Rainbow Over Hell
The Story of Pastor Saburo Arakaki
Good Timing

What incredible timing the Lord has! I just received the April 8 World Edition and am amazed at how the Lord moves. We just moved to a new town in Colorado where the local Adventist church is struggling with three members. There is a very nice church building (built by Maranatha about 20 years ago) that could easily seat a couple hundred people, but it is almost empty. The Lord has been prompting me to reach out somehow and tell others what a great opportunity we have here, but I wasn't sure where to start.

Your cover story (Richard Utt's “One”) was definitely an inspiration, and you have given us the opportunity through the Review to make our needs known (see Roy Adams' sidebar). We are hoping to entice some brothers and sisters to move here and help make a difference.

Pagosa Springs is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Every day I thank the Lord for bringing us here. The climate is mild compared to the rest of the Rocky Mountain area. The people are friendly, and the crime rate is minimal. Most of the locals appreciate nature, a good diet, and natural healing methods. The town is blessed with mineral hot springs and many days of sunshine. It is a wonderful place to retire, start a business, or raise a family.

So please, if you hear the Lord calling you to a mission field, consider Pagosa Springs! There is plenty of work here for any willing soul. Feel free to contact us for more information. For more information on the area, go to the chamber of commerce website at www.pagosasprings.com, which will also link you to the local newspaper and area real estate agents.

Looking forward to some new friends in Christ!

— Gina Dalrymple
406 Elk Drive, Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147
Phone: 970-731-0016
Email: GinaDal@Juno.com

The Review applauds this appeal and would like to report on this church a year from now.—Editors.

Why So Late?

Yesterday, April 12, I received the April 8 issue of the Review. I have read it from cover to cover. I enjoyed all the articles, especially Roger Morton's "Mighty Manila Miracles"—how the work is going forward in the Philippines.

However, if I remember correctly,
you said we should get the weekly Review by the date on the cover—yet I received the April 8 issue four days later. This is a standard type of thing. And an advertisement on page 4 promote the “NET ’98 Update” to be held on April 7. This makes no sense.

— A. Bruce Knutson
Barre, Vermont

Our mailing date is one week before the issue date. Because we have only one distribution point—the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland—we can’t guarantee that all subscribers will receive the magazine by the issue date. Your frustration is understandable.—Editors.

When Students Break the Rules
In his April 8 Faith Alive! column (“Doing the Right Thing”), Calvin Rock was asked what teachers in our schools should do when they know students are violating “rules” of the school. I feel that a much more positive and less legalistic answer is in order.

Instead of “[conversing] with students individually regarding their attitudes and actions,” invite them to your home on Saturday nights for games, popcorn, homemade fudge, or ice cream, or a light buffet supper. Really get acquainted with your students in an informal setting. Give them some worthwhile alternatives.

Frequently, it seems, some teachers feel that outside of the classroom, they have no responsibility as far as their students are concerned. It is stimulating to have a group of young people in one’s home and, I daresay, a vigorous Bible discussion will ensue.

Adults, even teachers, have a great deal to learn from the youth of today. Many are deep thinkers.

— M. Ellen Hardin
Scottsdale, Arizona

Another Healing
I can strongly attest to Dr. Everett Coleman’s restating that “the medical work is the right arm of the three angels’ messages” (see “The Healing,” Mar. 8).

I could tell a long story spanning four years concerning the Washington Sanitarium, then a large frame building (now Washington Adventist Hospital), and the wonderful doctors whose offices were then in the hospital. One of the doctors was my first personal contact with an Adventist. I thought to myself, these people are different from the mainstream one usually meets in the world. That first encounter, followed by an unusual chain of circumstances, eventually culminated in my being baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1959.

— Jane Cornelius
Silver Spring, Maryland

Growing Churches (cont.)
Alfred C. McCulure’s “Growing Churches” (April NAD Edition) reminded me of how, when I was in college, we used to go to the small area churches to preach, teach, and provide music. I do hope this is still being done.

We used to hear a lot about planting or spawning new churches. Over the past few years, as my wife and I have traveled in various parts of the country, we have visited some of these small churches. We find some are only barely existing and are almost on the verge of closing.

We need to remember that in planting, you also need to water and cultivate. Our large churches get larger because of all the “advantages,” and the small dry up. We need more “home missionaries.” It does take sacrifice, and I will readily admit I find it a struggle myself.

— Ray C. Myers
Myrtle Creek, Oregon
suppose I shouldn’t be surprised. Whenever someone mentions the pathetic lack of an Adventist presence in most of the world’s largest cities, as Ron Halvorsen did in “Cities Under Siege” (January 1999), the Review gets letters. A significant number of those letters cite Ellen White’s counsel regarding the benefits of country living and the dangers of living in the cities.

Although almost everyone concedes that fresh air, open spaces, and lower-than-average crime rates are preferable to noise and air pollution, congestion, and electronic security systems, the fact remains that most of the people who need to hear the gospel live in the largest cities and metropolitan areas of the world. Should we retreat to rural areas and abdicate our responsibilities just because the cities aren’t “nice”?

As with all of Ellen White’s counsel, her comments regarding country living are remarkably balanced. She wrote: “[G]od wants us to live where we can have elbow room. His people are not to crowd into the cities. He wants them to take their families out of the cities, that they may better prepare for eternal life” (Manuscript Releases, vol. 12, pp. 30, 31). That’s the ideal. Yet she also counseled, “Wherever the people of G od are placed, in the crowded cities, in the villages, or among the country byways, there is a home mission field... In every city or settlement where Christians meet to worship G od, there are men and women and children to be gathered into the fold” (ibid., vol. 6, p. 323). That’s the reality.

The greatest evidence that we should live in and work the cities as long as we can is found in the life and ministry of J esus Christ, and is wrapped up in the word “incarnation.”

For thousands of years God tried to guide His people from a distance; or, as the writer of the book of Hebrews wrote: “Long ago G od spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son” (H eb. 1:1, 2, N RSV). J esus Christ—divinity cloaked in humanity—is the truest physical and spiritual representation of what God is really like. He spoke the language of the people, ate their food, visited their homes, ministered to their needs. Al though He enjoyed times of solitude, away from the stress of nonstop activity, still He was always “on call,” always available. Because Jesus cared about them, people knew that God cared about them.

There was a time when Adventists in North America believed that sending missionaries to foreign countries was unnecessary, that they could fulfill the gospel commission to “every nation and tribe and language and people” (Rev. 14:6, NRSV) within the boundaries of North America’s great “melting pot,” which contained people from all over the world. But our Adventist ancestors eventually understood that the gospel couldn’t truly go to all the world unless someone took it there “in the flesh”; unless messengers were on the ground, learning the language, teaching by word and example what it means to be a disciple of the Lord J esus Christ. The same principle applies to working the cities.

Someone responded to Halvorsen’s article by asking, “Do we have to live inside a garbage can in order to clean it up?” I would respond by asking, Would J esus have come to earth if it weren’t necessary? Would H e have left the glories of heaven to endure scorn and abuse from H is own creatures if there were another way to win their loyalty?

Before J esus comes there will never be a time when the gospel can be taken to all the great cities of the world without people who live there doing the taking. I know it’s comfortable to believe that some satellite radio or TV broadcast can do the job by proxy, and that all we need to do is support the work from somewhere in suburbia—or better yet, from a safe distance in another part of the state. But part of the gospel’s appeal is that it changes people’s lives; and the greatest demonstration of that is when we care enough to get involved with those who have less than we do—less experience with God, less assurance, less money, less education, fewer opportunities.

When people know that we care, they can easier believe in a G od who cares.
I am mourning. A good friend died last week, and I am going to miss her. It’s hard to say goodbye with more than 2,000 miles separating.

She was brave. A fighter.

Confident that God would heal her. For more than a dozen years she battled that ugly cancer enemy. Then, at the very last, when breathing became hard, her eyesight dimmed, and pain overcame, she told a friend that if God was not going to heal her she wanted to die. Her indomitable will to live had vanished. Her fight was over. She had lost.

But I am mourning not only the death of my friend. I am mourning because I didn’t write very often. Because I should have sent flowers before the funeral. Because the week prior to her death I had thought, Bob and I need to call them. But a thought without action is no thought at all.

Sure, we called as soon as we heard. We sent flowers for the funeral. We told the family we loved them. But that was not enough. My inward defense for getting the daily essentials done while relegating the writing and the phone calls for later (when I had time) was unjustified. And I lost.

As I thought about what I should have done, I remembered the resolve of a church school teacher in Williams Lake, British Columbia (and that was a few years ago). It was New Year’s time when she said, “When I think of writing to someone, or calling them, or sending flowers, I’m going to drop everything and do it right then.” Knowing her stamina and fortitude, she no doubt followed through.

A good resolve, I had thought. I’ll do it too. But I didn’t. And I haven’t. And I mourn.

There are times, though, when I do participate in (and occasionally instigate) a thoughtful gesture. For instance, a few months ago my sisters and I wrote to the alumni from Canadian University College who were there during the time of our father’s reign as president and asked them to send him a letter of memories and encouragement. He was 96, and we knew his walk to the mailbox might become all we had imagined. The letters he received were placed in plastic protectors and snapped into a notebook for easy reading and rereading. Whenever we called, he’d say, “Guess who wrote today?” And we’d hear portions of that important document.

Then one early April morning, just this past spring, a fire demolished the house and, basically, the contents. Thankfully, he and his wife escaped unscathed. But in a corner of the eating area, in a box under a desk, were those letters—pretty much intact. With some drying and brushing off the ashes, they were readable, back in plastic protectors, and snapped again in a notebook.

Others have modeled for me this thoughtfulness dream. During conneXions ‘99 (a conference held here at headquarters for young adults who plan to “spread the gospel to the whole world”) consideration of others was well demonstrated. On Friday morning they feted individuals whom they identified as having “gone beyond.” There were verbal tributes (and a C 99 orange T-shirt) for leaders who had been especially helpful. But a standing ovation was for Francis Norcott, who was in charge of audiovisuals, a behind-the-scenes kind too often unrecognized.

In our offices A DRA has sponsored a “send a rose” day. We could purchase a rose, write a note, and have it sent to a person in this complex. Although I recoil (unless it’s my idea) at this bit of “planning-my-thoughtfulness-for-me,” it’s pretty obvious I need all the help I can get.

Ellen (that’s what the conneXions young adult presenters called her) suggested that we need to remember that our characters are not finished. “Weave all the kindness, obedience, thoughtfulness, painstaking, and love into it you can,” she wrote. Her counsel is good. And she must have written that just for me.  

* Ellen G. White, Our High Calling, p. 264.
READERS’ EXCHANGE

In this feature readers request correspondence about a specific topic. (We can use more submissions to this feature.)

RECIPES NEEDED: I am a pastor’s wife in Kenya, and I have started a cookery project geared to spreading the gospel. Please share your recipes or cookbooks with me. I urgently need them.

— S. Chepkoech Bett, c/o Pastor D. K. Bett, South Rift Mission of SDA Church, P.O. Box 1715, Kericho, Kenya, East Africa

ADVENTIST LIFE

A few years ago my husband and I decided to take our 2-year-old daughter, Avery, to see the Canada Day fireworks. As we stood with hordes of people watching the show, I looked at Avery to see if she was excited. Sure enough—her eyes were as round as saucers, and she had a look on her face of overwhelming shock that I had never seen before.

Then, because she couldn’t really talk yet, she started to sing the tune for “Jesus is coming in clouds of pure white to take His children home. I must be ready when Jesus comes, to take His children home.”

I really had to hold the tears back—partly because she had understood that Jesus was coming back for us, and partly because I hated to tell her that He wasn’t coming for us right then, when she had so much faith that He was.

At that moment I realized just how much children do learn, and how important it is for us to teach them the right things from the start.

— Kelly Philip, Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

One Sunday morning while our family were driving past a country church, our 4-year-old daughter, Hilary, asked why all the people were there. We explained that they worshiped on Sunday morning. “Oh,” she said. “First-day Adventists.”

— Cheryl Elmendorf, Loma Linda, California

SAVING BLOOD

PASSOVER LAMB: To help show the relationship between the Passover and the Crucifixion, Barbara Williams, of Nashville, Tennessee, submitted this drawing.

WE NEED YOU

Send Give & Take submissions to . . .
Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74617.15@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.
HEREVER THERE IS A WILL, THERE is a relative,” someone has said. And talk about wealth and property left behind stirs up all kinds of emotions. But this article is not about money. Nor is it about property or other material things we leave behind. Rather, it’s meant to lead each of us to ask the question: What do I want to be remembered for when I die? It’s a question we must ask in utter seriousness.

According to Numbers 23:10, even a bad man knows the best way to die. “Let me die the death of the righteous,” says Balaam in the passage, “and let my last end be like his!”

The Way We Live

You’ve probably heard of the little verse that goes:

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”

Someone has suggested that instead of saying “If I should die before I wake,” the line might well read “If I should wake before I die.”
for what purpose will we have lived? And for what will we be remembered?

In 1996 a very well-known Australian radio and television personality died suddenly. It came as a great shock to most. So high was the nation’s respect for him that a memorial service in his honor was held in the Sydney Town Hall. A Sydney Morning Herald article entitled “The Presence Without Pretext” wrote about him as follows:

“The public response to the ABC broadcaster Andrew Olle’s death has struck the consciences of a lot of media folk, and sent them into a bout of introspection. While Olle was a decent man, he worked in an industry where many of the highly paid ‘big names’ are uncommonly common, philistine, culturally depraved, and intellectually deprived. With their flashy cars, huge mansions, yachts, second homes by the sea, and vast expense accounts, their lives are dedicated to publicity seeking and ego tripping, the very things that Olle shunned. On the radio, television, and in the print, they behave like rot-tweilers (many of them look like them, too). Whereas Olle’s craft was to seek information and elucidate important issues, they hunt for confrontation and mindless controversy on looney margins.

“Yet it can be safely written that when these baying, emotionally insecure, desperate creeps (and creepettes) depart this world, they won’t raise a public memorial service of the like we saw at Sydney Town Hall for Olle or the outpouring of community grief of the past two weeks. They will slip into utter oblivion mourned by nobody of substance, leaving behind a tiny stain on the carpet and a faintly bad smell.”

Remembered for What?

I was talking to a young man after a Trans-Tasman Union session, and he told me a little of what was going on in the senior Sabbath school class in the local church he was attending. He remarked that there was so much needless discussion on issues such as perfection and the nature of Christ—some had almost lost the nature of Christ in the discussion—that he found himself receiving little in the area of practical food for Christian living. “I now go out to the kindergarten Sabbath school,” he said, “and am learning much more about the Bible out there”!

On which side of the ledger do you fall? Which of the following are you?

■ a cooperator or an obstructionist?
■ argumentative or agreeable?
■ judgmental or considerate?
■ compassionate or hardheaded?
■ compromising or firm in principle?
■ one who thrives on conflict, or a peacemaker?
■ one who helps build the church—weak and defective as it is—or one who puts it down?
■ harsh or kind?
■ extreme or balanced?
■ one who thinks they’re never (or seldom) wrong, or one willing to admit personal shortcomings?

It is possible to choose a life that will have lasting significance both now and after we’re gone. “‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them’” (Rev. 14:13, NIV).

What’s the Measure?

Will it be enough to say of you that you made a lot of money, that you read a lot of books, that you went to a lot of parties, that you were the president or manager of a successful operation—or any other of a number of things so many think are most important? Or will it be that you showed care for people, that you discovered God’s plan for your life, and that you became involved in the essential things that really matter in the long run? Is this what Micah 6:8 had in mind? “W hat doth the Lord require of thee, the passage says, “but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”

The person who has discovered the joy of truly living, whose life is rich in friendship and caring for people, and who daily enjoys the pleasures of good food and sunshine, will not need to wear themselves out in pursuit of the kind of success centered in praise or promotion. No fancy car or lofty title could ever match the happiness they know. If Jesus had wanted to, He could have had the most profitable business in Jerusalem, with branches in all the cities of the world. He could have exported to faraway places and perhaps been on a Time magazine cover as ‘Man of the Year.’ But Luke 19:10 says...
Martin Luther King tried to give his life to serve others, that I tried to love somebody, that I did try to feed the hungry; that I did try to clothe the naked; that I tried to love and serve humanity; that I was a drum major for peace; that I was a drum major for righteousness. And all the other shallow things will not matter. I won’t have any money to leave behind, or fine luxurious things to leave behind. But I want to leave a committed life behind . . . and that’s all I want to say."

T he person who has discovered the joy of truly living will not need to wear themselves out in the pursuit of success centered in praise or promotion.

Get a Life
Have you ever asked yourself, What am I here for? What legacy will I leave behind when I die?

Recently a young woman called Nancy had a disability and was confined to a wheelchair, yet she developed a unique ministry to hurting and lonely people. She placed an ad in the local newspaper that read: “If you are lonely or have a problem, call me. I am in a wheelchair and seldom get out. We can share our problems with each other. Just call. I’d love to talk.”

Each week at least 30 calls come in to her, and she spends her day counseling and comforting people. When asked how she became disabled, she said, “By trying to commit suicide. I was living alone and had no friends. I hated my job and was constantly depressed. So I decided to jump from the window of my flat, but instead of being killed, I ended up in hospital, paralyzed from the waist down. That second night in the hospital Jesus appeared to me and told me that I’d had a healthy body and a crippled soul, but from then on I would have a crippled body and a healthy soul. I gave my life to Christ right there and then. When I got out of the hospital I tried to think of how a woman like me in a wheelchair could do some good, and I came up with the idea of putting an ad in the paper, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Why not, then, let Jesus come into your life? Putting Him first could make it all be different. He can make it different. You may say, you don’t know my life, my circumstances. No, I don’t. But I do know what God can do. His grace, His mercy, is beyond our understanding, and He extends it to you.

Perhaps as you read this article and look back on your life, you may see that life has not always been what it should have been. But don’t be depressed and discouraged. The fact that you feel bad can be good. The realization of our need and failures of the past can be the first step toward a life that can have meaning in Christ.

God loves us. He promises victory over every failure. And He is committed to making something beautiful of our lives.
What biblical evidence supports the teaching that Michael is another name for Jesus?

The name Michael is used five times in the Bible to designate a celestial being (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). He is nowhere explicitly identified with Jesus, but some Christian writers have equated the two by carefully comparing the role played by Michael with that of Jesus. Any comparisons yield not only similarities but also dissimilarities, and both should be taken into account. We’ll start with the passages in which Michael is mentioned and then broaden the horizon to include several passages that are conceptually related to His person and experience.

1. He seems to be an angel: Michael is identified as “one of the chief princes” (Dan. 10:13), “your prince” (verse 21), “the great prince” (Dan. 12:1), and “the archangel” (Jude 9). “Archangel” implies that He is the prince of the angels, suggesting that Michael cannot be another name for Jesus because He is divine and angels are created beings.

Part of the problem is that the noun “angel” is taken to designate a creature, while in the Bible it designates a function. In other words, an “angel” is a being who functions as a “messenger” of God. In most cases they are created beings, but there is an exception.

In the Old Testament there are several references to the “angel [messenger] of the Lord” in which He is equated with God (e.g., Ex. 3:2, 4; Judges 6:12, 14). It is not that the messenger is identified with the One who sent Him as His representative, but rather that the Sender functions at the same time as the messenger. Many Christians have identified the Angel of the Lord as the preincarnate Christ. This Christological interpretation seems to be biblically valid.

2. He is leader of the angels: The phrase “one of the chief princes” (Dan. 10:13) could give the impression that He is one among many princes. But according to Revelation 12:7, Michael is the supreme leader of the heavenly angels, or “the great prince.” When necessary, He personally assists angels in their assigned tasks (Dan. 10:13), yet the angelic hosts are under His command (Rev. 12:7). He is indeed the “archangel” (Jude 9). This title is mentioned in one other place in the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 4:16, in the context of the second coming of Christ. He returns “with the voice of the archangel,” suggesting that Michael is most probably another name for Jesus.

3. He protects God’s people: Michael is described as the Prince of Israel (Dan. 10:21), the One who protects Israel (Dan. 12:1). This protection is described in military terms and portrays the Prince as a warrior. In practically all the passages in which He is mentioned there is a conflict between God’s people and their enemies, and Michael is present to defend them or fight for them. The protection can also take the form of judgment in which Michael stands up and defends and delivers God’s people (ibid.). Those are functions of Christ in the New Testament and confirm the suggestion that Michael and Christ are the same person, involved in leadership in the heavenly and earthly realms.

4. He is Prince of the heavenly hosts: In Daniel 8:10 there is a reference to a celestial being who performs the daily services in the heavenly sanctuary. There is only one other passage in the Old Testament in which this being is mentioned. Joshua had an encounter with a being who identified himself as the “captain [commander] of the host [army] of the Lord” (Joshua 5:14). He ordered Joshua to remove his shoes because the ground he was standing on was holy, similar to God’s apparition to Moses. The context makes clear that this being was the Lord Himself (Joshua 6:2). This Prince is the same person called in other passages Prince Michael, and therefore we can identify Him with the preincarnate Christ.

So even though the Bible does not clearly identify Michael with Christ, there is enough biblical information to warrant the view that They are the same person. The name Michael stresses the fact that Christ is the supreme leader of the heavenly angels and the defender of His people as warrior, judge, and priest.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.
How to Care for a Caregiver

A four-step BEST method

BY COLLEEN L. REECE

OUTSIDE OUR MOUNTAIN HOME NEAR the logging town of Darrington, Washington, winter raged. Inside, my 73-year-old mother's temperature soared well past 102˚ F. I despairingly looked out the snow-encrusted window, then at my worried 13-year-old nephew and back to Mom. What should I do? Always before, Dad had been there to make hard decisions. When he died the previous summer, I'd stepped into the head-of-household role. This was my first experience with being a caregiver. The choices terrified me: try to reduce the fever that hadn't responded to my best efforts or bundle Mom up and drive 30 miles through a blizzard to the nearest town with a doctor and hospital.

Sick but undaunted, Mom said she'd be fine. She took more aspirin, and gradually the temperature went down. We thanked God, and I felt I'd been given a reprieve.

In the 20-plus years before Mom died at almost 96, I served as caregiver many times, almost always short-term following a bout with flu or after a hospital stay. I fought the fear, fatigue, and depression that accompany even the most gladly given care. Surely my experiences and those of others, especially persons with long-term service, fit into the category Jesus mentioned when He said what we do for others is what we do for Him.

Jill* shared her feelings about her role as a caregiver. “I love my father and never want him in a nursing home, but after three years of day and night care, even with God’s help, I don’t know how long I can keep on.” She and countless others experience the despair I felt that snowy night long ago. The difference is, long-term caregivers often cannot see an end to their task.

You can help care for discouraged caregivers using what I call the four-step BEST method.

1. Be aware. You probably already know someone in either short- or long-term caregiving: a new and frightened mother with a sick child; a family with an Alzheimer’s or AIDS or cancer patient; a friend who provides a home for a disabled or retarded or diminished capacity person. Long-term caregivers are especially at risk, torn between guilt over their own humanness, their fatigue, and their deep desire to serve.

2. Express your concern. Marian took her “in sickness and in health” vows literally. For five years before her husband’s death she cared for him at home despite concerned friends’ protests that she’d ruin her own health. She wanted their encouragement. She didn’t need her decision overruled. “I know they mean well,” she told me in tears. “But I’ve prayed and I know I have to do this.” Then she quoted something I’d said months before: “Marian, when the right time comes for a change, God will let you know.” Marian realized and accepted this when the doctor said Bob needed more care than she could give at home.

3. Step in, don’t barge in. Lily offered to care for a spastic child a mother maintained at home, but only after she offered friendship and won the woman’s trust. Once established, Lily provided time off for her new friend by child-sitting one day a week for years.

4. Take action; don’t just ask what to do.
   - Supply food. Caregivers are notorious for neglecting themselves.
Take a night shift so the caregiver can rest.

If permitted, help with bathing. Fixed-income persons can't always afford professional care.

Clean the house or do yard work.

Do shopping.

Provide transportation.

If the patient is in the hospital, invite the caregiver over or take them out for a meal.

Call or send notes and flowers to the caregiver as well as to the patient.

Enlist patient-sitters and free up the caregiver for a weekend.

Let your friend know you are praying for them as well as for the patient.

Trapped by feeling helpless, filled with fear and pain, caregivers are prime candidates for illness. When they get sick, they often refuse to admit or seek help, afraid such a course will result in their being considered incompetent to continue caregiving.

The hands-on, practical help that loving and committed Christian friends and church members offer can ease the load and make a great difference in the difficult life of a caregiver.

*Names have been changed.

Colleen L. Reece is a freelance writer living in Auburn, Washington.
FROM THE SPARKLE IN HER EYES and the energy in her step, one would never guess that Valentina Ivanova has lived most of her life in Siberia. Many Russian women at age 60 are languid; years of inconvenience, discomfort, and disappointment are etched on their faces. But Valentina's smile brightens a room, and the love of Jesus is reflected brightly in her blue eyes—eyes that have seen decades of challenges because of her commitment to her husband, Sasha, their children, Nadia and Tanya, and her devotion to a faithful God.

Tried and True

In 1959 Alexander "Sasha" Ivanov finished medical school in Moscow. Along with the other graduates, Sasha was given a three-year assignment, after which he'd be free to choose where he wanted to work. A dedicated Seventh-day Adventist, he was given the choice to teach at the medical school in Moscow or go to Ocinniky, Siberia. Knowing that he'd have Sabbath problems if he stayed in Moscow, he decided that in Siberia he'd be less likely to be harassed. A year later he and Valentina were married.

From the very beginning Sasha had problems keeping the Sabbath. He didn't have to work that first Sabbath in Ocinniky, but early the next week he told his supervisor that he needed every Sabbath off, and he was immediately fired.

In the first two years after graduating from medical school Sasha worked at various jobs in eight cities. One of his assignments was at a "Pioneer Camp," where he was watched night and day for some infraction of the Communist Party rules. He was eventually fired for "walking barefoot in the grass." A nother time the KGB found Sasha meeting with fellow believers at a "home church." The next week a full-page article in the newspaper told of a man "who chose the Bible over the scalpel." All this time Valentina stood behind Sasha and cheerfully moved from one place to another. Eventually Nadia was born, the first of two daughters.

In 1962 Sasha went to Anzherka to apply for work as an ambulance doctor (a physician always accompanies ambulances in Russia). He offered to work any time except Friday and Saturday. But when he was scheduled to work every Friday and Saturday, he told his supervisor, "I cannot do this." Sasha had no work at all for a couple weeks. At the beginning of the following week he was notified by the KGB that if he didn't find work by the end of the week, he would be arrested.

During the week he looked for any kind of work. He saw "Help Wanted" signs in various shops, but each time he presented his identification they'd say only, "Sorry, we don't need you."

One day, in a village some distance from his home, Sasha saw a sign advertising for a painter. Eagerly he went inside the building. The manager said, "Yes, we need a painter. Let me see your passport."

When the man opened it he said, "I shouldn't be telling you this, but everyone in the region has been told by the KGB not to hire you. I'm sorry."

With dragging footsteps, Sasha made his way to the KGB office the next morning. When he didn't return, Valentina knew that he had been arrested. The next morning she gathered food and clothing for Sasha and went to the police station. She wasn't allowed to see him.

Sasha was held for three days in squalid conditions, and after a mock trial he was sentenced to three years in exile. It was a month before Valentina knew where he had been sent. Baby Nadia was just a little more than a year old, and Valentina herself only 25.

For Better or Worse

Valentina eventually received a letter from Sasha saying that he had been sent to a collective farm named "Victory," near the city of Maryinsk. A month with only this information, Valentina set off to find her husband. Leaving Nadia with a friend, she made the seven-hour train trip, arriving in Maryinsk. At the train station she asked for directions to the collective farm. Someone told her about a truck driver who was taking a load of supplies to Victory farm.
After she found the man, he agreed to let her ride along. A snowstorm developed, and going up the final hill the truck became stuck in a snowdrift about a half mile (one kilometer) from the farm. Valentina left the truck, carrying the food she had brought for Sasha, and trudged up the hill in the snow.

When she got closer, she saw a man coming out of a building. “Do you know Sasha Ivanov?” she asked eagerly. Joy rippled through her when the stranger answered in the affirmative. She asked him to tell Sasha to come outside. Then she hid around the corner until Sasha came out of the building. He was speechless when he saw his brave smiling wife. Valentina spent the night at the farm and then went home and prepared to move to Maryinsk.

When Valentina and Nadia arrived at Victory, they were assigned to live in a tiny house with an old woman whose husband had been exiled and later killed. Although her husband was dead, the woman stayed on because she had nowhere else to go.

The space allocated to the Ivanov family in the tiny house was actually just a windy corridor. Happy to be together in spite of the accommodations, the Ivanovs enjoyed this arrangement for only 10 days.

One evening Sasha did not return from his job caring for farm animals. He had been transferred again. A Communist party official told him that the country was not rich enough to use doctors as laborers on a pig farm.

The Adventure Continues

A gain Valentina waited for word concerning the whereabouts of her Sasha. Eventually Sasha was able to get a letter to Pastor Michael Zozulin, who then set out to take Valentina and Nadia to the place in Siberia to which Sasha had been transferred. What a joyful reunion it was when Sasha collected his little family from the train station.

This, however, was the easy part of the journey to their new home. The three of them had to travel the next 30 miles (50 kilometers) by truck. With still another 30 miles (50 kilometers) to go, Sasha found a small “half-dead” Mongolian pony to take them the rest of the way. They piled their few belongings on a cart and placed Baby Nadia on top, and Valentina and Sasha walked behind.

“The scenery was breathtaking,” remembers Valentina. They were in a quiet, peaceful valley surrounded by mountains. Part of the time they traveled on the frozen river. Night fell, but the travelers pushed on.

The small family was exhausted by the ordeal, but they had no choice but to keep walking. Their hopes revived when they came to a small settlement. They had walked halfway to their destination, approximately 15 miles (25 kilometers).

The next day they found the cabin to which they had been assigned. It had only one door and no windows, but it was a welcome sight to the weary travelers. It was located in magnificent and peaceful surroundings, on the side of the mountain, with a river flowing through the valley. They arrived in March, and Valentina had time to plant a garden and harvest the crops before Sasha was reassigned in September. During their three years of exile they lived in four places.

As Sasha’s exile came to an end, the family wondered where they would go. By now Tanya had been born, so there were two little girls to feed and clothe. Sasha was at last doing the work for which he had been trained. The Ivanovs felt content and happy. The rich Siberian soil produced a thriving, abundant garden, so the family had plenty of good food to eat. And with the peaceful, ravishing scenery—what could be more delightful than living in the midst of the unspoiled grandeur?

In his work Sasha provided medical care not only for the prisoners in remote facilities, but also for the employees of the prisons, the local people, and those who were in exile.

The Ivanovs were surprised and relieved when the administrator of the regional Siberian prison system came and offered Sasha a job. While in exile he had been given no choice as to where he would work. Now he had options, and his status changed from a man in exile to a free man.

“Dr. Ivanov,” one of his superiors said, “we know that you will have problems with your Sabbath wherever you go. We value your work, and we want you to work for us.” The prison officials
moved the family and their belongings to the new location. They bought furniture for them and settled them into a new home. A few years after the Ivanovs moved again. After that move, however, the Ivanov family moved only one more time before Sasha retired. They lived in Novokuznetsk, in the same apartment, for 25 years. Even though their little second-floor apartment had no running water and they cooked on a woodstove, the Ivanovs felt richly blessed. Sasha never had a Sabbath work problem; he worked every Sunday so that he could have every Sabbath off. Altogether Sasha worked as a surgeon in Siberia for 30 years.

School Days

When asked about the most difficult time in her life, Valentina becomes serious. "When Nadia started school, we would not send her to school on Sabbath," she says solemnly. One Sabbath Nadia's teacher came to the house and asked Nadia to go to school with her. "I will take you to an orphanage if you don't go," she told the little first grader. Nadia politely told her that she would not go to school on Sabbath. The teacher went to the town's director of education.

"What kind of student is this girl?" the director asked. The teacher had to admit that Nadia was an excellent student. "Let them keep her at home," the administrator said. "We have students who attend all the time and don't do nearly so well."

After the fifth grade, however, Sabbathkeeping became more complicated. The school held classes in shifts, and students went to school either in the mornings or in the afternoons. A 2:00 p.m. in December and January the sun went down at 3:00, classes began at 2:00 p.m. In December and January the sun went down at 3:00, classes began at 2:00 p.m. Afternoon classes began at 2:00 p.m. That was not an easy thing for students who had to wake up early in the morning, get dressed, and go to school by themselves. In the evenings, after school, students had to go home and study for their exams. The teacher had to make sure that the students were doing their homework on time.

The children of one of their neighbors were often home alone. The youngsters frequently came to Nadia and Tanya for help with their schoolwork. One Saturday the teacher spoke with unusual harshness against the Ivanovs. She said their home was dark because they had no electricity and everything in their home was black. She told the students that the Ivanovs spent all day and all night praying on their knees and that they had icons all over their home. She said the doctor himself was insane.

The students who had been in the Ivanov home defended the Ivanovs to their classmates. They said that they had been in the home and the Ivanovs were nice people. Nadia saw her classmates from the window and invited them into her home. Hesitantly they entered and began looking around. Nadia could almost read their minds: The Ivanovs do have electricity. Look, they have a radio. They, they even have a piano. These people are nice—they aren't going to hurt us.

Valentina served the girls tea and cookies, and everyone had a grand time. The visitors went to school the next day and confirmed the positive report of the neighbor children. A few days after Nadia and Tanya were accepted among their classmates, and they had friends. Valentina's fears about the children being taken from her were replaced by the satisfaction of knowing that it's possible to be true to God and enjoy community acceptance and friendship.

In the Valley of the Shadow

"I don't think anyone has only joy, happiness, and roses in his or her life," says Valentina. "Everyone has problems and difficulties. These difficulties make us stronger, and we don't fear the future. We just try to find a way to overcome and survive. These difficulties keep us closer to God because we need His guidance and wisdom in everyday living.

"Sometimes I felt God's presence physically," she recalls. "Sasha was away, and I was home alone with Nadia. In my evening prayers I felt as though angels were around me, that if I reached out my hand, I could touch them. God's presence was so tangible, I could feel Him warmth. Throughout my life the words of Romans 8:28, that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, have been my anchor."

In 1995 Sasha and Valentina moved to Belgorad, a 12-hour train ride from Moscow, where they are presently involved in building a new Adventist church.

Siberia is a place with vast forests, extreme temperatures, wild animals, and desperate people. But through years of adversity the Ivanovs' relationship with God never faltered. They drew warmth, joy, peace, and happiness from Him, and He used them as His instruments to reflect His love to others.
Found guilty of murder. Sentenced to death. Now executed. But before he died, a medical doctor in a Karachi prison wrote to Adventist World Radio saying how sorry he was for what he did—and expressing joy in his new freedom in Jesus: “I am on death row,” he wrote, “awaiting capital punishment. While in prison I was given a small radio, and there, in the darkness of my cell, I discovered the light of the Voice of Hope.” He said that he never knew about Adventists or AWR but that the programs were “messengers of good tidings.”

This is just one of more than 1,700 letters received in 1998—up from 1,200 in 1997—at the Voice of Hope studio in Pakistan, where Urdu programs are produced. AWR currently airs the 30-minute programs twice a day from its leased facility in Slovakia.

Encouraged by the interest shown in the Urdu programs, the Pakistan Union recently appointed a full-time person to handle listener mail and Bible correspondence courses. Special New Year’s and Ramadan greetings were sent to all listeners, with a pocket calendar and program schedule. The increased activity in the studio has appealed to the listeners too: currently mail is coming into the Lahore office at a rate of 100 letters a week. Mail comes from places as far away as India, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Fiji.

Programming is designed to speak to the spiritual and “life needs” of the person. In addition to devotional messages, listeners hear programs on family life and health. One listener wrote: “As far as I am concerned the Voice of Hope is a unique program. The medical advice given by your doctor was of great benefit to all listeners.”

Many are searching for light in the prison of life in Pakistan. Please pray for the Urdu programs that many may be led to Jesus.

Bert Smit is AWR regional director for Europe; he is the liaison between AWR and the Euro-Africa, Euro-Asia, and Trans-European divisions.
The Adventist Development and Relief Agency boat arrived at Irue village in Papua New Guinea just as the sun slipped behind storm clouds. It had not rained in Tinputz for more than a week.

My husband, Chris, and I, along with two senior staff from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), a donor organization for ADRA/Bougainville’s water project, had spent too long assessing the water systems of two other nearby villages. The route to Irue involves heading past the village on the point of the peninsula and up the middle of the bay.

Strange Sight

At some point (only the pilot knew when) we turned right 45 degrees and headed for the beach. This route was the only way through a massive reef. As the last light faded, I wondered if the pilot knew the route in the dark. The villagers were about to eat their evening meal when they noticed our arrival. They crowded on the sand as our guide pulled the boat through the shallow water.

Four salty white people at sunset on a Sunday must have been a strange sight for these devout Catholics. This pretty village is built on soft white sand. Gentle waves lap the shore only a short distance from cooking fires. But finding clean water has always been a problem for Irue. At the bottom of their well is a puddle of dirty, salty water. A lone galvanized tank stands to one side of a house with roofing iron.

The salt has eaten a hole in the roof. Instead, the village women collect rainwater in old 44-gallon drums or cooking pots. When there is no more water, the women paddle for an hour across the bay to collect drinking water.

Afer a short community meeting about constructing a ferro-cement tank, we walked back to the boat. The community surrounded us as we pushed out into the shallows, telling us to come back soon. The pilot pointed the boat at the bright stars of the Southern Cross pointers. Afer some point (again, only he knew when he turned the boat toward the full moon) we were safely away from the reef.

The sea was smooth. The moon was huge and luminous. Far away over the mountains, sheet lightning flashed across the sky. Later, as we washed away the sea salt, a team member said they felt guilty being clean when 20 minutes away families didn’t have enough water to drink.

The Pacific island of Bougainville is about to mark a year of peace after almost 10 years of civil war. Following land disputes concerning an opencut copper mine, the conflict degenerated into open fighting between Bougainville and Papua New Guinea (PNG) and among Bougainvilleans themselves.

The fighting revolved around issues such as land rights, anticolonialism, commercial exploitation, and independence. Afer a decade of tragedy, Bougainvilleans are finally beginning to reconcile and rebuild. Following an assessment visit in 1997, ADRA/PNG received funding from ADRA/Australia and AusAID to implement a three-year community development project in the Bougainville districts of Tinputz and Wakunai. The project has five components, each one reflecting grassroots community concerns, and each one currently at a different stage of implementation.

Irue was scheduled to be the first community to participate in the water supply component of ADRA’s Bougainville reconstruction project. Other components of this three-year project include adult literacy training, cocoa bean rehabilitation, sewing machine distributions, sewing workshops, and distribution of relief clothing.

Clear and Clean

Four months after that first evening meeting with the villagers of Irue, Owen Kasinori, A DRA/Tinputz water supply supervisor, told us, “The Irue community is very pleased with their tank and cannot wait for a chance to show it off to the rest of the Tinputz community. The tank has been filled. Water within the tank is very clear, and the community is very pleased with it. According to them, the water is kol gut tru, or very cool to drink.”
Russia: Adventist Church on the Frontier of Religious Freedom

Speaking at the International Religious Liberty Association’s conference in Moscow March 23, 24, John Graz, General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director, identified the vital importance of religious liberty, especially in the context of Russia.

“The Adventist Church supports religious freedom as a primary right and urges all bodies to recognize and affirm that right,” said Graz.

More than 100 representatives of different religious confessions met at the Russian Academy together with lawyers and representatives from the Duma (Russian Parliament) to discuss the problems of religious freedom in Russian society.

According to figures released at the conference, 16,000 religious units belonging to 60 confessional organizations are registered in Russia.

“If we consider this and also the fact that Russia was developing in conditions of totalitarianism for a long time (not only the past 70 years), if we bear in mind the imperfection of the law about religious organizations from 1997, then it becomes clear what a big responsibility lies on IRLA, in changing public perceptions of religious freedom in Russian society,” comments Bogdan Kachmar, communication director for the Adventist Church in Russia.

During discussion at the conference, the challenge of the restrictive law in Russia was debated, along with its varied practical implementation in local districts. According to one report, “most of the offenses [religious liberty violations] took place because of lack of information about the law and religious organizations.”

“What happens here in Russia has an influence on all the former republics of the Soviet Union,” commented Victor Krushenitsky, religious liberty director for the Adventist Church in Russia.

In a formal appeal voted by the conference, delegates called for leaders and members of religious organizations in Russia to support United Nations decisions proclaiming the year 2000 as an International Year of Peace Culture.

—Adventist News Network

Update on the Balkan Crisis

For more than three weeks Adventist Church leaders in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, had no contact with Pastor Dijana Daka and three church members in Djakovica, Kosovo. On May 4, however, Pastor Daka was identified in a report broadcast by British ITV Evening News as among a group of refugees in Kukës, a town in northern Albania, close to the border of Kosovo.

“We are delighted that Dijana is safe and believe that the other church members are with her,” says Miroslav Pujic, communication director for the Trans-European Division. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency office in Kukes has been notified, and the staff will make an effort to bring them to Tirana, capital of Albania.

“The crisis in Albania continues to worsen day by day,” reports Catherine Robinson, spokesperson for ADRA/Albania. “Over the weekend [May 1, 2] there were more than 16,000 new arrivals in the crowded and dangerous town of Kukes.”

Besides feeding more than 30,000 people every day, ADRA/Albania is running a kitchen that provides hot meals to 8,000 people in one camp daily. Reinforcements in the form of volunteers from all over the division as well as other countries are arriving on a continuous basis to provide much needed support. Most of them are presently being sent south, where ADRA/Albania is responsible for all refugees in four prefectures, a total of nearly 55,000 persons.

New Study Reveals Health Benefits to Church Attendees

People who regularly attend church can expect to live seven years longer than those who never go to services, according to a new study to be published shortly.

According to the study, those who attend church weekly live 10 percent longer, with a life expectancy of 82 compared to 75 for nonchurchgoers. The study is based on a health investigation of 22,000 people over a nine-year period and was published in the May issue of Demography magazine.

The study also found that health benefits increased with increasing church attendance and concluded that there was a cause-and-effect relationship in their findings that was not explained by other factors.

“As a church we have promoted a healthy lifestyle as part of our message,” said Thomas Neslund, an associate health director for the General Conference. “Here we have additional confirmation that participation in religious services is also linked to health benefits. Of course,
Let’s All Go Home

BY JEAN SEQUEIRA, EDITORIAL SECRETARY, ADVENTIST REVIEW

The Balkans, Central Europe, Sarajevo, the Olympics. For people of my generation “Sarajevo” conjures up beginnings of a world war.

When I heard about NATO troops gearing up for combat in Europe, my first thoughts were for the children because I remember the London blitzes of the forties. Sleepless nights were spent peeping from behind blackout curtains as searchlights crisscrossed a darkened sky. Planes wove hazardous paths between shafts of light, sometimes returning home across the English Channel, or else leaving wreckage on foreign fields.

Other nights were spent in underground shelters with food and water stocked for times when air raids made it too dangerous to sleep at home.

Whatever happened to “the war to end all wars”? Newspapers today report worldwide unrest, skirmishes, and fighting. Northern Ireland, Indonesia, Rwanda, the Congo, Sri Lanka.

That’s not to say people should come to church just to live longer! But it does show the healthy balance that religion can play in a better lifestyle.”—Adventist News Network.

World’s Largest Lay Congress Meets in Philippines

Nearly 75,000 Seventh-day Adventists met together for the world’s largest lay congress held at Mountain View College in Bukidnon, Philippines, A pril 12-17.

Organized to aid individual church members in sharing their faith, the congress brought together participants from Guam and Micronesia as well as the Philippines. The city mayor and government officials attended the opening meeting together with church officials from organizations throughout the region. Coordinating the congress were Leonardo Asoy and Hendrik Sumendap, personal ministries leaders in the southern Pacific area.

The daily program included seminars on mission and integrated evangelism along with personal presentations on how faith has changed lives. One presenter told of being sentenced to death. After being converted in prison, he shared his faith with his fellow inmates and was eventually freed. Three hundred of his fellow inmates were baptized and joined the church.

“The atmosphere at the lay congress was one of excitement as people celebrated one another’s fellowship and celebrated those won for Jesus through evangelistic activities,” says Jonathan Kuntaraf, associate personal ministries director for the General Conference. “The congress also served the higher goal of equipping people to be more actively involved in witnessing activities.”

The congress was projected to bring together 12,000 official delegates. Nearly 35,000 people attended on the weekdays, and almost 75,000 worshiped together on Sabbath, A pril 17. The Adventist Church in the Philippines numbers more than 750,000 baptized believers.— Adven
tist News Network.

Voice of Hope Takes Over Radio 74 Station in Romania

On A pril 1 Radio 74 Petrosani, Romania, joined the Radio Voice of Hope network in Romania, according to Bert Smit, Adventist World Radio’s region director for Europe.

In the last week of A pril, Daniel A margioalei, manager for the network, signed the contract to take over the station. The management change came because of financial difficulties that threatened the continuation of this Christian radio station.
1. Because of an unfavorable political situation, it became impossible to send Global Mission pioneers to the city of Kremlev. Instead they went to the city of Nizhnekamsk. As a result of their work in Nizhnekamsk, 67 people were baptized. Where is Nizhnekamsk located? Clue: The country in which Nizhnekamsk is located is 6,592,735 square miles in size.

A. Finland  C. Kazakhstan
B. Russia    D. Poland

2. Along the Orinoco River in Venezuela there are few boats. Global Mission funded the purchase of a boat to help in the work of health and evangelistic campaigns. Many individuals benefited from the boat, some of whom were a specific kind of Indian. What are the Indians along the riverbank of the Orinoco called?

A. Apache    C. Grarao
B. Aztec     D. Iroquois

3. The Sinaragu Bush is located on the Solomon Islands in the highlands of Malaita. Bible classes have been held, and 10 people have already been baptized. A new church was built, and a pastor is preaching and teaching in the church. While the Sinaragu people are accepting the truth about God, there’s one thing that terrifies them. What is it?

A. The sea  C. Snakes
B. Storms    D. The dark

Answers
1. B. Russia. The city of Nizhnekamsk is located approximately 540 miles east of Moscow.
2. C. Grarao. The Orinoco River is located in the southern part of Venezuela and continues into northern Brazil.
3. A. The sea. People in the Sinaragu community believe they are the only people who inhabit the earth. Some have heard the story of water covering the whole earth and killing everyone and everything. Village chiefs won’t let their people go down to the sea for fear they’ll bring bad luck back to the village.

Compiled by Summer E. Porter, Global Mission communication intern

NEWS BREAK

Ron Myers and Nicu Turtoi established Radio 74 two years ago as a lay enterprise in western Romania. The listening area has five major cities with a population of about 500,000.

Officials Break Ground for a New Adventist Book Center

On May 17, officials of the Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store conducted groundbreaking ceremonies for a new building in Silver Spring, Maryland. The 40,000-square-foot property will be located at the Orchard Center Mall at 12004 Cherry Hill Road. According to officials, the new store will be the largest Christian bookstore in the world. The new store will feature state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment for viewing Christian videos, a vocal soundtrack test room, and a colorful play area for children.

In operation in Takoma Park since 1904, the store has been named number one of the “Top 100” Christian bookstores in the United States by Christian Retailing magazine. Grand opening ceremonies for the new store are scheduled for October 31.

News Notes

✔ Celeste Ryan, marketing coordinator for Adventist Communications Network, was recently appointed media relations manager for the Adventist Church in North America. In this position Ryan will raise public awareness of the church, its mission, message, and membership.

What’s Upcoming

June 12   Women’s Ministry emphasis
June 26   Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Southern Asia-Pacific Division
July 3    Vacation Witnessing emphasis
July 17   Home Study International promotion
Aug. 7    Global Mission Evangelism
Rainbow Over Hell

He was born into a dysfunctional family. When he was only 6, his laborer father moved 2,500 kilometers away; his mother disappeared when he was just 7; at 8 he left home, became a double murderer before he turned 20, and until he was 25 swore allegiance to the only god he knew—the emperor of Japan. So why are we telling his story in the Adventist Review? And why do so many refer to him as “the Paul of Okinawa”?

By Roy Adams*

GOD HAD TO PICK SOMEBODY out of death row to find Himself an evangelist for Japan.”

The words came from Pastor Shinsei Hokama as he and fellow Japanese-American Hitomi Johnson sat down with me on a cold winter day last January in the Adventist Review library. With them was special guest Saburo Arakaki, the person Hokama’s statement had in mind. I felt a sense of history as I prepared to record a part of the story of this legendary veteran sitting across the table in front of me.

MAKING THE POINT: Pastor Arakaki always spoke as if in deep reflection on the past. Photo by Bill Knott.
When American forces invaded the island of Saipan in the heart of the Pacific in 1944, at the height of World War II, Saburo was an 18-year-old senior at the Saipan Technical School. But as the island suddenly transformed into a fierce, bloody battleground, all Japanese soldiers and civilians were expected to fight to the last person. Thus without warning, Saburo, an innocent teenager, found himself thrust into the carnage of war.

So who was this kid? And why our interest in him?

Saburo Arakaki was born in 1926 into the impoverished home of a farmer on the Japanese island of Okinawa. When he was only about 6 his father journeyed to Tinian, a tiny speck of an island (four by seven miles) near Saipan in the middle of the Pacific (2,500 kilometers away), to look for work as a laborer. He left behind a troubled and unstable family. Saburo's first recollections of his mother paint a picture of a poverty-stricken woman struggling to stay ahead of debt collectors, scrambling to make ends meet, and quarreling constantly with his paternal grandmother, whom she could not stand.

But things were to become even worse. As the economic situation deteriorated, Saburo's mother disappeared, leaving him and his three siblings to scramble for survival among relatives. At the tender age of 8, Saburo boarded a ship all by himself and traveled the long miles all alone to join his father on Tinian.

But it was on Saipan that the war found him—as a student of Saipan Technical. The Japanese forces, though they put up a brave struggle, were defeated in the end, and 19-year-old Saburo found himself fighting among holdout Japanese guerrilla units scattered around Mount Tagpochua on Saipan's northern end.

Eventually he was taken into custody by American forces and interned with other Japanese prisoners, including his friend and leader, a military police sergeant named Manabu Kaga. While in prison both men remained fiercely loyal to the Japanese emperor, often engaging in subversive resistance activities. Not surprisingly, they took a dim view of one of their fellow prisoners who had the temerity to urge cooperation with the Americans. Determined to silence such talk once and for all, the sergeant ordered Arakaki to execute the traitor. Creeping into the man's room in the dead of night, Saburo calmly stabbed his fellow prisoner to death with a homemade bayonet.

In time both Kaga and Arakaki escaped the Americans and returned to the guerrilla camp. But there again they ran into another situation that grated on their fierce loyalty to the emperor. A gain the culprit was another Japanese war prisoner, who, convinced the war was lost, was released among the guerrillas as a spy for the Americans. Once Kaga and Arakaki got wind of the scheme, they laid plans to eliminate the traitor. As the three were walking down a trail, Saburo dropped back a pace, raised his rifle, and shot the man in the back.

"Kaga-san! Help me!" the man called out as he fell. But Kaga stepped away, and Saburo moved forward to finish the job with a shot to the head. There was no remorse. He had done it for his emperor.

In December 1945 the last remaining Japanese stragglers (including Saburo) surrendered, and Saburo was captured and charged with murder. Betrayed by his colleague, the very MP who had ordered the assassination, Saburo was convicted of first-degree murder by the American Naval Martial Court in Saipan, sentenced to death by hanging, and transferred to the Agana Lockup on Guam to await execution.

There he spent close to a year on death row, deeply tormented by the fear of execution. But all that was to change in July of 1946 when, unex-
plainly, his sentence was commuted to life in prison and he was transferred to Hawaii to serve it.

But there was no rejoicing for him. Instead a new dread descended on him—the fear, the stark terror, of a life sentence without parole. He sank into a state of deep depression, and with hope virtually gone from him, life became unbearable, and he wished for death. The intensity of the emotion almost drove him to insanity.

Then Something Happened

The pivotal change in Saburo’s attitude came three years into his incarceration in Hawaii’s Oahu prison. It was then that a local nisei (a second-generation Japanese-American) approached him in prison with a set of Bible lessons. Saburo at first laughed at the nisei, with his halting Japanese; and not wanting to have anything to do with Christianity (which he saw as the White man’s religion), he refused to read the lessons (which the nisei, not taking no for an answer, had left with him anyway). But eventually loneliness got the better of him, and since there was nothing Japanese available to read in the prison, he finally broke down and read the Bible course.

As he studied, a gradual change began to come over him, and he came to realize that murder was a sin, even when committed in behalf of one’s country or one’s emperor. His whole being began to change from the inside, and the cancer of hatred began to dissolve. Later when two young leaders from the Japanese Adventist church in Honolulu requested to visit with him, he gladly received them. It was the beginning of a series of Bible studies that would eventually lead to Saburo’s baptism some nine months later.

When the day had come for the big
event, prison warden Joe C. Harper, who had taken a liking to Saburo and had been closely monitoring his amazing transformation, allowed him to travel to the local Japanese Adventist church unsupervised. That exceptional privilege, granted through the sheer kindness of Warden Harper, made a deep impression on Saburo and played its part in breaking down the hatred and resentment he’d been harboring for years.

The zeal for the gospel that would characterize the rest of his life became evident soon after his baptism. He immediately organized Bible study classes and led his fellow prisoners in worship. His efforts culminated in Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School graduations in prison, in which 200 prisoners received their certificates, having been inspired to enroll in the program just because of what had happened to Saburo.

When the local Japanese community learned of Saburo’s baptism, they organized a campaign for his pardon and release. For his part, hoping for the same outcome, the warden had been sending a series of petitions on Saburo’s behalf to Washington, to no avail. Undaunted, the warden solicited the aid of the then governor of Hawaii and even sent one request directly to President Truman. Nothing worked.

Meanwhile, Saburo himself began dreaming of freedom. And when he learned in 1950 that mission work had started in his homeland of Okinawa, he immediately pledged to God to return there as a gospel worker if he were ever set free. His own prayers for release, joined with those of many others, were finally answered; and in late April of 1954, at the age of 28—and after some nine years in prison—Saburo was granted a full pardon by President Eisenhower.

As if He Saw a Ghost!

As he left the prison on May 3, Japanese Adventists from the Hawaii Adventist church stood outside the gate waiting for him. To further his dream of service in his homeland, they handed him a plane ticket to Tokyo. Catching a military plane transporting American soldiers to the Orient, Saburo arrived in Japan and immediately made his way to San-Iku Gakuin (Japan Missionary College) in Chiba. His ex-convict status notwithstanding, he devoted himself to the study of theology among classmates 10 years his junior.

Arakaki in His Own Words

Excerpts From an Interview

By Roy Adams

Q. How would you comment on the state of the church today?

A. I don’t know about the church in other parts of the world, but I know that in Japan we are in a Laodicean state, with not much going on. Everybody’s saying the work is so difficult.

Is the problem with the church, or with a society that’s not interested in spiritual things?

The society is certainly part of the problem, but I think more than that, it’s the church. If the church were what it should be, then I believe it would capture the attention of the society and call it back to the Creator.

What do you think it will take to change the situation?

First a revival among the pastors. Then a revival in the churches. Then you will see some changes.

As you reflect on your life, what is the most exciting experience you’ve had as a Christian?

More than anything else, to see a person giving their heart to God and recognize Jesus as Saviour. This has got to be the most exciting thing for me as a Christian. That’s why I can’t sit still even though I’m retired. I just have to keep on doing that—bring more souls to the kingdom.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

I don’t know about 10 years from now, but I know that as long as I have life I’ll be out there preaching. When I retire, it will be in a pine box.
When Saburo showed up at Kaga's Tokyo apartment that summer day, the former MP stood there petrified. Unaware that Saburo was still alive, the man thought he was seeing a ghost, that his former colleague had come back from the grave to seek revenge. But Saburo held out his hand in reassurance: "Please don't be afraid," he said. "I'm a different person now, because I believe in Jesus Christ. I wish for you also to repent of your sin, receive God's forgiveness, and accept His love."

"I'm very sorry, Saburo!" Kaga responded, shaking and with tears rolling down his face. "Please forgive me!"

"I've already forgiven you," Saburo assured him. "Please accept my friendship."

Kaga wept profusely, and the two men began a lifelong friendship.

But Who Wants an Ex-Convict for a Minister?

When Saburo "graduated" from college, there was no job waiting. After all, he was an ex-convict, and ministerially unqualified to boot—having only audited classes at the college. W hat would a church
want with a man like that?

But after devoting himself to volunteer ministry in the prefecture of Okayama, Saburo was finally invited to Okinawa in 1957 to serve as a pastor. Not of an existing church, however, but of one he would raise up by hard labor. “That’s why he’s been called the Paul of Okinawa,” interjected Hokama at this point in our conversation. “He raised up churches in areas where there weren’t any. And when people saw the results of his work, they said, ‘Hey, we can’t let this guy go; we’ve got to hire him!’”

Over the years this modern Paul has established five churches in Okinawa and two in mainland Japan, with hundreds of baptisms.

Pastor Arakaki officially retired in 1989 (at the age of 63), but he has not been spending his days in a rocking chair—a status for which no one could fault him if he’d chosen it. For the past 10 years he has been lecturing and preaching throughout Japan, and has also made forays into Hawaii, mainland America, Canada, and Korea.

Today A rakaki lives in his native Okinawa, where in June 1998, Yoshiko, his wife of 41 years, who had stood by him through all his evangelistic endeavors, died of heart failure.

Bible lessons in prison were one of those moments.

But long before that occurrence the young Saburo had faced a series of providential events in his life that in retrospect convinced him that a divine hand had been personally guiding him. Why, for example, was he sent to Guam, when other Japanese criminals were being forwarded to their homeland following the end of the war? And why was his death sentence for double murder commuted? And in that Hawaii prison where he was practically the only one speaking Japanese, how did it come about that there just happened to be a second-generation Japanese-American around, who also turned out to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian? These and many other coincidences seemed too uncanny to be accidental.

But the event that A rakaki later came to believe was, above all, a defining moment in his life, and one with metaphysical significance for him, happened during the war, when he was just 18. Retreating from the advancing American forces in the battle for Saipan in 1944, he and many others found themselves cornered at the edge of “Suicide Cliff” at Cape Magpi, on Saipan’s northern tip.

It was hell on earth.

A rakaki told of emerging from a cave to face the sheer brutality of war, to see brave warriors and colleagues blown to bits in seconds. There was a lull in the fighting, a light rain was falling, and in the midst of that unimaginable carnage, he saw a rainbow in the sky, a rainbow over hell, a rainbow that slowly moved toward him and enwrapped him in its light.

As he looked up to the sky a strange peace filled his heart, and the fear of death was gone.

And though at that point he knew little, if anything, of its significance, that scene was one he would never forget. Indelibly etched in his memory, it would later emerge at the right time and with the right force to draw him with invisible hands into the tender embrace of God.

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* Apart from his own interviews and research, the author relied heavily on newspaper accounts and other materials (some needing to be translated) supplied by interested Japanese Adventists—in particular Hitomi Johnson, of Walla Walla, Washington, and Yoshika Caraig, of Texas. To keep the text flowing and readable, specific acknowledgments have been omitted.

Roy Adams is an associate editor of the Adventist Review.
A Higher Calling

CALVIN B. ROCK

In my 20 years as a pastor I have experienced the full range of congregational ministry. I would like a change and hope soon to run for an administrative position. My colleagues from various administrative levels tell us pastors that their happiest days were the ones they worked in local congregations, but they seem very reticent to pastor again.

Society's corporate model that stresses the climb from janitor to board chair, and the Puritan work ethic that equates status with divine approbation, stamp administrative oversight as superior to other types of labor. However, Jesus equates greatness not with position or power over others (Matt. 20:25-28) but with fidelity in service wherever His providence places us (Messages to Young People, p. 143).

That is not to say that leadership roles are not important. God directed that there be elders and officers in Israel (Num. 7:2; 11:16), and the early church also had a clearly defined leadership structure (Acts 15:2). The error is in ascribing to leadership privileged superiority rather than selfless servanthood. The call of the cross is to be Spirit-filled missionaries, not status-seeking functionaries.

Should pastors “run for office”? I think not. It is incongruent to politic or sell oneself in an attempt to gain authority in the very structure organized to proclaim the operational principles of the humble Galilean. Paul’s injunction “in honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10) and Jesus’ instruction to take the lower seat (Luke 14:10) may not be advantageous in the kingdoms of the world, but they are fundamental precepts of the kingdom of grace.

Your intimation is correct; the pastorate is not as valued as it should be. However, the antidote to the concept of the pastorate as a lesser post in God’s army is not capitulation to societal norms, but constant focus upon Christ’s example of servant leadership.

A good dictum is “Never seek the office; let the office seek you.” If it is the Lord’s will that you move from the pastorate to conference administration, you will not have to plot for that position. He will convince you, and more important, the people. That is the only way to ensure not only the honor of wider service but the guarantee of His blessings.

People tend to use the terms spiritual and moral as if they are the same. Is it possible to live a moral life without being spiritually converted?

It is possible to speak of morality that is not shaped by conversion. Such morality is conduct judged honorable by societal (human) standards, rather than the absolutes of the Word of God. This brand of morality lacks the superior motivations, understandings, and power that result from a relationship with the Creator.

Societal morality often parallels the Bible model in significant ways. But because it is not grounded in Christian principles and does not claim for its agents spiritual regeneration, it is correctly referred to by Augustine as “accidental obedience,” by Kant as “civic morality,” and by Bonhoeffer as “stolen goodness.”

Our high challenge is to demonstrate in our everyday experience the superiority of Christian morality over any other—including that of other religions. That we often fall short of such witness is not a reflection upon God, but on our own feeble faith and wavering consecration.

About the world to come, informed spirituality realizes that its conduct is not meritorious for everlasting life; only Christ’s righteousness accomplishes that. Nevertheless, it takes satisfaction in knowing that its exercise authenticates the power of the gospel, augments its progress, and provides believers the anticipation of rewards that will be given “in proportion to the energy and earnestness with which they have striven” (The Acts of the Apostles, p. 314).

Calvin B. Rock is a general vice president of the General Conference. He holds doctoral degrees in ministry and Christian ethics.
They Still Go

Adventist Volunteer Service

The following persons left their homes in 1998 to volunteer their time to assist in mission work in other countries for short-term service. Most of them have already returned home, but because of limited space and other delays, their names are just being published. We want them to know how much we appreciate their ministry.

Carrie A. Allen, to serve as English/Bible teacher, English Language Center, Euro-A sia Division, Kazakhstan, of Spokane, Washington, left November 3, 1998.

Jack Kenneth Baker, to serve as dentist, Saipan Adventist Clinic, Saipan, Mariana Islands, of Petaluma, California, left September 9, 1998.

Linbrook Barker, to serve as surgeon/physician, a ndrews Memorial Hospital, Kingston, Jamaica, of Riverside, California, left August 3, 1998.

Jolene Nicole Bauer, to serve as dental hygienist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, of Colton, California, left July 31, 1997.

Gilbert James Berto chini, to serve as interim secretary, M inisterial Association, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, Koyang City, Korea, and Better, of Winter Springs, Florida, left October 5, 1998.


Gary Hutton Chan, to serve as oral surgeon, Saipan Adventist Clinic, Saipan, Mariana Islands, of Loma Linda, California, left January 9, 1998.

Steven Connell, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Japan English Language School, Yokohama, Japan, of Keene, Texas, left December 29, 1998.

Robert Lee Darby, to serve as dentist, Saipan Adventist Clinic, Saipan, Mariana Islands, of Paradise Valley, Arizona, left September 5, 1998.


Kelly Dean Fri sen, to serve as physical therapy assistant, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, Debra Kay, and two children, of Loma Linda, California, left June 1, 1998.

Brian Lee Gang, to serve as physical therapist, Majuro Government Hospital, Majuro, Marshall Islands, of Newton, New Jersey, left September 20, 1998.

Wayne Craig Garrett, to serve as physician/emergency medical resident, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Cherline Joy, of Loma Linda, California, left July 29, 1998.

Andrew Paul Haynal, to serve as visiting professor, public health program, A dventist International Institute of A dvanced Studies, Manila, Philippines, of Battle Ground, Washington, left August 12, 1998.

Gary Alan Hopkins, to serve as physician/emergency medicine resident, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Amy Beth Hopkins, of Grand Terrace, California, left July 29, 1998.


Kristen Jean Jarnes, to serve as English/Bible teacher, English Language Schools, Ukraine, of Caldwell, Idaho, left August 19, 1998.

Kelly Lee Jones, to serve as English/Bible teacher, English Language Centers, Russian Federation, of Wenatchee, Washington, left August 19, 1998.

Jaclyn Y. Jung, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, left October 29, 1996.

Clarence Burton Keppler, to serve as physician/anesthesiologist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, of Hendersonville, North Carolina, left July 13, 1998.

Samuel and Effie Ket tings, to serve as physicians, a ndrews Memorial Hospital, Kingston, Jamaica, of Kennewick, Washington, left August 6, 1998.

Roger Kay Krum, to serve as development, maintenance, and agriculture worker, Paata SDA Mission, Paata Island, Caroline Islands, and Amy Lynn, of Sulphur, Oklahoma, left August 19, 1998.

Dana Joyce Langlois, to serve as assistant public relations officer, A DRA/Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, of Epping, New Hampshire, left September 8, 1998.

Kevin Lee, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, left December 26, 1998.

Timothy Douglas Lee and Rochelle Joy Lee, to serve as English/Bible teachers, Japan English Schools, Yokohama, Japan, of Battle Creek, Michigan, left August 19, 1998.

C heryl Faye Magnant, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Sparta, Michigan, left February 2, 1998.


James Sakae Miyashiro, to serve as physician/surgeon, A dventist Medical Center, Okinawa, Japan, and Hideko Miyashiro, of Honolulu, Hawaii, left June 9, 1998.

Teddric Jon Mohr (contract), to serve as president, Penang A dventist Hospital, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, and Lois Marie Mohr, of Kalama Zoo, Michigan, left January 12, 1998.

Monroe Alexander Morford, to serve as acting principal, N ile University Academy, Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt, and François Jean Morford, of M arysville, California, left October 26, 1998.

John Insa ng Park, to serve as physician, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, of Vero Beach, Florida, left Houston, Texas, September 24, 1998.

Eric Edwin Russell Oakey, to serve as periodontist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Dawn Michelle, of Rochester, New York, left August 16, 1998.

John Insang Park, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Winter Park, Florida, left June 18, 1998.

Daniel Marvin Patchin, to serve as physician/OB-GYN, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Marilyn Kay Patchin, of Gresham, Oregon, left July 7, 1998.

Rein Andre Paulsen, to serve as director, Food for Work, A DRA/Haiti, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, of Takoma Park, Maryland, left February 2, 1998.

Julia Anne Pope, to serve as MIS systems analyst, A DRA/Haiti, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, of Springfield, Virginia, left October 1, 1998.

Jeffery Pritchard, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Lubbock, Texas, left August 19, 1998.

Earl Bradley Quijada, to serve as physician/family practice resident, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, of Loma Linda, California, left April 5, 1998.


Robert L. Rob ertson, to serve as relief dentist, A ntigua SDA Dental Clinic, Antigua, West Indies, and Valetta Robertson, of Cooperopolis, California, left October 26, 1998.

David Chin R in, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Loma Linda, California, left March 1, 1998.

Susan Pamela Russ, to serve as dental hygienist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, of Bakersfield, California, left January 25, 1998.

Richard Alan Seidel, to serve as secondary math/science teacher, Guam A dventist
A cademy, Talofoto, Guam, of Wayneville, Ohio, left August 2, 1998.


Alice Cunningham Spindler, to serve as physician/OB-GYN, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Richard Spindler, of Brunswick, Maine, left May 14, 1998.

Jay Howard Sprague, to serve as relief dentist, Saint Kitts Dental Clinic, Saint Kitts, West Indies, and Rosemary Sprague, of South Lancaster, Massachusetts, left August 3, 1998.

Benjamin Timothy Stiles, to serve as chaplain, editor, and English program coordinator, 1000 Missionary Movement, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, Opal Irene Stiles, and two children, of Norman, Arkansas, left August 10, 1998.


Sissel Kay Topple, to serve as physician/family practice, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, of Asheville, North Carolina, left Houston, Texas, December 26, 1998.

Arnie Leopoldo Tupas, to serve as third-grade teacher, Ekamai International School, Bangkok, Thailand, of Wawona, California, left August 2, 1998.

David Craig Varner, Jr., to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, left August 19, 1998.

Frederick Veltman, to serve as lecturer, Old Testament studies, A vondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, of Hendersonville, North Carolina, left July 28, 1998.

Sandra Lee Wagner, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Pennsauken, New Jersey, left March 1, 1998.

Donna Maureen Webster, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, left August 19, 1998.

Lloyd Dean Wenzel, to serve as dentist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Sharon Joyce Wenzel, of Montrose, Colorado, left January 12, 1998.


David Scott Woods, to serve as regional manager, ADRA/Bolivia, La Paz, Bolivia, of Springville, California, left July 5, 1998.

Daniel J. Wortman, to serve as proposal writer, ADRA/Bolivia, La Paz, Bolivia, of Candler, North Carolina, left August 3, 1998.

Regular Mission Service
Gary Glenn Johnson, of Bay Point, California, is serving as associate treasurer, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, with his wife, Candice Jacqua Johnson, and two children. They left on March 17, 1997, from Detroit for Singapore, where Gary Johnson served as associate treasurer for the division before it moved to the Philippines on November 17, 1997. We regret the incorrect information in our November 12, 1998, issue.—Editors.

Literature Requests
The following persons and institutions have requested denominational literature and would be grateful for your help. The list is for literature only. Please discourage any solicitations for funds by the recipients.

GHANA

Elder Badu Peter, AMU Memorial SDA Church, P.O. Box 620, Techiman, Brong-Ahafo, Ghana, West Africa: religious books and missionary literature.


Stanford Lee Wolfe, to serve as relief dentist, Belau SDA Clinic, Caroline Islands, of Candler, North Carolina, left July 5, 1998.

Donna Maureen Webster, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, left August 19, 1998.


Donna Maureen Webster, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, left August 19, 1998.

Sandra Lee Wagner, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Pennsauken, New Jersey, left March 1, 1998.

Donna Maureen Webster, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea SDA Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, left August 19, 1998.

Lloyd Dean Wenzel, to serve as dentist, Guam SDA Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and Sharon Joyce Wenzel, of Montrose, Colorado, left January 12, 1998.
A couple years ago we welcomed the newest member into our family as our daughter Christine married Christopher. The entire family was together for the occasion. It was hard to believe that the Volk clan had grown so large. It still seems only yesterday that Heinz and I were wed, yet now we have four married children and six grandchildren.

For Christopher, becoming part of a large family was a dramatic change. He had grown up with only one sister, a few years younger than himself. She was not his only sibling. He has an older sister, Bernice, the product of his father's first marriage. But he had never met her. At least, not until a year ago.

The marriage had broken up soon after Bernice was born. It did not take her mother long to get married again, and Bernice, who was too young to remember her real father, grew up calling her mother's new husband “Daddy.” It was he who had walked her down the aisle and given her away. A few of her own children were born and learned to talk, they called him “Grampa.” It was quite by accident that she discovered she had another father.

“I see your uncle was killed,” an aunt commented one day, picking up the paper and reading about a well-known political figure who died in a car crash.

“My uncle?” Bernice asked. “I didn’t know he was related to us.”

“He’s related to your father.”

“But I thought I knew all of Daddy’s relatives.”

“I mean your real father.”

“You mean Daddy isn’t my real father?”

The aunt put the paper down. “Didn’t you know? Your parents divorced when you were just a baby.”

A tumult of conflicting emotions tumbled through Bernice. Her first impulse was to deny what she had heard. But if it weren’t true, why would her aunt say it?

Instinctively she reached out to her own little girl as she toddled by. The love she felt for this child—could her real father have felt a similar love for her? And if he did, why had he never contacted her?

“The divorce was a bitter one,” the aunt said. “Your mother wanted nothing more to do with him.”

Stunned by the news, Bernice determined to find her real father. After all, for the sake of her children she should at least try to get a complete medical history. She got more than that. She got family as her father welcomed her with tears of joy.

But finding her real father had its price. Her mother, unable to forgive and forget the past, told Bernice that she had to choose between her father and the family she had grown up with. If she insisted on seeing her father, she was no longer welcome at home.

Our Father also has children who have grown up without Him. They have grown up to believe that Allah, Buddha, Confucius, Communism, or Krishna is their parent. But our Father has not forgotten His children. Tenderly He recalls every detail. “I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. . . . I girded thee, though thou hast not known me” (Isa. 45:4, 5).

Full of love, the Father longs to wrap His arms around these children, our brothers and sisters, who have grown up without knowing Him. He states His determination: “I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him” (Isa. 43:6, 7).

Perhaps the greatest blessing that we as Christians enjoy is the knowledge of our heavenly Father. From infancy we have experienced His love and marveled at the wonderful gifts He gives us each day. Isn’t it time that our brothers and sisters also have this experience? Isn’t it time that we tell them about their real Father?

And when their former friends and relatives turn against them, shouldn’t we open our arms to them and give them such a welcome that they will never want to leave again?

Welcome to the family!

Elfriede Volk writes from the Russian Sahm Yook University in Yuzhno Sakhalinsk, Russia.