A Sister’s Legacy

The meltdown at Chernobyl affected one family in ways they could never have imagined.

Africa’s Sons and Daughters

Of False Hierarchies and Human Gods
A New Mood in India
What an inspiration Bill Johnsson brought to us by his well-written article “A New Mood in India,” July 8 issue of the Review, plus the related editorial in the same issue (“Lessons From India”). Coming from Johnsson, who shared with us the lean years, it meant all the more—a charitable and understanding recognition of what we see happening today, not as a negative reflection on some possible missing factor in past endeavors, but as a joyful recognition that in God's providence the time of reaping has come after many years. Well done—God bless you, and God bless India.

—Ted Torkelson
Blackfoot, Idaho

The July 8 report on India thrilled me—I just wish my parents, who gave 25 years of mission service to India, could see what is happening now.

The photograph of Bill Johnsson and his wife with Vincent Hill School in the background came very close to my heart, as my father was principal there for 13 years. I got my early education at VHS.

May the Lord continue to bless India and also the work you are doing at the Review in giving guidance to the church and reporting the progress of His work around the world.

—Margaret Blue Jackson
Longview, Washington

Waiting for a Visa
Chitra Barnabas's article on Tom Carter's global journey (July 8), which turned into holding patterns of delay, disappointment, and detour, illustrated nicely how God remains directing events behind the clouds of life's perspectives. Those still held in some holding patterns are cheered on by articles such as this one. Thank heaven no one, including no seemingly human-controlled circumstance, really has the ultimate direction of one's life but God. His thoughts and His ways are always mercy and kindness.

—Joe Hagan
Orange, Virginia

Knowing for Sure
For more than 60 years our Lord has guided me into many Bible classes, seminars, series of meetings, sermons, individual Bible study, and our fine Sabbath school lessons. For those reasons, I venture to reply to Calvin Rock's "Knowing for Sure" (July 8).

Both my observations regard the first question, first column. I believe Ellen White's two statements do agree. I believe Jesus' human nature was created and human, through His mother, Mary—"identical with our own." Also, we must be "warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such a one as ourselves." There is no contradiction here. The four Gospels are full of His healings and other miracles, as well as His parables and teachings, proving that He was and is divine. His resurrection and ascension are further proof.

As for the two Bible references (Matt. 27:44 and Luke 23:39-43), I see no problem there, either. Matthew per-

An Unbelievable Offer
To mark our 150th anniversary we're offering a year's subscription to the Review for only $19.99—that's just 43 cents per issue—the lowest price ever! This offer is for a limited time and applies only to people who haven't subscribed for at least one year. If you don't subscribe, act now! If you do subscribe, tell someone about this great offer. To subscribe, call 1(800) 456-3991; or contact us through our World Wide Web site at www.adventistreview.org.
haps was called away from the cross, and did not hear the plea of the repentant thief to Jesus. Besides that, Luke was not one of the original 12. He had the advantage of elapsed time, and had probably talked with several other disciples in addition to Matthew.

—Pearl L. Pflugrad
Portland, Oregon

Test Your Global Mission IQ
I believe that the several hundred British people reading the Adventist Review (July 8, p. 21) around the world will have chuckled at reading the description of the Isle of Wight as an “island nation.” The island is no more a separate nation than Long Island is distinct from the U.S.A. It is not just British, but Britain!

Furthermore, why does the General Conference perpetuate the myth of the island being an unentered territory? My father-in-law, Pastor Fred Edwards, back in the 1960s, pastored the group of some 15 baptized members for a number of years. The group had existed, even at that time, for decades. One hopes that the IQ of the Global Mission Department is a little more precise than it appears!

—Martin L. Anthony, Personal Ministries Director
Trans-European Division

Implications of the Incarnation
The Word of God points not only to the Messiah and His message but also to the mandate and the methods we should employ in the fulfillment of our God-given mission. Adventists, like other denominations, neglect to reflect upon the methods God employed throughout the centuries and in varied cultural settings in reaching His lost creation. We often turn exclusively to other sources and sciences when developing evangelistic and missionary strategies. But the God who gave us the mandate has also revealed the methods by which His mission may be successfully accomplished. Stephen Chavez (“Implications of the Incarnation,” June 10) strikes the right note in reminding us that the Incarnation is not only a theological statement. It is also the method by which we should reach those near and far. Let us turn to the Scriptures in the search of principles we should still apply today in ministry and mission.

—F. Edgar Nunes
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Forgive Me for Coveting!
I have been paging through my collection of Adventist Reviews and cursing (I think I may be forgiven for this kind of curse!) the powers that control the global economy and the rate of exchange. We all know what Ellen White said about the state of financial affairs toward the end of time, and we are certainly living in those times.

Satan is tying us up in chains of dollars and cents—to the extent that those living in the “developing” countries no longer can afford the simple joys of life—the weekly Review!

God bless you for a great magazine. Next year I’ll thumb my nose at Satan and order the Review anyway!

—Maureen Moroff
Namibia

Letters Policy
The Review welcomes your letters. Short, specific letters are the most effective and have the best chance at being published. Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, A dv entist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: Reviewmag@Adventist.org

COMPUSERVE network: 74617.15.
Dear Sir," she wrote to the Adventist Review editor, "I stumbled across [the November 13, 1997, issue of] your magazine . . . for the first time in a Laundromat.” That was Tunde Saheed of Bladensburg, Maryland—a Muslim. Her reason for putting pen to paper was not simply to tell us she’d found the publication “interesting reading,” but to take exception to an article in our Letters column by Paula Nixon of Auburn, California—who herself had written to take issue with a cover story we had run on Muslims two months earlier. In spite of similarities between Islam and Christianity, Nixon had written, many important dissimilarities remain. Chief of these, she said, was that the Muslim “Allah” and the Judeo-Christian “God” “are not the same.” Allah, she said, “was not the God of Abraham.”

Saheed vigorously begged to differ. They are the same, she argued. No one religion can claim God as theirs alone. “In spite of our differences God, Allah, Jehovah, Yahweh, and by any other name we choose to call the Allmighty God, is the Lord and Creator of us all.”

Nixon may well be versed in Muslim theology, for all I know; but I question her conclusion on this point. At any rate, if Islam accepts Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad as prophets. “But,” said Saheed, “we do not worship any of them, nor do we deify them.” And why not? Because, she explains, Muslims believe in and worship God without associating with God any deity “in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.” “It is this unadulterated belief in the oneness of God,” she says, “and the total submission to God’s will that . . . is the essence of creation.”

We misjudge the gravity of this cardinal Muslim tenet when we overlay the evangelistic significance of Islam’s acceptance of Jesus as a prophet. Says Saheed, “We do not accept the sonship of Jesus, for it is clearly and without any doubts in our minds beyond the glory and majesty of the Allmighty God . . . to arrogate to Himself a son.” The Quran “confirms . . . [Jesus’] miraculous birth,” she says, “and the miracles performed by him.” Then she adds, expressing without knowing it the scandal of Christianity, “It tells us that for a servant so anointed by the Almighty to be persecuted and nailed in the fashion described in the Bible was not possible.”

The deity and Messiahship of Jesus were no less offensive to the Jews of the first century, steeped in Old Testament monotheism. But with the coming of Jesus, a new dimension of truth dawned. And while still remaining radical monotheists themselves, the early Christians nevertheless uncomromisingly affirmed a powerful new reality, not of their own devising: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, NIV). Whether this attracts us or repels us, it is fact.

My message to Tunde (if I may use her first name just this once) is that there is no rational explanation for Jesus Christ. In His person we come face-to-face with impenetrable mystery—Immanuel, God with us in human flesh. We remove our sandals and Thomas exclaim in sublime wonder: “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28, NIV).
“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven” (Rom. 4:7, NIV).

It was mid-March and in honor of the ensuing spring season, our church asked members to bring green foods and drinks to the fellowship dinner. I was about 15 and thrilled to discover that our family had been assigned desserts. I’d bake a yummy chocolate cake with green frosting!

The task began. Eggs, oil, and my mom’s secret ingredients (My lips are sealed!) found their way onto the countertop. I opened the cupboard and pulled down a box of Betty Crocker’s best.

Satisfied with my mix of a richly thick and dark tarlike substance, I poured it into a large, flat sheet-cake pan. I set the pan in the preheated oven, pushed the appropriate 22-25 minutes on the timer, and waited.

I must have used a little too much of my mom’s secret ingredients, because after 25 minutes the toothpick I inserted into the jiggly mass came out covered with a gelatinous brown coating. Intent upon a closer look, I snatched an oven mitt from its hook and grabbed one side of the pan by its short “handle.” One mitt, one hand. Heavy cake pan. Disaster loomed.

My wrist and hand bent uncomfortably as I valiantly (or stupidly) attempted to set the cake on the counter. In a last-ditch effort not to splatter chocolate goo on the floor, I jumped and used my body weight to throw the cake up onto the counter’s surface. The cake made it high enough, but the momentum carried it too far. It slipped from my grasp and slid right into a sink half filled with dirty mixing bowls, measuring cups, and warm sudsy water.

I reached for another oven mitt and slopped some of the fallen cake back into the pan. I tossed off the mitts and grabbed chunks from the frothy sink, trying to put back pieces of cake that weren’t too soggy or soapy. I desperately mashed these remnants back into the pan and rammed the cake back into the oven.

Fifteen minutes later I pulled the cake out and left it to cool. Something’s wrong, I thought as I breezed back into the kitchen about 20 minutes later. The kitchen was freezing. Someone had opened the window, and cold air was rushing in. I looked at my cake and gasped in horror. A swimming pool-sized crater filled (or should I say emptied?) the middle.

What should I do? My eyes lit upon the two tubs of frosting sitting peacefully in the corner. I had planned on using only one, but now . . .

Golf course-green frosting covered my spring-themed cake. It looked great. Smooth, level, delicious. Would anyone find out that the middle of the cake was two inches of frosting and only half an inch of cake? Would it taste like Palmolive dish liquid?

Yes! My friends laughed at my audacity and wrinkled their noses at the slight soapy taste. “How could you ever think you’d be able to cover this up?” they asked.

How often do we do this—cover up a mistake by patting things back into place and pretending nothing happened? How often do we realize we’ve done something wrong and instead of starting over or at least admitting the problem and seeking help, we slather “frosting” across it and try to live as if everything were great?

We all make mistakes—church members and leaders alike. But our systematic way of trying to coat the problems or squish them into the floor won’t make them disappear. When leaders place church money in unapproved investments or citizens raise lawsuits against church policy and practice; when members ostracize a pregnant unwed teenager or conveniently forget the elderly man who gave children quarters every week for their offering but now resides in a nursing home, we must admit our mistakes—a true church of Christ’s followers must do nothing less—and we must be forgiven.

I’m glad that my friends discovered my counterfeit crater cake and that I was able to “come clean,” forgiven of my mendacity.

Our church needs to do the same.
**GIVE & TAKE**

**ADVENTIST QUOTES**

“Sometimes it takes strength to sit still.”
— Ed Komorowski, Danville, Washington

“In praying, remember, it’s not the elegance of our words—it’s the sincerity of our hearts.”
— Randy Maxie, Danville, Washington

“We must be purged before He comes, or we will be consumed after He comes.”
— Doug Batchelor, via e-mail

**ADVENTIST LIFE**

As personal ministries director I made a report to the church board on the Y2K problem and the impact it might have on our area. The board decided that no action was needed.

The next month I was to report on the rental of two booths at our local fair. When I called the fair office I was told that the two ladies in the office had set two different dates for reserving the booths. One had set a date for that month and the other had set one for the next month. This caused a big problem in paperwork and they were unable to confirm our rental at that time.

At our board meeting I said that the fair office had a Y2K problem and I was unable to make my report. One member said, “You mean a Y2K problem?”

My reply was “No, not Y2K but 2YW— Two Young Women—at two different computers putting out the wrong information.”
— Dale Graham, Tyler, Texas

One grandma told me of a lesson she learned from her grandson on a visit to her home. At mealtime she kept putting special, good food on his high chair tray. He always said, “Thank you, Grandma.” Finally he asked, “Grandma, are you an Adventist?”

“Why, yes,” she replied.

He responded: “Then why don’t you say ‘You’re welcome’?”
— Velma Beavon, Dayton, Montana

**PATHFINDERS WASH CARS FOR SCHOOL**

WE DO WINDOWS, TOO: The Ashland Eagles Pathfinder Club earned $200 in one weekday afternoon this past May during a car wash fund-raising event. The funds will be used to help the Ashland, Wisconsin, church school, which opened in the fall of 1997. The Ashland Eagles Pathfinder Club formed a year later.

**PATHFINDERS WASH CARS FOR SCHOOL**

WE DO WINDOWS, TOO: The Ashland Eagles Pathfinder Club earned $200 in one weekday afternoon this past May during a car wash fund-raising event. The funds will be used to help the Ashland, Wisconsin, church school, which opened in the fall of 1997. The Ashland Eagles Pathfinder Club formed a year later.

**WE NEED YOU**

Send Give & Take submissions to . . . Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74617.15@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.
A Sister’s Legacy

Her dying sister taught Dina Grimailo lessons about love, hope, and everlasting life.

BY JENNIFER MAE BARIZO

Here are many moments to begin this story—this tale of two sisters, a legacy, and love. But let's start at the part that is recorded in history, that fateful day 13 years ago when the Chernobyl nuclear power station spewed its deadly poison into the Ukrainian skies. Lack of communication concerning a routine electrical test provoked an uncontrollable power surge that resulted in a violent explosion of the reactor, releasing tons of radioactive chemicals into the air. The nuclear fallout of the disaster was 90 times greater than the atomic bomb that landed in Hiroshima, and 10 years later babies were still being born with no arms and legs, a stump in place of a limb.

On April 26, 1986, the day of the explosion, and for weeks afterward, the wind blew the toxic plumes of radioactive chemicals all over Europe.

After the explosion Dina and her sister Natasha played beneath the green rain and ate cherries from poisoned trees. Dina was 8. Natasha was 5.

The only children of Andrei and Raisa Grimailo, they lived in Moldova, 400 miles from Chernobyl’s doomed reactor.

Natasha had had an infection at the time, which caused open sores to appear on her skin. The sores would itch, and she would scratch them till they bled; her wounds became perfect portals for the carcinogenic particles to break into her body.

“We were kids; we didn’t understand,” says Dina, remembering.

Nine years later Natasha’s skin started to turn yellow.

She began to look anemic, and the tests showed that her hemoglobin count was lower than usual. In May 1995, at age 14, she was diagnosed with cancer.

“My mother and father did not want to lose a child. They would have done anything to save her,” says Dina. In desperate need for blood for Natasha, their father roamed the streets of Moldova, buying blood from strangers to keep his daughter alive. He even resorted to visiting nearby prisons, soliciting for blood.

Meanwhile, Natasha’s condition was deteriorating. Her parents were becoming frantic. As a last resort, they wrote a letter to Seventh-day Adventist evangelist Merrill Enwright. In a short time their whole family acquired visas to enter the United States, where Natasha received treatment free of charge at Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.

“Our whole family went to the Adventist church when we came to the United States,” says Dina.

They had all been born and baptized into the Greek...
Orthodox Church, and Dina recalls the pastor once saying that all other denominations were from the devil.

"Naturally, I was cautious about the Seventh-day Adventists," says Dina. "I even told my parents that I would not join the Adventist Church, even if they gave me a million dollars." But an impression had already been made on her heart. She started reading the Bible, which was foreign to her. "In the Greek Orthodox Church, the truth was whatever the pastor said," Dina says of her former religion. According to Dina, their family had never been very religious. "I do not remember ever being spiritual or attending church willingly," she says. Natasha even made fun of her for going to church.

But during this time in Florida, Dina was her sister's constant companion. "She was a frightened, sick girl," says Dina. Their parents returned to Moldova and left Dina to take care of her sister. "I was mother, father, friend, nurse, and sister to her," she recalls.

"She never wanted me to leave her. I fed her, cared for her. At night I would sleep by her side."

Meanwhile Natasha's condition was not improving, as the doctors had anticipated. She had been given prednisone, then chemotherapy, but the cancer always marched back, invading her young blood. They decided to give her a double dose of chemotherapy, with the hope that it would help heal her ravaged blood cells. The treatment eradicated the metastasized cells, but in a few days the stubborn cancer cells reappeared with a new intensity. The only option left was a bone marrow transplant. Almost $100,000 was raised to cover costs.

Dina was the only compatible donor in the family. As siblings they were genetically similar, but after a blood test, it was determined that Dina's marrow had only a 50 percent chance of matching her sister's. Through a donor registry, hundreds of bone marrow donors were tracked to find a perfect match for Natasha. One hundred percent blood match was found. The registry attempted to track him. Phone calls and exhaustive searches were made to find her blood match, but to no avail. Days passed, and Natasha's health was rapidly deteriorating. And they could not find the one person who could possibly save her life.

"It was the only time I knew of that Natasha cried," says Dina. "She cried when they told her she was going to die."
Going Home to Die

"I want to go home," Natasha said when the doctors told her that they couldn’t do anything else to save her. Her parents were hesitant. Moldova was not progressive, and the hospitals were not equipped to deal with Natasha’s worsened situation. Medication would be scarce, and drugs for pain relief were the Grimials’ main concern. They did not want their youngest daughter to die in pain. But Natasha insisted, and in May of 1996 she and her sister took the long flight home.

“They had to teach me how to stick needles into my sister. I had to be with her all the time, to talk to her and to give her medication.” On the plane, Dina learned how to administer morphine intravenously to her sister, and she had to do it many times after that, as Natasha would scream in pain.

Somewhere, though, in the midst of the tears and the heart-rending cries, they heard the Lord’s voice. Natasha’s parents were baptized, and at Natasha’s request she was anointed three days before she died.

“Once Natasha screamed, ‘Jesus, please take me already. I can’t make it anymore,’” Dina remembers painfully. “But she knew that God loved her till the day she died.”

The Legacy Continues

For Dina, having just lost a sister, nothing made sense.

“We had prayed for so long. We had been sent to America so her life could be saved. One hundred thousand dollars was raised. Why did God send the money if Natasha didn’t need it? If she was going to die?”

Natasha’s death had precluded the bone marrow transplant, but the fund-raising committee still had nearly $100,000 that had not been used. Members thought of building a memorial to Natasha in her home country, but the committee decided to redirect its focus on Dina. They wanted Dina, who had unfailingly cared for her dying sister, to become a nurse. With the funds raised to save her sister’s life, Dina was sent to Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.

Victor Czerkasij, director of admissions at Southern Adventist University, was involved in making arrangements for Dina to come to Southern. “The new country, the language barrier, and the different culture were difficult for Dina to get used to,” Czerkasij says, “but she knew she was at Southern for a purpose. She realized that whatever was on earth was temporary. She knew that one day she would see her sister again.”

Dina says that amid the changes, she knew that God was working in her life. “I had flown 16 hours and had no idea where I was. Everybody had a Southern accent that I couldn’t understand, and I failed the TOEFL twice. But I was in America, and because of my sister’s death, I was going to get a Christian education.” Dina was a living legacy of love.

It was at Southern Adventist University that Dina was first fully exposed to the church and to the God she had caught glimpses of in the ordeal of her sister. There she attended her first Bible class, the NET ’96 meetings by Mark Finley, and was finally baptized.

“Looking back, everything starts making sense. I realize what is important in life, and that God has led me to...

Religion in Today’s Russia

Religion has played a distinct role in the cultural and historical background of Russia. However, religious influence has often been dependent on the political health and stability of the country.

The majority of believers belong to the Orthodox Christian Church, which originated at the end of the tenth century, when missionaries from Byzantium converted Prince Vladimir of Kiev to Christianity.

Presently there are about 100 million Christians in the region, with more than 70 percent being Russian Orthodox. Other Christian denominations include the Old Believers, Baptist and Evangelical groups, as well as Lutherans. The Muslims, with 19 million members, are the second-largest religious community in Russia. There are roughly 5 million Protestants and 4 million Roman Catholics. There are more than 500 Adventist churches in Russia.

Under the former Soviet Union, religious freedom was constitutionally guaranteed but often strictly stifled by the government. For the 70 years of the Communist regime, atheism was rampant, and many revered Lenin, Stalin, and other Communist leaders. During that repressed period the KGB supposedly installed cameras in certain churches to monitor worshipers in order to curtail religious expression.

When the Communist regime collapsed in 1991, it left a spiritual vacuum that a variety of eager missionaries and cult followers rushed to fill. Hare Krishnas could be seen parading Nevsky Prospect in their monklike garbs, Jehovah’s Witnesses crusaded with their literature, and Evangelical Protestants swept through the cities with their soul-winning efforts.

But in 1997 a law signed by Russian president Boris Yeltsin divided religious groups into two categories: those that could prove 15 years of activity received full legal rights. Other groups, which had to register with authorities, faced a byew of government restrictions. The law also recognized the Russian Orthodox Church as an important element in the history of Russian culture and religion.

According to Vikto Zorkaltsev, Committee on Religious Affairs, this law was put into effect in an attempt to limit the presence of new religions, cults, and sects.

U.S. vice president Al Gore, who was in Moscow in 1997 for talks with Russian leaders, objected to the law as discriminatory. His objections, however, were for the most part ignored.
Cernobyl’s Lasting Effects

On April 26, 1986, the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine was to be shut down for routine maintenance. Unfortunately, safety precautions were inadequate, resulting in a sudden and uncontrolled series of explosions that released thousands of tons of radioactive chemicals into the air.

135,000 people near the disaster site were permanently evacuated to avoid exposure to radiation. Since then more than 400,000 have left the region because of the accident.

Because of frequent changes of wind direction during the explosion and shortly thereafter, the area affected by the radioactivity was very large, encompassing all of the Northern Hemisphere, although the significant contamination was in the former Soviet Union and parts of Europe.

For days the Soviet government remained tight-lipped while people walked beneath the green rain and children drank milk contaminated with deadly doses of radioiodine.

Approximately 270,000 people still inhabit the contaminated areas with dangerous levels of radionuclides. Genetic mutations also resulted from chronic exposure to chemicals.

Of the 400,000 workers involved in cleaning up after the accident, up to 40,000 are unable to hold full-time jobs today, and 5,000 are too sick to work. The death rate among these workers is 30 percent higher than the rest of the Ukraine’s population.

Studies of the population in the affected areas have displayed an increase in thyroid cancer among children.

According to the National Resource Defense Council, between 1966 and 1985 there were 21 cases of thyroid cancer reported in Belarus. Since 1986 more than 400 cases have been reported. The incidence of cancer caused by Chernobyl is expected to peak in 2005.

There has also been an increase in the number of tuberculosis cases, which specialists think has been caused by the radioactive particles in the air. The incidence of goiters has doubled in certain provinces in the Ukraine, as has the incidence of anemia. In some regions, such as Krasnoyarsk, the number of tumor cases has risen by 41 percent. Infant mortality and birth defects have also been on the rise.

Radioactive material continues to spread. A flood in March 1996 affected 30 million as it transported Chernobyl’s radioactive waste to the reservoirs of Kiev. In a 1991 interview Tamara Byelookaya, head of the Institute of Radiation Medicine in Minsk, said, “It is clear that . . . the whole population of the republic is being subjected to internal irradiation by the food they consume . . . 100 percent. You have only to look at the postmortem investigations done by our own scientists. They show that even the citizens of the Vitebsk province, which is supposed to be absolutely clean, have strontium and plutonium in their bodies. The only way [those chemicals] could have gotten there was by being eaten.”

An executive summary put out by the Nuclear Energy Agency stated that Chernobyl “produced severe health consequences and physical, industrial, and economic damage in the short term, but also its long-term consequences in terms of socioeconomic disruption, psychological stress, and damaged image of nuclear energy are expected to be longstanding.”

to the best place for me,” Dina says with conviction.

Czerkasij echoes her sentiments. “The God that she was looking for was reflected in the people she met and in the love the community gave her,” he says. “No matter what tragedies or setbacks she had, she was always positive. She always had a smile, even when she was crying.”

As Dina translated her anatomy and physiology textbooks word for word, she also learned to read the Word of God and Ellen G. White’s Desire of Ages.

“My old friends thought that the Adventists had brainwashed me, but I learned and discovered most of it by myself, reading the Bible,” says Dina.

“Every time I call home now my mother tells me to pray and trust in God. We have become so much more united as a family, even if I am on the other side of the world now.”

Salvation From a Child

Dina tells me the story of how her sister handed her a white envelope before she died.

“Open this after I die,” Natasha said, pressing the little packet into her sister’s palms.

When Dina opened it a white rubber eraser fell into her fingers. Dina turned it around in her hand, reading her kid sister’s familiar handwriting. Written on it, amid pen-drawn doodles, were five words.

“I love you. Don’t cry.”

They are sad words. Scrawled on a rubber eraser by a sister who was little more than a child when she died. Dina masks her emotion well as she speaks, but even with the weight of the past years, there is something enduring in her shadowy eyes that is often missing in the gaze of those who have lost someone they loved.

“I hate to say it sometimes, but I believe her death had a reason. We have to think of what is more important, the physical body or the spiritual body. Christ was born, and died to save the world,” Dina pauses, her words bringing back a flood of memories. “My sister, she was just a child, but she had to die to save me and my family, just as Jesus died to save sinners. I never would have known—she saved me.”

Jennifer Mae Barizo is from Ontario, Canada, and plans to pursue a career in music and political science.
Should we not immediately baptize those who accept Christ as Saviour, and then teach them our doctrines? Was not that the practice in the apostolic church?

It is not easy to answer the question of the content, extent, and timing of the instruction given to new converts to Christianity in the apostolic church (usually called "catechesis," from the Greek verb katecheo, "to teach"). Historical evidence indicates that from the second to the fifth centuries Christian catechesis took place before baptism. Once infant baptism was popularized, a shift took place and baptism preceded catechesis. Let's look at a few New Testament passages for answers.

1. The Gospel Commission—Matthew 28:19, 20: Jesus commanded the disciples to “go and make disciples . . . , baptizing them . . . , and teaching them to obey everything I commanded you” (NIV). Since “teaching” is last on the list, it is sometimes concluded that the catechesis was given after baptism. But the text is not as clear as some believe. The relation between the two participles—“baptizing,” “teaching,” and the main verb, “make disciples”—is not clear in Greek. Is making disciples explained in terms of baptizing and then teaching, or should the participles be taken as imperatives, listing what the Lord expects from the disciples without emphasizing the specific sequence?

Based on Greek grammar, the first possibility is very unlikely. The second has the support of Greek grammar. Because of the ambiguity of the passage one cannot be dogmatic, but even if we accept that there is an implicit sequence, then making disciples would imply that some prebaptismal instruction was given to new converts and that after baptism instruction was continued. The question is not whether catechesis preceded baptism but how much instruction was given.

2. Church Practice in Acts: After Peter’s sermon at Pentecost 3,000 were baptized “that day” (Acts 2:41, NIV). The instruction they needed was given through a sermon and “those who accepted his message were baptized.”

Philip “proclaimed [literally “was proclaiming,” suggesting progressive action in the past] the Christ” in Samaria and many were baptized. His message included the good news of God’s kingdom and the name of Jesus (Acts 8:5, 12, NIV). Obviously some instruction was given before baptism. Philip also explained the Scripture to the Ethiopian, beginning with Isaiah 53, before baptism (verse 35). Paul baptized the jailer and his household after speaking “the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house” (Acts 16:32, 33). After informing him that he had to believe in the Lord Jesus, Paul instructed him, and then baptized him.

3. Content of the Catechesis: Among the most important topics mentioned, in the apostolic speeches in Acts, we find the good news of Jesus Christ (8:35), His death and resurrection (3:15), His exaltation and mediation (2:23; 5:31), and His Lordship (2:36). Other doctrines mentioned are repentance (2:38; 3:19), forgiveness (13:38), justification (13:39), worship of the true God (17:29), final judgment (17:31; cf. Rom. 2:16), general resurrection (24:15; 17:18), second coming of Christ (3:20; 21), the kingdom of God (8:12), and the Holy Spirit (2:38).

This impressive list indicates that instruction was given to unbelievers before they were baptized. The amount of catechesis probably depended on the background of the individual.

4. Implications for Today: If baptism means the end of an old way of life and the beginning of a new one (Rom. 6:4), it is simply impossible to baptize someone without explaining the practical implications of a Christian life.

This is not just a matter of sharing present truth; it is a matter of honesty. Baptism joins people to the church and calls them to stand for truth. The least we can do is ascertain whether they understand our mission and the biblical truth we proclaim.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.
Heart to Heart
Serving those who are blind is easily done when your heart is in the right place.

BY RON BOWES

DOUG MARTIN came to the Blind Center in San Diego, California, a depressed and beaten man who considered himself an agnostic. Every day he was angry, not so much because he was blind, for that was a fact of life he'd come to grips with some years before, but because something besides his sight was missing.

Into Doug Martin's world came a voice, a woman's voice, a sympathetic voice. She'd heard about his anger from others at the center, and she was there to help.
However, when Martin heard that this woman's work was based on religion he “exploded.” He lashed out at her with profane and searing words, ending with, “I’m not buying what you’re selling!”

When the verbal torrent was finished, Molly Lesick was still there—listening. “I saw something in that man that told me he was reaching out, even though he didn’t know it yet,” says Lesick, a representative of Christian Record Services, the official ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that focuses directly on the needs of those who are blind.

Starting Small

Molly Lesick has seen that “something” in the lives of hundreds of blind people. Her special ministry to them has been to teach them the benefits of healthful living. Because of her concern, Lesick has been invited to speak to thousands of blind people at national conventions, presenting a message straight from the Seventh-day Adventist “playbook.” “Lifestyle changes in easy doses,” she calls it. “It’s a way to combat obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, which are epidemic among blind people.”

Martin was invited with other members of the Blind Center to a cooking school. Those who are blind do their cooking school up close and personal. They gather around to touch and feel. The most important factor, however, is the simplicity of the preparations. While many blind cooks can deftly handle sharp knives, can openers, hot ovens, and more, those who are blind, as do most of us, need to keep it simple.

“The recipes we teach are similar to those traditionally included in vegetarian cooking schools,” says Lesick, who has altered these recipes so that a slow cooker, a blender, and a microwave oven are the only appliances needed.

For most blind people, the idea of healthful cooking is a new thought altogether. Many are borderline diabetics and face serious consequences if they continue to neglect their health. Therefore, Lesick believes that a balanced diet and exercise are the “most important things we can teach.”

A Simple Plan

Molly Lesick’s approach is very simple. She goes where the blind people are, and she meets their needs. “Most blind people don’t mind a discussion concerning their disability; they just want respect,” she says. And she gives them that respect, along with a healthy dose of Christian love.

In Doug Martin’s case, he needed a personal program of rehabilitation, so Lesick started by trying to meet his needs for a better way of life here and now.

Blind since birth, Doug had built himself a relatively good life. He received a master’s degree in engineering from Penn State University, then worked as an acoustical engineer for the Navy for 17 years. However, recently his life has been unraveling. He has been divorced, estranged from his child, dependent on prescription Assistance Provided by Christian Record Services

All who are blind, legally blind (20/200 with corrective lenses), or have physical impairments that prevent them from holding reading material are eligible for the following free services:

Subscription Magazines are available in braille, large print, and audiocassette.

Full-Vision Books combine braille and print, enabling blind parents to read to their sighted children and sighted parents help their blind children learn to read braille.

Lending Library lends more than 17,000 volumes in braille and audiocassette.

Gift Bibles and Study Guides are available in braille, large print, and audiocassette.

National Camps for Blind Children are operated throughout North America.

Scholarship Assistance is given on a limited basis to blind young people trying to obtain a college education.

For more information, visit the website: www.christianrecord.org.

In Perspective

Do’s and Don’ts for relating to blind people:

Do treat them as ordinary people.

Don’t raise your voice or use childish language.

Do speak when you enter the room. They want to know who’s in the room with them.

Don’t leave cupboards and drawers open.

Do show blind houseguests where things are (closet, dresser, bathroom, etc.).

Don’t worry about being politically correct; just say “blind.”

Do introduce them to others.

Don’t ask someone else (a spouse or friend) what they want; ask them.

Do encourage them to talk about their interests (beyond how it feels to be blind).

Don’t think of them as blind people, just people who are blind.

Do tell them what’s on their dinner plate, using the hands of a clock—12, 3, 6, 9—as a frame of reference.

Don’t worry about saying, “Good to see you.” They’re happy to “see” you too.

— Adapted from The Courtesy Rules of Blindness, www.blind.net.
drugs, a smoker, an unemployed professional, a bitter person, a wreck.

Where should the helping process begin?

At the beginning, Molly decided, with breakfast. Doug, it turned out, had never eaten a decent breakfast in his adult life. Most of the time it was just a cup of coffee and a cigarette. This would lead to a day filled with anger. Molly helped point out to him that his angry explosions were directly related to his lack of nutritious food.

Slowly Molly tackled Doug's problems one by one. A stop-smoking clinic at Paradise Valley Hospital, a cooking school for several blind people in the home of a friend, a visit to an Adventist church, a weekly Bible study, an Adventist attorney to help with legal problems, and a financial counselor to help him get back on track financially.

Although this story doesn't end in a baptism, things are definitely headed in the right direction for Doug Martin. He considers himself an "earnest Christian" and attends church on both Sunday and Sabbath. He enjoys Sabbath school. He enjoys the weekly Bible study, where pages of braille Bibles turn, and discussions are great. Not all of his questions have been answered yet, but he is continuing to look for the answers.

So what's the secret of Molly Lesick's witness?

It's not the study guides; there are none. It's not the braille literature. It's not the cassettes that supplement her activities. It's not the camping program headed by Christian Record Services. It's not even the combination of all of the above. It's the singular devotion of a life to the lives and needs of others.

How can you help this ministry? If it is your gift, you can reach those who are blind just as Molly does—one person at a time.

In almost every metropolitan area in the United States and Canada there are federally sponsored blind centers, just like the one Doug Martin visited in San Diego. These centers are filled with blind people who could use a helping hand.

Christian Record Services (CRS) has more than 100 workers in the United States and Canada engaged in full-time ministry to the blind people. CRS publishes the oldest braille religious magazine in America. There are more than 300 students studying the Bible in braille and large print at home through the CRS Bible School. CRS has a 17,000-volume lending library of books on audiocassette. We also operate National Camps for Blind Children/Adults every summer.

As Christian Record Services enters the new millennium and a second century of service, the staff seeks to create an increased awareness of how sighted individuals can assist the blind people in their communities.

"Blind people may be hard to preach to," says Larry Pitcher, president of CRS, "but they are easy to love. With 1.2 million blind people in North America alone, there are lots of people who need us."

Ron Bowes is public relations director for Christian Record Services in Lincoln, Nebraska.
Michael Hembrom’s understanding of the Bible went from confusion to clarity after he listened to AWR broadcasts in Hindi—and as a result, 23 people have been baptized.

Michael, his wife, two sons, and a daughter-in-law live in Chirudih, Bihar. Honest and faithful Christians, they listened regularly to many religious broadcasts, but they were confused by the variations in the messages they heard.

One day Michael tuned in to the Adventist World Radio broadcast in Hindi. He was fascinated with the messages, and took notes on every subject for personal study. After some time he was convinced of the Adventist message, and he wanted to join the Adventist Church, but he didn’t know where to find one. So he and his family prayed, asking God to show them the way. And God did.

Michael’s wife, Phulmani, works for the Government Child Welfare Department. About the time the Hembroms prayed for God’s guidance, Phulmani attended the district child welfare workers meeting. Refreshments were served, and Phulmani observed that one woman, Mrs. Silas, politely turned away the offer of tea. Phulmani remembered the programs on health she had heard on the AWR broadcasts, so she spoke to Mrs. Silas, who shared the Adventist health message. She also told Phulmani that she was a member of the Adventist company at Bagjobra. Phulmani was thrilled—Bagjobra was just six miles (10 kilometers) from her village.

Returning home, Phulmani told her husband about the Adventist believers of Bagjobra. They decided to go there and find out all about this group.

The next day an acquaintance of the Hembroms, Benjamin Soren, happened to meet Michael and said he had missed seeing Michael in church on Sundays. Michael immediately shared his newfound faith with Benjamin, who, in turn, insisted that they go over to Bagjobra to learn more. They set out the next Sabbath to attend services. The bus line was on strike, but this did not deter them. They hired a rickshaw, went to Bagjobra, and met the believers there, where they were received with joy.

When this Adventist company conducted an evangelistic meeting in Chirudih in December 1998, 23 people—including the Hembroms—expressed their commitment to Jesus through baptism. Another 16 people declared that they wanted to join Scripture study classes. Please pray for these new believers, those studying the Bible, and those listeners still searching for the truth.

Adapted from a story reported by Peter Mundu to Alex Dang, field evangelist, Bihar Section, India. Courtesy of the Southern Asia Tidings and Edwin Mathews, director of the Adventist Media Centre, Pune, India.
This is the best vacation ever!” declared Arthur as he leaned back in the rowboat. He, his brother Vince, and their dad had rowed away from the campsite after supper and were now anchored in a bay of the wilderness lake, watching animals along the shore.

“You bet,” agreed Vince. “Even Mom and the girls are having fun. Hey, do you think that Mom would actually pull the trigger of the old shotgun if she needed us?”

“I doubt it,” laughed Arthur. “She hates guns.”

Suddenly a mighty Boom! shattered the peaceful evening. Mallard ducks rose quacking in surprise and fear. A doe and her fawn bounded into the forest.

The boys stared at their father. Dad grasped both oars tightly and began pulling as hard as he could. Mother needed them. What had happened? He knew that it must be urgent, or his wife would never have fired that gun as a signal.

Suddenly Arthur noticed that they weren’t moving in the water. “Dad, Dad,” he shouted.

“We aren’t moving! The anchor is still down.”

The two brothers began pulling at the rope that was attached to the bucket of stones being used as an anchor.

“Quick! Cut the rope!” shouted Dad.

Vince grabbed his Scout knife and began sawing at the rope. Arthur knew that they weren’t moving in the water. “Dad, Dad,” he shouted. “We aren’t moving! The anchor is still down.”

The two brothers began pulling at the rope that was attached to the bucket of stones being used as an anchor.

“Quick! Cut the rope!” shouted Dad.

Vince grabbed his Scout knife and began sawing at the rope. Arthur knew that they weren’t moving in the water. “Dad, Dad,” he shouted. “We aren’t moving! The anchor is still down.”

Rounding a point of the lake, the three saw Mom and the girls waving and pointing back along the trail. When the boat hurried up to the plank landing, Mom helped steady it as she told Dad the news: the packhorses had gotten away and were most likely headed home.

This was serious news: the family had traveled a full day to get to the camp from the main road. Dad immediately set off on foot to catch up with the horses.

Dad looked very tired when he arrived back in camp the next morning, riding one horse and leading the other. “You know, Katie,” said Dad as the family talked over what had happened, “I never even thought about an anchor when I heard that shot. I just knew I had to get back to you and the kids.” He laughed as he remembered rowing so hard but going nowhere.

“I think I’ve learned a useful lesson,” Dad added. “That old bucket of stones we used for an anchor is like the sins we drag around with us sometimes— not letting them go. We can row and row all we like, but we will never get home unless we are willing to let Jesus cut us loose from our sins.”

**Family Time**

On Tuesday (or whatever day you like), invite your family to worship God together.

☛ Ask each person to go to the driveway or some other place nearby and bring back a stone they can hold in the palm of their hand. Or you can gather enough stones ahead of time for each person at your worship.

☛ Ask each person to write one thing on the stone that sometimes keeps him or her from praying or from hearing God’s voice.

☛ Now place all the rocks in a small box or container and go out to the garden or backyard and bury them. (If you have no garden or flowerbed, see if an adult can take all of you for a car ride to some area where you can do this.)

☛ Read Isaiah 40:29 and Zechariah 4:6 to find out where the power to be free really comes from.

☛ Kneel in a circle and ask Jesus to help you cut yourself free from whatever is keeping you from enjoying God’s grace.
For the past seven years Está Escrito, the Portuguese version of It Is Written, has been one of the leading religious telecasts in Brazil. During that time more than 50,000 viewers have been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in that country. For this reason, when IIW speaker Mark Finley came to Brazil the first two weeks of June to conduct the third ACTS 2000 satellite evangelistic crusade, he did so as a personality highly recognized throughout that nation.

This ACTS 2000 satellite “decision” series was designed to focus on many key issues in God’s last-day message to the world. Emphasizing a developing relationship with Christ as Saviour, each message targeted essential elements in personal preparation for His soon return.

The Largest City

The host site was the Brazil College campus on the outskirts of São Paulo, one of the world’s largest cities. Each evening the campus church was packed beyond its 2,100-seat capacity. From this site the nine-night series was uplinked to a satellite to return in less than half a second to 450 receiver dishes at Adventist churches throughout Brazil, plus 1,500 dishes in homes of individual Adventists to which guests had been invited. Six cable companies also broadcast the series to their customers. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people were in the viewing audience.

This use of home satellite dishes by Brazilian Adventists proved very effective in reaching people with whom members have influence. One member reported having 25 guests in his home each evening with three making decisions for baptism during the series. Another told of having the chief of police, the town lawyer, a judge, a former registrar of documents, a cardiologist, a dental lab technician, and an insurance executive as regular attendees. One can imagine the dynamic conversations that must have occurred following each presentation.

Since this ACTS 2000 crusade was one of the shorter “decision” series (some ACTS 2000 crusades are 21 nights in duration), special emphasis was given to interest preparation prior to opening night. A part of this, 3,500 sets of Finley’s Discoveries in Prophecy video series in Portuguese were shared with many interests by Adventist laypeople.

Both weekends of the crusade saw numerous baptisms carried out throughout Brazil. Initial reports indicate more than 10,000 people have become Adventists as a direct result of this series, with many more continuing to study and prepare for membership in the Adventist Church.

In January of this year the first of the ACTS 2000 satellite crusades was uplinked in 10 languages from Manila, Philippines, to countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Thus far more than 20,000 baptisms have resulted. In March Pastor Finley was uplinked in 17 languages from Kumasi, Ghana, primarily to sites in Africa. More than 30,000 people have chosen membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yet many more are continuing to study the Bible beliefs of our church.
Brazilian Youth to Build Bridge Into the Community; Mega Event Planned in Florianópolis

Five thousand Adventist youth are finalizing plans to spend four days in the coastal city of Florianópolis to build a human “bridge of hope” in the community, from October 8-11.

“We would like to do something more than just to meet, play, and study together. The plan is to show our Christianity in practice, as members of the community in which we all live,” explains Udolcy Zukowski, communication director of the South Brazil Union. “Florianópolis is symbolic of that life and that religion in practice, wherever we come from.

“The meeting will be called ‘A Bridge of Hope.’ It fits well with the presence of a historic bridge linking the island of Santa Catarina and the mainland. It’s symbolic about our interest in reaching out to those among whom we live,” he adds.

Zukowski and his team of youth and communication leaders met recently with the state governor of Santa Catarina, Esperidiao Amim, and the mayor and city administrators of Florianópolis to discuss the project.

“They were overwhelmed with enthusiasm to see our young people join the city managers in making a difference for the citizens,” says Siloe de Almeida, director of the South American Division Communication Department. “They are making the city services available to join the Adventist young people in a variety of activities.”

Though Florianópolis is served by several Adventist congregations, the church’s presence is not as significant as the church leaders desire. “The church is not as well known as it should be and could be,” explains De A Imeida. “That’s why we feel it is important to make a particular statement as to who Adventists are.”

The Bridge of Hope event will include projects in the poor neighborhoods and fishing villages near Seventh-day Adventist churches.

To share hope, Adventist young people will develop some 20 community projects to supply necessities, create goodwill, break down prejudice between people, and open the hearts of individuals to the message of the gospel. “We will practically show our Christianity, but will also share our Christian faith through a variety of spiritual events which will be offered by the congregations in the city,” explains one of the local ministers.

The state government mayor’s office will partner in the program by providing materials and transportation. The individual projects will provide information and ways to save electric energy and preserve water quality.

Argentina Goalkeeper Chooses Religion Over Sports Career

BY HUMBERTO RASI, DIRECTOR OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, AND RAY DABROWSKI, DIRECTOR OF THE GC COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Carlos Roa, Argentinian soccer’s top goalkeeper, announced on June 25 that he is retiring from soccer for “religious reasons.” Since his appearance with the Argentinian World Cup squad last summer, Roa, 29, had repeatedly commented about his intention to quit professional soccer because it conflicted with his conviction about playing on Saturdays.

Roa had attended an Adventist school in Santa Fe, Argentina, and was nicknamed Lechuga (“lettuce”) by teammates because of his vegetarian diet. After his school years, he, his wife, and his parents became Seventh-day Adventists. Reporters noted that on Saturdays, prior to international soccer games, he withdrew to his room to study the Bible. Roa identified himself with the Adventist Church and its beliefs that emphasize the whole being, according to Dario Bruno, Roa’s former church pastor, who spoke about him during the 1998 World Cup in France.

Announcing his decision at a press conference at the Luis Sitjar Stadium in Mallorca, Spain, Roa said, “What I’m going to do from now on is more important than what I’ve been doing.” Citing religious convictions, Roa said that the cause of his saying goodbye to professional soccer was his faith, and the incompatibility of his membership in the Adventist Church with the demands of his professional career, as reported in Clarin, a popular Buenos Aires newspaper.

“I was really happy playing soccer, but I am seeking for better things. I’m not making this decision with fear or doubts. For a Christian, not everything is rose-colored. One’s faith must be strong,” he explained.

“I asked God to give me the opportunity to play in the World Cup, and He gave it to me. I asked Him to have a chance to play in Europe, and He also gave it to me. I want to fulfill my promises to Him and to retire now,” he said.

Roa, who will be viewed by some as an example of a role model of religious convictions, was named this season’s top goalkeeper in the Spanish league after giving up only 29 goals in 35 games and leading his Mallorca team to third place and the European Cup Winners’ Cup final.
Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood

BY BERT WILLIAMS, A TEACHER AT MAXWELL ADVENTIST ACADEMY, NAIROBI, KENYA

Mr. Rogers is in the news again. Well, maybe not in the headlines as late-breaking news, but he was featured worldwide recently in a segment by Jeff Greenfield on CNN and Time. To call the piece heart-warming would be an understatement, sort of like saying that Bill Gates has some money.

Everyone loves Mr. Rogers, from the millions of fans who have watched Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood over the past 30 years to the Hollywood intelligentsia who gave him his own star on that famous sidewalk. And why shouldn’t they? Here is a man whose lovely wife of 48 years insists he is no different at home than what we all see on the screen; a man who continues to believe that the entertainment industry is obligated to use its power to promote what is right and good and noble.

Fred Rogers, a fine pianist and an ordained minister, has never quit buying and wearing used clothes. His sweaters, including the one in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., really were knit by his mother before she passed away. He drives a nondescript older model car, but says he can’t think of anything he would want that he doesn’t already have. He’s just happy to have helped some children along the way.

So if we all think Mr. Rogers is so great, why don’t more of us emulate him? If we find his life appealing, why do we find fast-paced, self-centered acquisitiveness so alluring? If we value his soft-spoken, patient bearing, why do we find so much to be impatient about? If we think it noble for him to have devoted his life to making the lives of others better, shouldn’t we devote more of our own energies to similar goals?

Maybe it’s not just little kids who need to be listening to Mr. Rogers.
Global Mission Prayer Ministry

Please pray for: Anuiela and Edlira, who are sharing God’s love in Albania.

With a small allocation of Global Mission funds from the Trans-European Division (TED), Migena Lovaci recently started an outreach program for children in Tirana, capital of Albania. With fewer than 200 Seventh-day Adventists, Albania is a big Global Mission challenge.

When Migena was called to assist ADRA/Albania in helping refugees flooding into Albania from Kosovo, two secondary students, Anuiela and Edlira (pictured), volunteered to continue working with the children.

“A nuiela and Edlira share their love for Jesus with up to 15 children three times each week,” says Peter Roennfeldt, Global Mission coordinator for the TED. “The joy of these children who have learned of Jesus can be seen on their faces. They love to pray and share what Jesus is doing in their lives.”

Seventy percent of Albanians are Muslim, 20 percent Albanian Orthodox, and 10 percent Roman Catholic. Communism collapsed later in Albania than in other Eastern European countries, with greater unrest. Albania is now trying to rebuild its economy and infrastructure after many years of Communist dictatorship, isolation, and hardship.

Further Information

If you would like to join the Global Mission Prayer Ministry, or receive Global Mission newsletters, please call 1-800-648-5824 or e-mail gminfo@adventist.org.

Longtime British Educator Dies

Hugh Dunton, who served as an educator in Northern Europe and West Africa for 40 years, died on July 6 in England. He was 73 years old.

Dunton was the founding headmaster of Peninsula Secondary School in Sierra Leone, principal of Bekwai SDA Secondary School in Ghana, and headmaster of Stanborough Secondary School in England. He also taught at Newbold College in England and served as education director and associate secretary of the Northern Europe-West Africa Division (now the Trans-European Division).

Dunton, a historian, was also a noted writer. He was a regular columnist for British denominational magazines.

Dunton is survived by his wife, Britta, and his children, Roland and Susan.

What’s Upcoming

Sept. 11 Adventist Review emphasis
Sept. 18 Family Togetherness Day
Sept. 25 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Africa-Indian Ocean Division
Sept. 25 World Pathfinder Day
Oct. 3 Health Emphasis Week begins
Even the “elect” can be challenged by subtle deceptions.

BY ROBERT R. WRESCH

RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE BY e-mail chain letter, preceded by the addresses of hundreds of previous recipients:

Hello, my name is David "Darren" Bucklew. I live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I attend Bethel Park High School and participate in many sports. I have severe ostriopliosis of the liver (my liver is extremely inflamed). Modern science has yet to find a cure. Valley Children’s Hospital has agreed to donate seven cents to the National Disease Society for every name on this letter. Please send it around as much as you can.

Thank you, Darren.

PS: For those of you who don’t take five minutes to do this, what goes around comes around. You can help sick people, and it costs you nothing.

Although the message is prefaced by the e-mail addresses of many previous forwards, Darren Bucklew’s own e-mail address is not among them. We are thus unable to extend our condolences. I am not acquainted with Darren but am sorry to hear that his liver is extremely inflamed.

However, there is a problem concerning Valley Children’s Hospital, which, at least in Pittsburgh, does not exist. The message fails to explain how Valley Children’s Hospital could pay seven cents to the National Disease Society, which also does not exist. Furthermore, we are not told how Valley Children’s Hospital could possibly be made aware of the number of times this message has been forwarded.

Of special interest is Darren’s condition, “ostriopliosis.” He informs us that “modern science has yet to find a cure.” The situation is even more serious than that: Modern science has yet...
to discover such a disease.

A call to Bethel Park High School informs us that Darren Bucklew is, in fact, a student there. However, that's where the truth ends. My respondent reports that Darren's message has been circulating the Internet since July 1998. To help counteract this falsehood, the school has placed a disclaimer at the bottom of its Web page.

Darren's plea ends with these words: “You can help sick people, and it costs you nothing.”

Who would not wish to help sick people? Especially if it costs you nothing. Thus the appeal of this hoax.

But it concerns me that so many kind and well-meaning people are willing to believe without asking for evidence. Generous people can be easily deceived—which leads us from medicine to religion.

Quoting from the Bible, “The old prophet answered, ‘I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (But he was lying to him.)” 1

Although Darren lied, he claimed no divine authority for his information. But prophets too can lie, even when they claim to declare the word of the Lord, transmitted by an angel.

Jesus predicted that we can anticipate more such deceptions: “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” 2 “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” 3

Paul warned us of “false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” 4

A gain, Jesus warned, “For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” 5

Yes, even “the elect” can be challenged by subtle deceptions. But most deceptions are not so subtle. Let us first develop our discrimination on the easy ones, not afraid to be demanding of evidence.

If your doctor labels your condition “ostriopliosis,” please quickly find another doctor. If your religious instructors fail to ground every point solidly on the evidence of God’s Word, please quickly find other instructors.

Better still, study the Bible for yourself. God has gone to a lot of trouble to provide adequate evidence about Himself. How tragic to be deceived because we failed to do our homework.

Robert R. Wresch is an ophthalmologist at the Seventh-day Adventist Clinic on the island of Guam.

---

1 1 Kings 13:18, NIV.
2 Matt. 24:11.
3 Verse 5.
4 1 Cor. 11:13, 14, NIV.
5 Matt. 24:24, NRSV.
Of False Hierarchies and Human Gods
An old philosophy with evil consequences—then and now

BY ELIJAH MVUNDURA

Jesus was "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). And He Himself declared, "A nyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Yet Jesus "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). Why did Jesus assume the nature of a servant? Why did He take the lowest rank in human society? To answer these questions, let's go back to the world in which He was born.

In the ancient world people believed that gods, humans, and nature were linked in a Great Chain of Being that stretched from heaven down to earth. At the top of this cosmic hierarchy were kings. As such, they formed the connection between the human and the divine worlds, deriving their authority from their proximity to the gods. That's why ancient kings were either "man-gods" or priest-kings.

A classic example was the Egyptian pharaohs. The Greeks and Romans, for their part, initially deified rulers and heroic individuals posthumously (Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar are prominent examples). But later both Greek and Roman rulers deified themselves before death. There was the Greek king Antiochus IV, for example, who called himself "Theos Epiphanes" ("Evident God"). And Roman emperors such as Nero, Caligula, and Hadrian.

It's because Roman emperors claimed divine status (symbolized by emperor cult) that they persecuted the early Christians. Apparently, in proclaiming the divine lordship of Jesus Christ, these early believers were indirectly challenging the divine claims of the Roman emperors.

Yet, given the divine claims of Roman emperors and other heroic individuals in classical antiquity, hostility toward Jesus' divinity presents a great historical irony. And it's interesting that modern scholarship, though raising many questions about the divinity of Jesus, has been virtually silent on the deification of ancient kings, emperors, and heroic individuals.

This selective hostility toward the divine claims of Jesus is not surprising. The problem is in the servant position that Jesus assumed. It was difficult—and still is—to reconcile the contradiction between Jesus' poverty and humility with His divine claims. Pious Jews were genuinely mystified. God a servant—was He not omnipotent? God dying—was He not immortal? The reaction of sophisticated Greeks was similar. To them, Jesus was simply human—all human. And for them, humans served the gods, not vice versa.

No wonder Søren Kierkegaard described the Incarnation as the "absolute paradox." Jesus is an enigma, indeed. But how could it be otherwise? The second commandment explicitly forbade making an image of God (Ex. 20:4). This could only mean that to worship Jesus, however exalted His earthly position, would have been sacrilegious. It would have been to represent God in the "image" of human kings, and the kingdom of God in the form of earthly kingdoms. But making things even worse, Jesus assumed not the highest but the lowest position. In so doing, His servanthood became a powerful sign of God's unrepresentable glory and majesty.

So We Might Approach Him
In Jesus divine glory is dramatically expressed through absence. Yet the absence of dazzling glory and majesty
achieved another significant purpose. It made Jesus approachable and accessible. Instead of covering our faces, as in the case with Moses (Ex. 33:22), God covered Himself in human flesh. Sinners could now behold Him without dying. “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

If in Jesus human flesh sheltered divine glory, what is the nature of the “glory” that John saw? Ellen White provides an answer. “The glory shining in the face of Christ is the glory of self-sacrificing love.” Significantly, divine glory, in contrast to human glory, is not derived from dimming or diminishing others. Rather, as Jesus strikingly and consistently demonstrated, it comes from uplifting and elevating the wretched, the lowly, and the despised. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). And in the words of Ellen White, “the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven.”

Indeed, self-renunciation is the essence of love. “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16). The fundamental point is that there is no precedence in love. For love implies oneness, and oneness implies equality. “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23). To underscore the unity that is supposed to animate Christians, Paul compared the church to a body, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:1-27).

No Room for Hierarchy

The analogy of the body is instructive: it bars the ranking of body parts in any hierarchy of importance. A l-
though the different vital functions of the organs are duly acknowledged, there is no preference or precedence (verses 22-25). “So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other” (verse 25). Succinctly put, Christian love and unity are the antithesis of hierarchy.

Hierarchy means preference and precedence. It differentiates between the high and the low; between the honored and the despised. But the mystery of divine love is that God created us, not primarily to be His servants or even His worshipers, but to be His children. And just as earthly parents labor and live for their children, so does God for His human family. And He does much more. “I am among you as one who serves,” said Jesus (Luke 22:27). Indeed, Christians cannot help uniting with the apostle John in exclaiming: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1). “Now if we are His children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17).

Our coregency with Christ brings into sharp relief one of the most pernicious lies concocted by the devil—the lie that earthly hierarchies present a reflection of the heavenly order. As we know, it is the self-seeking Lucifer who first sought precedence in heaven. “I will raise my throne above the stars of God,” he declared (Isa. 14:13). Correspondingly and tragically, the same desire for supremacy led to the Fall. “You will be like God,” said the devil (Gen. 3:5). But this was a lie. We became not like God, but like Satan. Accordingly, human societies took their association with the poor and despised. Paul put it explicitly: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

Serious Implications

It was the hierarchical principle that informed the system of ancient and modern slavery, the caste system, and medieval serfdom. A nd it was also the same hierarchical idea of the Great Chain of Being (as it was called in the eighteenth century) that inspired European racism. The Aryan race was believed to be at the top of this Great Chain. Conversely, at the bottom were Blacks, generally thought to be the lowest link in the human chain that connected with the highest animal, the ape.

Interestingly, notwithstanding the scientific facade of the theory of evolution, it is also informed by the hierarchical principle. Well before the publication of The Origin of Species (by Charles Darwin) in the nineteenth century, scientists had been absorbed in a search for the “missing link” that joined man to animals in a continuous chain of life. To a large degree, the theory of evolution was widely accepted in the nineteenth century—not so much because of its “scientific rigor,” but because it resonated with a deeply ingrained cultural myth, the Great Chain of Being.

He Turned It All Upside Down

A full exploration of the varied diffusion and diabolical effects of the hierarchical ideology would take us far. Suffice it to say that the servanthood of Jesus goes far beyond theological and doctrinal formulations. It literally touches on every strand that has shaped human history. Such is the “wisdom from God” (1 Cor. 1:30). The ancient kings and the upper classes derived their authority and status from their assumed proximity to the gods. No wonder God “chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him” (verses 28, 29).

In other words, by assuming the form of a servant Jesus completely inverted the hierarchical order. He completely destroyed it. Through His association with the poor and despised, Jesus showed that not the high and mighty, but the humble and lowly are nearest to God. “For this is what the high and lofty One says... ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit’” (Isa. 57:15). Like the ancient pagan kings, Jesus claimed to (and did) connect heaven and earth, but in a position directly opposite to the one occupied by the so-called divine-human monarchs. Whereas the pagan gods were stationed at the top of the human hierarchy, the heavenly God-man took His position at the bottom.

Therefore, in Jesus, race, class, and gender hierarchies are completely destroyed. Paul put it explicitly: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

Christ is the only link between heaven and earth. He told Nathanael, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” (John 1:51). If the Lord of glory occupied the lowest rank in human society, can we dare assume a higher position?

1 All Bible quotations are from the New International Version.
4 Ibid.

Elijah Mvundura is an author and member of the Indianad Seventh-day Adventist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. H e is a former history and sociology lecturer at Solusi University in Zimbabwe.
The man who raped my daughter (a minor at the time) is now teaching physical education at an Adventist elementary school. Should I let the school know about this? If I were a parent or grandparent of these children, I wouldn't want someone convicted (yes, he was convicted) of such a crime anywhere near them. Besides, wouldn't the school be liable if he struck again?

In dealing with this case and others like it, we must keep two principles in view—first and most important, the protection of our children from possible sexual predators, and second, the possibility of the redemption of the offender.

There are legitimate reasons for you to approach the proper authorities; both revolve around the golden rule. If you were a parent you would want the school officials to be aware of past criminal convictions of its employees. And if you were one of the school officials, you would want to know how best to avoid both surprise revelations of past performances or repetitions of the offense. And yes, in most of the United States the school would be liable/negligent if further offenses occurred in the absence of diligent research into the applicant's background.

But please be clear; a past conviction does not necessarily suggest repeat performance. There are a number of variables to be kept in mind, such as: how long ago did the offense occur? What penalty did he pay for his crime? Was this his only such offense? Was he a church member at the time? Answers to these and similar inquiries should influence both your attitude and your approach.

Your feeling of not wanting this man who raped your daughter to be near children is understandable. Indeed, school officials should act with great caution in considering the employment of all sexual offenders, even those whose offense may have been in the distant past. They must do all they can to protect the children in their care. However, please leave room for God's grace to have effected genuine change and for the officials to decide, if the individual's subsequent experience suggests it, to give him the benefit of the doubt and make appropriate use of what are, hopefully, his now consecrated abilities.

You chair both the General Conference's Constitution and Bylaws Committee and Policy Committee. The past General Conference session (Utrecht, 1995) made numerous changes to church policies. Isn't there a danger in tinkering so much with our policies and regulations?

The church's business requires clear and sometimes detailed bylaws and policies for reasons of fairness, consistency, church unity, and a variety of other operational concerns, many with legal implications.

Is it possible to place too much emphasis on bylaws and policies? Yes, among them: (1) structuring policies to “get at” individual or localized problems rather than the church's broader operations; (2) encouraging overcautious leaders in their inactivity unless there is a specific rule that frees them to be active; (3) producing policy books so voluminous and elaborate that they are generally ignored as impractical; (4) discouraging creativity and wholesome individuality by creating an overdependence upon parent organizations; and (5) substituting energies expended in policy and rules manipulation for involvement in active (personal) gospel witness.

Ellen G. White sought to minimize the multiplying of policies and the influence of what she called “policy men” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 263). She feared that the dynamism so instinctive to movements of reform would be stifled by the regulatory spirit of formalized machinery—and so should we.

Will there be bylaw matters considered at the 2000 General Conference session? Yes. But be certain they will be addressed with the above principles in mind.

Calvin B. Rock is a general vice president of the General Conference. He holds doctoral degrees in ministry and Christian ethics.
B E C A R E F U L ,  O L D F R I E N D ;  T H E R E A R E those who are jealous of your success and want to kill you.” The speaker, a Muslim, addressed those words to Kwaku Forkuo, a prosperous cocoa farmer who lived in a small village in Ghana. “Don’t worry about me” was the laughing response. “I can take care of myself.”

Starting Out Again
Within a month Kwaku was dead. Was he poisoned? Did he die of natural causes? All we know for certain is that Kwaku’s death put his wife, Monica, and their children into great financial difficulties. They were cheated out of their inheritance, and Monica with her seven children had to return to her home village, Asokore.

The Forkuo family had very little money. Monica was allowed to rent a piece of land to provide for her family. But she had to return half the produce—the most desirable and valuable items—to the landlord for “rent.” In order to survive, the family made porridge, which they sold to the other villagers.

All Monica’s children—from the youngest to the oldest—had to work in the garden. And after they harvested their produce they had to carry baskets full of vegetables on their heads to the market, walking many miles in the hot tropical sun. Other children teased the boys for doing “women’s work.” Little did they realize it, but the Lord was training them in hard work, thrift, and diligence for the years to come. In addition to their household duties, the children did well at school as the years passed.

Providential Openings
Eventually Yaw Boakye, one of Monica’s sons, went to school in Bekwai to study business. There he met a fellow student with strange beliefs that were somehow compelling and convincing. The new friend was a Seventh-day Adventist. After Yaw Boakye moved permanently to Accra, he became an Adventist and invited his brother, Emmanuel Manu, to come live with him, to work, study, and attend the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Emmanuel likewise became a believer and was baptized. Eventually all the family, including Monica, was baptized.
The glory of Africa is in the transformed lives of its sons and daughters.

Emmanuel was on fire for the truth. Although he was only 18, he rented a tent, went back to his mother’s village, and ran an evangelistic campaign. There were several baptisms. A small church was established. It now has its own building.

Emmanuel persisted with his studies in accounting, and did well. When the church invited him to become an auditor, he became the first church-employed auditor to pass the examinations of the prestigious Ghanaian Institute of Chartered Accountants. He is now a chartered accountant, serving the church as a district director in the General Conference Auditing Service.

Whatever Happened To . . .

I accompanied Brother Manu and his mother to his late father’s village. It was Monica’s first visit to the village since her husband’s death many years ago. It has not prospered. Those who got her husband’s land are almost destitute. We were surrounded by excited villagers who gave us a memorable welcome. Emmanuel and his mother gave gifts to them and related how the Lord has blessed them over the years.

Emmanuel has said that years ago he was a small African boy just like millions of others who have very little to look forward to. Then he gave himself to the Lord, and his life was transformed. The best part is that most of his life is still ahead of him, as it is for all who long for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The glory of the African church is not in its large numbers of baptisms, but rather in the transformed lives of the sons and daughters of Africa who have invited the Lord into their lives.

Thomas P. Miller is director of auditing services for the Africa-Indian Ocean Division.
Scratches

The phone rang one morning at the church office in Livermore, California, jarring me back to reality from my concentration on the sermon I was preparing. On the other end of the phone was the familiar voice of Dr. Grace, a longtime member of the church and retired physician. I greeted her, spent a moment in small talk asking how she was doing, then asked what was on her mind.

She was wondering if I could stop by her house to pick up some boxes of clothing and deliver them to the Pleasant Hill Community Services building. I assured her that would be an easy request to fulfill and set up a time the following day to get the clothing.

Upon arriving at her home the next day, I began carrying boxes of varying sizes from the garage out to my car parked in the driveway. Dr. Grace supervised my trips from the garage to the car. Only a couple boxes remained to be put in the car. As I rearranged the trunk to accommodate the last two boxes, I happened to look up and see my 85-year-old member struggling to bring one of the boxes to the car. Before I was able to help her, she had reached the car with her awkward, heavy load.

The next few seconds seemed to move in slow motion and were excruciatingly painful for me. The awareness of what was about to happen choked any words I wanted to say. Then it happened. She heaved the loaded box of clothes onto the hood of my car. It was a fairly new Toyota Camry in mint condition—especially the beautiful, dark forest-green metallic paint shining in the morning sun. Fingers scratching a blackboard would have been more musical to my ears than the sound I heard. Helplessly I listened and watched as she pushed the box across the hood of my car—a distinct, loud, gritty, grinding, and scraping sound ringing loudly in my ears.

I didn’t say anything as I hurried to get the box and sublimly attempted to assess the damage. My worst fears were confirmed. The dark forest-green metallic paint revealed a nine-inch swath of very fine white scratches ground into the hood of the car. Casually, without Dr. Grace noticing, I wiped the area with my hand to see how badly the paint was scratched. The scratches did not wipe off.

I placed the last box in the car, climbed in, thanked her for the clothes then drove to my destination 40 miles away. During the next 40 minutes of freeway driving, I stared at the scratches directly in front of me. Forty minutes of wondering how Dr. Grace could not see what she had done to my car. All I could see were many, many rows of thin white line scratches in what used to be unblemished paint.

I delivered the clothes to the Community Services center in Pleasant Hill. Then I had another 30 minutes of driving to a lunch appointment. As the minutes and miles passed, I slowly began to see those scratches differently. The focus of my feelings had been on my slightly scratched forest-green metallic paint. I knew the hood of my car could be repaired and most of the scratches could be removed with a little effort.

My feelings slowly began to shift from the scratched paint to the reason for all those boxes of clothes in the first place. I had been reacting in a narrow, self-centered way. I had failed to think in terms of all the memories neatly folded and packed away in each box. Memories that could no longer be made. Memories of a very special person in Dr. Grace’s life. And after reflecting on those scratches for more than three hours of driving that day, I decided not to remove them. I needed the reminder.

You see, it had been just a little more than a year since those clothes had been worn by Dr. Henry, Grace’s husband of 63 years. The real scratches were on her heart—not on the hood of my car.

Bruce Nicola pastors three Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Trinity Alps district, near Weaverville, California.