A Badge Named Bernie
Who knew where this friendship would lead?

John Osborne: A God of Love Brought Me Back
A Single Dad

Thanks for Sherrie Platt's "A Day in the Life of a Single Dad" (June NAD Edition). The cover caught my eye and emotions. It tells the whole story—the little child's little fingers wrapped around the dad's big finger.

It takes a special person to do what Jim Harris is doing—giving his children quality time and juggling in his work. Only later will those children learn what a great dad they have.

—Margaret Kirk
Glendale, California

Tobacco Legislation

Shortly after our "Statement of Conviction: Why Tobacco Control Legislation Deserves Your Support" (June NAD Edition), the leading vehicle for tobacco-control legislation was defeated in the U.S. Senate. Nevertheless, we include a representative sampling of the many letters we received.—Editors.

If the National Tobacco Policy and Youth Smoking Reduction Act would really have a significant impact on the smoking habits of America's youth, it would possibly be worthy of our support. However, I find no credible authority on the subject who actually believes that it will have the desired impact. Its impact is best described in a recent newspaper cartoon in which two scruffily dressed teenagers with cigarettes dangling from their lips and clad in the latest shoe fashions are walking down the street. The first teenager says, "Hey, they are going to add a $1.50 tax to a pack of cigarettes so that we will give up smoking." The second replies: "Yeah, just like we gave up shoes when they went up in price to over $100 a pair." Hard drugs are generally very expensive, but America's youth still find the money to purchase them.

In fact, this is a badly flawed piece of legislation that is little more than another liberal "tax and spend bill." And unfortunately the people being taxed will be the victims of the tobacco companies.

I would like to ask the editor and associate editors pushing support for this bill: Why didn't I find a request in the Review for all Adventists to write their U.S. representatives and senators, asking them to support the recently vetoed legislation that would have banned partial birth abortions?

—Omar L. Brown
Cypress, Texas

Two passages of Scripture back up your "Statement of Conviction."

1. Isaiah 65:17, 20. Here the prophet communicates God's promise to make a new earth in which all people can live out a lifetime. In its savage pursuit of profit, the tobacco industry deliberately sells and lies about a product that kills people when used as intended. No Adventist—no believer, that is, in God's power to renew the world—can pass over an opportunity to rein in this practice and fortify support for its victims.

2. Amos 5:15. Here, while dwelling on what it means to be "the remnant," the prophet declares our duty to transform society. As Gerhard Hasel, former seminary dean, pointed out in his book The Remnant, to "establish justice in the gate" (RSV) is precisely to effect the changes in governance that cause "social justice" to flourish.

All this is a subtle business. The church should not be political in the sense of identifying with a particular nation or party or candidate. And when it does bear a witness concerning public policy, the church should be judicious in forethought and performance and, above all, faithful to Christ.

It is fully appropriate to help establish God's will on earth as it is in heaven. And as Ellen White showed through her example, to do so by political means is, under the right circumstances, fully appropriate, too.

—Charles Scriven, President
Columbia Union College

Thank you for furnishing e-mail addresses for Senator Lott and House Speaker Gingrich. I sent messages to them asking them not to support this legislation. This half-trillion-dollar tax on the American people represents bigger government and more socialism. We should really be for smaller government and more individual responsibility. It isn't like the young people don't know the effects of smoking or that it's illegal for them to smoke. The government doesn't have to regulate every phase of our lives. I thought we were
for more freedom, not less.

— Carl E. Crawford
CHICO, CALIFORNIA

I agree that the tobacco control legislation deserves our support, even though its effectiveness is doubtful when you consider the progress of the illegal drug market.

I must admit, however, that the position the church seems to be taking on the tobacco legislation is a bit confusing given our lack of support for other life-threatening issues such as abortion and gun control.

— Ivan Buchholz
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

Your Tithe Dollar
I really enjoyed reading Robert Folkenberg’s article on the use of tithe in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (see “Your Tithe Dollar,” June NAD Edition). I was quite surprised at how little of the tithe is actually used for administrative purposes. If this article is accurate, it appears that the churches separating from conferences over use of tithe need to find another scapegoat.

— Bryan Emde
APOPKA, FLORIDA

Elder Folkenberg has presented a seemingly convincing picture that the tithe dollar does not pay for a “bloated bureaucracy [that] some imagine.” There is another perspective:

1. Why should the local conference send 15.26 percent of the tithe up the system only to have it returned, but now in designated format? Why not leave it in the local conference without strings attached?

2. The article seems to make a compelling picture that little of the tithe pays for a bureaucracy. Yet the 133rd Annual Statistical Report—1995 reveals 13,787 evangelistic and pastoral (ordained and licensed) and 13,742 administrative and promotional (ordained and other) workers in the world field. Here is a ratio of one in the office (some call it a bureaucracy) to one in the field. All these workers are funded from tithe.

3. In the Potomac Conference about 26 percent of the total tithe is spent for pastors and Bible workers, meaning that a church has to raise $187,000 in tithe each year to support each pastor. Our church is hiring its own youth pastor, who will be paid a full denominational salary with all benefits; the cost per year to the local church is $50,000. This means that for every $50,000 to pay for a pastor the church has to pay $137,000 to support him or her. Is this what pastors and laity want?

— J. David Newman, PASTOR
DAMASCUS, MARYLAND

Advice From an Outsider
I’ve been thinking about your church lately. Don’t be like the Jews and expect the people to come to you; go to the people—and not just a few times each year. All the time.

For the past 12 years I’ve lived a couple miles from Union College, and according to the zip codes, I’m on their mailing list for evangelistic meetings. But I have never received anything from them, not even a visit!

I wonder about you Adventists. Don’t get into the church maintenance mode—maintaining the church from the inside, not building it from the outside. I’ve been to some of your churches: the programs are geared to the members and are not bringing new members in.

— Barry Rollins
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

ON THE COVER: Bernie Anderson (left) and Chuck Horner go back more than 15 years.
Keeping it all going—the family, the marriage, the career—sometimes that's the easy part. But how do you keep it in balance? Where do the values come from? And how do you give those values to your kids and the ones you care about? My mom did for me. Now I'm trying to do it for them.
On Christmas morning 1982 I drove through 10 miles of lazy traffic to meet the bride of Christ. I found her, weary and a bit forlorn, beneath the bell tower of a rented church, warming her hands over the hot air vents. Unlike her Lord, I can’t truthfully report that it was love at first sight.

My first post-seminary pastoral assignment was to a two-church district that supplied my professional colleagues with no end of one-liners. “Never thought you’d measure your ministry by the number of toilets installed, did you?” they would quip, noting that neither of my congregations worshipped in buildings with running water. “I think they’ll let you have a phone?” “I hear the last pastor stayed 14 whole months.”

Perhaps they knew with dark intuition how much such jesting wounded me, the product of a large, successful college church. In the Adventist world I knew, the choirs were exquisite, the organ full and sweet, the preachers most had silver tongues. Almost no one ever asked the deacon for the key to the basement bathroom that only could be reached by tromping through the knee-deep snow. Even on vacation Sabbaths, offering plates were full.

Stung by my bottom-rung position, I determined to make Christ’s bride into a church of which I could be proud. I would organize, revitalize, prioritize, evangelize. I would preach designer sermons, full of wise and deft allusions. I would rearrange the worship order, inculcating awe as spirits soared above our aging wooden building. I would work—how I would work—to prove the jesters wrong. If 40 hours a week had yielded stasis, what would 80 hours do?

It must have been a full eight months before the patient bride spoke truth to me. On one August Sabbath when attendance swelled to 36, I saw my congregation clearly for the first time—saw it for what it truly was, and not what I had been trying to make it be. Gathered in front of me that morning were housewives and spiritual widows, truck drivers and factory workers, schoolteachers and shop foremen. And even on their stoic faces I could see how much their Adventism cost them—in their homes, on their jobs, through their lives. They had come to church, hoping for the solace of a friendly face, praying that the spiritual loneliness would ease, relax for just a while. Here for two hours and a half, they would touch lives, mingle prayers, blend testimonies until each carried home more than the sum of all the parts from this swap meet of the soul. This was the one spot in their world where faith required no defense.

I was stung yet again by the foolishness that had made me miss the beauty of the bride. In graciousness, none had told me just how marginal I was to what the Lord was doing there. While I had been wagging my homiletic finger from the front, new life—unhurried and unhindered—was being born again each Sabbath.

Chastened and challenged, I chose in that moment of discovery to be one of them, not the one above them. I prayed that Christ would help me understand the nurse who worked 11:00 to 7:00, the man who drove the snowplow for the town, the mother wearied by her fretting brood. I knew I wouldn’t understand real-world Adventism until I heard the gospel in their tongue, until I preached the good news for those who worked the night shift and the town road and the printing press. Yes, change was necessary, even vital—change in me, who had been so certain of myself.

Across the continent, small congregations are still breath and life to Adventism, the common venue of a people unafraid of commonness. Fully two thirds of our churches boast no more than 100; half of those are less than 75. In 3,000 vital sites, Adventism celebrates its hope in buildings worn by time but warm with love, outposts of a kingdom that can never be ignored. Small but insistent, they bear witness to a countercultural truth: size isn’t everything. Only Spirit truly matters.

They will never be rich and increased in goods. They will never lack for nothing. But the Lord who gives His gifts where they can best be used and most will be appreciated still keeps them rich in faith, deep in love, and wise in training pastors.
Broken Things

D o you have any broken things that you consider too valuable to discard?

When I was growing up, my mother had a large ceramic mixing bowl that had been in the family for many years. I cannot recall where we got it, but it was there as long as I can remember. It was considered the most precious dish in the house and was used with the greatest of care only a few times each year, to mix Christmas fruitcake and other holiday treats.

I inherited an old Edison General phonograph from my father-in-law. There's a metal plate affixed to the side on which is inscribed the words “Manufactured under the patents of Thomas A. Edison at Orange, N.J., U.S.A.” and then lists 16 patents with dates stretching from May 3, 1888, to May 31, 1898. The phonograph is broken, but it's very valuable to me. I dream of having it restored and functioning one day.

Many of the world’s greatest treasures are broken. The broken treasures of the world empires of ancient Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, as well as those from many other ancient civilizations, are preserved on-site or are housed in the great museums of the world. A rachaeological treasures, most of them broken but delicately and painstakingly restored by archaeologists, can be found in the British Museum, the Egyptian Museum, the Israel Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, the Hermitage, and other great museums of the world.

Some things can serve no useful purpose until they are broken. A loaf of bread will do you no good unless it is broken. It was when Jesus broke the five loaves that the multitude on the mountainside were fed.

A n alabaster box of ointment was never so precious as when Mary broke it and anointed the feet of Jesus. What she did was of such profound significance that Jesus decreed that wherever the gospel is preached the story of the broken box of ointment will be told.

But the most blessed brokenness is that of Christ Himself. Isaiah prophesied of it, saying, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). Paul, writing to the believers in Corinth about abuses in the Lord’s Supper, quoted Jesus as saying, on the inauguration of this solemn rite, “Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24).

A fter Jesus had fed the multitude with the five loaves and two fish, He gave a discourse in which He referred to Himself as the Bread of Life. “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. . . . If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:50, 51). For many these were difficult and incomprehensible statements. They could not see the spiritual application of what they had heard, and unconvinced of its literal reality, many who followed the Lord withdrew and walked no more with Him.

But it is Christ’s brokenness that heals our brokenness. When our lives are broken by the weight of sin and its evil consequences, our faith in His bleeding sacrifice provides forgiveness and healing. When our relationships have unraveled and we find ourselves estranged from one another and far from the community of faith, He restores our relationships by bringing us near through the blood of His covenant. When our dreams are broken and faded, He points us to a glorious kingdom that He has purchased with His blood and is making ready for those who love Him. His body was broken so that lost and broken souls may be redeemed.

This world is full of brokenness—broken nations, broken communities, broken economic systems, broken standards, broken churches, broken homes, broken lives. Our task as Jesus’ followers is to address this brokenness in His name so that He may restore wholeness to those who will believe in Him.

Harold W. Baptiste is secretary of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.
GIVE
&
TAKE

THANKS AGAIN
For two years now we’ve printed brief thank-you’s from one Adventist to another in our Thanksgiving issue. The tradition continues.
Send one tribute (40 words or fewer) to “Thank You” at the Give & Take address below. Be sure to include your city, state/country, and phone number. A nd where possible, also include a photo of the person you’re thanking.
Deadline for submissions: September 28.
Remember—if you don’t get the weekly Review, you won’t get this special edition. To subscribe for yourself or someone you love at a discounted $33.97 for one year, call 1-800-456-3991. Thanks.

ADVENTIST LIFE: PATHFINDER-STYLE
In the spirit of our cover feature, former Pathfinders share their favorite memories.

I had never gone camping without my parents, and the name “Cuddy Ranch” scared me a little. As I waved goodbye to my family I had a feeling that this trip would be out of the ordinary. I was right.

On the second day three thunderstorms converged on our campsite. Lightning struck a tree near my tent, and all I could do was grab my Bible and start reading random verses. Needless to say, I survived the experience—and boy, did I ever get a crash course in prayer!
— Michele Stotz, Pacific Union College, Angwin, California

Being an Arvada Golden Eagle expanded my world to include discoveries that have served me well in life.

From our not-so-precise drill team I discovered my left and my right. From the drum and bugle corps I learned that a bugle could indeed be made to play every note in the key of C (my parents have damaged eardrums to prove this). And I learned about the club’s closely guarded recipe for the famous Golden Eagle corn dog—so guarded, in fact, that I as a low-ranking Pathfinder wasn’t even told what it was.
One day, though, while on cleanup duty I inadvertently discovered “the sack”—100 pounds of commercial pancake mix.
But I won’t tell which brand, because I also learned about loyalty.
— Mike Peterson, Sacramento, California

As a teacher in Cleveland, Ohio, I was the Pathfinder director. For a conference-wide weekend we demonstrated our first-aid skills. We added sights and sound by having soldiers from a nearby military base detonate a bomb in Lake Hiawatha. A n ambulance waited, and we put the injured dummies back together.
It didn’t take long for neighbors two to three miles away to let us know that the bomb blast had blown out their windows.
— Clarence Dunbebin, Takoma Park, Maryland

In my first pastoral district of four churches, we had only one family with children. That family was the Pathfinder Club. So when a Pathfinder Fair was announced, what could we do but something the family knew—farming!

Among other things, we made an almost life-size cow out of a paste-board box that a mattress came in. The only two-dimensional part of the cow was the “udder”—a balloon with earlike protuberances.
When our turn came, the youngest Huffman son, Bobby, sat on his milk stool and began to work the balloon ears. Soon the “udder” had shriveled to a flaccid state, giving a very authentic (and unexpected) touch to our display.
Though we were the smallest club present, we drove away with a blue ribbon. And when I got home, our dog wouldn’t stop barking at the “cow” until it was put away.
— Ted Wick, Fort Washington, Maryland
Bernie spent most of his time in front of the television. “I was an energetic kid who wanted to get involved,” he remembers. But where could he find an outlet for his enthusiasm?

Bernie’s parents, who wanted to provide him with a quality education, enrolled him in a succession of private schools. After a year at a Catholic institution, he settled down at Little Rock Adventist Academy in Arkansas for his sixth-grade year. Everything about this new school intrigued Bernie. He made friends quickly and enjoyed his schoolwork.

Before long Bernie’s friends invited him to attend Pathfinders. From his first meeting with the Little Rock Rangers, Bernie noticed a difference about the organization. “The leaders were really nice, and they seemed to care about me,” he says. Before long Bernie joined camping trips, played (safely) with matches, and added his own marching ability to the club’s growing drill team. “It was a godsend,” Bernie remembers with a smile. “Pathfinders, in a sense, became my parent.”

Jesus? Who’s He?

But something more than activities and friends had captured Bernie’s interest. During his seventh-grade year Bernie approached the local Adventist pastor and asked for Bible studies. “God was beginning to speak to my heart,” admits Bernie. “I wanted to know more.” Before long this enterprising...
13-year-old began lugging Ellen White books home and reading them in his spare time. He spent most of his Sabbath afternoons in private Bible study. During the year Bernie became a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Throughout this period of steady growth, Bernie stayed involved in Pathfinders. Something kept him coming back—in fact, he claims, he never missed a meeting. “A Pathfinder Club isn’t just an organization; it’s people. And the people led me to Christ,” he says. Bernie uses such words as “real,” “authentic,” and “sincere” to describe the leaders who impacted him so profoundly.

Chuck Horner, Bernie’s club leader and good friend, would have it no other way. “You’ve got to be friends with the Pathfinders, work with them, cry with them, pray with them. Once they see that Christ is in you, they’ll say, ‘Hey, he has something. I want it too.’” Bernie remembers that kind of friendship with Chuck. Often Chuck and his wife, Barbara, would join Bernie and his friends on weekends, watching videos and eating popcorn. Countless times Chuck would drive Bernie home after club meetings, using the opportunity to encourage him to follow God’s call.

**Bernie’s Dream**

It has always been my dream to impact the lives of children who do not have as many opportunities as other children have. That is why I decided to create Dream Kids, Inc., an organization determined to help make dreams come true for low-income inner-city children. Through the Dream Kids scholarship fund these children can attend Adventist summer camps across the country.

Summer camp is a place where dreams come true. I remember the thrill of learning to water ski, to ride a horse, to do a back handspring. I remember the encouragement from my counselor. I want other children to have this experience. Summer camp is the perfect place for children to find support and encouragement—and maybe even find Jesus.

I believe children deserve the right to dream the impossible. They deserve the right to have the opportunity to pursue those dreams. By providing adult mentors in a fun environment such as a summer camp, I believe we can give them that opportunity.

To those who believe as I do, please pray for the ministry of Dream Kids. Pray that God will bless our efforts to reach more children for His kingdom. For more information about Dream Kids and how you can help, write to us at: Dream Kids, 9231-1 Fourth Street, Berrien Springs, MI 49103; or call at 616-471-3083.

**The Next Step**

From the beginning, Bernie remembers, he felt a call to ministry. “I saw a deadness in Adventist young people, and that bothered me. I felt like we had something special, and I didn’t think Christ wanted [Christianity] to be a drag.” Bernie felt an intense desire to change things for the better. He lived his philosophy. “If I’m going to be a part of this thing, I’m going to have fun doing it,” he would say.

And have fun he did! From a trip with his best friend and two club leaders to Camp Hale, Colorado, for the 1985 camporee to partnering with Chuck as an evangelistic team, Bernie filled his Christian life to the brim. Ron Whitehead, now associate youth director for the North American division, hired Bernie to be a summer
Bernie, camp subcounselor at age 13. During his eighth-grade year Bernie preached his first sermon, on Pathfinder Sabbath at Chuck’s request. “We saw something in him that we should nurture,” Chuck recalls. “God had a special plan for this guy.”

This plan has brought Bernie through college and directly into the ministry at the Arlington, Texas, Seventh-day Adventist Church. Recently Bernie, his wife, Christina, and their 2-year-old daughter, Madison, moved to Michigan, where Bernie attends the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He works at the Center for Youth Evangelism as the nighttime programmer for the upcoming Pathfinder Camporee, Discover the Power. After graduation Bernie plans to continue his work as a youth pastor in Texas.

Why Attend Discover the Power Camporee?

■ To attend the world’s largest youth event for ages 9-16 within the Adventist Church.
■ To meet other Pathfinders and make new friends from around the world.
■ To highlight and celebrate the wonderful cultural diversity of the Adventist Church.
■ To have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet “spiritual celebrities” with powerful testimonies.
■ To experience new sights, sounds, and learning activities that can be found only at an international camporee.
■ To create memories with adult youth leaders that show them how special they are.

From latchkey kid to Master Guide, Bernie’s life has changed drastically since he got involved in Pathfinders.

Who Knew?

Yes, the Little Rock Rangers could have been any group of people: but they were so much more than that. What then makes Pathfinders so special?

Take a moment to ponder your own Pathfinder memories. What do you see? What do you hear? Crowded bake auctions and bright Pathfinder scarves? Choruses of voices chanting the Pathfinder Pledge and Law, singing the Pathfinder song? Drilldowns and knot boards and roasting raw potatoes over the fire? After-dark food drives?

Fun Fund-raising Ideas

A Discover the Power registration ticket is $135. Take that amount and divide it by five (the number of days in the camporee); this equals $27 per day.

■ At one Pathfinder meeting, allow your Pathfinders to write letters to relatives and friends around the country to request sponsorship for one or two days of the camporee.
■ Ask Pathfinder parents to be responsible for the cost of one or two camporee days. They can give the $27 for birthday gifts, for allowances, or for doing chores.
■ Plan for your club to raise $27 for each Pathfinder through a flea market, talent program, garage sale, trashathon, etc.
■ For more fund-raising ideas, check the Discover the Power newsletter or Web page at www.andrews.edu/CYE/camporee.
Investitures and camporees? Field uniforms and salutes?

If you were like Bernie Anderson, the new kid in the club, you remember growing friendships with peers and adults, and a deepening respect for God. These things make Pathfinders unique and priceless among a sudden excess of extracurricular options such as soccer, piano lessons, ballet classes, and day-care centers.

"Pathfinders helps you to grow in the right direction," says Bernie’s best friend and former fellow club member, Andrew Headley. "It gives you a nurturing structure that still allows you to make decisions." Perhaps this is why for more than 50 years since its inception, Pathfinders is still the church’s largest congregation-based ministry.

Perhaps this is why people like Bernie—and you and me—kept coming back to those rowdy stable meetings.

After all, they could have been any group of people. But with God at their center, Pathfinders has developed into a world-changing organization.

Sarah E. Coleman spent last school year working as a recruiter for Adventist Frontier Missions in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Next month she will begin an internship with the Adventist Review.
I WAS ADMIRING THE BEAUTIES OF THAT APRIL MORNING THREE YEARS AGO AS I RELAXED IN THE TELEVISION PRODUCTION TRUCK WE HAD AFFECTIONATELY NICKNAMED “CALEB.” CALEB—ALONG WITH HIS COUNTERPART, JOSHUA, OUR SATELLITE UPLINK TRUCK—WAS AN IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE PROPHETIC COUNTDOWN RADIO AND TELEVISION MINISTRY I HAD FOUNDED NARLY 17 YEARS BEFORE.

While waiting for other staff to join me for an editing session on a new set of videos, I glanced around Caleb for something to read. Lying on the table was a little book entitled The Remnant Church, excerpted largely from the first chapter of Ellen White’s Testimonies to Ministers. I had read it before; in fact, I could recall preaching entire sermons in which I dealt with passages from that book, instructing people on how to relate to its message.

How that book arrived on the table that morning is still a mystery; no one saw anyone bring it into the truck. But casting about for something to do, I picked it up, thinking to myself that it might prove useful to refresh my understanding of the material my theological opponents were using.

My friends tell me that I can sometimes be quite arrogant, and I certainly felt no special need as I began reading. I had been over this ground often before. I expected to go on the air the following week to proclaim that the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church had become Babylon. I planned to urge all faithful Adventists to leave the mainline denomination and join with us as God’s remnant for the last days.

But my arrogant attitude didn’t last long. On page 26 of The Remnant Church I read:

“For years I have borne testimony to the effect that when any arise claiming to have great light, and yet advocating the tearing down of that which the Lord through His human agents has been building up, they are greatly deceived, and are not working along the lines where Christ is working. Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home.”

These words, only five pages later, heightened my sense of uneasiness:

“When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him God-speed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent.”

Each statement seemed to leap off the page at me, challenging my self-satisfaction and forcing me to reconsider both what I believed and what I had been teaching others.

Truth Hits Home

My wife, Dianne, came to pick me up, and I shared with...
her what I had found. Quickly realizing the impact of this news, she asked, “What are we going to do?” I didn’t have an answer. We stood at the head of a $10 million organization that in just 10 years had grown from nothing to a successful ministry. If faithful to what I read, we would have to change our agenda. We would have to talk to our staff. We would have to talk to other independent ministry leaders and try to persuade them how wrong we had been.

Following truth and right had always been tremendously important to me, and even in my dilemma I couldn’t abandon those values now. I had to be true to what my conscience was telling me, regardless of the consequences.

But how had I gotten myself into such a mess? What had brought us to this terrible point where we had to admit that we had been championing a cause 180 degrees opposite to where we now knew the Lord wanted us to be? Only time would tell whether others who had joined us in this wrong would see the light and be willing to change directions with us.

That night seemed like the longest of my life. I knelt beside my bed, praying and crying out to the Lord, seeking light to carry me through the darkness that seemed impenetrable. Occasionally I would get up and pace back and forth, talking to myself, thinking things through, trying to come to some sort of rational decision. Where could we go from here?

The passages in The Remnant Church had convinced me that we were traveling down a wrong road. Worse yet, I came to realize that the Lord had warned His church through Ellen White that people like me would come and lead others astray. While at the outset of my ministry I had felt that I was fulfilling prophecy by “crying aloud and sparing not” and pointing out sins in the church, I had more recently allowed bitterness to cause me to fulfill a totally different prophecy—calling people away from the church God had established on earth to proclaim His last-day message.

Confirmed by the Board

When morning came, I knew I had to share the things I had been reading with our operating board. We called together all the board members as soon as we arrived at the office. They knew in a glance that something was wrong.

As I stood to speak, a heavy sense of responsibility weighed on my shoulders. I had led these people, and I had led
I realized that the Lord had warned H is church through E llen W hite that people like me would come and lead others astray.

firm in the conviction that turning the ministry around was the right thing to do, and as a result, the focus of my sermons soon changed.

**Things Fall Apart**

A t first the members of my local independent church and nationwide satellite audience were confused and dismayed. M any pleaded with me to reconsider. W hen I didn’t respond to their wishes, frustrations turned to anger. It soon became apparent that if Prophecy Countdown was no longer going to be a central clearinghouse for criticism of church leadership, many supporters would find others to champion their cause. O ur financial support quickly eroded as people began withholding their money, waiting to see what would happen. A s more people began to recognize

**Adventist Review, August 1998**

14
increasingly critical of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, some good had been accomplished: literally hundreds of people had been baptized into the church from our evangelistic outreach through 17 years. Many nights we stayed up late, praying to know God’s intention for us. But it seemed that the further we went in the direction we sensed the Lord leading, the darker it got. Our only hope was in His promise that He would not lead us otherwise than we would choose to be led if we could see the end from the beginning.

By November 1996 I realized it was time to take my decision—to reconcile with God’s church—to its logical conclusion. I took a public stand over television and shortwave radio that I would come back into fellowship with the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church. After that public commitment, my independent congregation, the Rolling Hills church, shrank to about 80 members. The others left, and we have not seen them since. The remaining congregation met in the television studio at the Prophecy Countdown headquarters, and we continued to broadcast our church services for several months. During these months we worked to continue funding our evangelistic outreach through the global shortwave radio station, but the task became increasingly difficult. Criticism from former colleagues regarding my new position increased the turmoil among our supporters, and donations soon plummeted to the point that we had to cut our staff to a skeleton crew. We could no longer sustain the Rolling Hills church financially, and neither could we support it theologically—“independent” of God’s organized church!

On May 24, 1997, we held our last Sabbath services there. It was an emotional time for us as we closed that phase of our ministry.

Renewed and Reconciled

On July 12, 1997, I was rebaptized by Pastor Jim King into the Clermont, Florida, Seventh-day Adventist Church—a loving little congregation 30 miles southwest of Mount Dora. Dianne and our 21-year-old son, Wesley, also became members there. For more than a year now we have loved our new church family, and they have welcomed us with open arms. Wesley has just completed his freshman year at Southern Adventist University.*

For the past three years the Lord has convicted me that I must follow Ellen White’s counsel to do all that I can to be reconciled with church leaders with whom I had “unhappy differences” (The Desire of Ages, p. 311). I have been personally seeking the forgiveness of those whom I was in conflict with. Most have been willing to accept my apologies, and have been glad for the reconciliation.

In the meantime, Dianne and I have watched the rest of our once-successful ministry crumble around us. But none of the turmoil we are going through can quiet the song in our hearts. The criticisms, complaints, and accusations that are hurled at us by those who are angry, bitter, and hateful can’t dampen the spirit of peace and joy God has given us.

Some Adventists now want to have nothing to do with me because I once believed and taught that God’s organized church had become part of Babylon. Most of my former supporters, conversely, believe I should be condemned for abandoning my former position and endeavoring to abide by the counsel of the Lord that we be united with God’s church.

My remaining goal is to be faithful to inspired counsel, even when it goes against my pride and popular opinion. This one inspired statement brought me to my knees: “The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church” (Sketches From the Life of Paul, p. 31).

I still have the fire of evangelism in my soul. There’s no work I love more. And it is my prayer that somehow, somehow, God can use me once again to bring souls into His church—and reclaim the wasted years! The church may not be perfect, but it’s God’s church nonetheless—His church militant, soon to be His church triumphant!

Today as I rehearse my long journey, tears of sorrow mix with tears of joy. I don’t know what tomorrow holds for me and my family, but I rejoice that a God of love brought me back to the church that both He and I love.

* Over the summer he firmly decided on a degree in architecture, and will be attending Andrews University in the fall.

John Osborne, formerly head of Prophecy Countdown, writes from Mount Dora, Florida.
What's worse than a bunch of deadbeats?  

BY ANDY NASH

Among the day-to-day things that dazzle Cindy and me about our baby girl, Ally, is her unbridled responsiveness.

I walk in the door after work. Ally grins big and bright.

Cindy pulls her from lying to sitting . . . to . . . standing position. Ally responds with a did-you-see-that expression, then cranks her neck to see if anyone did.

We strap Ally into her car seat. She fusses.

We start driving. She calms.

We stop at an intersection. She fusses some more. We hit a speed bump. She giggles with glee.

From the moment her big blinking blue eyes greet the soft light of a new morning, Ally fills our little home with a fresh wonder for the world. Back and forth she cranks her neck, taking it all in. And I know that as Ally gets older, both the frequency and volume of her responsiveness will increase—at least until someone or something suppresses it.

If you have—or have had—a child in your life, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Really now, what's better than a wringing-wet little girl prancing along a swimming pool, plugging her nose dramatically, and hopping in?

What's Going On Here?

Jesus' audience is a community of apathy and obstinacy, a people who stood in the presence of the two greatest men ever to have lived—Jesus and His cousin, John the Baptist—but who found reasons to reject both of them. And though Jesus generally didn't seem to pay much attention to His detractors, here He pauses to shake His head and say, "What exactly do you people want?"

A fair sentiment. After all, God had tried to corral His floundering flock via two very different approaches (both of which can be found in Matthew 5:13-16).

John the Baptist used the "light on a hill"—or in this case, the "light in a desert"—approach. Separating himself from a sick society, John lived an austere, isolated, self-denying life. He couldn't be found window-shopping in Jerusalem or mingling at weddings. Instead, head bowed at the condition of his world, John used a desert pulpit to call people to repentance and a higher standard. This light-on-a-hill approach was also used by people like Elijah in the Old Testament and by James (author of James and Jesus' half brother) in the New Testament.

Jesus, on the other hand, used the "salt of the earth" approach. Though He also called people to repentance and a higher standard, He did so up close and personal; He met the people where they were. He ate with them, drank with them, socialized with them, worshiped with them, healed them, loved them. Even when Jesus tried to get a little privacy, He took compassion on the people scurrying after Him. In fact the unscheduled feeding of the 5,000—and the disciples'
rather-hilarious get a way that follows (see Mark 6:32-44)— occurred on one of these occasions. This salt-of-the-earth approach was also used by people like Elisha and Paul.

But though some of Jesus’ and John’s contemporaries did respond to these approaches, most didn’t. Instead, they ridiculed both: John was far too conservative; Jesus, too liberal.

To illustrate the attitudes He and John had encountered, Jesus draws upon a familiar scene: the marketplace. In those days the marketplace wasn’t so much a place to buy and sell as to “trade and talk.” A few children might play—or pretend to play—flutes (a wedding instrument), at which point the others would link arms and dance. Or a few children might sing a dirge, at which point the others would do their best weeping and wailing—as that culture’s paid mourners would do.

It’s all great fun. In Jesus’ verbal portrait, however, it isn’t great fun. Just as the Jews didn’t respond to Jesus’ social ministry, the children wouldn’t dance to the flute music. And just as the Jews didn’t respond to John’s solitary ministry, the children wouldn’t cry to the dirge. They wouldn’t do anything.

Lessons Then, Lesson Now
This little episode leaves us with at least three big lessons:

1. **Some people won’t respond to any approach.** In the case of Jesus’ contemporaries, the problem wasn’t so much with the method of ministry, but come from their lantern.

2. **Because they didn’t think of it.** Just as some work colleagues (you know the type) won’t support any ideas that they didn’t conjure up, so will some people—especially zealous, but misguided, religious people—automatically dismiss any “light” that doesn’t with the message. “Nothing would satisfy them... The Jews were determined to receive no message from God at all.”

People, both then and now, might reject a message from God for any of several reasons:

- **Because they feel guilty for not accepting it earlier.** In verse 30 Luke writes that “the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John” (Luke 7:30, NIV). While this could mean that by forgoing John’s baptism the Pharisees and experts forfeited a heavenly dose of discernment, it seems more likely that their attitude was more of a “Why start now?” than anything else. God doesn’t keep Himself from people; people keep themselves from God—often for the weakest reasons.

- **Because they’ve closed their hearts to God.** Sometimes people will harbor so much sin—or sin so long—that their hearts have no room left for God. If a pure heart will see God (Matt. 5:8), the cluttered heart won’t. Sometimes we can pray only for an uncluttering.
Understanding that some people won’t respond to any approach is important. For one thing, it can keep us from pulling our hair out when attempts to evangelize fall short. For another, it can keep us from abandoning a ministry—as Paul almost did in Corinth—that God doesn’t want abandoned. God’s time isn’t always our time.

2. Some people will respond better to one approach than to another. While it’s true that people’s hearts must be at least partially open for any approach to work, we must recognize that some hearts will respond well to one approach—and poorly to another.

This brings us back to the two major models of ministry: light on a hill and salt of the earth.

Historically, most Adventist people and churches have favored the light-on-a-hill model—though not to the extremes that other groups, such as the Puritans and Amish, have. This model might appeal to us for any of several reasons:

- **Logistics.** A convert list doesn’t necessarily mean scandal, when a church member without a convert list doesn’t necessarily mean a crown without stars.

  While it’s true that people’s hearts must be at least partially open for any approach to work, we must recognize that some hearts will respond well to one approach—and poorly to another.

  This brings us back to the two major models of ministry: light on a hill and salt of the earth.

- **Safety.** Not everyone can handle the salt-of-the-earth ministry. Plain and simple, certain Adventists might have trouble finding opportunities to minister to non-Adventists. Recently I heard a General Conference employee tell how discouraged she was that she didn’t have non-Adventist friends to invite to the NET ’98 satellite evangelistic meetings. This woman’s schedule as a full-time church worker and mother didn’t allow many chances to make friends outside the church. The last thing this person and others like her should do is to feel second-rate. Their ministry is as important as Mark Finley’s and Dwight Nelson’s. A least for now, God has placed them, like Apollos, in a position to water the seeds that others have planted.

- **Comfort.** In most situations, the light-on-a-hill approach is easier than the salt-of-the-earth approach, which demands a “brave, unflinching element of sociableness.” But while more risky, the salt-of-the-earth approach, like a high-dividend stock, rewards a person’s faith greatly. Some of us “lights on a hill” would do well to consider prayerfully the salt-of-the-earth approach.

- **Analytics.** Every convert list out a convert list doesn’t necessarily mean a crown without stars.

  One Adventist with a weakness for swearing might do well to avoid Florida Marlins baseball games. Another Adventist with a weakness for gambling would be crazy to attempt ministry in Atlantic City or Las Vegas. A n Adventist with a weakness for swearing might do well to avoid Florida Marlins baseball games. Another Adventist with a weakness for gambling would be crazy to attempt ministry in Atlantic City or Las Vegas.

3. We must never stop responding.

Finally, briefly but just as important: if God desires childlike responsiveness from prebelievers, it’s safe to assume that He also desires childlike responsiveness from believers—the kind that keeps us not only in the arms of Jesus Christ, but in step with the music He’s composing for each of our lives. In this, another age of apathy and obstinacy, we must always stay on our toes and listening—so that He might one day say:

> “I played the flute for you, and you danced.”
> “I sang a dirge, and you cried.”
> “I performed all kinds of music, and you always responded eagerly—like a baby girl to warm peaches.”

![Andy Nash](image)

**Andy Nash** is an Adventist Review assistant editor and a first-year dad.

---

4. Expository Thoughts on the Books of the Bible, p. 81.
6. The Speaker’s Bible, p. 399.
7. For more on this, see my “Going Against the Grain,” Adventist Review, July 31, 1997.
9. Sadly, childlike responsiveness might not be what it used to be. ABC News reports that 48 percent of elementary students prefer time with their computers to time with their friends.
“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:1, 2).

With these words Jesus addresses a subject crucial to the integrity of our human relationships, and thus to our salvation. And the relevance of the subject could hardly be disputed in His time. One of the distinctive failings of the religious leaders of Christ’s day was their tendency toward harsh and critical attitudes. The incident of the Pharisee and publican praying in the Temple illustrates the problem (Luke 18:9-14).

The Pharisee was captivated by his own righteousness as he measured it against the righteousness of the publican. He considered himself superior as he sought self-justification, exaggerating both the shortcomings of his fellow and his own standing with God. Jesus’ commentary shows that he was self-deceived.

Some believers still condemn those whom God has accepted based upon their own standards of judgment. People are dismissed as unworthy because of their manner of dress, their fashion accessories, or the food on their plates. The fallout in human souls is enormous. In every community I have pastored I have met people who walked away from the church, not because they no longer believed, but because they felt unfairly judged and condemned.

I will never forget the words of a single mother who had been away from the church for 10 years, ever since her daughter was born. She was still distraught over the way she had been disfellowshipped as soon as the church discovered she was pregnant out of wedlock. The pastor visited her only to inform her that she was no longer a member. She told me, “Pastor, the irony is that when I knew I was pregnant, I wanted to come back to God more than ever before. I wanted my child to grow up in the church. They dropped me when I needed them most.”

Jesus employs a bit of hyperbole to explain us to ourselves: “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, butConsiderest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matt. 7:3).

Our unfair condemnation of others is more about us than it is about them. When we condemn another, we are often transferring guilt in order to escape the discomfort of self-blame. Our own historic wrongs and unconfessed sins are at the root of our condemning practices. Our gossiping is a sign of our insecurity. We are compensating for our own shortcomings and trying to feel better about ourselves by putting somebody else down.

But it does not work. Evil-speaking, condemnation, and judging others take their toll upon their practitioners. We do not feel better about ourselves when we condemn; we feel worse. Our standing with God does not improve; it suffers. We cannot rehabilitate ourselves by denigrating others. In the parable in Luke, the Pharisee goes home unjustified (verse 18:14). What good is going to church at all if we return home unjustified?

The difference between a hypocrite and a saint is not the presence of sin. We all have sin. Rather, it’s a difference of focus. While a hypocrite is intent upon the shortcomings of others, a saint is concerned about his own sins. “You hypocrite,” Jesus said, “first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:5, N A SB).

Jesus’ instruction has two parts. First: “Take the log out of your own eye.” It is the same instruction repeated by Paul to the Galatians as he advises them on the proper procedure for correcting an erring member: “Each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted” (Gal. 6:1, N A SB).

But the second part of Jesus’ instruction is “Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” By this command Christ shows that not all judging is precluded, only judging of a particular kind. His words address two extremes among the saved. There is a harsh critical attitude that destroys community, but there is also a disturbing phenomenon of moral indifference that is just as destructive. Part 2 of this column will address the latter.

John S. Nixon is senior pastor of the Oakwood College Seventh-day Adventist Church in Huntsville, Alabama.
Satellite Seminars Shed Light on Health Matters

BY CELESTE RYAN, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR FOR THE ADVENTIST COMMUNICATION NETWORK, BASED IN SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND.

No matter what their beliefs, people all over the world are interested in living longer, healthier lives. And that’s something the Adventist Church knows plenty about.

“We have been blessed with a unique health message, one highlighted by our nutritional habits and preventative health-care measures,” says Kermit Net-teburg, general manager of the Adventist Communication Network. “We’ve shared that message for decades through our inspired literature, innovative health-care systems, and schools of higher learning. Now, thanks to satellite technology, we have an even greater opportunity to share this message.”

Creating Health is one such program recently shared with the community. An estimated 5,000 people at 340 North American churches watched the two innovative health education seminars via satellite. The programs were sponsored by Adventist Health System (AHS) in support of the North American Division’s Year of Health and Healing initiative.

“AHS has designed these programs in an effort to continue quality health-care service and educational opportunities for our communities,” said Mardian J. Blair, president of the Florida-based corporation that has 113 organizations under its umbrella.

The outreach effort involved Loma Linda University’s School of Public Health, the General Conference Health and Temperance Department, and North American Division (NAD) Health Ministries working together to coordinate top-rated programs complete with a panel of prominent Adventist physicians and health educators. The program was hosted by Dan Matthews, speaker/director of the Faith for Today television ministry, and Monica Reed, medical director of the Women’s Center for Florida Hospital’s Celebration Health Center in Celebration City.

“I was really impressed with the caliber of people that came together to present the health information for this series,” Matthews said. “I regret that more churches and members didn’t tune in. This was good enough for every church with downlink capabilities to take advantage of, because we have never shared this kind of information before.”

The first of the programs, Nutrition Matters, was designed to give today’s busy families, including teenagers, parents, and grandparents, a practical approach to nutrition. Viewers learned how to adapt and apply nutritional values to their everyday lives, and were able to call in and dialogue with the panelists about the relationships between nutritional values, lifestyle choices, and their quality of life.

Reed believes this is important because “people need to understand that they can actually determine how healthy they will be and whether or not they will get certain diseases.” She notes that the top three killers in North America today are frequently related to lifestyle choices. “The more information we can get out there, the better we may be able to help people understand what they need to do to make changes that affect their health for the better,” she says.

The second program, Prevention Matters, educated viewers about the causes, risks, and treatments of coronary artery disease, diabetes, and cancer. The panelists explored how lifestyle choices and stress management contribute to the prevention of chronic disease. Unlike many health education programs, the experts also dealt with the spiritual ramifications of the issue. “When you think of all the risk factors for heart disease, poor diet, smoking, and no exercise, they explain only about half of the risk for having a heart attack,” says Warren Peters, director of Loma Linda University’s Center for Health Promotion. “That means there is a large area—including our social well-being, relationships with others, and spiritual well-being—to consider.” He also believes that hostility is closely correlated with the incidence of a heart attack.

“This information is very, very good and in accordance with what we’ve been trying to teach for years,” said Earnest Howard, who watched live...
from the Mount Sinai church in Orlando, Florida, with more than 100 others.

“I’ve averted all these diseases so far, and I just wondered if I was doing the right thing,” said Lillian Harold, a member of the Cress Memorial church in Orlando, about why she watched the program. “I came for that information and got it.”

Harold isn’t alone in wanting to know if she’s on the right track. John Scharffenberg, a health educator and panelist, believes your friends and neighbors also want to know. “If we realized some of the important statistics, like the fact that fruit eaten twice a day reduces the risk of cancer by 74 percent, compared to less than three times a week, we would tell all our friends,” he says.

Dr. Zeno Charles-Marcel, medical director of the Lifestyle Center of America in Oklahoma and a program panelist, agrees that Adventists have something to tell the world: “Today more than ever we’re seeing a validation of what the Adventist Church has taught for the past 100 years. The rest of the world is actually looking at this data and wondering ‘Why didn’t we know this all along?’ when in fact Adventists have known this for some time. Perhaps it’s because we haven’t been practicing it as diligently as we ought.”

That’s why AHS sponsored the free satellite programs. “We have a responsibility to educate our communities and share information that will improve their quality of health,” says Womack Rucker, Jr., AHS vice president and assistant to the president.

ACN isn’t the only way that the Adventist health message is being shared today, but it provides another vehicle to reach the masses for Christ. “This partnership provided a major opportunity for congregations to reach out to their communities,” says DeWitt Williams, director of NAD Health Ministries. “Adventists have championed innovative preventative healthcare methods, and we must share that knowledge.”

More Health Programs Coming

AHS is considering continuing the health education series this fall for churches to use in conjunction with outreach projects following the completion of the NET’98 evangelistic series in November. Next year ACN will aid churches in doing a division-wide Heartbeat, a health-screening program that provides participants with a comprehensive health evaluation. Meanwhile, videotapes of the first two Creating Health programs are available for $19.95 each or $29.95 for both. To order, call 1-800-327-9290, ext. 1506.
Choosing a Bride

BY EUGENE F. DURAND, A RETIRED ASSISTANT EDITOR OF THE ADVENTIST REVIEW

Back in 1994 David Weinlick got tired of the question that thoughtless people ask single adults: “When are you going to get married?” He began replying to all such inquiries, “On June 13, 1998.” As the date drew nearer, he realized that he had decided on the wedding site and whom he would invite, but hadn’t a clue whom he would marry!

What to do? Why, have a bride contest, of course! (Had he read the book of Esther?) A world of his plight got out, two dozen candidates from several states applied for the position of Mrs. Weinlick and showed up on the wedding day at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota.

There David’s friends and relatives carefully questioned the two dozen would-be brides to determine which one would be most compatible. Finally they chose Elizabeth Runze, a lovely redhead who, like David, was 28 years old. The two had met only briefly the day before when she dropped off her application, but they proceeded to get married immediately, as 2,000 shoppers watched. Both were thrilled at the way things worked out.

Is this any way to choose a partner for life? Our immediate response would probably be “No way!” But I wonder. While this seems a ridiculous process to those living in the Western world, it wouldn’t seem so strange to people in other cultures, where relatives choose the bride. Are their marriages any less happy and successful than ours, where we fall madly in love and marry in the heat of passion, heedless of compatibility or the sage advice of family and friends?

Mr. and Mrs. Weinlick appear well matched, with similar interests, education, and “chemistry.” It seems that their friends and relatives chose well. So while we might not recommend their method, other young people could learn from them the importance of heeding the wise advice of those who know them well before plunging into marriage.
Hospitals Providing Free Care to Western Communities

For more than 100 years Adventist Health has been dedicated to delivering quality Christian health care to communities across the West—even when the recipients cannot afford to pay. In 1996 Adventist Health’s 19 hospitals collectively provided more than $500 million in uncompensated care and services to the poor as well as to the broader communities they serve. Below are several noteworthy facilities:

Adventist Health/Glendale Adventist Medical Center
Glendale, California
$92,276,000

Adventist Health/San Joaquin Community Hospital
Bakersfield, California
$47,809,000

Adventist Health/St. Helena Hospital
Deer Park, California
$36,717,000

Adventist Health/Adventist Medical Center
Portland, Oregon
$19,851,000

Adventist Health/Walla Walla General Hospital
Walla Walla, Washington
$8,384,000

AWR Letter Box

“In the name of the Almighty . . . My dear beloved brethren at the Voice of Hope, warm greetings from cold Moscow. When I listen to your radio programs, I feel so close to God. When one of your radio pastors preaches, I feel that the world of heaven is in my hand, peace comes into my heart, and the divine hope comes into my sinful soul.”—A Shi’ite listener to AWR Arabic programs living in Russia.

“I have invited more than 250 people to listen to Adventist World Radio, because the programs have changed my life so much!”—Fermin, from Colombia.

For information about Adventist World Radio, Write to: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 U.S.A.
Or Call toll-free: 1-800-337-4297
E-mail: info@awr.org
Website: www.awr.org
Have you ever played with a yo-yo? It’s a lot of fun, once you get the hang of it. After you figure out how to get the yo-yo to come back to you, there are lots of other tricks you can learn, like Walking the Dog and the Eiffel Tower.

Do you know how a yo-yo works? You loop one end of the string around your finger. When you let go of the yo-yo, it starts spinning downward (and I bet you know why: the law of gravity). As it falls, the string that is wrapped around its center shaft unwinds. When the yo-yo reaches the end of the string, it wants to keep spinning (that’s because of another law of physics). But it can’t spin down anymore, so it spins up. The yo-yo starts to rewind the string around its shaft. If you give a little flick of your wrist, you provide the yo-yo with enough extra power to climb the string all the way back up to your hand.

The word “yo-yo” comes from the Philippines, where the toy was invented. We also use this word to describe things that behave like a yo-yo. When people change their minds back and forth or when something shifts from one place to another again and again, we might call it yo-yoing.

It is fun to play with a yo-yo. But it is not fun to act like a yo-yo. The apostle Paul knew that. Listen to his confession: “Sin rules me as if I were its slave. I do not understand the things I do. I do not do the good things I want to do. And I do the bad things I hate to do” (Romans 7:14, 15, ICB).

It sounds as though Paul felt as if Satan had him on a string. Paul wanted to do good, he tried to be good, but sin always jerked him back. Paul was being pulled in two different directions—good and bad.

Paul needed someone to cut the string. “Who will save me?” Paul asked. Then he answered his own question: “God will. I thank him for saving me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (verses 24, 25, ICB).

You know what you need to do to be good. But that’s not enough. You can’t do it without Jesus. Only Jesus can cut the string that ties you to sin. Jesus can set you free.
ew teachings of Scripture are more politically incorrect and thus easier to ridicule and caricature than the doctrine of the remnant, the idea that our church is an end-time prophetic movement.

The reality of this problem struck home recently with a letter written by a local pastor who felt that he could no longer remain part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In his communication he derided the remnant doctrine as one that “teaches its people that salvation can come only within its organization and through adhering to its ‘unique’ doctrines.” As his words amply prove, the biblical teaching that God has a remnant people is easy to distort. While some well-intentioned members may have taught the doctrine in the manner that this pastor described, any Seventh-day Adventist who has sincerely studied this message knows this depiction is warped.

The Adventist Church, as far as I know, has never taught that salvation is found solely “within its organization”; or that God doesn’t use other churches; or that God doesn’t have faithful, converted believers in denominations other than our own. We have never taught that you have to be a Seventh-day Adventist to be saved. Yet there is in prophecy an emphasis on an end-time remnant that is both deliberate and emphatic: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17).

Though in Scripture the word “remnant” is used in various ways, as a church we have never used it to describe an association of the exclusively redeemed. Instead, we view the remnant as a movement with a distinct message that can prepare people for the earth-shattering events that will precede the second coming of Christ.

The focal point of the remnant is that it has a unique message for the world, one centered on the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, which includes “the everlasting gospel” (verse 6), a judgment-hour call (verse 7), with an appeal to come out of Babylon (verse 8), and the most fearsome warning in the entire Bible: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (verses 9-11).

Scriptural integrity compels those who deride the biblical teaching of a remnant to identify another church or Christian body that is proclaiming this “present truth,” one that fits the other characteristics of the remnant, as depicted in Scripture. Is there another church body teaching the three angels’ messages? How many other churches are giving a loud and clear proclamation to help prepare people for what the prophet Daniel calls “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Dan. 12:1)?

Most of the churches that address end-time events generally do so in the context of the nation of Israel rather than in connection with the global issues that will precede the Second Coming, issues that involve the character of God, the great controversy between Christ and Satan, and the justness of God’s government and law. In fact, how many other churches are even proclaiming God’s law, much less its immutability? Not many.

I don’t give these criticisms to question the sincerity, faith, or salvation of other Christians. I say this simply to affirm that we as a church are proclaiming truths that characterize the remnant depicted in Scripture. The message we proclaim defines our movement as the remnant church.

Regardless of the “political correctness” of the teaching, it is still the truth.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference.
I found it no sacrifice to give up jewelry when I became an Adventist—not because I’m exceptionally noble and pure, but because I never cared for the stuff. The closest I ever came to being “bejeweled” in my pre-Christian days was when I proudly displayed the homemade leather bracelets I’d strung with beads purchased from the local “psych shop” (ex-hippies will relate to this). The bracelets came off when they rotted off, and went exceptionally well with my crazy-quilt-patched Levis and assorted rock ‘n’ roll T-shirts.

So when I was baptized into a body of Christians who tended not to wear jewelry or excessive makeup, and dressed modestly and unpretentiously (this was in 1982), I felt right at home—except that I regretted having to part with my beloved Levis on Sabbaths.

Imagine my surprise, then, as I watched my new church wrestle over this jewelry thing. And imagine my greater surprise as I’ve since watched my two little girls, despite my example of profound disinterest, become magnetically attracted to the stuff. Though I’ve endeavored inconspicuously to veer them away from it and into what I consider more constructive pursuits, our oldest daughter, Becky, has caught on and asked, “Why don’t you want us to wear jewelry, Mom?”

And so I’ve had to ask myself: Why don’t I? Am I just a narrow-minded reactionary trying to clone my prejudices and preferences in my children? And then, is the issue even spiritually relevant, or is it a dead letter—a stale leftover from an uptight, obsolete Victorian era?

Although I personally find the subject surpassingly boring, I owe it to my two little girls to consider my position carefully, prayerfully, and in the context of my understanding of the great controversy.

To do this, I’ve gone back to the garden—the Garden of Eden. In that place where the spark of divinity was exchanged for the seed of alienation, in that moment when the beauty of holiness was traded for the disfigurement of self-deception, I find answers to all my questions about the mysterious workings of fallen human nature. In the garden I find the source of our universal compulsion to dress up, cover up, decorate, and otherwise reinvent ourselves: “The eyes of [Adam and Eve] were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” (Gen. 3:7, NIV).

Self-motivated self-improvement is as old as sin. The naked soul blushes with shame at its exposed vulnerability and imperfection, and seeks a thousand ways to hide. I’ve concluded that wearing jewelry is just one of the ways that human nature compulsively attempts to cover its nakedness and validate itself by asserting, “I’m attractive; I’m worthwhile; I’m a person of substance.”

As I’ve said, it’s not my style to “cover my nakedness” with jewelry or other material trappings. Because I’m reserved by nature and allergic to display, my attempts at self-concealment are more subtle. I prefer the comfortable cloak of intellectual pride and religious orthodoxy—they’re not only harder to detect (and more affordable than a diamond ring or a BMW); they’re harder to criticize.

But whatever our concealment of choice, we find the cure for our universal compulsion at the cross. There we find the One who utterly immersed Himself in the shame of our nakedness—our spiritual nakedness and bankruptcy, as well as literal public exposure—that we might be wrapped in the warmth of His salvation. At the cross of Christ we find freedom from the compulsion to cover ourselves with any of a thousand contrivances, freedom to be clothed with the completeness of our Saviour’s self-renouncing character—a character that is fresh and relevant in any age, any place, any culture.

So how do I explain all of this deep theology to two wiggly, giggly little girls? For now I try to help them see that their God-given, unaffected beauty can’t be artificially improved upon. I try tactfully to direct their attention away from their appearance and toward the beauty of the natural world, the joy of service, the joy of learning and creating. Most of all, I try to help them see that jewels are not something God means for them to wear, but something He means for them to be—His living, beloved jewels, gleaming with the eternal light of the indwelling Christ (see Mal. 3:17).

Leslie Kay lives the simple life in Chloride, Arizona, with her husband and two daughters.
The cramped bus is an oven as it jostles over hundreds of potted-road miles to a town they’ve never seen. Hours later they arrive. They know nobody. They have no food. They have no accommodations. They each carry a small bag, a smaller living allowance, and a huge task: to share the love of Jesus and establish an Adventist church.

Welcome to the world of Global Mission pioneers, where some of the most creative, dynamic ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church takes place. All over the world—from the States to Myanmar to Burkina Faso—thousands of these volunteers pray daily for help to spark interest, shatter walls, and bring hope.

A RICH HARVEST

MUSLIMS LEARN TO GARDEN: Stephane, a pioneer in the Muslim village of Goundry, Burkina Faso, lives on prayer. A trained gardener, he made friends by calling a community meeting and offering his gardening expertise. Today 90 people tend gardens under his leadership. He tells the people of Goundry about a loving God who cares for the entire person—both physically and spiritually. The Muslim chief has said the Adventist Church will prosper in his village and has donated a block of land for a church.

GOD’S LOVE KEEPS HIM GOING: His Global Mission allowance stopped more than a year ago, but Nguerabay—a married man with four children—continues working as a pioneer in the city of Moissala, Chad. There are now nearly 50 baptized Seventh-day Adventists—including former prostitutes and drunkards. How does Nguerabay feed his family? “It is hard,” he says. Why does he keep working without any pay? “I want to free people from guilt by telling them about the blood of Jesus.”
The sunshine was surprisingly strong for a winter day, and I stood in its generous warmth without my coat. The frigid winds that typically bluster across our broad Nebraska plains were still for a change. The pungent aroma of evergreens hung in the air. My senses took it all in. What a beautiful day, I thought.

In marked contrast to the loveliness of the day were the muted sounds of mourning: a shuddering sigh, someone fumbling for tissues in a purse, a muffled sob. Pastor Greg’s warm and assured voice was a touchstone of reality as he began the familiar requiem: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. . . .” He continued to recite Paul’s inspired words: “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess. 4:16).

I couldn’t see Roger and the other family members; there were too many people crowded around the small canopy. My heart ached for him and his sister, who had been called urgently in the night and had arrived too late to say goodbye. I recalled my surprise at bumping into Roger at church just two weeks ago. We had hurriedly exchanged news about our lives and laughed about the good times we had enjoyed as members of a closely knit singing group. He explained that his many duties as a hospital administrator kept him from getting back home very often.

Pastor Greg asked if there were stories that anyone would like to share. A poignant remembrance was given by a close companion. Gracious hospitality had been extended to a young woman and her family. A nother friend recounted a funny episode from a camping trip. We all laughed, picturing the woman who could manage effortless elegance miles from hot showers or blow-dryers. Heads of those who knew her nodded in silent agreement.

My thoughts reluctantly turned back to the routine as I drove to the car wash and the grocery store. I rushed to the library to return two overdue books. The stuff of the everyday was unapologetically reasserting itself.

But God reminded me of some important truths in that old Adventist cemetery, and I pray they will remain etched on my consciousness as sharply as epitaphs engraved upon granite. Sometimes you need to set work aside to take care of people. It’s OK to cry. Do it now. Laughter is healing. We need to touch. Despite our best efforts, the shiny surface of life gets dusty sometimes. For the Christian, there are no goodbyes.

We’ll see each other in the morning.

Joann M. Herrington is an assistant professor in the Division of Human Development at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.