, Quebec, Canada

“Of all the commandments, the one people seem to fear most is the eleventh: ‘Thou shalt not get caught.’”
—L. Niere, editor, Philippine Publishing House

Each week while teaching first through fourth grades at Brakeworth Junior Academy in Birmingham, Alabama, I required my students to memorize a Bible verse. When we got to the Ten Commandments, one of my first-grade students announced, “Thou shalt not admit adultery.”
—Angela Emde, Mohawk, Tennessee
19. The Sabbath

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:32; Mark 1:32.)

"The world began with the Sabbath and will end with the Second Advent. The remnant church began with the issue of the Second Advent and will end with the issue of the Sabbath."
—Cecil S. Ma, Arcadia, California

"The Sabbath is a sign of sanctification, of being set apart. It's not a penalty for being Adventist."
—George R. Knight, at Georgia-Cumberland Conference camp meeting

"Sabbathkeeping is not an option with a burden, but an obligation with a blessing."
—Pastor Ingo Sorke, San Antonio, Texas

God's Signature

The Lord loves to talk to me just after I've gone to bed. I guess it's because I stop talking long enough to listen.

One night He showed me something I had to jump out of bed and write down! We know that God said He put His signature on Creation when He created the Sabbath. But He also showed me that He did sign His name.

Within the word "Sabbath," we find His name: Abba, Father, God.
—Myrna D. Sage, Newport, Washington

Making the Sabbath a Delight

When my kids were babies, I wanted them to "call the Sabbath a delight," so I determined that for every one time the kids hear me say "You can't play with that because it's Sabbath," they would hear me say a hundred times, "You can't play with that because it's not Sabbath." And so at the beginning of each Sabbath, very special items are produced from the high shelf in the closet and from mysterious places in the basement. And at sunset on Saturday night they disappear again.

Sometimes we'll be returning from a Sabbath afternoon outing, and a little voice from the back seat will ask, "Is it still Sabbath, Mommy?" There is great anxiety that Sabbath might end before they get to paint another picture or use the glitter or read a special magazine or play with the toy farm.

As the children are getting older, we're adding a few other strategies to help them call the Sabbath a delight. We've outlawed any church committee meetings on Sabbath, and we've greatly limited long, boring grown-up conversations. We plan ahead for special Sabbath activities—a craft that the family can do together, a visit from a friend (whom the children enjoy), a nature activity, or a walk. We use the Sabbath tablecloth, listen to Sabbath music, and eat Sabbath food.

It takes time to plan carefully
and prepare for Sabbath, but it's an investment. I want to someday “call the Sabbath a delight” with them in heaven!
— Dorothea Sarli, Niles, Michigan

A few weeks ago we were on our way to church when our 5-year-old daughter asked, “Why isn’t everybody going to church?” We thought she was talking about some friends of ours who were not going to church that day, but she said, “No, I mean why are all those cars turning the wrong way—that’s not the way to church!” Her little innocent mind was telling her that everyone should be on their way to church on Sabbath morning. How wonderful it would be if they were.
— Steve and Mary Martin, Skokie, Illinois

“The Sabbath is not just a day of rest, but a day of rest from ourselves.”
— Heather Iversen-Cress, Crestline, California

A Breath of Heaven

The earth turns east,

And the sun burns west.
The sky beyond the fir-collared hills

Turns from azure to molten gold.

For a brief moment an ancient pine

Stands silhouetted

Against the fading remnant of day.

It is sundown.

A round the world

On the darkening edge of night.

Wrapping the earth and all humankind

In the holy atmosphere

Of Heaven.

— Bob Nixon, Sr., Willits, California

For me, a student with a busy schedule, the Sabbath always comes as a blessed relief. Every Friday night it is so nice to sit in front of a roaring fire, sipping mugs of hot cocoa or munching on freshly baked cookies. It’s so nice not to be bothered

with the

busy schedule

of phone calls, homework, and appointments. To just be able to sit with my family and thank Him for all His blessings. To be able to rest.

Thank You, God, for caring about us the way You do. For giving us a day to rest and get to know You, our Father, better.
— Allison Zollman, eighth grade, Mount Vernon SDA Elementary School, Mount Vernon, Ohio

Sabbath Rest

One of my favorite times of the week is Friday evening—Family sitting together

House clean

Electronics off

Sharing and worshiping

I wonder if it is one of God’s favorite times, too . . .
— Naedo Henry, Lincoln, Nebraska

Ellen G. White:

“To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’”—The Desire of Ages, p. 289.
20. Stewardship

We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God’s ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellowmen, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27.)

“Taking care of our own physical and emotional needs is not selfish. It is good stewardship.”  
— Lloyd Erickson, Ph.D., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Recently our Sabbath school class was studying the concept of “covenant,” concluding that our agreement with God was much like a marriage. A young woman told that she had returned from lunch the previous day to find on her desk a dozen red roses from her husband. She smiled her surprised delight, commenting that our relationship with God also needs such small attentions.

Seizing the moment, the teacher prodded, “God is always sending us roses in many shapes and forms to prove His love for us. But a relationship—a covenant—is a two-way street. What can we do to make Him feel special?”

Silence gripped the normally verbal class as each chased the thought. The quiet was not broken until someone softly replied, “Share the roses.”  
— Kandace Zollman, Frederickstown, Ohio

“Plenty of people are willing to give God credit, but few are willing to give Him cash.”  
— Pastor Ron Halvorsen, Jr., in a sermon at the Keene, Texas, church

“A another advantage of paying tithe on one’s gross income is that all tax refunds are tithe-free.”  
— Philip Law, Union City, California

“You can’t take your money with you, but you can send it ahead of you.”  
— Dr. Lloyd Griffith, Port Angeles, Washington

“Good time management doesn’t mean squeezing a little more work into the day; it means spending more time with those who are important to us.”  
— Pastor Dan Serns, Kansas City, Kansas

As Sabbath school secretary, I was collecting the offerings from the children’s division. I emptied each envelope, in turn, into the offering plate, and as I poured out the contents from the primary class, I was startled to see the contribution of one small child—a four-inch neatly wrapped candy cane.

Knowing how children love their sweets, I felt it was a noble contribution. I thought of the widow’s mite. Like the widow, this child gave all she had.  
— Irene H. Casey, Sarasota, Florida
21 Christian Behavior

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to re-create in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

Walking the Talk

I feel good about how we each practice our religious beliefs.

68 percent agree
19 percent disagree
13 percent not sure

— from a survey of 910 married Seventh-day Adventists in North America conducted for the North American Division Office of Information and Research (the error factor is plus or minus four points at the 95 percent reliability level)

“Christian living is not based on the promises we make to God, but on accepting the promises God has made to us.”
— Don Lane, Yountville, California

“If you want to know what people are like, watch their reactions, not their actions.”
— Andrew Adams, Hot Springs, Arkansas

In 1984, when I was a newly baptized Adventist, I was helping two new Adventist sisters move. They were peppering me with rapid-fire questions about our beliefs. After answering one of their questions, I realized that they were both laughing at something. When they were able to speak, they told me that I had said, “We don’t eat jewelry.”
— Richard E. Pender, Rocky Mount, Virginia
“It’s not what you say that praises God as much as how you live your life.”
— Pastor Jim Brackett, at Auburn, Washington, camp meeting

“Through negative and destructive criticism, a man gives the reasons he cannot love his neighbor.”
— Sam Ketting, Kennewick, Washington

The Newberg, Oregon, church family recently moved into its beautiful new sanctuary after a dedicated congregation (including our son Reg) volunteered most of its Sundays and many evenings over the past four years. This period covered most of the living memory of our almost-6-year-old granddaughter Lisa.

Recently Lisa came to visit us. Full of chatter while going to town, she and Grandpa passed the construction site of a partially completed Unitarian church. Grandpa mentioned that it was going to be a new church, prompting Lisa to whirl quickly toward Grandpa and ask, “Shouldn’t you be helpin’ em?”
— Myrna Mass, Salem, Oregon

When my nephew Michael was 4, his dad tried to explain to him why it was healthy to be a vegetarian. After being told that hamburgers were made from cows, Michael gasped, “Daddy, when we get to heaven, I’m gonna tell Jesus what they’ve been doin’ down here!”
— Dave Gerstle, Collegedale, Tennessee

“For much of Adventist history the practice of vegetarianism has been considered wacky. As scientific research validates the benefits of going meatless, the diet has become easier as businesses have sought to capitalize on it.”
— from the Riverside Press-Enterprise, in a story about Loma Linda, California

“Our Christian standards are much more than not smoking or not drinking liquor or not wearing gaudy jewelry. The true standards are our motivation and purpose, which, through our Christlike actions, will present us as an example of love to all.”
— Nathan Blake, Lincoln, Nebraska
Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6.)

To Love and to Cherish

I am happy about how we resolve conflicts in our marriage.

- 63 percent agree
- 21 percent disagree
- 16 percent not sure

I am pleased about how we express affection in our marriage.

- 70 percent agree
- 18 percent disagree
- 12 percent not sure

If I had my life to live over, I would...

- 75 percent marry the same person
- 15 percent marry a different person
- 10 percent not sure

— from a survey of 910 married Seventh-day Adventists in North America, conducted for the North American Division Office of Information and Research (there is a 4 percent margin of error and 95 percent reliability level)

Raising 'Em Right?

I am satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents.

- 66 percent agree
- 18 percent disagree
- 16 percent not sure

— from a survey of 840 married Seventh-day Adventists with children in North America, conducted for the North American Division Office of Information and Research (there is a 4 percent margin of error and 95 percent reliability level)

"Parents can learn a lot about God just by being parents." — Pastor Jim Burgess, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada
Little Footprints, Big Footprints

Little footprints
Fresh-tilled garden soil
Next to big footprints.

Two big little steps
Next to one little big step . . .

Walkin’ with my boy
Heart is full of joy.

Rain clouds
Waterdrops
Thunder clapping nearby . . .

Big tug from a little hand
Two arms stretched up high
Little heart thumpity-thump
Arms clasped round my neck.

All is right.
It’s OK.

Big footprints
Fresh-tilled garden soil.
— Bill Scott, Fort White, Florida

My junior class recently presented to the whole church a Thirteenth Sabbath program called “Guess the Event.” Each member had a biblical event in mind and gave the congregation a clue.

When it was her turn, Keiko Andress stepped up to the microphone and said, “You could not get in if you were single.”

Not seeing the quick hands that she had expected, she clarified, “You had to be married!”

— Baki Wariri, Hongkong Adventist Hospital church

Ellen G. White:
“God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honorable’; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.”—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 46.

In the United States alone, an estimated 25 million people are providing care for chronically ill relatives or friends. In Helping Yourself Help Others, Rosalynn Carter writes, “There are only four kinds of people in this world: those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, those who will need caregivers. That pretty much covers us all.”

— Penny J. Nielsen, Weaver, Alabama
There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

“The heavenly sanctuary service is the essence of ‘God with us.’ Without Christ’s heavenly ministry, we would be cut off from God. But with Christ as our mediator, God sees us, H is earthly children, as H e sees Ch rist—holy and righteous in H e eyes. A nd because of this relationship, we are one, reconciled, at-one-ment, with God. A nd G od is with us! A h, salvation!”
—LeRoy Froom, Silver Spring, Maryland

“The problem with the investigative judgment is that too many of us are practicing it.”
—Philip Law, Union City, California

“A Clearer Vision
As regards the doctrine of the sanctuary, we stand today on the brave and inspiring shoulders of our pioneers. And without altering a single plank of the basic pillars of the faith, we should perceive a clearer vision. . . .

Perhaps a better way of expressing the same truth that came to Hiram Edson on that tear-filled morning (in October 1844) would be as follows: At the Ascension, Christ went into the presence of God (and in saying this, we are in line with the New Testament) and there commenced a “first-apartment ministry” (in line with the ancient typical service). At the end of the 2300 days (years) in 1844 (in line with the book of Daniel), He began a “Second-Apartment ministry” (in line with the ancient typical service on the Day of Atonement)—namely, the restoration or
vindication or cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary (in line with Leviticus 16 and Daniel 8:14).

This, in my thinking, is the essence of the message that God has committed to us as a people. And as the prophetic hour struck in 1844, angels were seen in vision flying in midspace, having the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, announcing in clarion tones this ominous and glorious new dimension of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7).

If the cleansing of the sanctuary involves also the final justification of God in the eyes of the universe, to the extent that all cosmic questions are resolved and the entire universe of created intelligences recognizes the integrity of God's government, then no one can successfully contend that this was completely accomplished at the cross. Thousands of bloody wars have bedeviled us since the cross. Hundreds of millions of humans slaughtered in ghastly carnage. Natural disasters, pestilences, famines, and the modern scourge of terrorism and drug abuse have added their share to the deadly toll. A million "W hys" break the silence of each day. A million tears drench countless pillows at the midnight hour. A huge question mark still lingers unerased in the cosmic sky, indicative to any sensitive observer that ultimate atonement is not yet here.

But the day is coming when all that will be behind us forever. There will be no more crime, no more substance abuse, no more murder, no more sexual perversion or immorality, no more corruption. There will be "new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13, NASB). "The great controversy is ended," said Ellen White. "Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean" (The Great Controversy, p. 678).

Does this sound like something that flies in the face of the gospel? No, this is the most beautiful thing I've come across in all my sampling of theology and philosophy. Thank God for the great transaction at the cross once for all enacted. Thank God for the great high-priestly ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. Thank God for the blessed hope! With all my soul I want to say, "T hanks be to God!"

— Excerpted and modified from Roy Adams, The Sanctuary (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1993), pp. 113, 141, 142, 144, 145, 147, 148

Ellen G. White:

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, 'whither the forerunner is for us entered.' Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption." — The Great Controversy, p. 489.
The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

“To so many people heaven is a last resort. And as resorts go, heaven isn't a bad place.”
—Pastor Keith Gray, Burleson, Texas

Once when I was attending the Keene, Texas, church, the pastor was speaking about the terrible conditions that we were living in and what a joy it would be when Christ returns to take His children home.

My 3-year-old son had been pestering me to take him home when the pastor asked, “Are you ready to go home?”

Turning toward the pastor, my son shouted, “Yes!”
—Millie Meeker, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

When our son Bobby was about 3, my husband was pastoring a large district—which meant a lot of traveling.

We always prayed for safety on the highways but did not realize the impression it had on our son until one night he prayed, “And dear God, if I do get to go to heaven, will You please give me a safe trip?”
—Jean Gifford, Clackamas, Oregon

“What earthly reason would there be for Jesus to come the first time if He wasn’t going to come the second time?”
—Robert Spangler, at the Kentucky-Tennessee camp meeting

A REAL PICK-ME-UP

INTERSTATE EVANGELISM: Sporting an airbrushed painting of the Second Coming, this pickup belongs to Ramiro Cortez, a member of the Houston Galena Park Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church.
FREE SEVEN-DAY TOUR!

ALL EXPENSES PAID: No baggage needed. You will be picked up and given clothing and perfect health in the twinkling of an eye. No one will tire or need sleep on the journey.

DEPARTURE: The date and time unspecified. Watch for signs. Be ready at all times.

AIRCRAFT: A large cloudy chariot will be provided, with wheels and wings that sing, “Holy, holy, holy.” Additionally, tens of thousands of angels will sing as you soar past the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The Director will answer questions regarding points of interest.

FINAL STOP: The New Jerusalem, where the Director will throw open the gates, each made of a single pearl, and lead you onto a sea of glass, where you will be given a harp, a crown, and a new name.

MUSIC: Like you’ve never heard before.

FEAST: Like you’ve never eaten before.


— by Sandra Lubens

Our 4-year-old granddaughter, Gelline, who lives with her parents in Las Vegas, attended Vacation Bible School at the Mountain View church last summer. Impressed with the Bible stories about Jesus’ ascension and second coming, which were dramatized so beautifully, she called me in California and said excitedly, “Grandpa, do you know that Jesus is coming very soon here in Las Vegas? Is He coming to California, too?” — Aibert C. Regoso, Baldwin Park, California

When my little girl was about 3 or 4, we were driving down the road talking about when Jesus will come again. “And we’ll ride on the clouds with Him, Mama?” she asked. “Yup,” I said. “All the way to heaven.” She thought for a few seconds, then said in the sweetest little voice, “Mama, can I ride on your lap?” A little amazed at how quickly my throat tightened and tears filled my eyes, I managed to sputter out, “Of course you can, baby. You can sit right on Mama’s lap.” I have thought about Jesus and his second coming many, many times. Haven’t we all? I have wondered: When will it be? Will I be ready? Will my loved ones be ready? What will it be like? But one aspect of these thoughts bothered me—in my mind’s eye, I had always been more like a spectator watching from afar all these wonderful events taking place.

Shouldn’t my thoughts be more like my daughter’s? Shouldn’t I be figuring out how I’ll fit into the picture? Shouldn’t I be thinking about where I’ll be sitting?

I knew then and there that I had to start laying out a plan for my trip home. My little girl had taught me not only that I was not going to be a spectator when Jesus comes again, but that now, in everyday life, I had to get involved and try to make a difference.

And when that wonderful day does arrive when we will all be swept into the clouds to meet Him, I want to be there for many different reasons—including a promise I made that my little girl could ride on my lap.

— Tammy Smith, Dickson, Tennessee
25. Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)

“Every day I am getting closer to being younger forever.”
—Philip W. Dunham, Canyonville, Oregon

My grandson and I had returned from a morning in the woods, where we studied wildlife, trees, plants, and especially ants. Back at home we had his favorite lunch—peanut-butter sandwiches, milk, and homemade applesauce.

As he ate he kept staring at me and finally asked, “Nana, are you getting old? Will you die soon?”

“Yes,” I said, “but not too soon. You’ll probably be out of college, and when Jesus comes again I’ll have eternal life and be young forever!”

“Nana,” he said, “if Jesus will make you younger, do you think He’ll make me 5 again? ‘Cuz I’m having an awfully good time now.”
—Helen Dorothy Charleroy, Browns Mills, New Jersey

“No Adventist fundamental belief . . . is more important than is our doctrine of hell as eternal punishment, not punishing. It is an end to all suffering. If we’re wrong here, all is lost, all is fear. In the face of the screaming nightmare of eternal torture, let Seventh-day Adventists take every opportunity to trumpet this truth.”
—Chris Blake, Lincoln, Nebraska

“While the popular assumption talks about souls in heaven, all whom the Bible describe as being in heaven went there in a bodily form.”
—Cezar R. Luchian, Collegedale, Tennessee

Death Is But a Small Matter

When silent lips and mutely folded hands rest in the quietness of death, once restless feet lie motionless and still with worn flesh finally devoid of breath, then will I not yearn anymore. I shall not need a human touch or smile. Nor poems to take my words in flight, soaring on high, like birds that greet the dawn, I shall not need them anymore. I will not fear the solitude of sleep nor mourn the passing of my years, for, robed in peace, my body there shall lie, feeling no joy nor bitterness of tears. There is no loneliness in death; only the living know dark loneliness clutching of faded hopes and dreams, remembering the joys of years gone by; there is but timeless peace in death.

Oh, soon! surrounded by angelic hosts rending the clouds with trumpet blast, Christ will appear with majesty supreme to call His remnant people home at last. I will awake from slumber deep, and from my throat will burst exultant cries that shatter earth’s restraining bonds. Then will I rise in ecstasy to keep my long-awaited tryst with God.
—Joy Radzik, San Bernardino, California

Loss

My life will never be the same I see it stretch before me now Love’s amputation’s left me lame More so than words allow

But Jesus Christ, He holds my hand He lets me know He cares Resurrection waits for His command My heart that trumpet’s blare.
—Karen C. Michael, Daytona Beach, Florida
26. The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)

“Whom Jesus comes—and only then—will all those seemingly unanswered prayers receive a spectacular revelation in the wisdom of eternity.” —Leslie D. Louis, principal at Greater Nashville Junior Academy

Fallen Star

“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God” (Eze. 18:32).

Aging king awaits the battle news. His fighting men pursue a rebel son, A base, usurping son, who stole by craft the hearts Once loyal to the king, W ho seized the throne, defiled his father’s bed, A nd placed on his own head King David’s crown. W hen David hears that son is slain H e weeps aloud in bitter agony. H is tears fall down, his cries mount up to heaven, “Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son!”

T he ransomed throng stand safe inside the city A s fires of doom fall swiftly on the land. A bitter cry breaks out. A ll heaven’s host Behold the Godhead torn with agony. T he King of kings, the Ruler of the universe M ours unconsol ed. Sobs tear the throats, the shoulders shake In grief untold for lost humanity. But most of all for one archfiend, archenemy, U surper, liar, slayer of the Son, Y et once H is brightest star W ho dies alone. —Irene Wakeham Lee

And Never Blink

T hat my eyes will catch H is eyes to worship and adore. T hat it could be so. T hat it is so possible. T hat it is! I sing in unceasing song, my eyes imagining. I pray my heart beats to that day and that my eyes never blink. —Pamela M airez Harris, C ollegedale, T ennessee

T hat my heart will beat for an eternity. T hese eyes drink in colorful kaleidoscopes of the cosmos and never blink.

T hat these hands will create and experiment without faltering restraint.

T hat this mind will never cease calculating intricacies of science probing natural laws traveling unbounded through time and space’s laboratory.
27. The New Earth

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)

At our Wednesday night Bible study, in which we are studying the sanctuary, we came to the part about returning to earth after the 1,000 years in heaven with Christ. The book we are using mentions the New Jerusalem coming through Orion to settle on the plain made when Jesus’ feet have touched the Mount of Olives.

My curiosity pricked, I picked up the phone and called the local librarian in the ready reference department. Carefully I explained that I wanted to know how far it was to the constellation Orion.

When she returned to the phone, she said: “Well, Orion isn’t a star. I’m looking in the American Heritage Dictionary, and it says that the nebula has a star that is in about the middle of the constellation, and it’s about 1,500 light-years away.”

“Well,” I said, “I guess I could get there in a week.” She asked, “What mode of transportation are you using?”

I was laughing too hard to answer.

— Melvin Sheire

Because of my husband’s profession, our family has been required to move many times. While I was exclaiming my unbelief that we were once again packing up a home, our 12-year-old daughter, Michelle, said, “Mom, look at it this way. When we get to heaven we won’t have to meet anyone new.”

— Charlene Lashier, Minneapolis, Minnesota

“The promise of dwelling with God forever in the new earth is the most beautiful promise ever made to me.”

— Carol Wilson, Saint-Laurent, Quebec, Canada