Parish Nursing: Riding a New Wave

Jesus the Unsinkable

Drug Proofing Your Family

Preserved for a Purpose

Simon Madrigal: From the gangs of East Los Angeles to servant of the Most High God.
America the Beautiful?

In “America the Beautiful!” (July NAD Edition) David B. Smith discusses what role Christian citizens should play in America’s political landscape. We should praise God daily that this nation’s founders, when the time of decision came, had resolved that question in their hearts. They believed that “when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government” (Declaration of Independence).

I submit that the men God used to secure the blessings of civil and religious liberty knew God’s Word better than we do. They knew that American citizens have a right and a duty not only to participate in their government, but also, if need be, to fight and die to preserve “certain unalienable rights” with which they were “endowed by their Creator.” Because we have become spiritually ignorant, we now numbly tolerate things our founders died to prevent.

—Robert S. Nakamoto
Burns, Tennessee

Moral Dilemmas?

It was indeed encouraging to see Jan Charles Haluska’s “In Christ There Are No Moral Dilemmas” (July NAD Edition). For many years I have firmly believed that there are no such dilemmas—or “gray areas.” Whenever I have thought there was such a dilemma in my life, I have found, in all honesty, that it was something I was unwilling to allow God to control.

—Elizabeth Stern
Via E-mail

Yes! Haluska has at last driven a stake through the heart of the phony moral dilemmas posed by even some Adventism’s darlings of higher education.

Some years ago a certain professor presented Haluska’s classic scenarios involving the hiding of Jews when surprised by the gestapo. The professor permitted only two choices: tell the truth or lie.

The next day I sought him out and presented a third option worded almost precisely like Haluska’s: “I refuse to answer your question.” In my naiveté I had fully expected the professor to say that this was just the answer he had hoped to hear in class. Instead, he blew off my reply as unworthy of serious theoretical consideration.

Thanks to Haluska, to Ron DuPreez for inspiring him, and to Christ for inspiring both! This article is eloquent in its simplicity—the perfect tonic for professional myopia syndrome.

—Jerry Stevens
Ferndale, Michigan

Regarding Your Letters

Lately we’ve been receiving a host of letters—and a host of letters-related questions. Here are some answers:

- The letters section is reader-driven. Letters published always represent letters received.
- A short letter is more likely to get published than a long letter saying the same thing.
- In general, our turnaround time for letters is two months (one month for readers to submit letters, one month to presstime). For example, most of the letters appearing in this issue, the September NAD Edition, respond to articles in the July NAD Edition. Letters appearing in the September Cutting Edge Edition (the third issue of each month) will respond to articles in the August Cutting Edge Edition, etc.
- When sending a letter, always include your city and state/country. Readers are more interested in where the letter originated than how it was sent.

Thanks for making the letters section such an engaging part of the Review. We must admit, though—some weeks we like it better than others.

—Robert S. Nakamoto
Burns, Tennessee

If Haluska’s main point was that Christians do not have any moral dilemmas, a visit to a prayer-seeking Seventh-day Adventist hospital ethics committee may be in order.

If Haluska’s main point was that Christians should not let consequences influence their estimate of the acceptability of a decision, he need not tell us about the results of Dirk’s martyrdom and the resulting shame that led the Dutch to religious tolerance. Why even talk about
consequences if we can’t let them influence our choices?

If Haluska’s main point was that God never struggles with a decision, he may wish to revisit Jesus’ struggle in Gethsemane, the accounts of Lucifer’s ousting from heaven, the Flood, and the final elimination of evildoers.

—Duane Covrig, Assistant Professor of Ethical Studies
Faculty of Religion
Loma Linda University
Loma Linda, California

We read Haluska’s article while helping with an evangelistic campaign in Reading, Pennsylvania, as part of our seminary training.

This is a “hard teaching,” and we have fallen short of the mark, but Haluska is right—and by God’s grace we will humbly submit to it and urge others to do likewise. No more situation ethics.

This message is challenging, radical, and uncompromising. It unleashes the Holy Spirit, transforms lives, and changes the world. It can ignite the hearts of young people, of new believers, of all who seek to do God’s will, and it will win precious souls to Christ. This is what He taught, and it is what we should live and share. God help us.

—Ed Christian, Jonathan Cheong, Kenneth I. Davilla, John Elliott, Skip Dodson, Brad Cassell

We received heavy mail on this topic. Look for more letters next week.—Editors.

Facing the Music
I was so relieved to see Ray Dabrowski’s news commentary, “Serious, but Not Weird” (July NAD Edition). Someone had sent me a copy of the Washington Post article, and I was furious. Sometimes our own members make our church look ignorant and senseless. I couldn’t agree more with Dabrowski’s article.

—Beth Schaefer
Laurel, Maryland

A Winner
The June 19 Cutting Edge Edition was such a winner!

Regarding Andy Nash’s “It’s Still the Best Policy”: It takes a courageous young person with integrity to say, “Our primary task is to be refreshingly honest”; “Objectivity brings credibility”; and “We hesitate to tell (or picture) the whole truth [because of the] sensitivity of those members who don’t want to know the whole truth.” Thanks for saying what many have been thinking.

Regarding Alex Bryan’s “The Theology of Chilling Out”: It’s refreshing to hear someone say, “A desire for theological perfection . . . leave[s] us vulnerable to religious intolerance.” But he presents quite a challenge to “love God with intensity and people with tender compassion.”

Erik Stenbakken’s goal of “adopting God’s values of unselfishness” while balancing the knowledge that “God Himself instilled in us an appreciation for beauty and quality” is indeed not easy.

And to think that this—and more—was all in one issue of the Review!

—Frank McMillan
Orlando, Florida

Death Row Response
In the June NAD Edition you published Michael Ross’s “How to Bring Light to Death Row,” regarding the Death Row Support Project, which I coordinate. This appeal has received a phenomenal response—approximately 350 letters and many phone calls. This is wonderful!

Thank you very much for your willingness to print Michael’s letter. Many people on death row will be blessed by this.

—Rachel Gross
Death Row Support Project
Liberty Mills, Indiana

Escape From Albania
First they heard the artillery. Then the small-arms fire. Then came the bullets whizzing through the air. It was time to leave.
“Behold, I come quickly…”

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ through stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.

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Vol. 174, No. 36
“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8, NIV).

Remember how you reacted when the odometer of your car reached 99,990? You kept alert for the next 10 miles, didn’t you, determined to witness the changeover to 100,000. Somehow round numbers or multiples of round numbers fascinate us. That’s why we fuss about the twenty-fifth anniversary of an event while almost completely ignoring the twenty-fourth. And we watch out for the fiftieth, the seventy-fifth, the 100th, our fascination growing the larger the number gets.

That same psychology keeps many today transfixed to the approaching calendar year 2000, a date once regarded as distant, out of reach, almost foreign to our frame of reference. On that date the 1,000-year-old “1,” so familiar to us all, will give way to a brand-new “2.” The event is so compelling to some that they feel even God should be duly impressed.

History Repeating Itself

On the basis of Bible prophecy Uriah Smith came to the conclusion, near the turn of the last century, that time could not continue much longer. As far as he was concerned, only a few more details yet remained to round out the “prophetic outline” and complete the picture. The end could come, he wrote in 1897, before the close of the century.¹

Smith’s feathers were ruffled, however, when a certain Rev. M. Baxter, using what Smith regarded as bogus premises, stole his thunder. Baxter predicted that the world would end April 30, 1901—a particularly “mischievous” forecast, as far as Smith was concerned, since in Smith’s view, it came “unquestionably right on the eve of the closing time of trouble and the end of all things.” “It would be nothing strange,” Smith contended, “if all should be consummated long before the date” set by Baxter. But it would be unfortunate and misleading, Smith felt, if people should confuse the obviously approaching end with Baxter’s “groundless theories.”²

It is one thing to know, as we do now, that both Smith and Baxter were wrong. But it’s quite another to learn from their mistake. And as we head toward the close of another century, it’s become clear that many among us have not done the latter. That is why the Adventist Review intentionally returns again and again to this theme.³

Our Predicament

The problem we face today is that of maintaining a sense of urgency in regard to the Second Advent while at the same time repudiating the growing hype all around us—in the world and in the church. It should be very clear, for all who have eyes to see, that no single human being or any group of us—however fervent, or earnest, or spiritual—can force the hand of God. He will come when He is good and well ready to do so.

Therefore, each of us must grapple with this question: Are we prepared for the long haul, if that’s what it turns out to be?

Speaking to His disciples just before He left the earth, Jesus threw out for their consideration the haunting question that begins this editorial, a question that’s equally relevant to us as we anticipate the Second Advent. When He comes, will He find us beating up on one another⁴ or waiting in faith?

“Faith,” says the author of Hebrews, “is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1, NIV). In other words, it anchors itself in the promise of God, regardless of the presence or absence of external signs or evidence. It is not restless. It does not exploit the credulity of the unstable (especially not for the sake of filthy lucre). It does not twist the truth. Does not wrest the Scriptures. Does not become anxious. Does not indulge in prophetic speculation. Does not manufacture evidence for its hope.

With consummate patience, faith waits, though the promise tarries.

Our challenge is to talk about problems less and pray about them more. Criticism is the devil's substitute for intercessory prayer. Those comments came from one of our faithful employees at the North American Division office. She works in an office where she hears all the scuttlebutt at the General Conference complex—all the political gossip. At the end of each day she could probably tell you 10 things she has heard about how the church is enfeebled and defective.

But she has learned God's principle of successful living: intercessory prayer drives the devil away. From us. From our conversations. From the problems of life.

For those around us, for those we love, for those we may dislike, intercessory prayer draws us together and drives the devil away.

What she said touched me deeply. I know many of the problems of the church. Indeed, dealing with those problems is what I do most of the time. But I love breaks from those problems. That's probably why a worship at the division office a few weeks ago resonated with me so deeply. It was about prayer. Thelma Caldwell, one of the secretaries in our office, asked people to share thoughts about their prayer life.

For example, Thelma asked if a certain time of the day is better to pray and have devotionals. While many people responded that they liked to pray first thing in the morning, others had some very interesting ideas about the best time of day to pray.

"After work," said one.

"I like to pray as I am falling asleep," said another. "This way my first thoughts in the morning are about my Master and Brother, Jesus."

"I pray in short, quiet whispers all day long," said another. "And sometimes in long conversations with God."

"God and I talk all day long," observed someone.

"Whether silently, out loud, singing a song with a message I want to embrace, or on my knees."

Another question in Thelma's survey asked if people had a special feeling about prayer. These answers were much more diverse.

"Prayer is my survival kit," remarked one individual. "Prayer gives me hope," said someone else. "Whenever something is happening, I can talk to my Friend. He's the one who's in control of everything."

"How would I handle the cares of life without prayer?" asked another person. "Or the joys, for that matter?"

Noon at the division office is a special time for several of the members of our staff. We have a small prayer chapel. It seats only 20 or so, but every noon a group of the division office workers meets to pray over our requests to God. Many letters come to the division office expressing concerns and burdens, hopes and joys. All of these requests go into the prayer log we keep in the chapel, and all of these requests are presented to God at the daily prayer gathering.

Thelma asked if people had a special place to pray other than the prayer chapel. Some unusual places were mentioned.

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"My place of prayer is by the side of my bed," mentioned one person. "And I have a special rug that I use to kneel on."

"I pray when I am in my car," said another.

"Everywhere is my special place to talk to God," commented someone else. "He's my friend who's with me every second."

Criticism is the devil's substitute for intercessory prayer. Sometimes criticism seems like the best way to improve things. But God's plan is that we will improve things by praying for one another. That's the best way to make things better.

That worship on prayer was wonderful. It's one I'll long remember. It reminded me that there are no difficulties too great for a praying office staff—or for a praying church.

Alfred C. McClure is president of the 850,000-member Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.
SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Log on to the 6,000-plus-member Adventists Online Forum on CompuServe, and you’re sure to find discussions ranging from church structure to the Green Bay Packers. Here were the 15 most popular discussions from January to June.
(Explanations are in parentheses.)

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<th>Messages</th>
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<td>2,971</td>
<td>Democratic Hypocrisy</td>
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<td>2,662</td>
<td>Fetal Prophets! (abortion)</td>
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<td>1,328</td>
<td>Clinton Poisons Kids (national school lunch program)</td>
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<td>1,313</td>
<td>Pipim Versus Thompson</td>
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<td>1,239</td>
<td>Paula Jones Versus Clinton</td>
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<td>1,173</td>
<td>Common Sense (women’s ordination)</td>
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<td>1,167</td>
<td>Hybels/Bretsch Connection (impact of Willow Creek on Adventist congregations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>The Grace Place or CAF (Christ Advent Fellowship, Berthoud, Colorado)</td>
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<td>991</td>
<td>Family Enrichment Resources Board Action</td>
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<td>975</td>
<td>Republican Hypocrisy</td>
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<td>841</td>
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<td>696</td>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
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<td>634</td>
<td>Todd Belief Part 1 (Catholic-bashing, creation/evolution, etc.)</td>
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<td>625</td>
<td>Deaf Sign Language</td>
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<td>570</td>
<td>Sabbath Versus Ratzlaff</td>
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ONLINE KING: Bruce L. Nelson posted 5,020 messages over six months, a whopping 28 a day. The top eight Adventists Online participants were men.

THANK YOU: ANOTHER CHANCE TO SAY IT

Last year’s Thanksgiving issue, in which readers thanked another Adventist (not a family member) for touching their lives, was immensely popular. Many of you who didn’t participate have requested a second chance.

You got it.

Send one tribute (40 words or fewer) to Thank You at the Give & Take address below. Be sure to include your city, state/country, and phone number.
Deadline: Sept. 29.

Remember—if you don’t get the weekly Review, you won’t get this special issue (dated Nov. 27). To subscribe for yourself or someone you love, call 1-800-456-3991. Ask for the “editors’ discount.”

WE NEED YOU

Give & Take is your page. Send your “Adventist Quotes,” top-quality photos, “Adventist Life” vignettes, “Readers’ Exchange” items, “Jots & Tittles,” and other short contributions to: Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; CompuServe: 74552,2564.
IFE IN MY NATIVE MEXICO HAD BECOME monotonous. I wanted adventure. And from what I knew about the United States, that seemed like the logical place to go. I immigrated to Los Angeles when I was a teenager and began living with my aunt.

Life in Los Angeles was interesting, and I have vivid memories of those first few months. I remember that there were so many people living in my aunt’s small house that the only place I could call my own was a small closet. That, for all practical purposes, became my bedroom.

I also remember the feeling of not always having enough to satisfy my hunger. With so many stomachs to fill, there were many times that my own went unfilled. Once all I had was 45 cents. I went to the corner grocery store to see what I could buy. I saw a small can that was priced at 35 cents. It was dog food. But it was all I could afford. As I walked to the cash register I spotted a small can of “people food” for the same price. I took the dog food and put it back on the shelf.

Gangfully Employed

Los Angeles held another kind of adventure. As I became associated with other teenagers, I spent countless hours on the street, creating a social life and becoming acculturated to my new country. I rapidly learned English, but I also picked up some other not-too-useful habits.

I joined a local gang, and our daily activities included fighting, theft, assaults, drinking, and using marijuana and other drugs. I got tattoos on my back, legs, and arms, and dressed like the other gang members. The change from the youth who had left his native country a few months before to the gang member I had now become was remarkable. I was even arrested once for hitting a police officer. At 17 years of age all that mattered was having adventures to talk about with my friends.

I had a sister in Tijuana who had become a Seventh-day Adventist. When I talked to her, she said she was praying for me, but I had no desire to join her church—or any other. In my prejudice I saw all church members as hypocrites. On the few occasions when I visited the Adventist church in Los Angeles, it seemed to me that it was a church for old people.

Over time I moved on to larger and more “reputable” gangs. I not only used drugs, but I began dealing them. Finally I made a connection that offered me a “job” and assured me that my pockets would always be filled with money—I would be a “professional” dealer with secure, permanent employment.

Someone arranged for me to travel to Tijuana, Mexico, to meet the contacts from whom I would receive the shipments of drugs. I rode with another man in an old truck. As dusk came, we sped up so as to not be late for the appointment. Suddenly a powerful light blinded us, causing the driver to swerve and lose control of the vehicle. The truck ran off the road, turning over several times. I remember the old truck coming to rest upside down. The first thing I noticed was that my hands were clutching the dashboard. Then darkness.

The next thing I knew, my hands still held on to a dashboard, but I was in another car with another driver and another passenger. We were traveling in a different direction. “Who are you?” I asked them. “Where are you taking me? What happened?” I heard only silence and the sound of a distant siren. I noticed a sharp pain in my left shoulder.

Again I asked, more calmly this time, “What happened?” The driver answered, “There was an accident back there; a truck flipped over. You were near the road, so we picked you up.”
“Where are we headed?” I asked.
“I’m going near the polytechnical institute; I’ll leave you there.” What a coincidence, I thought. My Adventist sister lived nearby.

**Arrested!**

When I got out of the car, the driver looked straight into my eyes and said, “Take care; we’ll see you around.”

The care and love I received while spending a few days at my sister’s home made me feel guilty and undeserving. She told me often that she was praying for me. But I told her not to bother.

When I returned to Los Angeles, I discovered that because of the accident I had lost that opportunity to break into a career in drug trafficking. I was terribly disappointed.

When I came back to my neighborhood, the gangs and the fights, life seemed different. Everything I did seemed absurd and without meaning. I felt a void in my life. Six months passed, and I no longer thought about the accident.

One day while arguing on a street corner with a small gang that had come into our territory, a fight broke out. Suddenly an old man on a bicycle rode slowly into the middle of our circle and said to us, “Don’t fight; don’t you know that you’re brothers?”

We screamed insults at him for his daring act, yet he continued. “Do any of you fear God? Do any of you want to accept Christ as your Saviour?”

Above the laughter and derision I shouted, “I do!” A great silence fell, and all eyes turned to me. I couldn’t believe what I had said. My mouth seemed to have had a mind of its own. How could I ever explain this to my friends?

Instantly the old man broke the silence. “Glory to God!” he exclaimed. “Hallelujah!” Signaling with his hands, he said, “Today I’ll be praying for you.” He rode off, leaving me and the rest of the gang speechless. I never saw him again.

The fight started again, but I had no urge to participate. I went home, feeling embarrassed. Not only had I publicly announced that I wanted to accept Jesus as my Saviour; I had acted like a coward throughout the fight. Me! One of the gang leaders!

For a few days my mind was in turmoil. One night I knelt and prayed. My sister had told me that to pray to God was the same as speaking to a friend, and that’s what I did. Except I didn’t consider God a friend. I said, “God, leave me alone. I don’t need You; I’m fine just the way I am. I want You out of my life. Amen”

Usually I don’t dream. But that night I had a vivid dream. I observed in detail the accident that occurred six months before. I saw the blinding light. I saw the truck flying off the road and flipping over. Then I saw two people in white clothing taking me out of the truck and putting me in the car I later found myself in after the accident.

I awoke breathing hard, bathed in sweat. I couldn’t stop sobbing. I got out of bed and fell to my knees. That night I accepted Jesus as my Saviour. I gave Him my life and surrendered everything to Him. No longer did I feel a battle in my mind—He had triumphed. I exclaimed, “You won!” And I prayed, as Paul did after his encounter on the road to Damascus, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

**A New Direction**

The next few weeks were frustrating for me as well as for the other members of my gang. They couldn’t understand the change that had taken place in me. I lost the desire to fight and use drugs and alcohol. Whenever they came by where I worked, they’d ask me to join them in some useless activity. When I refused, they’d say, “You’re still a member of our gang. Once a member, always a member,” they’d say.

About the same time, I began attending services at a local Seventh-day Adventist church. At first I didn’t know anyone there. But soon people began treating me like part of the family. The members invited me to meals, Bible studies, basketball games, and socials. I became acquainted with Pathfinders. I had never been exposed to anything like this before. The members of the church even offered to come to my house, pick me up, and drive me to all these activities. Within a few months I was baptized.

The harassment from my former friends didn’t diminish, however. If anything, it got more intense. Knowing that I’d face endless hassles if I stayed in southern California, I decided to start a new life somewhere else. I chose New York City.

I arrived in New York City on a Thursday afternoon with $20 in my pocket. I found a place to stay, and the next Sabbath I was in a Seventh-day Adventist church. Again I was absorbed into the life of that local congregation. And my spiritual life thrived.
More, More, More

Gradually the realization came upon me that I wanted to serve the Lord more completely. Once when our church was sponsoring a series of evangelistic meetings, I sat and listened to the evangelist. I took out a piece of paper and wrote the words “God, I want to be used in a powerful way.” Then I took the little piece of paper, folded it, and put it into my billfold.

Later that evening I stood in the parking lot, visiting with the pastor of the church. As we talked, I saw the evangelist come out of the building, walk to his car, and unlock the door. He stood there for a moment, then walked over to where the pastor and I were standing. He grabbed my hand, shook it, and said, “God wants to use you in a powerful way.” Then he walked back to his car and drove away.

I pulled my wallet out of my pocket, fished out the little slip of paper, and showed it to the pastor. It seemed to us that the Lord was leading me to full-time pastoral ministry. I wasn’t sure how to proceed. But I decided to follow the Lord wherever He led and walk through any doors that He opened for me.

I spent a year as a student missionary in Ecuador (even though I wasn’t a student at the time). When I returned to the United States I joined the Army Reserves so that I could earn money to go to school. I signed up for the ministerial course at Southern College (now Southern Adventist University). While still a student, I participated in a Voice of Prophecy evangelistic campaign in Brazil and conducted my own series of meetings in my native Mexico. When I graduated, the Carolina Conference gave me an invitation to pastor a Hispanic congregation in Rockingham, North Carolina.

That was two years ago. The Lord has blessed me in ways I could never have imagined when I came to the United States just a little more than 10 years ago. I’ve been involved in ministry here in North America as well as in South America, Mexico, and the Philippines. But my passion remains reaching the teens and young adults of America’s big cities, where gangs, drugs, and violence have cast their nets over huge segments of the population.

I know there is a solution to the problems faced by mixed-up teens (and their parents and grandparents). That solution is Jesus. He rescued me from the perilous path I was walking and preserved me to live for Him.

Simon Madrigal is a district pastor living in Rockingham, North Carolina.
DON AND KATHY (NOT THEIR REAL NAMES) wish it wasn’t true. They sent their son, David, to church schools from first grade into college. He was well behaved and got good grades. But away at school he fell in with students who drank alcoholic beverages. Then came the Saturday night when he mixed alcohol and cocaine. An early morning call from the hospital emergency room delivered the horrible news that he was dead after suffering a drug-induced heart attack.

The bad news is that addiction to alcohol and other drugs is one of the problems in many Adventist homes. The good news is that substance abuse is preventable if parents will employ a
simple, step-by-step approach to drug proof their children.

Step 1: Make temperance a priority in your home. We usually think of temperance in terms of what we don’t do: not drinking alcohol, not smoking tobacco, not consuming illegal drugs. But temperance is far more than that. “Every man that striiveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” (1 Cor. 9:25).

Temperance is being in control of your life, mastering your passions and appetites, and making rational decisions. It is valuing the one and only body God has given you as a precious gift to be cared for and kept in peak condition. We no longer view life in terms of what we cannot do and the negative consequences we hope to avoid. Instead, we focus on the present positives of what we can do and will do because of the benefits we enjoy both today and in the future.

Placing a negative prohibition in front of a child, especially an adolescent, can be like waving a red cape in front of a bull. It becomes a challenge, a temptation to be experienced. But a positive approach equips them with a protective “Why would I want to do that?” attitude.

Step 2: Recognize that your kids can do drugs. We want to believe that our children are perfect, that they will always behave in the manner we desire. But have you ever caught your 3-year-old reaching into the cookie jar before dinnertime after you told him or her no 16 times? Was the child testing to see if you meant what you said?

God designed that our first parents would never sin. But the unspeakable happened, and our lives have been forever different as a result. Drug abuse is so prevalent in our society that it is not a question of if your children will try drugs. The questions are When will they try drugs? What drugs will they try? Will they continue using drugs? If they continue, your refusal to believe that they would ever use drugs will be their most potent protection against having their habit discovered until one day it becomes too large and dangerous to ignore.

I used to be news editor of a weekly newspaper. One day a phone call came from the principal of the local elementary school telling me of a teacher having discovered two fourth graders in the restroom sharing cocaine. It turned out that one of them had brought the powder from her father’s stash at home. But that wasn’t the end of the story. One year later I was talking with the pastor of one of the larger Baptist churches in town, offering him assistance in developing a drug-prevention program for his church. He refused my offer with the firm declaration that nobody in his congregation would use drugs. What he didn’t know was that the girl who had been caught the year before and her father attended every Sunday!

Being an Adventist should protect you and your children against drug abuse. But it won’t unless you are willing to accept reality, no matter how painful it might be.

Step 3: Practice marital fidelity. What does marriage have to do with drug abuse? Far more than you might imagine.

Year after year studies have shown, both in my community and across the nation, that the most common factor among the youngest kids who begin using drugs and who often develop the worst addictions is that they are from broken and blended homes. Why? First is the increased stress that comes from divorce. Second is the lack of fathers as a firm guiding force in the lives of both sons and daughters.

One of my most prized possessions is a picture frame my wife gave me on my first Father’s Day. In a cutout on one side was a photo of my infant son, and on the other was the inscription “Anyone can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a daddy.” There is much to be said for the mothers who carry the load of parenthood alone after a divorce.

Fearful things happen when children lack proper parenting. Consider youth gangs, which have become the scourge of many inner-city and suburban neighborhoods. Typically, the children of unwed teen-aged mothers and absent fathers grow up to be gang members.

Rarely is it otherwise. Why are street gangs so attractive to young people? Because gangs give them the sense of belonging, the reward and punishment, and the sense of purpose they should be getting at home. In other words, a gang is a substitute family unit.

A loving home with a strong fatherly presence is a child’s first defense against both drug abuse and recruitment to gang membership.

If lack of parenting, especially the absence of a father, is the main factor leading children into drug abuse, close behind it is family modeling of drug-abuse behavior in which a parent or close relative drinks, smokes, or uses illegal drugs.

Step 4: Be an authoritative, disciplining parent. This does not mean that you bark arbitrary orders and expect unquestioning subservience. Not at all. Being authoritative means commanding the respect of your children in your role as a parent by being fair and caring, by mixing justice and mercy, and by saying what you mean and meaning what you say.

Too often we equate the word “discipline” with “punishment.” Jesus’ closest followers and friends on this earth were His disciples. Did they follow Him because He punished them? No! They followed because He loved them and instructed them in the way He wanted them to live and minister His love to others. Yes, parenting occasionally involves a little punishment for disobedience. But it also involves disciplining, loving instruction by word and example in preparation for life. Showing your children how to live is far more potent instruction than any words you will ever speak. It is also making them your disciples.

Step 5: Practice forgiveness and redemption. Often when dealing with misbehavior we opt for punishment as the first response. Some misbehaviors require an immediate response. But many do not. Does the situation offer you the opportunity to handle the matter creatively? Might a one-on-one chat illustrating right and wrong be more instructive? The challenge in dealing with misbehavior is to show
disapproval of the offense at once, while loving and redeeming the offender. After all, this is how God deals with us when we sin.

How we deal with the misbehavior of our children teaches them how to deal with their own failures. It either builds their defense against drug abuse or speeds their fall into addiction.

Take the case of Stephanie. She began using drugs after going away to academy. The guilt she felt after the first time she got high almost kept her from doing it a second time. But peer pressure, loneliness, and other factors helped her succumb to the opportunity. The high felt good. But then she came down and felt even more guilty than the first time. Before long she was using out of habit and to escape the guilt feelings that came with the return of sobriety. It wasn’t until her parents discovered her drug habit and put her into a recovery center that she learned what it meant to accept God’s offer of forgiveness and to forgive herself. It was forgiveness that broke her downward, guilt-driven spiral toward self-destruction.

A child who is accustomed to seeking God’s forgiveness no matter how bad their offense is strengthened to overcome more quickly than one unaccustomed to being redeemed.

Step 6: Control the media in your home. The next time your kids sit down to watch TV, pick up a paper and pen. Count the number of violent acts. Count how often the hero in the story smokes a cigarette, drinks an alcoholic beverage, or uses illegal drugs. How many commercials do you see during ball games equating alcohol consumption with athletic ability, sex appeal, popularity, or just having a good time? Is it any wonder that I rank messages about activities, information about how bad their offense is strengthened to overcome more quickly than one unaccustomed to being redeemed.

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Step 7: Keep your kids occupied. Keep them busy with homework, housework, hobbies, after-school and summertime jobs, church activities, etc. You name the activity; just keep their minds occupied. A busy child is usually a happy child.

Peer pressure is often touted as the biggest factor leading to drug abuse. It only becomes potent when a child is idle enough to be swayed by other influences. Peer pressure can also be uplifting when it influences a young person to do good deeds or be involved in positive things.

Step 8: Expose your kids to positive role models. I say “expose” because it is up to them to adopt their own role models. All you can do is help them pick positive ones.

We typically pick our role models for a limited number of characteristics: Michael Jordan for his athletic ability, Tiger Woods for his grace in the face of a racist joke, Celine Dion for her singing voice, Mariah Carey for her looks.

Never underestimate the power of a positive role model. They inspire us to focus on our goals and thus diminish the confusing power of temptation.

Step 9: Start your own home temperance education program. We as Seventh-day Adventists have been richly blessed with some great temperance magazines.

For adults we have Vibrant Life. But for kids there are two outstanding magazines, Winner and Listen. Winner is designed for kids in grades 4 to 6 and Listen for grades 7 through 12. Each includes age-appropriate stories, articles about activities, information about what drugs do to your body, and features about positive role models. Give your kids their own personal subscriptions to these magazines. Make them a present, something special you want them to enjoy but are not imposing on them. These magazines will impress the message of positive, drug-free living in their minds in ways you cannot. Make them partners in your family temperance efforts.

Step 10: Don’t be afraid to get help. Accepting that your kids might experiment with drugs is difficult. Discovering that they are using drugs can be downright devastating. Intervention requires more than dropping off your son or daughter at the door of a recovery center and signing the insurance claim form. Recovery is a process for the entire family.

If you suspect a son or daughter has a substance-abuse problem, don’t wait for it to get worse to do something about it. Get a professional evaluation. Then get whatever help is needed. Taking them to a recovery center is a more pleasant prospect than delivering them to a cemetery.

William F. Noel is cofounder of Madison DON’T (Drugs Offer No Tomorrow), in Madison, Alabama.
TELL MY WIVES . . . BUT I’LL LISTEN

I met Kahindi Nyiro, a blond old man, on his sheep homestead. I explained my visit, and he said I could talk to his wives, because he didn’t have time for the Bible. All the time, however, he stayed to the side and listened. As I finished with the story of the gospel, I half turned and told him that the first ones to hear of Jesus’ birth were shepherds. I said he was one of the lucky ones—a shepherd—who would get to see the kingdom of God first. He was deeply moved and asked me to forgive his attitude. He promised to make time to study and attend my small Sabbath school. He then escorted me half a kilometer as I went on my way to the next homestead.

WHEN HEAVEN SINGS

Wolfgang Mozart sounds like fingernails raked down a blackboard. Luciano Pavarotti is a blustering bullfrog. Bob Dylan sounds like, well . . . Bob Dylan. All earthly music sounds discordant against the crystal melody flowing deep in the heart of heaven.

The archangel Gabriel leads the music. Voices lift with sinless precision and harmony, so close it merges as one. God Himself joins in.

What’s happening? It can’t be God’s birthday. He doesn’t have one. Has He promoted an angel? Created another world?

Suddenly the music stops. All heaven looks to earth.

A hand reaches toward the sky. “I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . .” A gentle wash of water, and the face of another child of creation turns toward heaven.

Smiling broadly, Gabriel stands tall, and music again caresses all of heaven. He reaches over and tightly grasps a hand. A nail-scarred hand.

“I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” “This son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” (Luke 15:10, 24, NIV).

—Gary Krause, Global Mission communication director

GLOBAL MISSION PIONEER: Eliab Ombuora Khamala

—Eliab Ombuora Khamala. Eliab is a Global Mission pioneer working deep in the sandy desert of Kenya Coast Field, where the people suffer from dysentery and smallpox because of disease-ridden water and scarce food. Their staple diet is wild animals, such as antelope.

GLOBAL MISSION PIONEER: Eliab Ombuora Khamala

—adapted from Donella Meadows, Beyond the Limits, Rio Summit, 1992.

You Will Go Out in Joy

If our world were a village of 1,000 people, there would be . . .

GLOBAL MISSION: REACHING THE UNREACHED WITH HOPE

GLOBAL MISSION PIONEER: Eliab Ombuora Khamala

560 Asians
210 Europeans
80 Africans
80 South Americans
64 North Americans
6 Australians and New Zealanders

Illustration by Terry Crews

—adapted from Donella Meadows, Beyond the Limits, Rio Summit, 1992.
Jesus the Unsinkable

How much do we trust Him?

BY JOHN S. NIXON

I

N APRIL 1996 THE COVER STORIES IN BOTH Time and Newsweek reported the findings of the Jesus Seminar. What is the Jesus Seminar? It's a conclave of self-appointed biblical scholars conducting an ongoing “scientific” evaluation of the validity of the Gospels. Their conclusion so far is that most of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is unauthentic.

Among their specific findings:

- Jesus spoke only about 18 percent of the words attributed to Him in the Gospels.
- Only one sentence in Mark's entire Gospel is genuine history, and not even one in John's Gospel.
- Christ did not actually perform any of the miracles attributed to Him. They are rather the creation of His overly imaginative followers.

What we're left with is the so-called historical Jesus, an unlettered wordsmith standing in the marketplace, “making pithy comments and telling funny stories.” One of the theologians referred to Him as an ancient Lenny Bruce.

The response of intelligent Christians who take seriously the witness of Scripture must in part distinguish between being rational and being a rationalist. And if it is legitimate to judge a methodology based upon its conclusions, then let me say up front—I reject rationalism as a way of knowing God. My faith is intelligent because I have placed it in Jesus—the most intelligent thing a person can do.

But rationalism is nothing more than faith of another kind—faith in reason instead of Christ, belief in the ability of the human mind to grasp essential truth on its own. As for me, however, I trust the Word of God more than I trust the theologians and the scholars, no matter how distinguished they might be. “Knowing” concerns the heart as well as the mind. Correct perception depends upon more than mere intellect. It's also a matter of character. Said Jesus: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

Consider an incident out of the experience of Jesus and the disciples. The Master has just fed the 5,000, and after dismissing the crowd, the disciples, whom He'd earlier dispatched across the Lake of Galilee, find themselves in the midst of a fierce storm. “During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear” (Matt. 14:25, 26, NIV).

As they reach their absolute extremity, the Lord comes to them, striding upon the crest of the waves.

Picture the scene for a minute. Picture Him striding across the beach like any ordinary person. But as He reaches the water's edge, something extraordinary happens. He steps upon the breaking waves, flesh and bone making contact with water, and a miracle of physics takes place. The sea coagulates into a liquid highway beneath His feet, and Jesus walks on water. He is on His way to save His people, creating His own special effect as He goes. However the waves roll, Jesus remains afloat. He accomplishes in minutes what the disciples in hours have been unable to do.

And here we have our first lesson of Matthew 14: no storm that threatens us—whether self-inflicted or otherwise—is any challenge for Jesus.

The spectacular nature of Christ's feat (pun intended) is
at first lost upon the disciples because they do not recognize their Lord. Frightened and tired, they see only a mysterious figure through the darkness, gliding along the surface of the water—and for them it’s sheer terror. Never have they seen such a thing before. Superstition overtakes them, and they think they see a ghost. All composure disappears, and they abandon themselves to their fears—screaming, crying, and calling on the name of God! But at the peak of their terror something happens that restores complete calm. A mighty voice sounds, ringing out above the din of the elements, a voice sweet and clear, speaking words of peace: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid” (verse 27, NIV). It is the voice of Jesus, and everything is all right.

I want us to see the deeper significance of Jesus’ response. The phrase translated “It is I” is a meaningful expression from a rich Old Testament tradition. There are at least two places in Isaiah (Isa. 41:4; 43:10) where it functions as the divine name—harking back to the “I Am” of Moses at the burning bush. When Jesus takes these words upon His lips, it is a self-revelation, a divine declaration. And to this day these words from Jesus have the power to calm the troubled hearts of those who believe in Him. “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

Now we come to part of the story that only Matthew relates: “‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’” (Matt. 14:28-30, NIV).

Perhaps it is too much to say that Peter sees the theological importance of Christ’s self-designation. But he beholds Jesus doing what only God can do, and Peter decides he wants to do it too. None of the other 11 disciples asks to step out, only impetuous Peter. In terms of ambition, he is a giant. But as yet his aspirations are bigger than his faith. His courage of lip is greater than his courage of heart. And here is the remarkable thing: knowing all this, Jesus bids him come.
Peter steps out on the lake, his eyes fixed on Christ. He observes the way Jesus stands on liquid, and he imitates his stance, setting his legs and pointing his feet the same way. As the student focuses everything on the Great Teacher, the miracle is repeated. A moist sidewalk appears under Peter’s feet. He is walking on water just like his Lord. The disciple does exactly what the Master is able to do. Peter would have been all right had he only kept his eyes fixed on Jesus.

But as Peter starts getting the feel of it all, he begins to strut a little bit. Then he looks back at his associates, wagging his head. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a strong wind gusts, a giant wave comes between disciple and Teacher, and Peter starts to go down. It is not because of the wind or the wave that he goes down. It is because of the strut. He loses his concentration upon Jesus Christ and is vulnerable to the fury of the storm.

Peter’s experience explains ours. We are empowered to do all that Jesus did as we abide in Him. For when Jesus appoints, He, in the same act, empowers. “All His biddings are enablings” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 333). We end up living far below our privileges in Christ because we take our eyes off Jesus and focus upon ourselves. We are just like Peter. A strong wind gusts, a huge wave rises, and our inner hold on God is gone. All our failures as individuals and as a people can be attributed to this one thing—we take our eyes off Jesus. Instead of acknowledging our shortcomings, we put the blame on God. We say His word is too hard for us. “Who does He think we are? We can’t walk on water!”

Five years ago in Los Angeles, several Christian churches got together to sponsor what they called Condom Sunday. On an appointed Sunday they all passed out condoms to teens as they entered church for worship. Their premise was, teens are going to have sex no matter what we say, so we might as well help them do so safely. And that’s an immediate reflection on God. The implication is that His requirement is unreasonable and His Word unrealistic. Who does God think our teenagers are? They can’t walk on water!

It is the same posture we assume whenever the command of God seems too difficult for us, when it requires more than we can comfortably give, more than we are willing to give. We are just like the “Jesus Seminar” theologians—no different. We suddenly find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own” (John 7:17, NIV).

The spirit of autonomy is rampant in the world. Rationalism is nothing but reason gone autonomous. The idea exists that we own our lives and can decide for ourselves what truth is essential and what is not. Beware of arrogance of every kind—intellectual, religious, personal.

Rationalism is a worldview, a way of interpreting reality. Faith is another worldview. We must decide whether we are going to be people of rationalism or people of faith. If we are going to be people of faith, we must be willing to be called unrealistic, idealistic, naive, even irrational. The world has all kinds of insults for those who do not conform to its assumptions. It is possible to follow Jesus rationally, but only for a while. Sooner or later faith will conflict with human reasoning. Rationalists don’t walk on water.

We try to present ourselves as profound persons, knowing and in control. But we control very little and understand even less. William Jennings Bryan wrote: “You drop a brown seed into black soil and up comes a green shoot. You let it grow and when you pull it up, you find a red root. You cut the root and inside is white flesh. Yet you eat your radish without so much as troubling your mind over how brown cast into black becomes green, then red, then white.”

The world is full of mystery, and the greatest mystery of all is the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ. Believe it and live.
seven centuries ago a debate made its way through Europe’s monasteries and fledgling universities: How is truth best understood? For more than a millennium most theologians had followed Augustine’s pattern, reasoning from general to specific. According to this plan, all truth originates from one source. Such an approach provided absolutes—a God-centered worldview that corresponded with the then-accepted hierarchical social structure. Specific details—and truth itself—could be measured against overarching general statements. The forest comes first, then the trees.

The opposing party—the particularists—argued that by first giving attention to specifics—things that can be measured, examined, and tested—the meaning in life can be synthesized. Furthermore, by beginning with specifics, humankind’s God-given intellect can be exercised. After all, didn’t God invite His creatures to consider Him and His works in order to learn of Him?

We could dismiss the entire discussion as just another case of arcane, medieval bickering were it not for the fact that the debate influences the way we deal with God, interpret the Scriptures, and address questions of authority and usefulness.

Augustine recognized a distinct pattern in the way the Bible conveys information. Narrative, law, poetry, prophecy, parable, history, and biography consistently demonstrate that truth flows from God to humankind, and not the reverse. Biblical revelation begins with God, who provides not only facts but also a way of viewing those facts. When theologians speak of “salvation history,” it comes with a prior point of view—how God sees events. Secular historians are quick to dismiss biblical reports as biased.

Indeed, biblical accounts reflect a cosmic perspective. To human eyes, events such as the rise and fall of nations appear to be controlled by earthly factors alone, but biblical reports reveal that behind it all, forces at the second level are at work.

The God who created the universe comes first. But there are other cosmic powers at work. Bible passages such as Job 1 and 2, Ezekiel 28, Daniel 10, Isaiah 6, John 17, the book of Hebrews, Colossians 2, Jude, and many chapters of Revelation pull back the curtain. All we know begins with God, by whom we measure all else. His character is the standard of right. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; the One come down from heaven to reveal what God is like, to teach us His will, to assure us of His unfailing love, and to redeem us.

Although Augustine misunderstood a number of major truths, his recognition of God as the primal source of truth is biblical. But in the ensuing debate, the particularists won out. Their argument was soon captured by the forerunners of modern science. Nature was subdivided into segments small enough to be studied, and on a mass of such studies was built a general understanding. You recognize here, of course, the modern method. Not only is it followed in hard science, but in philosophical and social science as well.

Today professional journals are filled with detailed reports of tiny segments. A classic example is a government-funded biological study to determine whether it’s possible to know the age of the Mexican fruit bat by the weight of the cornea in its eye. While the method may have yielded valuable results for improving the quality of life, it suffers major flaws.

From its perspective, any result must forever be tentative, for the forest can never be finally outlined as long as trees remain unexamined. Any radically new discovery alters previous findings, and such discoveries are common. As we can never see the whole, only conjecture can fill gaps. Further, such a system lacks a final standard, especially a moral one, against which new proposals can be measured. Right and wrong become relative, defined and redefined by norms selected by society. Being limited to what is observable and measurable, it dismisses the supernatural, setting up a fundamental conflict with biblical teaching.

The Darwinian thesis is essentially designed to explain our present world without resorting to the supernatural. While helpful in many ways, the method of “specific to general” underlies the whole of secular modernity. And while excellent at understanding the specific, it falls short in grasping the general.

To respect the truths of a system built on specifics and at the same time honor the truths revealed by God poses an enormous challenge. No system without the whole input from God’s revelation will arrive at the full truth. We need to observe God in both the forest and the trees.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
Do Adventist youth represent the church of the future? Don’t ask the youth and young adult members of the Forest City Spanish Adventist Church in Florida. These young people are proving they are the church of today.

Earlier this year the youth and young adults planned, promoted, and carried out a full-fledged evangelistic series that resulted in 50 baptisms and a revival within the church. “Usually evangelistic meetings tend to bore the kids, but this one actually advanced them and led them to new heights of spiritual commitment,” says associate pastor Carlos Turcios.

After 10 months of preparation under the guidance of senior pastor Candido Enriquez, Evangelist César Gárdenas led the Forest City members in a Week of Prayer. The week immediately preceded the two-week evangelistic series and involved meeting daily to earnestly plead for God’s blessings and for the presence of the Holy Spirit. Nearly 900 people attended every night to pray.

To a young adult the term “evangelist” can conjure up an image of a gray-haired fiftyish person, but that profile didn’t fit Gárdenas, a 24-year-old Colombian pastor from Sydney, Australia.

According to Turcios, Gárdenas was an ideal speaker for the series, because it was important that every aspect of the series be youth-run rather than granting the youth token roles in an adult-centered program.

Although several church members were skeptical and doubted the commitment of the youth, more than 90 percent of the almost 200 youth members regularly attended the nightly sessions—and brought their friends.

Abdiel Almanza, who attended the meetings frequently, came with a unique story. Almanza had become extremely disgruntled with the Cuban political situation regarding health care. Government officials were shown favoritism over other citizens, and Almanza’s mother was not getting the care she needed. He set out for the United States on board a small raft and was picked up by the U.S. authorities and sent to the Guantanamo Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

While there, Almanza and the other refugees made cigarettes out of whatever materials they could find, including pine needles, dry grass, and pages torn from “books some people called Bibles,” said Almanza. After he’d used the first few blank pages of the book, he rolled a cigarette with a page that had text printed on it. The flavor wasn’t good, and since he had been taught to read whatever he could, he decided to read the pages of the Bible rather than smoke them.

He was fascinated with the stories in the Bible. When he was finally allowed into the United States, he reunited with Seventh-day Adventist relatives at the Forest City church and continued to study the Scriptures.

The genuine efforts of God’s young people were evident when 50 people, including Almanza, requested baptism as a result of the evangelistic series.

“I was thrilled,” said Turcios. “I want people to know that youth are willing and able to assume leadership roles in the church—not just ‘play’ church.”

As for the skeptical adults in the church, “they’re awakened,” Turcios said. “They’re amazed and stand in astonishment to see kids moving in the direction they’re moving.”

The Forest City Spanish church isn’t going to let the pioneering spirit of youth leadership stop now. Plans are already under way to conduct another youth-led series next year. “The best way to keep young people in church is to put them to work,” says Turcios. “Involve them in evangelism. If they own youth ministry, they will never leave the church.”

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY: New believers are introduced to the Forest City congregation.
Michigan Adventists Minister With Public Access TV

BY CARLOS MEDLEY, ADVENTIST REVIEW NEWS EDITOR, AND MERV FALOR, WHO WRITES FROM KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Members of the Kalamazoo, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church are using high technology to spread their ministry, and the results are significant. The church is producing public access television programs, and their productions are making waves throughout the community.

The ministry started when Merv Falor, a church member, caught the vision that his church should use television for a missionary outreach. Falor found that broadcast time was free of charge and included use of the studio’s TV broadcast equipment after a person had been trained by the public access staff. The low-cost training classes taught individuals how to videotape church services and edit the tapes for broadcast.

When the Kalamazoo church received this good news, many members chose to be qualified to work in television that the training center had to conduct two classes. The first television program the church produced was for the city’s Spanish population.

When that production was going strong, the church began producing Lifeprints, which focuses on positive events and agencies throughout the city. The response was immediate, with many viewers requesting video copies.

When the television ministry was firmly established, studio and community leaders began to view the church as a caring and hard-working group of Christians. The studio added the Kalamazoo church’s weekly worship service to the program schedule.

Then the TV ministry team created Bible Insights, a Bible study program featuring the church’s pastor, Royce Snyman. Today the public access studio even allows the church to show It Is Written on their channel at no cost.

This experience and knowledge has led Merv and Wilma Falor to dedicate their time and energy to helping interested churches learn how they can become involved in public access TV. As a result of their ministry, Adventist churches in Kalamazoo and Battle Creek have witnessed baptisms and are seeing visitors attending their services.

Branson Hospital to Downsize and Remain Open

The future of the Adventist Church’s only hospital in Canada now looks a little brighter than it did some months ago when an Ontario government commission had voted to close it down.

On July 23 that same commission, the Health Services Restructuring Commission (HRSC), announced that North York Branson Hospital would not be closed (as originally intended), but instead converted to an ambulatory care center, managed under contract to North York General Hospital (NYGH). The ambulatory care center will have as its primary focus the provision of services for the elderly. The commission did recommend that 11 other hospital facilities in the Toronto area be closed by 1999.

Under the conversion, Branson will lose all its 209 inpatient beds, emergency department, and 50 to 75 percent of its current 800 employees. “We will be submitting proposals for use of the bed space,” says Brian Fenton, senior vice president at Branson.

The remaining services will include specialty clinics, outpatient mental health services, assessment and diagnostic services, day programs for the elderly, and multidisciplinary health promotion and health maintenance programs for the local community.

The nature of the relationship between Branson and NYGH has yet to be determined, but it is believed that there is potential for the Branson operation to continue to be managed by the Branson Corporation and administration under contract to NYGH.

The HSRC reversal is considered to be the most dramatic of any decision made by the commission in the first year of its mandate, says Jack Gallop, Branson’s president and CEO.

“We are grateful to the many people across Canada who have been praying for the work at Branson. While the future is still not entirely clear, we believe we have been given the opportunity to plan for the continuation of services to be provided for the community surrounding the hospital and to negotiate the church’s future role,” Gallop says.

White House Honors Adventist Youth Service

On July 25 the Adventist Youth Service Network was among organizations honored by the United States government for their sponsorship of the National Service Scholarships (NSS) program.

Fifty high school students enrolled at Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools were nominated for NSS
New Rating System

BY MYRNA TETZ, MANAGING EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW

The subtitle read “New TV-ratings system made even safer for helpless American families”—below, of course, the article’s title, “NTVRSMESHAF.” In the article (Time, July 28, 1997), author Roger Rosenblatt says that “television executives announce revamped ratings system to offer more detailed descriptions of program content for concerned viewers.”

The executives found the new ratings system they developed “insufficiently explicit,” according to Rosenblatt. The author offers newer ratings that “will present so clear a picture of program content...that very busy people will not have to watch the shows themselves.”

For instance, NLF means “no longer funny.” Examples of this kind of program were cited as Saturday Night Live and Bill Cosby.

NF designates shows that were “never funny.” He suggests Hogan’s Heroes and Fish in this category.

YPDN means “young people doing nothing.” This signifies Seinfeld and Friends.

WO!HCAL! interpreted means “Watch out! Here comes a lawyer!” Rosenblatt says this is a segment of a news show in which an expert attorney is about to explain a case.

And this leads us to a discussion of possible ratings that we, in our heart of hearts, might suggest:

IWTVTBINTBOTS: “I’ll watch TV tonight because I need to block out today’s stresses.” This rating is for people who are looking for an excuse to view a program that shows the importance of marital infidelity as a relaxing mechanism.

TIBW-ANP: “This is Baywatch—a nature program.” There’s water (third day of creation), an occasional fish (fifth day), sand (third day), humans (sixth day) and a lot of bare flesh (they clothed themselves with leaves).

OSTASOVOBTL: “Oh, sure, there’s a scene of violence occasionally, but that’s life.” Besides, I may have to defend myself someday.

Which says that inherent honesty is the best policy with our motives, our focus, and how we spend our time.

Croatian Adventists Protest Sunday Law Proposal

Adventist leaders in Croatia have protested the restrictions proposed in the Sunday Trading Act.

In an official letter sent to the government’s Ministry of Economy, Adventists described the legislation as unconstitutional, saying that preventing work on Sunday would legislate against those who observe a different day of rest and would establish one religion and discriminate against others.

“We support the principle of separation of church and state,” said Zdenko Hlisc-Bladt, president of the Croatian-Slovenian Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “While we agree with the concept of a minimum weekly rest period, we believe everyone should have the right to choose which day they observe. If the proposal is adopted, believers who observe other days of rest will be forced not to work on Sunday, a clear attack on their religious liberty.”

“This human rights issue is provoking a debate throughout the country, with widespread media reports,” says Tihomir Zestic, communication director for the Croatian-Slovenian Conference. “Government officials have not responded to the church’s remonstrances.”

Adventists in Croatia number some 2,500. The church has maintained a presence in the country since 1908.—Adventist News Network.
Local Church Evangelistic Activities

The mission of Seventh-day Adventist churches is to share the good news of God’s love and Christ’s soon return. In 1996 North American churches evangelized in the following ways. (Fourteen percent of churches reported no evangelistic activity at all.)

- 39% Held NET ’96
- 29% Held Revelation Seminar
- 26% Conducted home Bible studies
- 18% Held public evangelistic series
- 14% Organized small group Bible studies

—Source: The winter 1996-1997 survey of local church lay leaders: 366 random telephone interviews conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University for the NAD Office of Information and Research. The error factor is plus or minus 3 to 6 percentage points at the ninety-fifth percentile of reliability. Information will be published in the “NAD Office of Information and Research Report 19.”

Bone/Tooth Connection

Women with an unexplained tooth loss should consider having a bone density evaluation to determine if they have osteoporosis. A recent study of otherwise healthy postmenopausal women found that 24 percent who had lost one or more teeth also had a faster decrease in bone mineral density. The risk to teeth is attributed to increased loss of the alveolar bone (the portion of the jaw that helps support teeth).—Boston University Medical Center.

Making Waves

Seniors should consider exercise programs in swimming pools, because the water’s buoyancy eliminates the fear of falling. After five weeks of regular exercise in waist-deep water, a group of people age 74 and up showed better balance and range of movement compared to participants who exercised on dry land.—Medical Abstracts.

—Compiled by Larry Becker, editor of Vibrant Life, the church’s health outreach journal. To subscribe, contact your ABC or call 1-800-765-6955.

ASI Celebrates 50 Years of Marketplace Ministry

More than 1,200 people gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 6-9, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Adventist Laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI).

Meeting at the Albuquerque Convention Center, the ASI convocation took as its theme “Celebrating 50 Years as Marketplace Ministers.” The annual convention serves as a forum to motivate and encourage Adventist professionals and businesspersons to make witnessing a part of their everyday life.

About 1,600 persons attended the weekend services and gave nearly $1.7 million for 26 mission projects around the globe, reports General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg.

Dan Houghton, president of Hart Research Center in Fallbrook, California, was elected to a two-year term as ASI president. Houghton replaced Harold Lance.

News Notes

✔ Youth, young adults, and youth leaders are invited to the Teen Prayer and Ministry Conference, September 24-27, at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. The program features a ministry model that combines Bible study, training, and community outreach.

The activities include group leader training, plenary sessions, and hands-on community ministry in the city of Keene. For more information, call 1-800-331-2767.

✔ Kenneth J. Fox, a former administrator at several Canadian hospitals and a member of the Canadian University College Board of Trustees, was recently elected acting president of CUC. Fox replaces Victor Fitch, who recently retired.

✔ Malcolm G. Taylor, a Southeastern Conference pastor, was recently appointed associate speaker and director of field services for the Breath of Life television ministry. Taylor replaces Reginald O. Robinson, who became Southern California Conference evangelist.

What’s Upcoming

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GINA SPIVEY BROWN and
LORETTA PARKER SPIVEY

The Not-So-Wonderful World of Disney

GINA: Good stewards don’t give their money to Satan.

Disney. The word itself brings a barrage of feelings that are associated with happiness and laughter.

In reality, it should bring weeping and gnashing of teeth. Why? Because although Disney appears as an “angel of light,” it is in fact the devil’s playground. As one who has visited Disney theme parks more times than I’d like to admit, I have to acknowledge that its first appearance is breathtaking. The rides, the friendliness, and the “magic” are so effective that they make one forget about life’s perplexities.

But beneath the glow is the support of the gay agenda. Gay Day and gay friendliness, with which Disney is involved, should be the final straw as far as the Christian community is concerned. It’s one thing to be gay-friendly; it’s another thing to support and even promote that lifestyle.

In addition, Disney’s support of the antifamily agenda includes: the ownership of Touchstone pictures, which produces violent and sexually explicit movies; and the ABC television network, which counts Ellen among its most popular and most talked-about shows.

In addition, such animated “classics” as The Lion King, Fantasia, and Snow White strongly support the notion of the soul’s immortality. Some may think that the cartoon nature of these movies makes them completely innocent, but don’t be fooled. The devil is an expert at deception. And he knows exactly what he’s doing. Shall I continue?

Disney also controls the Disney Channel, 80 percent of ESPN, 37 percent of the Arts and Entertainment Network, 50 percent of Lifetime Television, Anaheim’s Mighty Ducks hockey team, baseball’s Anaheim Angels, Hollywood Records, Discover magazine, and the Broadway production of Beauty and the Beast.

The Southern Baptists had it right when they decided to boycott Disney. If all Christians stopped supporting Disney and unified their efforts as well as their money, Disney would feel it. Adventists should follow suit—in a hurry. If Disney is boycotted, Adventists and other Christians will send the message that we love Jesus more than we love entertainment.

Let’s be good stewards of our time and money and keep them from the devil. He’s got enough of both already.

LORETTA: If you really love Jesus, look at the whole picture.

Gina, Gina, Gina.

I have to give you credit on this one (just a little, though). It’s true that we have to be good stewards. But why stop at Disney? There are hundreds of corporations that have similar policies. And what about companies that sell items that are against other biblical principles? Busch Gardens and the Sea World theme parks, for example. Do you recognize the connection with the Anheuser-Busch brewing company? Shouldn’t they be included in the boycott?

McDonald’s is one of Disney’s major marketing partners. A statement by McDonald’s says, “The Walt Disney Company is an outstanding organization with an excellent, well-deserved reputation for promoting family entertainment.” So McDonald’s is standing by its partner; is it part of the boycott as well?

What about companies that aren’t related to Disney? Ben and Jerry’s ice cream has had similar policies on its books for some time. Is Ben and Jerry’s ice cream out too? I certainly hope you didn’t use an IBM, Microsoft, or Intel product to type this month’s column, because all those companies have domestic partner policies that are similar to Disney’s. And Hertz (the rental car company) actually recognizes unmarried domestic partners for car rental purposes (but not for employee benefits).

My point is that we live in a sinful world. And unless we are going to run to the hills right now, or live like the Amish, we are bound to use a product; attend an attraction, park, or school; or visit a state or city that extends benefits to unmarried or homosexual domestic partners.

Should we be aware? By all means, yes. And we should also be good stewards. I’m just concerned about singling out Disney when there are so many other companies that have policies we find objectionable.

This is a question we all have to answer individually. And we may have to answer it twice—once here on earth and once on judgment day.

I’ve gotten myself to thinking . . . maybe I’ll just tie a string on a stick and go fishing this year (and throw them back, of course). After all, if I’m going to take a stand, then I have to take a stand.

Gina and Loretta challenge you to read your Bible, live your convictions, and take a stand . . . for Jesus.
Putting People First

Adventists are involved in a trend in American health care that's remarkably similar to an outline we've been following for nearly 100 years.

Editor's Note: Parish nursing is a relatively new application of an Adventist principle of health ministry: helping people to live healthy lives.

Readers interested in receiving further materials should contact AdventSource at 1-800-328-0525. A video and other materials about how to start a parish nursing ministry are available for minimal cost.

Church and health-care leaders recently concluded a five-year process in which the practice and potential of Adventist health-care institutions were reviewed (see p. 29). A summary of those discussions and a set of standards for Adventist health care are also available at minimal cost from AdventSource. Material for this article was supplied by the North American Division.

A popular program sweeping the country's health-care industry is parish nursing. It's a coordinated partnership between hospitals and churches of all denominations to promote a wholistic ministry. The guiding philosophy is simple: churches assume responsibility for the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of their congregations under the leadership of a nurse member.

The parish nurse does not perform hands-on nursing or replace doctor's visits. He or she may be a paid or volunteer member of the pastoral staff whose functions include but are not limited to:
- Health education and counseling.
- Providing a reference source to other community agencies and resources.
Modern parish nursing began 12 years ago when a Lutheran chaplain realized that many critically ill hospital patients might not have ended up so seriously ill if someone had noticed their early symptoms. It is estimated that 50 percent of today’s illnesses are behavior-related and therefore preventable. The need for health education, early disease detection, referral, and one-to-one counseling led to experimentation with several models of health education.

For treating the whole person, one of the most effective methods included cooperation between a physician, a member of the clergy, and a nurse. While all three have their place in promoting health, the nurse emerged as the natural communicator, facilitator, health adviser, and counselor because of her or his training in both the sciences and the humanities.

Thus the parish nurse project was born. Six nurses were placed in community churches by a Lutheran hospital in Illinois. Since then the number of parish nurses in North America has grown from six to 6,000.

The “mother” of parish nursing in the Adventist Church is Maxine Blome, recently retired as the nursing executive of Adventist Health in California, who oversaw the programs throughout the West Coast health system’s 19 hospitals. She and the others involved in this program view parish nursing as an extension of a well-established ministry. There are 125 parish nurse ministries in Adventist Health and a parish nurse project manual.

Last spring Blome and others shared their expertise at the Columbia Union College Nursing Alumni Continuing Education Conference at the General Conference headquarters. More than 180 attendees, from all faith communities, were challenged to consider parish nursing as a new approach to managing church health ministries and reaching out to their communities.

By Shirley Wilson-Anderson, chair of the Department of Nursing at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

- Coordination of volunteers and support groups.
- Interpreting the relationship between faith and wellness.
- Facilitating referral and providing advocacy as needed.

Because each parish nurse tailors a program for her or his congregation, there’s no such thing as a “typical” program. “Parish nursing can provide help for everybody in the congregation,” states one parish nurse coordinator, whose various programs fit every age group: visits or consultations with a nurse for older members; educational programs on heart health, diabetes, or cholesterol for middle-aged parishioners; classes on coping with stress and well-baby issues for new parents; a listening ear for teens; and programs for children about germs and the importance of hand washing.

This program is evidence that the business and mission of Adventist Health (formerly Adventist Health System/West) go far beyond treatment and therapy. Parish nursing is at the heart of Adventist Health’s historic tradition of helping individuals achieve physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness.1

Broadcasting From Paradise

Every Thursday La Freda Thomas records in Paradise, California. The following Saturday at 1:00 p.m. listeners of Christian radio station KXXX—heard from Anderson to Sacramento, California—tune in to Parish Nursing—Healing With Spirit.

When the half-hour radio slot became available more than a year ago, Thomas, parish nurse coordinator at Adventist Health/Feather River Hospital in Paradise, California, wondered how she could possibly sit in front of a microphone and talk for 30 minutes every week. But that hasn’t been a problem.

“Every week I have three distinct sections,” Thomas says. “I start with a seven-minute spiritual segment—something from Scripture or a current Christian writer.”

The middle section of the show is devoted to news from the 11 area churches that participate in parish nursing programs. “We encourage people to support the health ministries of other congregations,” Thomas says.

She concludes with either an educational segment on a specific health topic or a local referral source. When world-renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson was in Paradise, Thomas interviewed him. During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Thomas featured segments about breast cancer each week and publicized where low-cost mammograms could be obtained.

Thomas believes that the radio out-reach strengthens the rest of her parish nursing ministry. “As I move around the community, people call me ‘the radio lady.’ Because they’ve come to recognize my voice and trust the show, they feel free to come up to me and ask questions.”

“Don’t underestimate the power of the spoken word—and the Holy Spirit,” Thomas says. “Who knows who may have heard a piece of the gospel on KXXX. That will be the surprise and the glory of heaven.”2

Different Faiths, Different Communities, One Result

Across a busy thoroughfare from the Kensington, Maryland, Baptist Church, near Washington, D.C., and a stone’s throw from the Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church, rests the inviting presence of Temple Emmanuel. Some 12 months ago the Jewish congregation’s long-range planning committee identified a need: revive a social group for seniors.

Deborah Levy, a member of Temple Emmanuel, assumed responsibility for organizing a senior group, but was looking for assistance. That’s when she met Sue Heitmuller, director of
Adventist Healthcare Mid-Atlantic's Community Health Partnering Program, an outreach effort devoted to fostering health and wellness programs among different faith groups in Adventist Healthcare Mid-Atlantic's service area. “I asked Sue, ‘Do you work with Jewish people?’” recalls Deborah with a hearty laugh. “Sue quickly assured me that they were committed to working with a variety of faith groups.”

Some 27 miles away, near Damascus, Maryland, St. Paul's Catholic Church had identified a need of its own. A seniors’ club, after hearing a presentation on parish nursing by Heitmuller and Pat Hutchinson, R.N., a nurse coordinator of the Community Health Partnering Program, wanted to start such a program to help meet some of the health-care needs faced by their church members.

“One elderly parishioner mentioned that he had diabetes and wished that he had been better educated about the disease when he first experienced some of the warning signs,” remembers Sherrie Wade, social concerns coordinator at St. Paul's. The parish nurse program established at St. Paul's has enabled the church to “address some of the health needs of our parishioners and serve as a health-care resource for the community as well,” says Wade.

Different faiths in different communities, but one result: Adventist Healthcare Mid-Atlantic providing support for the health-care needs of different faith groups through an outreach ministry called Community Health Partnering.

“Adventist health care in the Mid-Atlantic region began with the opening of Washington Adventist Hospital 90 years ago,” says Bryan Breckenridge, president and CEO of Adventist Healthcare Mid-Atlantic. “The hospital, or sanitarium as it was called at the time, was started not simply to treat people who were sick but also to teach the benefits of exercise, nutrition, and a balanced, spiritually focused lifestyle.”

“Today these same principles are articulated in the care provided at Washington Adventist Hospital and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital,” he says. “There's a real opportunity to reach out into the community to help churches and synagogues meet the varied health-care needs of their congregations and their neighbors.”

Says Heitmuller, “Churches and synagogues, with their built-in support systems and links to the community, are natural meeting places for health-based programs and services.” Heitmuller meets with groups of all faiths, as well as nondenominational social service and community groups. “We usually receive a positive response, which correlates directly to the Seventh-day Adventist health message and the reputation of Washington Adventist Hospital and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital for providing compassionate care.

More than 90 years ago Ellen White wrote, “Education in health principles was never more needed than now. Notwithstanding the wonderful progress in so many lines relating to the comforts and conveniences of life, . . . the decline in physical vigor and power of endurance is alarming. It demands the attention of all who have at heart the well-being of their fellowmen [and women]” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 125).

Those involved in parish nursing are motivated by the desire to improve the physical well-being of those who live in their communities, and in so doing, have a spiritual impact upon those they serve.


2 Submitted by the Communications Department, Adventist Health, Roseville, Calif.

The Super Connie

The Airbus backed ponderously from the gate at Manila International Airport. As the two powerful jet engines began to spool up, I wondered, Would she still be there? We taxied toward the runway, and I craned my neck, looking for my old friend.

The Lockheed Super Constellation behind the abandoned warehouses where the old terminal stood was a graphic example of benign neglect. Wheel rims sagged sadly on flat tires resting on the cracked tarmac. Someone had removed an engine and only partly covered the gaping cavity with canvas. The bright company livery had long since faded away.

The 1950s had been the glory days of the “Super Connie.” Qantas had probably flown her on its Manila-Singapore-Sydney route, and maybe Bangkok and Saigon had seen her glide gracefully out of the air to disgorge her 100 passengers.

Four thundering 3,000-horsepower piston engines had driven her at 300 miles per hour across continents and oceans. She had a regal air about her. The shape of the fuselage was elegant, narrowing and rising toward that magnificent triple tail assembly.

I had discovered the superannuated aircraft years before. Each time I visited Manila, I sought her out. There she crouched, faded and neglected. Once-potent engines were rusted and silent. Windows that had glowed with life on the long night flights were scratched and dull. The entire aircraft had a crippled look, as she perched askance on her sagging suspension.

As my Airbus roared aloft, I wondered the old plane. What memories she would recount, could she but speak. She served in a different era, when flying was an adventure, not a conveyor belt. A mechanical failure or a navigational error could quickly create a white-knuckle incident.

What tales she would relate—of turbulent flights skirting typhoons, navigating by dead reckoning across the South China Sea and over Australia’s outback. What wisdom she would have learned in her many escapades. Who could count the passengers she served during her decades of commercial flight operations?

A victim of technological obsolescence, safety regulations, and economics, she had been pushed aside by the jet age, towed to a deserted corner of the airport, and stripped of her dignity. Soon they would scrap her, recycling her aluminum skin into soda pop cans. It was sad in a way, I mused while cruising in silent air-conditioned comfort at 37,000 feet.

It made me think of some people I know. They ministered as teachers, preachers, doctors, or administrators. Some served in mission fields. Some were imprisoned in wartime, impoverished by storms, debilitated by disease, or exhausted by stress. They honed their skills against the stones of experience in an earlier era, skills considered irrelevant in a quickly changing world.

Now too often they are towed to a silent and uncelebrated place, parked out of sight, and forgotten. The aging frame may show the ravages of time, but the memories and wisdom remain.

A few days ago I received a letter from a retiree who recounted the memories of 41 years of service to others. He recalled a talk by Elder H.M.S. Richards, Sr., at La Sierra College. The rallying cry had been “Man, what a chance!” “We never forgot that refrain,” the retiree concluded.

The once-stately Constellation out behind the old hangar will never fly again. What about you? Do you feel parked, silent, and alone? Share the depth of your experience and the faith that results from walking through trial, tragedy, and victory. Share the hope you have in a future. Pass on the joy that you yet retain. Because deep in your heart you know that there will come a day when you will fly again.

This article first appeared in the NAD newsletter Dear Retiree, February 25, 1997.

Del L. Johnson is associate administrator for the North America Division Retirement Plans.
Don’t you just love to play on the computer? Lots of people do. In some classrooms there is only one computer, but lots of kids; the teacher has to make a schedule and set a timer so that everyone gets a turn.

Games might be the most fun thing to do on the computer, but computers are good for other things, too. Maybe you have gone on the Internet to find out about stuff. Or maybe you have sent letters to friends or relatives on E-mail. And of course, people do actually work on the computer as well.

When you push a button on the keyboard or click the mouse, the computer does what you tell it to do. If you are a creative speller, the computer screen shows the words exactly as you spelled them. If you press the delete button, the computer deletes—even if you didn’t want it to.

There is a saying about computers: “Garbage in, garbage out.” Basically, it means that if you give the computer bad information or bad instructions, you are going to get bad results.

Computers are just machines, but there are some ways that they are like brains. With brains too you can say “Garbage in, garbage out.” You’ve got to be careful what you put into your brain.

If you see something bad, it goes into your brain. If you try not to think about it anymore, you can forget about it, but you can never delete it. It is there in your brain. And if you see lots and lots of bad things, it gets harder and harder to forget.

You can choose most of the things that go into your brain. You choose which books you’ll read, which television shows you’ll watch, and which video games you’ll play. All that stuff goes into your brain, even when you aren’t studying it, even when you’re just playing.

And all that stuff makes a difference in you. If you play a lot of violent video games, it makes you more violent. If you watch a lot of stupid television, it makes you more stupid.

Garbage in, garbage out.

The Bible has a good idea about this: “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Phil. 4:8, NIV). Lovely in, lovely out. If you want to be good, think about good things. Put good stuff into your brain.
The Adventist Review on-line is made available free through the sponsorship of the North American Division Adventist Health Ministry Department—coordinators for "The Year of Health and Healing."

During this year, Adventist Health Ministry invites each Adventist congregation to reaffirm the church’s health principles and share them throughout their communities.

For more information and materials on the Year of Health and Healing, call the Adventist PlusLine at (800) SDA-PLUS or Adventist Health Ministry Department at 301-680-6733.