To Love, Honor, ... and Rescue

Jon and Pamella Paulien celebrate their second honeymoon—by staying alive.
October 30: Spotlight on Worship

Have you ever wondered why your spouse likes getting hugged at church and you don’t? Do you ever cringe when someone says “Let’s have worship”? At your church service, what role does God play: bystander, audience, or performer? Do the “contemporary” worship forms thrill you or threaten you? Have you heard strange rumors about a new Colorado church called “Grace Place”?

Coming later this month—a sparkling 80-page issue you won’t want to miss. In “When We All Get Together,” you’ll find:

- Thoughtful essays on the above subjects.
- Photo features on Adventist churches in Holland, Nebraska; Winter Park, Florida; Medellín, Colombia; and Berthoud, Colorado.
- The annual Week of Prayer readings.
- Much, much more.

But if you don’t receive the WEEKLY Review, you won’t get it. To subscribe at a discounted $33.97 for 40 issues, call 1-800-456-3991.

Coffin’s objective evaluation of church policy regarding divorce and remarriage is long overdue. As a family law attorney I have concluded that adultery is not a physical act. Adultery is anything that destroys the intimacy of the partners. Just as true intimacy is mental and spiritual before being sexual, so adultery occurs from the loss of any of those components in marriage.

However, a church should not automatically disfellowship one partner without first visiting and praying together with each of the spouses separately and investigating the facts. I have personally grieved because of a local church action in which a wife was disfellowshipped for what appeared to be sexual infidelity. There was not so much as a pastoral visit beforehand. In reality she was merely escaping from repeated physical abuse by her “innocent” husband, who, immediately after the divorce, commenced openly cohabiting with another woman outside of marriage.

Christ’s admonition—to “go and sin no more”—should be our example. Ours is not to judge, but to nurture.

—Catherine B. Lang-Titus
Glendale, California

Divorce—And Church Policy

James Coffin’s “The Long Shadows of Divorce” (August NAD Edition) is most needed and welcome fresh air. Being married for 21 fulfilling years but close to so many cases described, I find it a blessing to see this issue presented so well. My prayer is that our organization wakes up to the reality and provides healing and grace to those who need it most.

—F. Meza
Via E-mail

Global Mission Special

Regarding your recent Global Mission issue (July 31), the “Hanging in the Imbalance” blurb on page 2 seems to evidence the church’s concern over population disparities. However, perhaps the greatest disparities can be seen among White New Yorkers. Overall in the New York metro area Whites are the overwhelming majority, yet almost nonexistent in the church. If you want to print population disparities, how about printing some of the most egregious ones?

—Eric A. Gang
Newark, New Jersey
In “Going Against the Grain” (July 31), Andy Nash’s football metaphor about the ballcarrier worked well. How nice it would be, then, to see the church throwing a few fantastic, unbelievable blocks downfield for our bold, young ballcarriers. If teamwork is the word, we must surely learn that skill.

—Gael Hoyt
Via E-mail

More Please

What an incredible picture of Jesus appearing before Pontius Pilate in Bill Knott’s “Who Is Prisoner, Who Is Judge?” (August NAD Edition)! If this vivid and realistic portrayal, with its unmistakably pure theology of salvation, is a sample of what your new associate editor can bring us, then we are in for a real treat.

—Robert E. Osborn
Takoma Park, Maryland

Congregationalism

I applaud Andy Nash’s sentiments in “Congregationalism: The Wrong Shaking” (August NAD Edition). His admonition to “stick around loudly” mirrors the advice my father gave me regarding the church. His words are commendable, challenging, and reconciliatory.

However, Nash’s assessment of congregationalism misses the mark. Tithe distribution is an obvious issue. Overlooked are member perceptions that justice is less important than expediency, creativity is secondary to orthodoxy, and absolute control is the objective of administrative leadership. Many mourn that what began as the “great Advent movement” has become monolithic, the spirit of conservatism replacing the moving of the Spirit.

At the risk of sounding too sympathetic, I think the movement toward congregationalism is more than an attempt to redistri-bute tithe. And it’s deeper than a pastor’s longing to see an Adventist Saddleback. It’s an attempt to revitalize the church, empower its members, find relevance, and rediscover the Spirit that made Adventism great! Until these realities are understood and addressed, we will never be able to “get along.”

—Gregory L. Hoenes, pastor
Hollywood, California

The 6,000-Year Theory

I noted with some concern and amazement the editorial comment (August NAD Edition) that stated, “We also reject the 6,000-year theory, which holds that the earth will experience a Sabbath-like rest for the seventh millennium. . . . It has no biblical basis.”

As one who has done considerable research and writing on this topic, the evidence is clear to me that virtually all the Adventist pioneers believed and taught the general validity of the seventh millennial—great Sabbath—rest. (See James White, in Review and Herald, Mar. 6, 1856; J. N. Andrews, “The Great Week of Time, or the Period of Seven Thousand Years Devoted to the Probation and the Judgment of Mankind,” a Review and Herald series running July 17 to August 21, 1883; and “The Millennium,” Bible Readings for the Home.)

Though some may choose to misuse the general parameter of the “great week of time” to try to set a date for Christ’s second coming, this should not cause us to abandon the biblical concept. Unless we are willing to repudiate the testimony of virtually all our Adventist pioneers and recall Bible Readings, the concept of the great week of time and the millennial Sabbath stands as a biblical concept and an Adventist understanding.

—G. Edward Reid
Fulton, Maryland

The idea of the seventh millennial rest can be found among the writings of Adventist pioneers. While Ellen White frequently referred to a period of “six thousand years,” she did not use this language to imply what some others did—the setting of a date for the Second Coming. In fact, she repeatedly warned against any calculation that would lead to date-setting. This was the focus of our previous editorial statement.—Editors.
"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.

The Adventist Review (ISSN 0161-1119), published since 1849, is the general paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is published by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is printed by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. The North American Edition of the Adventist Review is published 12 times a year on the first Thursday of each month. Copyright © 1997.

Publishing Board: Robert S. Folkenberg, chair; Phil Follett, vice-chair; William G. Johnson, Lewis Cooper, A. C. McClure, Dorothy Watts, Ted N. C. Wilson, Martin Ytreberg, Robert Nixon, legal advisor.

Executive Publisher and Editor: William G. Johnson
Associate Editors: Roy Adams, Bill Knott
News Editor: Carlos Medley
Assistant Editors: Stephen Chavez, Andy Nash
Editorial Assistant: Ella Rydzewski
Administrative Secretary: Chitra Barnabas
Editorial Secretaries: Mary Maxson, Jeann Seguirat
Art Director: Bill Kirstein
Design Assistant: Alan Forquer
Desktop Production: Stephanie Koping
Ad Sales: Melynie Tooley
Subscriber Services: Steve Hanson
Director, Periodicals Sales: Ginger Church
Consulting Editors: Robert S. Folkenberg, Matthew Bediako, Phil Follett, Robert J. Kloosterhuis, A. C. McClure, Jan Paulsen, Leo Rambold, B. B. Rock, G. Ralph Thompson
Consulting Editors: Alfred C. McClure, Don Jacobson, Kemmet Nettles, Monte Sahlin
Special Contributors: Harold Baptiste, George Counley, Malcolm D. Gordon, Bruce Johnston, Ted Jones, Ralph Martin, Cyril Miller, Thomas J. Mostert, Jr., Orville D. Parchment, Charles Sandefur

To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. (Please query before submitting long articles.) Include address, telephone number, and Social Security number, where available. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.

E-mail: Internet: reviewmag@adventist.org

Subscriptions: Twelve monthly issues: US$12.00 plus US$10.20 international postage; 40 issues of the weekly Adventist Review, US$89.97; full 52 issues (monthly and weekly), US$105.97

Subscription queries and changes of address for the monthly North American Division Edition: Contact your local union conference headquarters. For information regarding the weekly editions of the Adventist Review: Call 301-791-7000, ext. 2439, toll-free 1-800-456-3991 or E-mail shanson@rhpap.org.


PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Vol. 174, No. 40
What Happened to the Mormons?

A funny thing happened on the way to the kingdom. The Latter-Day Saints, commonly called the Mormons, became not only respectable but acclaimed.

Adventists can only wonder: What happened?

On the surface, Adventists and Mormons have much in common. Both movements arose in America around the same time—the 1820s to 1840s. Both claim a prophetic figure who received divine revelations. Both value extra-biblical writings. Both believe in the second coming of Jesus, with a time of difficulty preceding it. Both emphasize healthful living, with abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine. Both have a strong missionary emphasis. Both claim about 10 million adherents. Both stand for clean living, moral behavior, and family virtues.

Small wonder that the public commonly confuses “SDA” and “LDS.” Adventists get credit for “that wonderful choir in Salt Lake City,” and Mormons probably for hospitals with top-quality health care.

Scratch just beneath the surface, however, and you find that Adventists and Mormons are as different as oil and water. Mormon founder-prophet Joseph Smith died at the hands of an angry mob, shooting and wounding three of them before he expired; his successor, Brigham Young, is thought to have had 27 wives. Ellen White, by contrast, was married to but one man and ended a long ministry as a revered leader and citizen.

Adventists look to the Scriptures as the source of doctrine, standard of faith, and test of all other writings; Mormons add three books to the Bible and interpret it through these books. Although Adventism began in America, it has become a global religion, with more than 90 percent of its members outside the United States. Mormonism, however, is basically an American religion: with 4.8 million members in the United States, it is the country’s seventh largest.

Adventists and Mormons are even further apart in their respective beliefs. Adventists affirm the foundational truths of Christianity—the Trinity and the atoning death of Jesus Christ. But Mormons teach that God was once human and had a wife, and that humans may become Godlike. “As man is now; God once was; as God now is, man may become,” said Lorenzo Snow, an early Mormon president-prophet. From a biblical perspective, such a claim is monstrous and echoes the first lie—“You will be like God” (Gen. 3:5, NIV).

In 1846, 30,000 Mormons fled their dream city of Nauvoo, Illinois. Attacked in print and in person, they set out westward under the leadership of Brigham Young. A 1,000-mile trek brought them at last to the great Salt Lake of Utah, which Young called “the right place.” There in the desert, cut off physically and socially from mainstream America, they built their kingdom.

This summer marked the 150th anniversary of their arrival. National television news gave them prime-time coverage, and Time ran a laudatory cover story, “Mormons, Inc.,” that dwelt at length on the wealth of the movement—whose current assets total at least $30 billion. Mormonism’s combination of virtues “may make it the religion of America’s future,” gushed Time.

But three years ago when Adventists celebrated their 150th year since 1844, the public hardly noticed. Ouch!

The transformation of the Mormons—how did it happen?

First, through a studied public relations effort. A generation ago Mormons began a special effort to pitch themselves to the mainstream. At a time when society is falling apart, the Mormon standards of chastity, fidelity, honesty, and hard work resonate with many.

Second, because of a huge shift in American culture. This is a time when “anything goes” in theology, be it New Age, Mormon, or whatever; when even Christians don’t know and don’t care what they believe. And it’s an age that has scant regard for history. If it did, the Mormons would find few takers: their fantastic accounts of a lost Israelite tribe in North America and huge battles on this continent strain credulity.

“By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:20), we often say glibly. But this test, like the “increase” one—rapid growth—isn’t sufficient of itself. It is valid only within the larger context of: What do the Scriptures teach?
Why Good Things Happen to God’s People

The story is told of a person who was the only survivor of a shipwreck. He eventually washed up on a small, uninhabited island.

He prayed for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none arrived.

After several days he decided to build a little hut out of driftwood, to protect himself from the elements. The hut also offered him a place to store the food he scavenged from the forests that covered the island.

Life became predictable, but the man never forgot that his ultimate goal was to be rescued.

One day he was foraging for food when a fierce storm lashed the island. Though drenched, he thought happily of the protection he would find at his hut. But when he returned, he found his little hut in flames, smoke rolling up to the sky. He was stung with grief and anger. “God, how could You do this to me?” he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship approaching the island, coming to rescue him.

“How did you know I was here?” the weary man asked his rescuers.

“We saw your smoke signal,” they replied.

You may have wondered if anyone has seen the signs of distress in your life. A loved one dies. A business deal goes bad. A marriage fails. There doesn’t seem to be enough money for both the rent and Adventist education.

God doesn’t always make everything come out well, but I assure you that God does keep His promises. Sometimes we don’t understand His promises, but He keeps them. For example, Romans 8:28 is a familiar passage that many of us probably have memorized. But it’s a passage that we should look at in greater depth. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” is the way the passage reads from the King James Version of the Bible. It begs the question: Are all things good?

Our problem may be less with the promise than with the translation of the promise. The apostle Paul didn’t promise that everything would work out smoothly. A better translation is found in the New International Version: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

The promise is not that everything will be wonderful, but that God will work in everything to bring joy into the lives of those who love Him. The reason good things happen is that God is working for us.

God is working to bring good to your life. Did you lose a loved one? He helps you find comfort. Have you been hurt, laid up with sickness? He gives you time to read His Word, to pray, to listen to Him. Have you seen financial disaster? He helps you be content with less.

Our fires are God’s smoke signals. And when God sees them, we know that rescue is not far away.

We find this principle at work in the history of our church. The Great Disappointment was a terrible trial for the Millerite believers. They were sure that Jesus would return in 1844—many certain that it would occur on October 22. Yet Jesus didn’t return.

They were crushed, heartbroken, disillusioned. Many of them wondered if God had abandoned them, if God could be trusted to keep His other promises.

But God worked through some of the Millerite believers to open new truths, to reveal more about His plan of salvation. Hiram Edson, James White, Joseph Bates, and others searched the Bible. They learned about the heavenly sanctuary, about the seventh-day Sabbath, about how to trust God even when they couldn’t understand His ways.

God sent visions through Ellen White. She guided the early life of this movement, helped us see God’s plan more clearly, helped our pioneers as they sought to understand the Bible better.

In all these things God was working to bring about good. He will do that in your life and mine.

Next time your little hut is burning to the ground, remember that it just may be the smoke signal that leads you to depend more deeply on God’s grace.

Alfred C. McClure is president of the 850,000-member Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.
**ADVENTIST LIFE**

One Sabbath at the Elizabeth City, North Carolina, church, Pastor John Seaman told a children's story about a girl named Mary, who “knew everything” and refused help with any of her projects. Once Mary tried to make a pie. Refusing her mother's help, Mary left out many ingredients, including a piecrust. The resulting pie was a disaster.

When Pastor Seaman asked the children what lesson they had learned, he expected someone to say, “Mary learned that sometimes she didn’t know it all.” Instead, 4-year-old Lisa responded, “Put in the crust!”

—James Coleman, via E-mail

Not long ago we were in the car with our daughter-in-law and her two girls. In the middle of a discussion about babies, 4-year-old Madison asked, “Mammy, why is it that Oma [Dutch for “Grandma”] has no babies?”

“Well,” said her mother, “she has had four baby boys, but they are all grown up. Your daddy was the youngest baby of your oma.”

Madison paused, then said, “Oh, Oma and Opa, thank you very much for giving me my good daddy!”

—Dr. and Mrs. Leslie E. Keizer, Bellport, New York

---

**JOTS & TITTLES**

In this feature, Adventists share church-related advice.

**TRACKING MEMBERS:** A non-Adventist friend in Texas told me of an interesting plan in their church to follow up on absent members. A card rack was placed on each side of the foyer. All members' name cards were placed on the right side. On arriving for services, each member transfers his or her card to the left side. Any whose cards remain on the right are immediately contacted and told they were missed at services.

—Jean R. Hastings, Loma Linda, California

**YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY:**

Three months ago there were no activities or Sabbath school classes geared toward young adults at our church, so we decided to do something about it. Now we plan a vespers and social event each month, and we have a Sabbath school for young adults and the young at heart. It has been delightful to see people doing something together.

—Sherri L. Poston, Jackson SDA Church, Jackson, Mississippi

---

**“HATS OFF” TO ADVENTIST YOUTH**

In a day when memorization of Scripture has become almost passé, these two juniors memorized all the memory verses for a recent quarter and were able to repeat them on Thirteenth Sabbath.

Congratulations to Breanna and Elizabeth! (Look for your Review caps in the mail.)

Do you know a young Adventist age 18 or under who goes the extra mile for God? Send us a paragraph telling why a young person (not a relative) deserves special recognition. Please also send the address, phone number, and photograph (preferably “in action”) of that person. Periodically the Review will honor Adventist youth on this page.

---

**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: 74532,2564.
FOR 20 YEARS MY husband, Jon, had always been there for me. No matter what, he always cheered me on. He never gave up, never abandoned me—even though others had.

I grew up in a home in which I experienced things that left permanent emotional scars. Divorce and the combat that led up to it left early and vivid memories. I also felt singled out as an emotional and physical target.

Meeting and falling in love with Jon was one of the highlights of my life. He was a young pastoral intern; I was a young adult wanting to get in touch with God. I began attending church and asked for Bible studies. The senior pastor, who began studying with me, saw a potential match when Jon joined the staff, so he found other things to do so Jon could take up where he had left off. One thing led to another.

After we married and had children, some of the ugly, scary memories from my childhood were resurrected from my subconscious, where I had sought to keep them buried. The emotional pain was severe. It immobilized me. I tried desperately to deal with the pain on my own. But I realized ultimately that I couldn’t handle it alone.

Throughout the entire process Jon was the one who walked by my side and kept me from sinking. I depended on him, and he never let me down. We found out about a Christian counselor who specialized in cases of emotional and physical abuse. He offered to work with me intensively, if I could spend some time in the part of the country where he had his practice. Kind friends in the area opened their home to me.

In my desperation I said to myself, ‘I’m not coming home until this is taken care of.’ As I drove out the driveway of our home, I thought, ‘I’m no good to myself, my husband, my chil-
shop, high tide had already passed more than two hours before, and the water should have been fairly shallow. But nature is not so easily scheduled. The water was still uncomfortably deep.

I hemmed and hawed as to whether I really wanted to snorkel under the prevailing conditions. There was an ominous chill in the air, and I hate being cold. But there was no question in Jon's mind; he was going snorkeling. Indeed, the night before, he had taken his gear out to the water, but because no one else was there, he had come right back—to my relief. I didn't want him snorkeling alone.

The irony is that Jon is not a good swimmer. If we had gone out on that boat, he would have rented a buoyancy suit in order to keep afloat for the entire two hours. Now Jon put on his snorkel, diving mask, and flippers and flapped on out toward the open water. He crossed over a bit of coral wall and in no time was off. Jon's goal was to swim just as far as he could and then find a piece of coral large enough to keep his head above water so he could rest before continuing.

For a man who can barely swim, it was quite a plan.

I carefully crossed over the wall and plunged into the deep water. The water certainly had a different feel than at low tide. At low tide I saw two-inch fish and waded in two or three feet of water. Now I was seeing 12-inch fish, and the water was six or seven feet deep.

I was uneasy about the fact that my feet did not touch the ocean floor. I wondered, What about when I need to rest or adjust my mask or pour water out of my snorkel? But Jon was ahead and already out of shouting distance, so I followed.

I enjoyed the fish that swam by me and the beautiful colors of the coral. Every now and then I would check to see where my beloved husband was. I didn't like the fact that he was so far ahead, especially considering his swimming skills. Yes, I was concerned.

That's when my attention was diverted by the appearance of a gigantic stingray. It was an awesome sight—a huge stingray swimming right in front of me. The stinger trailing behind it must have been five feet in length. I couldn't...
believe it! It was exciting to see, and yet frightening. I wondered if Jon had seen the ray. It had come from his direction.

A Cry for Help

I had been thinking all along that for a person who could not swim very well, he really was farther out than he ought to be. Just then I heard Jon’s voice. Was he just calling my name, or was he crying for help?

I immediately began swimming in his direction. Something told me that I needed to be strong and pace myself. I needed to be calm and relaxed. So I swam with determination—steady, but not so fast that I’d wear myself out.

When I arrived, the look on Jon’s face was horrifying. What was happening? His face revealed fear, pain, and shock. “Ock!” he groaned. But I didn’t know what that meant. Had the ray stung him? Or had something else bitten him? “Ock!” he moaned again. I couldn’t understand what he was saying, so I told him to take off the mask and snorkel so we could talk plainly. I attempted to take the thing off myself, but he resisted.

Then it dawned on me. “Oh, you mean rock,” I said. I took hold of his hand so as to move him away from the rock.

“No!” he shouted.

All kinds of thoughts raced through my mind. Maybe his foot was wedged between some rocks and he was in pain. Or even worse, maybe his foot was severed! My heart pounded. I knew that at this very moment Jon was in some life-threatening situation, but what? We weren’t communicating.

I had never seen Jon look so fearful. Immobilized emotionally, he wasn’t thinking rationally. He was in a state of shock about something.
catching his breath from time to time.

And how did this five-foot-six-inch woman keep her nose out of the water so that her six-foot husband could be elevated long enough to catch his breath?

Flippers, of course. I stood on the tips of my flipppers. And that gave me just enough height to keep my face out of the water.

**We were out there struggling, fighting for our lives.**

With both of his hands he gripped my right arm firmly. We just stood there quietly. By steadying him on the rock that, fortunately for us, was there when we needed it, I was able to keep my husband from drowning. The Lord had answered my prayer for help.

**What Really Happened**

After Jon caught his breath and began to recuperate, it was time to call for help so we could get back to shore. But for some reason I couldn’t. I guess that I believed that after what we had just been through, we could get back ourselves. But after a bit of coaxing, I agreed to holler for help.

A woman reclining in a chair out in the sun heard me. “Did you say help?” she hollered.

“Yes,” I yelled back, and she was off and running. In no time a muscular young man appeared on the beach and dove in after us. Ten or 15 minutes later we were back on shore.

At the nurse’s station we answered some questions about Jon’s health. His blood pressure was fine (they should have checked mine), and he was released.

Looking back on this experience, I had more than a few questions. What if I had not chosen to process those scary childhood memories that had kept me from reaching God’s potential for my life? What if I hadn’t reached out to a godly Christian counselor who understood what I needed? What if I hadn’t started to learn how to forgive those I needed to forgive so I could begin to get on with my life? If this incident had happened six months earlier, would I have had the calmness and strength to do what needed to be done when my husband needed me the most? Would I have lost him forever? Would we both have drowned?

Three months later my family and I were in North Dakota at camp meeting, where Jon had been asked to speak. While there, we ran into a good friend, Ben. I was eager to tell him all about our horrifying experience on Heron Island.

Ben listened patiently. He was amazed by my story. Then he told us a few things about snorkeling, one of his favorite hobbies. He told me that there was no way that a person could stand on flipppers. “Flipppers are just too flimsy,” he said. “They can’t hold a person’s weight; it can’t be done.”

I asked, “How did I stand on the tips of my flipppers for such a long time then?”

He grinned a mysterious grin, “You didn’t,” he answered. “An angel held you up.”

**There are a good number of things I don’t understand. I can’t explain why I had to suffer so long with terrible emotional and psychological wounds. I can’t fully appreciate how God’s grace was demonstrated in the people God used for my healing. But I do know that my life was preserved by a gracious and powerful God, and that—like Jon—he’s always been there for me.**

Angel or not, it was God’s power that aided me and my husband, Jon, when I prayed. “Jesus, help!”

Pamella Paulien is not an expert swimmer, but she is a wife and mother of three children. She recently began working toward a degree in horticulture.
What My Mother Knew About the Tube

Are there Adventist Review families serious enough about the compelling power of TV to do something daring?

BY LOREN DICKINSON

It's a collector's item now. I wish I had one, but I don't want it in the condition I remember as a kid. Without warning one Thursday morning, it simply wouldn't play. That mystified my brother and me.

Then the answer began to emerge. Someone had wedged herself behind that dome-shaped cathedral radio and lifted one of the vacuum tubes, rendering that low-fidelity instrument soundless and useless. Paul and I considered that a high crime.

A few days later the mystery unraveled. My mother confessed. She had removed one of the vacuum tubes Wednesday night. But she had an agenda. "If you continue listening to that jazzy music, the tube stays out," she announced, and she meant it.

How did she know? Ah, she had discreetly checked the tubes when she returned from work. They were warm, and still worse, that orange-colored, recessed dial sat squarely on the jazzy music station from Minneapolis.

It all seems so innocent now. But matters of media, especially TV, have become crucial matters since then, particularly for the young. Let's take a candid, unsettling look at kids and TV, and then offer some hope. A lot of hope.

A plethora of facts have surfaced:

- In American homes with TV (and 98 percent of all homes have at least one) the set is on seven hours per day. Not a week; a day. But please note: the TV is on, only on. In some homes the TV acts like electronic wallpaper. Perhaps no one's watching, but it's on.1
- Some physicians claim they can predict kids' cholesterol levels "not by a blood test, but by how much TV they watch."2
- Twenty percent of juvenile offenders in jail admit to copying criminal behavior from TV.3
- Some studies say one can expect to experience five acts of violence per hour on prime time. Many kids are still up and plugged in. And high school seniors have seen an estimated 18,000 hours of TV by the time they graduate, a statistic we've heard again and again.4
- When the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers cartoon heroes debuted in the fall of 1993, aggressive behavior skyrocketed, especially among boys.5
- One of my media colleagues calls TV "a low-effort medium."6 I get his point. Reading is a high-effort medium, he says. That makes choices easy for some. TV often wins.
- With virtually no effort, television and other media habits can turn into addictions. A decade ago a student in a course I offered conceded she had watched The Sound of Music 18 times. Another saw it 12 times. TV addiction, in fact, may be even more pervasive than that.
- Of course, that doesn't exhaust the litany of unsettling outcomes we can lay at the feet of TV. But is there a brighter side? Yes. It's tougher, though, to see, because the behaviors are not nearly so dramatic.
- Take Sesame Street. Millions of young devotees for two
decades have learned to cooperate, take another's point of view, and experience fair play, to say nothing of learning how to count, spell, sing, and speak better and earlier in life.

Media scholars insist that all TV, in fact, is educational. Not just PBS, CNN, or Sesame Street. Inevitably, good and evil emit over the same channel.

Estimates show that we receive a thunderous 70 percent of our news from TV.7

Some TV shows, such as The Cosby Show and All in the Family, made some important statements in their heyday. The Cosbys showed that families can share respect; All in the Family, despite its irritating rage encounters, exposed bigotry at a new and public level.

Are there, then, “Adventist Review families” serious enough about the compelling power of TV to do something daring? Assuming so, let me offer some very hopeful options.

Option 1: Toss out the TV. Some families have, and it works. For other families, deciding no longer to permit TV is something like deciding no longer to permit books, magazines, and even radio into their experience. These media, however, are not equally comparable. Not when you consider how compelling and engaging TV is over reading and radio.

Option 2: Make TV viewing an interactive family event. Tell your kids how your family values are alike and different from what they’ve seen on TV. Generate some guidelines on what you approve and to what you object.

Option 3: Set limits. Plan hours, times, and programs. Do it by family consensus. Consensus is not the same as majority rule. Majority rule doesn’t satisfy when barely half the family determines what goes and what doesn’t. Consensus means general agreement by virtually all.

Option 4: Put the news in perspective. Something like: “That’s pretty scary, but most people don’t get hit by a drunk cab driver or shot by a neighbor.”

Option 5: Talk back to your TV. Call, or (better yet) write the station, demanding (kindly) better quality from programs. Hard copy is tangible; calls are easily forgotten or distorted. Write the program director or general manager.

One example: In October 1993 MTV “bowed to public outrage and moved Beavis and Butthead to a later time slot” after a preschooler in Ohio, apparently inspired by the program’s “heroes,” set a fire that killed his sister.8 Talk back. Families can request learning channels from cable companies that urge viewers to vote for their choices.

Option 6: Be informed. Write for these booklets:
3. Call 1-800-226-9494 to order a variety of books, videos, and curricula. The Center for Media Literacy publishes a quarterly newsletter for members.

Unlike the 21-inch TV, the dome-shaped radio is gone. Sadly, so is my mother. But I can see her now. She wedges herself behind the TV and yanks out the plug for reasons much more serious than jazzy music. And that was 1940. What now?

2 Richard Paul, Putting It All Together, video by Insight Media, 2162 Broadway, New York, NY 10024.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Debois.

Loren Dickinson is professor of Communications at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.
GINA: There are times when legal action is necessary, even among Christians.

Should an Adventist who has a grievance against another member take that person to court? The text we use to discourage such legal proceedings is 1 Corinthians 6:1-7: “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?” (verse 1).

However, many fail to read the eighth verse: “Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.” Many Christians have been taken advantage of simply because they refuse to sue “their brothers.” But are people who defraud another believer really our brothers?

Jesus said our brothers and sisters are those “who do the will of my Father” (Matt. 12:50).

Here are three points to consider:

1. A brother or sister wouldn’t treat me in such a way that I would have to take him or her to court (see Luke 17:1, 2).
2. The law was made for the unjust and for sinners, that is, for those who break the law and come under its condemnation (Rom. 3:19).
3. There are Christian lawyers and judges in our system whom we can expect to judge rightly and impartially. Even those who are unrighteous can still be used for God’s glory (see the story of the unrighteous judge in Luke 18:1-7).

The bottom line is this: there are many people in this world who call themselves Christians but don’t reflect Christ in their words or deeds. So should the Christian who has been defrauded seek and receive legal assistance in times of need, even if the person being sued is a “Christian”? Yes!

Every possible step should be taken to avoid legal action in every situation with every person. But once all avenues are exhausted and the situation must be resolved, the Christian should not be made to feel like a villain because of exercising his or her legal rights.

Doug Llewelyn, of the famous TV show The People’s Court, said it best: “If you have a problem with someone, don’t take the law into your own hands; take that person to court.”

LORETTA: It sends an inconsistent message when Christians sue each other.

Gina, please allow me to begin by quoting someone whose writings and life I respect—even though we rarely agree. “The ultimate question is: Do we trust God?”

Any idea who said that?

You did! And I agree. We can’t trust God for everything and sue our brother or sister at the same time. It’s a shame that we Christians have allowed the “Take ’em to court” attitude to permeate our perspective.

Take a look at my three points:

1. Is “brotherhood” contingent upon good and positive actions? Jesus had every right to say that those who do the will of His Father are His brothers and sisters. However, I’m not so sure that you (or I) have the right to make that determination—lest we fall into the category of the Levite and the priest in the story of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:30-37).
2. Some things are just “family business.” We, the church, don’t have a separate legal system. If we sue each other, we as members of God’s family allow others outside of the family to handle “our business.” It sends a horrible message to those whom we’re supposed to evangelize. How can I preach and teach about God’s miracle-working powers and yet not trust Him to work in every situation?
3. God is judge. And His Word is clear: “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:44, 45).

And finally, if you have a problem with someone, don’t take that person to court. Take a stand—and take the individual to Jesus in prayer. He promised: “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jer. 33:3).

What do you believe? And why? Gina and Loretta challenge you to read your Bible, know what you believe, and take a stand . . . for Jesus.
Nevada Nirvana

Green Valley, Nevada, isn’t green or a valley. It’s nearly 9,000 brown, flat acres of planned housing development. Made safe with high walls and security gates, it blocks everything except boredom.

Green Valley regulates much of your life—the pets you can own, the flowers you can plant, the color of your house, where to place your garbage cans. (Apparently you can still choose your own deodorant.)

“All that a community can be,” the promotional materials promise. “A place where you’ll enjoy life more than you ever did before.” A conformist’s paradise, for sure.

Could the church be a Green Valley? Where we look inward—with club rules to keep us secure and happy—and never look outside? Where the high walls and security gates of religion shut out the world’s problems? Where we sing, sit, listen, chat with friends—and just wait for Jesus to come?

What about our world? What about salt? What about light? We can’t see through shut doors. We can’t see the millions who don’t know Jesus. We can’t see people suffering.

Just before He left His disciples, Jesus said: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19, 20, NIV).

In other words, just don’t sit around in Green Valley church.

—Gary Krause, Global Mission communication director

Hope in Her Heart

Valerie lives in Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries on earth. Few Adventists live in Burkina Faso, making it a high-priority area for Global Mission. Valerie discovered Jesus through Matthieu, a Global Mission pioneer who was the only Adventist when he arrived in the city of Yako. Matthieu held services three miles from Valerie’s home, and several nights a week Valerie, who has a crippled leg, hobbled to the meetings. Now an Adventist, Valerie is sharing her faith with other young people in Burkina Faso.

VALERIE AND FRIENDS: A growing family of God in Burkina Faso.

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

300 Christians

700 non-Christians

—adapted from Donella Meadows, Beyond the Limits, Rio Summit, 1992
A Place Called PEACE

By Jim Lorenz

The scene is Sabbath morning. As head deacon Rick walks in the church door, he is bombarded by questions. Why isn’t the restroom fan working? Don’t you know what your job entails? (Never mind that only five people showed up at the last work bee.)

In another corner of the church Leslie, a Sabbath school leader, hears how she could be doing a better job. As usual, she won’t hear about the good things she has done.

Ken, the public-address man, gets feedback—not only from his sound system during the worship service but also from members afterward. They never consider that he is doing the best he can with the equipment he has to work with.

Sue is going through a hard divorce. She wants to forget the mess her life is in for just a few hours. But upon arriving at church she is bombarded with questions like “How is the divorce going?” Pretty soon she will come late and leave early (or probably not come at all), to avoid the inquiring minds that want to know.

After the service the pastor hears that he needs to do something about the way Bill runs Pathfinders. Someone else complains about the way Ms. Anderson is dressed. Another objects to the order of the worship service.

In wilderness survival one of the very first things one does is seek shelter. It is vital—we have to have shelter to survive. We must also realize, however, that shelter comes in many different forms. In our hectic world we may not need to seek shelter from what nature dishes out, but we may desperately need shelter from the story of divorce, critical bosses, and the constant struggle to make ends meet.

It is strange that we often don’t equate the church with shelter—quite the opposite. The storm going on out in the world may be dwarfed by the storm brewing in the local church.

Part of the problem is that people, even the dear members who have been Adventists all their lives, often don’t know how to keep the Sabbath. While they refrain from working on the Sabbath, they don’t refrain from doing “business” on the Sabbath. Nehemiah 13 tells us that people used to violate the Sabbath by bringing a “load” into the city to do business on the Sabbath. That load doesn’t have to be material. It can be mental. And often we discharge it onto someone else—for instance, we remind Robert not to be late again to the board meeting, or tell the head deacon that the parking lot needs restriping, or inform Mary how she could be a better greeter.

All these items might easily be taken care of at other times instead of being conveniently left for the Sabbath hours, thereby robbing someone else of a Sabbath blessing. Even if we speak “in love,” those we address may torture themselves for the rest of the Sabbath because they feel embarrassed or sad that they let the church down.

The physiologist Ivan Pavlov studied the response of a dog when the reception of food (something pleasant) coincided with the ringing of a bell. Soon the associa-
tion became so strong that the dog would salivate at the simple ringing of the bell.

What if, instead of food, Pavlov had administered an electric shock as the bell rang? The answer is clear: the event would then have been associated with terror.

What’s the effect when Sabbath and church are associated with the “shock” of complaint or criticism, or even well-intentioned “reminders”? Are we conditioning one another to associate church and worship with negative feelings? Then is it any wonder that we burn out our leaders and have a hard time getting experienced people to accept church office?

A church full of criticism leaves people with no place of calm amid life’s storm. It seems to me that we have forgotten a basic element of what the Sabbath and church are about. In my thinking, they’re about shelter and rest. The church service is just a small part of the Sabbath, which was created to be a shelter in time. One day in seven that we don’t worry about making ends meet. One day in seven that we don’t worry about our schoolwork. One day in seven when we can taste a bit of what heaven is like—time without worry—because we are in the presence of God.

The Old Testament had cities of refuge, where people in trouble could flee. We need to ask ourselves, “Is my church a city of refuge? Or is it a Roman colosseum, where battles are a spectator sport? Can I let my guard down, or do I have to be on constant alert against an ambush?”

The key variable is attitude.

The Disney theme parks are successful in large part because of their employees’ attitude. Every employee exudes the feeling that they are delighted to make your stay in the Magic Kingdom an unforgettable one.

Consider the possibilities of a church in which the members had the same attitude as that of Disney’s employees. And take it a step further. What if church members functioned on the basis of God’s standards? What if, in other words, they went beyond the standards of the Magic Kingdom to the standards of God’s kingdom? It would be heaven on earth, wouldn’t it?

To address these concerns, the Antelope Hills church (in Antelope, California) intentionally became a battered Christians’ shelter called PEACE (People Escaping A Chaotic Environment). They were guided by two scriptural passages—Psalm 27:5 and Haggai 2:9. “For in the day of trouble,” says Psalm 27:5, “he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock” (NIV). And speaking about the place of worship, God says in Haggai 2:9: “And in this place I will grant peace” (NIV). The Antelope Hills congregation saw these texts as clear indication that the church is to be a shelter of peace.

Like everything else, the battered Christians’ shelter isn’t a quick solution. It’s not easy to fight the “old man of sin.” As pastor and as a member of Antelope Hills, I’ve caught myself asking such questions as how someone’s work was going, only to find out that that person was having problems with his or her boss. I’d brought up something the member might have been trying to forget for 24 hours. Oops!

After the church had implemented the plan, my wife, Julie, and a church member, Bertha, were rushing to set up for Communion one Sabbath morning. Someone else had left the job undone, and Julie had just begun to complain.
mildly when Bertha gently reminded her that she was in a battered Christians’ shelter. Shortly afterward Bertha’s husband came in and also started complaining about the same thing. He too was gently reminded where he was.

The Antelope Hills shelter proved a great witnessing opportunity. People would often ask, “What is a battered Christians’ shelter?”—a question that gave members the perfect opening to explain the unique mission of the Adventist Church and the blessings of the Sabbath. I started our church’s air-conditioning repairman on Bible studies after he’d asked about the meaning of the shelter.

But the idea of a battered Christians’ shelter isn’t to be confined to church only. We should make the entire Sabbath a shelter. Have you noticed that Satan works harder on Sabbath than on any other day of the week? Family members often bicker more on Sabbath than on other days. Try telling yourself, “I’m going to bite my tongue and bring up the problem after Sabbath. Sabbath is too special to get into a knock-down-drag-out fight that leaves me fuming for the rest of the day.” Plan to discuss the problem after sundown Saturday night. Often you’ll find it not worth bringing up again because it was trivial to begin with. Let your children see that Sabbath isn’t a time when Mom and Dad are easily angered. That will be a lesson not soon forgotten.

What is a battered Christians’ shelter called PEACE? It is a place where people don’t need to struggle to survive. It is their church, it is their home, and it comes 52 times a year. That, when you stop to calculate it, is more than a month and a half of peace.

What about making your home, your church, a battered Christians’ shelter every Sabbath?

Jim Lorenz is the associate pastor of the Roseville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Roseville, California. The present article—as well as the shelter idea—came out of his experience at the Antelope Hills Adventist Church in Antelope, California, the first church he pastored after leaving the seminary.

The Battered Christians’ Shelter Statement of Beliefs*

BY JIM LORENZ

Because we believe the church should be a shelter from the stresses of life, and because we have freely received the “perfect peace” (Isa. 26:3) that comes only from God (John 14:27), we are also to give this peace to others (Matt. 10:8); thus we operate by the following guidelines:
1. We preach and practice the kingdom of God, thus seeking to bring a little of heaven here on earth and prepare people for the Second Coming (Matt. 6:10).
2. We believe that we are all equal in God’s sight (Gal. 3:28).
3. We endeavor to remove barriers from between ourselves (Eph. 2:14).
4. Our aim is to practice God’s unconditional (hesed) love (Jer. 31:3; John 3:34).
5. We strive to create a supportive atmosphere (Heb. 10:24; 25; 13:17).
6. We avoid demeaning, gossiping, grumbling, disputing, or criticizing (even constructively) while at church (Ps. 31:20; Phil. 2:14; Eph. 4:29).
7. We are careful what questions or comments we make to others, so as not to take them emotionally out of the shelter—questions like: “How is the divorce going?” or “How’s the boss treating you at work?” (Isa. 58:13).
8. We allow people to be human by forgiving them (Eph. 4:31, 32).
9. We believe the shelter is for restoring relationships and comforting the afflicted (Lam. 5:21; 2 Cor. 1:4).
10. We become servants in service to others and in the exercise of our freedoms so that more people will be brought in contact with the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 9:19; 10:33).

* Condensed for space.
When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus about being born again, He touched a sensitive spiritual nerve. No veneered religion, however attractive, will do. Real faith has to plunge deep beneath the surface, so deep that Jesus spoke of an entirely new life, one built upon a new birth.

Notice how this conflicts with contemporary values. Today's seeker is told that within one's self resides a vast storehouse of capacity waiting eagerly to be released. All sorts of systems are promoted to liberate the "real" us, including positive thinking, transcendental meditation, cosmic self-discovery, spiritual power pointing, horoscopic channeling, and a grab bag of psychological techniques touted by celebrities and the lesser known.

At the core of it all is a premise as old as a peril-ridden tree in Eden: that happiness and success, to say nothing of self-esteem, can be acquired and made to flow from within. The Bible confirms the value of every person on the basis of a cosmos-wide status conferred by the Creator. The way God looks at us was confirmed by Jesus' coming among us at unthinkable sacrifice. "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above," wrote the apostle James, "coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17, RSV). The point? Personal worth is real, but it rests not in self, but from how our Creator values us. It's shown in how He made us and what He has done to rescue us—both Eden and Calvary. We are God's treasured creatures, destined to be heirs of His kingdom.

Victorious living is found only in a shift of spiritual paradigms, from rule-based spiritual service to a new walk in love, infinitely intimate, profoundly powerful. Like the unfettered wind moving its way through newly open chambers of the heart, God's Spirit occupies the lives of willing believers, taking command. At last Jesus is Lord.

How different the Christian life looks from the surrendered side. No longer driven by multiplied rules, obligations, opinions of others, or self-forgiving greed, now we walk hand in hand with Jesus. He is tender, yet infinitely strong. Old guilt sloughs away in the presence of His grace. In response to our appeal, He steps in to become the master of all our lives, anointing us with His own righteousness, the same that restores us to fellowship with Him.

Old struggles lose their grip as they come under His power. Daily refreshed with prayer and Bible study, the believer grows ever more Christlike.

Grasp the picture: we the creatures of His hand, long runaways and aliens, now returned—not into some shallow, sentimental harmony, but for real, welcomed back into the kingdom of God. Now of grace, soon in glory. Jesus assured Nicodemus that this alone leads to eternal life. The old battles of trying and failing to make oneself good are things past. The war that arose in heaven continues on earth, but now on the turf of the triumphant Jesus.

So does this mean temptation has been disarmed? No, but Someone else joins us in battle, One who has met the test and overcome every temptation. To the degree that we stay at His side we are victors.

Human frailty is still ours, and we are still less than we ought to be. But we have given Christ the wheel of our lives, and at every moment He retrieves us. Lapses may trouble us and provide Satan an opening to discourage us. But we will not accept them as normal, sheltering them with an excuse, for they are not normal. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

But doesn't each mistake in some way unravel the cord of acceptance by Christ? In the little book Steps to Christ Ellen White took on that question directly: "The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts" (pp. 57, 58).

What is the direction of our lives? Are we with Jesus? Then we are on the way to victorious living.

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
My whole life has changed,” says Louise Twyman gleefully. “When I first attended the camp three years ago, I had already lost a lot of weight. I had gone from 230 pounds to 165. But slowly the weight started to come back. Within a few weeks I was back up to 185. I remember thinking, I don’t want this weight back. I want a way to keep it off. This program not only controlled my weight; it changed my whole life.”

Does the above testimony sound like an advertisement for one of the miracle diet rip-offs? Your skepticism is warranted. You can’t walk by the checkout counter of a grocery store without noticing the headline that reads “Eat All You Can and Lose 50 Pounds in One Week.” A few months ago we would sit and swap fad diet tales with you, but not today. Not since Fitness for Life.

**Humble Beginnings**

Many Adventists in the Allegheny East Conference are raving about the Fitness for Life health program. The brainchild of conference health director Gwendolyn Foster, Fitness for Life started in 1978, after Foster came in contact with Nathan Pritikin. “Nathan Pritikin, founder of Pritikin Longevity Center, had experienced serious health problems around World War II,” says Foster. “He read The Ministry of Healing, by Ellen G. White, applied the health principles, and was surprised by the life-saving changes that he experienced.”

Pritikin was also surprised that the church hadn’t done more to spread the wealth of knowledge on health it had. He challenged Foster to use the talents God gave her to spread the health message. She accepted the challenge. The rest, as they say, is history.

Backed by the Allegheny East Conference, Foster developed a ministry that focuses on health evangelism, and participants have been blessed since 1978.

Gladys Swift remembers when her cousin came back from a Fitness for Life camp held in Pine Forge, Pennsylvania. “I couldn’t believe how good she looked. She had so much energy, and her life changed. She talked about the spiritual experience she had there. I knew I had to go.”

This past summer Swift attended the camp. “It was a real life-changing experience for me. I feel better, sleep better, and have peace of mind. Even my husband made major lifestyle changes.” Swift has already signed up five people to go to next year’s camp.

Josephine Hairston suffered for years with weight problems and joint pain. “What I learned through Fitness for Life saved my life. The principles are so simple: drink plenty of water, walk, rest, eat healthy foods. It’s mind-boggling how effective this program is.” Hairston and her sister now conduct Fitness for Life seminars for their community.

**What’s the Secret?**

Like most quality programs, Fitness for Life succeeds because of its simplicity. The camp begins with a thorough physical assessment of the campers. This assessment includes blood tests, blood pressure screening, a weigh-in, exercises, and a timed walk. Physicians, under the direction of Dr. Geneva McCleary, a preventive-care practitioner, develop a fitness profile and exercise regimen for each camper. A postcamp assessment is done so that participants can see the difference.

Participants rise early in the morning for devotions, calisthenics, and a vigorous walk. When they return, a healthy meal is prepared by camp dietitians. Each day doctors, nurses, and nutritionists give lectures on topics such as preparing healthy meals, hypertension, diabetes, and weight control. At 4:00 p.m. a cool swim is a time to study the benefits of hydrotherapy.

In addition to camp, Fitness for Life seminars, cooking classes, and lifestyle training continue throughout the year around the conference. The program equips church members with medical training to share the principles of healthful living with neighbors.

An Adventist church in Berryville, Virginia, tried it. The church conducted a two-week program in Winchester and invited the commu-
nity. “The visitors outnumbered church members,” notes Doris Roberts, Berryville’s first elder. Today the church continues Fitness for Life through monthly gatherings at which participants talk about the goodness of God and encourage each other in healthful living.

Louise Twyman attended a Fitness for Life camp for the first time three years ago. She became so impressed with the presentations that she videotaped everything. Six months later she went to visit her son and daughter, who live in Las Vegas. While there she conducted a two-week Fitness for Life seminar at a non-Adventist church that her daughter attends. More than 40 persons attended the first time she did it. Last year she was asked to do the seminar again, and the response was great. But here’s the surprise: Twyman is not an Adventist!

The wife of a Baptist minister, Twyman adds, “I went to Las Vegas ready to do all the things I usually do. But I had no desire for anything except sharing with people what I had experienced through Fitness for Life.” She now heads a support group in Philadelphia, in addition to her evangelistic excursions to Las Vegas.

A Recipe for Success
Fitness for Life is predicated on the belief that the God who made us can fix us. Its total-health philosophy emphasizes the importance of nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and trust in God (NEW-START). The Fitness for Life program is designed to bring balance and healing to the four dimensions that make up a whole person: the physical, mental, social, and spiritual.

Fitness for Life also benefits from the support of the Allegheny East Conference. A volunteer staff of physicians, nurses, hydrotherapists, dietitians, and church members dedicate two weeks of their vacation time to support the program. With such support, the conference offers an affordable program to participants who otherwise could not attend.

Foster notes, “I believe, as Ellen White says, that the health ministry is the right arm of the gospel. Fitness for Life is an effort to communicate the gospel of Jesus to a world that is dying—both spiritually and physically.”

North American Hispanics Highlight Evangelism

BY STEPHEN CHAVEZ, ASSISTANT EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW

Evangelismo was the watchword at the Biennial Hispanic Evangelism Council, held recently at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. Pastors, evangelists, and administrators from throughout North America convened for five days of instruction, planning, and fellowship.

Attendees also put the final touches on this fall’s LA RED (NET) ’97 satellite evangelistic initiative that will be held November 8-15. The speaker for the eight sessions, which will originate from São Paulo, Brazil, will be Alejandro Bullón, ministerial secretary of the South American Division. Congregations throughout South and Central America will join approximately 420 sites in North America for this international evangelistic event.

According to Manuel Vasquez, vice president of the North American Division for special ministries, LA RED ’97 is just one of the outreach events being planned for Hispanics between now and the year 2000. In 1999, 100 major evangelistic campaigns will be held in large cities throughout North America, commemorating 100 years of organized outreach among Hispanics in the North American Division.

In addition to the evangelistic emphasis, several Hispanic Adventists were honored for their contributions to the Adventist Church, as well as to their larger communities. Those recognized were Maria Denneny, of Tempe, Arizona, for her work coordinating women’s retreats for Hispanic women; Max and Mary Martinez for their service to Native Americans; Louis Torres, from Amazing Facts, for his work with NET ’96 and LA RED ’97; Juan Carlos and Nancy Pardeiro, of Springdale, Arkansas, who own and operate a full-power “family friendly” television station (see Adventist Review, June 5, 1997, pp. 20, 21); Tulio Peverini, from Pacific Press, for his 28 years of service as editor of El Centinela; and Milton Peverini, for his 27 years as director-speaker of La Voz de la Esperanza.
Dr. Hicks’s Secret

BY RENÉ ALEXENKO EVANS, PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Like most small-town doctors, Dr. Thomas Hicks was beloved by those he served. He cured their illnesses, stitched their wounds, delivered their babies. Regarded as something of a benevolent aristocrat in tiny McCaysville, Georgia, he operated and dispensed medications for free, donated generously to his church, and handed out the best Halloween candy in town. In return for his generosity, the townspeople kept his secret.

Dr. Hicks sold babies. He also performed then-illegal abortions in his country clinic. In an era when an out-of-wedlock birth branded a young woman for life, Dr. Hicks offered another chance at respectability. Sometimes he was able to persuade the girls to carry the babies to term. Then he would sell the infants to childless couples and throw in a birth certificate naming the adoptive parents as the birth parents. The birth mothers slipped away anonymously. County records show that between 1951 and 1965 as many as 200 babies were “born” to parents from as far away as Ohio and Arizona.

It appeared Dr. Hicks’s secret died with him in 1972. But an Ohio woman’s father told her that she had been handed to him and his wife through the back door of the doctor’s office, still swaddled in blood from her birth mother’s womb. She had cost $1,000. With her search for her birth mother, the town’s best-kept secret began to unravel.

Townspeople are loath to condemn Dr. Hicks. Each time he persuaded a young mother to carry the child, they reason, he saved an innocent life. They call his actions “unofficial adoptions” rather than black market baby selling.*

While it’s easy to rush to judgment over a story like this, it’s impossible to know Dr. Hicks’s motives. We can surmise he prevented 200 abortions. Perhaps that is enough to allow his gilded memory to remain untarnished despite his venture into situational ethics.


Church Leaders Convey Regrets to Great Britain’s Royal Family

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom added its voice to those expressing sadness and regret at the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. Church leaders called on all members to observe a moment of silence together during their worship services on Sabbath, September 6.

In a message sent August 31 to the queen and members of the royal family, British Union president Cecil Perry spoke of the church’s shock and sadness at the news. “Our hearts go out to those closest to the princess who are experiencing grief and bereavement,” said Perry. “We will be asking all our members to pray specially for the princess’s children.

In a response received the same day from Balmoral Castle in Scotland, the queen’s private secretary expressed the royal family’s gratitude.

“The Queen, the Prince of Wales, Prince William, Prince Henry, and all the members of the Royal Family are most grateful for your thoughtful expression of sympathy on the sudden and tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The private secretary has been asked to thank you for your kindness in writing as you did at such a sad time.”

African Initiative Impacts Nine Countries

More than 60 African-American pastors, educators, and health-care professionals traveled to nine African countries this past summer to provide a wide variety of ministries, reports General Conference vice president Calvin Rock.

The volunteers conducted camp meetings, revivals, health seminars and workshops, and served in hospitals and clinics. Sponsored by Operation Reachback, an organization of Black Adventist professionals, the volunteers traveled to Cameroon, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Kenya, Madagascar, and...
Conferences in Ingathering

Ingathering, that venerable Adventist institution begun early in this century, officially resumes at the end of this month. While many Adventist members tend to give directly to Ingathering rather than solicit money from business associates and community members, solicitation isn’t dead. The top five conferences in soliciting funds from nonmembers in 1996:

- Ontario* $141,823.72
- Greater New York 134,031.64
- Texas 96,453.20
- Georgia-Cumberland† 76,713.86
- Michigan 74,003.26

* Ontario Conference is no longer on the traditional Ingathering program, but is piloting a new program called “ADRA Annual Appeal,” which is replacing Ingathering in a number of conferences.

† About 50 of the local churches in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference are involved in two pilot projects with a new program called “Campaign for Community,” which also replaces Ingathering.

Additional information on these new programs can be obtained from Monte Sahlin, ADRA director, North American Division, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904.

For Your Good Health

Flu Facts

Even though influenza season doesn’t come on in full force until November or December, October is a good month to start thinking about flu shots. The reason: it’s not impossible that flu season could start early, putting seniors and younger people with chronic health problems at risk for possibly fatal flu complications. Each year thousands of people die from pneumonia resulting from influenza.—Baylor College of Medicine.

Smoking Moms

Mothers who smoke not only put their own health at risk. They also are hit by higher medical expenses to treat their young children’s respiratory illnesses directly attributable to environmental smoke. A new University of Wisconsin at Madison study estimates that children under age 5 in homes where mothers smoke incur an average of $120 per year in additional medical expenses.—Health and Fitness News Service.

—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.

Mauritius, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

The initiative was Operation Reachback’s second annual service project.

News Notes

✔ Newbold College sent an evangelistic team led by Jeff Brown to South Africa for an evangelistic series and revival in KwaZulu-Natal province and Johannesburg, respectively. At the close of the meetings 113 persons joined the Adventist Church.

✔ Andrews University, Pacific Union College, and Atlantic Union College are ranked among the best colleges and universities in the United States, according to the September 1, 1997, U.S. News and World Report.

For the eighth consecutive year AU ranked among the 228 best national universities and PUC has ranked among the top 10 Western regional liberal arts colleges for four years.

✔ Timothy J. Lale, associate editor of Insight magazine, was recently appointed editor of Guide magazine. Lale replaces Carolyn L. Rathbun-Sutton.

✔ Derrick Nichols, pastor of the Kingsview Village Seventh-day Adventist Church near Toronto, Ontario, Canada, was recently elected president of the Ontario Conference. Nichols replaces E. Rick Bacchus, who became associate pastor of the Willowdale Adventist Church in Toronto.

Adventist Communication Network Broadcasts

Here are a few of the programs planned by the Adventist Communication Network for November. Call 1-800-ACN-1119 for complete program listings, time, and channel information. All times shown are Eastern time.

Nov. 4 ADRA’s World airs each Tuesday (Nov. 4, 11, 18, and 25)—8:30-9:00 a.m.
Nov. 5 First Wednesday—church news, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
Nov. 8 La Red ‘97—Hispanic evangelistic series. AIRS each night until November 15.
Nov. 15 Net ’98 Countdown Rally, 4:30-6:00 p.m.

What’s Upcoming

Oct. 1 Monthly Focus—Adventist Heritage
Oct. 4 Children’s Sabbath
Oct. 4-11 Health Education Week
Oct. 11 Voice of Prophecy Offering
“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!”—Ellen G. White, 1902.

“We finally got rid of those noisy kids.”—A church member in Oregon, 1997.

LAST FALL I LOGGED onto CompuServe’s Adventists Online forum to find, in the Young Adults section, a discussion that angered me.

The discussion, titled “And Then There Were None,” had been started by Oklahoma youth pastor James Buckmaster. His opening post read: “What can we do about the mass amounts of young adults leaving our church? What should the church as a whole do? What can you do?”

A couple advocates for youth and young adults quickly joined in.

“In my humble opinion,” wrote Allan Martin, from California, “I have yet to see the church show a tangible interest in doing anything more than the minimum. . . . Young adults are leaving the Adventist Church, some to reaffiliate with more pertinent Christian communities, others leaving Christian and/or Adventist lifestyles altogether.”

“Take back the church!” wrote Ray Tetz, from Maryland. “If young adults think that it will be handed over voluntarily, they could not be more wrong. . . . Don’t wait out the mortality options. Take back the church. And be prepared to give it up to a bunch of young know-nothings sooner than you like.”

I couldn’t believe these guys. Were they still fussing about the “discrimination” Adventist youth and young adults faced? I hadn’t had that experience at all. Here at the Review—first as a summer intern, now as staff member—I had been entrusted with all kinds of responsibilities. True, I hadn’t exactly noticed the church seeking out young talent (except for pastors), but I was sure that if youth and young adults really tried, they could break through. And so I set about enlightening James, Allan, Ray, and the rest.

“I’m tired of the griping,” I wrote. “With enough energy and enthusiasm, youth and young adults can overcome anything—broken promises, antiquated ideas, whatever.”

The ensuing three-week debate was bitter, painful—enough to keep me up at night. How can these people be so critical of the church? I wondered.

A year later I confess it freely: I was dead wrong. The underutilization of Adventist
youth and young adults, though certainly not universal, is much greater than I had ever realized. Though we’re a church of the young in some regions, such as South America and Inter-America, we’re not in North America. If we were, we would be known for it.

My online friends were being critical of their church not because they hated it, but because they loved it. The problem is big and getting bigger. Even I, an optimist constantly looking for reasons to be optimistic, have watched my optimism evaporate.

Growing Up Adventist
I think what partially blinded me to the problem is the affirmation and acceptance I have found in the Adventist Church. Last year I wrote a column, then a book, about the childhood church that taught me “faith, love, and laughter.” Those memories are all accurate. I loved “growing up Adventist”—not only in Minnesota, but in Florida, Tennessee, Thailand, Michigan, and now Maryland. I love the Adventist people in my life, and I’m indebted to them for the kindness they didn’t have to show me, but did.

Upon review, though, I’m beginning to understand why my experience was more enjoyable than that of many of my peers: because the fairly traditional package I came in was the package the church wanted. Because what I had to give matched what the church thought it needed.

It’s been a hard lesson, and I shrink at my former naïveté. But now, as I watch 38 to 50 percent of my peers drift from the Adventist Church—and thousands more bob aimlessly on the edges—I’m convinced that the problem runs much, much deeper than “those selfish, slacking Gen Xers.”

A Disabled Body
To put it simply: We haven’t allowed God’s kingdom to be as big as it needs to be.

Or, to use the language of 1 Corinthians 12, we’ve disabled the body of Christ. Sure, we recognize that “there are different kinds of gifts,” “given for the common good” (verses 4, 7), but, to paraphrase Orwell, we’ve deemed some gifts more different than others. And because these “different” kinds of gifts (and service and working) are usually found within a “different” generation, we’ve decided that we don’t need either.

It isn’t our decision to make. “The eye,” counseled Paul, “cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. . . . If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (verses 21-26).

We’re suffering. We might not realize it, but we are. Too many feet are being waved away, leaving the body of Christ walking on its hands. Their gifts slighted, accused of wanting only to be entertained (a giant myth), thousands of young Adventists wander off.
There are, of course, glimmers of hope. It’s refreshing, for example, to find many churches involving young adults in efforts to meet the various needs and learning styles existing within any congregation.

But inevitably, several self-designated “gatekeepers,” instead of attending the worship service they like, will attend the service they don’t like. Frowns on their faces, tongues clucking at the smiling young adult playing bass, they’re determined that Ellen White’s “rightly trained” (see opening statement) means that the church’s youth must be clones of themselves—thinking, talking, dressing, praising exactly as they do.

Adding to the gatekeepers’ fire is when a young, newly baptized Adventist, fresh from a drug-filled, heavy-metal background, testifies that all he needs is a King James Bible, a King James hymnbook, King James instruments, and other assorted King James items.

I don’t question such testimonies; I affirm them. If some contemporary worship elements remind these people of their former lifestyle, they should steer clear of them—just as many war veterans steer clear of Fourth of July fireworks. But for this same mentality to be urged on every young Adventist goes against everything Paul counseled and the wonderful variety with which God created us.

This isn’t to say that youth and young adults in your church won’t ever be wrong. They will be. Some will be wrong, some lazy, some simply impossible. But please, longtime Adventists, don’t judge the whole lot on the basis of a few bad eggs—or even several.

The same goes for young Adventists. Too often do I see sweeping shots taken at older Adventists—and the things they love. “The organ is way outdated,” some will say, citing statistics that show the organ connects with a minority of people. But for that minority, the organ is still a powerful worship tool and must be upheld.

To paraphrase Paul: “Neither can
the feet say to the head, ‘Because you haven’t arrived as we feet have, you’re no longer a part of the body.’”

Acceptance must work both ways.

What About . . .?
Some will argue that youth and young adults are making their mark in North America. After all:
- Columbia Union College recently hired a 23-year-old full-time chaplain, Kumar Dixit. “He’s giving it 100 percent,” says senior Wendy Shull. “The spirituality has gotten better on campus.”
- S. Kumar Dixit. “He’s giving it 100 percent,” says senior Wendy Shull. “The spirituality has gotten better on campus.”

The Adventist Review has turned over much of its new Cutting Edge Edition to young adults. Of this year’s first eight cover stories, seven were written by Adventists in their 30s, 20s, or in the case of Walla Walla’s Sarah E. Coleman, teens.

This spring at the Forest City, Florida, Spanish church, 95 percent of the 200 youth members regularly attended a two-week, youth-run evangelistic series led by 24-year-old Australian pastor-evangelist Cesar Cardenas. Said one report: “Skeptical adult members were amazed and thrilled at how youth ownership of the series advanced the youth to new heights of spiritual commitment.”

But these are exceptions—and though there are more, there aren’t enough. As a rule you’ll be lucky to find decent youth representation even in attempts to reach other youth.

At this year’s General Conference Spring Meeting, a friend walked through a committee where the members sat wringing their hands as they contemplated how to minister better to today’s youth and young adults. Not one youth or young adult was on the committee.

What’s so difficult to understand? For this to be a church for young adults, this must be a church of young adults.

Walking the Talk?
There are good intentions, yes.

In a June editorial, North American Division president A. C. McClure wrote: “Here comes the class of 1997. Let’s not coddle them. Let’s not make them prove themselves. Let’s not make them watch from a stool in the corner. Let’s not underestimate their ability to make a difference. . . . We need what they can bring us. Let’s make sure they know that.”

Powerful words. And I hope that Elder McClure will support them with concrete steps—perhaps inviting a few 1997 graduates to work closely with him.

Meanwhile, it’s been seven years since world church president Robert Folkenberg’s inaugural address—the one that brought so much hope to youth and youth ministers. “If we give [the youth] a piece of the pie,” he told his mostly adult Indianapolis audience, “they will stay for dinner.”

The widely heralded speech was followed by the formation of the president’s kitchen cabinet on youth, “a marvelous mix” of 18 North American Adventist youth, collegians, and young adults meeting April 10-13, 1991, at the world church headquarters. “I want you to wrestle with the obstacles we face in this church,” Elder Folkenberg told the group. “Don’t settle for superficial solutions.”

One of the cabinet’s recommendations was that they “meet twice a year for two years,” at which time “the frequency of the meetings could be re-evaluated.” The committee met once more. “While we were there we had great communication,” says member Victoria (Mummert) Emde, “but afterward I don’t know what happened.”

The cabinet also recommended that since Adventists under 30 made up one fifth of the church, all North American

NET ’98: Rumblings of Ownership

Nelson: “We’re targeting Gen X, and we’re inviting the world to come.”

BY ANDY NASH

The evangelistic series that pledged to “communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to thousands of young people known as Generation X” has brought Adventist Gen Xers into the planning. On August 12 at Andrews University several young adults met with NET ’98 officials, youth ministers, and speaker-designate Dwight K. Nelson to discuss how more young Adventists might be rallied to participate in NET ’98 preparation and the series itself. The task force continues to dialog via phone and E-mail and will meet again during a Generation X symposium November 17 and 18 in San Diego.

Meanwhile, here are some further specifics about NET ’98, beginning next fall:

■ As announced last winter, the series will be geared toward secular Gen Xers. “We’re targeting Generation X, and we’re inviting the world to come,” says Nelson, noting that the influence of MTV has given the world’s secular young people an unprecedented commonality.

■ Though NET ’98 remains untitled, Nelson’s theme will be the character of God. Citing Christ’s Object Lessons, page 415, Nelson says, “Every person of every age needs to see this ‘revelation of His character of love.’”

■ Each of the 26 nightly meetings will last 67 minutes (much shorter than NET ’95 and NET ’96).

■ Music, drama, special features, etc., have not been finalized. (The task force has suggested a nightly “person on the street” video package, in which random secular people across the world would be asked questions about the evening’s topic: what God’s like, millennium fever, hell, etc.)
The Samuel Plan
BY ANDY NASH

The last thing the church needs is for youth and young adults to run the show alone. Even the young prophet-to-be Samuel needed Eli’s help in recognizing the voice of God.

But it was Samuel, not Eli, whom God was calling.

In case the same is happening today—in case God is calling a young person, a thousand young persons, to lead His people as James and Ellen and Uriah once led His people—they need to be placed not only where they can be called, but where others can help them recognize Who’s calling.

These suggestions are about ownership, mentorship, and restoring the body of Christ to full efficiency. Those most hesitant to try them might well be those most delighted with them. (Remember, though: healing takes time.)

■ Church members: In large congregations, take the needed steps to turn over one of the Sabbath morning services to youth and young adults (with older members serving as mentors/advisers). In small congregations, turn over one service a month. Suspend judgment for one year.

■ Church board: If a group of youth or young adults comes forward with an idea for nontraditional ministry, go crazy with support for it. Tell the congregation about it. Pour money into it. Even if you don’t understand it. The fact that you backed the project—no matter its success—will stay with its creators for a long, long time.

■ Church employers: If you work at one of the church’s levels and the thrill is gone, find a new job—perhaps in the public sector, where your spirituality will be tested and probably soar. Before you leave your old job, ask your supervisor if a young Adventist can have it.

■ Church employers: Where it’s not possible to give young adults permanent jobs, offer 10-week internships—and don’t underestimate their value. I can trace at least half of my excitement about this church to a March 1993 phone call from the Review editor.

■ Committee members: If you’re on a committee discussing general-interest or youth-related issues and youth aren’t well represented on that committee, ask why.

■ Everyone: Mentor a young person any chance you get.

To those willing to try these and other ideas, I’d welcome your reports—positive or negative. Send to 74532.2564@CompuServe.com or to my attention at the Review’s editorial office.

Division representative committees should contain 20 percent of the same. These days you’ll be hard pressed to find many conferences where that recommendation is taken seriously.

Recently Elder Folkenberg clarified what he meant by the original “piece of the pie” speech. “When young people share with others what’s in their heart,” he wrote in an online conference last fall, “they’ll find their mouths filled with pie.”

He expanded on that comment in a December 16, 1996, Pacific Union Recorder article titled “Stop! Wrong Pie, Wrong Bakery!” “If you’re wondering about getting your piece of the pie,” he wrote, “maybe you’re in the wrong bakery.” Why not join the 23,000 Global Mission pioneers around the world who have discovered that the ‘real’ pie isn’t membership on committees or boards? It isn’t in the order of the worship service, the routine, or the structure. If music, the order of the worship service, or if ‘to celebrate, or not to celebrate’ is your dominant question, maybe you’re in the wrong bakery.”

It’s good counsel—for all ages.

There seems, though, to be two different kinds of pie: God’s pie and the church’s pie. And while youth and young adults can easily grab a piece of God’s pie (witnessing, giving Bible studies, counseling summer campers), they need help getting a piece of the church’s pie (holding a church job, serving on committees, crafting the worship service). True, committees won’t even appeal to most young people and seemingly aren’t as integral to the mission of the church as Bible studies, but they’re still important. If they aren’t, why do we have so many of them?

The Bottom Line

Don’t misunderstand. The issue here is not talent or intelligence or wisdom, but simply ownership at every level—from being a Global Mission pioneer to planning the Pioneer program.

A year ago I was ignorant of how little ownership was available to my less traditional peers. A year from now I’ll report on what, if anything, has changed. It’s my hope and my prayer that that article can be much more positive. I hate writing with a lump in my throat.

1 In these discussions, someone writes a message for all to view—not unlike a note on the refrigerator door. Then someone else comes along and replies to that note. A third person might choose to reply to either the first note or the second, etc.

2 As William Johnson reported in “South Mexico: Baptisms and Bloodshed” (Mar. 13), members in their 30s and 40s dominate administrative posts. When they reach 50, they’re moved back to the local levels. And the Adventist Church, amid persecution, is the fastest-growing church in southern Mexico.

Steve Case cites an estimate of 38 percent attrition from active church participation in “Where Have All the Youth Gone?” Giraffe News, Spring 1993; Steve Daily estimates a 50 percent attrition rate in his Adventism for a New Generation, p. 3.

“The Cutting Edge Edition arrives the third week of each month—just after the World Edition, and just before the AnchorPoints Edition. If you don’t receive the weekly Adventist Review, I invite you to try it. Call 1-800-456-3991. (Ask for the editors’ discount.) If you don’t like it, call me at 301-680-6560. I want to know why.


3 Proposal Summary Statement, North American Division President’s Youth Cabinet, July 10.

4 Ibid.

Andy Nash is an assistant editor at the Adventist Review.
Have you ever seen an optical illusion? Maybe on a hot day the road ahead looks like it is wet, but when you get there it is dry. Or maybe you see a stick in the grass, and for a split second you think it is a snake.

Your eyes are playing tricks on you. The road surface looks wavy like water because the light is bent by the waves of hot air rising from the road. Or maybe you are scared of snakes, so whenever your eyes see anything that even remotely looks like a snake, your mind goes “Yikes!”

Optical illusions fool your eyes. Look at the lines in this illustration:

[Diagram of two lines, one longer than the other]

The top line looks longer, but actually both lines are the same length. In another kind of optical illusion, an object might seem to be one size when you see it by itself, but when you see it next to other things it suddenly seems to be bigger or smaller. Sometimes you can’t believe your eyes.

When Jesus was raised to life after dying on the cross, He went to see the disciples. Thomas wasn’t there. When he came back, the other disciples told him they had seen Jesus. Thomas told them, “I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands” (John 20:25, ICB).

Thomas had seen Jesus. He had seen Jesus heal the sick and feed the 5,000 and still the storm. But he had also seen Jesus die on the cross, and that’s all he could remember right then.

Thomas's faith wasn’t strong enough to remember all the things he knew about Jesus. Faith was a hard thing for Thomas.

A week later Jesus came back. Thomas was there this time. Jesus said, “Look at my hands . . . Stop doubting and believe” (John 20:27, ICB). Thomas saw and believed.

We can’t believe our eyes. We have never seen Jesus. We need faith to know that Jesus is real, because we cannot see Him. Even though we cannot see Jesus, we can learn about Him. And the more we know about Jesus, the stronger our faith will be.

Faith is sort of the opposite of an optical illusion. An optical illusion is something you see but can’t believe. Faith is something you believe but can’t see.
"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, . . . what is man that you are mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:3, NIV).

It was 1964. I was 13, and the mop-topped Beatles were the rage. Teens at my academy in Berrien Springs, Michigan, were drawing pictures of guitars on school notebooks and clipping glamorous pictures of electric guitars to pin on their bedroom walls. Young would-be guitarists roamed school hallways strumming the air, chanting, “She loves me, yeah, yeah, yeah!”

Gone were mental pictures of a cowboy softly strumming his guitar by the flickering light of a campfire; rebellious rhythms were now in the air. Gyrating guitarists were striking electronically amplified strings in accompaniment to antiestablishment lyrics. Strobe lights replaced the fading coals of yesterday’s campfire. The reputation of the guitar had become tainted.

No small wonder that my dad, a minister and union conference youth leader, never mentioned to his three teenage sons that he owned and played a guitar. The association of the guitar with the “heathen” was too strong; Dad simply kept the secret to himself.

Then one day I tried to beat a case of boredom by rummaging around in Dad’s office closet. It was crammed full of intriguing stuff—a catchall sort of place. Far to the back, in the dim light, I spotted something shaped like a guitar. As I worked it out of the closet, I discovered that it was, in fact, a small guitar.

As I worked it out of the closet, I noted a green pennant-shaped sticker affixed to the case; the sticker read “EMC.” I knew Dad had graduated from Emmanuel Missionary College years ago. Awestruck, I wondered, Could this guitar be his?

Waiting for an answer wasn’t easy, but I reveled in the thought that within the walls of my house lay a real guitar. Wouldn’t my friends be impressed with such a find? Notebook sketches and cutout pictures couldn’t compare to this!

That evening Dad confessed that the guitar really was his. He shared stories of playing it during his college days at EMC, then offered to play it for my brothers and me—if we had any interest. Did we!

He tuned the guitar carefully, played a few chords—throwing in a “run” here and there for pizzazz—then began to sing along in his smooth tenor voice: “Roll along, prairie moon, roll along while I croon, swingin’ by in the sky, prairie moon . . .”

It is now 1997. My teenage passion for guitars has waned, yet warm in my heart is the memory of Dad teaching me how to tune my first guitar and play beginning chords. On many occasions since those early lessons we’ve enjoyed playing and singing old Western favorites together. The discovery of that guitar in the closet made a special bond between Dad and me.

That little guitar has also provided me with an insight into my heavenly Father’s heart. When I ponder the worth of my life within His enormous domain, I see myself like that guitar—small, out of tune, and suffering from a tarnished image. Gratefully, my heavenly Father sees beyond my appearance; He hears what others cannot hear. His heart’s desire is for me to allow Him the opportunity to turn the tuning pegs of my character, then strum the strings of my life in tuneful accompaniment to His rich, melodic voice.

Eric Beavon is a carpenter living with his family in a log cabin 10 miles from Silver Star, Montana.

---

**When I ponder the worth of my life, I see myself like that guitar—small and out of tune.**
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.