The Vision Glorious: Adventism’s Unique Understanding of Human History

The Judas Virus
I Was Wasting My Talents
Sandra Doran: Children Under Stress
Adventist Health Care

In “The Mission of Adventist Health Care” (Mar. 26 AnchorPoints Edition), Dr. Lyn Behrens advocates a need to work with formal and informal partners. She does not directly specify the religious affiliation of these partners, but some might view the partners whom she advocates to include those who do not share our beliefs. The statement “No mission, no margin; but also: no margin, no mission” might be viewed as a principle to justify partnerships with secular institutions in order to gain the financial rewards perceived (from a human point of view) to be essential to the survival of the Adventist health-care system.

I consider it sad that some of our institutions feel a need to unite in business with those who do not share our beliefs. Is this not a lack of faith in God’s ability or willingness to provide? Perhaps the financial difficulty that our health system realizes is related to departure from God’s plan. He who with power delivered Israel from the grip of Egypt is well able to care for His followers today.

—Dr. Gregory Scribner
Washougal, Washington

As the Adventist health-care institutions find themselves struggling to survive, maybe we need to rethink our health mission. We were admonished not to model our medical schools after traditional medicine and not to rely on pharmaceutical drugs as the backbone of our health care. We were to use natural means to help our body’s created ability to maintain and restore health.

We now find ourselves as just one in the crowd of many health-care systems struggling to survive when we should be set apart from the crowd. We need to be leaders in promoting natural methods of healing. We need to include alternative medicine such as chiropractic, naturopathy, acupuncture, etc, which are more in tune to natural healing. We should have been the leaders of the health and fitness revival of the eighties and nineties, but were not.

Let us not drop the ball this time. Let us stand out from the crowd and provide leadership for true health care.

—Dr. Carl E. Swarts
Gresham, Oregon

Breathe In, Breathe Out

John and Rebecca Griffin’s “Breathe In, Breathe Out” (Mar. 26) was of particular interest to me following a diagnosis of lymphoma in May 1997 and six chemo treatments.

I could identify with so many of his experiences; I cried and laughed all the way through. Some of the things mentioned were not a laughing matter, but the Griffins have a talent of putting a funny twist to serious situations.

May all of us be able to breathe in, experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit, and breathe out, passing on the blessing the Lord has given us.

—Verna White
Takoma Park, Maryland

I have not been able to comprehend what judgment was exercised in printing this medical exposé. I have had 50 years’ experience both as a trained medical librarian and certified cancer (tumor) registrar/researcher. For laypersons, this detailed, even gruesome, medical account leaves many points to ponder as to the advisability of the timing of some of the procedures, etc.

I’m thankful for heaven’s blessing in the eventual recovery of the patient, but I trust next time you will consider the psychological impact on your non-medical readers.

—Mrs. Jerry Lund
Fullerton, California

The Church and Politics

Thank you, Roy Adams, for “The Church and Politics” (Mar. 26)! I have sat in church listening to pastors tell how a certain side of the political spectrum is the only side a “Christian” can favor. Please have more articles on this subject as the elections draw near. (Ellen G. White has been totally overlooked in this area.) We should not take time in church for such trivia while the salvation of souls is our reason for being.

—Josephine Troxel
Via e-mail

It is quite obvious that Adams has not read the “other side” of the story on the Clintons. There is an abundant array of literature authored by credible people, such as Gary Aldrich (Unlimited Access),
that would bring Adams up to speed on what is going on. I do not believe that this should be a political issue, but when it affects the safety of our nation, I think we should become knowledgeable before we speak.

To imply that Jerry Falwell is a lunatic for exposing what this president and his wife are involved in is ludicrous. What does the Bible say about calling wrong right and calling right wrong? This has nothing to do with partisan politics; it has everything to do with you and me.

—Bev Stacy
Via e-mail

Please include city and state/country with all correspondence.

Same Old Fight (cont.)
I was touched by the letter “Same Old Fight,” printed in the March NAD Edition. The statements (and questions) of our unknown sister are worth addressing by someone who can relate.

I have asked those very same questions and have even made similar statements regarding the attitudes in the church toward those of us who have “gone away” and tried to “get back in.” After several painful years I am happy to report that both I and my church have enjoyed improved attitudes. We are family again. I have discovered the following:

1. Since any organization consists of many different personalities, there will always be those with a special talent for gossiping or “back-stabbing.” Fortunately, they are in the minority, but they do seem to have great influence. These people tend to feed on the bottom of the sea, where all the forgiven sins are to be put to rest. When they finish feeding on your sins, they will move on to another poor soul’s. Realize that it is your turn to be gossiped about and that it won’t last forever.

2. God’s “remnant” people can and do forgive! Please don’t call the whole church hypocritical when only a few in it are having trouble in that area. Lean on the friends who accept you and provide you with forgiveness and encouragement. And pray for strength and patience as you forgive those who cannot forgive you. God will bring events into your life that will help with patching up differences.

3. You may not realize it now, but there are members in your church who pray for you every day. Thank God for them! In time you will discover those who are sincerely rooting for your happiness. They are true friends . . . and they exist, even if you don’t feel their influence yet.

4. Even though it may seem impossible to get back into your church, don’t give up. The devil would want that. Keep coming each week, fellowship with your church family, and worship God and thank Him publicly for what He’s done in your life. You will be an encouragement to more people than you might think, including young adults. Demonstrate to others that God has forgiven you by living like a forgiven person. Walk through life facing forward, since the past is behind you.

—Les Moyer
Shermans Dale, Pennsylvania

I had the opposite experience shared in “Same Old Fight.” In the early nineties I came back to my home church in Coquille, Oregon, after having been a dropout for about 15 years. (I was in my 20s when I joined the church.) During my dropout years I attended sporadically, knowing I needed to be there all the time. When I quit arguing with God and returned full-time, I felt only love and rejoicing from my fellow church members. Many of them came up to me with hugs, saying, “I’m so glad you are back.”

Please, church members everywhere: Make an effort to welcome everyone back while we still can.

—Marjorie (King) Myers
Coquille, Oregon
After living out of a suitcase 10 days or more, I begin to have a strong urge to go home. But the news was not good when I reached the check-in counter at Sydney International Airport that day last March. The United Airlines plane that would take me to my first stop in the U.S. had not arrived from San Francisco. Our flight, they said, would be delayed eight hours.

Those who’ve been trapped in this kind of situation on the other side of the world from their home know immediately the implication of such a development. It really translates into eight hours of additional jet lag misery. I tried to take it in stride, but it wasn’t easy. “Dear Lord,” I said as I walked away from the counter, “You saw that coming, didn’t You? So what lesson am I to learn from this one?”

I put the question, but really was in no learning mood right then. I needed time to fuss (if only within myself), time to fume (however irrationally)—about why a big company like United did not have a backup plane sitting on the ground at every airport in the world for whenever Roy Adams is desperate to get home.

It took several hours for me to calm down sufficiently to notice the neat side of the whole situation. As passengers arrived that day, they were met by a senior United agent, selected by the airline to break the gloomy tidings before people actually reached the check-in counter. Anticipating the sour mood her message could touch off, she carried generous offers in her pouch to sweeten the bitter pill—offers for complimentary hotel accommodation and meals while we wait, plus big travel vouchers (for future flights) for those opting to leave the following day instead.

But the part of this whole experience that most impressed me came later in the evening. The new arrival time in Sydney for our plane would be 9:50 p.m. And we were warned that because of the airport’s strict curfew regulations, we had to clear the gate by 11:00 p.m. or stay the night. All passengers, they urged—as if we needed urging—must be on time.

As the jumbo pulled up to the gate—dead on the button—the ground crew went into action: fuel people, baggage handlers, catering. And 15 members of the cleaning staff, brooms and bags and cleaning agents at the ready, stood just outside the loading tunnel, waiting for the plane to empty. They’d have only a few minutes to tidy up the mess left behind by 300 passengers after two and a half meals, hundreds of drinks, and 13 hours in the big jumbo.

Will they make it? I wondered. Can they turn an international flight around in one hour?

Through the entire episode, not once did I detect anything short of complete coordination and teamwork on the part of the entire crew. It was an example of total commitment to a single goal—getting that plane off the ground by curfew time. And to our great relief, they did it. At 10:55 we were pushing away from the gate.

With an infinitely more important mission than getting an airline off the ground by curfew time, why don’t we see that kind of teamwork in our midst more often? When one of us is chosen for a major project in the church, how do the rest of us react—especially those who feel equally qualified for the task? Do we stand ready to cooperate—fully? Or do we (openly or underhandedly) work to sabotage the mission? On the other hand, what of the persons chosen? Do we have the humility that hides itself behind the cross?

The level of cooperation I envision will never come so long as the glory is perceived to go to one person, to one group, or worse, to one clique. Large numbers of believers will not give themselves in total abandon to any endeavor if they question the motives of those onstage; if they suspect that at the end of the day the purpose is to boost the careers of selected individuals.

So what to do? Must we wait for a crisis (when careers don’t matter anymore) to compel us to work together? I think not. What we need, I think, is to come to the place where it doesn’t matter who gets the credit as long as God gets the glory. Think about it.

The hour is late. The task is huge. And curfew time approaches.
With his knobby, arthritic hands the old man carefully unrolled several feet of a thick paper scroll. No one else had time to talk with him at the church office where I worked as a secretary. I became the only one to whom he could give his precious message about Daniel. I followed his thin crooked index finger as he pointed to colorful drawings along a chronological line that spread out some four feet.

I wondered how long it had taken him to draw them and carefully fill them with color. Or how long he had studied his Bible to arrive at his cryptic conclusions. I marveled more about his dedication than I did the convoluted explanations he gave in a crackly voice. I couldn’t follow them, and my mind wandered. I looked at the clock—almost time to go home. When would he finish? I felt shame at my feelings. This was his creation, the only thing he felt he could do for God anymore. It was his work of art, his scholarly paper, his message to the church. But who would listen?

There are hundreds, maybe thousands, like him all over the Adventist world. Our church spawned an early interest in Daniel, claiming to know the meaning of the visions, especially the 2300 days. So we should not be surprised that retired, forgotten, elderly men in small apartments spend hours trying to discover the key to understanding Daniel.

What secret does Daniel’s vision hold that can’t be revealed until the end-time?

We have all seen the charts. Sometimes they get passed around at churches, or they come over the Internet. Here at the Adventist Review we occasionally get manuscripts proclaiming new insights on Daniel’s visions and Revelation’s mysteries. Most are by amateur theologians. But I have heard of talented persons claiming new light who have set up persuasive ministries. Some stimulate our thinking, others are merely divisive and argumentative.

Daniel’s visions remain a source of debate. Our scholars sometimes differ on their interpretations, but most stay by the traditional 2300-day chart we learned in our Bible studies for membership. But what do we do with the rest of Daniel? How do we meet the challenges to our traditional understanding?

How do we study any part of the Bible? Daniel’s example shows us how.

1. Daniel read the Scriptures (Dan. 9:2) and took what he read very seriously—it saddened him (verse 3).
2. He sought God’s help. Daniel truly wanted to know about what he had read—so much so that he came to God with prayer and fasting. Perhaps he took a personal retreat that could have lasted a day or many days.
3. He began by acknowledging God’s power and love (verse 4).
4. Daniel spent time in confession (verses 5-19) and asking for God’s mercy. He expressed not only personal sin but collective sin (verse 20).
5. A response came quickly with a message of assurance that God loved Daniel (verses 21-23) and would give him understanding (verse 23). God is like that.
6. Daniel did not run away from God in fear (Dan. 10:7), as did others. In spite of feelings of fear, Daniel stayed and listened (verses 8-10).

Why was Daniel chosen to receive this earthshaking prophecy? What was his secret? No secret exists to those who read—it’s simple: “Then the man said to me, ‘Daniel, do not be afraid. Some time ago you decided to get understanding and to humble yourself before your God. Since that time God has listened to you, and I have come because of your prayers’” (verse 12, NIV).

I don’t claim to know how many of our scholars, pastors, teachers, leaders, and ordinary people like you and me come to God as did Daniel. I suspect we spend more time in debate, sure of our opinions. If all of us came to God for understanding, the confusion and doubt that sometimes harass us personally and as a church could be largely dispelled.

That was Daniel’s secret and the secret of those in the end-times who will understand the Scriptures, when “your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams...” (Joel 2:28, NCV).
ADVENTIST LIFE

During a share-and-praise portion of Sabbath school, the leader asked us to tell what we especially appreciated about modern laborsaving devices. One great-great-grandmother, Hattie Hutchison, took the microphone when it was handed to her and said, “I especially appreciate my dishwasher. And I brought him to church with me this morning.”

—Vangie Bowen, Exeter, California

During a baby shower for one of our young adult couples, our youth leader prepared some group games pitting the men against the women. Holding out some incentives, she announced that whichever group won the majority of the games would be given Ellen G. White pencils.

“All right!” quipped the father-to-be. “Whatever we write with those pencils will be truth.”

—Francis Recalde, Pasadena, California

Soon after joining the church, we went to visit my in-laws. On our first morning together my 6-year-old daughter came into the living room and curled up in the big chair. Her uncle Bud then came in and said, “Good morning, you old human.”

Crying and whimpering, my daughter said, “I am not a human, Uncle Bud. I am a Seventh-day Adventist!”

—Lois E. David, Deltona, Florida

Our 20-month-old granddaughter, Mackenzie, had been sick for a couple days. At bedtime, after a couple stories and prayers, her mommy put her in bed.

“I want Papa,” cried Mackenzie again and again, but each time she was told that Papa was at work.

Finally Mackenzie cried, “Then I want Jesus!”

—Dorienne Cearcia, Middleton, Idaho

JOTS & TITLES

In this feature Adventists share church-related advice.

THE BIBLE IN ORDER: Though I was raised an Adventist from age 6 and have heard the Bible stories again and again, I would not be able to tell you the order in which the stories come. My husband has started telling our sons the Bible in order. He works evenings, so his two nights off a week are special. He sits down with the Bible and reads a story, then he tells it to the children. It is thrilling to see them grasp the events in order, and they anticipate the next one.

—Sherry Patterson, Vallejo, California

KID-TO-KID MINISTRY: As adults we shouldn’t keep all the joy of fulfilling the gospel commission to ourselves; we should share it with our children. Our Pathfinder Club has enjoyed sponsoring two children from Honduras through Reach International, a Seventh-day Adventist not-for-profit charity. The Pathfinders raise money through car washes, an international food fair, offerings, and their own donations. They will benefit from corresponding with the children and may gain friends for eternity. Reach’s address is P.O. Box 34, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

—Debra L. Reynolds, Chapel Oak Explorers Pathfinder Club, Shawnee, Kansas
Our whole sweep of biblical interpretation, including the books of Daniel and Revelation, is a philosophy of history.

Olson: Right. I recently had quite a difference of opinion on the history of the Christian church with an Episcopal priest whom I meet in a weekly Bible study. I spoke about the fall of pagan Rome, and blamed the Papacy for it. He wasn't going to accept that. No, Rome didn't fall. And I ended up by saying, “Well, brother, you've been reading a different set of books than I've been reading.” In his concept of history, Rome doesn't get blamed for anything.

Nix: Rather than just reading Catholic history or Protestant history, when we study history from the Great Controversy perspective, the Adventist perspective, we're seeing history from God's perspective. We're seeing the play and counterplay from God's perspective.

Nix: Behind the scenes. God's pulling the curtain aside.

Coon: I don't know who the philosopher or historian was, but somebody said, “If you cut the word ‘history’ into two words, it spells ‘His’ story.”

Knott: An overview, then—

Knott: Several weeks ago I happened to be glancing at the bulletin of a Catholic university. And I noticed there that they have a course of study that would clearly develop a Catholic concept of history. Other writers refer to a “Protestant concept of history.” Is it accurate to speak of a Seventh-day Adventist understanding of history?

Maxwell: Definitely.
and that really is what it’s all about.

Olson: We believe in the existence of invisible beings who are real, and the war they fight in is real as well. I don’t know how many other Christians still believe that. But that is our Protestant and Seventh-day Adventist view.

Knott: In what ways is an Adventist understanding of the Great Controversy like that of other Protestant churches, and in what ways is it different?

Folkenberg: I’d say it’s much closer to what it was in most Protestant churches a century ago.

All: Yes, yes.

Folkenberg: Most Protestant churches today have lost sight of their Reformation roots. Adventists are much closer to the Reformation mind-set, to the classic Protestant view of history. Because we’ve had the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy, we’ve had things illuminated, and the light shined on the sweep of history.

Coon: This change in Protestant thinking was predicted by Ellen White. About six months ago an archbishop of the charismatic Catholic Church came to Chattanooga and spoke to a large audience. And the Chattanooga Free Press came out in the next edition with a big banner headline that covered practically the whole page—“The Death of Protestantism.” That was his message—that Protestantism has died, and we’d better all get together with the Roman Church.

Nix: But the Great Controversy vision was given 140 years ago at a time when Protestants had a more “Protestant” view. What was there about the vision that added more than just the Protestant view? I don’t think it’s just the Protestant versus Catholic issue. I think there’s an even deeper perspective that God was trying to get across.

Maxwell: Well, certainly the Sabbath. The big issue in Ellen G. White’s writings is the Sabbath. She saw it as the big issue of the last days—I mean the characteristic big issue. Now the mark of the beast figures prominently in the third angel’s message. And you have to know the Bible view, the Great Controversy view, of history in order to know what the beast is, and thence to know what the mark of the beast is. These churches have all lost sight of the biblical view of history, and they do not know what the beast is. Therefore they don’t know and have no clue as to what the mark of the beast is, excepting something printed on your forehead, which is absurd!

Coon: You don’t even hear them talking about the image to the beast.

Maxwell: I guess not. So it’s absolutely vital that we continue teaching history from the biblical-great controversy perspective in order to be true to our calling as Seventh-day Adventists.

Folkenberg: The culture of today says that you don’t talk about anything that might make another faith group uncomfortable. With that logic, you don’t teach difficult truth, you don’t preach it, you deny its existence, and in a few generations, it disappears from view.

Knott: In fact, some Adventists today are talking as though they’d like to be good evangelical Christians without the distinctive profile of being a remnant people. Do you see that kind of movement growing in the Adventist Church?

Folkenberg: There’s a part of human nature that denies any authority. We resent, we resist, any authority. The Lord has arranged things so that we have to make some decisions, and we know that the Sabbath is going to be one of the crucial issues. Does God have sovereign authority to make a day holy? an authority which we must ultimately acknowledge? That’s the real question.

Is there a move among some Adventists to reduce our distinctiveness? Of course there is, but it’s not unique to Adventism. Our nature, our culture, our environment, the media, our pop psychology—all of it teaches us, “Reject anything that intrudes on your individual sovereignty.” The great question that the Great Controversy forces us to answer is this: Is there a sovereign God to whom we will submit out of hearts broken by love for what He has done, or will we crown ourselves as our own gods?

Knott: Several of you have children and grandchildren. Think for a moment about how you would introduce the
Great Controversy concept to a child of seven. What would you say in a couple of sentences to give a brief overview?

Olson: Children have wonderful imaginations. And if you tell them that good and bad angels exist, they can see them. They can grasp that easily. You can tell them about the Great Controversy in personal terms: “When you want to do something that’s naughty, it’s Satan or one of his imps who is tempting you. There are also good angels that are trying to help you.” I think children are better able to understand the Great Controversy than some of us adults.

Coon: Can you make a generalization?

Knott: Oh, try!

Olson: And would we know? You see, I’m not teaching anymore.

Knott: But you’re in contact with people who’ve got children and grandchildren in that system.

Nix: Don’t you think it varies school by school? If the teachers themselves don’t understand, how can they pass it on? And when you have—I don’t know how much of this you’re going to print in the Review—

Knott: All of it!

Nix: But when you have some teacher education programs where the professors themselves doubt, how are they going to pass it on to their students? I remember not too long ago—I guess it was three or four years ago now—I was leading a denominational history tour. All that I share on New England tours is very simple Adventist history. We visit the sites where the pioneers lived, talk about their commitment and what they did.

And the last day of the tour, a young lady came down from the back of the bus and said, “May I sit with you?”

And I said, “Sure.”

She said, “What you’ve been sharing is heavy stuff.”

I said, “Well, what do you mean?”

She said, “Well, this is my first year of teaching, and I’ve never heard any of this before. Why didn’t I get some of this in college?”

Folkenberg: It’s not fair to try to caricature all the Adventist educational system as one kind, because the vast majority of our teachers are dedicated Seventh-day Adventists who believe this message. Having said that, can we improve? Absolutely. No question about it. And we will, I believe, as soon as the parents say, “The salvation of my kids is my highest priority.” You shouldn’t decide to send your kid to a college unless you’ve written to the college and said, “I want to see your spiritual master plan. I want to see your comprehensive assessment program. Send it to me.” Please, don’t assume this exists at any level. It won’t be there unless you ask for it!
Shepherd: You're saying that all of us are responsible for the way our educational system is communicating the Great Controversy message.

Maxwell: I must add—you may not want to put this in your paper—that I've had ministerial students who have graduated from the religion department of a college (don't ask me which) who didn't even know what the three angels' messages are. So it isn't being done everywhere.

Folkenberg: That's why I said, “Don't assume.”

Maxwell (laughing): I'm agreeing with you.

Nix: Before we focus on teachers too much, I wonder if we should also talk about Adventist homes. It's very easy for us to get down on the teachers. I live with one: she teaches sixth grade. But when she starts trying to find out how many of her students come from homes where they have family worship, where the parents pray with their children—it's pretty bad. We need to take another look in the mirror. How much time are we spending in our own devotions compared to the amount of time we're spending in front of the TV? How much time are we spending—quality time, spiritual time—with young people? If the great controversy theme teaches anything, it's that we're not just educating students to be good businesspeople or good physicians or good whatever. We're educating them to be citizens of heaven.

Knott: One of the key features of our understanding of the three angels' messages is the idea of believers coming out of other faiths, other denominations. Some have suggested we ought to be soft-pedaling that idea now as we talk about the Great Controversy.

Coon: In the parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus makes a very incisive distinction. He says, “There are other sheep not of this fold, but there will be one fold and one shepherd.” Other sheep, but one fold. There is the visible church, and there is the invisible church. The invisible church is made of people of any denomination who love the Lord and seek to do His will in their lives. The visible church is the remnant church. There's one church, one fold, but other sheep. Jesus said that the time would come when those other sheep would come to the one shepfold.

Knott: You still believe that will happen?

Coon: Amen.

Maxwell: This is the call to “come out of Babylon, my people.” The other sheep that are in the other folds, it seems to me, are supposed to come out of those other folds into the one fold in the final time. At the end of time, you're either a true, honest-hearted, sincere, Christ-believing Sabbathkeeper, or you're not in the right fold. There aren't two remnants. There's only one—"the remnant of her seed." It seems to me that those other dear folks who may be saved now have got to learn about the three angels' messages, or in that final crisis they'll be lost. Jesus doesn't want them to be lost, so He tells us, “Please, get on with it! Call them out of those other folds into the one fold.”

Knott: A weekend like this does a great deal to get us thinking about the importance of this message in our lives. What would you say to the member in the pew or working in a ministry or service who wants to talk about the Great Controversy in a clear, comprehensible way to their neighbors and friends?

Nix: Be passionate about it yourself. If you're not excited about it yourself, you certainly won't share it with anyone else.

Coon: You might start by reading the book. (Laughter.)

Olson: The same truth that brings us into this message will keep us in this message. We have to keep repeating this story. We have to maintain the excitement ourselves.

Maxwell: Our people prefer the closing chapters of The Great Controversy because they're all interested in the future. It seems to me that a good place for folks to begin is with those closing chapters.

Nix: If we aren't deeply in love with Jesus, as has been pointed out this weekend over and over, all these so-called requirements and do's and don'ts will be just a weight on us. When we're in love with Jesus, when we want to see His character vindicated, then it becomes a joy to do things He asks us to do.

Coon: Jim's got the answer. If you don't know Jesus as a personal friend, if you don't have a personal daily relationship with Jesus Christ, you're going to be afraid about the final events. And we never communicate anything we're afraid of except that fear. If we know Jesus as it is our privilege to know Jesus, when we know that He walks with us, that His angels watch over us, guard us, protect us, and take our prayers right to His very side, then we won't be afraid.

Knott: William Miller once wrote about the Second Coming, “Whatever you may think of yourself, whatever doubts or fears you may have, your heart must be the thermometer on this subject; your affections, like quicksilver, will rise or fall as you come in contact with this glorious theme. If a man love Christ, he will love His appearing; if he hate Him, he will hate to see Him come. This rule cannot be broken.”

As this special weekend has demonstrated again, that's a message that resonates in all our hearts. If we're in love with Jesus, this is the greatest story we can possibly share.

Bill Knott is an associate editor of the Adventist Review.

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N THE SPRING OF 1858, WE VISITED Ohio, and attended conferences at Green Springs, Gilboa and Lovett’s Grove. Bro. Tillotson took us from Green Springs in his carriage to the places of meeting. At Lovett’s Grove the Lord met with us, and His blessing rested upon us. First-day afternoon there was to be a funeral at the schoolhouse where our meetings were held. My husband was invited to give a discourse on the occasion. The people could not all get into the house. My husband was blessed with freedom, and the power of truth seemed to affect the hearers.

When he closed his remarks, I felt urged by the Spirit of the Lord to bear my testimony. As I was led to speak upon the coming of Christ and the resurrection and the cheering hope of the Christian, my soul triumphed in God. I drank in rich draughts of salvation. Heaven, sweet heaven, was the magnet to draw my soul upward, and I was wrapt in a vision of God’s glory. Many important things were there revealed to me for the church.

I saw that those who profess the truth should hold the standard high, and induce others to come up to it. I saw that some would have to walk the straight path alone. Their companions and children will not walk the self-denying pathway with them. Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims, following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have a hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials of earth, that elevates them above scorn, derision and reproach. Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit. This will only injure their own souls, and drive their friends farther from the truth. Treat them tenderly. Give them no occasion to reproach the cause of Christ; but never yield the truth to please anyone. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind.

But if your companions and children will not come, if you cannot win them to yield to the claims of truth, make their lives here as pleasant as possible; for all they will ever enjoy will be this poor world. But let not your duty to them interfere with your duty to God. Pursue a straightforward course. Let nothing they may do or say provoke an angry word from you. You have a hope that will yield you consolation amid the disappointments and trials of life. Your companions and children who will not be induced to tread the narrow, cross-bearing pathway with you, have not this divine consolation. They should have your pity, for this world is all the heaven they will have.

The earliest account of the Great Controversy vision of March 14, 1858.
ill Yet Be
I was shown that all who profess the present truth would be tested and tried. Their love for Jesus’ coming will be proved, and manifested to others, whether it is genuine. All, I saw, would not stand the test. Some love this world so much that it swallows up their love for the truth. As their treasures here increase, their interest in the heavenly treasure decreases. The more they possess of this world, the more closely do they hug it to them, as if fearful their coveted treasure would be taken from them. The more they possess, the less do they have to bestow upon others, for the more they have, the poorer they feel. O, the deceitfulness of riches! They will not see and feel the wants of the afflicted friends, and a portion of the wealth of heaven for them, and God raises up others who come up and fill their places, and take their crowns. Men are raised up who consider it a privilege to sacrifice something for Jesus who sacrificed so much for them. I was shown individuals who although they have heard the solemn truths for these last days, and the coming of Christ is brought nigh them by the fulfillment of prophecy, have no thoughts of loosen-

**Those who profess the truth should hold the standard high.**

ing their grasp of this world. They have no idea of sacrificing their treasure here.

O that these covetous ones could get a view of heaven, of its purity, its loveliness, and behold the holy angels engaged in the salvation of man! All heaven astir! Angels are going forth on their mission, descending to watch over the tempted children of God, and shield them from the power of the evil angels. And while these angels are descending, others are ascending to bear their tidings for an additional angel to administer relief to this or that lone desponding one who is fiercely buf-feted of Satan. Angels are constantly passing, and repassing each other, in their upward and downward flight, fulfilling their mission of love. Would that they could get sight of this. Methinks that they would catch a little of the zeal and fervor of these devoted angels, which they manifest for the salvation of man. It would inspire them with that interest which would call forth effort, and they would cheerfully sacrifice for the salvation of their fellow man. In addition to this, all the happiness derived from earth, and from a selfish hoarding of earth’s treasure, would appear so small and meager compared with the beauty and unsurpassed glory of heaven, that earth’s treasures would be eclipsed, and would appear but dross could they win the heavenly treasure. How strange it looked to me, as I saw that all heaven was interested in our salvation, and then saw the little interest man manifests for his fellow men. They throw their arms about their treasure here as though it was their Saviour, and could impart unto them eternal life.

I was ashamed, distressed, agonized, that such should ever bear the name of disciples, or profess the name of Christ. I saw that they should cheerfully say, Here, Lord, is the little of earth’s treasures Thou hast lent me; take any portion of it; take it all, it is Thine. Let me do my part in saving my fellow men, and let me be raised up with the redeemed to dwell with Thee forever. Tremblingly will such disciples lean upon the strong promises of God. Earth fades before their vision. Heaven magnifies, and no sacrifice is too dear for them to make for the far more, the exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.

In this vision at Lovett’s Grove, most of the matter of the Great Controversy which I had seen ten years before was repeated, and I was shown that I must write it out. That I should have to contend with the powers of darkness, for Satan would make strong efforts to hinder me, but angels of God would not leave me in the conflict, that in God must I put my trust.

After I came out of vision, the afflicted friends, and a portion of the congregation, bore the body to its resting place. Great solemnity rested upon those who remained.

This article is excerpted from Ellen White’s volume titled *Spiritual Gifts* (vol. 2, pp. 265-271). Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy through more than 70 years of public ministry.
THE JUDAS VIRUS
Knowing when you have it and how to lick it

BY LYNDON K. McDOWELL

JERUSALEM HAD NEVER SEEN A TRIAL like it. The Prisoner at the bar, innocent of all sin; His judges, guilty of the most heinous crimes. The One judged, the Judge of all the earth; those pronouncing sentence, condemned by their own deed. As if held in the hands of doom, men and women seemed compelled to act by forces beyond their control.

And among the turbulent throng one man sat alone, a terrible fear gripping his soul. “Whomsoever I shall kiss,” he’d said to the Temple police, “that same is he: hold him fast” (Matt. 26:48).

In the flickering gloom of the crowded hall, Judas saw only the torchlight glare as it fell on the pallid face of the Son of man, and above the tumult and the shouting he heard only one sentence: “Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). Then, no longer able to endure the torture of his guilty conscience, he cried out, “He is innocent; spare Him, O Caiaphas!” “I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood!” And rushing from the hall, he went and hanged himself.

What made this man, once an honored member of a special group, become a byword among all nations for all time? The question is important, for the history of Judas is not simply the isolated story of one man. Though his name is vilified and despised, Judas is a representative of many who profess to be followers of Christ, and the methods the devil used to entrap him then, he uses against us today.

Remember that Judas had expressed no open opposition to Jesus. Even at the Last Supper, when Jesus told him to do what he had to do, the disciples “thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor” (John 13:29, NIV). They would never have imagined the evil plan to which Jesus was referring.

So how did such a wicked scheme develop in the heart of Judas? How did Judas become a traitor? I offer three reasons, gleaned from the comments of Ellen G. White.

1. Judas manifested pride in his own opinion and cultivated a disposition to criticize and accuse.

Invented in heaven, practiced in Eden, and used all through Christian history, divisive contention has been one of Satan’s most successful ploys. And men and women with a measure of charisma, a persuasive ability, and a determined mind are especially vulnerable.

It is so easy to pick on a minor point of disagreement and win a following. An early example of this is found in the Didache: “Your fasts must not be on the same days with the hyp-
ocrites, for they fast on Monday and Thursday, but you must fast on Wednesday and Friday.” Perhaps a contention such as this led Paul to write Romans 14:1-6. Don’t pass judgment on disputable matters, he said. “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike” (verse 5, NIV).

In the time of Henry VIII a printer made an error in the new prayer book. Written in Latin, the word sumpsimus was spelled munsimus. Since few of the clergy knew Latin, they got used to mumbling “mumsimus.” Then one perceptive cleric saw the mistake and demanded it be corrected. The result was such a split among the clergy that Henry VIII had to make a throne speech about it in 1545. “Some be too

Capernaum. It was at Capernaum that many disciples of Jesus “turned back and no longer followed him” (John 6:66, NIV). Disappointed, Judas “determined not to unite himself so closely to Christ but that he could draw away.” Many do this today. There is hardly a mainline church that does not face pressures on theological or policy issues, and consumer-driven independent churches proliferate and flourish. It is part of the turmoil of our times.

Judas wanted to be independent. And Judas became a traitor.

2. Judas failed to resist and overcome elements of depravity in his life.

We live in an age when our spiritual perceptions have been subverted by a world saturated with the sensual and the obscene. Deviant behavior has become normal, the normal has become deviant, and individual liberty has become social license. There is an ever-widening chasm between the strictures of God’s commandments and the fantasy world in which the modern media entice us to live. None of us is totally immune to its allure. Television is largely dirty and violent by design. Too many of us sit passively imbibing its themes, and imperceptibly our appreciation of truth and beauty is soiled. Glossy magazines, with their modern libertarian morality, beckon us at every supermarket checkout counter. Marketed to carnality, they arouse our eros and dampen our agape.

Consumer advertising courts our covetousness. We secretly envy celebrity and success, and a broken and contrite heart becomes unattractive.

Consumer advertising courts our covetousness. We secretly envy celebrity and success, and a broken and contrite heart becomes unattractive. We have to be almost insensitive not to feel the tug of the tide of evil. How can we be sure that we are not following in the steps of Judas?

Sin is not only tailored to be attractive; it is also fashioned to seem rational. Often we only begin to see the stark ugliness and sadness of sin when we reap its fruit. Judas was very rational about his decision to betray Jesus. If by His act Jesus was condemned, it would expose Him as a false Messiah. And if Jesus was
indeed the Messiah, He could not allow Himself to be killed. To Judas it was clearly a rational no-lose situation. Thus Judas became a traitor.

3. Judas neglected to make a full surrender to Jesus.

To “surrender to Jesus” can easily become a simplistic shibboleth. But in real life it is exceedingly difficult. The devil often taunts us with our trivial shortcomings, while blinding us to our more serious sins.

If we are sensitive to the atmosphere around us, how can we tell the difference between what is total surrender and what is fanaticism? And how does one separate cultural commandments from God’s commandments? The distinction is not as easily determined as one might think, and the two have often been confused.

Soul-searching personal surrender requires an understanding of all that has made us what we are: our approach to Scripture, our culture, our education, our hierarchical position. All these factors play a part.

Thus what we call total surrender to Jesus has to be an intimately personal thing and is exceedingly difficult. It cannot be defined or imposed by committees or boards.

The ultimate act in the drama of Judas’s life came at the Last Supper. As Jesus washed his feet, “the heart of Judas thrilled through and through with the impulse then and there to confess his sin. But he would not humble himself.”1 Judas had made his last free decision, for the “hour, and the power of darkness” had come (Luke 22:53). For him, probation had closed and “Satan entered into [him].”2

Part of the tragedy of Judas was that he had a loyalty to a cause rather than to Christ, and when the cause appeared to fail, he consciously loosened his ties. Judas never experienced what Isaiah did when he saw the holiness of the Lord and cried out, “Woe is me! for I am undone” (Isa. 6:5). He never shared the experience of Peter on the lakeshore when “he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord’” (Luke 5:8), or of Thomas, who, with his unbelief swept aside, cried out, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). And Judas never knew the vision of John, who, seeing the glory of the risen Christ, fell at His feet as though dead.

It is important to emphasize again that there was no open opposition to Jesus on Judas’s part, no “big” sin in his life. He was an evangelist. He was a faith healer. He was a church treasurer (so to speak) and a prominent member of the team. But his little decisions, his daily smothering of conviction—these were the character traits that ultimately led him to betray his Lord.

As I look into my own soul, and as I look at the church from the perspective of 40 years in the ministry, I see a similar problem. We’ve heralded the holiness of the Sabbath. We’ve emblazoned the beast on our handbills. And we’ve been more than a little proud of our insights. But have we led men and women to see the transcendent holiness of Christ and to fall at His feet, saying, “I am undone, for I am a person of unclean lips”?3

Judas never did. And Judas became a traitor.

We all, to a lesser or greater extent, have the Judas virus in us. The only antidote is a humble recognition of our personal vulnerability and a daily honest surrender to the control of Christ in our lives. While the final fearful day of “the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53) is destined to come, it is also true that we have a loving Saviour who is not willing that any should perish. He knows the innermost secrets of our soul and learns over us in love, saying, “How can I give you up”?

Our response will determine our destiny. No habit, no hierarchical position, no “30 pieces of silver,” can possibly weigh against the glorious appearing of our Saviour.

2 Ibid., pp. 716-722.
4 The Desire of Ages, p. 719.
5 Eros has to do with sensual love.
6 Agape has to do with divine love.
7 The Desire of Ages, p. 645.
8 Ellen G. White, Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 103.
9 Hosea 11:8, NIV.

Lyndon K. McDowell is a retired pastor living in Scottsdale, Arizona.
Approximately one third of the inhabitants of the Naxcivan (also spelled Nakhichevan) Autonomous Republic (NAR), Azerbaijan, now have access to immunization and health education after the opening of an Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) health education center in Naxcivan City and 44 health posts in outlying districts and villages.

The health education center is part of the final stage of ADRA’s pilot primary health-care project in the republic. The largest of all the health posts, located in the capital city, is staffed by three doctors and two nurses. Formerly a kindergarten building, it has space and facilities for health education instruction.

**Hope on Wheels**

The 44 village posts officially opened on January 5, and approximately 5,000 people a month have been treated, estimates ADRA Azerbaijan director Ian Ridley. Robin Willison, project manager and a civil engineer, reports that the 44 health posts do not include three additional mobile units, each staffed by a pediatrician, a general practitioner, and a nurse.

As a qualified civil engineer Willison has helped modify a building provided in the capital city to be used as an administration and records center. Willison has also been effective in selecting and adapting the variety of buildings that are now clinics. “Each village post is run by a local health worker or nurse who is trained to treat basic illnesses,” explained Ridley. “If a patient is diagnosed with a more serious illness, they are informed of the next visit of the mobile unit doctors.”

These doctors visit each village post every two weeks, providing extensive treatment and immunization. Only two weeks ago ADRA received permission to be the only agency to provide immunizations in the republic at this time. According to Ridley, immunizations in the country haven’t been available for the past eight months because of the complete breakdown of the health infrastructure provided by the former Soviet Union.

**Talent Pool**

The demise of the former Soviet system left most of its qualified personnel unemployed. It is from this reservoir of expertise that Willison has been able to recruit staff for the new project. Some 60 medical staff from the new clinic network have been retrained to World Health Organization (WHO) standards by Willison, who has a master’s degree in public health from Loma Linda University in California.

The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the benefit of local populations who for the past four years have been receiving staple foods provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by ADRA Azerbaijan.

Although the ADRA clinic network is still in its infancy, it has been commended by Jeanne Russell, deputy director of Save the Children, who inspected the ADRA project for USAID. She said it was the best structured health project in Azerbaijan because of the excellent mingling of health education, medical care, and clinical expertise.

In its eighth month of existence, the primary health-care project has a target population of 100,000. As the only relief agency operating in the territory, ADRA already enjoys a high profile because of its feeding program. ADRA has also provided other services, such as a supply of warm clothing and blankets (essential in a region that experiences very severe winters) and a horticultural greenhouse project for out-of-season salad and root vegetables.

The original proposal of the project was drafted by British ADRA volunteer Conrad Vine, who spent four months in this remote, virtually blockaded mountainous region dominated by the twin peaks of Mount Ararat. The project was the final overseas service elective in Vine’s top management course for the British Government Health Service. His proposal emphasized the desperate health-care needs of the local population. Inspired by his experience in Naxcivan, Vine is now ADRA director in Tajikistan.
NET ’98 and LA RED ’99 to Aid Outreach in Hispanic Churches

BY CARMELO MERCADO, INDIANA CONFERENCE NET ’98 HISPANIC COORDINATOR

Last year more than 4,000 people joined the Adventist Church as a result of LA RED ’97 satellite evangelistic meetings beamed from Brazil. Now during 1998 and 1999, two new satellite programs will be reaching millions of Hispanics: NET ’98 and LA RED ’99.

It is not a coincidence that these two events are available for Hispanic outreach. Each will have its distinctive flavor designed to reach a more diverse population. NET ’98, for example, will feature two translators—one from North America and the other from Spain—to reach Hispanic populations from both Europe and the Americas in their own distinctive variations of the Spanish language.

LA RED ’99 will be broadcast from the United States in September 1999 and will be a direct Spanish series presented by internationally known South American evangelist Alejandro Bullon.

Among Hispanic members, the NET ’98 series will be especially attractive to second-and third-generation Hispanics in North America (especially Gen Xers and baby boomers) who may be limited in their grasp of the Spanish language and will appreciate their churches’ offering the program in both languages.

NET ’98 will also attract many Hispanics whose spouses and children are not fluent in Spanish and who can attend a church that is providing the series in English as well as in Spanish. LA RED ’99 will be attractive to those who can see and hear the gospel being presented within the context of their own Hispanic culture.

NET ’98 will be a flexible program, providing translated material such as the Discover Bible lessons and Dwight Nelson’s sermon outlines for the series. For English-speaking pastors and church members with a vision of planting a Hispanic church in their community, providing both programs will enable churches to present evangelistic meetings in the Spanish and English languages to help fulfill their dream.

Religion Tax Voted Down in Hawaii

The Hawaiian legislature has abandoned a plan to tax churches and nonprofit organizations, according to the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department (PARL) of the Pacific Union Conference.

The bill, which originally was intended to impose a 1.5 percent excise tax on the receipts of all nonprofits, including churches, hospitals, and schools, was voted down by the Ways and Means Committee on April 14.

The excise tax was offered as a measure to deal with a serious budget crisis brought on by reduced tourism from Asia, a byproduct of the Asian financial crisis.

“I urge everyone to continue to lift our leaders up in prayer as they struggle with our economy,” said Mike Brownfield, a local Seventh-day Adventist pastor.

If passed, the bill would have required nonprofits, including churches and church schools, to submit an annual report to the state, while still requiring hospitals to pay the 1.5 percent excise tax.

Brownfield joined the many who took definite and responsible action in defense of religious liberty by opposing the bill, says Alan J. Reinach, Pacific Union PARL director.—Adventist News Network.

AHS-sponsored Church Opens in Ukraine

More than 1,000 persons attended the grand opening ceremonies for the new Lutsk Adventist Church building in the Ukraine on March 7.

Local government officials joined Adventist Health System representatives and church leaders from the Euro-Asia Division and Ukrainian Union Conference who gathered for the historic event.

Construction of the 700-seat church was sponsored by personal contributions and a $52,000 gift from the Adventist Health System, based in Orlando, Florida. Health system leaders also contributed an additional $12,500 for an evangelistic series in the church. The new church, with 250 members, is the first Adventist church built in this city of 300,000 residents.

Bahamian Field School Results in 331 Baptisms

Three hundred thirty-one persons were baptized at the Inter-American Division’s first field school of evangelism conducted in the Bahama Islands.

Held from March 12 to April 6, the school served 35 ministers and lay members, says Leslie V. McMillan, IAD evangelist and associate ministerial secretary, who directed the school and outreach series.
A Call for Respect

B. B. BEACH, General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department

The new law regulating church existence and status in Russia, passed by the Parliament and approved by President Boris Yeltsin in 1997, has aroused considerable consternation in religious liberty circles around the world. It appears to run roughshod over the United Nations instruments and the Russian constitution itself in regard to the concept of equality of religious bodies and the principle of nondiscrimination.

At the recently held thirtieth Congress of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists, a call was sounded urging the Russian authorities to give the same “respect” to the Baptists as is given to the dominant—and increasingly dominating—Orthodox Church.

Adventists and Baptists in Russia have much in common. Both started work in Russia during the last third of the nineteenth century (though the Baptists arrived some 20 years earlier), and they have often shared church facilities. Both emphasize personal conversion and believers’ baptism. Both groups have often been a persecuted minority. Neither group belongs to the World Council of Churches.

Seventh-day Adventists also have the right to be treated with respect and nondiscrimination as a historical church in Russia. We are not a new religious movement in Russia, having been there for well over a century and suffered in many ways more than the Orthodox Church during the period of Communist oppression. It is disconcerting to be referred to pejoratively by some Russian Orthodox leaders as a “sect” and as a result to be refused places of worship and halls for evangelistic campaigns.

Adventist members and evangelists, especially those from Western countries, can help correct misimpressions by being mindful of Russian nationalism, respectful of the country’s traditions, and knowledgeable regarding Russian culture.

Adventists and Baptists, with other religious bodies, are cooperating in the Russian Religious Liberty Association to achieve religious liberty and legal equality of churches.

Each day the students followed a program of classes, visitation, and participation in the nightly meetings. The series, held under a large tent, was a practical demonstration for the field school. Attendance numbered in the thousands, according to McMillan.

“This has been a historic event for us in the Bahamas,” said H. A. Roach, Bahamas Conference ministerial secretary. “We have had the second highest number baptized in the history of the conference, and the first in a series of field schools to be conducted by the Inter-American Division.”

The next division field school will be held later this year in Puerto Rico.

News Notes

✔ The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for September 1997 has been used to purchase a new evangelistic center and administrative office complex for the Lithuanian Field, according to Trans-European Division officials.

Located in the city of Kaunas, the center will also be used for a church, publishing house, and Adventist Development and Relief Agency offices. There are approximately 1,000 Adventists in Lithuania.

✔ The Adventist Retirees Convocation will meet June 10-14 at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Featured speakers will be North American Division president Alfred C. McClure and longtime pastor Morris Venden. The meeting will include workshops, day trips, a prayer breakfast, and a banquet. For more information call (616) 471-3360.

✔ Dr. Allan R. Handysides, a physician practicing in Ontario, Canada, was recently elected director of the General Conference Health and Temperance Department. Handysides, who served as health and temperance director of the Eastern Africa Division from 1983 to 1986, replaces Dr. Albert Whiting, who is retiring.

✔ Correction. In “All That Glitters Is Not AU” (April 23, Adventist Review), Loma Linda University was mistakenly identified as being in Riverside, California. For the record, Loma Linda University is still in Loma Linda and has no plans to re-locate! La Sierra University (once a campus of Loma Linda University) is in Riverside.

What’s Upcoming

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Sure Bet

The day I could pass for 18, I completed what had become a rite of passage for those of us who sprouted into adulthood among the less-than-hallowed streets of Miami Beach—I went to place a few bucks on a greyhound at the Biscayne Dog Track. As I walked through the turnstile and entered the complex, however, I immediately saw the 12 ticket windows—10 that took your money and two that gave out winnings. Now, I'm no statistician (even if I am the son of one), but I knew that five-to-one odds against you aren’t a good bet. From that moment I realized that the dog track could be only a losing venture.

About seven years later I read Daniel 2 for the first time in my life. And just as I saw that the odds worked against me at the track, I saw that the fulfillment of the prophecy that predicts Christ will establish His eternal kingdom presented odds that only a fool could bet against.

Think about Daniel 2 purely from the odds alone. Babylon, “the head of gold” (verse 38),* came and went, just as Daniel had predicted.

That’s one for one.

The second kingdom, Media-Persia (“And in your place another kingdom will arise, earthier than you” [verse 39]), came and went, as predicted.

That’s two for two.

The third kingdom, Greece (“And a third kingdom, another, of brass, which will rule over all the earth” [verse 39]), came and went, again as predicted.

Three out of three.

The fourth kingdom, pagan Rome (“And the fourth kingdom will be strong as iron” [verse 40]), rose and fell, again according to the prophecy.

That’s four out of four.

Next Daniel said that this fourth kingdom—unlike the others, which were each replaced by another single empire—would be broken up into lesser kingdoms, some stronger than others, and that these kingdoms would never be united, even through the bonds of family and marriage. “And that you saw the feet and the toes, partly clay, partly iron, the kingdom shall be divided . . . and as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, the kingdom will be partly strong and partly broken. And as you saw the iron mixed with the clay, they shall mingle themselves with men’s seed, but they will not cleave one to another, even as iron will not mix with clay” (verses 41-43). What better—and more accurate—prediction could have been made about the breakup of the pagan Roman Empire into what ultimately has become the divided nations (some weak, some strong) of modern, inter-married Europe?

That’s five for five.

What’s left? Only God establishing His eternal kingdom. “And in the days of those kings will the God of heaven set up an everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed” (verse 44).

Look at the odds. Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, pagan Rome, modern Europe—all came in order, just as Daniel had predicted (notice too that the Lord has here given us something as concrete, irrefutable, and accessible as world history upon which to help establish our faith). The only thing left in the prophecy, and the only thing that we, from our perspective, haven’t yet seen fulfilled, is the last one, Christ’s eternal kingdom.

Thus what the Lord presents in this chapter are tremendous odds that the promise of His coming and the establishment of His kingdom will be fulfilled. Daniel was right on the first five. Why bet against him on the last?

As I said, I’m not a statistician, but my dad is, and when I called him for this column, he said that anyone betting with those odds in their favor had an excellent chance of winning (as opposed to the racetrack odds). From pure statistics alone, then, we have every reason to believe the Bible promise of Christ’s return. The math works clearly and overtly in our favor. Meanwhile, those who reject the Bible predictions about Christ’s return are gambling with odds heavily against them.

They have a better chance of winning at the dog track.

* All Aramaic translations are mine.

Clifford Goldstein is editor of Liberty, a magazine of religious freedom.
Have you studied the metric system? It’s wonderfully logical. Once you know some basic terms, you can figure out what the words mean. For instance, a meter measures length. A centimeter is one hundredth of a meter. “Centi” means “hundred.” When you see a word with “cent” in it, it probably has something to do with a hundred. There are 100 cents in a dollar. A century is 100 years. Get it? Can you figure out what a centipede is if I tell you that “pede” means “foot”? A centipede is a bug with 100 feet. Well, it’s not really a bug—it’s an arthropod. And it doesn’t have 100 feet. Centipedes can have 30 legs or 350. In this case “centi” means “seems like a hundred.”

If you had a test on the metric system, you could memorize each word. Or you could just remember that kilo means a thousand times bigger, and milli means a thousand times smaller, etc. Then you could figure out the word meanings from looking at their parts. You would also learn the system.

Memorizing and learning do not mean the same thing. Do you know your memory verse? Let’s imagine that it’s John 13:34: “I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you” (verse 31, ICB). But in our memory verse, Jesus says we should love each other “as I have loved you.” Can you see the difference?

You could learn more things about this verse. Would you like to know what the disciples had been doing instead of loving each other? They had been arguing over who was the greatest. You can read about it on page 643 of The Desire of Ages, by Ellen G. White.

You can learn it by memory (millimeter, centimeter, decimeter, meter). Or you can learn to understand (centurion? he must be the commander of a hundred men).

Memorizing is good. Understanding is better. Learn it by heart.
I Was Wasting Your talents plus the Holy

I WAS CONVINCED THAT resigning my church office would be wrong, perhaps even sin. I nearly classified it with bankruptcy or adultery. From childhood I had been instilled with the idea that one should never quit—one should always finish what he or she starts.

When the nominating committee had begun its yearly work of filling the various positions in our church, I had asked myself what job I would like to do. As a teenager I had once worked in a school library, and because of my love for books and tapes, I thought about the church library. I was sure this would be a fun and fulfilling ministry for me. It was also just right for my secretarial and organizational skills.

When my pastor-husband came home from one of the nominating committee meetings, I happily announced to him, “I have an idea what I would like to do this year.”

“So has the nominating committee,” he replied, smiling. “But go ahead and tell me what you were going to say.”

“No,” I laughed. “You tell me first what they want me to do.”

“They were wondering if you would be willing to be the youth leader this year, since you’ve already been working in that department,” my husband replied.

Me? Youth leader? I was flattered. And I did have several ideas for the youth that had come from our three teenagers. Perhaps I really could be the leader. A few doubts nagged at me (like children patting their mother’s arm to get her attention), but I ignored them.

“I’ll pray about it,” I promised my husband.

I Accepted the Job

The next morning, on the strength of only one Bible text that I had run across in my personal devotions, I accepted the job. Within a month I
knew I had made a mistake, but by now the church offices were filled and I was in the youth department.

Determined not to quit, I charged ahead with my usual enthusiasm for new things. But it was short-lived. I simply didn’t have leadership skills. I could organize papers and pamphlets, but not people and programs. I was trying, like David, to work for the Lord in armor that didn’t fit.

I really wasn’t doing a good job, and I sensed that my youth assistants realized it too. Then the guilt of not covering all my bases stressed me further, and I began to dread Sabbath mornings in the youth room. I talked to my husband about resigning, even though it seemed sinful to say the word. The weight of the armor was overwhelming.

Meanwhile, the woman who had been appointed church librarian had moved away, leaving her office vacant. How I would love to get my hands on those books! But I was married to the youth department, and casting my eyes in any other direction seemed very wrong.

I often wondered why I couldn’t just pray away my perplexities. Hadn’t God promised help for every obstacle? Wasn’t His strength made perfect in weakness? He didn’t answer in just the way I had hoped, but as the months passed, an answer began to emerge.

**My Talents Were Wasted**

Admiring other people who were outgoing and successful, I had tried several ministries through the years: colporteuring, teaching an adult Sabbath school lesson, song leading, and now being youth leader. They were all washouts. Call it discontent or spiritual coveting, I was wasting my own talents while wishing for bigger, better ones. Perhaps I was actually out of God’s will and not experiencing His full blessing.

Confessing my sin, I agonized, “Lord, what should I do? I dare not do anything without Your unction.” I had already proved to myself that my humanity was not capable of making right decisions. I left it in God’s hands for the day.

That evening I went to prayer meeting. Because we had just finished an evangelistic series, not many people realized that prayer meeting had again resumed. Thus there were only two women present besides my husband and me.
My husband had chosen to speak on how the Holy Spirit works. As I listened I felt trapped. “One of the ways the Holy Spirit works,” my husband explained, “is by blessing our natural abilities.” He took us to 1 Corinthians 12:27-31: “You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. . . . Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? . . . Eagerly desire the greater gifts” (NIV).

“So what do you do if you find yourself in a church job that isn’t within your natural abilities?” I blurted out. Then I explained my situation and how I had gotten into this position that was, for me, most uncomfortable. I mentioned my desire to work in the library and how it would better fit my personality and capabilities.

“You know,” one of the women said, “I’ve been praying that someone would do that job. I did it for a year and hated it. I didn’t like being shut up in that little room because I wanted to be out with people. I love to talk, and I couldn’t do that there,” she laughed.

I Removed the Heavy Armor

How thankful I am for encouraging friends. They assured me that they didn’t think it wrong for me to resign under these circumstances, especially since the youth department had four other adults working there. As we knelt for closing prayer, tears of relief came.

The next morning I lost no time removing the heavy armor. I wrote the church board a note of resignation explaining that Sabbath school was already covered for the month, so I wouldn’t be leaving the youth without a program. I then phoned one of the youth assistants, a bubbly, enthusiastic, sanguine individual. She was understanding and supportive. I contacted the other assistants as well.

The church board asked me to stay on in the youth room for another month. But (happy day!) they also approved me as the church librarian. Relieved and at peace, I watched as the remaining youth leaders scheduled a meeting and changed the room around. I could quit, knowing that things were in capable hands.

A week later I took a spiritual gifts inventory test that I had acquired from the conference office. The results showed that out of the five main categories, “leadership” was my lowest score. “Nurturing” was where I scored highest, and church librarian was one of the listings under that category.

I’ve been church librarian now for five months, and I believe I have at last found my niche in the church. I’ve been able to encourage several people to read helpful books. Two of the youth are now assisting me.

Our goal for this year is to convert all of our books to a modified Dewey decimal system and have the catalog cards for them. We want church members to be able to look up any subject of their interest and find what books, videos, tapes, and articles we have available. We also are . . . Oops! I’m getting carried away!

My advice? Find a way to “try on” the church job in question. If it fits, the synergism of your talents plus the Holy Spirit will equal a fulfilling and successful ministry. If it doesn’t fit, then resigning can be appropriate, especially if your deficiencies are standing in the way of progress.

Remember, David took off the king’s armor when he was convinced it wouldn’t work for him.

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Children Under Stress

Childhood. A time of giggles, jumping, exuberance, best friends. The absence of stress. A safety net where you are protected, secure, happy, worry-free.

A beautiful picture, but how close is it to reality? Susan Dubuque, author of *A Parent's Survival Guide to Childhood Depression,* reports: "At any given time, as many as one in every 33 children and as many as one in every eight teens may have clinical depression. Children under stress who experience loss or who have attention, learning, or conduct disorders are at higher risk for depression. . . . Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds and the sixth leading cause of death for five- to 14-year-olds."

Somehow it’s easier to talk about children who are running carefree down Norman Rockwell lanes, splashing and laughing, than to turn our attention to those whose portrait appears on a darker landscape.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry lists the following symptoms of childhood depression: persistent sadness or hopelessness; inability to enjoy previously favorite activities; increased irritability, anger, or rage; frequent complaints of physical illnesses, such as headaches and stomachaches that do not get better with treatment; frequent absences from school or poor performance in school; persistent boredom; continuing low energy or motivation; poor concentration; a major change in sleeping or eating patterns; poor self-esteem; a tendency to spend most of one’s time alone; suicidal thoughts or actions; abuse of alcohol or other drugs; difficulty dealing with everyday activities and responsibilities.

How do we react when we encounter such symptoms in our children, students, and Sabbath school boys and girls? Do we chastise them for not having a “cheerful spirit”? Do we order in-school suspension for continued episodes of anger? Do we tell them to stop complaining, buck up, get over it, get with it, or get it together?

I am not suggesting that discipline is not sometimes necessary for difficult behavior. I am not suggesting that we feed into melancholia on the part of our children. I am not suggesting that we coddle, overprotect, or ignore insubordination. I am suggesting that too often we spend so much time dealing with outward behavior that we miss the red flags waving desperately before our faces. We want to “fix” things, straighten the crooked, obliterate the evil. Our good-intentioned campaigns lead to school board meetings, apologetic parents, promises to rein in wayward souls. But after 50 lines of “I will behave in school,” 25 missed recesses, 13 afternoons in the office, and 12 days in the hall, we are no further ahead than when we began.

What do we do, then, with the child who is clinging, morose, non-compliant, acting out? We can start by realizing that every human being is a study in complexity, that simple answers, such as “rebellious behavior” or “bad parenting” will not bring us any closer to seeking solutions. We can continue by examining the factors that surround the child’s difficulty. Is he having difficulty with reading, writing, spelling? Does she find it painful to grip a pencil and work the letters out through the lead? Is school an exercise in futility? Is paying attention, maintaining focus, or sticking with a task like trying to paddle upstream in a rushing downward current? Is stress a constant companion, failure an all-encompassing reality?

We can take steps to address the context that frames the depression. We can design programs that build on children’s strengths. We can talk to doctors, psychiatrists, and educators. We can find ways to let children know that we understand, that we are there to help. We can take time out to listen, to connect our children to the people and places that will affirm their efforts, help them to move forward.

Childhood: a time of laughter, confidence, rosy dreams? Perhaps for some. But for others a time fraught with anxiety. As adults we can do no less than find ways to provide help.


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At Rest

MAURER, Werner M. “Mac”—b. Oct. 28, 1922, Mackenbach, Germany; d. Jan. 16, 1998, Worcester, Mass. He served as a medic for the United States in World War II. A graduate of Atlantic Union College, he began his career as a teacher at Greater New York Academy in Queens. He later launched a long career in international and domestic sales. He is survived by his wife, Gloria; four daughters, Heather Lennon, Susan Worth, Linnea Lakin, and Kristen Christoph; five grandchildren; and four step-grandchildren.

MILLER, Clarence—b. Sept. 8, 1915, Takoma Park, Md.; d. Feb. 16, 1998, Calimesa, Calif. He was the son of Dr. Harry Miller, famed for his work as the “China doctor” in the former China Division, where Clarence also began his mission service as a teacher in 1936. He served as an administrator at Loma Linda University Medical Center for 17 years (1950-1967). He went again to China and later was the associate director of health for the Far Eastern Division. Prior to his retirement, he served nine years as chief administrative officer of the St. Helena Hospital in California. He is survived by his wife, Lillian; one son, Thom; one daughter, Carol; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

NORMAN, Mabel Rollins—b. Aug. 30, 1921; d. Feb. 6, 1998, Orlando, Fla. She was a former employee of Oakwood College. At the time of her death she and her husband were retired in Avon Park, Florida, where she served as a freelance writer and was active in women’s ministries and volunteer work. She is survived by her husband, Richard S. Norman, Jr.; four sons, R. Steven Norman III, Vernon, David, and Myron; three daughters, Joy Cavins, Audrey McLarty, and Myrala Omeler; two brothers, Howard and Eugene Rollins; one sister, Ruth Jenkins; and 14 grandchildren.


PRELOG, Zora Belle—b. Oct. 10, 1920, Paris, Ill.; d. Jan. 3, 1998, Rockledge, Fla. She served for 24 years as assistant food director at Highland Hospital (Portland, Tennessee) and Florida Hospital (Avon Park, Florida). She is survived by one son, Larry; two daughters, Donna Roberts Van Devander and Debra Candy; 10 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.


WHEELER, Ruth Lellah Carr—b. Oct. 11, 1899, Artesia, Calif.; d. Oct. 12, 1997, Deer Park, Calif. She served as a teacher at all levels of education from elementary through college. She also authored nature books and science textbooks and was a broadcaster on KCDS radio in Angwin, California.
I was on a business trip to Florida, and my sister had come to meet me for a day. It was so good to see her. Amid the clinking of dishes and the loud music in the restaurant where we met, she asked, “So how are you doing?”

“Fine,” I answered. (That’s my standard reply.)

“No, how are you really doing?” she asked. “You can tell me. It’s OK.”

Suddenly I was pouring out my soul to her. “Life is overwhelming right now. I’m tired of hurting all the time. I’m tired of being so clumsy, dropping and breaking everything. I’m tired of walking with a cane, when I do walk. I’m tired of losing my balance and falling, whether I hurt myself or just my dignity. I’m tired of lying awake all night, feeling like the only person in the world who isn’t asleep. I’m tired of being chronically ill and knowing that it will always be there, even if I someday go into remission.”

I knew I could bare my heart to Janice without being told to “snap out of it.” It is about as easy to snap out of a depression as to snap out of a broken leg. Janice would understand—she battles depression too. We talked for a while about what triggers hers and mine.

Mine is extrinsic. It comes and goes with exacerbations of my illness. Hers just happens. There are no real identifiable reasons, and though stress and insomnia play a part, it is hard to tell whether the depression causes the stress, or the stress causes the depression.

“So what helps you?” she asked. We compared notes on hot water, sleep remedies, and better pain management. We agreed: one of the greatest relievers of pain or depression is fun!

“Anything that helps me pump those endorphins,” I told her. “A good laugh with a friend, or even something that makes me smile, really helps everything. Listening to ‘upper’ music, digging in my raised flower gardens that the boys built for me on our deck, and some of the psalms are really good for this too.”

“I hang on to the text in Isaiah about the eagles when things get rough,” she said.

I knew which one she meant. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31). Right now, when walking for short distances with my cane is uncomfortable and makes me short of breath, running and not being weary is so appealing.

“I love that text too,” I blurted out. “When things get piled up around me until I just think I can’t cope, I need to think of this text. I probably need to tape it next to the front of my computer or something.” We both laughed, and our conversation drifted on.

The next day we had a little time together before I had to leave. “I bought you a present,” she said, her eyes twinkling. She handed me a strangely misshapen package. I pulled off the wrappings. Inside was a beautiful bald eagle, with wings spread for flight. “Oh, Jan, he is beautiful!” I said.

“I hang on to the text in Isaiah about the eagles when things get rough,” she said.

Sally Dillon is a freelance writer living in Timberville, Virginia.