A Fine Balance
How Adventist educators serve the church

That’s My Line!
Let Me Cry an Ocean
Introducing Marty

Just a quick note to say thanks for printing “Introducing Marty” (Gloria Neidigh, May 27 AnchorPoints Edition). It was a good reminder for me that it’s possible to put the “old” Bible into practice in this fast-paced modern world. It reminds me that I don’t have to be like Mary all the time and let the house go down, but I also don’t have to worry so much about what’s going to happen if I don’t wash the car right away. Thank you.

—Anderson K. Barbosa
Boynton Beach, Florida

Strange Theology?

Was there “strange theology” in the May 27 issue of the Review?
1. Did Stephen Chavez (“Straight Talk”) really mean that homosexuality is no lower on the “sin scale” than pride, selfishness, dishonesty, and heresy?
2. Did Ella Rydzewski (“Who Is Saved?”) intend to say that salvation may not be limited to “those who have formally and officially accepted Christ as their personal Saviour” and that love and fairness may recognize another way?
3. Did Clifford Goldstein (“What Is Truth?”) proclaim “the truth” when he implied that a Sunday worshiper demonstrating hesed (mercy) may have more “truth” than a nasty Sabbathkeeper?
4. Did Lynn Sauls (“Through a Glass Darkly”) really want us to believe that God might be merciful to a manipulative, violent, dishonest woman because her reality might have been flawed because of heredity and environment and because she saw “through a glass darkly”?

And all this in one issue? If I read those articles correctly, please publish more of the same—that brand of theology is encouraging and challenging!

—Frank McMillan
Apopka, Florida

Another Visit to the Doctor

The article about Kellogg (Bill Knott, “Another Visit to the Doctor”) was very informative, and I appreciated it. However, two questions come to mind.

If his theology was so flawed that it resulted in his removal from the church, to what extent is he being elevated at the museum? Or why is he being so elevated at all?

Throughout the entire article there was no reference to his squandering anything or being overgenerous with anything. That being the case, how could he be accused in the subtitle of being prodigal?

—Dave Holloway
Kalispell, Montana

Thank you for the Kellogg story by Bill Knott. For five years I served as chaplain and public relations director and was well acquainted with famous people whom he served. I also worked closely with staff members who knew him well.

It is good to know that this talented and prodigiously productive man can now be portrayed objectively. While his work contributed significantly to the development of our church and its health message, there were character deficits accurately described in Knott’s article. Kellogg, who became a powerful and well-known national figure, succumbed to the sort of illusions of self-importance that tempt many achievers.

—Oliver Jacques
Fallbrook, California
Thank you for the interesting account of John Harvey Kellogg, which brought to mind the rest of the story:

In 1954 Pastor E. L. Pingenot and I had been transferred to Louisville, Kentucky, to build a new church and 10-grade junior academy. In 1956 I accepted a call to Battle Creek, Michigan, to be principal of Battle Creek Academy. Prior to our departure to Battle Creek, we had several memorable visits with Elder and Mrs. Pingenot as he recounted the goodly years spent pastoring the Battle Creek Tabernacle during the 1940s.

During the early days of Elder Pingenot’s pastorate in Battle Creek, Dr. Kellogg spent most of his last two years of life as a patient at the Battle Creek (Phelps) Sanitarium. Elder Pingenot visited Dr. Kellogg almost daily at the sanitarium, praying and reviewing the Scriptures with him.

It was during those years that John Harvey and his brother W. K. (Will Keith) became reconciled to each other as Dr. Kellogg’s heart softened toward people around him and those he had previously known and dealt with. Elder Pingenot stated that during the last months of his life Dr. Kellogg admitted that he had strayed from the pathway to the kingdom of God, and became reconciled to the Lord in confession and repentance.

Elder Pingenot asked Dr. Kellogg if he would like to have his name presented to the Battle Creek Tabernacle for membership. Dr. Kellogg replied, “No, no, Elder Pingenot. The brethren would never understand, and it would only stir up old feelings that might disrupt the church. Let the bygones of the past be past. The Lord knows and understands, and that is all that really counts.” Dr. Kellogg passed to his rest shortly thereafter.

—Ralph P. Bailey, Ed.D.
Cleburne, Texas

Grieving for the “San”
I was saddened by the news of the closing of the “San” and appreciated Bill Knott’s brief history published in the April 22 Review (AnchorPoints).

My birth certificate, issued in 1928, indicates that I was born at the “Melrose Sanitarium.” I remember as a child hearing my parents refer to the “Melrose San.” I did not find any reference to this name in Mr. Knott’s article. Was this ever a legal name? Or merely a colloquialism of that era?

—Charlene Higgins Baez
Holbrook, Arizona

The name “Melrose Sanitarium,” though widely used for several decades, appears to have been a local, not a legal, designation. —Editors.

On Target
I am intrigued by the variety of reports from readers on celebration churches. It appears as though some writers have written on hearsay evidence without having visited one.

Not all celebration churches are off base or “uncomplimentary.” The one we attend has many group ministries to the hurting, a strong youth ministry, an active community assistance outreach, and a Christ-centered message.

A guitar and overhead screen do not a celebration church make. There is a difference between a worship style and a church style. Christ’s message must be the foundation of both.

But even though the worship style may be different, it does not mean that it is less worshipful. Psalm 150 describes complete worship and praise that is an energizing and uplifting experience. God is good and accepts what is in our heart, not just what is in our hymnal. So, just as when we visit traditional Adventist churches, before casting a blanket judgment over them all, let me assure your readers that there are celebration churches out there that are not off base or uncomplimentary, but on target!

—Stu Freeman
Alta Loma, California
Coping in the Key of Life

Carlos Medley

Here's a short quiz. Study the above alphanumeric pattern. Is this pattern (a) a molecular formula for a new organic wonder drug, (b) the key to a DNA map, (c) a code for a computer security system, or (d) none of the above?

If you chose the last answer, then you're absolutely right. However, if you still want to know what the pattern means, show it to the musicians at your church. Better yet, show it to the members of your church’s praise band. I'm sure they'll recognize the pattern as the chord progression for the basic 12-measure blues song in the key of C. Countless songs, including many popular pop and jazz songs, are based on this simple harmonic pattern or some minor deviation.

I share this particular bit of musical trivia because the national global events in the past few months have given many people a reason to sing the blues, or at the very least become discouraged. Consider the following:

- U.S. congressional leaders are wondering if the proverbial doomsday clock is about to strike midnight in the wake of the Senate's Cox Report released in May. The 700-page document, which has been described by one senator as scary, alleges that the People's Republic of China has acquired secret design information on America's most advanced thermonuclear weapons, “including every thermonuclear warhead in the country's ballistic missile arsenal.”

- Horrendous devastation erupted in Eastern Europe in March as more than 600,000 Kosovar refugees, including many Adventists, were forced from their Yugoslavia homeland, seeking refuge in Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, and other areas.

At the same time, Yugoslavian people suffered enormous hardships under the relentless bombing of NATO forces.

- North America was plunged into despair in April when two teenagers opened fire on fellow students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. By the end of the murderous rampage, 12 students and a teacher had been killed. Then the assailants turned the guns on themselves. The incident ignited dozens of copycat shootings and bomb threats in North America and spurred a national debate on gun control and school safety.

I'll be the first to admit that the events of the past few months at times caused me to worry. It's very easy to become depressed about society's future in the wake of such happenings. They graphically reveal how frail and vulnerable life really is.

But despite our delicate mortality, it's comforting to hear Christ's command “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1).

Truly our faith is put to the acid test when bombs are dropping or when our children walk in harm's way. But God promises to walk with us and protect us in our darkest hour. David echoed this thought when he wrote, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Ps. 23:4, NIV).

Christ admonishes us not to worry about the cares of this world, or about those things beyond our control. Not a moment of worry will improve these situations. “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” He says (Matt. 6:27, NIV).

Not only is worry powerless to change situations, it is also counterproductive to our walk with God. Worry burdens the soul and over time wears down our health. By worrying we rob ourselves of precious mental energy needed to fulfill God's will and do the work of His kingdom.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus points out that the cares of the world often hinder God's ability to make the gospel powerful in our lives. He tells us that the worries of the world choke the gospel and render it unproductive (Matt. 13:22).

When Christians worry, it shows their lack of faith in the Creator's power. When we worry, we're telling God that we don't trust Him to take care of us. No matter how desperate the situation or how hopeless the plight, Christ is able to deliver us and provide our every need.

“Worry is blind and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 481).
Finding Our Place in the Kingdom

Janice* is one of the finest Christians I know. She became interested in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a result of NET '95. She joined the church that December and hit the aisle running. She soon carried the ball for the church potlucks and taught a children’s Sabbath school. She got on various committees including the church board. Janice and her children could usually be found at the midweek prayer meeting, and she even joined a two-night-a-week craft program in the church school gym. At the same time Janice worked outside the home full-time while raising two boys.

Janice’s husband, Tom, a police officer in the small Western town where they live, has an inquiring mind. For two years he attended a study group with his wife before he also joined the church. But he wasn’t even dry from the baptismal waters before being rushed into service. He got on the school board, volunteered to mow the lawn once a week and do church maintenance. Three years later the couple feels burned out. Tom has lost his thrill for Bible study. If he attended a Friday night study now, he would probably fall asleep. Almost every other night of the week finds the couple at the church. With all of this they still feel guilty if they have to say “No” on a rare occasion.

Nancy belongs to the same church. She comes alone to church about every other week and rarely attends Sabbath school. Except for her personal tithe and offerings, she doesn’t appear to contribute to the life of the church. Every time the nominating committee asks her to take a position, she turns it down. Other members can’t resist comparing her to Janice, and Nancy comes up short. Few people realize the struggle Nancy has at home and work. Her husband and teenage son ridicule her new religion and accuse her of “living for the church” when she does attend an occasional evening meeting. Nancy feels guilty for her lack of church activity.

Paul and Liz are what we might call nominal members. They attend church once a month. They give little financially. They hold on to church because they have been raised to do so. (Too many singles fall into this category.)

None of these people have found their place in service to God and to their families. Actually Nancy may be closer, since she remains courteous and helpful to her family in spite of their prejudice against her religion. The ability to serve in a difficult family situation is itself a ministry. Because of her gentle spirit, she also witnesses on her job as a secretary in the county government. People often come to her with their problems, because they know she is compassionate. Her ministry is outside the church edifice. But the time may come when she will have to put God before her family, and will she be able to?

If someone talks to Paul and Liz about their noninvolvement, they will drop out altogether and join others who haven’t been seen in years. The time may come, however, when a crisis will bring them back full-time (if they keep a good relationship with the church family).

Every church needs a Janice and Tom. But they can go too far in their service and thus lose that first love for Christ. Their boys need quality time as well, or the children may grow up resenting the church they feel kept their parents from them. Janice and Tom need to decide how much church work will keep them challenged yet allow time for spiritual and family life.

How can old and new members find their place in the church family? Sometimes it takes years, but we need to be wary of the extremes. Most important is devotion to God, then our families, and then the church family. There is such a thing as gaining the whole church but losing one’s soul. After all, we do not live for a church but our Lord. Sometimes we are more concerned with doing good works in the name of a church than in God’s name. On the opposite side, we can drift into secularism by ignoring the church and underestimating its influence in our lives.

Finding one’s place in the church family means analyzing our spiritual and family needs and bringing those needs to God in prayer. The Spirit will lead those who sincerely want to find their place in God’s kingdom.

* Names and some details have been changed.
ADVENTIST LIFE

For a recent New Believers Day at the Washington Conference office, I served the Adventist favorite—haystacks. As I was refilling a bowl in the serving line, one of the new members asked me seriously, “Do you think our first meal in heaven will be haystacks?”

— Dawn Hainey, Arlington, Washington

A woman scheduled to give the children’s story for church was just a little nervous. She told the story and returned to sit next to her husband, quite pleased that it had gone off without a hitch. Then her husband told her that instead of telling the children to quietly return to their seats, she had said, “Now you may quietly go to your rooms.”

— Lauren Kenner, Fairfield, California

The first birth I witnessed was that of one of my grandsons, who on March 26 of this year celebrated his thirteenth birthday. I always recall I had taken with me a Review to read while waiting for his arrival and during the delivery had fanned both my daughter and the doctor with it. This was certainly a different but helpful use of the Review.

Years later, at the other end of life’s cycle, I was sitting at my husband’s bedside reading the Review just prior to his death. Indeed, the Review holds a special place in my life.

— Edie Sines, Martinsburg, West Virginia

CONTEST: THE GREAT OUTDOORS

O.K., nature photographers—here’s your chance. The Adventist Review would like to feature your best shots of God’s creation (human beings excepted). We’ll award a $100 grand prize, plus two $50 prizes. All published entries will merit a Review cap. Send submissions (photo and descriptive caption) to “The Great Outdoors” at the Give & Take address at left. Photos will not be returned. Deadline: October 1, 1999.

FOR EXAMPLE: Janet Coulter of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, had already sent us this photo—which she titled “God’s Greatest Beauty Is in the Detail.”
Once upon a time during the last century a school opened for the purpose of educating ministers and church workers. At the end of the first year enrollment had swelled to 72. This Christian school combined manual labor with studies. Students could learn practical skills and earn money to operate the school at the same time. The teachers and the students were involved in working on the farm. The arrangement didn't last long, for the farm never really turned a profit.

Even without farm income the school prospered, but there were difficult times of stress between the denomination and the academics. The church members, mostly simple folk, began to criticize the college for its defection from church ideals. It was little things at the beginning that signaled changes. For instance, the students were required to attend chapel services but the faculty were finding other activities to fill their time. Without the faculty presence in chapel to help maintain decorum the services became less reverent and worshipful. One time the students even kept a faculty attendance record and published the results in the student newspaper.

Other unobtrusive changes gradually came into the school. There were not enough academics in the denomination to adequately fill the teaching positions, and so those who were not members of the church were hired to teach classes. There was a growing concern in the constituency that the board of trustees could not be trusted to keep the school on the straight and narrow. One time when the school needed money, the constituency, along with a commitment of funds, required that they have the power to select and remove any of the trustees. They would see to it that there was no religious drift from the faith of the fathers.

But the drift continued anyway. Chapel frequency was reduced to two times a week and attendance was no longer required. The natural result was that the student body as a whole no longer participated. Weeks of Prayer and revivals became less frequent, baptisms were down, and an attitude was expressed among the students that one person's religion is as good as another's. A nother contributing factor to the declining spiritual atmosphere of the school was weekends away, either at home or for recreational activity. This deprived the college community of the weekly communal worship experience. All of this contributed to accusations that were made about a “new theology” at the school.

And then there was the dancing debacle. In a sense, it was the symbolic catalyst for the constituency to rally around, decrying the spiritual drift at the school. The problem was that students had become interested in dancing. They were at first prohibited, then they were regulated, then they were supervised, and then . . . well, nothing was done. With the word out among the constituents that there was dancing at the school, the inclination for financial support
decreased significantly. The school put on a strong public relations campaign and spoke about all the fine religious things that were happening on campus. It apologized for various ways that the constituency had been offended, but at the same time there was quiet talk among the academics about the church control of the school being a “millstone” around their necks.

The Council for Higher Education suggested a change in the relationship between the church and the school. The group suggested that a covenant be established between independent parties rather than authority by one over the other.

The annual subsidy from the church was a dwindling percentage of the school budget, and there was a call for a cutoff of aid to the school since the school was getting so much foundation and government money. Motions were made at constituency meetings to cut the allotment to the school because it was not morally defensible to spend church mission money on an institution that was not a mission and was, in fact, straying from the mission of the church.

Other issues rubbed the salt of secularization in the opening wounds between the church and the school. Accusations were made that the school no longer upheld the faith because speakers were allowed on the campus who espoused non-Christian ideals. There was a dwindling number of religion credits required, the nonrequired chapel attendance had declined to nearly zero, and weekend worship services were joined by very few teachers or students. Certain government funds were not accepted by the school, but the academics who wanted more federal money pointed to the inconsistency of the fact that hospitals owned by the denomination accepted federal funds.

On one occasion the board of trustees came back from a church constituency meeting that they found particularly frustrating and decided to rewrite the constitution. They deleted the provision that indicated that the school was an agency of the church and withdrew the power of the church to elect trustees. The president of the church immediately cut off the annual subsidy.

A compromise was reached within one year, and the compromise was that the constituency would stop subsidizing the school but congregations could earmark special contributions that they could send through the denomination.
office. The compromise received constituency approval, and the progressive divorce between school and church continued.

The final break came when finally the two institutions decided to go their separate ways. The denomination yielded all claims to governance, and the school yielded all claims to funding. Reactions to this final severance were varied. Two days after the action, the Winston-Salem Journal ran its editorial under the headline “Wake Forest Goes Secular.” So Wake Forest University, established by the fervor of the Baptist Church to train ministers, became a private secular university.

Other stories
We might have told the story of many other schools, schools begun in the fervor of Christian conviction that now have drifted from H. Richard Niebuhr’s paradigm of “Christ against Culture” to “Christ of Culture.” James Burtchaell outlines other denominational colleges in his book The Dying of the Light, subtitled, The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities From Their Christian Churches.1 There you will read about Congregationalists at Harvard and Dartmouth; Presbyterians at Lafayette and Davidson colleges; Methodists at Millsaps College and Ohio Wesleyan University; Baptists at Virginia Union University and Linfield College (in addition to Wake Forest); Lutherans at Gettysburg and St. Olaf College and Concordia University; Catholics at Boston College, the College of New Rochelle, and Saint Mary’s College of California; and the Evangelicals at Azusa Pacific University and Dordt College.

Many were the influences that led these schools down the slippery slope from Bible-based, church-funded ministerial training schools to secular universities, including

- faculty focusing more on their own discipline and less on the institutional mission.
- the growing independence of boards and the growing divergence of missions.
- regional accrediting associations replacing the church as the primary authority.
- faculty selection becoming more dependent on academic expertise than spiritual commitment.
- financial security depending more and more on government grants and endowments than church subsidies.
- customer-driven admissions officers focused more on recruiting any student as compared to students who complemented the mission of the institution.

These and other influences did not grow out of a malevolent conspiracy to overthrow the spiritual foundations of the school. There was no clandestine religious group following a grand strategy of insidious corruption. Good people of high moral conviction led these schools. The transformation of their mission statements from counterculture to culture-reflecting came slowly but surely through many small decisions made by church administrators, college presidents, and faculty search committees. The law of unintended consequences devolved through small decisions that related to chapel attendance, funding sources, behavior restraints, and a multitude of decisions that led these schools away from their founding churches.

James Burtchaell says in the preface of his book: “I have had to leave aside what may have been even more interesting stories: those of the Mennonites, the Mormons, the Quakers, the Disciples of Christ, the Episcopalians, the Seventh-day Adventists.”

What is our story?
And what would his story have included if he had told the story of Seventh-day Adventist higher education? Would he have told of pressures of “new theology,” lifestyle changes, and accrediting bodies pushing Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities for more independence from the church? Would he have suggested that the 1992 decision of the Annual Council that clarified the independence of the Adventist college and university boards was a watershed event? Would he have told of false anecdotal stories that resulted in constituencies withdrawing students if not subsidies? Would he have reported the recent Annual Council action on “International Coordination and Supervision of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education”?

If he were writing the future instead of the past, what predictions would he make? Will Adventist higher education maintain the connection with the church, or will the subtitle of his future book be The Disengagement of Colleges and...
Universities From the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Defying the trends of history

How might Adventist academics defy the trends of history? Is it possible for academics to serve the church? I would like to suggest a number of areas:

1. Academics serve the church in their attitudes about the church and its leaders.

   The schools and faculties mentioned above were quick to complain about unwelcome interference and intrusive concerns being expressed by ecclesiastic authority and unenlightened church constituencies. But they compliantly bowed to civil authorities on issues of zoning and occupational safety. They raised little fuss about the demands of accrediting bodies, while they impugned church concerns.

   There is a condescending insolence among some educators to the perspective of those in church administration. I have felt it myself as I resist some directives. But it’s amazing how quickly one’s perspective can change when you move from church administration to school administration! For instance, my perspective on the church subsidy from the union conference to Southern Adventist University is quite different now! Intellectual insolence that disables our mutual trust contravenes the gospel.

   David refused to cut the garment of Saul, Jesus allowed His crucifixion by Jewish leaders, and Paul encouraged respect for those in authority. In no case should there be an artificial compliance, but the college needs to take seriously the concerns of those elected to lead the church. We serve our church through loyal conversation and positive attitudes toward our leaders.

2. Academics serve the church through an unashamed commitment and loyalty.

   It is not unreasonable to ask that the intellectual pursuits of the college show loyalty and commitment to the church.

   Aventist academics are painfully aware that academic peer pressure tempts the dilution of simple gospel commitments and loyalties. I spent a semester at the Harvard Divinity School, during which time the pastor there came out of the closet. It was indecorous to claim Christ as a personal Saviour but quite apropos to be gay. It was difficult to talk about Scripture as having authority but quite appropriate to find fulfillment in New Age chanting.

   For academics to truly serve the church, they must not lose their nerve and be intimidated by their academic colleagues into politically correct beliefs expressed in vacuous theological mumbo jumbo that leaves everyone guessing about what they believe. We must not fall into the habit of talking religiously so as not to give offense, thereby saying much and affirming little.

   Colleges and universities that separated from their founding churches found a nice foil in the narrow exclusivism of the founding churches. They were as good at using this straw man as an excuse for separation as the church was good at finding anecdotal stories of a loss of faith in the school. Both sides found what they were looking for, and they got what they didn’t want—separation.

3. Academics serve the church by helping it find theological depth and upholding church doctrine.

   There is a subjectivism today that suggests that telling my story is the same as telling God’s story. The church faces the danger of the religious equivalent of safe sex—all feeling and no risk. As Ralph Woods has said, “This new ease in Zion, this friendly familiarity with the Lord God of the cosmos, can be discerned in old-fashioned liberal no less than new-fangled evangelical churches.”

   Edward Farley has recently declared that the relevance-driven worship practiced in old-line liberal congregations prompts one not to exclaim ‘holy, holy, holy’ but ‘nice, nice, nice.’ In his book A Far Glory, Peter Berger argues that we are witnessing ‘the triumph of triviality’ even in traditional churches.

   “The loss of mystery and the accommodation of worship to a God who is just a kinder and gentler version of ourselves leaves no space to inspire worship or command our service. As Flannery O’Connor said, ‘Sentimentality in religion is like pornography in art: they both cultivate immediate sensate experience for its own sake.’”

Everyone wants to be spiritual, but no one wants doctrine. Today spirituality can be as vacuous as feeling good in a hot tub to having chills go up your spine when you capture the view of the Grand Canyon. Instead of a spirituality that grows from teaching about the nature of God, there is developing a spirituality not rooted in the Bible that is a gaseous, gossamer thing, meaning everything and nothing at the same time. The end result of such a depleted concept of spirituality will be to avoid the scandal of the gospel and to have an unwillingness to confront the cultural conformists of the world. We’d better be very clear when we march to the beat of a different drummer that we are not hearing the band play without a score.

The college can help the church find the balance between a feel-good pietistic religion with roots no deeper than Yanni’s mood music and a Teutonic, doctrinaire, true-believer

The transformation from counter-culture to culture-reflecting came slowly but surely.
fundamentalism with roots in stone.

On the one hand, let’s not be caretakers in the museum of truth, dusting off memorials to the pieties of previous generations. On the other hand, let’s not accept designer doctrines fabricated in the New Age laboratories of a heathen society. Committed belief is not toxic to the college. A principled worldview that draws lines in the sand is a necessary framework to learning.

We must never face the “cut flower” phenomena—looking beautiful and bright, but cut from our doctrinal roots—dead but not knowing it yet. Our roots grow deep in traditional biblical interpretation and are nourished by a commitment to biblical truth. Let’s never separate ourselves from those roots. We must deepen our grasp of the doctrinal fundamentals of the Adventist Church. To do that, the college must have the academic freedom to follow the instructions in the preface to those doctrines in the church manual:

“Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God’s Holy Word.”

A. Ibert Meyer once said, “Education is a conversation between the older and younger generations on what is important.” For our conversation toward faith maturity to take place, it must be secure from external threat. In the secular university where academic freedom is claimed as the Holy Grail, social restrictions of politically correct beliefs often are not destructive of faith but rather necessary ingredients to it. Let us teach them the responsible use of those keys and assure them from our own experience that doubt and questions are not destructive of faith but rather necessary ingredients to it.

4. Academics serve the church by living in unity with one another.

When my dad was a kid on the farm, his mother one day told him to take a drink of water to his father who was out plowing a field. Dad walked over the plowed field, and as he came over a little rise in the field he saw the horses standing still and his father kneeling down by the plow. Dad thought his father was fixing the plow, but as he got closer, he heard his father praying. Dad said it was as if he were standing on holy ground as he heard his father review each of his nine children’s names and pray for them one by one. There is something powerful about hearing your name in the prayer of another.

If there is any place in the Bible where we are included in prayer, it is in John 17:20, where Jesus says, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (NIV). Jesus is praying for us! We have believed in Jesus because of the message of the disciples. What is the message of this last prayer of Jesus for us? “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (verses 20, 21, NIV).

The last plea of Jesus to His Father was “that all of them may be one.” Jesus didn’t pray for our faith. He didn’t pray for our doctrinal purity. He didn’t pray for perfect performance. He prayed for our unity, “that all of them may be one.”

Why is this unity important to Jesus? He gives us two reasons. The first reason that our unity is important is...
The church must recognize that it isn’t possible to bring young people to a maturity of faith without losing some of them along the way.

You have a problem! You have a hole in your end of the canoe!

But whose problem is this, really? It is our problem—we are in the same canoe. So should it be when we hear of a problem at La Sierra University, Walla Walla College, or Atlantic Union College. We are in the same canoe. So should it be when we hear of a problem at church headquarters or in the conference office. We are in the same canoe. We are together in this. Their problem is my problem. It is our church.

On September 13, 1993, Yitzhak Rabin shook hands with Yasser Arafat and said, “We who have fought against you, the Palestinians—we say to you today, in a loud and clear voice: enough of blood and tears. Enough!”

We have shed no blood but there have been tears, and I say . . . Enough! I’m not saying that there should be mindless agreement, or that there are not places where we must draw a line in the theological sand. There may be ideas that should be opposed with every fiber of our being. But I am urging that we not personalize our differences and build caricatures of those who disagree with us.

May this be the day that academics serve our church by saying “Enough!” and showing them “the miracle that binds the hearts of God’s people together in Christian love.”

The church must recognize that it isn’t possible to bring young people to a maturity of faith without losing some of them along the way.
Leading Students to Think

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Wise teachers should be chosen for our schools, those who will feel responsible to God to impress upon minds the necessity of knowing Christ as a personal Saviour. From the highest to the lowest grade they should show special care for the salvation of the students and through personal effort seek to lead their feet into straight paths. They should look with pity upon those who have been badly trained in childhood, and seek to remedy defects, which, if retained, will greatly mar the character. No one can do this work who has not first learned in the school of Christ how to teach.

All who teach in our schools should have a close connection with God and a thorough understanding of His word, that they may be able to bring divine wisdom and knowledge into the work of educating the youth for usefulness in this life and for the future, immortal life. They should be men and women who not only have a knowledge of the truth, but who are doers of the word of God. “It is written” should be expressed in their words and by their lives. By their own practice they should teach simplicity and correct habits in everything. No man or woman should be connected with our schools as an educator who has not had an experience in obeying the word of the Lord.

Principal and teachers need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The earnest prayer of contrite souls will be lodged by the throne, and God will answer these prayers in His own time if we cling to His arm by faith. Let self be merged in Christ, and Christ in God, and there will be such a display of His power as will melt and subdue hearts. Christ taught in a way altogether different from ordinary methods, and we are to be laborers together with Him.

Teaching means much more than many suppose. It requires great skill to make the truth understood. For this reason every teacher should strive to have an increased knowledge of spiritual truth, but he cannot gain this knowledge while divorcing himself from the word of God. If he would have his powers and capabilities daily improved he must study; he must eat and digest the word, and work in Christ’s lines. The soul that is nourished by the bread of life will have every faculty vitalized by the Spirit of God. This is the meat which endureth unto everlasting life.

Teachers who will learn from the Great Teacher will realize the help of God as did Daniel and his fellows. They need to climb heavenward instead of remaining on the plain. Christian experience should be combined with all true education. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Teachers and students should study this representation and see if they are of that class who, through the abundant grace given, are obtaining the experience that every child of God must have before he can enter the higher grade. In all their instruction teachers should impart light from the throne of God; for education is a work the effect of which will be seen throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly to understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application. By painstaking effort the vital truths should thus be impressed upon the mind. This may be a slow process; but it is of more value than rushing over important subjects without due consideration. God expects His institutions to excel those of the world; for they are His representatives. Men truly connected with God will show to the world that a more than human agent is standing at the helm.

This article is an excerpt from a longer piece about the vital work of Adventist teachers, and originally appeared in Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, pages 152-154. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.
Saturday, May 30

Although today is a regular day off, our crew is on duty because of extreme fire hazard. Last winter a little more than half the normal amount of snow fell, and there has been less than 1/4 inch (five millimeters) of rain since the snow melted in March. For the past two weeks the temperature has climbed above 80°F (26°C) almost every day. This, combined with a relative humidity below 20 percent has resulted in explosive fire conditions.

When our shift ends at 2000 hrs (8:00 p.m.), I stay at the office to work on a sermon I am to give at church in two weeks. I am just settling into the project when a smoke report comes in over the radio. When the report is confirmed a few minutes later, I jump in the initial attack truck, advise the district duty officer (DDO), and pick up our crew leader at his house. I drop him off at the office to organize additional support with the DDO and proceed to the fire. When I arrive the only other person on the scene is our assistant fire management officer.

Even though less than a half hour has passed since I left the office, 2.5 acres (1 hectare) of spruce and aspen forest are already engulfed in flame. Pushed along by 30 mph (50 kph) winds, the fire grows rapidly. With only 125 gallons of water on the 1A truck, we know it would be just as effective to spit at the fire. We knock the fire down around the point of origin to make a safe place to park the truck and to set up the water tenders that are on the way. Our crew leader arrives, with the local First nation contract crew close behind.

We work on the fire that night until 0200 (2:00 a.m.). Then we retreat to the office for a planning session with the duty officer. We think that the fire will burn to Bear Creek, about 1.5 miles (2.5 kilometers) ahead and then slow down enough in the creek bottom so that we can catch it there the next day. I finally get to bed at 0330 (3:30 a.m.).
Sunday, May 31
Up at 0630 (6:30 a.m.) and back at the office just after 0700 (7:00 a.m.). I learn that the fire has crossed Bear Creek and burned about a mile (1.5 kilometers) past it. With the help of one of the contract crew members and an emergency fire fighter (EFF), I continue to build line up the west side of the fire in an effort to prevent it from flanking the water-tender park in the event of a change in wind direction. Progress is quite slow, as the fire is hot enough to keep relighting where I have already worked. So I have to keep going back over what I have already done, checking to make sure the fire is not crossing the line. In the afternoon the crew from the next district comes to assist me.

We've received considerable air tanker support on the southeast flank of the fire today. This support has helped secure that flank of the fire. The fire continues to spread northward, until by the end of the day it is about 3.5 miles (six kilometers) from the point of origin. At 2130 hours (9:30 p.m.) those of us who have been on the fire since the night before are pulled off so that we can get some rest. I get to bed at 2300 (11:00 p.m.).

Monday, June 1
Fire crews from all over the Yukon poured into camp last night. This morning their tents look like mushrooms that have come up overnight in the field.

The fire boss tells our crew that we are being assigned to support functions. The reason he gives is that the very long hours we have been working on the fire line, plus the additional time in planning sessions, could increase our chance of suffering a fatigue-related injury. It is quite disheartening to watch the other crews take over "our" fire. We console ourselves with the thought that six crews are being used to replace us.

An hour later the fire boss tells us that the wind is supposed to change to the northwest. Since we are the local crew, he wants us to set up a sprinkler line behind a group of five houses and a motel, restaurant, and gas station complex. We are issued clean uniforms, as we are also tasked with public relations duties.

Sunday, June 7
Yesterday afternoon one of the sector bosses on the fire line flipped his ATV over and injured his neck and back. This morning I am assigned as sector boss for the southeast flank (sector 1) of the fire. In addition to me, the sector has 18 people in four crews working in it. The fire has been knocked down pretty well throughout the sector, but is still smoldering with occasional flare-ups. It needs finishing off and mopping up.

Thursday, July 2
Today my sector of the fire is declared out. It has been expanded to include all the fire south of Bear Creek. As sector boss, I have been in charge of four miles (seven kilometers) of fire line and up to 25 personnel.

Friday, July 3
Today I am reassigned to the north perimeter of the fire as a crewman. This is quite a change of pace for me. Instead of being in charge of a sector, I now have a water nozzle, one EFF assistant, and am responsible for only 220 yards (200 meters) of fire line. Actually, it is quite enjoyable: no personnel to be responsible for, and best of all, no paperwork at the end of the day.

Saturday, July 4
Today I am pulled off the fire line at 1400 hrs (2:00 p.m.) and reunited with my regular crew as a strike team for initial attack on any new fire start. The fire blows out the north perimeter, burning through water hoses and over the helipad near where I had been working. Our crew assists with evacuating the other crews from that area of the fire. All personnel are safely pulled, and we let the fire run into the rocks at the top of the hill.
Thursday, July 23

The fire has grown to about 7,900 acres (3,200 hectares), but we have been able to hold it for the past two weeks. The people working on it have changed, as tired crews are replaced by fresh ones. It is difficult to know who is winning this contest—we or the fire.

While working on the fire, I can look across to the glacier-wrapped mountains on the other side of the valley. The smoke in the air has provided spectacular sunrises and sunsets. Plants are starting to grow already in areas that the fire has burned. Next year there will be many flowers and mushrooms where now there is nothing but a scorched and blackened wasteland.1

Over the course of the fire I have filled various roles: crewman, crew boss, sector boss, and helibase manager. This is my last day on the fire. I’m being transferred to another district. New challenges, new opportunities.

While working on this fire I discovered many parallels between the challenges I faced there and what I encounter in my life as a Christian. As a forest fire fighter I am challenged with bringing wildfires under control. As a Christian I have Christ and the other church members to assist me, with the Bible and Holy Spirit for guidance.

When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin we must be certain that we have extinguished it and removed it from our lives. Otherwise, like a fire that has not been dug up and thoroughly extinguished, sin keeps coming back, and we have to cover the same ground again. This is not always easy, for as Paul wrote, “I end up doing that which I do not want to do” (Rom. 7:15). Fortunately, Christ is willing to do the work for us. All we have to do is ask and then let Him.

Just as a fire crew faces many difficulties in controlling a forest fire, we experience various trials, difficulties, and setbacks in our efforts to grow fully into the image of Christ. There are also moments of inspiration, joy, beauty, and peace as we experience what Christ has done and will do for us, and the ultimate victory He brings.

When thinking about the different roles I had on this fire, I am reminded that as our walk with Christ progresses, we will always have new challenges to face along with new opportunities to grow in grace. As we get stronger the challenges and responsibilities that Christ gives us increase. Sometimes we may feel that the challenges are more than we can handle. However, we can be certain that “He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle unless He also provides an escape route” (1 Cor. 10:13). He has also promised that He will be with us all the time, everywhere; ready to pick us up, dust us off, and show us the way to go.

1 Haines Junction fire number 05-98 burned 7,900 acres (3,200 hectares), cost more than Can$4 million to control, and was human-caused.

2 Biblical quotes are author’s paraphrase.

At the time of writing, Ed Foreman was employed by the government of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development—Renewable Resources. He resides in the Yukon, where he leads a low-tech lifestyle in harmony with God’s creation and the natural environment.
New Dorm Dedication Defines Decade Of Educational Development

BY JACK MAHON, A RETIRED JOURNALIST WHO WRITES FROM ENGLAND

When Uganda’s minister for economic development Syda Bumba severed the golden ribbon to declare the Bugema University girls’ dormitory “well and truly opened,” she was effectively doing much more than making an attractive 600-student facility available to the secondary school.

In front of the national media, she was presenting the high point of 10 years of educational development on the part of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Since 1989 ADRA/Uganda, funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Danish Children’s Fund, and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), has built and completely equipped 59 primary schools.

However well built and furnished a school, though, it is useless without trained and experienced teachers. In May this year 300 ADRA-trained teachers sat for their qualifying examinations at the end of a three-year course of study. To contribute to the efficient control and management of the school units, ADRA has graduated 450 persons from its management course as well.

Uganda’s first lady, Janet Museveni, indicated her willingness to officiate at the opening ceremony, but when state affairs made this impossible, she designated a distinguished minister from the Bugema District, a few miles west of the Ugandan capital, Kampala.

Being minister of economic development, Bumba is well informed about building investment and costing, and she was frankly astonished that the four-building complex, the quality of whose materials and workmanship she had declared superior to any school or even university in the country, had cost only US$650,000. If government contractors were involved, the minister insisted, just one of the four buildings would have cost that sum. The words were music in the ears of ADRA country director Doris Jorgensen, to whom the phrase “cost effective” is very close to a statement of belief.

Jorgensen is one of only a few female ADRA directors in “implementing countries,” and the dormitory project was negotiated with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) by Rigmor Nyberg, who is one of only two female ADRA directors in a “supporting country.” Jorgensen herself would also credit the success of the enterprise to her husband, Evald, the tireless project manager of the school-building program.

One does not have to walk very far from ADRA’s head office in Kireka—one of the hills on which the Ugandan capital is built—to find a major reason for ADRA’s cost-efficient building projects. Next door to the office building is the big wood shop with its industrial machinery and impressive stores of African hardwoods. Not only are all the building lumber, roof trusses, and door and window frames produced here, but also a full inventory of school furnishings, desks, benches, blackboards, bookshelves, cupboards—everything made of wood for school application—is manufactured, all of superior quality and well below the Kampala market price. It is a two-line production system. Through its apprentice scheme it turns out not only superior woodwork but also skilled woodworkers.

According to A. S. Katende, coordinator of the ADRA/Uganda Teacher
Education Project (AUTEP), a national survey of primary facilities taken just before ADRA commenced its building program showed that of 104,000 classrooms only 50 percent were in permanent buildings. These were mainly schools established by missions. The remainder were either traditional erections of temporary materials or buildings that were dilapidated and vulnerable to adverse weather conditions.

This scenario was a clear indication to ADRA/Uganda of the nation’s greatest developmental need.

During the political upheavals of the Idi Amin regime the educational system came to a halt, with schools destroyed and teachers and pupils displaced. With a stable government in place, educational development could proceed. Each new ADRA school unit contains a minimum of eight substantially built classrooms with office space and teacher dwellings.

With regard to the staffing of the new schools, Katende notes that ADRA recruited 300 licensed teachers from seven districts of eastern Uganda and provided them with in-house training. The courses started in 1996 and proceeded in strict compliance with governmental standards. A midterm review of the program by the Ministry of Education reported that ADRA followed approved methods throughout and went on record that other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) intending to train teachers should follow the same guidelines.

The confidence of the Ministry of Education in ADRA’s training techniques seems to be further reflected by the invitation to ADRA/Uganda to appoint representatives to sit on the nation’s premier educational planning committee, which is largely influential in shaping future developments.

Non-Adventist Pastors Find Sabbath Truth

Rumors and speculations have reached the North American Division office about events involving some pastors of the House of God/Church of the Living God and the Adventist Church. Division officials have released the following statement to set the record straight.

Several pastors from the Church of the Living God have indicated a commitment to the Sabbath truth, and one has been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is former bishop, David Hill of Newark, New Jersey.

David Hill received a challenge from one of his members two years ago. The member asked him to explain why the church worshiped on Sunday. Hill said he would preach about that soon. As he studied the issue, he couldn’t find biblical reasons to worship on Sunday. Instead, he came to believe the Sabbath. When he was ready to take his stand, he contacted the New Jersey Conference.

President Dowell Chow guided Hill into a more complete knowledge of the message of the Adventist Church, resulting in Hill’s baptism, along with his wife and two others, on June 26 in Tranquility, New Jersey.

If you should go into Doris Jorgensen’s office in a quiet moment (a rare occurrence), she may show you some significant documents from one of ADRA’s rural schools. These record the first-time registration of children from a pygmy tribe. Your eye will be instinctively drawn away from the neat rows of print that set forth the conditions and personal details of the admission to the parental signature of acceptance at the foot of the form. This is unmistakably a diminutive thumb print in some kind of sepia permanent ink. “It’s cow dung,” the matter-of-fact country director will tell you.

“Here’s a lot of it about, and it never fades.” A part from the pasture fragrance, you may sense a whiff of destiny about those documents, which testify to the illiteracy of the parent while giving no hint of the horizons of achievement now opened to the children of the new generation.
Online Gambling—It’s Big and Getting Bigger

BY TIM PONDER, PASTOR OF THE ABERDEEN AND WILNA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES IN MARYLAND

Reflecting today’s society are the millions of websites that make up cyberspace. In this vast mixture a person can find the good, the bad, and the downright ugly. One branch of the information superhighway that is currently stirring up much controversy is online gambling.

Sitting in front of a home computer, anyone can gamble in a seemingly endless number of online casinos, with names like Crazy Horse Online Casino or the Wild West Frontier Casino. In the process, they can win or lose a huge amount of money. (The casino obtains one’s credit card number before any games are played.)

Groups opposed to gambling are concerned that online wagering is accessible and addicting. A person doesn’t have to make the effort to travel to Las Vegas or Atlantic City or the many other gambling locations in America. Children also have easy access to these casinos through their family’s home computer. All they have to do then is “borrow” mom’s or dad’s credit card.

A billion dollars is now being wagered online each year by Americans. By 2006, that figure could top $100 billion a year, or much higher. The National Gambling Impact Study Commission recommended in its report on June 18 that online gambling should be prohibited in the United States. Senator John Kyl of Arizona, in an editorial in the Washington Times, strongly endorses this stand.1

Pro-gambling advocates believe that public demand for online gambling will cause legislators eventually to discard these attempts at prohibition. Either they don’t know or don’t want to know that “nothing is so demoralizing or intoxicating, particularly to the young, as the acquisition of money or property without labor.”2

I’ve never been much for rituals, religious or otherwise. While some find meaning and solace in the repetition of symbolic words and gestures, I’m always left without a clue. A s a kid in school, the more I placed my hand on my heart and pledged allegiance to the flag, the more meaningless it felt. A s an earnest young Roman Catholic, the more I made the sign of the cross and sincerely recited my Hail Marys and Our Fathers (the Lord’s Prayer), the less sense they seemed to make.

As a young adult convert to Adventism, the practical significance of the ordinances of foot washing and Communion eluded me. After all, nobody’s feet were really dirty, so why wash them? A nd while I could appreciate, to some extent, that “the bread we eat is the purchase of [Christ’s] broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood” (The Desire of Ages, p. 660), I couldn’t fathom those microscopic wafers and thimblefuls of Welch’s grape juice. Sorry to say, repetition didn’t improve my comprehension.

One Communion Sabbath last year I decided I was tired of being such a thick-headed Philistine. A s the elders asked the blessing on the bread, I asked the Lord, “W hat’s my problem? W hy can’t I seem to feel engaged and connected with these divinely ordained symbols? I really do appreciate what they represent, so why don’t I feel more involved as I partake?”

Absorbed in my private frustration, I vaguely heard the pastor invite the congregation to share their praise and prayer requests. Vern, a long-time elder, spoke first: “I just want to thank the Lord for bearing with me, for never giving up on me.” Then he confided, with emotion, “A nd I’m so grateful my brother, Gene, has come back to the Lord and married a wonderful woman.”

Gene, who had crept in quietly with his new bride, stood and blurted, to Vern’s surprise, “I thank God too for not giving up on me, and for slapping me upside the head when I needed it!”

Affectionate laughter was followed by Debbie’s grateful thanks for God’s perseverance in her life; Jo’s appreciation for prayers and encouragement in behalf of her beloved prison ministry; Jesse James’ request for prayer for those “that go down to the sea in ships,” as he was preparing to do off the Alaskan coast. As Pastor John concluded with the familiar words “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19, N IV), my Communion mental block seemed to shift. I sensed the Lord sweeping His hand across that living sanctuary and asking me, “Do you understand now what this means? Look around you—this is My body. These brothers and sisters have a right to demand and be granted; who suffer and seek alongside you; who struggle and fail and struggle again, as do you—these are My body. A nd because they are My body, they’re your body, also.”

My body, my blood, my kindred spirits in Christ. Pretty heavy stuff for a habitual loner, a devoted individualist. But it’s become the only context in which Communion carries any meaning for me.

As I’m reconciled to my God by the sacrifice of my Saviour, I can’t help being reconciled to His church. The bread and the wine, no longer a sterile, private ceremony between my soul and my Saviour, have become the corporate celebration of reconciliation He’s always meant them to be. The foot washing, an illustration of the power He’s granted believers to spiritually refresh one another; to identify with and lift one another’s burdens; even to help cleanse one another from sin, through the ministries of Christlike empathy and intercessory prayer.

There is a mystery here that I have not, by any means, fully apprehended. A mystery of unity that is incomprehensible to the natural mind; foreign, at best, to my post-modern, Western mind. Mysteriously, but vitally, I’m connected to this improbable body of believers; vitally connected, also, to brothers and sisters I have not yet known, who are separated from me by distance and even death. A nd I’m intrigued by an unfamiliar yearning to know them all; to hear their stories; to play a part, however small, in bringing this disparate, displaced body together.

I yearn to see the body of Christ made whole.

Leslie Kay is a freelance writer, wife, and mother. She lives in Chloride, Arizona.
LET ME CRY AN

The Internet message header arrested my attention.
It read in bold caps: WHY?

BY KEN MC FARLAND

ON THE INTERNET, I’VE JOINED SEVERAL e-mail discussion lists focused on cancer. Recently someone posted this message:
“Friday our doctor at the cancer hospital told us that Jack’s liver is failing and he probably has only a few weeks left.” It was signed, “Sandi Allison, caregiver, husband Jack, age 48, stage IV cancer.”

This kind of message appears all the time on cancer lists. But what caught my attention about this one was the message header. A single word in all caps: WHY?

Why?

I’ve never met Jack and Sandi and probably never will—unless it’s in a better world. But that one stark question reached me with its heartbreaking anguish. I’m sure Sandi cares deeply for Jack and is terrified of losing him so prematurely. She has to stand by and watch as he suffers, helpless to ease his pain or to stop the relentless advance of his cancer. The doctors say he has only a few weeks left, and she can’t imagine going on without him.

Why?

Right now another new friend I’ve made on one of the lists is facing a decision I once thought I’d have to make. Natasha is just 26 years old. Like me, she has been diagnosed with MFH sarcoma. Her’s is above the left knee and is far advanced (stage IV). Her local doctors have told her that amputation is her only option and that no matter what they do, she has no more than two years to live.

Through the list, I recommended she make an appointment with my surgeon, who specializes in limb-sparing surgery. As she made preparation to fly out to consult with him, I prayed that he might be able to save her leg, as he did mine. Yet I knew that even the best surgeon can’t save them all.

I felt deeply for Natasha in her fear and her pain. Of her local doctor, she wrote in a post to the list, “He told me that no matter what I do, I most likely won’t live over two years. I’m totally scared. My leg is hurting me more than it ever has. I honestly don’t know if I’ll ever be able to let them amputate, even if it would kill me not to. Please, is there anything I can do for the pain? Nothing works anymore.” Then she lists the pain meds she’s taking, and they are the big guns.

Maybe I’ll get a chance to meet Natasha. I know something of her fear and pain. Yet I too am helpless to relieve it.

Why?

What’s happening in the lives of Jack and Sandi and Natasha represents but a single drop in the sea of trouble and sorrow and suffering that sweeps unceasingly over the face of our planet. The collective daily burden of both reported and unreported misery borne by earth’s inhabitants is too staggering to calculate or comprehend.

Meanwhile, where is God? Supposedly He’s all-powerful and has infinite love. So how can He just sit idly by and watch people suffer? Why does He allow the pain to go on and on and on?

If you are a parent and you’ve had to sit helplessly and watch your young child suffer and die, is it impertinent to demand of God an answer? If you read, as I occasionally
have, news stories of brutal child abuse, is it presumptuous to wonder if God really does care—if He really is all-powerful?

Don’t You care, God? Don’t You ever visit hospitals and hear the screams and groans of agony? Don’t You hear the heartbroken sobs of those who have had their loved ones torn from them by death? What kind of world are You allowing to continue down here? What kind of God are You, that You can see and hear all the pain in this world and seemingly do absolutely nothing? The pain, God, the pain!

Don’t think for a moment that I haven’t asked these kinds of questions myself as I’ve bitten cuts on the inside of my lip trying to ride out searing physical pain—or as I’ve sobbed out my even greater emotional pain in what felt like total, cold isolation.

Why?

It’s the ultimate question. A question fueled by pain and anguish. And anyone who offers an easy answer is deluded. I’m concluding that the best I or anyone else can hope for in this life is a partial answer. All we can see here is as “through a glass, darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12).

Yet, driven by my own need to make sense of the seemingly senseless, to live in a bad world and still believe in a good God, I’ve searched for an answer. I’ve read all the standard books on why bad things happen to good people. I’ve listened to sermons that tackle the question. And all I have at this point is a partial answer.

Fingering the Real Culprit

If there’s anyone who’s ever lived who knew a thing or two about suffering, it was the biblical Job. As I’ve revisited his story, it’s opened windows of understanding for me in my quest for an answer to the great Why.


Now notice carefully what Satan says next: “But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face” (Job 1:11, NIV).

And then notice just as carefully God’s reply: “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger” (verse 12, NIV).

“You strike him,” Satan says. “You reach out Your hand and hit him—and I guarantee that he’ll curse You!” But then God makes very clear who is about to do the real dirty work. “Very well, he is in your hands!”

So Satan slaughters Job’s family—all but his wife. He destroys his flocks and herds and crops. But to Satan’s great consternation, Job doesn’t turn against God. So the devil returns to God, intent on carrying things a step further. “A man will give all he has for
his own life,” Satan argues. “But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face” (Job 2:4, NIV).

And again God makes clear who the real villain is: “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life” (verse 6, NIV).

Then, just so none of us could miss it, the writer of the book next says that “Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores” (verse 7, NIV).

Who afflicted Job? Satan—not God!

Behind the Scenes

I must remind you that Satan’s grand strategy, his primary goal in this great contest between good and evil—this great war behind all wars—is to convince us that God is our enemy. He will do anything—anything at all—to make it seem that God is against us, because Satan knows that children don’t ultimately rebel against parents when they are convinced their parents love them. But they do rebel against parents they are convinced don’t care.

Unless you understand what is really going on behind the scenes in this great war behind all wars between God and Satan—as revealed in the story of Job—the chances are very good that in time, when you’ve suffered enough pain, you may join Job’s wife in blaming God for your troubles.

And if that happens, you are in great danger. Because it is impossible to continue loving someone you are convinced is hurting you, someone who cares nothing for you, someone who is against you.

This is why it is so vitally important that each of us spend time every day getting to know God better. If we do this, we will eventually come to know God so well that we will realize that He is not our enemy—that Satan is.

Satan is the destroyer here on this earth—not God! God is the restorer. Satan is the author of all death; Jesus—the Son of God—is the author of life. Satan is the one who brings sickness and suffering; God is the healer.

So how does Job’s story help in answering the universal “Why?” Why does his story have to say to Jack and Sandi and Natasha?

1. That God is not our enemy and that Satan is not our friend.

2. That God does at times permit us to suffer—whether as a result of Satan’s direct attacks, our own sinful choices, or simply because we live in a sin-filled world.

3. That we may not always know or understand the “Why?” behind our suffering or grieving. Job apparently didn’t know the reason for his suffering and tragedy. He was unaware that he was the immediate focus of the great war between Christ and Satan.

4. That being unable to answer the question “Why?” does not give us an excuse to blame God for our troubles.

5. That when we know God well enough, we will have found Him to be so consistently wise and full of love in all His dealings with us, that our faith in that love and wisdom cannot be shaken, no matter what He permits to come into our lives. We will be utterly sure that—even if we don’t fully know the answer to our “Why?”—God has good reasons for permitting our trouble. And we will be unswerving in our belief that God’s reasons are the wisest and most loving reasons possible. We will be convinced that if we could know what He knows and love as He loves, we too would permit what He has permitted.

If

If I could know for sure that by saying goodbye in death to someone I love, their eternal salvation—or mine—would be assured, would I not agree with God’s decision? If I could know for sure that by allowing into my life the physical and emotional pain and suffering I’ve personally experienced in recent years, God would change me in ways that would assure my own salvation, would I not agree with what He has permitted?

Sometimes when bad things happen to us or to those we love, we may see evidences even now as to why God may have permitted those bad things to happen. Other times we may remain in the dark. In such cases we must fall back on our trust in the God we have come to know. We may need to wait until the battle is finally over to present our “Why?” to God in person, knowing that He will be eager to answer every one of our questions.

Maintaining faith in God’s wisdom and love even when we or those we love must suffer is not easy. But those who do will be among those who will soon have all their “Whys?” fully answered in person.

And if faithfully enduring pain and loss is part of the price I must pay to enjoy eternity, then bring on the pain! If tears are part of the process I must pass through to live with all of you in a place without tears, then let me cry an ocean! I will endure anything to be there!

*All personal names in this article have been changed.

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H ave you ever been to a surprise birthday party? I love all parties, but I think surprise parties are especially fun. I think the best part about the last surprise party I went to was how special it made the guest of honor feel. Just think—someone had to go to a lot of trouble to plan the party, all the guests had to work hard to keep it a secret, and we all had to sneak into the birthday person’s house. It was so much fun watching her face when she realized the party was for her.

There was one thing about that surprise party that seemed kind of naughty: sneaking into my friend’s house. After all, she hadn’t invited us in. But her sister, who planned the party, had a key to her house, and she let us all in. She knew her sister well, and she knew her sister would love the surprise. In fact, she knew her sister would be tickled that we had gone to all that trouble for her. She was right! My friend was so startled and so touched that I even saw her wipe away a tear or two.

Praying for other people is kind of like planning a surprise party for them, except there’s only one Guest. The guest is God. You see, just as I wouldn’t sneak into my friend’s house without getting permission from someone who knew her well, God won’t barg in on a person’s life without an invitation. But you can invite God into that person’s life by praying for them. And once you’ve invited God into that person’s life, God can do things that will surprise and excite that person beyond their wildest expectation.

Sometimes people think they’re not good enough to invite God, or that He doesn’t love them enough to come. Sometimes people don’t think they know God well enough to ask Him to come in. And sometimes people just forget to invite God.

But you can invite God in for that person. And asking God to come into other people’s lives makes a big difference. Many people who didn’t make God their friend until they were adults will tell you their mom or dad never quit praying for them. The Bible says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16, NIV). Keep praying for others, and you could be planning the best party they’ve ever had.

Family Time

**Prayer Journal**

- Start a prayer journal with your family. Write down the names of two or three people you will pray for and your request for those people. Be sure to check them off when your prayers are answered and add other names to the list.
- Read a Bible story about members of God’s family who prayed for someone in Acts 12:1-16. Whose prayers were answered? Was Peter praying for himself? Why not?
- Ask the adults in your family about a time they have prayed for someone else or when someone else has prayed for them. What happened?
- Sing “Whisper a Prayer” with your family. Pray for members of your family and church family.
That’s My Line!

It’s hard to tell who gets the most out of witnessing: the “witnesser” or the “witnessee.”

BY KRISTI AYARS

The Young Women’s Retreat began with the incredible story of Cherie Peters, formerly a “street person.” One of her statements hit me like a brick: “In all my years on the street, not one Christian ever approached me or said ‘Jesus loves you.’”
Eager to protect her dignity, she talked "for someone she knew needed it." She refused a lunch for herself, but took one "for someone she knew needed it." The next Sabbath afternoon we put together 10 sack lunches with peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, fruit, and dessert. We drove downtown. The sidewalks were empty. I assured my husband that we would find homeless people in the shady little park I had walked past in my many days as a clerk. Sure enough, our 10 lunches were gone in a snap. One woman refused a lunch for herself, but took one “for someone she knew needed it.” Eager to protect her dignity, she talked about her Catholic mother, her son, pantyhose, and the apathy of the mayor and other city officials. As we finally extricated ourselves, she said, “God bless you.”

I realized. That’s my line!

It’s Growing

The next week we made 14 lunches and still ran out. A man who could have been dashing with wavy blond hair and striking blue eyes stopped us to talk, accepted a lunch, asked if we wanted to borrow his newspaper. He tapped his foot exaggeratedly to the music from his plastic stereo. My husband and I exchanged glances. High as a kite, we agreed. We smiled at the man and started to say goodbye. He grinned and said, “You kids are doing a good thing here. God loves you.

Hey, I said to myself. That’s my line.

The next week we encountered a stately woman in a shapely dress pacing the concrete near the center of the park. One open-ended question and she was off, describing her woes in drunken-but-animated slurs. Next to her a stunted man with sparse teeth and thick glasses spoke up. “My pastor is really great. You ought to come to my church. Do you know where it is, out past the Chevy dealership?” We didn’t, but I couldn’t help thinking, Wait, I’m supposed to invite him to my church.

We missed a week. We came back with 18 lunches and some books; still no leftovers. In front of the courthouse a woman grabbed a worn copy of a past yearly devotional. “Just what I prayed for!” she exclaimed. “Now, sit down right here.” I did, curious. She opened the book in the middle and held it upside down. I resisted the urge to correct her. She began to “read.” The selection retold Jesus’ promise to clothe the lilies, feed the birds of the air, and therefore always meet our needs. She turned to me. “See!” she said. “You never have to worry.”

Hey! I thought. I’m the one who’s supposed to be tender to others.

As I approached, I could see a heavyset man sleeping sidelong on the bench. His hat was askew, and there was a hard look in his eye. He would like a sack supper. I reached out to shake his hand, and asked his name. “Donnie,” he replied, his breath strong enough to put me under the influence. “There, there,” he murmured. I caught my husband’s attention. He stepped closer, warily, as Donnie kept rubbing my hand. Then Donnie gave me his hand to my husband: “There,” he said. “Isn’t her hand warmer now?”

Hey! I thought. I’m the one who’s supposed to be tender to others.

Kristi Ayars is a physical therapist who lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with her husband, Eric.
At Rest

GOSSE, William Harold—b. Feb. 27, 1919, Englishtown, N. J.; d. Nov. 26, 1998, Loma Linda, Calif. A World War II veteran, he returned home to serve more than 32 years in a health system of the church in California and Maine. He is survived by his wife, Juanita; one son, William; one daughter, Joanie Regester; and seven grandchildren.

GRIFFITH, Jack—b. Jan. 9, 1924, Long Beach, Calif.; d. Feb. 24, 1999, Battle Ground, Wash. He served as a pastor in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference and a teacher in the Potomac, Chesapeake, and Carolina conferences, as well as in California, Oklahoma, and Florida. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; two sons, Michael and John; one daughter, Cari Pepper; two brothers, Eldridge and Robert; and one sister, Frances Krooskos.

HANSON, Thomas E.—b. Aug. 11, 1919, Lafayette, N. J.; d. Mar. 3, 1999, Airdmore, Okla. He served in the Georgia-Cumberland, Michigan, Arkansas-Louisiana, and Oklahoma conferences as a pastor. He also worked as a principal, teacher, and chaplain. He is survived by his wife, Paula Jean; four sons, Dan, Mark, Chris, and Tracy; four sisters, Ruth Whiting, Naomi Andren, Eleanor Simkin, and Cecilia Snowdy; and eight grandchildren.

JAQUA, Clifford L.—b. Nov. 27, 1926, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.; d. Dec. 26, 1998, Riverside, Calif. He served in the Adventist education system for more than 45 years with 30 years in higher education. He served at Loma Linda University for 18 years as chair of the Department of Administration and Leadership, where he developed an educational doctoral program and educational curriculum for other Adventist colleges. He is survived by his wife, Ellen; three sons, Terry, Preston, and Charles; one daughter, Candice Johnson; one sister, Dorothy Clark; and seven grandchildren.

KIDWELL, Marche H.—b. Sept. 23, 1929, Takoma Park, Md.; d. Feb. 9, 1999, A shville, N. C. He taught biology, anatomy and physiology, and other subjects at three schools: Tri City Junior Academy, Mount Vernon Academy, and Valley Grande Academy. In 1991 he received the Zapara Award for Excellence in Teaching. He is survived by his wife, Helen; one son, Kent; one daughter, Kimberly M. Miller; one brother, Raymond; one sister, Edna Caudle, and two grandchildren.

LEUNG, Hing Sun—d. Feb. 11, 1999, Loma Linda, Calif.; age 99. He was a longtime educator who served in China and Hong Kong for 31 years, Sabah for 10 years, and Sarawak for two years. He is survived by his wife, John; two daughters, Doreen Liem and Dorothy Zane; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.


LUKENS, Melvin Lloyd—b. Apr. 5, 1915, Mountain View, Calif.; d. Mar. 29, 1999, Paradise, Calif. He served as a pastor in California, Hawaii, Washington, and Arizona. He held administrative positions in the Adventist Conference. He is survived by his wife, Lucille; two daughters, Glencie Kaping and Sharon Calkins; one sister, Dorothy Hart; and three grandchildren.

MADSEN, Mabel Lena—b. Dec. 11, 1912, Casey, Iowa; d. Jan. 26, 1999, Harrar, Okla. She served as an educator for more than 47 years in the elementary and secondary schools of the church. Her teaching career stretched from Iowa, Colorado, and Tennessee to Taiwan.

MILLER, Carlyle B.—b. Nov. 21, 1922, Flint, Mich.; d. Nov. 5, 1998, Flint, Mich. He served in the church as an educator for the Lake Region, A lernity West, and Southeastern conferences. He is survived by his wife, Vera; one son, Maurice; one daughter, Carla Johnson; one brother, William; three sisters, Willlie Ann and Flora Miller, and Viola Jackson.

MINCHIN, Leona Belle Rhoads—b. July 24, 1907, Elk Point, S. Dak.; d. Mar. 26, 1999, Loma Linda, Calif. She served as an English and music teacher and an office secretary. She accompanied her husband, Gerald Minchin, in his work as a teacher, pastor, and administrator for more than 40 years. She also accompanied her daughter, Dorothy Comm, on two terms of service in the Philippines. She is survived by two daughters, Dorothy Comm and Eileen Davis; six grandchildren; and one great-grandson.


REVALO, Jun—age 51, b. the Philippines; d. Jan. 21, 1999, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. He served as a pastor and a teacher for many years at Canadian Union College. He was pastor of the Fredericton Seventh-day Adventist Church when he suddenly collapsed at a Wednesday evening prayer meeting. He is survived by his wife, Hope.

SCZEKAN, Michael—b. June 5, 1943, Denver, Colo.; d. Mar. 28, 1998, Cumberland, Maine. He served in the church for more than 17 years as a pastor and evangelist. At the time of his death he was associate treasurer for the Northern New England Conference in Portland, Maine. He is survived by his wife, Nicole; one son, Bryce; four stepdaughters, Emily, Rachael, A rie, and Kaela; his parents, Frank and M arjorie; and two brothers, Bernard and Steve.
You Never Know, That Child Might Grow Up to Be a Heart Surgeon

The summer heat distracted Helen and me from our studies that first Sunday in Iowa City. We were on a leave of absence from Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University) for graduate work at the University of Iowa. Our class assignments were interesting, but we were tired from the move—especially the heat.

The heat, however, was not the only distraction. The woman in the next house—only 10 feet away—had all her windows open. She sat by her window typing to the rhythm of a Baroque symphony, the volume of the hi-fi so loud our windows rattled.

“I can’t concentrate,” said Helen.

My options: 1. Get out the Tennessee Ernie Ford record that Helen’s father gave us and turn the volume up as high as it would go. 2. Send over Ray (our 7-year-old son) with a note asking her to please cut the volume. Bad options. The first would alienate. The second was cowardly.

So I picked out a favorite Vivaldi LP and, with trepidation, visited our neighbor. A small woman with smiling eyes answered the door.

“We love Baroque music,” I said. “But the sound amplifies so much between our houses we can’t concentrate on our studies. I wonder if you could turn the volume down a bit. Oh, and have you heard this one?” I held out the LP.

“I would love to hear it,” she said. “And I have some I think you would like. Oh, my, I do have it a bit loud. I’ll turn it down right now.”

After she returned with two records, I learned she would be one of my professors. I shudder to think what might have happened.

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We should always be kind—out of self-interest if for no other reason. That kid next door who outmenaces Dennis the Menace might be your boss someday. That nerdy classmate might someday be one of your child’s teachers. That bratty cousin might be closer to you in a few years than any of your other 87 cousins. Beware of road rage. That driver who upset you might be the oncologist you go to when an MRI shows you have a suspicious-looking growth in your abdomen. Sow kindness; reap kindness.

Last Sabbath someone new came to Sabbath school. Where had I seen him before? “This is my first time here,” he said. When he gave his name and told me he was in real estate, I remembered where we had met. In one of our apartments. He had considered renting and then subletting it to a client from Germany. Although I had concerns about subletting, I had treated him kindly. “I didn’t know you were a Sabbathkeeper,” he said as he joined me. He belonged to the Seventh-day Church of God and had come to worship with us since he had no church home in Naples. I think he’ll be back. How glad I am that I had been kind to him.

The watchword for evangelism is kindness. “If we would . . . be kind and courteous,” writes Ellen White, “there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 189).

Christians who have been born again and are growing in grace will become kind—not from ulterior motives but because kindness will eventually be to them as natural as breathing.

When Christ said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48), He was referring to this type of kindness. The preceding passage presents a heavenly Father who makes his “sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (verse 45). In the parallel sermon recorded in Luke, Jesus said, “But love ye your enemies, and do good . . . and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:35). I long for the day when it will be natural to be kind. Until then I will try to be kind even when annoyed. You never know, that adolescent next door might show up in church some Sabbath, or grow up to be a heart surgeon and save my life.

So it seems to me.

R. Lynn Sauls is a retired professor of English and journalism. He and his wife live in Naples, Florida.
A
n ordained Adventist minister wept in my office like an abandoned child: his wife, as a 12-year-old, had been sexually molested by her father, and 20 years later the abused little girl had crumbled into an emotionally destroyed woman whose pain brought the walls of her home down upon her husband and their three children.

Though I have no reason to believe that it ended this way— suppose her father had repented? Suppose he was convicted by the Spirit of his sin, that he dropped to his knees, confessed, and with acid tears pleaded with Jesus for pardon? Would he be forgiven?

Be careful what you reply, because if you answer “Yes,” you’re saying that this man—who maybe minutes before was having sexual intercourse with his little girl—was now perfect in Christ. You’re saying that his heinous sin was pardoned by the blood of the Lamb, and the man stood clothed in a heavenly righteousness, “even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22).

Are you prepared to say so? What other choice do you have? Where sin abounds, grace does more abound, right? Pardon to the chief of sinners, right? Christ died for the ungodly, right?

Yet, even with this answer, there’s another side to this equation, one not generally talked about.

After years of wandering in a wasteland of legalism, which has left untold thousands of souls spiritually shipwrecked on the shoals of guilt and hopelessness, the Adventist Church is finally understanding the gospel, understanding that redemption is not something that happens in us but something that happened for us in Jesus. Our redemption is not in ourselves, but in Christ: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (verse 24). In Him we have been redeemed; in Him, and Him alone, is our redemption. Redemption has never been, nor even is now, in ourselves; it happens, and exists, only in Christ. This is the essence of the gospel, the essence of the good news, the essence of assurance that so many Adventists seem to crave.

Yet, in our quest for “assurance of salvation,” have we forgotten how many millions of lives have been ruined or made unbearably difficult by sins that have already been forgiven? Have we been so obsessed with what happens to the record of our sins in heaven that we have ignored the record of them on earth, the record that’s painfully etched in our own beings and the beings of those whom we love; a record that’s not so quickly wiped clean? How nice, indeed, if relief from the consequences of our sins could come as quickly as the pardon for them does.

Scripture drips with examples of the devastation wrought by forgiven sin, pardoned sin, like David, who, though immediately forgiven for adultery, murder, and treachery (after he repented), still had to live with the bitter consequences. Sure, his sin had been covered by the blood of Christ, and in the book of record “pardon” had been written in nice big letters next to those sins. David understood justification by faith; anyone who could write Psalm 51 had to. Our problem isn’t the legal, forensic declaration of pardon in heaven but suffering the consequences of those legally and forensically pardoned sins here on earth.

God is a merciful God. He can and He does bring healing. But it’s often a long, laborious, and painful process. And besides, even healed wounds leave scars. . . .

Maybe it’s time we stop our navel-gazing, obsession with “assurance” and instead seek power on high for victory over the sins that so often cause us to question our salvation to begin with—sins that always one way or another, in one manifestation or another, bear bad consequences, not just for sinners but for the unfortunate beings who share the planet with them.

Clifford Goldstein is the editor of the adult Sabbath School Bible study guides.
Be Not Weary in Well-doing

BY MILDRED J. WHITE

You won’t forget to come back again, will you?” Wilma¹ pulled me close to her wheelchair as she spoke. I put my arm around her shoulders and assured her that our group would return in a few weeks. She squeezed my hand in approval. Though the years had ravaged her body, Wilma’s mind was still bright and active, and she had understood the whole program.

“The singing was nice,” she said, “but I liked the sermon the best.” And she began to quote verses of Scripture she had just heard. I stayed with her for a few minutes, then moved on to visit with other members of the rest home.

Some, like Wilma, enjoyed participating in the singing and in visiting, but others only sat and watched. Some even dozed off. However, as our group mingled with them, they all seemed to recognize a kind word and a loving touch. As one nurse expressed it, “A quiet peace seems to settle over our rest home when you put on a program.”

Our nursing home ministry began several years ago when one of the members of our church, who owns and operates a rest home, expressed a desire to have a Sabbath service at her facility. I offered to organize a group of volunteers who would be willing to devote one Sabbath afternoon a month to this ministry. We sing the beloved old hymns together, present words of hope and comfort from Scripture, and pray for the residents.

Keeping this program going year after year hasn’t always been easy, and sometimes discouragement raises its dark head. But at times like that I look to Jesus, the Lord of glory, who didn’t pass by any of His children. “The aged, the sorrowing, and the sin-burdened, . . . all were happier for His presence.”² A nd just when we need it most, sunshine breaks out upon our pathway.

A few Sabbaths ago most of the regular volunteers were gone, and I could find only a handful of helpers. We prayed that the Lord would make up for our lack of a program. A s I was leaving the nursing home, Kim, the nurse in charge, clasped my hand in both of hers and said, “T hank you so much for coming. Your group has been a special blessing to our home today. If you have a minute, I’d like to tell you about it.”

While we were singing in the parlor, she had walked down the hallway to check on patients who were still in their rooms. She looked into Jacob’s room and called out cheerily, “How are you today, Jacob?” even though she didn’t expect an answer. Ever since he had arrived two months before, Kim had tried to bring happiness into his life, but he refused to acknowledge her or even speak. She often found him sitting by the window. She knew he was waiting and watching for family who never came. But today was different. His face was wreathed in smiles as he explained, “Nurse, I hear heavenly music. It sounds like angels singing.”

Kim walked over to the window and sat down beside him. Taking his frail hand in hers, she said, “Let’s sing with them, Jacob.” Together they joined the singing floating down the hallway. “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’d first begun.”³ When Kim rose to leave, she could tell by the light in Jacob’s eyes that healing had begun.

Farther down the hall she found Thelma, who had been sick with the flu, sitting up in bed humming along with the music. “I’m feeling better, Nurse,” she said. “I think it’s the music. I love those old hymns. They make me feel better in here,” and she pointed to her heart.

Kim rose to leave. “I thought I should share that with you today,” she said as she headed for the door. “I wouldn’t want you ever to think that it isn’t worth your while to come.” I thanked her for the encouragement and drove home praising God for His goodness and for His promise that if we do “not grow weary while doing good, . . . in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”⁴

¹ N ames have been changed.
² T he Desire of Ages, p. 74.
⁴ Gal. 6:9, NKJV.

Mildred J. White is a writer who lives in Redding, California.

1 Names have been changed.
2 The Desire of Ages, p. 74.
4 Gal. 6:9, NKJV.