From Violence to Peace

Phyllis Scott-Zimmerman: No Longer a Victim

Like Father, Like God
Inside Their World

What an impact! Erik Stenbakken’s article on student missionaries (“Inside Their World,” July 15) combined good photography, interesting writing, and excellent layout to bring the “feel” of student missions right into our homes. I chuckled at the sight of dishes being washed in the shower (the better of the two available choices), said “Oooooh” when I saw the “fourth-grade dog,” and felt a wave of sympathy for the young teacher trying to find a quiet spot to grade mountains of papers.

I would enjoy more articles like this one. Not that I don’t appreciate the others—I do! In fact, I read each Review from beginning to end. It’s just that the pictures make it come alive. I don’t know how you could afford to do it, but if you can, send someone around the world to do articles like this on a soup kitchen in New York, a summer camp in Georgia, an academy in Peru, an Air Force chaplain in Virginia, and an ADRA project in south Sudan (of course!).

—Homer Trecartin, finance director, ADRA/South Sudan

Nairobi, Kenya

The Gift of Curiosity

The article “The Gift of Curiosity,” by Oliver Jacques, in the July 15 Review is a fine one, but most intriguing to me was the brief author identification at the end. He is described as “a retired missionary and church administrator,” but there is no mention of the fact that he is a great-grandson of Ellen G. White. My mind wandered over the possible reasons for this omission and finally assigned you the best possible motive: that you already knew about his heritage but didn’t want to imply that any special virtue or privilege is afforded to White’s descendants. Or perhaps Jacques simply left out that detail when he submitted his essay.

Either way, the detail reminds the reader that one reward of faithfulness to God, as in White’s life, may be a large crowd of redeemed descendants curious to meet you, one of their God-fearing forebears, in heaven.

—Margi Dalgleish Roth

Gaston, Oregon

The Dialogue That Never Happened

Wow! Chris Blake sure got me out of my comfort zone with his July 15 article “The Dialogue That Never Happened.” I cannot see any value in publishing an article that puts God down to Satan’s level in the great controversy. True, it never happened, but I am very uncomfortable to see this misinformation printed in our Review. What was the point of the article? It wasn’t funny. How could it glorify God?

Incidentally, Bill Knott, in his editorial “An Unparalleled Opportunity,” was right on. We need to learn how to point kids and others to the joy of Jesus.

—George Woodruff, retired pastor

Deltona, Florida

Give Credit Where It’s Due

I couldn’t agree more with Chris Blake (Aug. 19) in his article “Give Credit Where It’s Due.” Christians should be the most gracious and affirming people on earth. I must respectfully disagree, however, with the intent of the article.

While the importance of proper referencing is understood, such formalism would be a pointless and undesirable part of worship. Straining over such

Fifty-seventh General Conference Session

PLACE: SkyDome and Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
DATES: June 29-July 8 (Thursday-Sabbath), 2000
THEME: Almost Home
HOUSING: There are several ways to obtain a housing application: (1) visit the official General Conference Website at www.adventist.org; (2) request through e-mail to gcsession@gc.adventist.org; (3) write GC Session Management, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; (4) call (301) 680-6216; or (5) fax (301) 680-6290.
INFO: Look for more information about the session to be published in the Adventist Review, beginning with a news feature in the November NAD edition.
details merely reflects Adventists’ ongoing struggle with various forms of legalism—our rightness versus Christ’s righteousness. We must remember the purpose of worship is to place our focus on God, to praise and glorify God, and to experience God. Anything that detracts from that focus and experience should be eliminated (or at least minimized). Regardless of which human may have created something (whether song, drama, poem, or anecdote), the credit ultimately belongs to God. What better way to acknowledge the real Creator than by utilizing various materials in a way that aids the worship experience?

—Mark L. Petitt
Fletcher, North Carolina

Thank You So Much
Thank you so much for the good news that you send out to the world within the Adventist Review. I especially liked two articles in the August 19 issue: “Going Where the People Are” and “See You in the Morning.” These are articles that touch the heart and mind, and themes that make me say “True! Right!” Thank you for all the good work you are doing!

—Jorg Gotzinger
Norway

Will They Grow Where They’re Planted?
Great harm has been done, in my opinion, with the article “Will They Grow Where They’re Planted?” by Bradley Booth in the August 19 Review, to a section of our church already deeply burdened and struggling for survival—our schools.

In my opinion a properly worded foreword, editorial comment, or at least an opening paragraph reiterating the church’s position on church schools has been sadly omitted. A cursory review of the article reveals no emphasis on attending Adventist schools or disapproval of the education and environment experienced in a public school. In order for our schools to survive the attacks aimed, support must be provided at all levels, at all costs.

Our school today in Huntsville now serves far less than one third of the eligible children in our church and neighboring churches. Why? Though you get many answers such as too expensive, no transportation, inadequate facilities, incompetent teacher, etc., the underlying cause is money. Unless parents are taught to sacrifice for their children, they won’t. Read Ezekiel 23:38, 39 in a modern-day context of a teenager in a public school trade-off.

I realize that the study was to point out the need to enhance each church’s spiritual enrichment programs for youth and young adults who have not attended Adventist schools, which of course should be done. The six areas covered in the final paragraphs are excellent suggestions and should be incorporated in every Adventist home. But don’t give up the goal of every Adventist youth in an Adventist school! This article did not support that. It’s skewed so that it appears as a fait accompli that Seventh-day Adventist children will attend public school. It is not so. Every Adventist child should be in an Adventist school. And guess what? The parents shouldn’t have to pay a dime!

Teach it! Preach it! Live it! Shout it! If we never had another evangelistic effort, but used the money to save our children, the church would be far better off today. No greater sacrifice can be made in our families than to save our children. One hundred percent retention may not be possible, but neither is 100 percent loss acceptable.

What to do? I suggest you print an article detailing the virtues and benefits of an Adventist education to offset the slant of this article. There is no need to hurt struggling parents by accentuating the negative, even if it’s true!

—Gordon S. Oakley
Huntsville, Alabama

Cover Story
From Violence to Peace
How the power of God entered a life of heartache and abuse.

Articles
This Isn’t a Performance
Form does not always follow function.

Like Father, Like God
There’s only one perfect Parent; the rest of us are still trying.

My Best Buddy
Learning who to trust on the Internet.

Departments
Letters
Give & Take
Leaving the Comfort Zone
World News & Perspectives
The X-Change
Tuesday’s Child
Book Mark
Reflections

Editorials
The Other Six Days
A Clean Reflection

Next Week
Creation Illustrated
How one man’s dream became a testimony to a Master Designer.
The way some Adventists debate what should or should not happen during Sabbath morning worship services, one could get the impression that in spite of cultural differences, there's only one orthodox way to worship. For some, more important than choosing whether to worship on Sabbath or Sunday is deciding whether to drum or not to drum, to clap or not to clap, to read song lyrics projected on a screen or from The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal.

Not long ago I attended a leadership seminar for church pastors and administrators. At one session the seminar leader asked us to describe a successful church. Responses generally revolved around themes such as Bible-based preaching/teaching, dynamic worship leaders, talented musicians, a grace-based atmosphere of love and acceptance, etc.

A bsent from the descriptions of a successful church (until I mentioned it) was what a church does the rest of the week. And therein lies a problem for those who live as though the sum and substance of a church's vitality consists of what it does on Sabbath mornings: how fine the sermons are, how much money is collected, how lively is the singing, how warm is the atmosphere.

Perhaps a better gauge of a successful church comes by asking, What difference is this congregation making in the community? Is a congregation doing God's will if its influence is all but invisible the rest of the week?

To put it another way: Have Adventists, say, in North America—especially those in Anglo churches—put such an emphasis on Sabbath morning performances that we've become merely spectators? In metropolitan areas that have a variety of worship options, people generally gravitate to where they "get the most" out of a service. And while it's no fun to sit through boring, ill-conceived, and carelessly executed worship services, there's more to belonging to a local congregation than watching Christian "performers."

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Cor. 12:27, NIV). Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, all of Christ's followers are missionaries of grace and truth. At our best we reflect Christ's character in settings professional and social, high-profile and humdrum. It is our words and actions in public and private that give credibility to what we do on Sabbath mornings.

No amount of Sabbath morning activity will make up for a lack of community activity the rest of the week (see Micah 6:6-8). And by the same token, a congregation involved in Spirit-motivated witnessing and service activities during the week will have much for which to praise God on Sabbath mornings. It's when we serve, singly or in small groups, spontaneously or long-term, that we establish bonds with one another and with people in our communities that have the potential for yielding eternal benefits.

Not long after we moved to this part of the world, our car broke down on a six-lane highway as my wife was driving home from work. Linda hiked to a pay phone and called me, then she went back to wait with the car. While she waited, a woman who worked as a checker at one of the local supermarkets saw Linda, pulled over, and asked, "Mrs. Chavez, can I give you a ride somewhere?"

I don't know what I found more shocking: that a near stranger would stop in rush-hour traffic to help someone she barely knew; or that from hundreds of people she saw each day, the woman remembered Linda's face and name (observed, no doubt, from the checks Linda wrote at the supermarket). Even now, when I see this woman checking groceries at the supermarket, although I know nothing of her life philosophy, I consider her a true believer. If I were looking for something to believe in, I'd ask her what she believes.

According to the writer to the Hebrews, more important than what we get is what we give: "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds," he says. "Let us not give up meeting together . . ., but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24, 25, NIV).
Demon Dog: Hound From Hell is probably not on the list of acceptable viewing for anyone, much less an 8-year-old with a fairly active imagination. Yet there I was, hand on the on-off knob of my nine-inch color TV, watching wide-eyed as a German shepherd mixed-breed puppy wreaked havoc on a normal family living in suburban heaven.

In the toothsome agony of jangled nerves that a horror movie can cause, I stared at the screen, half listening to the movie dialogue. I also had to keep my “mom radar” tuned. It was way past my bedtime, and I wasn’t supposed to be watching those “awful” movies because, as she’d say, “what you put in your mind is what will come out, Kimberly . . .” So, uncomfortably close to the small screen, I sat in frightful anticipation of the next calamity.

The dog in the movie, from a litter of demon-possessed puppies, managed to turn three of the family members into selfish, spoiled, materialistic creatures. Once wholesome, conservative, and kind, they became the complete opposite. The mother smoked cigarettes and drank wine all day. The kids went from A students to school-skipping delinquents. Only the father was “strong enough to resist.”

A wise old man (I don’t remember if he was purported to be a man of the cloth or not) told the perplexed father what was happening to his family. The father would have to fight to get them back from the possession of the demon.

What will forever stay etched in my mind was the test the old man told the father to do while the children were sleeping. The father was to wait until his family members were sound asleep, in the darkest part of the night, and look at their faces as reflected in a mirror. The father grabbed an ornate hand-held mirror and faced it directly into the countenance of his daughter, sweetly reposed in sleep. What he (and the viewing audience) saw was gruesomely appalling. Worms crawled in and out of wrinkled and rotting caved-in cheeks. Hideous scars burned like acid on the skeleton-like, seething mask. The father gasped, I gasped, the music screamed horrid chords, and the father rushed to the other rooms, seeing the worst reflected in the mirror.

This troubled me. I immediately thought about my sins (including the disobedience of watching the movie) and wondered, If someone held a mirror up to me as I slept, would they see the same rot of sin? In fear I switched the set off, nestled under my covers, and prayed. I pleaded. I promised to be good. I fell asleep, images of evil dogs and ugly worm-eaten faces running through my dreams.

Maybe my child’s mind has embellished the image a bit and I’m making the scene more than it was. But maybe not. Sin is gross, grisly, and putrefactive. It lives with us, in us. Even in the hallowed halls of churches it can breed and fester. A unkind word, a tithe withheld, or a greeting not given. A gossiped story, a talent not used, or an abuse of power.

The rebuke that begins the book of Isaiah depicts a sin-sick society. The Lord, through Isaiah, tells His children to “stop bringing meaningless offerings! . . . I cannot bear your evil assemblies. . . . Your hands are full of blood” (Isa. 1:13-15, NIV). But in Isaiah 1:18 are the saving, sanitizing words of God: “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (NIV).

We don’t have to live under the sickness of sin. Sure, we will be tempted often, and sometimes we’ll falter (as I did with the movie), but our Father is there, not with a mirror to show faults, but with a squeaky clean, supersized sponge and some fresh-smelling antibacterial Holy Spirit “soap.” He’s ready to use as much elbow grease as needed. And as much as we’ll allow.

As promised, Jesus will give us a clean reflection. Just ask.
ADVENTIST LIFE

My wife coordinates get-well gifts for our church members who are in the hospital. Recently she visited a member who was recuperating from a kidney stone operation. Not knowing the nature of his illness, she presented him with a copy of Max Lucado’s book He Still Moves Stones.

— Ernie Nolan, Ponoka, Alberta, Canada

One of our church members had been very sick and had been in the hospital for tests. She was now back in church and was feeling much better. The pastor was so happy to see her back and wanted the congregation to know that she was well. He stated that “we are grateful to God that Mrs. ———’s autopsy has come back negative.”

— Elsie May Gang, Tranquility, New Jersey

QUOTES

“The value of a gift is in the love of the giver!”

— Ron Halvorsen, Sr., at the 1999 Redwood area camp meeting in northern California

“There are many phrases that carry great meaning for us. ‘I love you’ is certainly close to the top. For some people, ‘You look like you have lost weight’ would rank fairly high as well. But I suspect that the most profound words anyone could say to us would be: ‘I know Jesus because I have seen Him in you.’”

— Judy Wilson, during a Bible study, Arlington Adventist Church in Texas

REFLECTIONS ON A FALL DAY

Forgiving
All of us by
Loving us enough to
Let our sins fall away.

Indeed we may
Seem bare, but

God will make
Our lives better by
Destroying the
Small things, the

Leaves, so He can
Open the trunk— our
Very hearts— and
Erase the dirt and give us a heart as
white as

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N
O
W

— Cameron Kuhlman, Colledale, Tennessee

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

T'S LATE AFTERNOON. SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Phyllis Scott picks up a colorful flyer from her father's stack of mail. On the front, a scantily clad woman rides a strange-looking beast, the number 666 emblazoned on her forehead.

"Look at this!" Phyllis shoves the brochure under her sister's nose. Tonja, too high to care, ignores her momentarily. Phyllis flips her long brown hair out of her face and continues to read. "Join our free classes and learn about the mark of the beast and the state of the dead. 'Wow! You guys wanna do this?"

Tonja and Melissa, Phyllis's best friend, shake their heads in disinterest. "No way."

But Phyllis will not be deterred. She opens the pamphlet further and discovers more tantalizing offers. "Free Bible, free lessons, free binder . . . We gotta do this!" Before her companions can protest, Phyllis grabs the phone, dials the number of the local Seventh-day Adventist church, and signs the three of them up for the meetings.

Melissa and Tonja groan. Phyllis just can't resist a freebie — legal or stolen. Nor can she resist anything as sensational as a beast with multiple heads and a woman with the mark of Satan on her forehead. A n alcohol and drug user since the age of 8, Phyllis lives from one high to the next and grabs excitement wherever she can. After all, few things in her present or past are worth remembering.

Shaky Beginnings

Phyllis's life frequently involved intense conflict between the forces of good and evil. Earlier in the year Phyllis had accepted Jesus into her life after attending a Vacation Bible School at a Baptist church down the street. Phyllis remembers standing up front, staring at the red-carpeted floor, and crying as she gave her heart to Jesus. "I don't think Christ ever left my heart," she says today, "even though I left Him."
Unfortunately, accepting Jesus didn’t make Phyllis’s life any easier. At the age of 9 she was confronted, one morning at breakfast, with a family member who had been brutalized beyond recognition the night before. Angry, Phyllis resolved to protect her loved one from any more physical violence and to ensure that she herself would never experience it.

About this time her interest in martial arts began growing—the perfect weapon against unwanted violence.

The Teenage Years

Things continued to get worse at home. Whenever her stepfather got drunk, he turned violent and abusive. “I saw his violence,” Phyllis reflects today, “and I wouldn’t stand for it. I honed my fighting skills by fighting my stepfather.”

Police visits to Phyllis’s home became routine, and all the officers knew her name.

Phyllis needed all the strength she could muster for the trying years ahead. The domestic violence continued until, when Phyllis was 16, she and Tonja moved in with their biological father. Phyllis resorted to alcohol and drugs to find an escape. “There is one whole year of my life that I don’t
Worth Fighting For

Anyone who knows Phyllis Scott-Zimmerman for more than a short time soon realizes her passion for self-defense. Holding a black belt in several different martial art styles, Phyllis is qualified to kill—but she doesn’t. Instead, she uses her skills to teach others how to protect themselves.

“I’m not a man-hater or an extremist. I am pro safety for all,” she tells her Beginning Cardio-Kickboxing class. “I just want to give you the tools to protect yourselves when you are attacked.” And teach them she does. Not only in Beginning and Advanced Cardio-Kickboxing, practical how-to classes for women who want to feel safer and more empowered, but also in other self-defense lectures, Phyllis freely offers her knowledge to any who will listen.

“God protects us many times from things unseen,” Phyllis states with conviction. “But we live in an evil world, and we are not exempt from the evil and the wrongdoings of humanity.” In class she illustrated her points from her own experiences at home and on the streets, as well as from the glut of current news stories on violence in the world.

Phyllis, who began dabbling in the martial arts at the age of 8, instantly succeeded in it. Throughout her growing-up years, she found herself defending herself and her family members from unwanted attacks. By the time she reached her early 20s she spent up to six hours a day in practice. “Every single instructor I’ve had tried very hard to get me into competition,” she remembers, but she always refused. “I knew that I could totally hurt somebody . . . because I couldn’t control my emotions.”

Several more encounters with the supernatural, as well as her declining spiritual life, convinced Phyllis to leave intense martial arts training behind.

But even if she chose not to fight competitively, other challenges tested Phyllis. Virtually all higher-level martial arts classes add mental control to the easier-to-achieve physical control techniques. This usually leads to spiritualism.

Phyllis’s last instructor was deeply involved in chi (channeling energies from the center of the body and using them for supernatural power) and consistently tried to involve Phyllis. “What?” he challenged her when she refused to read a book on mind control. His unnaturally bright-blue eyes stared straight at her. “Is this too much for you to handle?”

“No. It’s too much for my spiritual life,” Phyllis responded. “I’ve learned the techniques to defend myself: I don’t want the ability to control the mind.”

Several more encounters

 remember,” she states wryly. She would roll over and smoke marijuana before she got out of bed every morning.

Despite her tumultuous home life, Phyllis seemed like a normal teenager to strangers. She earned A’s and B’s in school and played on the girls’ varsity basketball team. Outgoing and nery, she became instantly popular with her peers. “I didn’t have any peer pressure,” she comments now. “I was the peer pressure.” She remembers taking a younger friend out of his youth group meeting and getting him high on drugs, then returning him to the church before the meeting ended.

Although Phyllis thought she enjoyed partying and getting high with her friends, nothing quite satisfied her empty heart. Phyllis knew there was a God—her parents had dabbled in everything from the Watchtower Society of Jehovah’s Witnesses to Buddhism. Besides, she’d had her own personal experience with God 10 years earlier. But her journals, which became increasingly more suicidal as hope declined, still referred to Him.

“I think the great controversy was being played in my life,” Phyllis observes today. “Satan knew that God had something planned for me [and he] started putting suicidal thoughts in my mind. I was at my bottom pit.”

Several times Phyllis tried to take her own life. Once she drank a whole bottle of Southern Comfort and jumped into her car, ready to drive over a cliff. But each time she tried to start the vehicle, it died. A nother time she resolved to kill herself alone at home, but people began streaming into the house. With at least 20 visitors present, Phyllis eventually got high and passed out on the couch, unable to
fulfill her initial suicidal plan.
Two or three days later she received the flyer from the Adventist Church.

Turning Point
Phyllis, Tonja, and Melissa stuck to their resolution to attend the Revelation Seminar. On the first night of the Lompoc, California, Revelation Seminar, they showed up at the church. High, drunk, and dressed rather like the woman on the advertising brochure’s cover, they drove into the parking lot with their music blaring loudly. "There was a typical little Adventist lady sitting at the desk," Phyllis remembers with a laugh. "They were [all] frightened!" But nobody reproached them at all. The night’s topic was “Christ Our Hero,” and despite her condition, Phyllis enjoyed the presentation immensely.

A few days later, the three girls discussed the meeting and collectively decided to go back the next night—without getting drunk first. By the third night they resolved to wait for the weekend to get high. They wanted to be fully alert at the meetings.

At the end of the Revelation Seminar series all three women were ready for baptism. They'd stopped drinking and doing drugs—not without a struggle—and started keeping the Sabbath. They'd become complete vegetarians and even stopped drinking caffeinated beverages. But most importantly, they'd found the one true Source of happiness. Once again Phyllis accepted Christ’s presence in her heart. On December 7, 1985, Phyllis and her best friend, Melissa, publicly declared their faith by baptism. Delayed by a severe neck injury from a car crash, Tonja was baptized too, several months later.

Looking back, Phyllis is amazed at the way things worked out. “People [at the church] allowed the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and it gave us acceptance and a feeling of belonging,” she says gratefully. One elderly woman named Gladys approached the three young women, grabbed each of them by the head, and kissed their foreheads every time she saw them. Despite the age and lifestyle difference between the young women and Gladys, they were “drawn to her” because of her unconditional love.

Soon after her baptism, Phyllis began exhibiting this same kind of love to people in her new church: she became their youth leader and Pathfinder director.

After graduating from high school returned to school part-time to complete her M.A. in youth ministry at the seminary. She also manages the Andrews University women’s health club in Lamson Hall and teaches self-defense classes for the Physical Education Department.

Among her many passions, Phyllis has enjoyed an intense love for youth. “I didn’t go the youth ministry route the first time,” she says, “but God called me back.” The encouragement of her first pastor led Phyllis to seriously consider studying youth ministry, and she has enjoyed her classes so far.

However, her priorities are focused at home. “I haven’t gotten full force into the program [at Andrews] because I don’t want to move around with a family of my own. I did that as a kid.” Phyllis is adamant about putting her own family first. “Youth ministry starts in the home,” she states seriously. “The most important thing as a mother is to guide children to eternity.” She plans on homeschooling her children in order to give them a “strong, firm, spiritual bond and home.”

Her task will begin soon. Phyllis will have her first child in November, and she and DaRon are excited about this new adventure.

Fifteen years ago if you would have predicted this life for Phyllis Scott, she would have laughed in your face. Caught in a web of alcohol, violence, drugs, and parties, she couldn’t see past her next high and didn’t want to remember her past. But thanks to the perfect timing of the Holy Spirit, her life grew into a beautiful testimony. Formerly angry and alone, Phyllis is now fulfilled, free, and focused on spreading Christ’s message. When she was asked what she wanted to tell her church, the first sentence she uttered testifies to her commitment: “We serve an awesome God.”
The week following last month’s column I bought a book, marked down from $20 to $3.98, titled *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, by Jean-Dominique Bauby.

Bauby was a 43-year-old editor in chief of the French *Elle* when he incurred a massive stroke that affected his brain stem. He describes “swimming up from the mists of coma” 20 days afterward and emerging to a maddening condition called locked-in syndrome, wherein the victim is virtually paralyzed from head to toe, his mind fully intact, imprisoned inside his own body.

In Bauby’s case, blinking his left eyelid was his only means of communication. He awoke from his coma to find a doctor sewing the right eyelid shut with a needle and thread “like he was darning a sock.” Bauby feared his other eye, his one avenue for contact, would also be closed off.

“I have known gentler awakenings,” he quips.

His right ear is deaf, and his left ear amplifies and distorts any sounds farther than 10 feet away. Moreover, his head “weighs a ton, and something like an invisible diving bell holds my whole body prisoner.” On many occasions, however, his mind “takes flight like a butterfly.”

His crafted words tumble in my head like polished rocks. In his own head he churned over the book’s every word 10 times, learning the text by heart before he let it out.* His transcriber recited the alphabet until Bauby blinked at the appropriate letter, building words in an unbelievably painstaking fashion. One letter at a time. The alphabet was arranged in the order of frequency in the French language: E S A R I N T U L O M D P C F B V H G J Q Z Y X K W.

He now reveled in simple pleasures and modest requests. “I would be the happiest of men,” he announced, “if I could just swallow the overflow of saliva that endlessly floods my mouth.” Ever fashion-conscious, he turned down a “hideous jogging suit” provided by the hospital for clothes he is accustomed to: “If I must drool, I may as well drool on cashmere.”

He recalls how, on the final day before his former life was snuffed out, “I mechanically carried out all those simple acts that today seem miraculous to me: shaving, dressing, downing a hot chocolate.”

“How can I describe,” he laments, “waking for the last time, heedless, perhaps a little grumpy, beside the lithe, warm body of a tall, dark-haired woman?” His 10-year-old son sits beside him, “and I, his father, have lost the simple right to ruffle his bristly hair, clasp his downy neck.”

“I can weep quite discreetly,” he confides. “People think my eye is watering.”

Some of the hospital staff enraged him, particularly “those who wrenched my arm while putting me in my wheelchair, or left me all night long with the TV on, or let me lie in a painful position despite my protests.” Yet he forgives them.

Somehow he maintained his sense of perspective and humor. “I’ve lost 66 pounds in just 20 weeks,” he says. “When I began a diet a week before my stroke, I never dreamed of such a dramatic result.”

He received remarkable letters that were spread before him in a “hushed and holy ceremony”: Some of them are serious in tone, discussing the meaning of life, invoking the supremacy of the soul, the mystery of every existence. And by a curious reversal, the people who focus most closely on these fundamental questions tend to be the people I had known only superficially. Their small talk had masked hidden depths. Had I been blind and deaf, or does it take the harsh light of disaster to show a person’s true nature?

Other letters simply relate the small events that punctuate the passage of time: roses picked at dusk, the laziness of a rainy Sunday, a child crying himself to sleep. Capturing the moment, these small slices of life, these small gusts of happiness, move me more deeply than all the rest.

I read his words and wonder, What am I doing with this enormous life of mine?

---

*He died two days after the book was published.

Chris Blake is a professor of English at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.
This Isn’t a
PERFORMANCE

Who are we trying to impress?

BY JANALEE SHAW

O, NO, NO! IT’S STILL NOT RIGHT.”
Our conductor’s hands wave wildly, and his voice
rises in frustration. A large sigh wells up from some
hidden depth. “Folks, what we’re trying to do here is
. . . you’re trying too hard to blend. That’s not what
we’re looking for.”

Puzzled, we glance at each other. The last thing we
expect to hear from this particular man is an admonition to
stop blending. After all, he’s usually in favor of blending. In
fact, he had seemed rather taken with the concept up to
now. Suddenly, 20 minutes before the choir is scheduled to
make its entrance into the sanctuary, the director has
changed his tactics.

“Maybe this will help,” he tries again. “This isn’t a perfor-
mance; this is worship. I’d like you to sing from the heart.”

As we walk down the aisle, those words keep echoing in
my head. It feels so strange to be told by a musician that our
current music isn’t to be considered a performance. The
complaint I’ve usually heard with regard to music in church
is that everyone takes it casually and settles for mediocre
performances. I know, naturally, that the congregation is
supposed to be careful that they are actually worshiping; I
have been taught, however, that people involved in produc-
ing the program need to do a professional job “so as not to
detract from someone’s blessing.”

As I think about the implications of performance versus
worship, I remember one Sabbath morning in a rural North
Carolina church . . .

Warming Up
It was Communion Sabbath. A rather novice church
organist, I arrived long before anyone else to practice the
songs I would play for the service. I was nervous. I wanted
everything to go smoothly.

A few minutes before Sabbath school started, a panicked
church elder rushed up to the organ. “Jan, you’ll never
believe the mess downstairs!”

“What’s happened?”

“The water heater kicked the bucket. The children’s
classrooms are carpeted with icy water. It’s a disaster area.”
He collapsed against the organ and clutched his head. “I
don’t have a clue where to start cleaning. I’ll never get it
mopped up before everyone gets here.”

We got out cloths and started mopping. By the time peo-
ple began to arrive, the basement had been nearly returned
to normal—unless you noticed that water had an alarming
tendency to bubble out around the soles of your shoes with
each step you took (which added a whole new meaning to
the phrase “walk softly in the sanctuary”).

A group of dark-suited men studied the offending water
heater and agreed that something would have to be done
about it. Of course, that was a problem that would have to
wait until Sunday. In the meantime, there was the issue of
warm water for foot washing. Solemn-faced elders formed an
ad hoc committee to figure out how to get the water warm
enough to prevent those who were taking part in the ordi-
nance of humility from having to stick their feet in (hor-
rors!) unheated water. They voted to put a large kettle on
the stove in the potluck room. The committee was
adjourned. Service preparations went on.

The Cupboard Was Bare
The head deaconess raised the next alarm. When she went
to the cupboard to get towels for the ordinance of humility she had, like Mother Hubbard, found the cupboard bare. Someone had taken the towels home to wash after the last Communion. An ad hoc committee of deaconesses was formed to solve the mystery of the missing towels. Unfortunately, no one could remember who had them last.

The phone rang. Apparently faulty memories were the norm rather than the exception that morning. Mrs. Porter,* the lovely grandmother who had faithfully made Communion bread for this church since the start of time, had forgotten all about it until that very moment. She was calling to meekly say she was awfully sorry, but there was no bread. The deaconesses looked at each other, aghast.

News spread rapidly from the deaconesses to the elders, who reconvened their ad hoc committee to join the deaconesses’ committee. This solemn discussion was more rushed than the last. Time was running out. Sabbath school was nearly over. Something had to be done and quickly. Communion without bread was—well, unthinkable.

Someone suggested crackers. A n uneasy silence spread over the group. Who would actually buy crackers on Sabbath? The ethics of breaking the Sabbath to provide necessary staples for the church’s most solemn event were a bit murky. Finally, Walt volunteered. Everyone else sighed in relief; the problem would be solved. Breaking the Sabbath would be on Walt’s conscience, not theirs. That issue taken care of, they voted to use paper towels to dry the feet. The committees were adjourned. One of the deaconesses began to tear reasonable sized chunks of paper from the roll in the restroom.

The deacons and deaconesses lined up in the hall in preparation for the dignified march down the aisle. Something wasn’t right. They counted heads; someone was missing. They were short one deaconess. The clock ticked loudly. A search party was sent to seek the lost.

In the meantime Walt showed up. He proudly held out a paper bag full of Saltine crackers. The pastor took a close look at the cracker ingredients. Relief turned to frustration. The crackers were bursting with leaven. They wouldn’t do. Walt was dispatched to the local Christian bookstore with orders not to come back until he could produce unleavened bread in one form or another.

The search party returned. They had been unsuccessful. One deaconess had failed to come to church that day. My sister was drafted. “Don’t worry,” she was told. “Just do what we do.”

I started the prelude, fumbling only slightly with the pedals. The pastor and his troops began their stately glide down the aisle.

Walt stuck his head in the sanctuary door. Gesturing wildly, he caught the attention of one of the deacons. He also distracted me. I stepped on a wrong pedal and glared. The song changed key once or twice as I searched for my place. A deacon discreetly collected the bread trays from the Communion table and carried them off to be filled.

Now What?

The service proceeded fairly smoothly until time for the ordinance of humility. A man and women separated to file into their respective rooms, the head elder remembered the water. It had been boiling with great abandon for some time. In the excitement no one had remembered to check on it. The problem shifted from cold water to hot water. A committee was formed to discuss the situation. Tired of solving problems, they decided to abandon the idea of warm water altogether and use tap water. The congregation didn’t seem to mind.

The congregation reassembled. The church pianist took her place. She and I started the special number. It was truly impressive (for an organist who had all of two weeks’ experience with pedals). A few measures into the piece we heard a strange sound. A woman we had never seen before was singing her heart out along with us from the very back row of the church. Heads were swinging in her direction. The pianist shot her an annoyed stare. The woman in the back row didn’t notice. I started to giggle uncontrollably. The organ notes wobbled. Blissfully ignorant of the commotion she was causing, the woman kept singing off-tune. The furious pianist began to pound out notes in an attempt to cover the singing. I struggled to keep up.

The deacons and deaconesses stood. They moved toward the table. Two deaconesses slowly raised the snowy tablecloth. A’s they began folding, my sister dropped one corner of the cloth. It caught the cover of the grape juice tray, flipping it into the pastor’s lap. Her face turned red. Tears began to fall. Her shoulders shook. The pastor dusted off his lap and leaped to his feet. He put his arm around her.

Trays of bread were solemnly offered to the congregation. The organ played softly. One tray moved past my small niece on its way down the row. She took one long look at the bread. Her big brown eyes got even bigger. The reverent hush was pierced by a sweet high voice exclaiming, “Wow! It looks just like Captain Crunch!” I started to giggle again. This whole event was assuming the character of a Keystone Cops silent film.

We struggled to the end of the service. Those who had participated were alternately embarrassed or amused,
depending on their personality. Every one of us was glad it was over.

**From a Distance**

As I take my place at the end of a pew in Pioneer Memorial church, I smile as I remember that Sabbath. Although it was one of the more frustrating church services I've participated in, I think of it with amusement. Today, however, I wonder about that Sabbath with all of its mishaps and our reaction to them.

I remember a conversation I recently had with Mrs. Wilhelm. She and I had been members of that North Carolina church before we both ended up at Andrews University. I lamented with her over all the problems we encountered that day and added how disappointed I was over the breakdown in our careful plans.

"That's funny," she said. "I was there that Sabbath, and although I noticed things weren't going smoothly, I thought it was a very moving service. The fact that so many people were involved gave the service a special personal emphasis. I got a blessing from it."

As I think about her words, years of institutional guilt descend on me. I had been so involved in the things that had gone wrong that I missed the whole point. I let God down that memorable morning. My chat with Mrs. Wilhelm opened my eyes to the only thing that mattered about that day. I had performed. She had worshiped.

The organist plays the introduction. The conductor raises his hands. Music swells. "Gathered in God’s presence . . ." The words flow straight from my heart. For the first time I don't think about the people sitting in the pew closest to me. So what if they can't pick my voice out of 50 others. I'm not here to impress them. I'm here to worship.

*Names have been changed.

Janalee Shaw lives in Muncie, Indiana, where, in addition to writing, she is working on a doctoral dissertation.
Like Father, LIKE GOD

What my kids taught me about God, and what I learned from being a father

BY ED CHRISTIAN

O NE FATHER’S Day, when my son Paul was 5, he curled up in my lap and said, “Dad, you’re not the best dad in all the world, but you’re an interesting dad.”

I took that as a compliment, though I didn’t know what made Paul think me so interesting. It got me thinking, however, about our heavenly Father, who is indeed the best dad in all the world.

Jesus taught us to call His Father our Father. What can we learn about God our Father by looking at what it is like to be an earthly parent? What can we learn about what we owe Him, how we should behave, what He wants from us?

“Ow gladly would I treat you like sons,” God said to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah. Can’t you sense His broken heart when He says, “I though you would call me ‘Father’”? (Jer. 3:19).

David defined God’s fatherhood in Psalm 103:13: “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.”

Moses reminded the Israelites that in the desert, “the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son” (Deut. 1:29).

Like any good father, God sometimes has to discipline His children, but Solomon comforts us with the thought that “the Lord disciplines those He loves, as a father the son He delights in” (Prov. 3:12).

• Imagine a father deciding to give his daughter the car of her dreams for her birthday. “Oh, Dad,” she screams as she hugs him, “what a wonderful gift!”

Then she sober. “How can I ever repay you, Dad? I can’t take this without paying you; it was too expensive!” How about $300 a month?” And she refuses to drive the car until he agrees to let her pay for it, or at least for part of it.
Instead of accepting salvation as a gift from our Father in heaven, which calls from us, in grateful response, a renewed attention to the chores He has assigned us, are we insisting on helping to pay the cost ourselves?

Imagine this. You've just given your son that new book he's been longing to read. "Thanks, Dad!" he says. "It's just what I wanted." You mention that you're going out to hoe the garden. Would he like to help? "No, thanks; I think I'd rather start reading this," he answers.

Fathers love it when their children say thank you not only with their mouths, but with their actions. So does God.

Paul suggests a way we can do this: "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life" (Phil. 2:14-16).

- My children know that they have to hold my hand when they cross the street. Often, though, they continue to hold my hand as we continue down the sidewalk. For them, holding their dad's hand is not just a requirement, but a delight, and I am pleased by that delight.

Our Father in heaven is also pleased when we choose to walk beside Him, holding His hand. The more we depend on Him to watch out for cars, to know which way to turn, to take us somewhere worth going, the more He likes it. That's just the way dads are.

- My family lives in the woods, and my children love to explore. If I need them, I simply ring the old schoolhouse bell mounted above the front porch, and they come running. They know that if they come when called, they'll get to enjoy whatever treat I have in store for them: a meal, a story, a chat, a walk, a ride.

Coming when called is a character trait worth developing in children. Fathers appreciate it.

Our Father in heaven has called all of us, and He loves it when we come when called. If we don't come, though, He has to chase us, because we are, after all, His children. And then comes the “discipline” of “those he loves,” a discipline that "produces a harvest of righteousness and peace" (Heb. 12:5-11).

**Eating What’s on Our Plate**

- Dads like it when their kids eat what's on their plates. It lets them know they've given their children something worth eating, something they enjoy. If I serve my children something they aren't fond of, they don't have to eat a lot of it, but I do expect them to eat the tiny bit I serve them, and without complaining. They may not like the taste, but eating it will be good for them.

Our Father in heaven is also pleased when we eat what He puts on our plates, even if we don't like the taste, even if it is a cup of suffering. Paul explains how he deals with what God gives him: "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:12, 13).

- Solomon tells us that “a wise son brings joy to his father” (Prov. 10:1). One of the very best ways to bring joy to your father is to enjoy his company. What father is not flattered when his children seek him out and love to be with him?

Our Father in heaven is delighted when we enjoy His company, when we love Him so much that we'd rather spend time with Him than do anything else. And the more time we spend with Him, the easier it becomes to hear His still small voice.

- Fathers are gratified when their children ask their advice, listen to their advice, and heed their advice. They are also pleased when this results in their children avoiding needless suffering or frustration.

Our Father in heaven is also pleased when we listen to and heed His advice. We can find much of His advice in His letters to us. He is pleased when we read and reread His love letters. We, in turn, can rejoice when following His advice leads to joy, peace, and health. "He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father" (Prov. 28:7).

- A good father does a lot of things for his children that they never even realize, providing for needs they may not even recognize. Most of what our heavenly Father does for us we won't know until we get to heaven. We can be sure, though, of His constant love.

As Christ said: "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matt. 7:11). We can be certain that, like the father of the prodigal son, our Father forgives us while we are yet far off.

And we can both show our gratitude and grow in His grace by coming when called, holding His hand, eating what He puts on our plates, enjoying His company, and heeding His advice.

Fathers like that kind of thing.

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*Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.*

Ed Christian teaches English and Bible at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania.
Thief River Falls is a town of 8,000 people tucked in the northwest corner of Minnesota one hour south of the Canadian border and miles from anywhere else. Locals say it is 10 months of winter and two months of road work. Not much for young people to do in a town this small and this remote.

When Benji and Dan Sayler begged to attend a Wednesday night praise and prayer service at the local high school, they never realized that their parents would attend with them and get excited about the idea.

Ben and Marilyn Sayler, members of the Open Arms Christian Fellowship, an Adventist congregation, realized that if youth would come to a one-time event, they might come to more, and who better to minister to the youth of Thief River Falls than the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Open Arms Christian Fellowship recently celebrated its first anniversary. Head elder Sylvia Grindley says there is an unusually large number of young people at their church. Most of these young people are not baptized members.

To make the youth event special the Saylers invited the YouthNet eXtreme Team, a youth ministry sponsored by the North American Division Youth Department, based at the Center for Youth Evangelism at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Ben had seen the group at Maplewood Academy in Hutchinson, Minnesota.

When the traveling group agreed to come, Ben said, “If we are going to do it, we might as well do it big-time and spread it as far as possible.”

The small team of organizers came up with 32 pages of ideas. They enlisted support from 22 churches in the town, and garnered radio, newspaper, and television coverage. The group also splashed posters across the town, and a local hotel placed a notice on its billboard.

The eXtreme Team rolled into town and opened for barely 40 people. “First I watched in fear as young people got up to leave,” says Ben. “But then they came back 10 minutes later with their friends.”

Attendance peaked at 160 on Wednesday night. “The community has been so involved and the youth have been telling their friends that they have to come,” said Brian Yeager, director of the YouthNet eXtreme Team. “This is a new concert format for the group. While keeping the eXtreme Team’s usual style, which focuses on relationships, we’ve pushed the envelope for Adventist youth evangelism. This is what the eXtreme Team is all about—empowering people’s dreams and reaching the unchurched.”

The audience has not been a captive audience. The youth chose to attend these meetings instead of visiting several other events in the area. “So many churches offer Vacation Bible School (VBS) for the children but never offer VBS for young people, and that is what the eXtreme Team is doing here in Thief River Falls,” says Ben Sayler.

Marilyn Sayler echoes her husband’s sentiments. “Because of what happened at Columbine, Colorado, we can’t forget this generation,” she says. “This whole week is about internalizing the
feeling of God's love in these young people," says Ben. And it's happening. Yeager adds, "In reality, we have just built on what the church and the youth have dreamed up, door prizes, special guests, advertising, and volunteers. This is just a fulfillment of their dreams."

One of the special guests attending the meetings was Thief River Falls mayor Mark Borshiem. "Having the eXtreme Team in town has been an energetic and exciting experience. The team has made the youth and the guests feel very comfortable, as though they are a part of the group."

Mayor Borshiem says that this week will help guide the youth toward a positive future. "Even if only one or two make a decision, it is worth every ounce of energy."

Well, Mayor Borshiem, 17 young people of the city of Thief River Falls made a decision for Christ, and two made a decision for baptism. "The thing I love about [the church in] Thief River Falls is that they dared to dream. The eXtreme Team has the resources to do anything, but it took some people to creatively dream and reach out to their community," Yeager added.

For more information on the YouthNet eXtreme Team, call 1-800-Youth-2-U.

### Romanian Youth Write Bible From Memory

**BY JONATHAN GALLAGHER, ASSOCIATE GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR**

In a highly visible display of commitment, more than 4,500 Romanian youth wrote out the Bible from Genesis to Revelation from memory in just 28 minutes. The event, arranged by the Pathfinder youth organization, brought together young people from all over Romania to Liberty Park in Bucharest on September 12.

“Our youth wanted to demonstrate that the Bible means very much to them,” said Adrian Bocaneanu, president of the Adventist Church in Romania. “By taking the time to memorize whole sections of Scripture, they are showing that the Bible is still very much alive and relevant to the needs of the modern world.”

Jan Paulsen, General Conference president, encouraged the large crowd of Pathfinders and told them that by this action they were sending a signal around the globe. "Through this event you are proving what the Bible means to you, and you are telling the whole world of your love for the Word of God. May the Lord honor your commitment today.”

Paulsen then began the event by writing out the first verse of Genesis. Joan Caraza, general secretary for Romania’s Inter-confessional Bible Society and a deacon in the Orthodox Church, added his congratulations. “I appreciate your efforts to uplift the Bible,” said Caraza. “To memorize part of Scripture is a sign of respect for the Bible, and I encourage you to write it on your hearts and not just in your minds. You are an example for us, and you will encourage international organizations who are helping to translate the new Romanian Bible.”

Janine Duta, a Pathfinder from Petrosani, said, “Every one of us is excited because this is very important. It’s a plan to bring friendship and understanding among people and help them see that the Bible is full of meaning.”

The thousands of young people lined the park avenues, writing their sections on a giant scroll 1.75 miles long. “These young people are just making the point that whatever people may say, the Bible is still the answer to life’s questions and is the gospel of salvation,” said Bocaneanu. “May these memorized words come alive in the lives of these young people who have shown their love for the Bible so clearly today.”
Floyd—Storm of the Century?

By Kimberly Luste Maran, Assistant Editor, Adventist Review

For weeks newscasts were inundated with reports on Hurricane Floyd. I guess being 600 miles wide and packing 140-mph winds does have its privileges. Stories on past storms, future storms, storm emergency contingencies, and closings because of the storm were rampant on the major television networks lining the Atlantic. Floyd did not act as predicted, but still ravaged much of the eastern U.S. and some tropical locales (including the Bahamas) with a glut of rain and wind. And several areas, with millions of dollars in damage, haven’t yet recovered.

Survivors breathed a collective sigh of relief when it was over. I was one of them. Picking up fallen tree limbs and sweeping away the leaves littering my deck, I thanked God for His mercy and prayed for those who had fared worse. The danger was over.

Or so I thought.

Hanging over the September 27 Newsweek cover flag are the words “Get Ready for More Storms Like Floyd.” More? The accompanying article reports that Floyd wasn’t the “storm of the century,” and the tests of “emergency preparedness” that it triggered will come in handy.” But it also warns that “new hurricanes are brewing.” It goes on further: “The United States has entered into a period of Atlantic hurricane activity more intense than any since the 1960s.” We may be in trouble.

It seems as history races on toward a new millennium that along with human decay, the elements are falling out of balance. Unpredictable wrathful winds and rain, tumultuous earthshaking quakes, and blazing fires accost the earth. It’s a good thing we Christians have the best book on “emergency preparedness” planning. Hopefully, it won’t take the storm of the century to put it into action.

Community Services Aids Thousands of Flood Victims

Food and supplies desperately needed for thousands of displaced families flooded out by Hurricane Floyd are being provided by Adventist Community Services (ACS). ACS is leading relief efforts in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, and other Eastern states following the massive destruction caused on September 16.

“T here is a big need for food right now; we are distributing it as quickly as it comes in. With two new distribution centers opening, there will be even greater need in the coming weeks,” says Verdie Culpepper, ACS disaster consultant at the North Carolina warehouse.

ACS, the community action agency of the Adventist Church in North America, is managing a multiagency warehouse in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state of North Carolina. ACS is also operating seven collection centers for donated goods throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and plans to open more sites.

Hours after the storm struck, ACS disaster relief coordinators and volunteers began working with storm survivors to help them begin the rebuilding process.

The Southwest Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church worked with the local community to manage an interagency warehouse and distribution program there, which takes items to those hardest hit by the flooding.

“The department stores have donated cleaning materials, but we are being overwhelmed with requests. We need boxes, rags, mops, buckets, brooms, and flashlights,” says Mark McCleary, pastor of the Southwest Philadelphia church. The relief operations in Philadelphia will remain open as long as the need remains.

Nearly 1,000 volunteers are helping in North Carolina, staffing the warehouse and distribution centers in the local communities. North Carolina is home to four ACS operations, with the largest distribution site located in Rocky Mount; however, Greenville, Roanoke Rapids, and Wilmington also host distribution facilities.

Under signed agreements with the FEMA and state disaster response agencies, ACS’s Rocky Mount center has distributed nearly 300 tons of cleanup supplies, food, and clothing to survivors.

“We are helping 3,000 to 5,000 people a day here at our Rocky Mount site, and as more people start the cleanup process we expect the numbers to increase,” said Mike Ortel, ACS North Carolina disaster coordinator.

In Newport News, Virginia, response teams worked directly with FEMA helping seniors who are in shelters.
Did You Know?

Religious, Political, Entertainment Leaders Appeal to Hollywood

Religious leaders, politicians, and entertainers are among those who issued a public appeal July 21 urging Hollywood executives to reduce sexual and violent content in entertainment media.

“We are asking the entertainment industry to assume a decent minimum of responsibility for its actions and to take some modest steps of self-restraint,” reads “An Appeal to Hollywood.” “And we are asking parents to help in this task, not just by taking responsibility for shielding their own children, but also by making their concerns known to media executives and advertisers.”

The appeal asks industry executives to enter “a new social compact” to help children and society.

“Allowing children unsupervised access to today’s media is the moral equivalent of letting them go play on the freeway,” the appeal reads. “But today even the most conscientious parent cries out for help from an industry that too often abdicates its responsibility for its powerful impact on the young.”—Religious News Network.

Could You Repeat That?

High stress levels can temporarily interfere with your memory. Test participants received varying levels of cortisol, a hormone produced in the body during stress, followed by a memory test. Volunteers who received cortisol at levels similar to what the body produces when under high levels of stress for several days showed decreased memory performance. Memory functions recovered as stress levels returned to normal.—Archives of General Psychiatry.

Bananas for Your Bones

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables is an important lifestyle contributor to greater bone mass. Researchers tested more than 600 men and women and found that volunteers had greater bone mass as the amount of dietary potassium and magnesium they consumed increased. Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of potassium. Bananas and orange juice are also rich in magnesium.—American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

For Your Good Health is compiled by Larry Becker, editor of Vibrant Life, the church’s health outreach journal. To subscribe, call 1-800-765-6955.

Pathfinder Camporee Generated Media Blitz

Media coverage of the Pathfinder camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, this past August provided the Adventist Church with a unique opportunity to witness to the community, reports Willie Oliver, North American Division Pathfinder ministries director.

In a two-week period the Adventist Church and its Pathfinders and leaders were featured in reports on NBC, ABC, CBS, FOX, PBS, and cable television stations more than 20 times in the state of Wisconsin and beyond.

Nearly 20 articles were written about different aspects of the event in major and regional newspapers from Milwaukee to Green Bay. Around North America, community papers featured local Pathfinder Clubs headed to the event or upon their return home.

What’s Upcoming

Oct. 30 Children’s Sabbath
Nov. 6 Week of Prayer begins
Nov. 20 Ingathering begins
Nov. 30 Bible Emphasis
Dec. 4 Stewardship Day
BY T. GREGORY MATTHEWS

The following events did not actually occur but are painfully true-to-life.—Editors.

THE SCREEN BLINKED AS SHE TYPED THE letters in: “Red Rover, are you there? I’d like you to come online so that we can talk in real time.”

She waited as the letters from her best friend flashed across the screen: “Yes, Angel-777, I’m here. What’s up?”

“Oh, Red Rover, I’m so excited. We won the regional Pathfinder Bible Bowl today at Campion Academy. Now my Pathfinder Club will participate in the national competition. And get this— it’s going to be held in my home church. Dad is so excited. He’s the director of our Pathfinder Club. Now he’ll host the national competition, and his club will be one of the finalists.”

Red Rover leaned back in his chair and smiled. It was time to put his plan into action. He pulled up Angel-777’s file for review:

Name: Unknown
Home: Somewhere in Colorado, near Campion Academy, at the site of the church scheduled to host the National Bible Bowl Championship.
Age: 13 years old
Supervision: Parents both work day shifts. Older brother works at the local Burger Barn. Angel-777 home alone after she gets out of school.
Father: Local Pathfinder Club director.

“Good morning. Rocky Mountain Conference; may I help you? Yes, we’re hosting the National Pathfinder Bible Bowl Contest. It will be held March 13 in Brighton, Colorado, at the Brighton Seventh-day Adventist Church. Are you interested in attending?”

The pastor was understandably pleased and proud. Today had been a great day. The Pathfinder Bible Bowl Contest had gone well, and the Brighton church club had finished in second place.

“Got a question for you, Pastor Goodheart,” said the man lingering after the Bible Bowl event. “I’m impressed with what I’ve seen here today. I’d like to have my children involved in a club like the one you’re running here. How can I get in touch with your Pathfinder director?”

Pastor Goodheart eyed his questioner: middle-aged, well dressed, wedding band. The man was obviously a professional. Hadn’t the pastor told the congregation that God would use the Pathfinder Club to interest people in the church? Here was someone who could be a real asset to the club, and who knows, maybe even as a church member.

“I’m certain that our director would be glad to speak with you,” Goodheart said. “You’ll find Samuel Shepherd over there,” he said, pointing. “He’s talking to his daughter, Charlene.”

As the visitor strolled away, he summed everything up: “Charlene Shepherd, I have your name. Your address will be easy. We’ll soon meet, but under different circumstances.”

All was quiet at home. Supper was finished, and
How Can I Protect My Children?
BY T. GREGORY MATTHEWS

1. Purchase software that will restrict, block, track, and/or limit access to Internet sites you consider inappropriate. These generally cost between $20 and $30 each. Examples include: Computer Cop, Cyber Patrol, Kid Desk, Internet Safe, Kid Proof, Net Nanny, and Surf Watch. Remember, no program works perfectly. Computer Cop helps in tracking the Internet sites that your child visits. Kid Proof sends the child to an alternative site that you select (e.g., an educational site) whenever an attempt is made to access an inappropriate one.

2. Contact your Internet service provider. Some providers (e.g., America Online) will offer you such software free of charge.

3. Your Internet browser may include a function that tracks the sites visited. If you use Microsoft Internet Explorer, click on “Go” and then “Open History Folder.” This will list the sites recently visited.

4. Internet sites commonly download programs to your hard drive, and often without your knowledge. The most common type are called “cookies.” You will find these in the “cookie” file in your Windows directory. Open them and you will see what has been downloaded. A pornographic “cookie” does not mean the site has been accessed. But a large number of similar “cookies” will indicate the area of the Internet where your child is spending time.

5. Search your hard drive for graphic files that have been downloaded, and open them to see if they are inappropriate. The most common graphic file titles will have the following letters following the dot (.) In the file title: BMP, GEM, GIF, JPG, PCD, PCX, PIC, TGA, and TIF. However, there are other file formats.

6. Place your Internet-accessible computer in a general family area where the screen is visible to other people.

7. Place clear limits on the time and specific hours spent on the Internet and in chat rooms.

8. Talk to your children, and listen to them. Discuss which sites they are accessing, and their involvement in chat rooms. Communication with your children about their Internet use will resolve many issues.

9. Don’t overreact. Your children are dealing with their own sexuality and its development. Accessing an inappropriate Internet site may represent nothing more than age-appropriate curiosity. Deal fairly and openly with your child and move on.

10. Become familiar with the wide variety of material available on the Internet. In doing so, you will become knowledgeable of the issues, and better able to guide your child in using it.

11. Ask for wisdom and guidance from the Lord. You will need it.
Charlene was sitting at the computer, her fingers racing over the keyboard.

“Red Rover, are you online? I’d like to talk.” But there was no answer.

Her father called from the next room: “Charlene, come in here, please. Your mother and I would like to talk to you.”

She might as well see what they wanted. She knew that she wasn’t in any trouble. And anyway, her best buddy wasn’t online.

As Charlene entered the living room, she noticed that her parents were looking unusually serious. A strange man was sitting across from them on the sofa. He was well dressed, middle-aged, probably married. She wondered who he might be.

“Charlene,” her father began. “Your mother and I have been visiting with a friend of yours. He tells us that you know him as Red Rover?”

The confusion on Charlene’s face was unmistakable. This couldn’t be. Red Rover was the 14-year-old son of a seminary student at Andrews University in Michigan.

“Angel-777,” the man said slowly and with emphasis. “I’ve wanted to meet you for some time, and I knew that it would happen. I’ve prayed that it would happen under these circumstances, with your parents.”

The shock of hearing her chat room handle on the stranger’s lips rendered Charlene speechless. Something was wrong. What was going on?

“You see,” he continued, “I’m a detective with the Denver Metropolitan Area Task Force on Child Abuse and Pornography. I’ve been visiting with your parents about some of the dangers that you’ve been involved in.

“It was easy for me to determine that you’ve been a lonely girl, home alone after school, searching for friendship on the Internet,” he said slowly. “I’m an active Christian, but not a Seventh-day Adventist. When I figured out that you must be one, it was easy for me to develop a cover story involving a 14-year-old son of a ministerial student at Andrews.

“Without realizing it, you’ve given me more and more information about your identity until I knew where you lived, and when you were home alone.

“I haven’t done this to harm you. You see, my wife and I once had a 14-year-old daughter much like you. We didn’t realize the danger she was getting into, home alone after school, on the Internet, searching for friends in the chat rooms. We gave her the standard counsel about never giving away either her name or address. But we didn’t realize that this was not enough . . .”

T. Gregory Matthews is a chaplain at the Veterans’ Hospital in Brighton, Colorado.
often feel as if my husband doesn’t really “hear” me. We often argue, especially when I tell him how he has hurt me. What can we do to improve our communication with each other?

Allan’s reply: Communication is a learned art. It can be especially difficult between husband and wife because they often have unrealistic expectations of each other. For example, I often hear, “He should understand me . . . I am his wife,” or “She should know that about me.” Yet even in the best of marriages, simply saying “I do” doesn’t magically transform your spouse into your personal mind reader. Let me make some suggestions to help you improve your communication:

1. Pick your spots intentionally. Agree upon times and places for you to talk about the things that are important to you both. Often after a hard day at work or a long day with the kids, spouses are not in the best frame of mind to be the best communicators. Discuss what times are best for you both. Take into consideration privacy, amount of time, and frame of mind.

2. Listen long, talk short. Some couples set basic ground rules for their “chats.” Some common ones that improve the conversation include giving each spouse two to three minutes of uninterrupted talk while the other listens carefully and silently. A mother is to paraphrase the thoughts of your spouse before talking. A mother is to clarify and state the feelings of your spouse based on what he or she shared. A mother is to listen longer than you speak. Such a ground rule, if agreed upon, creates a solid foundation on which to communicate.

3. Use “I statements.” When describing your emotions, start by saying “I feel . . .” Try to avoid the use of “you” in your sentence. For example, “I feel angry when my golf clubs are borrowed without asking me,” rather than “Why do you always borrow my golf clubs without asking?” Take ownership of your feelings. This simple technique can help your mate hear your emotion without feeling blamed or accused.

4. Pray for spiritual discernment. The Holy Spirit is eager and willing to give you special abilities to understand and hear what your spouse is saying. The Spirit is also great at giving you and your spouse the “gift of interpretation.” Be sure not to manipulatively use prayer as a platform to instruct or shame your partner. I often recommend using personal, private prayers at the beginning of a conversation, and then, if agreed upon, audible prayers after the conversation. Communication is a learned art, and part of learning is making mistakes and growing. As you and your spouse polish your skills, be willing to understand and forgive each other. With time, your chats with each other can be times of healing instead of hurt.

I have some questions I’d like to ask, but I’m not sure if they fit your column. Would you explain what you’re looking for in a question?

Deirdre’s reply: When the Adventist Review first approached us, Allan and I were asked to answer questions from young adults about Christian lifestyle. I guess the intent was to give young adults a forum to explore personal questions in an honest and straightforward question-and-answer style. But over the years most of the questions we have received have been from adults who are curious or concerned about young adults. The great thing is that adults have tuned in to the column, but in some ways some young adults seem to have tuned out.

The X-Change is about young adult lifestyle and how it relates to Christianity. So we’re looking for questions from young adults that deal with everyday struggles of living in the real world. We’re looking for honest questions about relating with God and with the church. We’re looking for your questions about relationships. If you have some, send them.

Send your questions about young adult life, Christian lifestyle, and Generation X culture to: The X-CHANGE, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, or via e-mail to dream_VISION_ministries@CompuServe.com.

Allan and Deirdre Martin are cofounders of dre.am VISION ministries.
As always, Anna and Meggie were thrilled that Auntie Faye had come to visit. While everyone hugged, Mom whispered to Auntie Faye, “Ask Anna about school.”

Auntie Faye’s eyes twinkled as she gave Anna a big squeeze. “How’s school, pumpkin?” she asked.

“Good,” murmured Anna, sticking a finger into her mouth and looking for a place to hide in Mom’s skirt.

“Ask her about the science fair,” Mom prompted.

Anna’s finger slid farther into her mouth as she totally disappeared behind Mom. “I won first place for second grade” came the muffled reply.

“First place!” Auntie Faye shrieked. “Oh, sweetheart, I am so proud of you! Tell me about your project! What was it? Give me another hug!” And with that, Anna deserted her hiding place and flew into Auntie Faye’s arms. In a minute she was digging around in the cabinets for the things she needed to show Auntie Faye her experiment.

Little sister Meggie had been watching all this quietly, but soon it got to be more than she could bear. “Auntie Faye,” she pleaded, “come listen to me. I can play the piano,” and she grabbed her aunt’s hand and dragged her out to the living room.

“Aren’t you the pianist!” Auntie Faye squealed after Meggie had picked out “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” all by herself. “Good job! You keep it up, and in no time you’ll be playing as well as your mommy!” She squeezed Meggie’s shoulders.

“Hey, did I hear my name?” laughed Mom, sticking her head around the corner. “Faye, when you have a minute I want to show you the curtains I’m making for Meggie’s room.”

“Sure,” said Auntie Faye, jumping up from the piano bench. But Anna was standing right in front of her.

“Auntie Faye, I swam the whole length of the pool without stopping,” said Anna.

Meggie pushed her sister aside. “Auntie Faye, I read a whole book.”

Just then Dad walked into the room. “How’s my favorite sister?” he laughed as he hugged Auntie Faye. Everyone laughed at Daddy’s joke, because Auntie Faye was Daddy’s only sister. “When you get a second I want to show you my latest painting,” Dad said.

And that’s how it went the entire time Auntie Faye was there. First Anna, then Meggie, then Mom, then Dad had something to show or tell Auntie Faye. And every person got the same response: “Wow!” “Beautiful!” “Good job!” “I’m so proud of you!” “Keep it up!”

Auntie Faye is an encourager, and that’s why everyone is always so thrilled when she visits.

Are you an encourager? The Bible says “Let us encourage one another” (Hebrews 10:25, NIV). When you encourage others you help them do their best. Not only that, people will always be happy to have you around.

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**Encouraging Words**

Family Time

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

*Send each person in your family on a hunt to find something in your house that shows how someone has encouraged them. Sit in a circle with your family. Begin with the person who has the shortest name and continue to the right. Whom was it from? How did this thing encourage you? How do you feel when someone encourages you?*

*Still in your circle, ask each person to name someone they know at church, school, work, in your neighborhood, or somewhere else who might need encouragement. How can you tell? What can you do to encourage those people? How will you follow through with your ideas this week?*

*Read a Bible story in Judges 4:4-8. Who needed encouragement? Whom did he turn to? Why that person?*
Adventists and Armageddon: Have We Misinterpreted Prophecy?

In this book Donald Mansell, a retired E. G. White Estate historian, makes a valuable contribution to the literature on Armageddon. He has written the only published work that traces Adventism’s interpretation of the subject from the church’s beginnings to the present day. Mansell proves that early Adventist preachers and theologians* understood that Armageddon represents the final spiritual conflict between Satan’s kingdom and the kingdom of God prior to Christ’s return.

Mansell points out that Uriah Smith set the church on a speculative track concerning Armageddon (Rev. 16) and the king of the north referred to in Daniel 11:40-45. While Smith never denied the spiritual significance of Armageddon, in 1867 he shifted his emphasis to a literal application with political and military leanings. He was influenced by the current popular views of Armageddon, which maintained that the battle would be waged in that portion of Turkey through which the Euphrates River flows. Other Adventist writers joined this metamorphosis in interpretation and began a train of conjectural applications of the prophecy based on current events. Of course these events shifted in nature and demanded a constant revamping of exposition. Thus these Adventists ascribed eschatological significance to the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871); then to World War I; next to World War II, and so on.

Mansell states that such sensational interpretations in times of crisis brought large accessions into the church during evangelistic meetings. But when the crisis passed without the expected result, the majority of these calamity-hour converts fell away embittered and ashamed. Mansell shows that this un biblical, events-driven line of prophetic exposition contributes to the time-setting of closing events, especially the year of Christ’s return. This tendency brings true prophecy into disrepute and overthrows the faith of the credulous. The author shows that no support for these approaches to eschatology can be found in the Spirit of Prophecy, but rather there are abundant warnings against them.

Mansell has drawn a chronological chart on which he traces the transition of Adventist thinking about Armageddon through three major phases: Armageddon as a spiritual battle; Armageddon as a religio-military battle; Armageddon as a military battle (the prevailing view during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). His chart reflects a return to the original and more accurate view that Armageddon refers to the spiritual battle between organized apostasy and God’s final movement of the faithful. Mansell attributes the restoration of this understanding in large part to biblical scholar Hans K. LaRondelle and a careful study of Ellen White’s writings on the subject.

Full of interesting sidelights on Adventist writers and thinkers and skillful in the analysis of the subject, Mansell’s book is well worth reading.

Even today I can still remember our headquarters. Nestled in the corner of our guest bedroom, the walk-in closet was the perfect location for my friend Kristi and me to hold our weekly meetings. We spread quilts on the floor, placed a small bookcase in the corner, and for a final touch taped pictures of our adopted whales on the wall. We stocked up on felt pens, colored pencils, stickers, and stamps. We were set for our meetings of the Good Deed Club.

We were very devoted members, and spent any free time trying to think up new projects to try out on our community. These projects ranged from homemade “Have a nice day” cards to selling eggs to the local retirement home at a reduced rate. We started a file of encouraging Bible verses and even wrote a few poems of our own to put on the cards.

One of our most ambitious projects was to witness to our neighborhood. For weeks we collected Junior Guides from our church. One Sabbath afternoon we took these magazines and put one in every mailbox on our block. We wrote a note on each one, “Please read these stories, and when you’re done pass them on to someone else.” Most of them ended up back in our mailbox, but we felt good for just having tried. We would tell anyone who would listen all about our Good Deed Club. We were not ashamed. We were not ashamed of the deeds we were doing and, more important, we were not ashamed of the God that we were advertising to those around us.

Years went by, and our lives got too busy for the Good Deed Club. Every so often I would think of our club and tell myself that as soon as I got some free time I would make cookies for the elderly neighbor next door or offer to baby-sit the kids down the street for free. Free time never came, however. My desire to earn money overcame my desire to make people happy.

Suddenly I wasn’t so eager to tell people about the God I had once been bragging about. There were already so many misconceptions about Seventh-day Adventists. What would they think about me? My concern for popularity was stronger than my concern for my religious life.

Recently thoughts of witnessing and the Good Deed Club came to my memory. One of my coworkers at Eddie Bauer stopped me after work. “I have a few questions to ask you, Jeni,” he began. “I know that you’re a Seventh-day Adventist, and there have always been some things that I’ve wondered about that religion.” At first I panicked. I was going to sound stupid. He was going to think I was a part of some cult. How could I get out of this? Before I could think of a way to get away he started to ask the questions, and to my amazement I had no problem answering them. He was genuinely interested in my responses. He didn’t think I was a freak. The questions got deeper. There were some questions I didn’t have answers for, but it didn’t stop me from encouraging him to ask more.

I went home from work that night feeling more alive spiritually than I had in a long time. It was then that I began criticizing myself for being so unwilling to witness. It wasn’t hard. I shouldn’t be embarrassed to do it. I thought back to the days of the Good Deed Club when every day was exciting to me because I might have the opportunity to tell somebody about the love of Jesus. I realized that’s how it should be even now that I am 21 years old. Jesus says, “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3, NIV).

I think it’s time to start a new Good Deed Club with the same enthusiasm I had when I was younger. I’ll be able to bring some joy into lives that might otherwise be dreary without the message I have to share.

When she wrote this Jeni Hasselbrack was a junior English major attending Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.