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Real Christians in a Virtual Age

RECENTLY I READ ABOUT A HUSBAND and wife who were hiking in the mountains. They came upon a crowd looking up at a small boy stranded on a ledge. The youngster had kept climbing up—until he looked down. Then he froze in his tracks.

The husband and wife quickly grasped the situation, climbed up to the boy, and brought him down. Everybody was happy. But the incident kept nagging at them with this question: How come nobody else made an effort to save the boy?

The answer probably is simple: We live in a virtual age. A lot of people—more and more, and probably a majority—prefer to watch than to do, to fantasize rather than experience, to live in a world of virtual reality.

For every team leader on the field every Sunday, there are a million Monday morning quarterbacks. For each coach who calls the plays, there are 10,000 analysts and critics. For every person who dares to do, there is a crowd of spectators and spin doctors.

Where is this virtual age leading us all? Invite a group of kids to actually do something together—play a game, build a boat—and they have to decide whether they can give up watching their favorite show or the computer game they had planned.

At a time like this, the life of Jesus shines bright and clear. Jesus was real, not a fake. He was a doer, not a spectator. He threw Himself into the fray instead of analyzing and spin doctoring.

Peter—himself a doer, a fisherman turned preacher—sums up that short, burning 33 years of Jesus’ life like this: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and . . . he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Another disciple, Matthew, the tax collector turned apostle, put it this way: “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:35, 36).

Jesus spent much time in prayer, but He spent more time in healing. Jesus spent a lot of time preaching and teaching, but even more in helping others. For Him, words and deeds were all part of a whole: they all brought hope, comfort, new life. They all—every word, every act—had a redemptive value. They all were part of the mission that impelled this carpenter from Nazareth, this noblest Man who ever lived, this Son of God who became Son of man: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

And at last, climaxing this life of gentle, kind acts—the cross. Jesus had seen it coming from way back, at least as early as age 12 when He went up to Jerusalem for the Passover and saw the lamb sacrificed. Jesus did not want to die—He enjoyed life. But when the time came, “the hour” that He had talked about to His friends, He set His face like steel and headed for Jerusalem, knowing that He would never return to Galilee. On that last Thursday evening when the moon was at the full He sat down at the table with the twelve; then He went to the garden and agonized with the heavenly Father as the cup of woe passed into His hands. He sweat drops of blood, but He did not turn back. He took the cup and drank it to the dregs; He went to the judgment hall and the mocking and the lashing and the spitting; He went to Golgotha, bearing our sins upon
Himself and winning for us eternal life. Therein lies a huge and essential difference between Christianity and all other religions. Our faith at its heart isn’t about doctrine or ethics or lifestyle; it centers in a Man, a real Man, and what He did.

If Krishna or Rama could be shown never to have lived, Hinduism would carry on unaffected. Hindu scholars will tell you it’s not the reality of Krishna or Rama that counts, but only the idea. If Buddha had never actually existed, the religion that bears his name wouldn’t miss a beat. If Muhammad was proved to be a fake and the followers of Islam had only the Koran, that would be sufficient for them.

But if Jesus of Nazareth never existed, if He did not give His life to healing and helping, if He did not die on the cross, if He did not come back from the dead on Easter Sunday, Christianity collapses like a house of cards.

And we who take the name of Jesus today must be real, not fakes. Our righteousness, which is His righteousness, comes through faith, but it always makes a difference in how we live if it’s the real thing. We are saved by grace through faith unto good works, says the apostle Paul (Eph. 2:8-10). Jesus Himself told us that, unless the branch—that is, us—bears fruit, it doesn’t belong, and God will cut it off (John 15:1, 2).

Real Christians are doers, just like Jesus. Real righteousness means rolling up our sleeves and getting our hands dirty.

The reproach of Christianity is the yawning chasm between profession and action. Mahatma Gandhi said that to be called a Christian was an insult, but to be called Christlike was the highest compliment he could be paid.

The curse of Christianity is all the talk without the doing. The curse of Adventism is the preoccupation with theology while the world is going to hell.

Our Christianity is too comfortable. When will we break through the cocoon of Laodiceanism and take seriously Jesus’ commission: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21)?

Thank God, He still has people who take the commission seriously. They come in all ages and sizes and personalities. They are as mixed and as different as the colors of the rainbow, but they all have one thing in common: They love Jesus and are totally committed to Him. And that commitment blooms and blossoms in lives that, in their own small measure, recapitulate the ministry of the Master.

God has a multitude of these dear ones; only He knows the number. He has them in surprising places; He has them among His Adventist people.

This special issue will introduce some 25 of them to you. We present them as merely a sample of the great multitude. And we give them, not to bring any praise or glory to these individuals, but to give you hope and inspiration.

These 25 aren’t perfect; only Jesus is perfect. But God is using them—just as He wants to use you and me to His glory and the accomplishment of His mission.

Real Christians, in this age of fakes. Adventists who live their commitment, who make a difference.

Men and women who act—not analysts and armchair critics, spectators and spin doctors.


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

By William G. Johnsson
Mike Mennard: Reflecting a Real God in Real Life

During the past two years, Mike Mennard, solo recording artist, has performed more than 450 concerts and has opened for several nationally known artists. Exhilarating as most public performances are, Mike finds inspiration in his smaller, less conventional venues as well. Every Thursday Mike leaves work an hour early and drives into a well-guarded parking lot. From there he can see people already waiting for him, waving ecstatically through the large window. Rushing into a spacious dining room, he quickly takes his seat as friendly greetings resound from all around.

“Hi, everyone,” says Mike, pulling out his brightly painted, glow-in-the-dark guitar. “You know the most

FAST FACTS

Name: Mike Mennard
Home: Angwin, California
Age: 30
Years Adventist: 23
Place of birth: Fort Worth, Texas
Occupation: musician/writer
Church involvement: children’s ministries, leading music
Spiritual high point: “I wake up each morning at 5:00 to read, write, and pray. Although 5:00 a.m. sounds too early for spiritual high points, each morning brings new highs—as long as I get to bed at a decent hour.”
Family: wife, Michelle; cat, Bogus
Dream for the church: that all generations might learn to worship God together
Hobbies: writing poetry, inventing board games, channel surfing
Favorite Bible book: Genesis
Favorite other book: My Name Is Asher Lev, by Chaim Potok
Favorite food: pancakes with real maple syrup
Favorite musician: Brad Turner
amazing thing happened at work this week; let me tell you about it.”

Thus begins his weekly hour-long “concert” at Crestwood Psychiatric Facility in Angwin, California.

Five years ago Mike began sharing his music with the psychiatric patients there. He plays his guitar and encourages people to sing along, taking requests as they come. In turn, a select few might venture a solo or read a poem. What started as a onetime visit has expanded into a mission of sorts. Most of the patients know Christian hymns and gospel songs, and they start singing them even before Mike can pull his guitar out of its case.

“Most people don’t believe me when I say that my visits to Crestwood are full of hope,” says Mike. “Yet I’ve always found hope in unexpected places.”

On weekends Mike, who lives in Angwin, travels throughout the western United States, mostly to churches and Christian colleges. Lately he has found a new audience at coffeehouses. While it’s not a traditional environment for worship, Mike finds it a conducive, nonthreatening stage to introduce people to God.

“Churches have always tried to persuade people to come to them, but Jesus actively pursued people where they were,” says Mike. “I’ll go anywhere to make God real in real life.”

His performances consist of songs from his two albums, Grace (and Other Stuff) and the more recent Life With a View. His music tells true stories of people whose lives reflect an active God. Interspersed between songs are touching—and often very humorous—anecdotes about his own life and how God has intervened.

“Mike is a terrific musician and performer, but it is also immediately clear that he loves God. His concerts make you laugh, cry, and laugh again,” says Barry Van Iderstein, of Antioch, California.

When not strumming his guitar, Mike works as a writer and editor for Pacific Union College. He admits that the best part of the job is working with his wife, Michelle, who is assistant director of public relations for the college. She accompanies Mike on most of his tours, serving double duty as road manager and world’s greatest fan.

“Each weekend is a new adventure with Mike,” says Michelle. “I’m never quite sure where we’ll end up. We’ve shared God in churches of many denominations, in Christian coffeehouses, in city parks, and even in some bars. But I always know that the weekend will be rewarding, and I’ve never been disappointed.”

By Julie Z. Lee
Gabriel Renaud: Filmmaker

ABRIEL RENAUD WAS HALFWAY through a teaching degree at Avondale College when he realized he really wanted to make films. So in 1979 Gabe defied the odds by becoming one of only 25 students to be accepted to study at the prestigious Australian Film and Television School that year. Gabe's self-funded 16-millimeter film Life at Avondale College, which he submitted as part of his application, secured one of the coveted places in the program.

Since graduating from film school, Gabe has directed television dramas and award-winning documentaries, as well as corporate and educational videos. Recently he directed a television documentary about an Aboriginal man who died of AIDS. The film, Gabe says, speaks a language that bypasses prejudice, and has been widely accepted by both Aboriginal and White audiences around Australia.

Gabe credits his wife of 20 years, Andrea, for inspiring him to keep going even when times were tough. “I’m married to the most beautiful woman in the world, who has stood by me through thick and thin,” he says. Gabe's three teenage children (who, he says, are “a delight and challenge to live with”) provide him with much-needed “reality checks.” “They constantly force me to take a hard look at the discrepancies between what I practice and what I preach.”

During his 20 years in the film industry Gabe's talents have also been behind some of the most well-known and innovative film projects undertaken by the Adventist Church. Working with the South Pacific Adventist Media Centre, Gabe directed and edited the Keepers of the Flame series, which he cites as one of the most personally satisfying projects of his career.

Even so, Gabe is aware that many Adventists still see filmmaking as a “fringe” activity. But as he points out, a film that deals honestly with an issue can go straight to the very heart of the human experience. A film can explore the “intangibles” of existence—faith, love, emotion—in a way that just talking, or even preaching, about them can’t.

For Gabe one of the fundamental challenges of each project is to present life in its extreme complexity, where there are sometimes no obvious “rational” answers. “And this is as it should be,” says Gabe, “for if there's no mystery left in life, there's no longer the motivation to explore and discover.”

Gabe is passionate about changing the minds of those who underestimate the power of the visual medium. “We have to represent our beliefs in images rather than words if we are going to communicate anything at all to the under-40s,” says Gabe. “My challenge is to help church administrators see the tremendous benefits they could gain both personally and institutionally by encouraging more freedom and diversity in this area.”

“My dream,” says Gabe, “is an Adventist Church that truly values creativity and accommodates it within its ranks.”

By Bettina Krause
HE LIGHTS WENT OUT JUST AS MY meeting was about to get under way one Friday night in 1996 at the Hillview Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nassau, Bahamas. Using lamps, flashlights, candles, and everything else that can make light, we pressed ahead.

The next morning a leader in another church I was visiting apologized to me for what had happened the previous evening. Puzzled that someone not a member of the particular church should apologize so personally, I asked the conference president about it as we drove to another meeting. Well, he said, that's because he's in charge of the electric power in the entire country.

That's right. Freeman Duncanson has, since October 1996, been the general manager of the government-owned Bahamas Electricity Corporation, with head offices on the main island of New Providence, and with physical assets in the amount of US$400 million. After joining the company as a trainee-apprentice in 1960, Freeman was sent off to London, England, for further studies in the company's in-service award program. It was while there that he married Bridget Pulley, his companion now for the past 35 years. They have three grown children.

Freeman's is a demanding job involving the responsibility for more than 300 megawatts of power sent out from rotating plants that provide electricity to the whole country. His staff of more than 1,000 includes 120 professionals trained in the fields of electricity and accounting.

Born in 1943, Freeman grew up in a family of six children, obtaining with them his first religious motivation from his Baptist minister father. His own conversion came, however, from reading a little book he bought one day from a barefoot boy selling magazines on Bay Street in downtown Nassau. From Jesus With Love, the cover said, beneath the picture of a smiling Christ. Freeman took it home and couldn't put it down.

With time, however, he began to feel the need for something more. His wife was Catholic and felt a similar yearning. For years the couple struggled with the issue of giving their children a solid spiritual foundation. But what church should they join?

It was around this time that an Adventist evangelistic campaign came to town—for the third time in three years. After ignoring the first two, Freeman attended the new series being conducted by evangelist Leslie McMillian just down the street from where he lived. And he couldn't stop talking about it when he went home. First his youngest daughter joined him. Then his son. Then his eldest daughter. And finally his wife. "This is God's true church," a little voice said to her the very first meeting she attended.

The family had at last come home to the Adventist Church that had produced the little booklet Freeman had purchased from the little stripling years before, a book known to most Adventists as Steps to Christ, by Ellen G. White. The family joined the Centerville Adventist Church, where Freeman has served as head elder for 16 years.

On the job (where just about everyone knows he's an Adventist), witnessing comes naturally to Freeman. And as he attends public functions with high government officials, witnessing opportunities frequently arise over his choice of food and drink. In addition, Freeman is a justice of the peace, in which capacity many (both Adventists and non-Adventists) come to him for counseling on everything from business to family to religion.

By Roy Adams
PERVASIVE. That’s what it was. Day and night. Should I? Shouldn’t I? She had to decide.

Geri Kennedy's brother, Craig, was in acute renal failure, and she knew what he needed. She also knew that quite possibly she possessed what he needed.

"There are so many tests," she explained to God. "You know whether I am healthy enough to donate one of my kidneys to my brother and, in fact, whether it is the right thing to do. So," she bargained, "if all the tests are positive, then I'll know that this is what You want me to do." She desperately needed assurance.

But then the questions began. "Was I putting God on the line to protect me if I did this? How would I feel if I didn't give my kidney to my brother? How would our family members feel if something happened to me? If my brother misused his body afterward, could I accept that he still could make his own choices, wrong or right? Would my brother forever feel an obligation?"

Geri's husband, Herb, joined her in praying for God's leading. Geri testifies, "Almost immediately I began to feel a sense of peace knowing that God was in control."

Now it was time to discuss this with their two daughters, their families, and her parents. "There were many questions, tears, fears," Geri remembers. And then their acceptance of God's will.

"My daughters had questioned why I would do this for someone who drinks alcohol, smokes, and disregards our Adventist lifestyle. I told them that God loves him, that I love him. That I couldn't stand by and watch him suffer."

Geri’s parents wanted their son well, but they didn't want...
Eventually the family all promised each other that no matter the outcome, no one would blame Craig. Craig begged her not to do it— he didn’t want anything to happen to her. She told him that she believed God would lead and that it was all in His control. “The feelings of love, awe, and tears,” Geri remembers, “are beyond my skills to put into words. His question was ‘What will I ever do to repay you?’ ”

Geri remembers answering with a grin, “Don’t worry; I’ll have a list.” Then: “This kidney of mine doesn’t drink or smoke, and it goes to church every Sabbath, so please try not to change its lifestyle.”

The day of surgery was bittersweet for the entire family. Geri’s nephew was tragically killed in a car accident just a few days before, and his funeral was the same day as the surgery. Jakki, Geri’s daughter, went to the funeral to represent their family, and her other daughter, Twyla, stayed with Craig. After the initial assessment and hospital routines were completed, Geri was wheeled into the operating room with her husband by her side.

The staff put Geri’s and Craig’s gurneys side by side as they awaited the surgery. They looked at each other and held hands. “Then,” says Geri, “my brother asked seriously, ‘Where is it?’ ”

“When’s what?”

“With tears flowing down his face, he said, ‘The list.’ ”

“Craig,” she said, her own tears flowing, “there is no list—this is a gift. I love you, and God loves you. He will see us through.”

“A thousand words couldn’t describe the look on his face,” says Geri. “All he could do was squeeze my hands even harder, smile through his tears, and shake his head.”

After the surgery the rest of the family joined Geri and Herb. When they learned that Craig was doing fine, there were more tears of happiness, kisses, and hugs. Twice during the following days Craig’s body started to reject Geri’s kidney, but each time God heard their pleas for his complete recovery.

“To be able to see my brother healthy once more and to feel that special closeness is fantastic,” says Geri. “His 14-year-old daughter wrote thanking me for giving her daddy the chance to have a healthy life. It’s a letter I’ll always treasure.”

Geri says she doesn’t look at the experience as something wonderful and great that she did, but rather as something great and wonderful that God did.

By Myrna Tetz

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**FAST FACTS**

Name: Geri Kennedy
Home: Lacombe, Alberta, Canada
Years Adventist: 44 years
Place of birth: Calgary, Alberta
Occupation: registered nurse
Church involvement: Sabbath school host, deaconess, board member for “Better World,” assistant in children’s Sabbath school
Spiritual high point: “As an adult attending nursing school, I became discouraged. I prayed, ‘Lord, if You want me to continue, put a bud on my rosebush’ [it was October in Alberta]. In the morning there were five new buds. As I finished my degree, I had no doubt that that’s what God wanted me to do.”
Family: husband, Herb; daughters, Twyla Holdal, Jakki Lehr
Dream for the church: to become more unified in our forms of worship services so that all generations can enjoy them together
Hobbies: Sewing, crafts, listening to music
Favorite reading: “I love the Review because it has a lot of variety. It counsels, instructs, stirs the emotions, and teaches.”
Favorite food: potatoes, popcorn, nuts
Favorite musician: Kenny G, Johann Strauss, and many more.
WHAT GRACE ADEYOYE LEARNS IN her many university and government positions, she shares with the women of the Adventist Church. And what she learns in working with the church helps her make an impact on her community. And what a broad community it has become!

Trained in the sciences, with a Ph.D. degree from the University of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Grace lectures in parasitology and immunology at the University of Lagos. She is doing research in finding protective antigens against schistosomiasis (Schistosoma haematobium), a study sponsored by the World Health Organization and the University of Lagos.

She has served as coordinator of the Committee on the Control of Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) for the Nigerian government and on a group concerned with family planning and HIV/AIDS, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development. She has also received training in conflict management and is a part-time trainer for the Secondary Peace Education Programmes and the University Conflict Management Workshops. And then there are the other organizations to which Grace belongs, such as the Nigerian Association of University Women and the Nigerian Society for Parasitology.

So—you guessed it—Grace also helps the church with conflict management. “Today, more than ever before,” she says, “I see Jesus as the prince of peace and the solution to all human conflicts.” She has taught conflict management to Adventist women’s ministries convocations as well as other religious groups. “The training in conflict management has helped me in developing better relationships with members of my family, church, and society at large,” Grace testifies.

She also spends time helping the young people of her church, the singles, the widows, and the less privileged. Both in and out of the church she has helped organize seminars on widowhood, child abuse, female inheritance, and the choice of future partners. She is serving on the General Conference Commission on Human Sexuality and is the vice president of the Adventist women’s ministries in Nigeria. “I plan programs to uplift Christ and raise the standard of life for women,” she says. In the past, she adds, she helped with family life and health and temperance programs as well as adult literacy and career choice.

And in her spare time? Grace is the happy wife of a lawyer and the mother of five children. Two are in university and three in secondary school. As if that were not enough, she says, “I have a special love and zeal for evangelism. I was one of the two ladies who conducted the first open-air public crusade in Nigeria, in 1986.” Since then she has helped train other women and conducted other meetings herself. Fifty-one individuals have been baptized through her efforts.

Recognizing the support of her family, and especially her husband, she says, “Serving others with humility and the fear of God remains my greatest source of satisfaction and joy in the Lord.”

What she learns she shares, and everyone in her community and church benefits.

By Ardis Stenbakken
Jan Ekelof: Responding to the Call

Some flames you smother; others you spread.
In the summer of 1994 Jan Ekelof was feeling restless about his faith. Eleven years had passed since the Maryland firefighter had welcomed Jesus Christ into his life—a struggle in itself. “I didn’t grow up in a Christian home,” he recalls, “but I knew there was a God—some Spirit who was holy and all-powerful. During my teenage years I contemplated who He was, where He was. But it wasn’t until I was 27 that I knew I wanted Him in my heart.”

Now, at age 39, Jan craved the next step: sharing his faith with coworkers who were all too familiar with his former life. “I had gotten drunk with these guys, smoked dope, talked trash with the best of them, trying to fit in,” he says. “Now I wanted them to have this experience that I had with Jesus. I didn’t know what to do. I had avoided this thing for years.”

After months of praying for God to reveal His will, Jan was riding in an ambulance with a coworker who began sharing some personal problems. After a half hour of listening, Jan found himself asking the coworker if he’d like to pray. Sure, said the coworker.

What am I going to do now? Jan remembers thinking. Pray on the job—on an ambulance at that?

The two men turned onto a side street, parked, and prayed together. “God’s Spirit came over that ambulance that day,” says Jan. “He showed me how to share Jesus’ love at work.”

Before long Jan—now at a different fire station—was sharing and praying with other willing coworkers. Praying for encouragement, praying for wisdom, praying for protection. Then an idea: firefighters at area stations regularly huddling to pray for themselves, their families, and their coworkers.

These days, at select times in Montgomery County, Maryland, up to 50 firefighters, spread over 14 stations, can be found sharing and praying together—in person and by phone. Other coworkers occasionally request prayer for a specific situation. “We’ve had people who started in the group by just listening and are now active members and have accepted Christ into their hearts.”

FAST FACTS

Name: Jan Ekelof
Age: 43
Years Adventist: 15
Residence: Highland, Maryland
Place of birth: San Juan, Puerto Rico
Local church involvement: deacon, facilities manager
Spiritual high point: listening/relation to a successful businessperson’s conversion story
Family: wife, Lynne; three sons, Rob (20), Michael (13), Reggie (10)
Dream for the church: that we choose carefully the battles we fight
Hobbies: sports, coaching son’s basketball team, youth activities
Favorite food: Mexican
Favorite book: The Desire of Ages
Favorite musician: Ray Boltz
says Jan, one of three Adventists participating. “People are excited.”

Jan still marvels at how God has used him. “I’ve never been a Bible scholar, knowing where certain passages were or the specifics about Noah, Abraham, Peter, and the rest,” he says. “I decided to just be me, no matter where I was or who I was talking to. I ask Jesus to give me the words to speak, and I just try to love others as He loves me.”

By Andy Nash
Sang Uk Choo is a typical example of a self-made individual, aided by divine providence. He rose from life in an orphanage to being the founder and president of a school that provides educational and vocational opportunities for socially deprived young people. This, he believes, was achieved through hard work and the leading of God.

Sang was born in Mokpo, Korea. His family was left destitute after the death of his father and two older brothers. Sang made his way to Seoul, where he ended up in an orphanage. Each day he and five other orphans roamed the streets of Seoul looking for customers whose shoes they could polish. His fortune changed with the appearance of a pair of oversized boots that were dropped in front of him one day. The extra size meant extra work, but Sang polished them until they shone.

The boots belonged to Mr. Cloud, a wealthy American businessman. Impressed by the job done by the little street urchin, he summoned Sang to his office, arranged to send him to a Seventh-day Adventist school, and set him up for a successful life. At the orphanage young Sang was also introduced to the Voice of Prophecy correspondence course and eventually joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

To express his gratitude to God and his benefactors for giving him a lift in the past, Sang Uk Choo is today actively engaged in salvaging young lives by providing educational opportunities for the socially underprivileged.

Sang operates a vocational night school for training underprivileged young people who work during the day. The school offers such programs as computer science, engineering, and others. More than 5,350 students have graduated from his school since it was established, and every one of them has been absorbed into the job market. Each spring and fall the school conducts a Bible seminar for the students, resulting in between 150 and 300 baptisms each year.

Having experienced deprivation as an orphan, Sang today seeks out orphans who live in their own homes under the supervision of older siblings. Sang provides these orphans financial help as well as parental love and supervision. He also works with adoption agencies to find good homes for them.

As president of the Juvenile Delinquents Guidance Association of the Northern Seoul Area, he works to give juvenile delinquents a second chance at life. Those under the age of 18 are generally spared from prison terms if sponsors can be found to provide guidance for them and send progress reports to the prosecutor’s office. Since 1984 Sang has personally sponsored 180 juvenile delinquents and been rewarded with seeing all of them remaining crime-free. At the same time he provides funding for some young people to start businesses as street vendors.

In recognition of his outstanding service to underprivileged youth in Korea, Sang was presented a presidential award by President Chun Doo Hwan in 1986, a national award by President Roh Tae Woo in 1989, and the Kookmin Hunjang Dongbekjang, the highest national award, by President Kim Young Sam in 1997.

By Mary H. T. Wong
WHEN INGRID KLÄMBERG WAS asked to direct the Youth Counseling Center in Boras, Sweden, she was afraid of what her church and her family might think. What about her children if their “mum” became known as the “sex lady”? But she thought too of the thousands of students with whom she could connect. The Youth Counseling Center is one of 220 centers operated by the Swedish government for young people ages 13-25. At the center Ingrid sees about 1,800 youth a year, counseling and supporting them in an extremely vulnerable time and area of their lives. “I never regretted my decision. I need God more than ever; every day He leads and helps me to treat the young people right. I think I have a great advantage of being a Christian in my job, but it’s also a challenge, since most Christians seem to put the ‘sex sin’ on top of the list of sins.”

Ingrid feels a burden to represent her church, and says God asks her to “do to others what you would have them do to you.” Because of this attitude, girls at the center frequently ask for the “Christian midwife.” The young people come to talk over problems of sexual identity, sexually transmitted diseases, contraceptives, incest, parental divorces, and relationships with parents. Ingrid, who is an R.N., a certified midwife, and has a graduate degree in sexology from Gothenburg University, shares her healthy view of sex as something special given by God.

“The most difficult part of my work is working with girls who have been raped or are the victims of incest,” she says. She also gets upset and sad because so many young people do not take care of themselves and get into trouble. “They lack firm principles,” Ingrid says. “Some seem to think, ‘It’s never going to happen to me!’” Ingrid also is frightened by the number of younger adolescents who are suffering from sexually transmitted diseases.

Besides her work at the center, Ingrid teaches sex education courses at the local high school and maintains a private practice counseling young adults. She is an active church member and a member of the Swedish Union Committee and the Trans-European Division committee. But mostly she is interested in young people. She believes Adventists need to talk more about sexuality to their own children. “We must talk about love, intimacy, sexuality, and desire as the four key words for people’s happiness and fulfilled life,” she says. “We don’t need the dark side of love as the world will give the young people.” Ingrid tries to meet people where they have needs.

“I am well known in my community,” Ingrid admits. She has been on radio and local TV programs as well as frequently quoted in the newspaper. “Most of the young people of Boras know who Ingrid Klämberg is, and they also know that I belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So I have a responsibility for the church and all the young people I meet to be the light I should be in the world.”

By Ardis Stenbakken
STEP INTO THE MOCCASINS OF SHIRLEY ANN Munroe on any given day, and you will understand why she has no time for the trivial or the banal: you will, in fact, be hard-pressed to keep up.

They might take you, for instance, to Wal-M art to buy kitchen supplies for the Roswell (New Mexico) church, of which she is one of the most active of the “active” members. Still shopping, you could be looking for a seasonal motif for the fellowship hall tables: flags and streamers for an indoor Fourth of July picnic; autumn leaves and cornucopia for Thanksgiving dinner— for which this potluck “chef” furnishes the recipes so that all comes together like a family meal. A pron-clad, she’ll be on hand to direct operations as well.

If it isn’t at a church affair—a council of elders, an Investment sale, a church board meeting—you may be at a meeting of the board of directors of the Roswell Symphony Orchestra, where Shirley Ann, its president and board chair, is leading a planning session for celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary concert of its esteemed maestro.

You could be in a music store selecting anthems for a local Presbyterian choir, which Shirley Ann directs. Or maybe it’s music for the joint...
Christmas cantata this church and her own perform for the public annually.

You might be following those busy moccasins to the airport to catch a flight to Dallas for a meeting of the Southwestern Union Conference executive committee, or to Washington, D.C., to share her skills at a General Conference committee meeting. Maybe she's off to California to attend a ceremony conferring on a rural hospital administrator the prestigious Shirley A nn Munroe Leadership Development Award, a monetary grant named in recognition of her longtime career in health-care management and delivery by the American Hospital Association. Vice president of this national organization for the past 10 years of her professional life, Shirley A nn Munroe would be a challenge to someone far younger than this very unretiring retiree. Even without her impressive credentials, however, Shirley A nn would still be important to the members of the Roswell church. Most of these worthies don’t think of her, or even know her as a Who’s Who (which she is); they know her only as Shirley A nn, on whom they can always call for help and counsel. Some of us know her as an unabashed ambassador for God, a veritable feminine version of Joseph or Daniel in the courts of the land and of the Lord.

By Jeanne Jordan
DAVE WOOD HAD CLIMBED LADDERS umpteen times in his many years in the construction business. Little did he realize how drastically his life would change that Sunday evening. August 22, 1982, as he stood on a ladder propped against a 20-foot light pole, inspecting some electrical work.

The next few events are a blur in Dave’s mind. He remembers feeling the ladder move. Desperation gripped his heart and panic engulfed him as he felt himself falling.

Until that day Dave had felt quite pleased about the way things were going in his life. His business was prospering; his family was doing well. He supervised a construction crew.

But after the fall doctors informed the family that Dave’s spinal cord injury meant a tracheotomy and life support. He would be paralyzed from the neck down and respirator-dependent for the rest of his life.

After the accident Dave felt helpless, unable to do anything for himself. At first he found it difficult to understand why he had suffered such a crushing blow. Yet in spite of the hardball life had thrown at him, Dave has not become bitter or resentful.

Now Dave spends his days reaching out to others, although he spends most of his time confined to a wheelchair in the Takoma Park, Maryland, home that he shares with his wife, Jeanne. He passes out Discover Bible study cards to everyone and anyone with whom he comes into contact. No one escapes his invitation—not his nurses, not the mail carrier, not even a stranger at a restaurant. Three people are currently preparing for baptism, one of whom is Emmanuel Coleman, a nurse who cares for Dave.

A few months ago Dave’s ventilator was not functioning properly and Dave was having extreme difficulty breathing. Paramedics were called to take him to the hospital. Three days after the incident the same paramedics returned to the Woods’ home, inquiring about the Discover Bible study cards that Dave kept mentioning between breaths on the way to the hospital.

Dave loves writing letters and making greeting cards on his computer, a tedious and painstaking task. He does it by holding an 18-inch mouth stick, with which he strikes the keys of the computer.

He enjoys reading his Bible, which is propped up in front of him. On nights when sleep doesn’t come easily Dave recites the Lord’s Prayer, the twenty-third psalm, or Psalm 91. He is presently memorizing Psalm 46.

Dave told me that his greatest wish is for Jesus to return. He yearns for the fulfillment of 1 Corinthians 15:52: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Nearly 16 years since the day of his accident, Dave has made it thus far with the help of God, his loving family, and his nurses. If you ask Dave how he’s doing, he replies without hesitation, “I’m thankful for another day; each day is a miracle.”

I came away from my visit with Dave refreshed and renewed in my trust in God. Dave taught me what faith and childlike trust in a loving Saviour can accomplish.

By Chitra Barnabas


Born to a poor family in Puerto Rico, Luis Cajiga seemed destined to work in his father’s cigar shop. But even before elementary school he longed to be an artist. Today, as an internationally regarded artist, Luis says he can’t separate his art from his faith in God. “You can learn to be a medical doctor, a teacher, a lawyer, or an engineer,” explains Luis, “but you can’t learn to be an artist. That is something you are born with. God chose that for you.”

Luis recalls as a 5-year-old drawing pictures on the inside walls of his home. Later Luis’s schoolteachers recognized his talent and encouraged him to create colorful chalk borders on the classroom blackboards. He even became something of an entrepreneur, earning five cents per drawing for illustrating his classmates’ assignments. By the time Luis turned 18 he knew he wanted to pursue a career in art. But he also knew that his family couldn’t support him financially. So Luis bought some cardboard, carefully drew two pictures, and sent them to the wife of the governor of Puerto Rico along with a letter saying he wanted to become an artist. She rewarded his initiative and found a place for Luis in a graphic arts workshop in San Juan.

In the 41 years since then, Luis Cajiga has become one of Puerto Rico’s best known and most honored artists. His works have been shown around the world, including Europe, Asia, and many cities in the United States. Last year Luis was chosen to design the poster for Hispanic Heritage Month (right) and was invited to Washington, D.C., to exhibit some of his works as part of the celebrations.

Luis creates art that resonates with the colors, life, and people of Puerto Rico. “Cajiga’s work radiates love and harmony,” writes art critic Peter Bloch. “The colors are joyful, the lines clean and sharp; the people’s daily life is depicted with love.”

Perhaps this “love,” which people often recognize in Luis’s work, is a reflection of the love of God that Luis strives to portray. “I think that being an artist is like having a ministry,” he says. “You can show people [through your art] how God guides in life, the beauty of nature, and how that nature shows us the love of God.”

He adds, “Being an artist has opened many doors for preaching the great gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The most consistent challenge Luis faces because of his Adventist beliefs is the scheduling of exhibitions and shows on Friday nights. “I have to say no,” he says. “But it is beautiful when somebody asks why and I can give them reasons for my faith.”

As an artist Luis Cajiga has received widespread public recognition and countless awards. But as an Adventist Luis says he has received something even more precious: “the assurance of truth, security in Christ, and the beautiful promises of God, received by faith.”

By Bettina Krause
"El está sentado sobre el globo de la tierra..."
ISAIAS 40:22

5to. CENTENARIO DEL DESCUBRIMIENTO DE AMÉRICA Y PUERTO RICO
Sang Lee: A Modern Apostle With the Gospel of Health

When Sang Koo Lee was born in China in 1943, his Buddhist Korean parents had no thought that their eldest child would become a Christian. Nor could they have imagined their son as a physician who would turn his back on a lucrative allergy practice in southern California to devote his life as an itinerant “preacher” much like the apostle Paul.

Finding God on his own Damascus road, Sang now brings joy to his aging mother at home in Korea. In his homeland there are today both a NEWSTART restaurant and a NEWSTART noodle—named through her son’s God-given influence on the nation. The road there came about in this way.

Fascinated by the meaning that he found in the book Counsels on Diet and Foods, given him by a patient, Sang requested more books by Ellen White, “this woman who wrote a hundred years ago what my medical journals are reporting only today.”

Adopting the eight natural remedies in White’s classic Ministry of Healing, Sang readily accepted the invitation to practice lifestyle medicine at northern California’s Weimar Institute. Actively teaching in both their NEWSTART program and the college, he also began to reach out to Koreans in his homeland by holding Korean

**FAST FACTS**

Name: Sang Koo Lee  
Age: 54  
Baptized: 1982  
Birthplace: Manchuria  
Occupation: physician  
Church involvement: working with the Mountain View, California, Korean congregation in a modified NEWSTART program early mornings before work and late evenings after work  
Spiritual high point: discovering the relationship between the Sabbath and health; understanding the significance of Sabbathkeeping from a biological and medical viewpoint  
Family: reared three children—homemaker Jennifer, TV anchor Sumia, and college student David—as a single parent; one grandson, Justin  
Dream for the church: that all members will rediscover meaning in the Sabbath and the three angels’ messages. “We’ve known the difference between Sabbath and Sunday,” he says, “but we haven’t dwelt on the meaning. We need to know why Ellen White saw the Sabbath commandment shining out in the sanctuary.”  
Hobby: listening to “beautiful music where I can hear God’s voice and feel Him touching my genes.”  
Favorite Bible book: Genesis. “I call it the ‘big bang book’ because it’s so concentrated. It blasts out at me all the time.”  
Favorite other reading: scientific journals for evidence of the Bible’s gospel of good health  
Favorite foods: Brazilian mangoes and Hawaiian papayas  
Favorite composer: Ludwig van Beethoven
NEWSTART programs there and on the Weimar campus.

Growing Korean interest led Sang to establish his own ministry, which he calls Healing Love. “That’s God’s healing love; love from the Designer of one’s genes,” he makes clear.

Because those healing principles are the same in every language, Sang began his own missionary journeys. Between regularly scheduled two-week lifestyle training retreats (six in Korean and five in English), offered regularly at the Naniloa Resort Hotel in Hilo, Hawaii, he can be found at other sites around the world. In Germany he is helping to develop ARCHE—another NEWSTART center; in Brazil he adds science to the Bible’s health guidelines at ministerial and medical retreats; in India he finds receptive audiences to his messages of hope and healing. He has also visited Spain, France, Hungary, Romania, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Argentina, Mexico, Guadaloupe, and Kyrgyzstan.

While he’s enthusiastic in his presentations about nutrition, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, and air, Sang is eloquent when discussing rest and trust in divine power. He presents rest not only as a daily need but also, from his own spiritual discovery, a reason for a seventh-day Sabbath from a health viewpoint.

Regarding his emphasis on trust, the Korean national radio and television stations invited him to Seoul in mid-March 1998 to tape a series on hope to combat growing national depression in the wake of the nation’s economic reversals.

With Sang Lee, the gospel of health is companion to the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, and he is passionately consumed by the motto “Sharing Christ in the marketplace.” The difference is that his marketplace has become the world.

GOOD NEWS: Using the Bible’s prescription for good health, Sang Lee travels the world.

By Shirley Burton
MAKING CONNECTIONS: Raul Escobar visits with Jim, a volunteer cook and homeless man at The Gathering Place in Lincoln, Nebraska.

FAST FACTS

Name: Raul Escobar
Age: 27
Baptized: 1983
Birthplace: Juarez, Mexico
Occupation: Loan Review Specialist
Church involvement: church board, young adult ministries
Spiritual high point: “Right now our twentysomething group is really amazing.”
Dream for the church: “For us to fulfill God’s work. We know that we’re living at the end of time. We need to share the gospel with everyone we know.”
Hobbies: cycling, model car collecting, running
Favorite Bible book: Daniel, Job
Favorite food: Mexican
Favorite music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven
Raul Escobar: To Serve and to Learn

Jim speaks evenly, “One time I asked someone if a homeless guy could take a shower at their facility, and they said no. I looked that person straight in the eye and said, ‘Then you would have turned away Jesus Christ.’”

Homelessness is something Jim knows lots about: it’s his life. And as Raul and I sat listening as Jim talked about Jesus, it was with fresh eyes that we saw our Saviour as one who was truly “one with us.”

Raul Escobar has no shortage of stories gleaned from his time as a volunteer at the Gathering Place, a soup kitchen in Lincoln, Nebraska. Hot meals hit the tables 365 days a year here, and at least one Sabbath a month Raul and a crew from the local young adult Sabbath school are there to serve and to learn.

On other days Raul and some friends play basketball at the regional hospital for mentally ill patients. It’s easy to see how a hot bowl of soup on a blustery day is a blessing, but more subtle is the blessing of picking Tim when choosing sides for basketball. When the other patients whisper “Don’t pick Tim; he’s no good” and Tim gets picked and praised anyway, that’s something too.

Why do it, though? Why serve? Raul’s answer comes as easily as his smile. “I need to have faith in action. I need to do something that shows that I have Christ in my heart.” And so he does, and as the leader of outreach for the Sabbath school class, he helps others get involved too.

Raul is quick to point out that the benefits of service aren’t just for the people served; they’re for those who get involved as well. More than a feel-good sensation, getting one’s hands dirty has a similar effect to the ordination of foot washing at Communion. The real growth, however, comes with the realization that servanthood can be difficult, especially when those being served aren’t “respectable.” Raul says it’s not like stopping to change a flat tire for someone in a suit. Sometimes the diners come in drunk, or they smell bad, or they’re just unpleasant.

Serving should be for the growth of our own compassion. “More than doing it to feel good,” Raul says, “we should do it to feel for them as Christ would.” And seeing them as Christ does turns the statistic of some 50 meals served per evening into an infinitely valuable gathering.

Mission work in his own backyard has special reward for Raul and those who give with him. “When you help people who can’t ever repay you, they get a glimpse of Christ.” And what could be more valuable than that?

By Erik Stenbakken
Our van stopped at the edge of Shantipur village, a suburb of Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India. In front of us a woman pumped water from the village well and another beat out her washing on a stone slab. A cross the dirt road was a small store and a cluster of tile-roofed houses. An older man greeted us. “This is Atul’s father,” the pastor said. “His house is just across the courtyard. A tul is waiting for us.”

We followed Mr. Auchite (OW-she-tay) to a humble two-room house made of whitewashed mud bricks. Seventeen-year-old Atul crawled to meet us, a wide grin on his face. He climbed onto the seat of his hand-operated tricycle with which he brings two friends, polio victims like himself, to church each week. Using it, he also visits his neighbors, enrolling them in Voice of Prophecy Bible lessons. He currently has 11 families studying the Bible. Six students are preparing for baptism.

Atul invited us inside. To this small room (eight feet by ten feet) 60 people came, at Atul’s invitation, to hear the story of Jesus for the first time in 1992. Atul, then 11 years old, heard the story of Jesus from an Adventist pastor who studied with his family. He was so excited about it that he crawled or was carried about the village to invite his relatives and friends to hear it too. Sixty people came, and 25 of them were baptized. Since then another 10 have joined the church.

John Sosana and Sunil Kamble, Atul’s two Hindu friends, have recently taken their stand for Jesus. All three youths now have their own wheelchairs, gifts from people who read about their experience in the “Inside Story” feature of the adult Sabbath school study guides in 1997. Besides that, funds have been given for an electronic keyboard for their singing group, mats to sit on for worship, Bibles and books for witnessing, and a motorized tricycle for their activities. But that is not all.

“You have raised funds to build three churches!” we told Atul. His eyes opened wide in surprise. “People who read your story want to help you build a church in Shantipur. And enough funds have come in to build two other churches in nearby villages as well.”

Atul’s eyes glistened as he whispered his thanks. Atul’s father then took us to a property half a block away. A broken-down house will be demolished, the land cleared, and a small chapel built in recognition of Atul’s witness.

Laltanki, about four miles from Atul’s home, has 150 members who meet in the village lanes because no house is big enough to hold them. Atul assisted with the evangelistic meeting that established this church. The people wept when they heard that they would get a church too. The third church is being built in Buranagar (five miles in another direction), where 30 were baptized in 1996.

“Atul is an inspiration to all of us,” Pastor Pardhe remarked. “Without his dedication and enthusiasm none of this would have happened.”

By Dorothy Eaton Watts
As a Judge in the Compensation Court of New South Wales, John Bagnall occupies a unique position—he is the only Adventist ever appointed to the judiciary in Australia.

Sabbath morning John teaches Sabbath school at the Epping Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Sydney, where he is an elder. He has attended this church all his life.

During the week, however, John's time is divided between working in his chambers, where he may read law reports or write judgments, and hearing cases in open court. The court usually sits for six hours each day, and John will hear up to seven cases. Sitting judges in Australia wear formal judicial dress, which, as John explains, includes “black bench jacket, silk robe, jabot, and wig—and trousers!”

For John, one of the more fulfilling aspects of his work is to see disputes resolved—either by agreement or by judgment. “It brings a finality and certainty to parties in dispute,” he says. “In a sense it fulfills the role of peacemaker.”

John chose a career in law in the early 1960s, when higher education at state universities was still viewed as “suspect” by many of his fellow Adventists. Suspicion of the legal profession in general was also reflected in the questions John frequently had to field, such as “How can you defend a guilty person?” and “How can you be honest and a lawyer?”

But as John explains, the ethics of the legal profession and many legal principles are closely related to Christian values. “‘Loving your neighbor’ becomes, in law, a tortious duty of care for your neighbor,” he says. “Or the commandment against false witness becomes a legal obligation not to deceive or mislead your fellow lawyers, your clients, or the court.”

In fact, the major challenges John has faced over the years have not been ethical dilemmas or moral conflicts between his profession and his faith. “The challenges are more with lifestyle,” says John. “Maintaining a teetotaler stand in a boozy world; eating simply and healthily in a profession where eating out is an ‘art form’; working reasonable hours, with daily and Sabbath rest, in a profession where long hours are common.”

In the course of his 30-year career, John has fought misconceptions on two fronts. On one hand, some Adventists see the phrase “Adventist lawyer” as a contradiction in terms. But John continues to demonstrate that “practicing Christians can be good and effective lawyers without compromising Christian ethics.” On the other hand, John’s successful legal career has also allowed him to break down some of the misunderstandings about the beliefs and practices of Seventh-day Adventist Christians among members of the legal profession.

“I’ve been a man of two worlds,” says John. “My church and the law—I love them both.”

By Bettina Krause
ON THE BENCH: The only Adventist ever appointed to the judiciary in Australia, John Bagnall serves in the Compensation Court of New South Wales.
Laura Flores: One Special Friend

PLAYGROUND PARISH: Laura Flores’ ministry to her community’s children begins here, on the campus of the local public school.
by Walla Walla College's Community Service Office, matches college students to elementary school children whom counselors have identified as "at risk." Children may also ask for mentors themselves, or parents may ask for their children to be matched to a mentor. Scott Rivas, a former WWC student, initiated the program five years ago. At the time he was a campus small group leader, and the group decided they wanted to help in the community. Scott shared the group's idea with the elementary school counselor, who continues to work with the program. Teachers continue to be enthusiastic as they see the positive results in their students who have mentors, including better attendance and improved attitudes.

Laura's desire to serve may have had its roots in her childhood, when her family, natives of Mexico, served as missionaries in Uruguay and Brazil. Even with these experiences, Laura admits that mentoring has given her a broader view of the world. "I've been in Seventh-day Adventist schools all my life. Sheltered, I guess you could say. I admire the children I've met who have to deal with much more than I had to when I was a child."[*]

* Sara is a pseudonym.

By Rosa Jimenez
As Head of Communications for an international investment bank in Hong Kong, Neroli Hills-Perry is on call 24 hours a day. “My job never takes a break, because global business means juggling time zones,” explains Neroli. “During the recent sale of one of our banks all the sale negotiations went through three continents, which meant we worked around the clock to catch each of the parties during their waking hours.”

In this workaholic environment, Sabbath work pressures inevitably arise. Neroli makes it clear to her staff that from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday she is “unavailable” and any problem will either have to wait or yield another solution.

Even the bank chair has noticed Neroli’s Sabbath policy. Recently he was a patient in the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, and in a conversation with the hospital chaplain said, “I already know a bit about your Sabbath. I have a Seventh-day Adventist who works for me, and wild elephants won’t drag her into work on Friday night and Saturday!”

“I don’t make a big song and dance of my religion at work,” says Neroli, “but eventually people ask. And as they keep asking, I keep answering. As

COMPOUND INTEREST: Neroli Hills-Perry is equally at ease in the volatile environment of international banking as she is when she describes her religious convictions to those who inquire.
part of my job I entertain clients as well as the media and government officials, and you wouldn’t believe the conversations that start when people find out I don’t drink and that I’m a vegetarian.”

Neroli, an Australian, has lived and studied in a number of countries. She and her husband, Andrew, moved to Hong Kong last year after Neroli was “poached” from the investment bank where she worked in Sydney.

“My parents instilled in me a belief that anything is possible if you keep your faith in God and your feet firmly planted on the ground,” says Neroli.

Are Adventists needed in the world’s financial markets? “It’s a highly competitive area where the lure of the almighty dollar often wins out against the Almighty,” says Neroli. “There are good Christians in international finance, but I believe we need more.

“Someone recently asked me how, in all good conscience, I can work for a bank. I told him that I worked for a bank because I believed I was an influence for the better. God puts all of us in places for a reason, and it’s my responsibility to do what I can, not just by the tithes and offerings I give to the church, but by what I can give society as a whole.”

For Neroli, Adventist faith also means a secure place in a global family. “When we arrived in Hong Kong,” she says, “we went to the closest Adventist church, where we had fabulous fellowship right from the very start. One day I mentioned to my assistant that we were meeting Chinese friends for dinner. She said, ‘How do you know all these people? You’ve only just gotten here. It seems you’ve been out more in the last month than I have all year—and I was born here!’ I told her, ‘It’s simple; we met them all at church.’”

By Bettina Krause
T’s Sunday Morning. The day begins at 4:00, when Timothy Smith wakes up. He doesn’t rise early to see patients at Loma Linda University Medical Center, as he once did—he’s the patient. His wife, Wainette, pumps the hydraulic jack that lifts his six-foot-four-inch frame from the bed and places him in a wheelchair, where he’ll spend the rest of the day.

Morning is the best part of the day—it’s their quiet time before the boys get up. Every other morning, when she doesn’t work at the hospital, Wainette runs five to 10 miles, a habit she’s cultivated for some 30 years since immigrating from Sweden.

After Tim graduated from the medical school at Loma Linda University in 1972, the couple was baptized at the Loma Linda University church. Tim and his friend David Wilbur graduated at the top of their class, and both scored high on their medical boards. Some years after graduation Tim noticed increasing difficulty with his legs during his morning runs. Doctors diagnosed him as having progressive multiple sclerosis. Twenty-one years later Tim is a quadriplegic.

The day ends as Tim is moved from his wheelchair to his bed, using the red metal jack. He’s spent most of the day reading on the World Wide Web; a little television, a little talk, and it’s time to sleep—if he can.

**FAST FACTS**

Name: Tim and Wainette Smith
Years Adventist: 26
Place of birth: Tim: Riverside, California; Wainette: Barnamo, Sweden
Occupation: Tim: physician; Wainette: operating room nurse
Church involvement: Wainette: Sabbath school assistant when Tim didn’t need as much care and the family could attend church together
Spiritual high point: Tim: in the 1980s when he was able to participate in ham radio Bible studies; Wainette: Sabbath mornings
Dream for the church: Tim would like to see a willingness to be more inclusive.
Hobbies: Tim: computer; Wainette: running (has run a recent marathon).
Favorite book: Tim: Durant’s History of Civilization; Wainette: busy schedule leaves little time for reading
Favorite food: Tim: Italian; Wainette: Oriental; both like Marie Callender’s pies.
Favorite music: Tim: John Denver and classical; Wainette: gospel, the Gaithers, Chopin, and the Romantic period of the classics
Tomorrow is Monday, and Wainette leaves for work at 6:00 a.m. at the medical center, where she is an operating room nurse. A woman will come in to feed Tim lunch. Two sons, Gustav and Bertil, also help with his care. During the week they commute to La Sierra University; a third son, Krister, studies paleontology at the University of California at Berkeley, in northern California.

The Smith family looks forward to Sabbath. David Wilbur stops by each Friday evening to chat. Sabbath mornings resonate with gospel songs. “It’s almost like heaven,” Wainette says. On Sabbath she attends early church and Sabbath school; often the two boys share their musical talent at a local church. While Tim watches church via television, Wainette finishes a special dinner she prepared on Thursday. There will be lots of company: friends who visit every week; the boys and their friends. There could be 12 or more present—welcome fellowship after a lonely and busy week.

After years of family prayers God hasn’t healed Tim physically. Has it caused the boys to be cynical? Yes and no. But God’s guidance in life decisions and other things that come together provide the Smiths evidence of His care. There have been laughter and family togetherness. They remain thankful for staying at Loma Linda University Medical Center, with its resources and professional friends. Tim is grateful for the support of a disciplined, caring wife who is also a skilled nurse. And Wainette is thankful that Tim has been so good-natured throughout his ordeal. He has coped with his situation with class and fortitude.

They thank God for their three sons—two planning to be physicians. Growing up, the boys became accomplished musicians, learning to play the classics and performing with school groups as far away as Australia and Europe.

Amid a major struggle, God still blesses with small miracles.

By Ella Rydzewski
Elias Links: Ambassador for Christ

“Elias (Elty) Links became known to the members of the Capital Memorial church when he was South African ambassador to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank from 1987 to 1990. Since 1996 Elty has lived in Brussels, Belgium, serving as South Africa’s ambassador to the European Union. Elty modestly describes himself as “a middle-of-the-road South African husband and father who will work overtime if I have to, but who likes eight hours of sleep.”

Elty’s day begins with exercise, personal and family devotions, and a chauffeur-driven ride to the office. “I keep a Bible on my desk,” he says. “I like to read a text and spend a few minutes in reflection before I begin my duties.” A typical day offers a wide variety of activities—phone calls, briefings, meetings, speeches, etc. “The role of South Africa’s ambassador to the European Union in managing and shaping the country’s relations with the union is certainly an exciting and challenging one,” he admits.

What about being a Seventh-day Adventist? What has the unique ability to serve in a high-profile position and at the same time be a genuinely kind, loving Christian and a loyal Seventh-day Adventist.”

FAST FACTS

Name: Elias (Elty) Links
Location: Brussels, Belgium
Age: 51
Years Adventist: lifetime
Place of birth: Cape Province, South Africa
Occupation: career diplomat
Church involvement: local elder, International Seventh-day Adventist Church, Brussels (has also been active in Adventist congregations in Bellville and Sunnyside, South Africa; Zurich, Switzerland; Binghamton, New York; and Washington, D.C.)
Spiritual high point: “When one walks in an Adventist family, there are often no dramatic ‘Damascus road’ experiences. Rather there were many experiences connected by God’s leadership over many years. I’ve never slipped out of the church so that I had to come back. The support of my wife, my children, my church, has made my life a glorious experience.”
Family: wife, Yolanda; son, Andre; daughter, Stacey
Dream for the church: to be approachable so that we fulfill the potential of the marvelous truth we have in our own families and communities, and be the force we can be through the silent influence of the Holy Spirit
Favorite Bible book: First Corinthians, for its emphasis on spiritual gifts and human sexuality
Favorite reading: anything by Morris Venden or Samuele Bacchiocchi
Favorite food: any kind of soup
Favorite types of music: violin and choral
challenges or opportunities does membership provide? Elty points out that the societal upheaval that many predicted with the dissolution of apartheid in South Africa was ameliorated in part by the faith backgrounds of much of the population (Christians, Muslims, Jews). He says that for more complete reconciliation to occur, it’s widely believed among South Africans that they have to look for a power beyond their own.

Elty’s faith gives him an opportunity to speak with authority about spiritual things as well as matters political and economical. “I pride myself on being known as a Seventh-day Adventist,” he says, acknowledging that Adventists are well-known in many countries of the world. “It keeps me on my toes.”

By Stephen Chavez
WATCHING GOD WORK THROUGH
Corey Currant is like watching an
action hero at work. Corey is a
Christian in action, and just like
Jesus, he loves kids.

Working with children is
where Corey’s religion meets
reality. His interest in helping
children came clearly into focus while he was
attending Upper Columbia
Academy, near Spokane,
Washington. When he was
an academy sophomore, his
parents took in their first
foster child. This inspired
him to volunteer his sum-
ners working as a transport
driver with the Washington
State Department of Social
and Health Services’ Child
Protection Services Division.

Now a Walla Walla
College freshman, Corey
continues his CPS driving
service. For the past two
years he has worked his class
schedules so that he could
drive year-round. “Those
kids need a lot of help,”
he says.

Most of the time Corey transports kids to and from
appointments or to visits with their parents. Twice he
was present when children were taken away from their
parents.

Corey has no doubts about how involvement has
impacted him. “It has made me see how the real world is
and the hardships of others. I can see how much sin has
really messed things up.”

Corey can tell you all about the consequences of sin.
He has seen it. He can also tell of God’s great love and
concern for individuals. He grew up in an Adventist
home and was baptized at 17. Gaining a Christian
education is a priority. After working hard to pay
off his debt to Upper Columbia Academy, Corey’s
financial picture looked bleak. Last summer he
began to wonder if he could attend college in the
fall. By God’s grace, he says, and with help from
the Financial Aid Department, he now
attends Walla Walla
College. “It was a spiritual
high point for me. This is
all God’s getting me here!”
he says enthusiastically.

To keep alive and well spir-
itually, he is involved in a
campus prayer group. During
the week group members
check on one another to
make sure each is staying
spiritually on track. In this
small group a new idea was
born.

The group plans to organize
a “parents respite service.” The service will provide parents
with a few hours of rest on weekends. He believes the program
will have plenty of participants.

By Cari Ann Butler
IN 1996 LILLY KALIGITHI SOLD HER nursing home business in Oregon, said goodbye to her four children and 16 grandchildren, and returned to India to establish a home for orphans and abandoned children. With the funds from her business she purchased nearly two acres at Rusthambada, Narasapur, Andhra Pradesh.

Although she wasn’t yet set up to take in children, Lilly couldn’t refuse the beautiful babies.
9-week-old baby girl, Shiny. The baby has been Lilly's constant companion since that November day in 1996. Shiny is almost deaf, but her black curly hair, dancing dark-brown eyes, and mischievous smile have made her the darling of the whole community.

Sweet Home, as Lilly calls her orphanage, is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream to help the destitute children of her native land. "I had two dreams," Lilly said, "to see my youngest child and only son become a worker for God and to establish an orphanage in my native place. As soon as my son finished Andrews University and was hired as a pastor in the Ohio Conference, I knew I was free to accomplish my second goal."

So Lilly sold her business in Oregon and began to raise funds for the ongoing support of her project. Meanwhile, she contacted the Flecks of International Children's Care (ICC) in nearby Vancouver, Washington, to see if she could channel her funds through them. Her orphanage is the first ICC project in India, joining other orphanages in Asia run by that organization in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka.

To learn how to run children's homes ICC style, Lilly traveled to Guatemala to witness firsthand how the house parent plan works. She learned that ICC encourages family-type homes to be set up on two acres of land, with each set of house parents responsible for 12 children. She came away inspired to do the same in Narsapur.

Less than two years after she moved to Narsapur, Lilly has 19 children and two homes in operation—one in a rented house while she looks for property to build more homes.

I visited Sweet Home recently. We walked with the children to their homes. We saw their neat cots and their school shoes lined up in a row by the door. Everything was spotless. The children seemed so proud of their home. They showed us the cemented courtyard where they gather to play games and do their homework. There Lilly sat on a bench under the shade of a tree while the children gathered around. "I wish you could be here on Saturday night," Lilly told us. "The children put on a program for us. They recite poems, do little skits, and sing songs. God has been good to me. I am so blessed to have the love of these precious children and to see the dream of my life fulfilled."

By Dorothy Eaton Watts
Hey know where the youth hang out in southern California, and Aaron Matlock and Bryant Willis are ready to take the gospel where it needs to go.

Through their ministry to young adults, Aaron and Bryant have realized that there is more to ministry than just passing out tracts and feeding the homeless. Some of the well-known youth hangouts they target are Pine Street in Long Beach, the Promenade in Santa Monica, Roscoe’s Chicken and Waffle in Venice Beach, Universal City Walk, and various theaters, cafés, and comedy and dance clubs.

“At first, witnessing at Roscoe’s was scary!” says Bryant. “That’s where I used to hang out. There I was, back in my old hangout, talking to my peers. Females figure that we’re getting at them. We let them know up front that we care about something deeper than their phone number—their salvation.”

Instead of collecting telephone numbers, selling drugs, or styling, these young adults are out spreading the Word by distributing Discover Bible Guides and Steps to Christ.

“Yeah, some have tried to pull them down by saying that they are followers and don’t have minds of their own. People have tried to run them off, ask complicated questions, misquote Scripture, or raise their voices to try to distract them, but the Lord always takes care of them. When rejected, they continue on because they know that it’s a privilege to work for God.”

With the support of Sandra Willis, Adventist Youth leader at Philadelphia Adventist Church in Long Beach, Aaron and Bryant have incorporated their witnessing program into their local church youth group, which goes out witnessing every other Friday night.

By Deedra Brown

Adapted with permission from the Winter 1998 edition of Giraffe News, a ministry resource for Adventist youth and young adults.
Caught in the sweetest of thefts, the hummingbird hangs before the eye for a delicious moment—all lightness, all motion, all fantasy. And all made of wood.

For Adventist sculptor Ralph Trethewey, of Walla Walla, Washington, it's all in a day's—or rather a month's—work. Ralph's realistic wood sculptures, particularly of American birds, have earned him an enviable reputation as a superior craftsman in the close fraternity of wildlife artists. His unique sculptures of hummingbirds and other birds may take up to four weeks and 150 hours to complete, and have frequently earned him People's Choice and Best of Show awards at regional art fairs and exhibits in the Pacific Northwest.

Ralph has been a keen observer of wildlife since age 10, when he began producing simple sculptures with a pocketknife. Believing that God had given him a gift to bless others, he gave away most of his early work. While attending college, he decided to refine his skill through several sculpting classes. Subsequently he developed sculpting techniques and styles that have earned a living for him and his family for the past 25 years.

Ralph's clients range from individual collectors to government agencies, including a 1995 commission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department to sculpt 22 original pieces representing the bird life of the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. Displayed in a series of forest and shoreline dioramas were birds unique to the Hawaiian islands, including several on the endangered species list. Hank Williams, Jr., former Oregon governor Barbara Roberts, and the museum of Ripley's Believe It or Not have also purchased his work.

Since 1994 Ralph has also been sculpting birds in bronze, working from clay models that are then made into molds and finally cast. Galleries throughout the Northwest contain both his wood and bronze sculptures.

"It's not always easy to believe in and keep the Bible Sabbath in a business where most sales events are on Friday night and Sabbath," he says with a slow smile. "On Sundays, when I can attend, there aren't usually that many buyers left. Sometimes I've been so exasperated with God as to ask Him, 'Why can't I get my chance to make a lot of money?' But then my belief in eternal reality comes through, and I remember that when I honor God's command, He promises to honor me."

An active member of the Walla Walla City Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ralph has discovered that his most significant ministry is to the other artists who also exhibit at art fairs and galleries. "We're all in the same business—all trying to make a living through our craft," he says. "They know what I believe, and sometimes even teasingly urge me to break my Sabbath pledge. Some even offer to watch my booth for me during Sabbath.

"I'm convinced that when the time comes, many of these honest-hearted people will understand God's truth better because they can remember someone they respected who actually tried to live it."

By Bill Knott