Spooky Action at a Distance

Having been a longtime admirer of God's creation and often caught up in the wonder of the great glory of God's effortless artistry thrown majestically through space (I love Stephen Hawking's "Hubble" and related websites) and written magnificently on a dark moonless night sky, I was interested instantly in Clifford Goldstein's "Spooky Action at a Distance" (Aug. 27 AnchorPoints Edition).

Of course, the concepts proposed—tiny particles "knowing" they are being observed and then changing their behavior, and tiny particles "knowing" about another "hole in the wall"—are baffling to human reason and logic. But isn't just a look at the wide, silent, orderly night sky at least as baffling? Perhaps we think we have a handle on it because we know about gravity and the forces of mass, velocity, star birth, and on and on. More important to me than all the physics and intelligent understanding of these things is our stark and glaring lack of a knowledge of faith.

Goldstein is right in the end: "Perhaps he should have studied something more logical. Like the gospel." This is not only the power of God to get to heaven, but the power of God to live a life separated from the love of our sins.

Thank you for a thought-provoking article. This one struck home.

—Barbara L. Marsh
FLETCHER, NORTH CAROLINA

Just when we think that man has figured it all out, along comes another amazing discovery.

I have always been amazed at the power and infinite knowledge of God, as Goldstein's article so aptly showed us. And it was complemented wonderfully by Ellen White's "The Working of Infinite Power" (Aug. 27). Both did for me what I needed today—strengthened my faith.

—Ted R. Chadwick
GASTON, OREGON

Goldstein's is a silly attempt to draw a false dichotomy between modern physics and the gospel. By taking the new physics totally out of context, he trivialized it and made the gospel a tawdry curiosity. A nyone who would believe the gospel because it does not violate common sense as much as physics does not understand either physics or the gospel. One does not believe quantum theory on the same basis that one believes the good news.

—Harold Wright
ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Comparing the rationale of the gospel to the paradox of quantum physics missed the point by light-years. I suggest, rather, that if we will but open our eyes and minds, the apparent enigmas of this twentieth-century science can greatly inform our Christian faith.

To imply that when matter is finally deconstructed all that remains is an equation is a boggling testament to the nature and permeating power of a Creator-God. Further, the notion that subatomic charges are affected by being observed says to me that the idea of human minds freely choosing to observe God's laws, including the Sabbath, may have something to do with the harmonious maintenance of our planet and the cosmos. To me, the "without cause" and random chaos of subatomic charges is a startling testament to free will at its most fundamental and literal level. Chilling and yet reassuring.

To read the Gospel of John with the ideas suggested by quantum physics is an enlightening experience. The timeless existence of Logos, the incarnation of Jesus, and His promise of everlasting life can be more rationally considered. The effectual power and mystery of prayer become more literal and easier to grasp. Even such texts as "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" take on a bold new meaning.

—Robin Simmons II
DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
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Note: Some have asked that their e-mail addresses be included with their letters.

Suddenly Sunday

Thanks to William G. Johnsson for his very insightful review of the recent apostolic letter, Dies Domini, by Pope John Paul II (see "Suddenly Sunday," Aug. 27). I will look forward to reading the follow-up articles that the Review is planning.

It is interesting that many influential
Protestants are also calling for a restoration of Sunday as a day of rest, with "Sabbath" significance, and not just a "weekend day." Pat Robertson has urged the restoration of Sunday rest several times recently. In fact, much of the discussion on the 700 Club telecast on July 27, 1998, dealt with the great need to be back to Sunday "Sabbathkeeping."

Thanks for bringing these significant developments to the attention of our people.

—G. Edward Reid
Silver Spring, Maryland

Reading the pope's letter impresses me with many fine-sounding reasons for observing Sunday. It makes reference to Scripture, Christian history, human needs, and the worship of God. The mass and repetition of ideas are sure to sway the thinking of people who want to believe the popular, easy way.

What is the flaw in the document? It is contrary to God's work and Word in giving to mankind His day of rest: "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." It would be well to study the chapter containing those oft-repeated words: "So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested" ("The Scriptures a Safeguard," The Great Controversy, p. 593).

How shall we meet these arguments? Not with hostility. "Put up your human sword," the Lord said to Peter. Our weapons are not human. God's people, made strong by the faith of Jesus, are to speak His Word. The sword of the Holy Spirit will send His truth home to minds and hearts of those who will hear.

—David Manzano
Kingston, Tennessee

Today my mail was dominated by two eye-catchers: the Review bannering "The Pope's 'Lord's Day' Encyclical, Analysis and Response," and an It Is Written mailer hailing "What Way A merica—The Pope Calls for Sunday Ob servance."

Having read the pope's message first-hand, I find it to be a very thoughtful and heartfelt appeal to his own bishops to revive a commitment to Christianity. I find no conspiratorial attack on those who choose to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. I find the declaration of war comes not from the pope, but from the Adventists. Are we so intent on being persecuted that we invite it?

I don't quite understand why the church that claims to carry the "everlasting gospel" characterizes its evangelism by railing on other Christians. If an evangelistic thrust includes any heartfelt gospel presentation on the tender mercies of God and the sacrifice of Jesus, it comes as an add-on. Instead, weeks are spent in tedious discourses on prophecy and various tangential subjects designed to identify the enemy as other Christians. The Muslims, New Agers, and apathetic nonworshippers are no problem.

After 50 years of this diet, I just don't get it.

—Robert E. McMullen
Orlando, Florida

At the Edge of Restraint
I couldn't help feeling somewhat guilty as I perused R. Lynn Sauls' "At the Edge of Restraint" (It Seems to Me, Aug. 27). How tempting is it for Seventh-day Adventists to try to meet our scheduled meetings and appointments on time! It's imperative that we habitually depart far ahead of time rather than be tempted to speed. As exponents of law (commandment keepers), we must remember Jesus' command to render not only to God what is His, but to Caesar also.

—Harold G. Gaskins, Pastor
Cincinnati, Ohio
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 40 times a year each Thursday except the first Thursday of each month by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association. Periodicals postage paid at Hagerstown, MD 21740. Copyright © 1998, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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E-mail: Internet: reviewmag@adventist.org
CompuServe network: 74617,15

Adventist Review, October 22, 1998

4 (1404)

Printed in the U.S.A.
Vol. 175, No. 43
They Ministered to Me

ROY ADAMS

I never attend camp meetings with the idea of doing a report on them. But almost invariably at the end of summer I find that some event or memory clings to me and refuses to go away until I share it.

My camp meeting itinerary this year began in the picturesque Australian city of Sydney and ended in Saskatchewan, in the heart of Canada’s prairie country. Both stops, and all the others in between, left their own particular memories. But it’s my experience in Tobago that keeps triggering the replay button in my mind.

I’d gone to this 116 square miles of beauty (population 53,000) on a Sunday, after spending Sabbath in Trinidad, Tobago’s larger sister island, where some 13,000 had gathered for the South Caribbean Conference’s first camp meeting. Tobago would see only a small fraction of that number, but it would make up for it in other ways. Two things (among others) impressed me:

1. The Fellowship

My countenance fell when the vehicle taking me from the airport pulled up to the Havilah Heights Holiday House on a rocky rural hilltop. It wasn’t the kind of arrangement I’d expected. How will I get my daily exercise in this stony, hilly place? I fussed inside. How can I work here amid the distraction of six other campers? And how will I survive the heat?

All these concerns faded into insignificance by the second day. By then I’d found an excellent place for my daily walk—two miles in the refreshing morning air, a riot of tropical birdcalls serenading me all the way. I’d discovered also that I had all the quiet I needed for study and meditation. And it had dawned on me that the hilltop location not only provided a spectacular view of the ocean—less than two miles away—but also exposed the place to its cooling breezes.

But the best of it all was the fellowship. The place is owned by Lincoln and Joanne Archer, an Adventist couple. And they served breakfast.

If those last four words mean nothing to you, then you’ve never sat down for breakfast at the Archers’—and as in my case, with the guys! Here’s how I told it to my diary as I headed back to Washington, D.C.: “Ian Green, Irvin Austin, Noel Brathwaite, Joseph Mccoon, Gerard Damsteegt, Elie Honore—these were my six fellow campers. The fellowship was superb! And Joanne’s breakfasts (where we all came together) were pure delight: mangoes, sapodilla, grapefruit, pineapples, bananas, custard apples, melons, bananas, papayas, sugarcane, local cereal, homemade whole-wheat bread fresh from the oven, and a different (vegetarian) entrée every morning. Always some item to discuss, some philosophy to examine, some experience to tell. These were great times, unhurried times—and good!”

2. The Music and the Singing

I once heard Elder Charles Bradford say that in order to deliver your best sermon, “you’ve got to have the audience.” I add: “and the music!” Most of us—preachers and people alike—need the lift that comes from a spirited, well-conducted song service or from a well-executed special musical selection.

That’s what I got night after night in Tobago from a musical pool of mostly young adults in their 20s and 30s. Whether presenting traditional gospel or contemporary selections, they were simply superb—a phenomenon I found difficult to understand, given the relatively small membership (6,000) on the island.

I was impressed—as well by the vocalists as by the congregational singing. A rousing early the first night, I joined in the rousing song service. But when they let go with Charles Wesley’s great hymn “And Can It Be?” I found myself totally overcome with emotion. It was one of those times when simple, passionate, unpretentious singing combines with powerful, evocative lyrics to stir every fiber of the soul. Fighting back tears, I simply sat there, unable to sing more—just pondering the awful meaning of those poignant words:

“No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.”

I’d gone there to minister to the people. Without knowing it, they’d ministered to me.
It was Sunday morning, and I had the flu. Then again, most Adventist pastors feel like they have the flu on Sunday morning: everything that can ache does, and nothing seems so justified as last month’s decision to purchase an answering machine.

But this was the morning of the church work bee—four hours of opening closets and pushing dust that I had passionately promoted the previous three Sabbaths. It wouldn’t do to send regrets or offer up excuses. Deacons save a special scorn for pastors who have never found the business end of a broom or the will to clean a gutter.

As I parked my Escort and hurried up the sidewalk, I admired the growing pile of “stuff” accumulating in the pickup parked beside the back door: carpet remnants (from the remnant church!); Primary Treasures, long outdated; props from mission pageants long ago. In my imagination I was already enjoying that wonderful, echoing sense of spareness and order most church buildings never know.

But all my glory turned to dust as I spied a box of note-books wedged among the items destined for the dump. “What’s this?” I quizzed a deacon.

He smiled conspiratorially. “More stuff we don’t need. Came from some back closet.”

I opened the top gray notebook, and my pulse quickened. There in neat brown ink was the record of the church’s organization seven decades earlier, the rationale for planting the congregation, and a list of all the charter members. Page after page followed, filled with the minutes—and the years—of the congregation, detailing evangelistic efforts, building plans, youth ministries, Dorcas.

Each successive notebook unfolded five or seven years of the congregation’s past, faithfully recorded by clerks and secretaries who believed in the importance of what they were doing. Long-dead persons rose in front of me as I read, making speeches, arguing priorities, urging motion, motion, motion.

Had my timing been a bit different or the deacon a bit more hasty, we would have lost in one small box the only written record of the church. Among the things that ought never to be put in a landfill, the history of God’s people leads the list.

There are some Adventists who sense a fundamental contradiction between the church’s future and its past. To be an Adventist, they argue, is to be always leaning forward, anticipating the Second Coming, unconcerned about the past. Why gather to ourselves a history that will only turn to ashes soon? “If in doubt, throw it out,” they urge, little caring that the records they would pitch often illustrate a depth and balance modern churches lack.

But history is not Styrofoam, nor disposable, like diapers. Nor is it just the province of the sentimentalists, who would dress it up in beards and gingham bonnets, inviting us to gawk at all its unmodernity. In the minutes and the motions, in the graying photos in the files, we glimpse Providence at work, gathering resources, fathering faith, planting seeds of unexpected good. If the Holy Spirit was needed to bless the business meeting, to guide the outreach effort, what but a foolish rootlessness could make us think we need not keep the record of His aid?

Those who are privileged to read the “stuff” in the church closet cannot help but emerge with a deepening gratitude for what God has done for H is people in that place over time. Inevitably, the links between those distant days and our own muddled moments assert themselves with forcefulness. In the bottom of one box I found a photo of my Italian grandmother—not yet baptized, still a Roman Catholic—sitting among church members on a Sabbath morning while Glenn Coon preached his heart out. I began to understand, half a century later, what she sacrificed for the truth, how she wrestled with a choice she feared might disconnect her from her past. For the courageous woman that she was—and the careful clerk who kept the photo—I give thanks. And I will again tomorrow.

Here’s a call for keeping churches clean, but keeping history out of landfills. Zeal for the Lord’s house ought to set our hearts on fire, but never singe the story of His leading.
ADVENTIST LIFE

One Sabbath my wife and I went to church and sat down at the end of a pew. A couple, obviously guests, beamed at us from the other end of the same pew. They behaved as though they knew us. We smiled back, puzzled as to who they might be.

After the sermon the couple came up to us and asked, “You don’t remember us, do you?” We admitted that we couldn’t remember them.

The husband said, “When we joined the Adventist Church about 10 years ago, you folks were the first to invite us over for Sabbath dinner. We were almost afraid to come back to church after that, for fear that you’d invite us over again for some of that vegetarian food of yours!”

— Vernon Oliver, Jr., Huntsville, Alabama

JOTS AND TITTLES

We welcome your advice, hints, and bits of wisdom for this column. Keep those suggestions coming!

COMPANY’S COMING FOR DINNER: If you attend a large church and would like to meet more people, try planning “surprise dinners.” You and your family may choose to host the dinner or be invited guests. Neither party will know their matched guest or host by name prior to the day of the dinner. Simply supply guests with an address to go to and hosts with a number of guests to prepare for. Announce the event in your church bulletin and include a survey such as the one at right. Two or three people may successfully plan this event.— Edith Fitch, College Heights, Alberta, Canada

CAMP MEETING CONFUSION: I love to play the organ for evangelistic meetings. Although very good speakers are secured for our camp meetings, they usually don’t appear until the music has already begun, and I’m left wondering what the speaker would like me to play and when. Please communicate better with your musicians!— Juanita Simpson, Show Low, Arizona

Company’s Coming for Dinner!

_____ I/W e would like to be surprise dinner guests.
_____ I/W e would like to be hosts for dinner guests.
_____ I/W e are willing to participate in either role.

NAME _______________________
PHONE ___________________
If a guest, how many would go?
_________
If a host, how many can you serve?
_________
Residence address of host:
________________________________

SWAPPING STORIES: Promise Moffett and Jean Sequeira, current editorial secretaries for the Review.

AVID SUPPORTER CELEBRATES

Promise Joy Moffett of Hagerstown, Maryland, celebrated her ninety-fifth birthday on August 16. The daughter of Jethro Kloss (author of Back to Eden), Promise credits healthful living and trust in God for her longevity. Promise, an editorial secretary at the Review for 31 years, still reads the magazine from cover to cover. Checking for typos, Promise?

ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

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.
I had never walked out of church during a sermon before. I felt as if I was breaking some unspoken rule, yet anger propelled me out of my pew, down the aisle, and out the door.
How Christians live when they don’t like the government

The speaker had started with a useful premise. As he began, the lights were dimmed, and all eyes were trained on the huge projection screen let down before us. Soon majestic scenes of the U.S. Capitol building were shining above us. The speaker began to explain that Washington, D.C., had been built to impress the world with its power, but that there was only one true source of authority and power—the God of heaven.

“How true,” I mused to myself, remembering what Daniel the prophet affirmed to King Nebuchadnezzar: “The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,
Paul lived by his own counsel to be respectful to those in authority.

and bestows it on whomever He wishes” (Dan. 4:25, NASB).

Suddenly, the sermon took an unexpected twist. On the screen was a huge picture of the president of the United States—with a circle and a line through his face. The speaker began to mock and deride the president, evoking snickers and chuckles from some in the congregation.

I sat there in the semi-darkness, trying to sort out what it was about this situation that made me uncomfortable. Bible passages and principles began rising up in front of me—principles that should govern our attitude and conduct toward civil and religious authorities, even when we may not agree with their philosophy or behavior.

Anti-government Rhetoric Rising

As I drove away from the church that Sabbath, I found myself reflecting on how popular the anti-government theme has become in this country, and that I have begun to hear similar attitudes voiced by church members at all levels of service. This is certainly not a new phenomenon; there have always been Christians who viewed their government with fear and apprehension. It’s quite normal to feel apprehensive about a structure that is capable of wielding such power over our lives. A clear understanding of the potential to abuse such power even helps to create a healthy tension between a government and its people.

Today, however, there are movements in the United States and other Western nations that have capitalized on this growing undercurrent of anti-government sentiment to further their own aims—aims that are contrary to Biblical principle and that will prove injurious to religious liberties.

One such group in the United States has taken advantage of an anti-government climate to work within the political system to forward its own religiopolitical agenda. Other groups have taken a completely opposite course and have segregated themselves in open rebellion. Some of the latter have even committed criminal acts in the name of a truth they deem greater than either Biblical principle or representative government.

While many Christians wouldn’t dream of participating in “domestic terrorism” or joining a political action group to advocate tearing down the “wall of separation” between church and state, they unwittingly feed these efforts when they circulate antigovernment videos, distribute literature from dubious sources, or pass along the latest conspiracy theory about the government.

Seventh-day Adventists may be especially vulnerable to these two extremes because of the prophetic insights we have concerning the U.S. government’s role in last-day events: we remember that, according to Revelation 13, the lamblike beast will yet speak like a dragon. But the insights gained from our study of prophecy about the coming loss of civil and religious liberty must be balanced with a firm Biblical understanding of our current duties to God and to civil government. If we don’t keep a balanced and proportional view of both, we will risk being caught up in one extreme or the other.

God’s Word makes it clear that He has allowed the establishment of earthly government to help create safe environments in which people can live and work. These environments are critically important for developing stable families and communities. God has also established earthly governments so that there may be systematic law and order for the protection of persons. Last, God’s Word and the record of human history both remind us that regardless of who is in charge of the civil authority, God retains ultimate control and uses the nations to accomplish His purposes.

Old Testament Illustration

The Old Testament narrative reveals several periods in Israel’s history when it became obvious that the people needed an established system of civil government. When is people were willing and trusting, the Lord ruled theocratically through prophets and judges. In the absence of a godly representative, however, terrible things occurred.

One such tale is recorded in Judges 19 through 21. A shocking and tragic story is told of an Israelite woman who was victimized, gang-raped, murdered, and whose body was subsequently dismembered. Adding to the horror of what had happened was the discovery that her body parts had been sent on display to various parts of Israel as a call to revenge. Both before and after the narrative we find disclaimers, as if to say, “We know this sounds appalling, but what can we say? We had no one to lead us!” The account of the incident begins with Judges 19:1—“Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel” (NASB)—and it ends with Judges 21:25—“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (NASB). In three dreadful chapters
we are given a glimpse into what it might mean to live in anarchy.

God's purposes for allowing civil governments have always been an expression of His greater redemptive goals. This was strikingly evident when God used the government and resources of Egypt as an incubator in which to grow an entire nation of people. By allowing Joseph to be taken captive and eventually raising him to government leadership, God placed him in a position of unparalleled influence through which his family was preserved from famine and given an opportunity to thrive. When the people of Israel had grown large enough to return to their homeland and subdue its inhabitants, God again exercised His power over the government of Egypt to release His people.

The truth found in these stories finds theological expression in many places: "O Lord, God of our ancestors, God again exercised their homeland and subdued its grown large enough to return to When the people of Israel had given an opportunity to thrive.

Unless it had been given you from God, you would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11, NRSV). Jesus both acknowledged and affirmed the necessity of submitting to both God's government and Caesar's rule in their proper and respective roles.

Following Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, His apostles repeated this balanced theme many times during the turbulent years of the early church. Many first-century Christians looked for Christ's imminent return and believed, as we do now, that end-time events were unfolding rapidly. Many of them also feared the imperial government, and with good reason.

If God's people are overcome with fear, to whom will the anxious masses look?

Paul, Peter, and hundreds of fellow Christians lost their lives during the reign of the demented and morally bankrupt Emperor Nero. There were no constitutional checks and balances in place to stay his madness. Yet even in this atmosphere of expectation and in a climate of governmental insanity, the apostles were still calling on the saints to show respect to those in authority. Christians ought not to bring on the cause of God the charge of being rebellious, they urged, but instead should be known for abiding by the law, showing themselves to be good citizens, respecting leaders and praying for them, and avoiding the appearance of antagonism toward the government.

Paul states this perspective forcefully in his counsel to the believers living in Rome:

"Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God to you for good. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake" (Rom. 13:1-5, NASB).

Paul reiterates this point in his letter to his coworker Titus:

"Remind them [church leaders] to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one" (Titus 3:1, NAB).

That Paul not only wrote about these principles but also lived them is illustrated by an encounter recorded in Acts 23:5. In this account Paul had been brought to the Sanhedrin to answer charges against him. Having once enjoyed "insider" status, Paul could no longer be considered a "card-carrying Pharisee" and found himself at odds with the established rulers. Even though he could no longer identify himself with the same political party he had once supported, he demonstrated his respect for the office of high priest. While addressing the Sanhedrin, Paul had rebuked Ananias, the high priest, while addressing the Sanhedrin, Paul had rebuked Ananias, the high priest, and was hit in the mouth as a result. Realizing that he had spoken disrespectfully to the high priest, he apologized and, quoting Exodus 22:28, said: "You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people" (NASB).

Paul clearly did not agree with what these leaders were doing, but still lived by his own counsel to be respectful to those in authority. The apostle understood that if Christian leaders indulge an un-Christianlike attitude of disrespect and criticism toward those in authori-
It will soon have poisoning effects on their own leadership. The apostle Peter expresses this same principle in his first letter:

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king” (1 Peter 2:13-17, NASB).

The Remnant’s Responsibility

Our identity as Seventh-day Adventist Christians means that we are keenly aware of the roles that national governments in general, and the U.S. government in particular, will play in last-day events, but this shouldn’t cause us to disregard repeated biblical counsel. It should rather make us even more diligent in using the legitimate means we do have to influence government leaders. Unlike some conservative Christians who have thrown up their hands and lapsed into apathy, we may choose, while time allows, to exercise the rights and privileges we have as citizens of our several nations. In many nations of the world there are accepted and appointed methods for voicing wants, needs, and opinions to local, state, provincial, or federal governments. Adventists have also established credible watchdog agencies and periodicals that are vigilant in keeping watch over civil and religious liberties, including the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) and Liberty magazine.

With these rights and privileges come certain duties and responsibilities, some of which include staying informed (by accurate and credible sources); exercising the right to vote; obeying laws (so long as they do not conflict with God’s laws); serving in local, state, provincial, or federal governments as talent and calling indicate (remember that God called such persons as Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Isaiah, and Nehemiah to work in government); and volunteering for projects that improve the community and establish social harmony.

Because we live in a political climate in which scandals proliferate faster than the latest computer software and in which society’s moral high ground seems to be caving in faster than the California coastline, it is very easy to criticize and malign government leaders. We needn’t look farther than the front page of any newspaper to find sufficient cause for alarm. But God wants us to be quiet in the storm, pointing people to Him who will be their hope and anchor. If God’s people are overcome with fear, to whom will the anxious masses look?

God’s will for His people is that we rest in confident assurance that He is in control of our destiny and that we use our influence to reassure others of the same truth. We dishonor Christ by our lack of faith and counteract our own witness to Him when we engage in fearful speculations and wild suppositions.

Once again, Scripture is our safest guide. If we choose to focus on the promises of God’s sovereignty and adhere to the Biblical principles about our relationship to civil government, we won’t be swayed by any extreme. Those promoting the idea that government is now so corrupt and evil that it can be cured only by bringing about a union of church and state will be met by a clear “Thus saith the Lord.” Those at the opposite end of the spectrum who encourage a spirit of insurrection will be met by the same Word.

Paul’s counsel to Timothy has stood the test of time and deserves our best attention in these difficult days:

“I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:1-4, NRSV).

Jacine Stauffer is the branch coordinator for the Iowa-Missouri Adventist Book Center and writes from Parkville, Missouri.
Language is important when we lead a group in worship.

Language should be one of our least concerns when we worship God alone. God sees beneath our words and knows our innermost thoughts, desires, and feelings—even when we have difficulty expressing ourselves. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26).

But when we lead a group in worship, that group can share in our thoughts and feelings only to the extent that our language is audible, understood, and free from distractions.

We should strive, therefore, to use language as effectively as possible when making announcements, reading the Bible, and praying in public. We need to speak loudly enough, slowly enough, and distinctly enough for everyone to understand every word. And what we say should be relatively free of distractions.

Can you detect the distractions in the following expressions?

1. “Our call to worship today is Psalm 95:1, 2.”
2. “Shall we turn in our hymnals to page 64 and sing the first and last verses?”
3. “Turn to the reading on page 777 of the hymnal. I will read the dark print, and the congregation will read the light print.”
4. “May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His Word.”
5. “Shall we kneel as far as possible?”
6. “Lord, we want to thank You for sending Your Son.”

Here are the answers:

1. When making a call to worship, just make the call: “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.”
2. Say “Let us sing,” not “Shall we sing?” What if someone said “No, let’s pray?”
3. Avoid asking the congregation to turn in their hymnals. I know of only two ways to turn in our hymnals. One is to turn them in the way students turn in their assignments. The other is to get inside our hymnals so that we can turn around in them. And we should refer to a hymn number, not a page number. Page and hymn numbers are not always the same. Instead of verses, refer to the stanzas. A verse is a line of poetry. Hymns are divided into stanzas. (I like it when all stanzas are sung. Sometimes a last stanza doesn’t make sense without the stanza before it—Martin Luther’s “A Mighty Fortress,” for example.)
4. In announcing a responsive reading, announce it as simply as possible: “Let us read responsively reading number 777, ‘Christian Unity.’” Anyone who has been attending church knows what a responsive reading is. A first-time visitor will watch to see what others do and do the same. There is no need to explain the procedure week after week.
5. How far is it possible to kneel? One could say, “We invite all who find it possible to do so to kneel for prayer.” But even that is unnecessary to say, because those who can’t won’t kneel anyway.
6. If we want to thank God, we can do more than tell the Lord that we want to thank Him. We can say, “Lord, we thank You for sending Your Son.”

Language is important when we help lead a group in worship. But more important is not to be critical of others who are leading out. Better to try to do what God does—look beneath the appearance, look beneath the words, discern the intention, and not let inadequate language prevent us from true worship. After all, we come to church not so much to listen to others speak, but so much to speak ourselves, but to worship God and listen to Him in His still small voice. The focus should not be on the participants, but on the Lord, sitting high and lifted up, on Him who walks up and down amid the worshiping congregation, on Him who dwells in the hearts of those of a “contrite and humble spirit” (Isa 57:15).

So it seems to me.

* I’m grateful to Herman Bauman for ideas in this section, borrowed from a handout he prepared for ministerial students when he taught religion at Atlantic Union College.

R. Lynn Sauls taught English and journalism in Adventist colleges and universities for many years. He writes from Naples, Florida.
Preparing A People to Stand

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

BY SOME OF OUR BRETHREN MANY THINGS have been spoken and written that are interpreted as expressing antagonism to government and law. It is a mistake thus to lay ourselves open to misunderstanding. It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. We should exercise great care lest we be understood as putting ourselves in opposition to the civil authorities. It is true that our warfare is aggressive, but our weapons are to be those found in a plain “Thus saith the Lord.” Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. We should not be turned aside to lines that will encourage controversy or arouse antagonism in those not of our faith.

We should not work in a manner that will mark us out as seeming to advocate treason. We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order. Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws. We are not required to defy authorities. There will come a time when, because of our advocacy of Bible truth, we shall be treated as traitors; but let not this time be hastened by unadvised movements that stir up animosity and strife.

The time will come when unguarded expressions of a denunciatory character, that have been carelessly spoken or written by our brethren, will be used by our enemies to condemn us. These will not be used merely to condemn those who made the statements, but will be charged upon the whole body of Adventists. Our accusers will say that on such and such a day one of our responsible men said thus and so against the administration of the laws of this government.

Many will be astonished to see how many things have been cherished and remembered that will give point to the arguments of our adversaries. Many will be surprised to hear their own words strained into a meaning that they did not intend them to have. Then let our workers be careful to speak guardedly at all times and under all circumstances. Let all beware lest by reckless expressions they bring on a time of trouble before the great crisis which is to try men’s souls.

The less we make direct charges against authorities and powers, the greater work we shall be able to accomplish, both in America and in foreign countries. Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world.

It is our work to magnify and exalt the law of God. The truth of God’s holy word is to be made manifest. We are to hold up the Scriptures as the rule of life. In all modesty, in the spirit of grace, and in the love of God we are to point men to the fact that the Lord God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

In the name of the Lord we are to go forward, unfurling His banner, advocating His word. When the authorities command us not to do this work, when they forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, then it will be necessary for us to say as did the apostles: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19, 20).

The truth is to be set forth in the power of the Holy Spirit.
This alone can make our words effective. Only through the Spirit's power will victory be gained and held. The human agent must be worked by the Spirit of God. The workers must be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. They must have divine wisdom, that nothing may be uttered which would stir up men to close our way. Through the inculcation of spiritual truth we are to prepare a people who shall be able, in meekness and fear, to give a reason for their faith before the highest authorities in our world.

The Lord's agents should have a sanctified zeal, a zeal that is wholly under His control. Stormy times will come rapidly enough upon us, and we should take no course of our own that will hasten them. Tribulation will come of a character that will drive to God all who wish to be His, and H is alone. Until tested and proved in the furnace of trial, we do not know ourselves, and it is not proper for us to measure the characters of others and to condemn those who have not yet had the light of the third angel’s message.

If we wish men to be convinced that the truth we believe sanctifies the soul and transforms the character, let us not be continually charging them with vehement accusations. In this way we shall force them to the conclusion that the doctrine we profess cannot be the Christian doctrine, since it does not make us kind, courteous, and respectful. Christianity is not manifested in pugilistic accusations and condemnation.

Many of our people are in danger of trying to exercise a controlling power upon others and of bringing oppression upon their fellowmen. There is danger that those who are entrusted with responsibilities will acknowledge but one power, the power of an unsanctified will. Some have exercised this power unscrupulously and have caused great discomfiture to those whom the Lord is using. One of the greatest curses in our world (and it is seen in churches and in society everywhere) is the love of supremacy. Men become absorbed in seeking to secure power and popularity. This spirit has manifested itself in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers, to our grief and shame. But spiritual success comes only to those who have learned meekness and lowliness in the school of Christ.

We should remember that the world will judge us by what we appear to be. Let those who are seeking to represent Christ be careful not to exhibit inconsistent features of character. Before we come fully to the front, let us see to it that the Holy Spirit is poured upon us from on high. When this is the case, we shall give a decided message, but it will be of a far less condemnatory character than that which some have been giving; and all who believe will be far more earnest for the salvation of our opponents. Let God have the matter of condemning authorities and governments wholly in H is own keeping. In meekness and love let us as faithful sentinels defend the principles of truth as it is in Jesus.
Since the 1800s, Battle Creek, Michigan, has been the site of many momentous events in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

1852—David Hewett, “the most honest man in town,” becomes the first Sabbathkeeping Adventist in Battle Creek.
1855—The Whites move the Review and Herald to Battle Creek.
1860—The name “Seventh-day Adventist” is adopted.
1863—The General Conference is organized.
1866—The Western Health Reform Institute is established.
1874—Battle Creek College opens; the first official overseas missionary is sent.
1901—The General Conference reorganizes and unions and conferences are formed.
1902—The great fires take place. (The sanitarium in February, and the Review and Herald in December.)
1903—The General Conference and Review and Herald both move to Takoma Park, Maryland.

Today, in the final years of the twentieth century, important things still happen in Battle Creek. Cereal City U.S.A., a new theme attraction that tells the story of the cereal industry in Battle Creek, Michigan, features Ellen White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There has not been a cereal factory tour since April 1986, and the popular demand for tours has been building. In 1991 the idea was born for a way to tell the story of the history of cereal, and in June 1998 Cereal City U.S.A. opened its doors.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Ellen G. White are frequently mentioned in the two theaters that tell much of the story of cereal.

Duff Stoltz, a longtime resident of Battle Creek who has led Adventist history tours in Battle Creek and is an expert on cereal history, explains: “Those who know Battle Creek history acknowledge that Seventh-day Adventist history is a part of Battle Creek’s cereal history. You cannot get the full story of cereal without telling how and why it got started. In her visions from God, Ellen White was instructed in healthful living and was given specific and practical directives for a healthful lifestyle. She not only presented these messages to the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but helped to
Charlotte Hamlin Cycles to the Arctic Circle

BY EUGENE HAMLIN, WHO WRITES FROM WINTHROP, WASHINGTON.

Residents of Fairbanks, Alaska, reacted in astonishment when they learned that Charlotte Hamlin, an Adventist from Winthrop, Washington, had ridden her bike to the Arctic Circle—at age 79. They were further amazed that she had crossed the United States at age 68 and Canada at age 75.

Hamlin began her Arctic Circle trek in Hudson’s Hope, British Columbia. After pedaling more than 1,675 miles, she reached the Arctic Circle in Alaska on July 27, exactly two months before her eightieth birthday.

On the pavement of the Alaska Highway she pedaled 50 to 60 miles a day; however, on the gravel of the Dalton Highway, she averaged 25 to 30 miles a day. And on rainy days it appeared she had entered a mud derby and won.

After cycling across the Arctic Circle “finish” line, Hamlin spoke to visitors on a 52-seat touring bus. In her impromptu speech she asserted that the Adventist lifestyle had given her the strength and vigor to bicycle up the Alaska Highway. Before leaving the Arctic Circle, she and five other Adventists joined hands, offering a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s protection during her trip.

Hamlin, a white-haired grandmother from Winthrop, Washington, has also cycled through Europe (1987), Asia (1988), and Australia (1993) to promote wellness. “I wanted to see what the human body was capable of doing,” she said. “If it’s properly nourished and taken care of, it’s unbelievable what a person of any age can do.”

After her global trek Hamlin authored Ride With the Wind. The book not only chronicles her 12,000 miles on the road, but provides a number of tips for healthful living. She developed her wellness technology while a nursing professor at Andrews University. Her lifestyle seminars helped people significantly reduce their cholesterol, triglycerides, blood...
Japan turns out idol singers (Idorus) like spare parts on an assembly line. Public relations firms manufacture these pop stars, usually teenage girls, and their sound is factory-produced. They all look the same, and the lip-syncing factor is high. They’re also a multimillion-dollar industry.

In recent years HoriPro, a Tokyo graphics company, has developed Kyoko Date, a unique Idoru who isn’t human (computer-constructed Kyoko exists only in virtual reality). Today you can visit Kyoko’s Web page and download a video clip of her singing, or go to the store and buy her CD single (“Love Communication”). She looks real, she sounds real, but she’s as fake as that other unreal Japanese craze—Tamagotchi virtual pets.

HoriPro says Kyoko’s measurements are 83-56-82 centimeters. That may seem trivial, but they’re vital statistics for thousands of her fans around the world. Take, for example, Jung from Korea. “I love Kyoko,” he says. “I want to see Kyoko always. What a beautiful!” Or Endi from Italy: “Computer+graphic+girls=WOW.”

One sexist male fan, Bing Lee, has devoted a website to Kyoko. For him, she’s the perfect girl—“She never gets sick, never snubs her fans, never complains, and never gains weight.” She also doesn’t breathe, doesn’t shed tears, and doesn’t grow old. She consists of 40,000 polygons, and 10 computer experts worked on her face alone. Kyoko’s designers are making plans for her to star in her own movie and appear on a live TV show, where she’ll chat with other artists.

We face a scary, increasingly unreal world. Yet no matter how virtual, computer-driven, and digital the twenty-first century becomes, love will still make the world go round. We’ll still need grace. We’ll still need forgiveness. We’ll still need God. And we’ll desperately need authentic Christians being real in an unreal world.
Religious Teens More Likely to Avoid Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs

A new study conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University shows a substantial difference in attitudes toward smoking, drinking alcohol, and use of illegal drugs between religious and nonreligious teens.

According to the study, just 8 percent of teens who attend religious services at least four times a month smoked cigarettes, compared to 22 percent of those who attend services less than once a month. Only 13 percent of teens in the first group said they had smoked marijuana, compared to 39 percent of the others.

Also, 20 percent of religiously involved teens said at least half their friends drink, compared to 38 percent of the others. Nineteen percent in the first group and 32 percent in the second group said they personally had had an alcoholic drink in the previous month.

Center president Joseph Califano said the survey results underscore the importance of religion in “giving children the moral values, skill, and will to say ‘no’ to illegal drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes.” —Religion News Service

Historical Note

75 Years Ago . . . Review Mourns President’s Death

Under a full-page, front-cover photo of the late leader, Review editors mourned the August 2, 1923, death of Warren G. Harding, twenty-ninth president of the United States.

Unaware of the financial scandals involving three of Harding’s Cabinet officers that would later cloud his legacy, the Review eulogized Harding as a man of honesty and integrity. He was, the editors noted, “a loving husband, a kind neighbor, a wise counselor.”

Seventh-day Adventists had more to mourn with Harding’s passing than others. Harding’s mother was a Seventh-day Adventist, as were his younger sister Carolyn and her husband, Heber Votaw, former theology teacher at Washington Missionary College and superintendent of prisons during Harding’s administration. Harding himself had been to John Harvey Kellogg’s Battle Creek Sanitarium five times during a 12-year period and was thoroughly familiar with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle. Unaccustomed to having friends in high places, many Adventists no doubt grieved for both the president and the loss of influence his death afforded.

Recent biographies of the Harding family have been less complimentary to the president, pointing to evidence of extramarital affairs and inept management.

Religion in the News

Religious Teens More Likely to Avoid Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs

Establish 100 Adventist churches in unentered areas, as well as 82 church buildings for new Global Mission congregations established since 1990.

In addition to the mission initiative, the church is also providing humanitarian aid in the aftermath of Bangladesh’s worst-ever flood.

Adventist Media Center Expands

Office space at the Adventist Media Center in Simi Valley, California, will increase by 70 percent when interior construction is completed early next year. Half of the existing warehouse is being converted into two floors of offices, radio studios, and video editing rooms. To commemorate the expansion, North American Division officials recently conducted a groundbreaking ceremony (see photo).

News Notes

✔️ The It Is Written television ministry has been invited to participate in the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN/EN LA CE) satellite broadcasts in Spanish to 19 countries of Central and South America, says General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg.

The telecast will be uplinked from Costa Rica. The program will feature host Mark Finley and will alternate weekly with It Is Written’s Spanish version, Esta Escrito, featuring Milton Peverini.

Within two months, TBN/EN LA CE Spanish plans to go on a larger satellite link that will expand to include the United States, Toronto, Montreal, the countries of Western Europe, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. This far-reaching release will eventually allow Esta Escrito to cover 54 countries.

What’s Upcoming

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A certain man had two sons. The elder one was smart and scheming. The younger one was dull and pliable. When the father died, he left his property to be divided equally between the two sons. His property consisted of one coconut tree, one cow, and one blanket. The elder brother wanted to take advantage of the younger’s simple mind. “According to our father’s will,” he told him, “half of the property should go to each of us. I will give half of everything to you.” The younger brother was quite happy that his brother was so kind.

And so the two brothers went about dividing the property. The older said to the younger, “I’ll take the top half of the coconut tree, and you take the bottom half. I will be content with the back half of the cow, and you take the front half. As far as the blanket goes, you take it during the day, and I’ll take it during the night.”

Not knowing the ways of the world, the younger brother thought the deal was generous. A fter all, he was getting half of everything. He drew water from the well and poured it each day on his part of the tree. The older brother took the coconuts from his half. The younger one gathered straw and collected feed and faithfully took care of the nutritional needs of his portion of the cow. The older one collected the milk. When it came to the blanket, the younger one found that he really didn’t have any use for it during the day, but the older one slept under it comfortably at night.

Within a few days the younger one realized that he had nothing to cover himself during the night, and he couldn’t sleep well, shivering in the cold. A fter several nights of cold and sleeplessness, at last it dawned on him that his brother had not been fair, and indeed what he had done was unjust.

So one morning the younger brother woke up cold but wiser and decided to do something about the situation. He took an ax and began to cut down the coconut tree. The older brother came running and asked the younger what he was doing.

“Oh, nothing,” he said. “I decided to cut the tree down.”

“You shouldn’t do that,” pleaded the older one.

“Why not?” said the younger one. “After all, the bottom half of the tree is mine. I can do what I want with it.”

Sensing that the younger brother was becoming wiser, somehow talked him into saving the tree and went about milking his cow. The younger brother came with a stick and started beating the front of the cow, again telling his brother he was only doing whatever he wanted to his portion of the cow. The cow, of course, became angry and kicked the one who was milking, spilling all the milk.

The younger brother was really smart now. He soaked the blanket in water during the day and spread it out wet for the older one to use during the night. Of course, it was too wet to use, and both brothers were cold that night and could not sleep.

Finally dawn came to them, and with it a lesson for both: Life is not for cheating, nor is it for naive simplicity. Life, instead, is to be lived in justice, fairness, equity, and love.

We live in a world of extreme competitiveness. The eagerness to excel, the zeal to make a quick buck, and the race to outbid everyone else often leads one to sacrifice the essential qualities of life as God would have us live it. A n animalistic
spirit competes with the goodness of the human spirit.

A tiger leaps for its prey without pausing to think whether such an act is just or unjust. A crocodile may eat a child for breakfast and stretch out on a riverbank to enjoy a sunbath. But humans are neither tigers nor crocodiles. Created in the image of God, we share His qualities of creativity, justice, and love. We need to work, to be industrious, to be creative. We are made to reach for the stars, excel in every way we can. Our minds are made with infinite capacity, and it is only right and proper that we make the best of it. But in the process we have to maintain the other parts of the divine image that we share: justice and love.

Hence the words of Micah come thundering down to us: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8, NRSV). To Christians this challenge means three things.

1. Having our lives centered in God. Nothing else matters. Nothing less suffices. We are not made to live a life of pretense. God hates hypocrisy of every kind. No sin is more dangerous than hypocrisy. Others’ sins are easily recognizable, but hypocrisy can be exceedingly subtle, even hiding from its victims. Hypocrisy was the sin that caused Jesus to call down His litany of woes upon the Pharisees (Matt. 23).

2. Commitment to others. When Jesus commanded that we should love our neighbors as ourselves and each other even as He has loved us, He was giving us an essential principle of joyful living. Life without love is dead. Love is the part of the image of God that seeks out others—the poor, the lonely, the wandering, as well as the satisfied—and shares with them its life. Love knows neither limits nor boundaries. It’s color-blind. It has no race. It prefers no language. It knows no national frontiers. It’s one life reaching out to another in an embrace of care, concern, and mutuality.

3. Dedication to justice and mercy. God loves us in spite of what we are, not because of what we are. His grace is unmerited favor. He loved us while we were yet sinners and enemies. Sharing that image means that we too will take upon ourselves a covenant to deal with others in justice and mercy. The quality of life around us could be so much greater, the meaning of life so much richer, the genuineness of Christianity so much more attractive, if we as Christians lived lives of justice and mercy.

A life of justice and mercy means that we treat everyone with dignity and equality. If we are employers, our labor practice will not only meet the demands of industrial law, but go beyond them to establish an equitable and enjoyable atmosphere in the workplace. If we are workers, we will work, not just according to the rules, but in a spirit of productivity and efficiency. Justice and mercy govern the giver and the receiver, and a life lived in that context will care for the needs of all while taking advantage of none.

That’s what it means to live out God’s purposes for us.

John Fowler is an associate director of the Education Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland.
Following the Lord’s Lead

Taking a faith walk with God is often challenging, but never boring.

BY TERRENCE L. COLLINS

At age 35 I found myself at loose ends. I was divorced, in debt, and very much alone. Surviving divorce was hard enough, but being separated from my young sons seemed cruel punishment. To say I was discouraged would be an understatement.

Feeling a need to improve myself, I decided to get rid of some of the destructive habits I had acquired over the years. I felt better, but my spiritual hunger was still unsatisfied.

In 1988 I began to watch the television program The World Tomorrow, produced by the World Wide Church of God. I eagerly sent for the Bible lessons offered.

Soon a man named Dale Munson came to my door. Expecting someone from the World Wide Church of God, I invited him into my home. Not until later did I realize that he represented the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thus we began an 18-month study of the Bible.

As the lessons unfolded, the Holy Spirit began to convict me. I became convinced that I had to have a total relationship with the Lord. Despite this conviction, I began to backpedal and shy away from studying with Mr. Munson. I canceled appointments. Sometimes I would agree to study, then refuse to answer the door when Dale arrived. There were times when I would be listening to music or watching television when Dale’s knock came. I would quickly turn down the noise and sit quietly until he left.

Mr. Munson has an artificial knee, shoulder, and hip, and was 74 at the time. It wasn’t easy for him to visit me. He was often in pain, but he never gave up on me. He never condemned me or acted impatiently.

So What’s the Problem?

Why was I hiding? Because when we studied about the Sabbath, I knew that my job as an officer for the Michigan Department of Corrections would have to go. The Holy Spirit was opening my eyes. I continued to study on my own, using a comparative study Bible, concordance, and Bible dictionary. Dale and I continued to discuss what it meant to serve the Lord without reservation.

Our studying made it clear how important the Sabbath is, but my job was important to me also. It meant excellent benefits and a good salary—the thought of losing it scared me. I needed to pay child support and numerous other bills, and oh, yes, I wanted to eat occasionally. More than once I wondered, Why should I give up a good job just to go to church?

In 1990, while on medical leave, I decided to take my stand. The leave had given me ample time to study and pray. God had been at work in my life, and one day I mentioned to Mr. Munson that I wanted to be baptized. He contacted the assistant pastor, and on May 12, 1990, I was baptized into the Lansing Seventh-day Adventist Church by Pastor Tarsee Li.

During my medical leave I had studied, prayed, and planned my approach to the warden to petition for Saturdays off. Finally I made my presentation. I explained how I came to understand the importance of the Sabbath and gave him all the supporting texts I could find.

“You’ve done a good job with your research,” he told me, “but I can’t honor your request.”

My pastor, Bradley Galambos, wrote a letter in support of my
petition. The warden responded in writing that I was a good employee and that they would miss me when I was gone.

When I returned to work, I began the difficult task of trying to cover my Sabbaths. We rotate days off every week. I routinely got two Sabbaths off every five weeks. I asked if I could work six days and have every Saturday off. The answer was no.

I asked if I could work five days and have one of my two days off be Saturday, which I would rotate. But the answer was no. Every door slammed shut. I was told I had two days off each week, just like everyone else, but no fixed day.

Jesus said, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26).

Still a Struggle

I began to count the weeks before I would be fired. I didn’t think I would last long. I made it through the first two and one-half months by switching days and using annual leave (of which I had very little).

Finally came the Sabbath I could not cover. When I didn’t work, I was given a verbal warning and a specified time period when the offense could not be repeated. When it was repeated, I was given a written reprimand. Again I had a specified time period when the offense could not be repeated or I would be put on probation. If the offense was repeated during the probationary period, I would be terminated. I received probation four times in the first five years, but God saw me through each time.

Other officers took exception to my desire to have Sabbaths off. They complained that I wasn’t the only one who wanted Saturdays off. The resentment ran so high that some officers with higher seniority would race to the annual leave book and request a Saturday, then give it up at the last minute to someone else—never to me. Others would literally run from me so I wouldn’t ask them to trade days with me.

I felt discouraged and isolated. However, all of this only made me more adamant and committed to doing the right thing. God was teaching me that by trusting Him, I would come out victorious. I chose to trust Him.

Some of my friends felt I was making my life unnecessarily hard. God would understand, they said.

And that’s the point: God always
understands. He is God. And He said: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates” (Ex. 20:8-10, NIV).

I won’t condemn anyone for what they do. I only know that I had been convicted, and to go against what I believed would have been wrong.

Fortunately, I was able to work my off days and turn the overtime into comp time to get more Sabbaths off. In any 60-day period we could have no more than six leave days off for vacation or personal time. I chose to use my leave time to get Sabbaths off. During this time it came to a point where I didn’t have enough annual leave or vacation time. When this happened, I had to switch days off with another officer. Finally administration decided to minimize the number of hours that we could convert from overtime to comp time, and I had to turn back 80 hours of summer vacation time in order to cover more Sabbaths. But for me, the Sabbath is a vacation each week.

Also, during this difficult period there were at least five opportunities for an 8:00-4:00 position with weekends and holidays off. These opportunities were never offered to me.

The Point of No Return

The testing time came when I asked a coworker to switch days with me, and he had agreed. On Friday, however, he came to me in the early afternoon and said, “I’m sorry, but I can’t work for you tomorrow.”

I was stunned. The previous week I hadn’t worked on Sabbath, because I hadn’t been able to get anyone to switch days with me and I wasn’t able to use annual leave. This was the second week in a row, and now it was too late to make other arrangements.

I went home and quietly told my wife (I had gotten remarried), “I lost my job today.” She talked very little the rest of the evening and the next day (you have to know my wife to understand the significance of this). Still, I was reminded of 2 Chronicles 20:15: “Do not be afraid or discouraged…. For the battle is not yours, but God’s” (NIV).

I called in early that Sabbath morning to let them know I wouldn’t be there. The captain wanted to put me on sick leave, because I had, in good faith, been covered. But this would have meant signing a slip stating that I had been ill and require a doctor’s statement. I declined to do this, thinking it would undermine my entire witness. He said, “Well, you know what’ll happen.”

By the end of Sabbath my wife and I had agreed that we were going to wait on the Lord. We were unified, and we prayed that fear and hesitation would be removed from our hearts. We would follow wherever He chose to lead us.

Five days later I was given probation and warned not to let it happen again or I would be fired. How unusual! I was already on probation. This disciplinary action merely extended the probation an additional three months.

Faithfulness Is Its Own Reward

I now accrue enough annual leave to get most of my Sabbaths off. There are about six times in a 12-month period when I need to switch days, but now some of my coworkers come to me, asking if I will switch with them so that they can have a particular day off. I’m happy to do it, even if the day they give me is not a Sabbath.

Since I chose Him and started my faith walk, God has blessed me in several significant ways:

I met and married Nola Bell (formerly Stevenson) just 26 months after my baptism. I have three great sons from my previous marriage, and I gained a stepson when I remarried.

My faith in God grows stronger every day. I’ve seen how He works. I haven’t worked a Sabbath since early 1990, and in March 1997 my colleagues at the Handlon, Michigan, Training Unit nominated me, and I was selected, the 1997 Corrections Officer of the Year for my facility. One month later I was selected Corrections Officer of the Year for the State of Michigan. In addition I was one of five finalists for the National Corrections Officer for 1997.

It pays to serve the Lord. And it will continue to pay until we receive our final reward—eternal life—and a place with Him in our new home. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding,” said the wise man. “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5, 6, NIV).

Don’t be afraid to walk with God. He won’t disappoint you. He’ll protect you. He’ll lead you in His paths of righteousness. And when you get tired, discouraged, weak, helpless, and can’t see how to go on—when self finally gives up—that’s when He’ll carry you in His arms to victory. And wow! What a ride!

When I thought I was improving myself, God was working in me. The victory came when I began to cooperate with Him and stopped resisting. I’ve claimed Jesus’ promise: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33, NIV).

My wife likes to remind me: “Faith is not believing that God can; it is knowing that He will.”

Terrence L. Collins is an adult Sabbath school teacher and an assistant deacon in the Lansing, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church.
One afternoon this summer little got done in the General Conference, because people (at least in the offices I visited) were busy devouring the apostolic letter by Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini*—a lengthy, detailed, and passionate plea by the pontiff for Roman Catholics to keep Sunday holy.

Of course, the hype (in ways so utterly Adventist) immediately started. Within a week of the document’s release I was in Norway, where rumor was that the pope had warned in the letter that those who didn’t conform to Sunday worship would have to be “dealt with.” Maybe the pope did write that somewhere, but it wasn’t in my copy of *Dies Domini*.

My copy did, though, have passing references to “laws concerning Sunday rest,” which would “enable everyone to keep the Lord’s Day holy.” It also talked about an encyclical by John Paul’s predecessor Leo XIII, which stressed “Sunday rest as a worker’s right which the State must guarantee.” John Paul also wrote that “in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.”

He’s right: civil legislation should respect their duty to keep Sunday, just as it should respect ours to keep Sabbath. How that is accomplished is, no doubt, another matter (one fraught with apocalyptic consequences)—but in the end the pope didn’t say anything particularly new or extraordinary regarding Sunday laws. One doesn’t need *Dies Domini* to know that he favors them.

The fascinating aspect of the letter, however, wasn’t politics, but theology. Mr. Wojtyla wasted lots of ink trying to justify theologically the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Page after page attempts to “recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying the church’s precept, so that the abiding value of Sunday in the Christian life will be clear to all the faithful.”

What’s clear, however, is that however effective the quotes are that we love to use—in which priests and other Roman Catholic officials brag about how the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath day to Sunday—that position doesn’t seem to be the official one.

Instead the pope goes to great pains, using the same retreaded arguments, to prove that the seventh-day Sabbath “foretells the sacred day of the new and final covenant.” In fostering this argument, however, Mr. Wojtyla is reduced to quoting Saint Jerome, Saint Gregory, and Saint Basil, getting them to say what Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and Saint John don’t. The pope even resorts to the Creation story, and—pulling language directly from the Sabbath texts—tries fruitlessly to buttress the position that “Sunday is the day of rest because it is the day ‘blessed’ by God and ‘made holy’ by Him, set apart from the other days to be, among all of them, ‘the Lord’s Day.’”

The attempt to find in Sunday a fulfillment of the Sabbath has, in fact, largely been abandoned (for lack of evidence) by many Evangelical scholars, who argue instead that “Sunday is a new day of worship that was chosen to commemorate the unique salvation-historical event of the death and resurrection of Christ, rather than merely being another day for celebrating the Sabbath” (From Sabbath to Lord’s Day, Zondervan), another theological excursion doomed to shipwreck upon the shoals of Scripture.

What can account, then, for the pope’s lengthy attempt to justify Sunday from the Bible? My guess is that Seventh-day Adventists—with our solid, Bible-based defense of the Sabbath—have made an impact, that our arguments have, indeed, had an influence wherever we have preached and taught them. After all, how could they not? The pope had to try to deal with them directly because we have been dealing with them powerfully and effectively for more than a century and a half. He couldn’t ignore us or our arguments any longer.

However, with all due respect, *Dies Domini* is the latest proof that even the “vicar of Christ” can’t get from the Bible what simply isn’t there.

Clifford Goldstein is editor of Liberty, a magazine of religious freedom.
Taking the Gamble Out of Grocery Shopping

BY PAUL S. DAMAZO

If you like to eat, you doubtless spend a certain amount of time each month in your local supermarket. There, in addition to searching for the most nutritious and economical ways to feed your family, you’re also faced with an unprecedented array of fresh, frozen, and canned food products from which to choose.

Those of us who live in developed countries can make purchases with the assurance that our foods have been processed and packaged according to rigid government standards for purity and quality.

But what some people still find confusing is all the terms they find emblazoned on the packages and containers that crowd the supermarket shelves. What should one make of products that boldly proclaim “low in cholesterol,” “fat free,” or “high in fiber”? And how is one to know if these claims have any basis in fact?

For More Informed Choices

Ten years ago then U.S. surgeon general C. Everett Koop released The Surgeon General’s Report on Nutrition and Health. A direct result of that report was the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990, the federal government’s first formal recognition of the role of diet in certain chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease, and cancer.

This law mandated each food container (with very few exceptions) have a label of nutrition facts that list the amounts of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, fiber, and other major nutrients per serving. The label also helps consumers to see how a particular food contributes to a daily balanced diet.

Let’s Go Shopping!

A box entitled “Nutrition Facts” is easily found on nearly every container of packaged or processed food and drink (see diagram). Directly underneath that heading are the words “serving size,” and “servings per container.” The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has established specific serving sizes that reflect amounts that people customarily consume. Additionally, the FDA requires that all labels for a given product use the same serving size. For example, the serving size for all ice creams is a half cup, and for all beverages, eight fluid ounces.

This figure affects all the other data listed on the label. If you consume double the serving size, you get twice the amount of fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates,
protein—and calories.

Speaking of calories, the label lists two kinds of calories contained in the product: calories of all kinds, and calories from fat. Ideally, the total fat intake per day should be 15–20 percent of all the calories you eat. Some servings of so-called gourmet ice cream contain the fat equivalent of half a stick of butter or two quarter-pound hamburgers—more fat than you should eat in an entire day.

Reducing fat is the number one way for most Americans to lose weight and maintain a healthy weight level. And today nearly every kind of food product is available "fat free" (but more about that later).

Generally speaking, the ideal diet is one that's low in fat, cholesterol, and sugar. And the nutrition facts label is a very useful tool in helping to plan meals that are at the same time attractive, appetizing, and within the boundaries of a balanced diet.

The nutrition facts label presents nutrient information in two ways—in quantities (grams) and as percentages of daily values. The percentages of daily values column provides a ballpark estimate of how individual foods contribute to the total diet. It compares key nutrients in a serving of food with the daily goals of a person who consumes 2,000 calories a day. A person can simply add up all the percentages for a particular nutrient to see if the day's diet fits with the recommendations. If the total is 100 percent, the recommendations have been met.

About Those Labels

Not that long ago food manufacturers put their products in packages that boldly sported claims like "reduced fat," "low in cholesterol," and "high in fiber." And the issue was not is it true? but rather Compared to what? A product that reduces fat by one milligram doesn't necessarily make it any healthier than when it had the additional milligram of fat.

The Federal Nutrition Labeling and Education Act changed all that. Now there are strict definitions for terms that are used to describe a food's nutrient content. For example, to qualify as "reduced" a nutritionally altered product must contain at least 25 percent less fat, saturated fats, cholesterol, sodium, or calories. (The same is true for a product that carries the words "less" or "fewer.")

A product that bills itself as "high in calcium" must contain 20 percent or more of the daily value for calcium. The same is true for any other nutrient.

W're occasionally treated to news reports about the supposed benefits of eating this or that food product. The FDA guidelines mandate that a manufacturer's health claims emphasize the importance of one's total diet in the prevention of disease and not exaggerate the role of a particular food or diet in disease prevention. Claims must be honest and balanced.

For example, a manufacturer may say that foods high in calcium "may" or "might" reduce the risk of osteoporosis. But because no one food possesses magical healing powers, manufacturers must not distort the roles of their products in promoting health. A health claim may state, "Development of cancer depends on many factors. A diet low in total fat may reduce the risk of some cancers."

Back to Eden

Today in most developed countries it's not the scarcity of food products that causes the greatest health risks: it's eating too much, and the wrong kinds of foods, that leads to cancer, obesity, coronary disease, diabetes, and a host of other lifestyle-related illnesses.

The great irony is that the original diet, designed by the Creator for all his creatures, has been ignored for decades—especially in industrialized countries. But the pendulum is swinging back toward the ideal diet—liberal amounts of fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, augmented with breads and pastas—prepared simply and economically. Not surprisingly, this is the original "low-fat," "high-fiber" diet. There's not much multinational food conglomerates can do to improve on it.

Virtually every major magazine or television program today that features recipes includes vegetarian recipes, along with numerous ways to cut down on harmful fats, sugars, sodium, and cholesterol. Bookstores carry a wide variety of easy-to-use, health-enhancing cookbooks that contain traditional and ethnic recipes. Trying out these recipes is a fine way to experiment with good food and keep your focus on good health.

When you shop for processed or prepared foods, be sure to read the label. Understanding and using the label information will contribute to better health for you and your entire family. And you can pass along the two greatest legacies one generation can give another: spiritual values and good health.

Paul S. Damazo has been a consulting dietitian and president of the California Seventh-day Adventist Dietetic Association. He lives in Riverside, California.
In reading the hundreds of letters I have received through the years as a columnist, I find a common thread woven throughout hand-written missives, e-mail messages, and neatly typed documents. All of us simply want to be understood. Caught up in lives packed with a million details, meeting inevitable pockets of frustration and disappointment, we seek the listening ear of another, the healing balm of a heart that understands.

The Washington Post recently reported on a study that makes sense of our drive to package our frustrations in words, to deliver our day's draining episodes to the listening ear of a friend. Seeking to discover whether “reliving a bad time may be good in the long run,” psychologists from the University of California and Cornell Medical Center involved subjects in a number of frustrating experiments, then gave some of them the opportunity immediately to recall the annoying experience. “In one experiment, 20 people were asked to do arithmetic exercises in their heads—and then interrupted and prodded to work faster. Their blood pressure rose significantly during the experience.”

The researchers waited 20 minutes and then allowed half of the participants to talk about their experience. The other half of the group was called back one week later to discuss what had happened. In both cases blood pressure went up in recalling the annoying experience. “In one experiment, 20 people were asked to do arithmetic exercises in their heads—and then interrupted and prodded to work faster. Their blood pressure rose significantly during the experience.”

The researchers waited 20 minutes and then allowed half of the participants to talk about their experience. The other half of the group was called back one week later to discuss what had happened. In both cases blood pressure went up in recalling the annoying experience. Interestingly, however, the participants who had the opportunity to vent after 20 minutes were also involved in a second discussion one week later. Their blood pressure did not go up. The researchers concluded that the opportunity to relive a painful experience “can briefly raise a person’s blood pressure, but it may soften the emotional pain in the long run.”

I find the study fascinating for two reasons. First, just as God has designed our physical bodies to perform optimally under conditions He has set forth, so He has designed our emotional well-being around principles that can be found in His Word. It is no coincidence that the Old and New Testament heroes of faith spent hours pouring out their hearts to God in prayer. The Creator who crafted bones, tissue, and muscle to thrive in response to water, exercise, whole-wheat bread, and sunshine created a human heart that thrives in response to unburdening, unloading, understanding.

We speak and we are free. Driving home from work, on our knees in our bedroom, walking under a darkening sky, we relive the annoyances of the day, traverse again the trials that have troubled us, cry out to our God. Rising up from our knees, signaling an end to our discourse with God with an amen, we are free of the emotional pain that has stung us for one more day.

“A little talk with Jesus makes it right, all right.”
“Roll, roll, your burdens away.”
“Tell Him all about your troubles.”

The words are not just trite fragments of rhymed verse. Prayer has a physical effect on our bodies, a direct link to our emotional health. Like the psalmist, when we cry out the sorrow of our days, we find new strength and freedom to go on.

Second, I find the research significant because it reminds me again of my role as a friend. When another takes the time to dial my number, write me a letter, unburden a heart, I can do no less than listen. In providing an opportunity for another to share a painful experience, I provide an outlet that makes life's trying moments lose their power.

Trying to keep our irritations locked inside of us is like attempting to hold a beach ball under water. The more we struggle to submerge our pain, the greater the burden becomes, filling our whole being with tension. The Creator who designed our physical bodies to flourish under healthy conditions has designed our emotional systems to respond positively under the right conditions as well. Talking to the Father, sharing with a friend, we jettison the baggage of our lives, take a deep breath, and face the journey with lighter steps.

Sandra Doran is an author, speaker, and educator from Attleboro, Massachusetts.
At Rest

CHERIAN, M. E.—b. July 6, 1926, Ranni, Kerala, India; d. Aug. 7, 1998, Pune, Maharashtra, India. He served in the denomination for nearly 50 years, most of this time as an educator. He was president of Spicer Memorial College from 1963 to 1990 and then served as president of the Southern Asia Division from 1990 to 1997. He is survived by his wife, Premila; two sons, Franklin and Kenneth; one daughter, Meena; and two grandchildren.

KEMMERER, Martin—b. Nov. 7, 1913, Emmaus, Pa.; d. Aug. 26, 1998, Loma Linda, Calif. For 15 years prior to his retirement he served as an undertreasurer of the General Conference; earlier he was treasurer of the Southern Asia Division. He is survived by his wife, Premila; two sons, Franklin and Kenneth; one daughter, Meena; and six grandchildren.

KITTRELL, Miriam Elizabeth—b. Nov. 29, 1938; d. Aug. 8, 1998. She served in the denomination as an educator, beginning in 1968 in a one-room school in Durango, Colorado. Her final position was superintendent of schools for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. In between she served at Campion Academy (Colorado), Enterprise Academy (Kansas), and Forest Lake Elementary Education Center (Florida). She is survived by her husband, Dan; two sons, Daniel and Kenneth; and two grandchildren.

KOZEL, John Clifford—b. Aug. 2, 1911, Brainerd, Minn.; d. May 31, 1998. He served in the Pacific, North Pacific, and Southwestern union conferences, and at Walla Walla College. His last position was assistant treasurer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; and four daughters, Shirley Jean Skreslet, Carol Anne Bixel, Judith Lee Goronz, and Nancy Lou Chapin.

MABUTO, Listone—b. Dec. 7, 1958, Zimbabwe; d. Aug. 26, 1998, Port Sudan, Sudan. He had served almost two years with ADRA and was responsible for the movement of relief food from Port Sudan to the ADRA warehouse inland for distribution to some 70,000 refugees during 1997. He is survived by his wife, Jean; one son, Lloyd; one daughter, Lois; and his parents.

VON POHLE, Myrtle Arkebauer—b. July 28, 1902, Camden, N.J.; d. June 30, 1998, Scottsdale, Ariz. She served with her husband, the late Dr. Ernest von Pohle, as a missionary in Guatemala. Later they were founders of the Tempe Clinic-Hospital in Tempe, Arizona.

WOHLERS, Harry A.—b. Mar. 23, 1899; d. May 30, 1998, Holly, Mich. He served in the Midwest as an educator for 43 years at Indiana, Adelphi, and Broadview academies. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn; two sons, Dorison and Fred; and two daughters, Harriette Mason and Vesta Gutsche.

There is no system in place to notify us of the deaths of denominational workers. Only one conference shares this information with us. Most of our announcements come from e-mail announcements, family members, and friends. Often they do not have complete information. Please send in obituaries as soon as possible and include standard dates, denominational service records, and names of survivors.
It's not my fault that Noah's flood hid uranium right beneath my house. After the flood a violent wind heaped rocks and soil over the minerals, concealing them for a time. One mineral buried under my home by Noah's flood is deadly.

One afternoon last October I was raking leaves in my yard. A passing motorist observed, "Every time I drive on your ridge, I get a heavy feeling in my chest. Have you checked your house for radon?"

Radon? What's radon? I thought. "I had that heaviness when my house had radon," the passerby explained. "It's reported that one in 16 homes in the United States has it."

My conversation with the stranger made me think. Before being aware of the possibility of radon in my home, I was often away from home. But after my decision to hibernate at home for the winter, the "heavy feeling" began, coupled with shortened breath. I had wondered if I had congestive heart failure.

Concerned, I prayed, "Lord, with my ne'er-do-well past I may have to rest when others are still active. But isn't this too soon?"

No change. I prayed earnestly. I reminded God of Hezekiah and his prayer for healing.

Then I prayed submissively, "Well, Lord, if I have to rest, I will do it with joy."

The next day this man drove by with his uncanny remark about radon.

I began an investigation and learned that uranium, as a radioactive element, decays, forming a metallic radioactive element called radium. Radium spontaneously degenerates to form the gaseous radioactive element called radon. Escaping through fissures in the earth's crust, it can be poisonous.

If the radiant energy given off tallies more than four picocuries (pico means "very small"); curie is a unit of radioactivity per liter annually, it threatens human health. Symptoms include a lack of energy and endurance, sometimes a heavy feeling, and a stress intolerance. Permanent lung damage can result. Breathing radon on a regular basis may be as deadly as being a pack-a-day smoker. A simple test showed more than four picocuries in my home.*

A s N oah warned people to repent, so God startled me with radon.

T he uranium hidden by Noah's flood and trapped in my house had changed to poison. Sometimes my religion gives way to the lure of self-satisfaction and complacency. I lose sight of God. I need a notice telling me to come back. The heavy feeling in my chest from radon corresponds to the heavy feeling in my heart from sin.

According to the Bible, no one but Jesus ever lived a perfect life. Because I cannot obey in my unconverted state, His sinless life is credited to my account when I believe in Him as my Saviour. I earned the death penalty (Rom. 6:23), so I have a choice—I can either die for my sins and forfeit eternal life or be released from the weight of sin by accepting by faith Jesus' death for me.

The Bible sees Christ as living sinlessly, not merely "instead of me," but identifying "as me." His love does not stop when I sin any more than my parents would have stopped loving me when I did wrong. He does not stop loving me when I indulge beyond the necessities of survival any more than when the people before the Flood coveted wealth more than its Giver. A s H e warned the antediluvians to repent through Noah, He startled me with radon.

Now when I read about Noah's flood, a wave of reality swells in me. The historic event of Noah's flood affects me today. How is it with you? Have you coveted wealth instead of its Giver? H as N oah's flood affected you?

* A radon test kit can be purchased from the American Lung Association, a local hardware store, or by calling 1-800-55-RADON.

Susan Cunic is a freelance writer living in Pikeville, Tennessee.
Imagine this. It’s a glorious morning—the sun is shining; birds are singing. You walk into the kitchen. There on the floor is such a surprise: a huge basket filled with your favorite foods. (You are imagining this, so you get to choose: watermelon, potato salad, brussels sprouts, whatever you like.)

Now what are you going to do?
A. Wrap it all up and put it in the freezer.
B. Pull up a chair and start eating as much as you can.
C. Call up your friends and invite them over for a party.

And then, that night, what will you be left with?
A. If you choose A, you will have a mound of frozen potato salad.
B. If you choose B, you will have either a lot of leftovers or a tummyache.
C. If you choose C, your house will be a mess with paper plates everywhere. There won't be any food left. You will be tired. But you will be happy.

The wonderful thing about a party is that everybody talks and laughs and has fun. At a party, people enjoy being with other people. That’s the whole point.

When Jesus was on earth, He kept trying to tell people how they could be happy. “He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35, ICB). “Blessed” means “happy.”

Giving will make you happier than taking or keeping.

This idea doesn’t make sense to a lot of people. They add up the things they get. The way they see it, the more they get, the more they have.

But Jesus isn’t counting things when He talks about giving. Jesus wants us to know that the more we give, the more we become loving and unselfish. We become more like Him.

Jesus knows about giving. He gave us this world. He gave us everything we own. He gave His life to save us. Jesus knows how blessed it is to give.

He wants us to be blessed, too. “Give, and you will receive,” He says. “You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you” (Luke 6:38, ICB).

Choose C. Invite others to the party. Share what God has given to you.