“Spooky Action at a Distance”
—Clifford Goldstein

Life Lessons
All Eyes on the Winner

The Pope’s “Lord’s Day” Encyclical
Analysis and Response
Courting Trouble
I really enjoyed Brian Jones’s “Courting Trouble,” in the June 25 AnchorPoints Edition. At one time I would have disagreed on the point of not suing those who have wronged you, but after personal experience I see things a little differently.

My husband and I were wrongfully sued by someone who was not a Christian. People don’t realize that even if someone has done something wrong, when you sue them you are suing their family as well. The hardship and emotional trauma is devastating. I don’t think anything could be further from God’s will. I am sorry that it took this incident for me to see this, but I can at least use it for some good by telling others what a horrible thing litigation is.

—Lisa Doll
GRAHAM, WASHINGTON

Adventist-Lutheran Dialogue
To say the very least, I was shocked to see the June 25 supplement titled “Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation” just after reading an article titled “Catholics, Lutherans Burying Old Debate” in our June 12 Jackson, Tennessee, newspaper. A’s Seventh-day Adventists, knowing what we know about the world’s final outcome, how can we join those who have already reached an accord and joined hands with Catholicism?

—George F. Harvey
BROWNSVILLE, TENNESSEE

We haven’t joined anyone. The purposes of the conversations were clearly stated on page 1 of the report. —Editors.

The Power of Love
Regarding the Ellen White reprint “The Power of Love” (June 25).

Since a serious cancer surgery a year ago, I have had a lot of time for reflection and have become keenly aware of the tension between the various partisan groups within the church. All this is killing the spiritual life of many—even whole churches.

I have been looking and praying for words to show a better way of dealing with the disagreement and dissatisfaction—and here it is! Written plainly and pointedly, it has been here for 110

Good News for Older Readers
“Just a note to ask you to please try to make the Review more readable for us older folks who can’t see to read as well as we used to. We still enjoy reading it, but at times it is almost impossible for us to do so,” wrote Myrtle Cossentine Aldrich, of Avon Park, Florida, in a recent letter.

Her request is typical of quite a few that come to my office every year. Some readers, now in their sunset years, have only the Review left in their life, and they plead with me to find a way to make it accessible to them.

I have wrestled with this problem for years, as did my predecessor, Kenneth H. Wood. Under his tenure the Review launched a large-print edition, but it was not financially viable and had to be discontinued.

At last—good news! The Review and Herald Publishing Association has obtained supplies of a clear magnifying sheet that you can lay over the page and that will enable you to read the print more easily.

This sheet has a $5 value, but we will send it to you free if you add a year to your current subscription or begin a subscription. To add on a year or begin a subscription, call 1-800-456-3991.

And keep reading the Review!

William G. Johnsson, Editor
years. If any of us wish to be a correct pattern for Jesus Christ, let us pick up this article—then read and heed. And, oh yes, let it begin with me.

— Ronald Hughes
CORNERSVILLE, TENNESSEE

Why Should We (Go to Church)?
I’d like to add a thought to the most pertinent question Myrna Tetz asked in the June 25 issue: “Why Should We?” My main reason for going to church is that I have an appointment, a date, with the most dear Friends in all the world, the Lord Jesus Christ and His dear Father.

— Linda Hicks
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Thumbs-up to Children’s Corner
I am always amazed at the variety of topics Rosy Tetz covers in Children’s Corner and the lessons she draws from the simplest things. For example, “Camouflage” (July NAD Edition) was excellent. Jesus will be our “camouflage,” our righteousness, if we let Him.

I’m well “up there,” but I still enjoy Children’s Corner—and the whole Review. You are frequently remembered in prayer.

— Ethel F. Heisler
HENDERSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Overwhelmed!
The response to our AnchorPoints contest has been overwhelming—126 manuscripts from 11 countries. We are amazed, gratified, delighted. This will mean, however, that the judging process will take longer than previously anticipated. We want to thank all who participated, and request their patience during the evaluation period. You can be sure that our judges—all external to the Adventist Review staff—will be working with all deliberate speed to complete the process.

— Jean Hollingsworth
ABILENE, TEXAS

Secret Organization?
Over the past three and a half years my husband and I have been in all of the lower 48 states with our RV. We make it a habit to rest on the Sabbath and start looking for an Adventist church on Friday evening or Sabbath morning. I have been surprised at how elusive our churches are.

In one town, after calling the number in the phone book, I finally called the police station to find the church—only to learn that the church phone had been disconnected. When I finally found the congregation, I asked them if their church was a secret organization.

At another place, when I called the church number, all I got was “Please leave a message.” (I wasn’t even sure if I had reached the right place.) It would have been so nice to hear a friendly voice telling the time for Sabbath school, church, and prayer meeting, and a number where the pastor or a church member could be reached.

At another place we drove 25 miles to find a note on the church door saying that the church was closed for camp meeting.

These things are very hard for my non-Adventist husband of four years to understand. I hope that someone in each of our churches will take the responsibility to post the church’s address, phone number, and pastor’s name and phone number in local motels and RV campgrounds. Let’s make Christ’s church more visible and accessible.

Hope to visit you soon—if we can find you.

— Jean Hollingsworth
ABILENE, TEXAS

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ADVENTIST REVIEW, AUGUST 27, 1998 (1147)
Suddenly Sunday

With the promulgation of the papal encyclical Dies Domini, suddenly the issue of Sunday observance is making news around the world. Seventh-day Adventists should wake up and take notice.

The pope's apostolic letter is the most recent and certainly the most important in a series of rapid developments in the Sabbath-Sunday debate. A ready during the past few years several works have appeared attacking the Sabbath, while the Internet has become a forum for heated discussion. We Seventh-day Adventists have long believed that, just prior to the return of Jesus, the Sabbath will become a topic of national and international debate. We believe that the arm of the state will be exercised to enforce legislation in support of Sunday observance. The events of the past few years demand that we ask: Are we on the threshold of those very last days?

John Paul II dated his apostolic letter May 31, but it became available in English only in early July. The encyclical consists of 87 numbered sections divided into five chapters: “Dies Domini” (The Day of the Lord), “Dies Christi” (The Day of Christ), “Dies Ecclesiae” (The Day of the Church), “Dies H omini” (The Day of Man), and “Dies Dierum” (The Day of Days), with an introduction, conclusion, and index. The text is liberally sprinkled with biblical quotations and references, while 131 endnotes fill out the letter with references from Catholic tradition.

The encyclical embraces much more than the title, On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy, would suggest. The pope is concerned about the low attendance at Mass among Catholics, but he also uses the letter as a vehicle to argue for keeping Sunday rather than the Sabbath. His reasoning embraces history, theology, sociology, and legislation.

History: Seventh-day Adventists will find little with which to take issue in John Paul II's account of the change from Sabbath to Sunday. He indicates that the switch was a gradual one, with some Christians keeping the Sabbath and some both days centuries after the time of Jesus (§ 23). He doesn't try to pinpoint any word from the Lord or the apostles that instructed Christians to make the change. Further, he recognizes that "wise pastoral intuition suggested to the Church the christianization of the notion of Sunday as 'the day of the sun,' which was the Roman name for the day and which is retained in some modern languages" (§ 27).

In general, the pope's reconstruction of history agrees with the research of Adventist scholar Samuele Bacchiocchi. Adventists would place the beginnings of the change in the day of worship later than the pope's, and would also point to the Jewish factor—the eclipse of the Jewish wing of Christianity in the early church along with the desire of Christians to dissociate themselves from Judaism.

Theology: The encyclical is a curious mixture: It contains deep spiritual insights mixed with leaps in theological logic. It continually harks back to the biblical text, but that text itself is silent in support of the most critical element—the change in the day. Dies Domini speaks of the Sabbath in glowing terms, although Sunday is accorded an even higher place. The pope roots Sabbath observance where the Bible does—in Creation first of all, then in redemption. He distinguishes the Sabbath from the ceremonial regulations God gave to Israel: "This is why, unlike many other precepts, it [the Sabbath] is set not within the context of strictly cultic stipulations but within the Decalogue, the 'ten words' which represent the very pillars of the moral life inscribed on the human heart. In setting this commandment within the context of the basic structure of
ethics, "the Lord’s day." We gladly obey the instruction of the Lord and our Lord Jesus, who pitched His tent among us; this day on which He rested in the tomb — this day, the Sabbath, is His day. This is indeed "the Lord’s day" (Rev. 1:10). We gladly obey the instruction of Scripture to keep this day holy, but first and foremost we observe it in honor of our Lord and Saviour.

Thus the issue lands squarely where it began at the Reformation — sola Scriptura or Scripture plus tradition. The pope quotes Scripture but ultimately has to appeal to tradition for support of Sunday observance. We stand by Scripture alone, and therefore we are Seventh-day Adventists.

I will note briefly a few other theological items of interest. Dies Domini is riddled with references to the Eucharist and Mariolatry. Here lies the heart of Catholic dogma, and those evangelicals who seek a theological rapprochement with the Vatican can need to face the fact. Second, the encyclical gives ringing affirmation of the Second Coming, to which, it argues, the Sunday mass points. Finally, the call to Sunday observance is set in the context of the dawn of the third millennium, which John Paul II several times calls "the Jubilee."

**Sociology:** Dies Domini includes more than theological argument. It sees in the rhythm of the week "a meaning and importance which go beyond the distinctly Christian point of view" (§ 65), and the need for a day of rest as something built into the very order of Creation. So the encyclical reasons: "When, through the centuries, she has made laws concerning Sunday rest, the Church has had in mind above all the work of servants and workers, certainly not because this work was any less worthy when compared to the spiritual requirements of Sunday observance, but rather because it needed greater regulation to lighten its burden and thus enable everyone to keep the Lord’s Day holy. In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical Rerum N ovarum spoke of Sunday rest as a worker’s right which the State must guarantee" (§ 66).

**Legislation:** John Paul II calls upon the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church "to work tirelessly with the faithful to ensure that the value of this sacred day is understood and lived ever more deeply" (§ 87). But what does that "ensuring" entail?

In several places it seems to include civil legislation. The pope notes with approval the civil law of the Roman Empire that freed up Christians for observance of Sunday (§ 64) and ecclesiastical laws passed by the church that released people from work on Sunday (§ 66). He speaks of the "obligation to ensure" that everyone has a day of rest in our times, presumably Sunday (§ 66), and states: "Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy" (§ 67).

This language has ominous overtones. Legislation that guarantees freedom to practice religion is good; legislation that, in the name of promoting religious observance, infringes on the freedom of others is bad. At the individual or the corporate level, coercion in religion is a failure and contrary to biblical freedom.

The pope’s call to "rediscover Sunday" (§ 7) has been given wide prominence in some countries. Time will tell whether it eventually falls on deaf ears or leads to a gathering movement on behalf of Sunday. A dventists would be advised not to take John Paul II’s challenge lightly: this is the pope whose intervention helped bring down Communism.

In the months ahead, the Adventist Review will feature articles in each of the areas of Sabbath debate highlighted by Dies Domini — history, theology, sociology, and religious liberty. You won’t want to miss them.
Jesus set the example. He daily mingled with people and found what I believe were pretty clever ways to get their attention and enhance their retention. One day, because of the crowds, He boarded a boat and spoke to the people who sat on the shore. I can imagine Him motioning to the field beyond and, while the audience turns to see what He’s pointing at, He explains: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field” (Matt. 13:24, NIV; see also verses 37, 38). Those people could never look at a farmer in a field planting seeds without remembering that Jesus is the farmer, the field is the world, and they are the seed.

On another occasion He pointed to the grass on which He was standing and said to His audience, “Why do you worry about clothes? . . . If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, . . . will He not much more clothe you?” (Matt. 6:28-30, NIV). Although the deeper symbolism may have escaped some of them, how could a follower of Jesus back then ever tread on green grass again without remembering how concerned He was— even about what they wore?

Hebrew parents were commanded by God to teach their children that “thoughts of God were to be associated with all the events of daily life. . . . And the use of figures and symbols caused the lessons given to be more firmly fixed in the memory” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 592).

Many of us wish we had more time to reflect on our relationship with God, more time to study the Scriptures and pray. With the press of daily living as it is today, these times with God are not long enough. We could, however, include thoughts and expressions of God throughout each day more often than we do—not as a substitute for devotional time, but as an enhancement.

It’s only natural to awaken to each new day and remember that God created the heavens and the earth and light and morning. What a great God! Thank You for a new day.

Then as I shower under the rush of warm water, I think about Jesus’ invitation to drink from the “spring of the water of life” (Rev. 21:6, NIV). I accept and thank You, Jesus.

Washing with my bar of soap prods me to recall David’s plea—“Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (Ps. 51:2, NIV). That’s my plea, too, and it’s a pretty big one. But please, Lord, do it for me.

At breakfast as I eat my slice of toast, I am reminded that we should “cast [our] bread upon the waters” (Eccl. 11:1). Thank You, Jesus, for the privilege of helping the Baltimore city church members share food with the destitute there.

I walk past an hibiscus bush by the corner of the house as I leave for work. The flowers are big and orange-red, but they blossom for a very short time—sometimes just one day. However, with 25 buds (I counted) on the plant, we can know there will be more flowers tomorrow. Jeremiah praises his Lord because His love and compassion “are new every morning” (Lam. 3:23). As I see new blossoms daily, I say, Thank You for renewing your love for me each new day.

With an apple in my lunch, a spiritual lesson comes quickly. The reminder of Eve’s quest for wisdom and Adam’s unwillingness to live without Eve gives me reason to plead, Give me wisdom, please, but only that which comes from You.

It’s evening, and my husband and I take a walk. We pass a rock on the path and remember that Jesus’ tomb was secured by a big rock (Matt. 27:60). Help me to remember, Jesus, that Your angels can remove whatever separates me from You. A feather is a reminder that Jesus said the birds of the air have a place to rest but the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head (Luke 9:58). Please, Lord, live with me. The baby in the stroller being pushed by her parents reminds me of a baby born to Mary (Matt. 1:21) long ago. I now reflect on how His life and death is the assurance of forever life for me. Thank You, Jesus.

We return from our walk and sit on the deck as the sun goes down. The light of a hundred fireflies can be seen in the darkness, and I remember that Jesus said He was the light of the world (John 8:12). Darkness and light. Thank You, Jesus. I choose light.
ADVENTIST LIFE

While I enjoyed a fellowship meal with my son and his family after church one Sabbath, my 8-month-old grandson was pounding a piece of bread on the tray of his high chair.

After listening to the pounding for several minutes, my son said, “This is a vegetarian potluck, Jarrett. We don’t have to kill our food before we eat it.”
— Vi Case, Canon City, Colorado

I urge my kids to react to bad behavior in another by attempting to understand it before criticizing. My 6-year-old, Ruben, may have taken this too far. Describing a mosquito to his older brother, Matthew, he said, “They suck your blood. They have to eat something.”
— Evelyn Caro, Whittier, California

ADVENTIST QUOTES

“Through negative and destructive criticism, a man gives the reasons he cannot love his neighbor.”
— Sam Ketting, via e-mail

“Parents can learn a lot about God just by being parents—loving parents.”
— Pastor Jim Burgess, to the Sherwood Park, Alberta, church

“Stress is the distance between belief and reality.”
— Rita Barrett, Scappoose, Oregon, discussing the need for revival in the church

“To have mercy means yielding your rights.”
— Ron Christman, in a Sabbath school teachers’ meeting at the Burleson, Texas, church

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MAKING THE WORLD A LITTLE WARMER

STILL KNITTING: In response to a 1990 ADRA appeal, 87-year-old Emma Kerbs has now knitted 314 colorful children’s sweaters. Emma says that her average knitting time is approximately 13 hours per sweater and that she uses only synthetic yarns—for greater comfort, washability, and durability. Though her first contributions were sent to Africa, Emma’s sweaters can now be found around the world. Emma’s eightysomething friends have also participated in the project. Faye Cox has knitted 220 sweaters, and Bea Bradbury, more than 100. All are members of the English Oaks church in Lodi, California.

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Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74532.2564@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.

LET’S PRAY

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IN THE SUBATOMIC WORLD OF QUANTUM reality, nature contradicts our most commonsense notions: events happen without cause, electrons “know” they’re being watched, and particles exist and don’t exist simultaneously. Quantum physics confronts humankind with phenomena that not only expose the limits of human logic, reason, and rational thought, but brashly defy them. At the quantum level, things happen that scientists can barely believe, much less explain, at least not without grand leaps of faith that strain credulity. It’s more rational to believe that Christ filled 5,000 stomachs with just a few loaves and fishes than to believe in quantum phenomena. Indeed, the “foolishness” of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:25) makes more sense than what physicists themselves call the “absurdness” of quantum reality.

Birth of Modern Physics
In the 1600s, European scholarship started to break away from the scholasticism modeled on the Greek philosopher Aristotle, which had dominated Western intellectual tradition for centuries. As the chronological odometer reached 1700, great strides had been made in all areas of thought, especially physics. Owing to the extraordinary achievements of Isaac Newton, the fundamental view of the world had been radically and unalterably revolutionized. By the early twentieth century, however, Newtonian (or classical) science couldn’t account for certain phenomena concerning light and the amount of energy emitted by hot glowing objects. New paradigms had to be advanced. The result was the birth of modern physics, which was divided into two branches: relativity and quantum theory. While relativity (general) deals with the macrocosmic world (gravity, stars, galaxies, the universe itself), quantum theory goes into the opposite realm: that of subatomic entities, infinitesimally small and in some ways immeasurable. And though general relativity can strain credulity (for example, it teaches that gravity is nothing but mass-warped space-time), in the quantum world the limits of human reason are made embarrassingly blatant.

The Double-Slit Experiment
The place to begin quantum theory is with the simple double-slit experiment. If one drops a pebble in a pool of water, the water spreads out in waves. If between that pool and another pool there is a thin barrier with two holes, the waves
at a Distance”
will go through both holes and make smaller wave patterns on the other side. If the holes are close enough, those two smaller sets of waves will meet and merge with each other, creating a distinct “interference pattern” on the other side of the barrier.

Light acts similarly. When shone through two holes in a barrier, light goes through each hole, making small waves on a photographic plate on the other side. Each “wave” of light passing through the slit mingles with the other on the opposite side—like the wave patterns in the water—and forms an interference pattern on the photographic plate.

If you close one hole and shine light through the other one, the light merely piles up on the part of the photographic plate behind the hole, much like throwing rocks through a hole in a wall will cause the rocks to pile up behind that hole. Scientists can, in fact, shoot just one photon at a time (it also works with electrons and atoms), through one opening, getting the expected build up right behind it.

So far, so good. Now if, while shooting photons one at a time through the single hole, scientists open up the second hole, one would expect nothing to change. The photons should gather behind the first hole, just as if rocks thrown through one hole would gather behind it even if another hole, out of range of the trajectory, were opened. The second hole shouldn’t influence what happens at the first. Right?

Wrong, at least at the quantum level. If, as photons, electrons, or atoms are being shot one by one through the first hole and the other hole is opened, an interference pattern forms on the other side! In other words, the same pattern appears as if the particles were going through both holes.

How could that be? The individual photons are being fired, one at a time, through just one hole. The presence of the other opening should, from a commonsense perspective, make no more difference than would a second hole in the wall make a difference when throwing rocks through only the first one. Yet the photons, electrons, or atoms “know” that the other slit is open, go through it too, and as a result, make an interference pattern on the photographic plate!

“Although each photon starts out as a particle,” wrote astrophysicist John Gribbin, “and arrives as a particle, it seems to have gone through both holes at once, interfered with itself, and worked out just where to place itself on the film to make its own minute contribution to the overall interference pattern. This behavior encompasses two mysteries. First, how does a single photon go through both holes at once? Second, even if it does this trick, how does it ‘know’ where to place itself in the overall pattern?”

The Uncertainty Principle

Quantum physics presents another phenomenon that leaves human reason in the dust. It’s called the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, (which Cambridge astrophysicist Stephen Hawking calls “a fundamental and inescapable property of the world”), and it states that it’s impossible to know both the velocity and the position of a subatomic particle. While that concept itself might not sound so strange, what’s strange is why we can’t measure both—and that’s because observing one aspect of the particle changes the other. In other words, the act of observing a particle alters its reality.

It gets worse. In the quantum world a subatomic particle doesn’t seem to “exist” until it is observed. It is (according to one interpretation) in a “ghost” state—not a physical particle, but merely a nonmaterial “probability wave” that collapses into a particle only when someone looks at it. And even then one can know only its position or motion, not both, because quantum reality is so nebulous that the act of trying to measure one aspect of the particle’s existence disturbs the other.

The Uncertainty Principle has even more bizarre implications for the double-slit experiment. If you were to place an electron detector at each of the holes, then even when the electrons go through both, the expected wave interference pattern that would normally appear on the other side doesn’t appear. Instead, the electrons just pile up outside each hole. Why? “The act,” wrote John Gribbin, “of observing the electron wave makes it collapse and behave like a particle at the crucial moment when it is going through the hole.” Observing the electrons altered them! In fact, even with a detector at just one hole, the wave function still collapses, and no interference pattern forms on the other side, because, Gribbin states, the electrons going through “the second hole ‘know’ that we are looking at the other hole” and thus behave like particles as a result.
“Spooky Action at a Distance”
A nother aspect of quantum reality shows even less mercy to rational thought. A ssume that two subatomic particles, created in a collision, are a million light-years apart. In the quantum world, at the moment the spin of one of the particles is observed, the other particle, no matter how far away, will immediately (at a speed faster than light!) spin in the opposite direction! It’s the same as (sort of, anyway) having one cue ball spinning in Podunk and another in Paris. The moment someone observes the spin of the ball in Podunk, the ball in Paris spins in the opposite direction!

“This is quantum weirdness,” wrote Berkeley physics professor Timothy Ferris. “Interfering with one part of the quantum system alters the results observed in another part, even when the system has been enlarged to enormous dimensions. . . . It is as if the quantum world had never heard of space—as if, in some strange way, it thinks of itself as being in one place at one time.”

Albert Einstein called it “spooky action at a distance” and to his dying day never could quite reconcile himself to the theory. Others, especially the quantum pioneers, had severe struggles with the implications of their work. Commenting upon the inexplicable phenomena of subatomic reality, Danish physicist Niels Bohr wrote, “If someone says that he can think about quantum physics without becoming dizzy, that shows only that he has not understood anything about it.”

**Quantum Physics and Christian Faith**

However complicated, quantum phenomena does make a simple point: if such a “hard” science as physics itself confronts us with aspects of reality that go beyond human reason, why shouldn’t the gospel do the same? That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would incarnate into humanity and die for our sins is not a truth that logic, reason, and experience alone can discern. Logic alone might lead one to a Creator, but not to Calvary. The gospel is a truth that has to be told us; otherwise, we’d never know it, no matter how much reason and logic we used.

And even after being taught the gospel, we still have to accept it by faith, because if it was purely logical, we wouldn’t need faith to believe it. To believe that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8, NIV) isn’t the same as believing that $2 + 2 = 4$ (though in quantum math, $2 + 2 = 4$ isn’t necessarily true because one can never know for sure what value $2 + 2$ has!). Who needs faith to believe that the sum of the angles of a triangle equals 180 degrees? Faith is needed to believe in the “foolishness” of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18) precisely because the cross can appear foolish.

Of course, so can quantum phenomena, and even more so. From logic alone, it’s easier to believe “that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3, NIV) than to believe that merely observing the spin of a subatomic particle can reverse the spin of another particle more than a million light-years away. Unlike quantum physics, the gospel doesn’t ask us to defy logic, only to transcend it. Quantum reality cuts against our most fundamental notions of reality in ways that the gospel never does. However far beyond the scope of mere logic alone, there’s nothing illogical about Christ, from pure love for fallen sinful human beings, bearing the penalty of our sins so we never have to.

The bottom line? If something as solid, as tangible, and as accessible to our senses as matter, as material itself, can evade the reach of reason—how much more so should reason’s limits be apparent in something like faith, which encompasses a reality far more complex than the mere materialism of quantum physics?

Werner Heisenberg (for whom the Uncertainty Principle is named), musing about the early days of quantum science, wrote: “I remember a discussion with [Niels] Bohr which went through many hours till very late at night and ended almost in despair; and when at the end of the discussion I went alone for a walk in the neighboring park I repeated to myself again and again the question: can nature possibly be as absurd as it seems to us in these atomic experiments?”

Perhaps he should have studied something more logical.

Like the gospel.

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3 Gribbin, p. 13.
4 Ibid.
5 Timothy Ferris, This is Quantum Weirdness (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 269.

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The Working of Infinite Power

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

INCE THE BOOK OF NATURE AND THE book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths. Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from her research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written Word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works.

Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the Word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the Creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of Creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years.

Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature. Of the first day employed in the work of creation is given the record, “The evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5). And the same in substance is said of each of the first six days of Creation week. Each of these periods Inspiration declares to have been a day consisting of evening and morning, like every other day since that time. In regard to the work of creation itself the divine testimony is, “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9). With Him who could thus call into existence unnumbered worlds, how long a time would be required for the evolution of the earth from chaos? In order to account for His works, must we do violence to His Word?...

When consideration is given to man’s opportunities for research; how brief his life; how limited his sphere of action; how restricted his vision; how limited his sphere of action; how frequent and how great the errors in his conclusions, especially as concerns the events thought to antedate Bible history; how often the supposed deductions of science are revised or cast aside; with what readiness the assumed period of the earth’s development is from time to time increased or diminished by millions of years; and how the theories advanced by different scientists conflict with one another—considering all this, shall we, for the privilege of tracing our descent from germs and mollusks and apes, consent to cast away that statement of Holy Writ, so grand in its simplicity, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him” (Gen. 1:27)? Shall we reject that genealogical record—prouder than any treasured in the courts of kings—“which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God” (Luke 3:38)?

Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God in nature.

In the hymn recorded by Nehemiah, the Levites sang, “Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all...
things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all” (Neh. 9:6).

As regards this earth, Scripture declares the work of creation to have been completed. “The works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. 4:3). But the power of God is still exercised in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism once set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath. Every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the care of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. From the smallest insect to man, every living creature is daily dependent upon His providence [Ps. 104:27-30; Job 26:7-10; 26:11-14; Nahum 1:3 quoted].

The mighty power that works through all nature and sustains all things is not, as some men of science claim, merely an all-pervading principle, an actuating energy. God is a spirit; yet He is a personal being, for man was made in His image. A personal being, God has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus, the outshining of the Father’s glory, “and the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3), was on earth found in fashion as a man. A personal Saviour He came to the world. A personal Saviour He ascended on high. A personal Saviour He intercedes in the heavenly courts. Before the throne of God in our behalf ministers “One like the Son of man” (Dan. 7:13).

The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declares of Christ that “all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:16, 17, RV, margin). The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe such as to leave the demands of the soul unsatisfied. No intangible principle, no impersonal essence or mere abstraction, can satisfy the needs and longings of human beings in this life of struggle with sin and sorrow and pain. It is not enough to believe in law and force, in things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. We need to know of an almighty arm that will hold us up, of an infinite Friend that pities us. We need to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. And even so God has in His Word revealed Himself.

He who studies most deeply into the mysteries of nature will realize most fully his own ignorance and weakness. He will realize that there are depths and heights which he cannot reach, secrets which he cannot penetrate, vast fields of truth lying before him unentered. He will be ready to say, with Newton, “I seem to myself to have been like a child on the seashore finding pebbles and shells, while the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me.”

The deepest students of science are constrained to recognize in nature the working of infinite power. But to man’s unaided reason, nature’s teaching cannot but be contradictory and disappointing. Only in the light of revelation can it be read aright. “Through faith we understand” (Heb. 11:3).
Midnight Meditations

Everyone needs an Intensive Care Unit.

By Alfred C. Berger

It started by my shoveling snow. I knew I shouldn’t be doing it. Because of my heart disease, a kind and dutiful doctor friend had warned me. Nevertheless, there I stood, shoveling snow. It seems as though those laws that are given for our own best good are the ones we transgress far too easily. In temporal matters we call such behavior a lack of judgment, disobedience, or defiance. In spiritual terms we call it sin.

Halfway through my snow-shoveling task I felt as though giant hands were grabbing hold of my chest with unbelievable force. Gasping for breath, I barely managed to get inside the house before everything went black.

A doctor who was called gave me injections. Frightened and caring members of my family surrounded me as I regained consciousness. Amid the confusion and anxiety one thing became comfortingly clear— I was still alive! Thank God, it was so!

The ambulance took me away, headed for the intensive-care unit of the hospital. Things happened so quickly and with such routine that I could hardly comprehend it all. Before I knew it, I was lying in an ICU with numerous tubes in my body. It was not difficult to admit that I had arrived into another world. Here definite laws governed. Efficiency and cleanliness prevailed. Personal attention, thoughtful care, and love were given priority. These life-savers, these marvelous servants of mercy, these Samaritans, moved noiselessly and efficiently. I felt a hand on my shoulder; I got a comforting word. Fear was banished and replaced by knowing that I was in safe hands.

As the day progressed, it grew quiet in the rooms and corridors. During that first night in the intensive-care unit, I rehearsed the day's happenings. I found myself comparing hospital care to the kind of care the church gives. Didn't the messenger of the Lord say something about the church being a hospital for sinners?

Here I was, lying in an ICU bed, a decidedly physical “sinner.” I had been shoveling snow contrary to my doctor’s orders, and now I was reaping the full consequence of my disobedience. It would have been quite natural to expect both a dressing down and words of condemnation. But I didn’t experience a single syllable of either from those who were doing their best to save my life.

There wasn’t any expression of overbearing arrogance. I had no feeling of being treated by people who wanted to exhibit their own sufficiency. The doctor had heard all about the shoveling, the snow, and the cold. He had heard about the intense pain and the fainting. But there hadn’t been a single word of reprimand, not even one pointed finger.

In the hospital the primary concern is to save life. Isn’t
that exactly what ought to be the all-prevailing interest of the church?

Why do so many of the sinners in the church—those who in one way or another have gone contrary to the will of God—feel condemned, even rejected? What makes it so hard to come back if one has failed? Could it be that some churches and members are mismanaging their trust? Are we lacking in love?

Now I am back home trying to apply the lessons and the commitments gained from this experience. Every church member, every brother and sister, is in need of his or her private intensive-care unit. I like to remember that Jesus calls us to give time, sympathy, and understanding care in service to others. Saving lives is still the primary thing.

The words that were left with me on the way home were wise and helpful. They were uttered, firmly and decidedly, but with a sympathetic smile by the doctor in charge. In their practical simplicity, they reminded me of the words of Jesus to the sinner: “Now, go home, but shovel snow no more.”

Alfred C. Berger is a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist and a retired pastor living in Fagerstrand, Norway.
All Eyes on the Winner!

It makes a difference when we see the big picture, when we know the outcome.

BY PHILIP G. SAMAAN

Oh, I'm scared.”

The agonized words came tumbling out of Tara Lipinski shortly before her figure-skating competition in the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. This 15-year-old American skater just needed her mom’s reassurance. “It’s OK to be scared,” said her mom. “But you can do it.”

We all know that she went on to win, becoming the youngest gold medalist ever in the history of Olympic figure skating. Why would such a flawless skater be so close to success yet be so anxious about failure? Isn’t it because victory is conceived in the risky bowels of defeat? There we have it—“The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat,” as the sports slogan puts it. Probably Tara Lipinski rehearsed in her mind a thousand times the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat before her ultimate triumph.

I gladly listened to the news on the radio that Lipinski had won. Later, as I watched a rerun of her final performance on television, I was not in the least anxious about her final triumph. I was experiencing the “thrill of victory” for her, even though she, her parents, and her fans—being part of the actual event—were still anxious and unsure. From my vantage point, I already knew the final outcome. They did not.

The Christian application is clear. We already know the final outcome of the spiritual race in the great controversy. In the throes of anguish and the thick of threatening darkness, there is indeed good news for us—light at the end of the tunnel. Its powerful rays filter through the darkness and guide our weary steps to our heavenly home. Our Redeemer has already won the victory for us. Today He runs life’s road with us, and will be awaiting us at the end with the words “Well done” (Matt. 25:21).

Look to the Joy

Tara Lipinski, in her struggle to win the Olympic gold, endured many hardships, ridding herself of any hindrance that would impede her progress. If she could endure such hardship in order to win a perishable gold medal, how much more should we endure the cross for the crown of life!

Running the race with Jesus impels us to shake off the weights that impede our progress so we may “run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1, 2, NKJV).

We need to join the apostle Paul not only in knowing what it means to believe in Christ but also to suffer for Christ. “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ,” he said, “not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1:29, NKJV).

The apostle Peter also knew what it meant to experience victory snatched out of defeat. And in the midst of suffering he gives us a glimpse of the glory awaiting us at the end: “But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:13, NKJV).

The pilgrims on heaven’s highway persevere in suffering for the joy that is set before them, the joy to culminate in glory. We already know the final outcome of the great controversy between good and evil. We already know that at the end of...
the race total triumph is assured. We already know that at the end of this rugged road there is a rich reward.

The glorious prospect of the joy that is set before us surmounts our present suffering and transforms it into transcendent joy. If the prospect of a loved one coming to visit us fills us with joyous anticipation in the midst of suffering, how exceedingly more should the coming of our beloved Lord impact our lives today. Our suffering must always be viewed from the perspective of His sustenance. In the strain and stress of life, we must never allow the present suffering to eclipse the future glory. That is why Paul declared: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18, NKJV).

Share the Suffering

Brennan Manning depicts the scandal of the cross as the “signature of Jesus.” This signature is eternally etched in His blood upon His heart and is indelibly traced upon every person. The signature of Christ will break our hearts as it broke His, until our hearts convulse with His heartbeat. It is imperative for us to be like Christ if we are determined to become His devoted disciples. For we do not merely partake of His salvation; we also participate in His suffering. His condescension and crucifixion lead us to deny self daily, carry our cross, and follow Him.

The cross of Calvary propels us to experience radical discipleship, where we are willing to be humiliated for the sake of the humble and lowly One. This is risky and dangerous business, for the bloody signature of our Lord is traced upon the soul of every one of His faithful followers. When the crucified and risen Lord becomes our life, we share not only in His joy, His victory, and His exaltation, but also in His sorrow, His struggle, and His humiliation.

The humiliation of sharing in Christ’s suffering in this world will culminate in the exaltation of sharing His glory in the world to come. The beautiful crown awaiting us above emerges from the bloody cross actuating...
Jesus experienced His Father’s deaening silence on the cross. He could not see His Father’s face. “The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by [humans]. . . . The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him H is coming forth from the grave a conqueror.”

But He knew in whom He had believed, and by faith, not by sight, He gained the victory. He was forsaken (see Mark 15:34) so that we may never be forsaken.


No human being was ever summoned to drink such a bitter cup, nor has any come close to such a feeling of utter abandonment. Only the Son of God ever plunged into such an abyss of darkness. In our darkness we can see a light at the end of the tunnel; He could not.

And He did it all for you and me. His perfect faith is what we desperately need to inspire and fortify our own. Our faith riveted to His faith pierces through the darkest night, the thickest cloud— to discern the light beyond, trusting ever less in the seen and ever more in the unseen.

**We finally learn that sometimes, in the profoundest way, God’s silence is H is answer.**

Tenacity is more than hanging on, which may be but the weakness of being too afraid to fall off. Tenacity is the supreme effort of a man refusing to believe that his hero (Jesus) is going to be conquered.6

If Jesus Himself held on to H is Father amid the darkness, how much more we need to hold on to H im in the midst of our darkness?

When we long to live in the brilliance of H is light, H e allows us to plunge into the darkness of the night so that we may be compelled to live by faith and not by sight. When our way is hedged by darkness, when we stare at a moonless, starless night, when we’re enveloped by dark clouds shielding God’s presence from us, then we finally learn to truly trust in Him— then we’re able to testify with Job: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust H im” (Job 13:15, NKJV). Then we finally learn that sometimes, in the profoundest way, God’s silence is H is answer. A nd with the hymn writer we can sing: “When darkness seems to veil H is face, I rest on H is unchanging grace.”

5 Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1992), reading for February 22.
6 The Desire of Ages, p. 753.

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At the Edge of Restraint

It’s Monday morning and time to make my weekly commute from Naples, Florida, to Andrews University. I head for Southwest Florida Regional Airport earlier than usual. A storm is forecast to hit by midday. Instead of risking a delay on my 12:50 flight, I’ll be on standby for the 11:15 and try to get away before the storm hits.

Onto I-75 going north. In the passing lane. Going 75 miles an hour—five miles over the limit. Seventy-five on I-75. Troopers won’t bother you if you’re within five miles over. So I’ve heard. Passing a number of trucks and cars. Moving right along. Maybe I’ll be the first standby and make the 11:15.

From the rearview mirror I see a Dodge Viper rapidly gaining on me. Tailgating now. Slowing down. Impatient at my being in the way. What’s wrong with that guy? I’m going five miles over the limit and still he wants to pass?

OK, OK! I move over to the regular lane so the speed demon can pass. OK, now pass, you — — — (an unflattering word I heard my father use when I was a boy goes through my mind). The Dodge overtakes me as my anger overtakes me. I catch myself going faster. Now 80 miles an hour. Bad thoughts and bad names are directed to the driver of the Dodge, words not used in polite society, words I never use aloud, words that for years have seldom entered my mind.

Then remembrance of Jesus’ words: “Wosoever shall say, ‘Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire’” (Matt. 5:22). Not just “fool”—any derogatory name applied judgmentally and in anger to any soul for whom Christ died.

Then conviction: Oh, God, what’s wrong with me? This has been happening to me more and more lately. I am becoming possessed by unrighteous anger. Jesus, help. Jesus, take control. Don’t let the evil one take over.

And the still small voice speaks: “You’re in too much of a hurry. Keep within the speed limit. When it says 70, it means 70. Render unto Caesar. Intentionally going over 70 with no letup is different from occasionally and unintentionally slipping over the limit while watching the road. If you always consciously go beyond the limit—even if only a little—you will develop a frame of mind that affects your response to all laws, human and divine. You will eventually push against the edge of restraint in all things and rationalize a defense. The evil one will have you.”

Silence.

Slowing to 70.

Less tension. At peace with the state—and heaven. Not resentful of those who speed past me. No name-calling.

Instead, a prayer for their safety. “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Ps. 119:165).

Staying under 70 and singing.

“A mazing grace! how sweet the sound. . . .” “O h, to grace how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be . . . .” “W hate wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul . . . .” “I wonder as I wander out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come for to die for poor ornery people like you and like I . . . .” “I’m just a poor wayfaring stranger, traveling in this world below, but way up yonder there’s no sorrow in that fair land to which I go . . . .”

A airport exit up ahead. Already?

Long-term parking. Northwest ticket counter. “My ticket is for the 12:50 flight to Detroit. Could I be on standby for the 11:15 flight?”

“H ow about taking the 10:00 a.m. flight? It has plenty of room and is boarding now at Gate B6. You have time to make it.”

Thank You, Jesus.

So often as we drive on blue highways through little towns, we find all the lights are green—if we go the right speed. In Christ it is “not yea and nay” (2 Cor. 1:19), but in Him it is always yes. “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps. 84:11).

I should not go beyond the speed limit anymore. Neither should I push beyond the edge of God’s restraints. So it seems to me.

R. Lynn Sauls has taught English and journalism in Adventist colleges and universities for many years. He writes from Naples, Florida.
1000 Missionary Movement

A dream—1,000 young people a year to mission lands.

BY MYRNA TETZ, ADVENTIST REVIEW MANAGING EDITOR

Nothing about the site was particularly impressive, if buildings and facilities are a measurement device. The location of the 1000 Missionary Movement in North America on 260 acres near Louisville, Kentucky, boasts a couple house trailers, barns where tobacco had dried in ages past, and five rather modest buildings under construction.

But first glances are not great assessment methods. Add 33 prospective Missionary Movement volunteers, one paid director, 10 full-time and 15 part-time volunteers, and the dream of director Dr. Jairyong Lee, and a different scene emerges. Patterned after the program in the Philippines, this movement has as its goal the training of 1,000 young (age 18-30) missionaries every year to share God’s love in foreign lands. After one month of intense training, the young people are sent by twos to bring the gospel to new groups of people, help pastors with extended districts, assist in the growth of small churches, teach English language classes, and help with youth programs, for example.

On the morning of June 26, before 8:00 a.m., Jack Nash, pastor of the St. Matthew’s Seventh-day Adventist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and Missionary Movement board member, and I arrived at the site. A 88-year-old construction supervisor, Joo B. Lee (no relation to Dr. Lee), was on duty as well as director Lee and other volunteers. With the arrival of the 33 young movement missionaries, the day and the trek to the Prayer Garden began. This entailed a half-mile hike across an open field and a 51-log-defined-step climb to the worship area.

As we prayed and worshiped together in this beautiful wooded setting with stacked flat rocks as pews and a wooden cross as a backdrop, I began to sense the meaning and the mission of the 1000 Missionary Movement. A special place, this worship site would become a sanctuary for those seeking the companionship of their Saviour beyond the daily worship schedule.

Because this movement is in its infancy, between classes the youth help in the establishment of the facilities. With the temperature already in the high eighties and wiping the perspiration from their faces, some dragged and hauled materials from the construction site while others dug with
spades. During the work session I interviewed their leader and two young people. As they answered my questions, I better understood the dedication of those who are willing to participate in what appears to be a monumental project.

Soft-spoken, well-defined, and articulate, Dr. Jairyong Lee shared the story of the beginning of the movement in the Philippines and this one in the United States. He recalls listening to a representative of the General Conference explain that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is losing 60 percent of its young people.

“When we have to do something,” Lee said to himself during the discourse. Because he could not quiet this directive, the vision of the 1000 Missionary Movement was born—as much to save and keep our young people as to reach the world for Christ.

Just last March the movement in the Philippines celebrated having sent out 1,000 young missionaries, with 10,000 conversions and the building of 100 churches since its beginning in 1991. With the support of General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg, GC youth director Baraka Muganda, Global Mission director Mike Ryan, Southern Union president Malcolm Gordon, and Kentucky-Tennessee Conference president Richard Hallock, Lee’s first dream spawned a second.

“The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference committee voted to sponsor this movement in the United States just last year,” explained Lee. “With that assurance I came here to begin the second Missionary Movement.” Lee expresses his gratitude to the conference for their support in many different ways. Financially, however, except for one salary, the movement depends on donations.

“When the students come, there are all kinds,” Lee continued. “But here they get up at 5:30, begin with morning devotions, then classes, work education, prayer sessions, and friendships. Classes include a study of topics such as ‘Public Evangelism,’ ‘The Remnant Church,’ ‘Health Evangelism,’ ‘Bible Study,’ ‘Spirituality,’ and ‘Last-Day Events.’”

One student who was sent to China as a missionary was arrested and later released. A mother was robbed while serving in Russia. All are committed to laying down their lives if called to do so by the Lord.

Interviewing two young people convinced me that this movement is—as the founders have said—a training place that will change the lives of youth.

A student, Charles Bivens, from Gatlinburg, Tennessee, considered his future, a letter from the 1000 Missionary Movement arrived, and he was interested.

“I called the conference to check on the program’s legitimacy,” said Charles. “They said it was a great organization, and I filled out my application.”

A month’s training Charles and his partner, Ken Hou, from Buffalo Grove, Illinois, were in the first group to go to a foreign country. (See feature, p. 28.)

Fulfilling Prophecy

Working now at the movement site as a dean of boys, Charles has plans that include pursuing a theology major. After graduation he wants to return to “apply what I have learned and make what has happened to me happen for others.”

“I believe we are witnessing the fulfilling of Bible prophecy,” testifies Charles. “I believe this to be one manifestation of the latter rain.”

Kim Weisner joined the 1000 Missionary Movement very recently. She says that she was in and out of the church, working and attending a community college part-time, but she claims she had never found where she belonged.

She was sitting beside her mother at camp meeting listening to Dr. Jairyong Lee. “I felt, wow! My mother turned to me and said, ‘Is that something you’d like to do?’

“I’ll think about it,’ I responded. ‘And I need to pray.’”

Kim told the Lord that she knew He had a plan for her life. “I happened to be in Matthew 4,” continues Kim. “Christ was gathering His disciples. I stopped reading. Then I read about how they left their nets and followed Him.”

“OK, I know what You want me to do,” prayed Kim. “Now give me peace.”

Kim exudes enthusiasm and explains that her two Korean roommates have been such a blessing to her. “They are so disciplined, so focused, so helpful—they have taught me so much.”

There are big plans for the site. “An administration building on the side of a hill, more housing facilities, a proper kitchen and dining area, a play area, and the completion of the chapel,” lists Lee. “By Monday,” he says (and this is Friday), “the air-conditioning and heating units will be installed for the students’ housing, carpets will be laid, the plumbing will be functional, and the students can move in.”

I shake my head. But why would I question? These people have a dream.

For more information call (502) 895-4444.
"And you call yourself a church!"

BY KERMIT NETTEBURG, ASSISTANT TO THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATION

It was a Kudzu cartoon that highlighted the issue. A woman accosts the pastor at the door of the cartoon’s church and says, “What—no tanning salon? No juice bar? No food court? No fitness center?”

“And you call yourself a house of worship!”

I saw the cartoon the same day that I visited a historic church in downtown Washington, D.C.; it listed classes in yoga as part of its “ministry” to the community.

Just what is a church?

The answer is not trivial. The answer is the heart of defining what the Seventh-day Adventist Church should be. Our Sabbath school discussion group that same weekend excoriated the Adventist Church for not taking more stands on public issues.

Is that what a church is?

Scientists, Theologians, and Administrators Grapple With Issues of Science and Faith

Our concern tonight is [that of] someone who participates in two communities, the community of scientific inquiry and the community of faith. What is the experience of the scientist who is also a believer, particularly the scientist who serves in the employ of the Adventist Church? What questions will such a person have to face?

That statement, part of the keynote address by La Sierra University religion professor Richard Rice, essentially summed up the issue facing the conference on science and faith, which convened on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, July 23-29.

The meeting brought together about 140 participants (biologists, chemists, physicists, mathematicians, administrators, theologians, and experts in computer science) to focus on the big issues in regard to Creation.

Luke’s recording of the early Christian church in Acts gives us a picture of a church with a single focus: To spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who were perishing.

We still follow that model. This fall more than 5,000 churches around the world will participate in NET ’98—churches from virtually every time zone, churches on every inhabited continent, churches big and small. It is a clear message that the Seventh-day Adventist Church still believes that spreading the gospel is why we call ourselves a church.

The final panel of the Kudzu cartoon makes the point clearer: The woman clinches her diatribe of the pastor by saying, “What’s the point of your valet parking?” Indeed.

HEAVY STUFF: It was a focused crowd—that group of scientists, theologians, and administrators. Every plenary (as indicated in this half of the audience) was full, every breakout session well attended. (Photo Jack Stenger.)
Religion in the News

New Law Protects Charitable Donations

President Bill Clinton recently signed the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act into law. The bill protects the religious and charitable contributions made by people who later declare bankruptcy, reports Religion News Service.

“As Americans, we value the important role religious and charitable institutions play in the daily life of this nation,” Clinton said upon signing the bill on June 19. “It is a great loss to all of our citizens for creditors to recoup their losses in bankruptcy cases from donations made in good faith by our citizens to their churches and charitable institutions.

“As Americans, we also know that giving, whether to one’s church, temple, mosque, or other house of worship, or to any charitable organization, fosters and enriches our sense of community. We need to encourage, not discourage, that sense of community. The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act does just that.”—Religion News Service.

Historical Note

59 Years Ago . . . World War II Erupts

Church leaders counseled caution to those interpreting the outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939, as the beginning of Armageddon.

“There will doubtless be those who will venture to forecast the whole course of events, and attempt to define the outcome,” wrote General Conference president J. L. McElhany in a September 14 message. “Such a course we regard as unwise and attended with much peril. This is a grave and serious hour, a time when our words should be few.”

McElhany’s article illustrated that practical concerns were also on the minds of church leaders. He urged readers to pray for leaders at the General Conference, who would consequently have many more responsibilities thrust on them if a general war cut contact with mission territories.

In a September 28 note, Review associate editor Frederick Lee warned, “War no longer can be confined to regiments of soldiers at the front. The enemy strikes at any time and at any place.” Readers ought not to lose hope, however, Lee counseled, for “the Lord of the universe is most surely watching over this troubled world, and is waiting the hour, which cannot be far distant, when He will come and save us.”

WORLD NEWS & PERSPECTIVES

Religion in the News

with its focus on the deeper meaning and dimension of religious art (with AU art professor Greg Constantine) and on the evocative power of music (with organist-composer Kenneth Logan). In a brilliant, digitally enhanced performance of his own composition, “Congo Nights,” Logan transported the senses in one fell musical swoop into the heart of a tropical rain forest, filling the imagination with the sounds—and almost the sights and smells—of nature in the African night.

The conference’s plenary agenda divided into three parts: on design (in nature), geology, and origins. The Friday evening vespers, falling under the rubric of design, symbolized the greatest unanimity and consensus among participants. As they sang Cecil Alexander’s “All Things Bright and Beautiful,” there could hardly have been any question of a vibrant, common faith that “the Lord God made them all.”

That unanimity clearly came under strain, however, as the conference grappled with questions of geology and origins. And though presenters and respondents spoke with appropriate care, the alert observer could pick up clear signs of unresolved issues in these areas. A separate evening meeting of the Association of Adventist Physicists for example, heard calls for change in the church’s traditional position, not only on the age of the earth, but also on the age of living things. Such calls were far from unanimous, however, and represented a significant departure from the tone of the general sessions.

Guest presenters at the conference included astrophysicist Robert Newman of the Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, and philosopher Del Ratzsch of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Ratzsch’s new book, The Battle of Beginnings, received much attention at the conference, with its urgent call to both creationists and evolutionists for deeper intellectual honesty, rigor, and accountability.

NEWS NOTES

✔ CompuServe Users. You can access the Adventist Review online each week within 48 hours of presteime, and several days before the magazine reaches your home. The Review is available free of charge in the Adventists Online Forum (GO SDA).

If you have e-mail, you can also contact the Review staff online. Send letters, prayer requests, and subscription requests to reviewmag@adventist.org.

What’s Upcoming

Sept. 5 Lay Evangelism Day
Sept. 19 Family Togetherness Day
T'S SABBATH, A WINDY EARLY-SPRING Sabbath. An appeal is made for offerings to support the local church school. It seems that funds are desperately needed for the coming year. The congregation is reminded of the worthy student fund.

Now it's Sabbath afternoon, and I've been thinking about the offering call. I don't remember the subject of the sermon. It was good, but my mind has rewound a couple decades, and my heart is flooded with memories.

So Long Ago

When I was 6, my mother became a Seventh-day Adventist. My father, not being Christian, had difficulty understanding and adjusting to all the changes Mom began to make in our home. One of those changes was Mom's insistence that her two eldest school-aged children go to the local Adventist school, which was more than a 30-minute drive from our home. My father didn't understand why the nearby free public school wasn't good enough. But my mother persisted. She wanted her children to learn about the Bible in a caring atmosphere, with teachers and administrators who loved the Lord and His truth.

Sabbath was something else my father couldn't understand. But he honored my mother's desire to raise us as Adventists, making allowances to help us keep the Sabbath. The strain of these differences and misunderstandings led my parents down separate paths, and four years after my mother became a Seventh-day Adventist, they divorced.

During those four years our family had moved from the West Coast to the East. My father, who worked in the aerospace industry, had changed companies. The loss of a major contract resulted in a company-wide cutback, and my father was laid off shortly after the divorce. Finding herself in a new state with no relatives, few friends, no money, and no job skills, my mother searched for ways to keep her daughters in church school. She struggled severely with her need for help and her strong natural pride.

I especially remember a tearful afternoon she spent in our living room with the principal of our small two-room, eight-grade school. She explained that between the divorce and the loss of my father's job, she would no longer be able to pay the full tuition, but would willingly do anything to help her two oldest children stay in church school. She taught cooking classes, drove the school van, and generally made herself available for anything that needed to be done.

Eventually Mom found a factory job in a city an hour's drive from school. But with two small children, in addition to two children in school, she also needed day care. For a time we attended a non-Adventist Christian school that had a day-care center. It was a wonderful friendly school, but my mother, who had come from a Sunday church background, was concerned about its influence on her Sabbathkeeping children. I remember Mom crying at night, praying to be able to send us again to an Adventist school.

Mother's job required her to be at work early in the morning, so every morning at 5:30 we all got into the car and slept while Mom listened to soft music on the radio and drove the half hour to the school and day care center. Then she drove an hour in the opposite direction to her job. She picked us up at 6:00 every evening, when the day-care center closed. It

BY CHERYL GILBERTSON
was exhausting for all of us.

The following year all four of us were in school. Mom enrolled us in another Adventist school even farther from where we lived. Knowing it would be impossible to send us all on her minimum wage, Mom again went to the school principal and treasurer, whom she didn’t know, to ask what arrangements could be made. She would be able to pay only a small amount each month, but she so wanted her children to learn in an Adventist school.

There was a large Adventist hospital in this new city, and my mother applied for a job there. The pay and the location were better. Arrangements were also made for the two eldest of us to sell Christian magazines that summer. We were not paid in cash, but received a scholarship toward our tuition. I was extremely shy, and the thought of selling magazines on street corners and going door-to-door terrified me. But I knew the sacrifices my mother had made and was making, and how important it was to her that we attend this school, so I swallowed my fear. During the school year we cleaned the classrooms after school for an hourly wage that was applied to our account.

Late that fall Mother began working in the housekeeping department of the hospital. We moved into a townhouse near the school. When I was old enough I got my first “real” job in nutrition services, alongside many of my friends.

Still Struggling

At the end of every summer during my academy years my mother petitioned the school board for student financial aid. Even with her higher wage she was unable to pay full tuition for four children. During my senior year my best friend’s parents were on the school board, and she had overheard them mention a doctor and his wife who had shown great kindness to my mother and us children. They were the ones responsible for keeping me and my siblings in school.

I graduated from academy and enrolled in an Adventist college. Their sympathy toward my mother (while others whispered about “the divorcée”) inspired great admiration in me. I listened intently when they taught my youth Sabbath school class and watched them sit together during the worship service.

I graduated from academy and enrolled in an Adventist college. After attending for two years and experiencing some unfortunate events, I spent a summer counseling at an Adventist summer camp. When forms for my financial aid were not forwarded in time for my signature, I missed the deadlines for my grants and loans and lost them. Without this help I was unable to return to college after my sophomore year.

Discouraged and depressed, I drifted out of the church. At 20 I no longer felt optimistic about my faith or my future. Attending an Adventist college seemed an impossible dream.

I worked, staying out of college for a year and a half before enrolling in a non-Adventist college. There were times during those college years when I would cry in my dorm room, wishing to get back to the trusting, peaceful relationship I’d had with God during academy. I graduated two years later.

There were times when I was with friends that I’d remember the things I’d been taught at church school—about drinking, about relationships, about the Sabbath. Memory verses long forgotten would present themselves in bold black letters in my mind.

After graduating with honors, I moved back to the West Coast to begin my career in a large city. I loved it. But the excitement of independence, a new job, a new city, and new friends soon began to wane. Again I felt the old familiar longing.

I tried going to a few Adventist churches, but some were cold. In others I never got over the feeling of being a visitor. I attended one church regularly for about three months. But each Sabbath the people always seemed surprised to see me as they fumbled over my name. Still, the memory verses “I will never leave you or forsake you” and “Remember the Sabbath day” often surfaced into my consciousness.

I finally quit going to church, giving it up “for good.” I decided that in seven years of trying to get back to
God, somewhere, somehow, I’d crossed a boundary and I’d never get back. It just seemed like a waste of time and energy trying to relive the past.

Is That You, Lord?

One morning as I was waiting for the bus to the downtown bank where I worked, I saw a street person passed out across the wide sidewalk. Without even thinking, I stepped over him. With great force in my mind I heard and saw the verse: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). In that instant I saw the cold stoniness of my heart. But in my professional dress, on my way to my professional job, I brushed it off.

All day long that verse rang in my ears. Indeed, every time I saw a homeless person after that, the forceful words returned: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . .”

A few weeks later I received a brochure in the mail. Then I saw an occultish-looking ad on TV, advertising a prophecy seminar. As a former Adventist, I instantly recognized the topics. My sister, who, with her husband, had also moved to the same city, received the same brochure in the mail and saw the strange ad on TV. We had talked about returning to church, and each of us had done so periodically. We discussed the reasons we stopped going back to a warm and supportive church. We love this truth. We love our church. We love our God.

After an exhausting, uphill battle and some unfortunate incidents, my mother also drifted away from the church. But the Lord has brought her back to a warm and supportive church family, and she too is learning to let go of the mistakes of the past—others and her own.

Precious Memories

A few weeks ago I found an old Review. As is my habit, I began my reading in the back, looking for the list of those leaving for mission service. I’ve often seen the names of former teachers, pastors, and classmates, and their siblings and parents, listed. In this issue was the name of the doctor and his wife who sponsored my tuition so long ago. I have heard over the years that they returned to mission work several times. My heart thrilled as I read their names.

Since I rededicated my life to God a few years ago, I’ve served as a volunteer missionary teaching English and Bible in Asia. I praise God for the opportunities He has presented, enabling me to be involved in mission work both at home and abroad.

It has now been many years since I graduated from academy, and I’m thinking of the winds of the Spirit that have blown through my life, the whispers, the gales—all the positive influences. I’ll never forget my mother’s faith, her tenacity, perseverance, and strength. I think of visits to my hometown church, where parents of old academy friends would smile and give me a warm welcome. I recall teachers who were compassionate and supportive about my unpredictable family life, as well as the principals and school board members who responded in answer to a desperate mother’s pleas and prayers.

Above all, I praise the Lord for the doctor and his wife, who will never know until heaven the influence they’ve had on my life with their financial support and their great and humble example.

I hear the wind through the windows, and my mind returns to the request for offerings this morning. I’ve heard many reasons parents choose not to send their children to Adventist schools. But as I consider their reasons, I remember a small, proud, tearful woman who sat in her living room a few short months after her divorce and swallowed her pride to ask the principal if there was any way for her two eldest children to attend church school; a woman who took advantage of any opportunity for the privilege of sending her children to a truth-teaching school. I think of the Wind that has settled in the quiet spirit of my heart as I lay down my pen, and I am grateful. Through it all, He has changed my heart, my life.

Cheryl Gilbertson lives in Centerville, Ohio, where she works for a software company.
listening to women reading their stories, I am amazed at the fortitude that holds families together under stress, lends a constancy to the lives of children, and infuses power and hope into even the bleakest of circumstances.

I am convinced that the world is made up of many strong women. Women who keep going when there is only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug; women who gather sticks in the early morning, work wool and flax with eager hands, and wear garments of strength and dignity. Women of faith and courage.

One year ago a reader of the Review entered a plea for understanding in the Give and Take column. Her eighth child, a little girl, had been born with Down’s syndrome. Physical complications made caring for this child difficult and heartwrenching. Responding to her request for support, a woman 2,000 miles away penned a letter straight from the heart. Over the course of the next year the two became kindred spirits, buoying one another up through difficult times.

I have before me seven letters written by a mother of eight, heralding a year of faith and triumph. The correspondence tells the story in simple eloquence, relating the details of a life in words penned at odd hours, moments snatched when children slept and laundry lay clean and folded. I am energized by reading of a mother in another place who saved $4,000 from birthday gifts, odd change, and grocery money to finance a child’s surgery. I gain new strength for my own journey by reading of another woman who rises at dawn, takes the horses down to pasture, teaches a young son who is struggling to read, guides her daughter through the world of academics, instructs a neighbor in piano, weeds the garden, cans, freezes, doctors a sick calf, practices midwifery, cleans up after a sick child, and sews a quilt for a friend.

My faith is fortified by the texts that she clings to as her 3-year-old develops medical problems, her 1-year-old requires care that is expensive and out of reach. “Daily I see His goodness” she writes. “I know He loves and cares for me, and I can say with confidence that all things work together for good, and that struggles produce the greatest Christian growth.” Her words strengthen me.

We are bound together: women, Christians, Seventh-day Adventists. Bound with the octogenarian who writes to me of her efforts to renew her marriage after 57 years of hatred. Bound with the isolated woman on the edges of the desert who draws strength from John 6:37; the aunt from California clipping Review articles for her grief-stricken niece in Massachusetts; the 80-year-old from Georgia who sends me four typed pages of God’s leading in her life, encloses a tape of a local gospel artist, and adds on a segment of her yellow-nape Amazon parrot squawking recognizable words into the microphone.

We draw strength from one another. Because a mother in Idaho can line up seven children and drive them, washed and scrubbed, to a Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary, I know that I can arise early on Sabbath morning in New England, catch up on my Bible reading, put the dog out, rinse the breakfast dishes, prepare for guests, teach the youth class, and navigate my own two sons into a chapel in Lincoln, Rhode Island.

We are sisters—mostly unidentified, anonymous—humble believers clinging to faith, refusing to give up, solving problems, soothing the cries of children, walking the aisles of grocery stores, stretching our minds and money, finding courage in moments of crisis, calling our pleas to the Lord in the night.

Like our sisters of old, the Lord will not forsake us. “So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah” (1 Kings 17:15, 16, NIV).

Sandra Doran, Ed.D., is an educational consultant and special lecturer at Providence College in Rhode Island.
Potato Soup and Mission Work

When God has His way, the recipe is a culinary masterpiece.

BY S. CHARLES BIVENS

Just what,” you may well ask, “does potato soup have in common with mission work?” Well, first I have to tell you about my potato soup.

Several days ago I stood making a pot of potato soup here in Chiba, Japan—my mission field. Now, my recipe is simple (my mother’s recipe, actually): milk, salt, and of course... potatoes. It’s simple and it’s good. I also add a little cornstarch to thicken it. Kind of like a chowder.

On this particular day I thought, Why not add some carrots? So sure enough, I did—then some celery, mushrooms, baby garlic, and green onions. Now, it was good, mind you, very good. But my point is this: I intended it to be potato soup, just plain potato soup, nothing fancy. When I got through with it, though, it was a culinary masterpiece!

“Oh, K,” you’re saying by now, “the guy’s a good cook. So what? What’s that got to do with mission work?” Bear with me; I’m getting to that. Remember this principle: what I intended it to be wasn’t what it became, and the end was even better than I intended.

Let me tell you another story. One year ago I enrolled in college, and I was thinking I would have a potato soup experience. God had a different idea. I received and accepted a call to the 1000 Missionary Movement Training Center in Louisville, Kentucky.* You see, God was adding some carrots to my “potato soup” ideas about my ministry. Halfway through the training I found out I would be going to Japan. Japan! Of all places (God had just added the celery and the baby garlic).

What God wanted me to do has turned into the greatest experience of my life. I have learned more about the redeeming love of Christ, more about God’s patience, His kindness, His sacrifice, than I could have back home in the States. God has changed my life!

Of course, I’ll continue my education, but with a different emphasis. I know now that I’ll never be able to be anything other than what I am now—a missionary. It’s with this goal, this thought, that I seek the best education. God wasn’t content with the potato soup experience for me. He wanted to give me the culinary masterpiece experience. And that’s just what it’s been, too, teaching Bible and English at the 3-H Language School in Chiba, Japan.

Four months ago one of our students said that her greatest desire was to be someone’s mistress. We thought we had misunderstood her because her English was not very good, but upon checking, we discovered we had heard correctly. What became her new goal? “To be baptized,” she would tell you. She has completed baptismal classes and was baptized in March.

I wouldn’t trade what God has done—watching Him work—for all the potato soup in the world. I may eat some potato soup now and again, but my experiences with God will always be culinary masterpieces.

God may be inviting you to a similar experience. There are thousands of Seventh-day Adventists who are thinking “potato soup.” Let God into your kitchen. Change your major; come out of retirement; do whatever He calls you to do. From now on, let Jesus do your cooking. You may be surprised that what you expected wasn’t the result God had in mind.

* See World News and Perspectives, p. 20.

S. Charles Bivens is currently working at the 1000 Missionary Movement site in Louisville, Kentucky.
Literature Requests

Imagine doing evangelistic work or leading a church without enough books to read, Bibles to go around, or literature for interested persons. A large percentage of Seventh-day Adventist churches face this challenge. At the same time in North America we spend thousands on Sabbath school materials and other literature that we throw away when we finish with them.

The names below come with requests for Bibles, Spirit of Prophecy books, Adventist books and magazines, Sabbath school lessons, and evangelistic materials. Other needs, such as children’s materials, are noted with the names. One word of caution—our friends in these countries are often poor and a few times have asked for financial assistance. Please do not send money overseas.

GHANA
Adu Acheampong
Home Health Education Service
P.O. Box 275
Sunyani, Brong-Ahafo, Ghana

Pastor Opokue A gyemang
(associate district pastor)
Mampong A shanti District of SDA
P.O. Box 61
Mampong-A shanti, Ghana

Evangelist Paul Wiriedu A nyankwah
P.O. KN 151
Kumasi, Ghana

B. Y. A samoa
SDA Church
Mid-West Ghana Conference
P.O. Box 727
Sunyani, Brong-Ahafo, Ghana
(youth/Pathfinder leader)

E. O. Boansi, Chaplain
SDA Secondary School

Stephen Y. Busi
Seventh-day Adventist Church
P.O. Box 22
Kintampo, Brong-Ahafo, Ghana

Frederick A nadjoe, Jr.
Seventh-day Adventist Church
P.O. Box 2
A gona-A hanta, Ghana

Thomas M ankrado
(lay preacher)
A zani Town
P.O. Box 87
A hanta, A gona
Takoradi, Ghana

Baffoe Samuel
SDA Educational Unit
P.O. Box 16
Sunyani, Brong-Ahafo, Ghana

KENYA
Pastor Daniel Kiptoo Bett
c/o South-Rift Mission of SDA Church
P.O. Box 1705
Kericho, Kenya

Mrs. Pauline N. Meraba
P.O. Box 1995
Kisi, Kenya

VBS materials, Picture Rolls, hymnals

Elkanah M. Mogusu
P.O. Box 1995
Kisi, Kenya

Joel Mose Obwogo
Nyamache Secondary School
P.O. Box 194
Kisi, Kenya

Children’s books and magazines, Picture Rolls.

Pastor Daniel N. Ongiri
Kisi Town Adventist Church
P.O. Box 2070
Kisi, Kenya

NIGERIA
Henry V. Oshiri
Rivers Conference of SDA Church
P.O. Box 111
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Spirit of Prophecy and other SDA books

PHILIPPINES
Mrs. Merlynda A. Ando
1207 USM Avenue, Kabacan
South Cotabato 9407, Philippines

Pastor T. Batulayan
Poblacion, Banga

9511 South Cotabato, Philippines
SDA books and books for grades 1-6; textbooks, storybooks.

Fortunato Buquaquina
Central Seventh-day Adventist Church
Oroquieta City
7207 Misamis Oriental, Philippines

Samuel Escosura
Dolefil SDA Church
Valencia Site
9504 Polomolok, South Cotabato, Philippines

Wilfredo Miado
c/o Southern Mindanao Mission
P.O. Box 152 General
9500 Santos City, South Cotabato, Philippines

Regemelc Simyunn
SDA Church
Notre Dame Avenue
9600 Cotabato City, Philippines

ZAMBIA
Chalwe Chilufya
c/o North Zambia Field
P.O. Box 710286
Mansa, Zambia

Prophetic pictorial aids on Daniel and Revelation.

ADVENTIST REVIEW, AUGUST 27, 1998 (1173) 29
Do you have a toaster at your house? Have you ever wondered how it works? How does it know when the toast is ready?

The secret is the bimetal switch—a special switch made of two metals. Metal expands when it gets hot; however, different kinds of metal expand at different amounts of heat. The people who invented toasters took one metal that expanded only a little when it got hot and one metal that expanded more. They stuck the two pieces of metal together. When this new bimetal plate gets hot, it bends!

When you push the lever to start the toaster, the heat turns on. The heat toasts the bread, and it also makes the bimetal switch get hot. As the bimetal switch gets hotter, it starts to bend. The switch bends over and pushes a hook away. The hook releases a spring, which pushes the toast up and turns off the heat. As it cools down, the bimetal switch goes back to its unbent shape.

You may think it would be fun to take your toaster apart so you can see all these switches, hooks, and springs. It’s easier to take a toaster apart than to put it back together. Maybe you can find one at a garage sale for 25 cents— you can take it apart all you want.

The bimetal switch works because even though the two pieces of metal are different, they work together. People need to learn to work together like that.

People are different. They have different ideas. They have different ways of doing things and different ways of thinking. This is good—if they are willing to work together.

If you like to do crossword puzzles, you know that it is fun to do them with someone else. They might think of an answer that you haven’t been able to come up with. Jigsaw puzzles are more fun with someone else too. Life’s puzzles are easier to solve when we work together.

The Bible says, “It is good and pleasant when God’s people live together in peace! It is like having perfumed oil poured on the priest’s head and running down his beard” (Psalm 133:1, 2, ICB).

Well, that’s good and pleasant, I’m sure. But maybe we could also say: “When God’s people live together in peace, it is like two different metals bending together to make the perfect piece of golden brown toast.”
was resting on the bed one evening when our 4-year-old appeared, tousled and large-eyed, having played outside late enough to watch the moon rise over nubby southern California hills. Companionably, he crawled up beside me.

“The face of God is looking down on me,” he confided. There was a pause. Then seriously, “Isn’t the moon the face of God?” I reserved a smile for later.

“Well—not really. But you can pretend it is.”

“Yeah.”

Another pause.

“Will the sun be red when Jesus comes?” And I had another clue to the private thoughts of a boy in the backyard after bedtime.

I think our son was in good company that long-ago evening. Company like Enoch, who, following his vision of the Lord coming with tens of thousands of angels, must have recalled the scene again and again! Or Joel, once favored with a preview of certain heavenly signs preceding the Second Advent. Almost certainly he pondered them as he watched the yellow moon rise.

Malachi must have often remembered his view of evil’s eradication, even as Abraham dreamed of a city and Paul the incomparable resurrection day.

I can imagine that William Miller, student of Daniel’s prophecy, cherished his thoughts of glory when disappointment bowed him down, and Ellen White, who brought us hopeful words like a few grapes from Canaan, treasured her glimpses of heaven.

The list could go on. For, as Peter observed soon after Jesus’ ascension, “heaven must receive [Him] until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21, NKJV).

All His holy prophets! What company to be in! Yet here in the nineties we like to be pragmatic. Is it reasonable to be preoccupied with the Second Coming year in and year out? After all, from the time on Olivet’s hillside Jesus discussed H is return roughly 2,000 years have passed; from the day early Adventists peered expectantly into the blue, more than 150. However good our intentions or pleasant our imaginings, do we tend to set ourselves up for disappointment again and again? It’s a question not a few thoughtful Seventh-day Adventists have asked.

But perhaps there’s a better one for us to consider: Just how badly do we want Jesus to come?

In 1844 while some Christians pored over prophecy and looked for an imminent coming, others frowned and whispered, “Fanaticism.” Seeing that the event did not occur when predicted, were the critics right?

We have to conclude they were not wrong about everything. But they were not right.

For when Jesus failed to come on October 22 of that year, none of the critics cried. When on October 23 the sun rose without a hitch and shops along Main Street opened as usual, they relaxed and slapped each other on the back.

Why?

For the answer perhaps we can look into our own hearts. If we’re not on tiptoe watching for Jesus to come, why aren’t we? If we’re not devouring end-time prophecies more hungrily than ever, why not? Which leads to a second serious question: Do we rather like it here?

When I met my friend Joan one morning in the supermarket, she seemed excited about a certain item of world news. (I’m sure she had in mind more than an isolated incident, in itself unworthy of much ado.)

“Our Lord is coming!” she exclaimed joyfully.

I think our Lord must have smiled. It is, after all, “to those who eagerly wait for Him” that “He will appear a second time . . . for salvation” (Heb. 9:28, NKJV).

Lord of prophets and saints and little children, keep me in good company. Let me watch the red sun sinking and call to mind expectantly Your coming. Let me gaze upon the moon in quietness. The face of God is looking down on me.

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