Mapping Your Future
Looking ahead to a lifetime of learning, friendships, and adventure
Power-filled Camporee

On page 18 of the September NAD Adventist Review you showed a picture of a young man reading his Bible. This young man is Emerick Angela from the Curaçao Pathfinder Club. The Brighton, Colorado, Silverwings Pathfinder Club had the privilege of hosting this club from Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles (an island group off the coast of Venezuela). The 20 Pathfinders stayed in our extra tents and ate all their meals with us. Each morning Emerick, who is studying to be a minister at the Adventist school in Venezuela, led out in the devotional. He would speak in Spanish, since some of the younger Curaçao members didn’t understand English very well (this group can speak four languages). Another Pathfinder would translate into English.

On the last night of the camporee as our clubs gathered to say goodbye there were very few dry eyes in the group. As we sang and prayed we promised to meet again in heaven, if not on this earth.

This was a wonderful experience for our Pathfinders and staff. Many of us said that we would not consider going to another camporee without hosting a club from another country. It is what made the difference in our enjoyment of the camporee.

— Sherrilyn Lorenz
Gilcrest, Colorado

Home Is Where the Church Is

Linda Sutherland’s article “Home Is Where the Church Is” in the September NAD issue was great—ideas on making our churches more open and user-friendly are always good, and I’m promoting the article in our President’s Page, which goes to all Southern New England employees.

I grew up in the Hoquiam, Washington, church at Grays Harbor and was actually there visiting my parents a few weeks ago. To my recollection, we never had anyone who “whistled” every hymn. There was a man who played a harmonica along with the hymns for years, but he has passed away. Some did not like the harmonica, but it was very quiet and a joy for William.

— Judy Thomsen
Southern New England Conference

The article by Linda Sutherland in the September issue of the Adventist Review struck a chord. I have no problem going from high to low church, except when the Godhead is not central. The question I have is what do Linda and Larry do during...
Mission Publishing insert

As one (gratefully) receives the Adventist Review in batches from time to time here in faraway South Africa, I find myself out of sync sometimes with the goings-on in the North American Division. In the July 1999 issue of the Review (NAD Edition) which I’ve just received [in October], for example, there was an insert announcing the publication, by Mission Publishing, of a study Bible based on the KJV with comments by Ellen G. White, plus other helps such as a Scripture Index to the Spirit of Prophecy writings, chronological tables, maps, and illustrations.

I want to applaud Mission Publishing for attempting to appeal to the Adventist market by making Bible reading perhaps more appealing and informative to more of us—especially in light of a rising tide of biblical illiteracy that seems to be engulfing the Christian church in the West (not excluding our own).

Allow me, however, to register two reasons for some discomfort on my part: (1) the use of the KJV as the base text. The seventeenth-century English of the KJV at times obscures rather than reveals. It does not communicate as clearly now (in the almost twenty-first-century) as it did then—the dynamic nature of language being what it is; and (2) putting the comments of Ellen W. White as part of the (study) Bible. This may unwittingly play into the hands of those who have always accused us of granting Mrs. White’s writing biblical status. This, in no way, is meant to diminish the role and relevance of the Spirit of Prophecy in the life and ministry of the church. I’m simply concerned that we will have produced, in the minds of some, an “Adventist” Bible—something we have historically and (I think) rightly guarded against.

An Abusive Situation?

As a licensed marriage and family therapist I was interested, and then alarmed, to read Sandra Doran’s advice about an abusive family situation (July NAD Edition) in her Dialogues column. While her suggestions to draw closer to the family and to pray for them are wonderful, I shuddered to read her statement “You cannot afford to rush in and make groundless accusations.”

Community members should not wait for proof of abuse before making a report. When one makes a report of suspected child abuse it is just that—a report of suspected abuse. This is not making “groundless accusations.”

Child Protective Service caseworkers receive extensive training in child interview techniques, investigation, and appropriate intervention. As a therapist and mandated reporter, I am required by law to report suspected abuse immediately, as are teachers, ministers, health-care providers, day-care workers, and others in positions of public trust.

While people outside the family circle seldom know of an investigation, potential embarrassment to a suspected abuser must not be allowed to outweigh the risk to children. Even if there are no visible bruises, even if it is “only” the emotional abuse caused by fear, intimidation, and isolation, these children need support now. Whatever subtle behaviors are observed in public, the private reality is inevitably much worse. Please do not delay. Each of us has a moral responsibility to stand up for children who cannot defend themselves.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40).

—Gosnell Yorke, translation consultant, United Bible Societies (Africa Region)
KEMPTON PARK, SOUTH AFRICA

—Patti Cottrell Grant
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Only God Knows

We do the best we can, but the real work is done when God takes control.
It's funny the difference 20 years can make.

In late October 1979 theologian and Bible teacher Desmond Ford gave a Sabbath afternoon address at Pacific Union College that reverberated around the world. Ford struck at the prophetic foundations of Adventism, challenging in particular the teaching of the pre-Advent judgment and the distinctive mission of our movement.

Two other blows followed in quick succession: an Adventist pastor Walter Rea attacked the credibility of Ellen White in the book *The White Lie*, and Donald Davenport, an Adventist physician-developer with whom a number of church entities and individual Adventists had invested church funds or personal savings, filed for bankruptcy.

The triple challenge posed by Ford, Davenport, and Rea—soon identified as FDR—rocked many members. Some were destabilized or confused by the theological arguments; some, brought up believing that Ellen White's words had been dictated from heaven, were shocked to learn that she drew upon other sources in her writings; still others were disillusioned by what appeared to be a major financial scandal.

Those years—the early 1980s—were the most difficult ones of my ministry. Feelings of anger, betrayal, and distrust stalked abroad, as family members and friends of long standing parted company. Some ministers quit the ministry and the church; many members expressed their unhappiness with the church by canceling their subscription to the *Review*.

There are times when we wonder, Where is God? and this was one of them. But God was where He always is: tenderly watching over His bride, the church. From today's perspective I can see His hand guiding Adventists through to a brighter day.

As painful as that period was, great good emerged from it:

- A more mature view of Ellen White's prophetic role has taken root. While some still incline toward a dictation view of her writings and others haven't been able to get beyond the shock of Rea's evidence, many others have come to realize that the humanity of the prophet does not negate inspiration.
- The Davenport fiasco led to a tightening of church policies and auditing procedures. Laypeople played a much more prominent role in the work of the church, bringing their expertise and wisdom for a greater accountability. And the actual losses from Davenport, while still significant, shook down to less than a tithe of the first projections.
- But many more things were happening for Adventists in North America, as the Lord helped us put FDR behind us.
- Evangelism came roaring back through the use of satellite transmission. The NET events, beginning in 1995, energized members and brought in scores of thousands of new believers. Soon the rest of the world was taking note and following the lead of North America.
- A spirit of mission swept the church as unprecedented numbers of Adventists of all ages got involved in building churches as Maranatha Volunteers, working on ADRA projects, joining evangelistic teams abroad, and so on. At a time when America's youth were restless and bored, thousands of Adventist youth led the church and the world in a spirit of commitment and service.
- Along with high-tech advances such as 24-hour Adventist television programming on 3ABN, many Adventists discovered, and rediscovered, the power of prayer in daily living.

And I could go on, but it's time for the final word on these 20 years. And that must be not one word but two—confession and thanksgiving.

Confession of our worldliness and lack of faith.

And thanksgiving for the gracious hand of our Lord over us in spite of our failings.

That's maybe a helpful thing to remember as we move into the new millennium.
If you ain’t got an education, then you just got to use your brains,” an elderly woman once observed. Her logic teases us with the notion that education circumvents the need to think.

Learning to think is central to the higher education experience. We may know that students go to college to develop critical thinking skills, but do we understand how important those skills are to our Adventist young people? Living in a complex pluralistic world, they must continually distinguish between the factual and the alleged, the real and the artificial, the temporal and the eternal. An Adventist college education should prepare them to do this.

Ellen White raised this concern long ago: “As the student sacrifices the power to reason and judge for himself, he becomes incapable of discriminating between truth and error, and falls an easy prey to deception” (Education, p. 230). Training our young people to think for themselves can help them stand more firmly on spiritual ground. As Ellen White reminds us: “It is the work of true education . . . to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought” (ibid., p. 17).

Our college students are the next generation of church leaders. How important that we recognize God’s expectation that His leaders become thinkers. God’s injunction “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18) should guide the Adventist college experience. But placed in the hands of human teachers, it also may create a double trap.

A few years ago a group of Adventist college students expressed their frustrations about a Bible class. When they raised questions about faith issues, the teacher gave no response or responded judgmentally. Teachers such as this one who misunderstand the important role critical thinking plays in faith development may disillusion their students and weaken their connection to the church.

Equally unfortunate, however, is the behavior of those Adventist college teachers who view the goal of teaching students to think for themselves as an end to itself. They forget two things: human reason has its limitations, and the goal of thinking for one’s self is, ultimately, to increase one’s faith in God.

Independent thinking that does not lead to faith-building leads to skepticism and self-sufficiency. Learning to depend on human reason alone is one of the worst possible outcomes of a Christian education. I know several former Adventist college students who forsook their church and their God, seemingly because they learned how to question but not how to trust.

Spirit-led Adventist educators help students learn how to think for themselves about spiritual things, in a way that builds faith. Our students, in turn, need an “educated faith” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 271). A rational awareness of how God has led them in the past will help fortify their faith for those difficult experiences when there are no answers for their questions.

God’s dealings with us may not always seem rational, but as we use our critical thinking skills to discern His faithful ways, we learn to trust Him more. This is higher education at its best.

When our Adventist college campuses become places where young people engage in nonthreatening, guided explorations of their own belief systems, where they learn to think for themselves yet are encouraged to apply their discoveries to a firmer trust in God, then the product our colleges produce will more than compensate for the high tuition costs.

I recently witnessed a striking example of this. In a Sabbath school class discussion on creation and evolution, an Adventist college graduate made several original observations. These comments demonstrated an informed grasp of both evolution and creation issues. Yet her firm trust in God and His Word and the vibrancy of her own spiritual life radiated from the strength and tenor of her observations. Afterward, I told her how much her example had strengthened my faith in the Adventist higher education system.

Perhaps the statement at the beginning of this article should read: “If you ain’t got an education, then get an Adventist one, because using your brains should help you learn to trust in God.” Let’s keep the T word at the heart of Adventist higher education. If we do, our future will be bright.

David C. Smith is president of Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.
GIVE & TAKE

JESUS IS MY EVERYTHING

Jesus means the world to me
in many different ways—

Jesus is my Comforter, He wipes away
my tears

He's also my Protector, He shields me
from my fears

He is the Knowledge that I have, to
know what's right or wrong

He is the Music that I hear, in nature's
sounds and song

Jesus is my Architect, He has things all
planned out

He is my Adviser, whenever I'm in
doubt

He is the greatest Tradesman, for He
made the universe

He became the Miracle, born of
virgin birth

He is the Light that shines on me, He
shows the way to go

He is the Rock on which I stand, I'll
not sway to and fro

He is my constant true Companion, He
is with me every day

He is my patient Listener, for He hears
me when I pray

He is my only Teacher, it's from Him
that I must learn

He is the Faith I have within, from
Him I will not turn

He is the Artist that I see, in the beauty
of all things

He is such a Blessing, for the comforts
that He brings

He is my Everlasting Life, He died so I
could live

He's my firm Assurance, for the promises
He gives

He is the Strength on whom I lean,
when I'm feeling weak

He is the Power within my heart, from
which I feel the beat

He is the Shadow that follows me, as I
walk along

He is the Owner of my life, it's to Him
that I belong

He is the greatest Author, for He wrote
the Book of Life

He is the Only Answer, to our trouble
and our strife.

He is Alpha and Omega
The beginning and the end.

—Julie Cameron, Noranda, Australia, diagnosed
with terminal cancer, wrote this in March 1999.

DREAM CENTER

We have a dream—to help equip
women who “fall between the cracks”
to “make it” in today's world with
lessons in office skills, computers, how
to fill out job applications and undergo
interviews, and appropriate dress for
the workplace. We have started a

“career closet.” Each woman will
receive three outfits when she starts
work. A cosmetologist will style her
hair for her first interview. Classes will
be conducted in a new Community
Services center being built on our
church campus.

—Spartanburg church, South Carolina

PATHFINDER “FIRSTS” MEET IN OSHKOSH
FIRSTS: The 1999 Pathfinder Camporee
held August 10-14 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin,
proved to be a camporee of “firsts.”
Desmond Doss, the first Seventh-day
Adventist Congressional Medal of Honor
recipient, who received his Master Guide at
this camporee, holds Jessica Davidson of
the Council Cardinal Pathfinder Club (North
Carolina), the youngest attending dressed-
out Pathfinder at her first world camporee.
For the 22,000 who attended the camp-
oree, many young people experienced first-
hand God’s mighty saving power as an
approaching tornado turned in its course on
Thursday night, August 12, and was God-
steered around the campground.

—Spartanburg church, South Carolina
A Parent’s Quest
How Adventist colleges/universities help our children find faith

BY RICHARD C. OSBORN

MY DAUGHTER TOOK A COURSE AT an Adventist college campus that involved people of other religions presenting their beliefs. Several classmates became interested in one of the Eastern religions because its adherents seemed to be happier and more accepting than others; plus they shared similar lifestyle characteristics with Adventists, such as vegetarianism.

As a result of the class presentation, my daughter suggested that Adventist young people who live in cloistered Adventist communities and educational institutions most of their lives lack exposure to a broader world, which makes them easy targets to be recruited by other religions.

Is she right? If so, what can we do in our colleges/universities to increase the transmission of Adventist faith and values?

My two children attend Seventh-day Adventist colleges. Heather attends Pacific Union College as a senior majoring in English/journalism. Her brother, Trevan, is a freshman theology major at Columbia Union College. My wife, Norma, and I encourage their attendance at Adventist colleges. More than anything, we want them to graduate with a strong faith commitment to Jesus Christ and loyalty to our church. Our conviction is that academic and professional success will be a by-product of the education process if these two primary goals are met.

Is It Real?

In a supposedly ideal world, Adventist children are born into happy families, in which both parents are active members of the church. During the early childhood years parents nurture their children with daily family worship and weekly attendance at Sabbath school and church. The children are then sent to Adventist schools from kindergarten through college, and possibly a professional degree. The child grows continually in faith, accepting without question the doctrines and lifestyle teachings of the church, while experiencing no crises or challenges in their personal lives.

In a supposedly ideal world the role of the college is to bolster the child’s faith through religion classes that indoctrinate the student in the church’s 27 fundamental doctrinal beliefs. Aided by on-campus spiritual programs, the college strictly enforces the church’s lifestyle teachings in such areas as dress, entertainment and recreation, drugs, and alcohol, producing graduates who subscribe to all our lifestyle stan-
standards for the rest of their lives.

Upon graduation, the child marries an Adventist and either works for the church or lives in a strong Adventist community, complete with Adventist church and school. Then, having their own children, they repeat the model and live happily ever after.

For many individuals, however, this is not a real-world scenario. Many heartbroken parents can tell stories of children who grew up in an Adventist home, attended church and Sabbath school, went to Adventist schools but still ended up leaving the church.

Roger Dudley, director of the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University, followed a group of 1,500 teenagers for 10 years beginning in 1987, many of whom did not attend Adventist schools or colleges. When the study concluded, Dudley estimated that “at least 40 percent of Seventh-day Adventist teenagers in North America will essentially drop out of the church by their middle 20s. A actually, more drop out, but some will return.” Of those remaining, only 56 percent attend church regularly.

Adventist doctrines do not appear to be a major problem for those who drop out. Although Adventist colleges are often blamed by parents for these departures because, it is claimed, they cause students to question the church’s theological positions and do not enforce lifestyle practices, the truth is far more complex.

What Do They Need?

According to many psychological models, college-age youth need to be challenged in their belief and value structure in order for it to become their own. We have all observed students who avoided this process in college and then had disastrous identity crises after being married and having children. Although more research needs to be done on Christian college campuses, a number of models are helpful.

Lawrence Kohlberg provides a three-level model for developing principled moral reasoning. The highest level of development enables the individual to control his or her conduct on an internal basis because “standards flow from the source of an enlightened conscience, and the motivation to act is based upon an inner process of thought and judgment.”

Ernest Pascarella discovered that Bible colleges offer the least amount of growth toward Kohlberg’s highest level of principled moral reasoning. The greatest growth took place at liberal arts colleges. Adventist colleges typically avoid the strict, authoritarian approach found on many Bible college campuses and tend to stress a more liberal arts orientation. Some voices in the church suggest that we should return to a more Bible college approach. But would such an approach produce the kind of faith transmission we want?

One of the most helpful theories for Adventist colleges grows out of the work of Erik Erikson, who stresses the importance of identity formation during the college years. James Marcia has taken Erikson’s theories and developed very practical descriptions of four identity stages centered on crisis and commitment. His four stages include identity diffused, identity foreclosed, moratorium, and identity achieved.

One of the key roles of an Adventist college should be to help freshmen move from stage to stage by their senior year. Research completed on both secular and Christian campuses, however, finds that only about half of all students experience such growth.

Why is such growth important for Adventist college students? Why shouldn’t they just hold as tightly to their beliefs as their parents do, which is the case for identity foreclosed individuals? As Van Wicklin, Burwell, and Butman note, our children need to acquire a “transformed image of self and world sufficient to serve as a foundation for adult life.” Without such transformation, their unique talents are lost. Such hardworking individuals do well so long as they stay close to their “sources of approval.” They “tend to be low in personal autonomy and self-directedness and high in their need for social approval . . . . These students retain their sense of security and self-esteem as long as they remain in

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North American Adventist Colleges

1. Andrews University
   Berrien Springs, Michigan
2. Atlantic Union College
   South Lancaster, Massachusetts
3. Canadian University College
   College Heights, Alberta, Canada
4. Columbia Union College
   Takoma Park, Maryland
5. Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences
   Orlando, Florida
6. Griggs University (Home Study International)
   Silver Spring, Maryland
7. Kettering College of Medical Arts
   Kettering, Ohio
8. La Sierra University
   Riverside, California
9. Loma Linda University
   Loma Linda, California
10. Oakwood College
    Huntsville, Alabama
11. Pacific Union College
    Angelina, California
12. Southern Adventist University
    Collegedale, Tennessee
13. Southwestern Adventist University
    Keene, Texas
14. Union College
    Lincoln, Nebraska
15. Walla Walla College
    College Place, Washington
A Fabric of Faithfulness

Steven Garber served on the faculty of the American Studies Program, an interdisciplinary semester of study on Capitol Hill for the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, when he interviewed individuals who graduated from Christian colleges. Among those who had a "coherent faith that meaningfully connects personal disciplines with public duties" he found the following three traits without exception:

Convictions—a Christian worldview sufficient for the challenges found in secularization and pluralization of the modern world.

Character—teachers who incarnated the worldview students came to identify as their own.

Community—friendships with whose whose common life was embedded in that worldview providing a "network of stimulation and support" showing that "the ideas could be coherent across the whole of life."

————

Steven Garber, The Fabric of Faithfulness. Weaving Together Belief and Behavior During the University Years (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), pp. 37, 111.

A Divine Blueprint

Ellen White dealt with this issue, and her counsel seems to serve as a precursor to modern educational thought. She wrote: "The severe training of youth, without properly directing them to think and act for themselves as their own capacity and turn of mind will allow, that by this means they may have growth of thought, feelings of self-respect, and confidence in their own ability to perform, will ever produce a class who are weak in mental and moral power. And when they stand in the world to act for themselves, they will reveal the fact that they were trained like the animals, and not educated. Their wills, instead of being guided, were forced into subjection by the harsh discipline of parents and teachers."5

A gain, notice her words: "There are many families of children who appear to be well trained . . . ; but when the system which has held them to set rules is broken up, they seem to be incapable of thinking, acting, or deciding for themselves . . . . They have not been thrown upon their own judgment as fast and as far as practicable, and therefore their minds have not been properly developed and strengthened. They have so long been absolutely controlled by their parents that they rely wholly upon them."6

When Ellen White wrote about students needing to be "thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought," she was writing about the need for identity-achieved college graduates, to use more modern terminology.

Yet when we see Adventist colleges attempting to produce the kind of student urged by Ellen White, misunderstandings easily develop. We don't like to see our children going through crises of any kind. However, we have to prod our children and students to become identity achieved for long-lasting results.

Parents walk a balancing act in raising children in a sheltered yet open environment; our colleges feel the same tension. Sometimes parents and colleges do not get the balance exactly right, but we must constructively learn together.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Establishing this balance on an Adventist campus requires a number of paradoxes.8

We want our colleges to:

- Offer a "balance of challenge and support."
- Recognize that the developmental needs of freshmen are different from seniors or graduate students.
- "Renounce congenial neutrality . . . and embrace without apology its own heritage and discipline" and be "without embarrassment and without apology . . . partisan," to use Charles Scriven's words.9
- Promote a disciplined understanding of our heritage not focused on "prepackaged sets of questions and answers" but on "creativity, logical rigor, and self-critical honesty."10
- Embody academic excellence within the context of a Christian worldview so that graduates will think Christianly through the integration of faith into every aspect of their lives.
- Offer value-laden rather than value-free classes.
- Employ professors who "push the little boats away from the dock" but are there to help them in the "painful process of rebuilding" students' worldviews by clearly stating their convictions without forcing students to accept their views. They serve a dual role as dissonance-raisers and mentors solidly grounded in the belief system of the college mission. They know how to blend the parent and peer role. They can find the middle ground between professionalization and indoctrination—professors who can be truth seekers and still be loyal to the church that founded the college and to the expectations of the constituency.

Ellen White wrote, "Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly to understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application."11

- Provide an education that is both erudite and religious.
- Combine a community of inquiry and conviction and be both clinical and pastoral—where students are "cared for even while they are stretched as learners."12
- Exhibit patience with the graduates of our colleges to see the greater fruition of their efforts in the years fol-
\begin{itemize}
  \item Recognize that all three institutions—families, local congregations, and schools and colleges—have to work together to be successful in faith transmission. (A Roman Catholic colleague told me that priests and bishops sometimes ask Catholic colleges, "Why aren’t you turning out better Catholics?" He said, "We respond, ‘Why aren’t you sending us better Catholics?’")
  \item Help create a climate in local congregations that is conducive to Christian growth. According to Dudley’s study referenced earlier, many of our students leave the church because of the climate of the lack of active recruitment for graduates to become involved in local church life.
\end{itemize}

It’s Elementary!

How can our colleges go about graduating more identity-achieved individuals?

\begin{itemize}
  \item Expose students to moral dilemma discussions.
  \item Promote active learning in all classes, especially religion.
  \item Provide intellectually and spiritually centered classrooms.
  \item Integrate community involvement into learning (the Student Missionary, Taskforce, and summer camp programs are especially valuable).
  \item Provide contact with faculty members outside of class.
  \item Plan activities that appeal to students’ spiritual needs: chapel services, dormitory worship activities, weeks of prayer, Sabbath school and worship services, weekend spiritual retreats, prayer conferences.
\end{itemize}

We’re All in It Together

Let’s return to my daughter’s concern about a cloistered Adventist setting inhibiting spiritual growth. A dventist colleges need to balance the paradoxes mentioned above in order for faith transmission to take place. Having that happen in an Adventist college with committed Adventist teachers, administrators, and staff members will bear greater results than if the exploration to become identity-achieved takes place in a secular setting with professors who have little or no sympathy or understanding for a Christian worldview.

When we see young people leave the church, let’s take joint responsibility—as families, local congregations, and the community of higher education—to love them back. When we see our young people going through a crisis, let’s be patient with the college and our children, because the long-term results for faith transmission will be gloriously successful—and eternal.

Richard C. Osborn is vice president for Education, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. He helps provide leadership to the 15 Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities located in North America.


2The bibliography on this topic could be very long. Three articles were of particular value for this article. Roger Dudley has written voluminously on this topic, with his latest article being very helpful: “Understanding the Spiritual Development and the Faith Experience of College and University Students on Christian Campuses,” Journal of Research on Christian Education 8, No. 1 (Spring 1999): 5-28. Calvin College hosted a conference dealing with these broad issues in April 1993, which resulted in an outstanding book summarizing much research edited by D. John Lee and Gloria Goris Stronks, A Seminarian in Christian Higher Education, Calvin Center Series (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994). A nother article of value was written by Ernest T. Pascarella, “College’s Influence Principled Moral Reasoning,” Educational Record, Summer/Fall 1997, pp. 47-55.


6Ibid., pp. 132, 133.


8Some of these ideas come from Lee and Stronks.


11W hite, Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 154.

Working the Angles

Financing an Adventist education may be difficult, but it’s not impossible. And it may be easier than you suppose.

BY GENE EDELBACH

School was to start in just two short weeks. Her phone call began innocently enough: “I’ve been thinking about it all summer, and I’ve decided that I need to be at your school, not community college.”

Vicky had been accepted to our school months ago. Her grades were great, and admissions was not an issue. Two thirds of the battle won—she wanted to be here and we wanted her. It seemed too easy, and it was.

“So Vicky, how about finances?” A long pause.

“Well, I have enough saved for community college, and I’ll work real hard,” she volunteered.

Thus the struggle began, a struggle faced every term by thousands of students wanting the value of a Seventh-day Adventist higher education.

The Big Question

After working for a substantial number of years in the enrollment area of Seventh-day Adventist higher education, I can honestly say that it is rare that I spend very much time convincing students and parents of the need for Christian education. Instead, the number one question asked is “How can I pay for the value I want?”

After some discussion Vicky realized her community college savings and her dedicated hard work would cover about 35 percent of her year’s educational costs. Her parents decided they could find a few thousand dollars if the school would be willing to divide their contribution into payments. The school was willing.

It was suggested to her that maybe her church could help. Vicky was skeptical. It was a small church, and she was embarrassed to ask. The church was in a different union 1,500 miles away. She had a lot of reasons it wouldn’t work. We sweetened the deal. If Vicky raised $2,800, we would find a donor to cover the rest. Vicky stalled for two days, too discouraged to do anything.

I called and suggested that she ask her pastor for help. She finally did, but he told her in a kind but firm way that asking was her job, and he gave her a few names of members to contact. Vicky sat for two more days—enough more discouraged.

Finally, three days before registration, Vicky made her first phone call. Two hours later a very excited Vicky called me to ask if the offer was still good. She not only had found her missing money, but had raised $1,000 for the next school year.

Fitting the Pieces Together

While not every story is as successful as Vicky’s, most are, if the same components are involved. Although very few people can just write out a check each month to cover the costs, and only in very rare cases can students work off the entire cost, an Adventist education is accessible for at least 99 percent of those who are reading this article. More than 90 percent of the students who attend Adventist colleges or universities receive some financial aid. At least 50 percent have more than one half of their bill covered by aid, and
more than 25 percent attend Adventist higher education without any parental assistance.

Although it's true that factors such as income and achievement determine your assigned aid category, your category of aid is usually compatible with need. And special exceptions can happen in unique circumstances. Certainly every student is different, and needs vary drastically from family to family. There are, however, some standard contributing factors to financing an Adventist education successfully.

Start planning early. Paying private elementary and academy tuition will usually prohibit development of a big college fund for most Adventists. However, even if presavings are out of the question, other preparations are possible. 1. Begin by looking for Internet or nongovernment scholarships during the summer between the student's junior and senior years in high school. 2. Apply for loans and grants during January and February of the student's senior year by filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). 3. Finally, and maybe most important, the student should realize that grade point averages, leadership, and extracurricular involvement starting in the ninth-grade year will make a major impact in funding college or university. Students who are involved in high school extracurricular activities and are academically successful are desirable to colleges and universities, and schools are willing to pay to get them.

How much? It depends on the school and the student's achievement level, but most qualified incoming freshmen will receive $800-$5,000 in institutional money, and a few of the highest achievers will receive much more.

Timely application and high school success can also make a big difference in nonschool aid as well. Many state grants require application by a certain deadline and have set GPA requirements. Here in California, for example, many of our students receive the California State Grant of more than $9,000 in free money each year; however, anyone not applying by March 2 is immediately disqualified. While most state grants are not this high, many can reach sizable amounts.

Keep your eyes open. After enrolling in college, students can continue to have an impact on how the bill is paid. All Adventist schools have endowed money to give away each year. This money, given by generous alumni and other interested individuals, is usually awarded to students who maintain a B+ or higher grade point average or excel in certain areas. Some schools have renewable scholarships and/or loans based on grade point averages that turn to grants when the student graduates. Students have an opportunity to apply for these midway through each year.

Get a job. The good old days, when a student could work off their entire bill, are gone. This does not mean, however, that work cannot play a major role in funding a college or university education. Ten to 20 hours of work each week is common and can result in $1,000 to $3,000 toward educational costs. Summer is also a great time for the student to contribute, when it's not uncommon for an individual to earn $2,000 to $3,000.

In addition to the summer work that a student might find near their home, many other possibilities for employment exist. Most Adventist colleges or universities employ a substantial number of

Learning to Lean

A small group of literature evangelists from Weimar Institute were canvassing in Chehalis, Washington, going home to home, offering a variety of Christian books in return for donations for their Christian education.

Suddenly, while they were driving, the car's muffler lost its connection with the rest of the car. The group limped their way to a muffler shop across town, but the man said, "Sorry, I can't repair it this afternoon, and it'll cost you at least $200."

After the members of the group explained their predicament, including a sketch of their goals in mission service, the man relented, "Well, I guess I can at least look at it."

A half hour later, as the man finished welding, TeRay Bingham grabbed some books and began a canvass. The man listened politely, slightly bored, then pointed at The Great Controversy and God's Answers, asking, "What's the usual donation for these two?"

"A bout $20," TeRay answered as the others prayed silently.

"You just bought yourself a new muffler. " The mechanic smiled broadly, taking the two books into his office. He then told them of his dream that his own children would learn to serve the Lord and grow up as faithful Christians.

Literature evangelism brings young people to their knees in prayer as they learn to serve others. More than 30 Weimar students learned lessons in trust last summer in programs that typically last eight to 10 weeks.

Sara Matthews studies at the Weimar Institute, near Auburn, California.
student workers on their campuses or in affiliated industries. Many schools assist with summer living expenses by paying a bonus to students who work the entire summer. The Adventist Church has many opportunities for student summer work, such as Taskforce, book sales, and summer camps. These jobs not only make money, but provide a useful service, and many times provide additional matching money from the college or university as well.

Don’t forget your uncle. For better or worse the U.S. government is probably the number one contributor to funding students through the Adventist higher education system. While the schools themselves do not accept government funding, students have for many years. Most of this money is in the form of no- or low-interest loans with very easy payback requirements. Amounts vary, but they range from approximately $2,500 to $18,000 per year. Federal government grant money is based mostly on need and ranges from zero to more than $5,000 annually.

For most of the successful students, money will come from many sources. Creativity, persistence, and working closely with your school’s enrollment and/or financial aid counselor are very important. Students should not give up their dreams of an Adventist education until they have exhausted every resource and all professional assistance.

While some payment plans may include only parent payments, student work, and student achievement grants, a more typical financial package might include federal and state grants and loans, parent payments, student work, school grants, endowed money, outside scholarships, a contribution from the local church with student funds matched by the school, and help from a grandparent or relative.

We Can Work It Out
Funding an education at an Adventist college or university is challenging but possible for almost everyone, rich or poor. Out of hundreds of tough cases I see every year, only one or two cannot be resolved if all parties contribute what they can, and if all resources are properly utilized. Prayer, dedication, and hard work almost always ensure success.

Although academic excellence is found on every Adventist campus, the argument certainly can be made that many schools, both government and private, also offer an academic experience of equal quality and many times for less cost. This is true, but can the other schools offer the values found in an Adventist education? Will the other schools provide the academic training in a safe environment in which faith and values are integrated with learning? Will the environment nurture spiritual and social growth grounded in the Adventist tradition? Will the student’s faith and commitment to God, humanity, and the church grow or decrease?

Look closely at the Adventist school of your choice. You will find an extraordinary value financially obtainable to almost everyone.

Gene Edelbach is vice president for enrollment services at La Sierra University in Riverside, California.

Betsy’s Story
Walking across our campus, I can’t help noticing how beautiful it is. We are situated between two sparkling blue lakes, and as I look at the sky it is bright and clear. On this glorious Florida day my thoughts linger on a phone call of just a few minutes earlier. I spoke with Betsy, a student worker in my department. Betsy told me about a recent setback that kept her from coming to work. This time it was “car trouble.”

Betsy has had her share of setbacks over the past few months. When I first met her she and her young husband were eagerly awaiting the birth of their first child. I think that Betsy's college family was looking forward to the birth just as eagerly as she was.

A n Adventist education is accessible for at least 99 percent of those who want it.
But then tragedy struck without warning. Something went terribly wrong, and there were complications. Sadly, the baby did not survive. We all cried with this young couple as they faced their loss. There are no words that can comfort at such times; only faith in our heavenly Father can see us through. Somehow Betsy found that faith and clung to it. Little by little God was helping her with her pain. I asked Betsy what brought her through her tragedy.

She shared with me that the love of her husband and the care, concern, support, and prayers of fellow students, faculty, and staff were her lifeline.

Betsy always has a smile on her face and a pleasant word for me each time I see her. Yes, she has had setbacks in her young life, but she has also claimed the promises that we are all valuable to God. We are not forgotten. God watches over Betsy, just like He watches over you and me.

Dawn McLendon is director of marketing and recruiting for Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences.
Parents: Partners or Pushers?

Discovering God’s will for their lives is one thing our children have to learn for themselves.

BY BENJIE LEACH

OUR 18-YEAR-OLD SON HAS JUST graduated from academy. During his senior year he took a religion class with a career component, but he still can’t decide what career he wants to pursue, or even what to major in. He tells you that he’s decided not to go directly to college. He says it would be a waste of time and money. He’s decided to get a job at Taco Bell until he has decided on a major and career. What does a good parent do?

As parents one of our greatest desires is for our children’s happiness and success. We’re eager to give them every advantage physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We dedicate them to the Lord when they’re only babies, and spend years providing them with food, clothing, and shelter. We try to give them the best possible education, but in the end (and this is the hardest part) we have to step back and trust the Lord to lead.

Of course, we’ve exposed our children to all kinds of careers, read them books that highlight various careers; helped them observe honorable people in their work; and as they got older, encouraged them to shadow people in careers they find interesting and urged them to follow their dreams.

But often, and no one’s to blame, a student stands on the edge of adulthood and stares into an uncertain future with no firm idea about which career path to choose.

This is no time to panic. Most 18-year-olds are clueless about what they want to do for the rest of their lives (I’ve met some 50-year-olds who aren’t sure what they want to
be when they grow up either). And by the same token, if every freshman who walks into my office and tells me he or she wants to be a surgeon were to become one, there wouldn't be enough operating rooms to go around.

At this point in your child's decision-making process, you have at least two options: you can encourage him or her to work at Taco Bell (after all, this could be an opportunity to begin a long and satisfying career making bean burritos), or you can encourage your child to spend at least a semester or two at an Adventist college—even if he or she hasn't decided on a major.

Encourage Exploration

Encourage your student to go to the college's counseling and testing center and take a career test. The Strong Career Interest Test is probably the best known and most effective test available. It's not a silver bullet that tells the one and only occupation that your student should choose, but it can give some general guidelines about which occupations might best be suited to his or her interests and in their majors. A teacher or a Christian friend might spark an interest in an occupation that he or she has never even considered.

A year at an Adventist college or university will also give your student opportunities to grow in his or her spiritual experience. Christian friends, a Week of Prayer, a Bible study group in the dorm, or a vespers program might be the defining moment of his or her spiritual life.

Even if students don't decide on a major or career in the first year or two of college, they might be inspired to serve as a student missionary or Taskforce volunteer. They can enter the Adventist Colleges Abroad program and study overseas, learn another language, and broaden their outlook on life. The experiences can be so enriching that they help students see new and unexpected directions the Lord may be leading in their lives.

On Becoming a Child of God

Few people would consider contracting malaria as a contributing factor in a spiritual awakening. Not so for Victoria Thornton, a senior nursing student at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California. She had heard of the Students for International Mission Service (SIMS) program before, and it had interested her, but she felt she didn't really have a service to offer. That is, until she talked with a couple fellow nursing students who had recently returned from Kenya.

“I got really excited about Kenya, but I don’t think I was ready to go then spiritually, emotionally, or professionally,” says Victoria.

For that reason, she wasn’t really surprised when it seemed that all of the doors to Kenya—namely, finances and school obligations—were closed to her. Victoria continued with her coursework and kept a possible trip to Kenya in her prayers.

Then, in December of last year, Victoria felt God leading her to Kenya once again. “I’ve always been interested in missions, but until I was at LLU I never had a skill like nursing that would enable me to be a...
skills. It may also suggest some specific occupations that he or she has never even considered.

At the counseling center students have access to such materials as the Occupational Outlook Handbook, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, which contains extensive occupational information. Sitting down with a career counselor and going over this interest test can help students recognize several potential occupations they can pursue.

College career days or career fairs provide opportunities for students to speak to people who are willing to share information about their particular occupations: what education and abilities are needed, what the job is really like, what the job market looks like for the future. This helps students explore an interesting occupation with a knowledgeable, fulfilled expert.

Making Connections

Parents can encourage their sons and daughters to make good friends who are connected to Christ. Often the Lord speaks through Christian friends and teachers, helping young people focus on their strengths—and their weaknesses (knowing that they’re not very good around sick people helps them eliminate nursing as a career option).

During the first two years at a liberal arts college, a student will take the general education curriculum. These classes might include one that helps him or her to decide on a career. Sometimes while taking general education courses students begin to see that they really enjoy history, business, music, etc., and this sparks an interest that develops into a career.

Even though your student may be undecided during those first years of college, you should encourage him or her to establish good study habits. Study skills classes are available to help make the grades necessary to get into their chosen career—when they decide what that is.

The Heavenly Hot Line

I hope that you’re praying for your parent who says he will pay his child’s tuition and not let that “beneath” family’s dignity. I’ve heard parents protest that a certain career is “beneath” the family’s dignity. I’ve observed more than one parent who says he will pay his child’s tuition and not let that “beneath” family’s dignity.

Some parents make the mistake of pressuring their sons and daughters to go into specific careers. Sometimes it is a career, such as medicine, that the parents themselves missed out on. Other times it is a career that would be helpful to the family, such as taking over the family health food business. I’ve heard parents protest that a certain career is “beneath” the family’s dignity. I’ve observed more than one parent who says he will pay his child’s tuition and not let that “beneath” family’s dignity.

missionary. I’ve always wanted to let children of different nationalities know that they are loved. I chose Kenya because of that desire I believe God has planted in me,” acknowledges Victoria.

Both Victoria and her roommate, Allison Jackson, also a nursing student, prayed, asking God to show them the way. Though over the past few months Victoria had increased her nursing skills enough that she was comfortable going on a mission trip, she knew struggles still lay ahead. “It was difficult,” recalls Victoria. “I knew I was going, and I knew God wanted me to go. I just didn’t know what to do about it.”

Suddenly doors that were previously closed began to open for the students. Each obstacle that had been a problem earlier melted away before them.

In June Victoria, her roommate, Allison, and Martha Lopez, another nursing student, left for Kendu Bay, Kenya. The people of Kendu Bay welcomed the young women with wide smiles.

For the next seven weeks they worked at Kendu Adventist Hospital during the day, while at night the Kendu people taught them the language, the culture, how to laugh, and how to prepare food to avoid becoming sick. Because of the village’s close proximity to the dampness of Lake Victoria, sickness is a recurring problem, and malaria is extremely common.

Within the first week Allison contracted malaria. It quickly spread to Martha, and finally to Victoria. All three young women recovered with the help of treatment and were able to continue their work in the hospital.

Victoria looks back on her time in Kenya as a turning point in her spiritual life. “I wasn’t treated like a nurse, a woman, a White person, or even an American. They treated me like a child of God. They gave me such a sense of love, and each of them gave God all the glory.”

Victoria is scheduled to graduate with a Bachelor of Nursing degree in March 2000 and plans to pursue a career in pediatric oncology at Loma Linda University. She would love to return to Kenya someday and continue what she feels is part of God’s plan for her life.

Bend, but Don’t Break

By Dustin R. Jones, University Relations, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California.
tution only if he or she chooses a certain major, but not one dime if a different one is selected. I’ve had parents ask me to “sell” their son or daughter on a specific career.

A wise parent will be a “disinterested” partner. This doesn’t mean that you have no interest in your child’s career choice. It simply means that you won’t push your child into a career. A good parent will encourage the child to let the Lord lead in important career decisions. I know it’s hard, but it’s essential we keep in mind that your son or daughter has to follow the Lord’s lead, not yours.

Wise Christian parents teach their sons and daughters solid Christian values regarding career choices. Today’s young people are exposed to all kinds of media messages telling them that happiness is directly related to the salary they make. I encourage college students to find careers that suit them so well that they would volunteer to do them—even if they didn’t get a paycheck.

The Lord has a special ministry for each of us, whether it’s a pastoral ministry, a health ministry, a business ministry, an educational ministry, an auto mechanic ministry, or, yes, even a Taco Bell ministry.

A person is happiest when he or she has found that special ministry. And greater than the satisfaction of knowing that your child is doing well professionally or materially is the knowledge that he or she is listening to the Lord and following His lead. “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord” (Jer. 9:23, 24, NIV).

Benjie Leach is director of counseling and testing at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas.

Growing Faith

It was Friday night, and I and a group of friends had retreated from the harried pace of campus life. We had spent time socializing, then drifted into singing and sharing what God had done in our lives during the past week.

I began to feel trapped. I’ve heard all this before, I thought. Then someone made a comment about end-time events. My lips began to move. “I hate the church. I hate the church for its apocalyptic hope, the hope of the end.” It was a voice of frustration.

The group was silent, and so again was I. Inside I was seething, angry at the hypocrisy, the shallow level of communication that I thought I perceived.

I’m still frustrated at hearing the same religious clichés; however, my line of thinking has gone much deeper. The spiritual experience of that night did not resonate with me. But who am I to judge someone else’s religious experience? Am I so intent on my religious ideal that I trample others’ spirituality because theirs doesn’t resonate with my own?

It’s in times such as these that I fall back on my Adventist education. The years of Adventist education I have received are beginning to pay off. The mental processes that I have shared come, in part, from an experience that speaks to a questioning tolerance of different ideas. In the environment of Adventist education I’ve been able to test my wings without falling from grace.

This education has provided me with teachers who have been willing to pick me up and brush me off after every foray. They have been willing to smile at my sometimes small-minded and stubbornly held ideas. These teachers have been able to turn me back to a truly Christian perspective. Through the good, the bad, and the ugly, this education has given me a flexible framework upon which to hang the skeletal structure of my beliefs.

The flesh will come slowly, the process never fully complete.

Chris Drake is a senior at Walla Walla College, currently serving as a student missionary in Norway.
Rejuvenation

I’ve had the privilege of pastoring on the campus of Columbia Union College for the past four years. There have been days when, as the campus chaplain, I haven’t looked at my job as a privilege, but rather as an excruciating burden. During the first few months at the job I began to meet with a student named Joey.* I knew his family fairly well. His father, the minister of a large church, was a well-respected person. Joey came by the office week after week, for about an hour, sharing his beliefs and understanding of God. It became quite clear to me that he no longer believed in the same God his parents believed in. In fact, he claimed that he no longer believed in God.

After a couple months I began to feel frustrated, that my time was being wasted. Why did Joey keep coming by?

Finally I got the courage to ask. “Joey, why are you spending all this money attending a Christian college?”

I wish I had a great anecdote to tell about when I prayed, “God, I’m lonely,” and I met the most wonderful person and we fell in love. But that hasn’t happened. I wish I could say that God has dramatically shown me the direction I should take for my life, but instead I’ve had to muddle my own way through college. What I have taken for God’s leading in my life may have really been my dad’s voice.

Years of Christian education won’t automatically make you believe in God. Growing up in the church doesn’t necessarily put you in the belief club. This is not something you can be grandfathered into. There comes a time when you must decide for yourself about your belief in God’s existence.

I had not really thought much about how I felt about this question until recently. Now I’m almost finished with college, and I’ll be going to a public university far from home or working in a strange city. No one will be there to tie me to the church. Without the foundation of my own personal belief in God, my faith will not survive. Even though my parents taught me about God all my life, I still have to accept His existence myself.

“Is there a God who hears me?” I believe there is—even if I can’t prove it. God doesn’t necessarily make lives different in superficial ways. He changes lives from within. He changes our spirits, our inner beings. We see Him in the changes He makes in our personal characters. For those who are searching for God, keep looking. He’s out there—looking for you.

Hans Olson is a senior mass communications major at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, and managing editor of the campus newspaper, The Southern Accent.

Testimonies of Faith

Does God Exist?

I was born into the home of an Adventist minister who is also the son of an Adventist minister. In fact, virtually my entire family is Adventist and has worked for the church in some way or another. For me, there was never any option but to say, “Yes, God exists.”

I’ve been in the Adventist educational system for 15 years. I have been taught that there is no answer other than yes to the question of God’s existence. But as a journalism student, I’ve been taught to question everything. . . . everything except the question “Does God exist?”

I wish I had a great anecdote to tell about when I prayed, “God, I’m lonely,” and I met the most wonderful person and we fell in love. But that hasn’t happened. I wish I could say that God has dramatically shown me the direction I should take for my life, but instead I’ve had to muddle my own way through college. What I have taken for God’s leading in my life may have really been my dad’s voice.

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Hans Olson is a senior mass communications major at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, and managing editor of the campus newspaper, The Southern Accent.

Healing and Being Healed

My faith has grown hand in hand with my growth in my profession. In the medical field many of the most central issues of life—birth, physical development, sickness, invalidism, aging, and of course death—come into focus. If a person is willing to listen, nursing speaks of the goodness and mercy of God every day, in every experience.

As a nursing student I was involved in the care of a woman who had suffered cardiac arrest on the operating table. She had, according to the assessment of the doctors, suffered irreversible brain damage. Her family was told that she would likely remain in a vegetative state.

Nevertheless, the nursing group continued normal daily care for her: combing her hair, talking to her, rubbing her hand, singing to her, and praying with her. Day after day she remained in a fetal position, unresponsive.

We continued. Somehow we knew that Christ had not given up, and neither should we. Six months later she walked out of the hos-
Follow the Leader

I was never this close to God back home, even though I always felt “religious enough.”

Before leaving, I felt nervous and scared, but still excited. I’d never stayed farther away from home than Pacific Union College, which is an hour away from my house. I wasn’t as independent then, and I considered not going, but now I’m really glad I did. I think God was keeping at me to get me to come. I had already told World M issions “No,” and they called me again for an interview. After I passed screening committee and they asked me if I was sure that I didn’t want to do it, I decided that I had better go, because this is where God wanted me, and I haven’t been sorry.

The best advice I can give to future student missionaries is to pray about your decision, either to really confirm it or to gain strength from God’s divine supply of power and love.

My best memory with my students was getting to know them better last weekend outside of class on our class trip as freshman sponsor.

My best memory with other teachers was the weekend we went to another island for a weekend and really bonded as friends. Another one involving students and teachers was an awesome Friday night service we had back in November. We wrote and directed a skit based on the great controversy, and had an agape feast with beautiful music. That was a wonderful witness to the students.

The most valuable thing I’ve learned this year is to depend more on God. He’s led me all the way; I couldn’t have made it without daily prayer and Bible study.

This has been the best year of my life. I’ve learned even more about life than I’ve taught my students, and I’ve gained a closer relationship with God in the process.

Stephanie Fritz attends Pacific Union College. She served on the island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia.
It Was Nothing

Nine months in Peru, filled with challenges, as well as joys. Character-building experiences were a daily experience. So was depending on God. So was adventure. The day was long and extremely hot. I smiled, searching my mind for the appropriate verb conjugations to converse with the church family I was visiting. It was the end of a wonderful Christmas trip in Ecuador with student missionary friends. They caught the bus back to their school while I waited for my flight. Four hours of small talk with strangers in Spanish. I was exhausted, my only thought of the air-conditioning in the airport. To leave me alone was unthinkable. More small talk in Spanish. I was out of vocabulary words. I was relieved to discover no one seated next to me on the plane. An empty seat separated me from my only neighbor. I buried myself in my Bible and journal, unwilling to subject myself to two hours of chitchat.

The man on my left suffered no such restraints. "Where are you traveling to?" Lima, obviously, I thought; the flight doesn't stop anywhere else. I replied politely and returned to my journal. "Just traveling?" I answered curtly, "I work there." Back to my journal. "What do you do?" queried my persistent seatmate. I checked a sigh. "I'm a student missionary teaching violin." My words incriminated me. If I was really in South America to serve, why wasn't I even acting civil? His next words caused me to shut my journal and look fully at him for the first time. "What church?" He settled in for a good long talk. "Maybe your church has the answers to my questions." He hit me with some of the most difficult questions he could think of. Where is God when bad things happen to little children? Why are you a believer? Do you believe Christ died for us? I began to pray, "Lord, I know these are the questions I will face as a pastor, but Lord, I'm not ready for this now." The Lord replied with Jeremiah 1:6-8, and for two hours I prayed without ceasing. I had a three-way conversation, in two languages. That God used me, I have no doubt. My Spanish has never been so good before or since. I was on a high from sharing the gospel.

His last question stuck with me: "Why did you come here from the United States to work?" The implications were clear—why leave a cushy, clean, wealthy environment to come to a country where you can't drink the water? It hit me as I waited for my luggage. Who was I to complain about anything? What I did was truly nothing.

My Lord had suffered far worse culture shock than I, voluntarily traveling from glory to filth. He came to serve, and commanded me to do likewise. That's why I came. Because in serving, I deepened my walk with God. I learned to wait on the Lord, to trust Him for the details of my life. I learned to hold on tight and let go. I grew in my understanding of the world and God. In my spiritual life I aged 10 years (at least).

In service, the issue is not where we are called, but that we are all called—some across the world, some across the country, some across the street, but we are all called. In answering the call of Isaiah 41:9, 10, I found peace and joy and help in all circumstances. The strength behind the service of student missionaries and Taskforce workers is to let us go out, so that we may approach each day with a fire to live, and love, and serve our Lord.

Holly Blackwelder is an assistant campus chaplain at Walla Walla College. She is studying for the pastoral ministry.

They're Only Words

It has been said, "A person who visits China for a week writes a book. Someone who visits for a month may write a postcard or letter. Those who stay for a year cannot write anything at all."

Many times we appreciate individuals who take a year off for service. They are called to serve and "help" others. In reality, it's the individual who changes. Living in Shanghai, China, for a year has taught me many things about life. It has also challenged me to grow spiritually and mentally.

I remember the first time I was asked to give a Bible study. It was to be held at the home of one of the church elders who would be interpreting for me. As I prepared I became nervous and started asking lots of questions. Would the interpreter understand my words as well as my meaning? Would I be able to answer their questions? Would they understand the message of the story and find it relevant for their lives? It was a case of nervous jitters.

Before I left for the meeting, my roommate offered to pray with me. He reminded me about the story of Moses and Aaron as they went before Pharaoh. Moses lacked confidence, but the Lord promised to give him the words to say.

I'll always remember that experience, because it was a chance for me to share my faith with others; at the same time it strengthened, my faith. It's a simple reminder I will
always carry with me. No matter the barriers—language, culture, or religion—I know that God will always give me the words to say.

Roy Wu is teaching English at the San Yu Language Institute in Shanghai, China.

On Eagle’s Wings

Until the accident our spring break was carefree—five female student missionaries enjoying a day at the beach in Kentung, “the Hawaii of Taiwan.”

The next day, headed back to the San Yu English Bible Center in Pingtung, the driver lost control of the bus on a wet curve. In a heartbeat a traffic accident in a foreign country changed all our lives. Our friend Jody Stout died instantly.

A lot of people think, OK, I’m doing mission work; nothing is going to happen to me. But something like this can happen anywhere.

It was rough on us. It tested us. The thing about it is God never leaves us. He’s always there. We may not understand it now, but all we can do is have faith in God’s wisdom and love.

Our students were amazed at how we reacted. They asked us, “Why didn’t your God prevent this?” They couldn’t make it fit with the loving Father God we had been teaching them about. So we explained that we live in a sinful world, that God wants something better for us, and that’s why He sent Jesus to earth. We have hope. We aren’t doomed to life just as it is today. God has a plan; He can even bring good from a time of crisis.

I’m back in school now at Southern Adventist University. Yes, I still have pain in my knee occasionally. Emotional healing takes time after the trauma of seeing a friend die when you’re both so far from home. But every day I thank the Lord for my parents, who made sure I got a Christian education. They and my teachers taught me to fly—allowed and even encouraged me to fly as far away as Taiwan to serve the Lord—and gave me the faith to know God will carry us on eagles’ wings in times of trouble (Ex. 19:4).

Yomary Rivera is a junior elementary education major at Southern Adventist University. She was a student missionary in Taiwan during the 1998-1999 school year.

In the Discovery Zone

I’ve changed in many ways. The whole time I’ve been going through all the cultural differences. I’ve also been in charge of kids not much younger than myself. I’ve been looked up to, despised, asked for advice, and ignored. I’ve been responsible for the education of more than 50 students, in not only the subjects of math and biology, but in training them “to be citizens on earth and in heaven.”

I’ve had to teach kids how to sit properly, show respect, study, to pick up their litter, and when to speak and when not to; all this with very discouraging results at times.

I’ve become more assertive to expect results when I ask for them (this may cause some difficulties with my siblings when I return home). I’ve learned to live on my own, buy my own food, toilet paper, and teaching supplies, and fight my way through airports. I can take bucket showers, write discipline slips, and hail a taxi. I’ve planned a pizza party (baked the pizza myself, picked out an approved movie, and kicked them all out at curfew). I’ve sponsored fund-raising events, fixed classroom tables, chased pet lizards out of class, stopped fights (none too serious), and made up millions (it seems) of finals—along with being badgered for the grades given. I’ve monitored detention, visited students, survived parent/teacher conferences, and confiscated Walkmans and pornography.

More than all this, though, I’ve grown a lot, spiritually and emotionally. I’ve learned much more about God and developed a stronger relationship with Him. I’ve learned to trust Him more (since there’s no one else around to depend on). I’ve learned to live on my own with God, away from my parents and sisters and friends and pets, and I can do it (though, of course, I’d much prefer living with them).

In these discoveries I also have come to an even clearer realization of how much my family and friends mean to me.

I’ve been living in a place where the electricity is never certain, where I have to get drinking water from another island, where fruit is not plentiful, and where whenever I walk through the streets (if you can call them that) all the kids run up to me to ask for money. I bathe in salt water, wake up to roommates screaming about the cockroach that just ran across their face, and every day face a roomful of young, energetic teenagers speaking in another language (when they’re supposed to be listening).

Now I’m coming back home, where I’m not a foreigner, but I’m afraid I’ll feel like one.

Gabrielle Kiele is a student at Walla Walla College. She was a schoolteacher in Ebeye, in the Marshall Islands.
Imprisoned Pastor Gives Bible Studies to Inmates

GARY KRAUSE

A recent Adventist Review (Aug. 12, 1999) featured Sri Lankan pastor and school principal M. Anthony Alexander, who has been held in prison “under suspicion of terrorism” since March 1998. Pastor Alexander is a former Global Mission pioneer, and half the pioneers working in Sri Lanka became Adventists through his ministry.

Many Adventists have written letters on Anthony’s behalf, and some have received diplomatic replies claiming he has confessed to supporting terrorism. Richard Lee Fenn, associate director of the General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department (PARL), quotes credible sources that say Anthony was tortured and apparently forced to sign a document written in Sinhalese, the language of Sri Lanka’s majority. Alexander can’t read or write in this language.

We understand that the attorney general’s department in Sri Lanka is preparing an indictment for this case to be taken up at the high court. The trial is expected sometime in November. Please continue to pray for Anthony and his wife, Saratha, and their five children.

John Graz, director of PARL, recently received a letter from Anthony—the first he has sent from jail to the General Conference—dated May 24. Here are some excerpts:

GREETINGS TO YOU IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, FROM YOUR BROTHER, A CHOSEN VESSEL FOR THE PRISON MINISTRY IN SRI LANKA. IT’S IN FACT MORE ENCOURAGING THAN CONSOILING WHEN I RECEIVE LETTERS FROM OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT WAS ON MY REQUEST THAT I WAS TRANSFERRED TO THIS NEW PRISON WHERE MORE THAN 800 TAMIL POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE IMPRISONED, WHEREAS BOGAMBARA PRISON HAD ONLY 26 TAMIL POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND THE REASON FOR MY REQUEST WAS TO GIVE SOME WORK TO MY NET AND BAIT. NOW I CAN REALLY FEEL THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMISSION STATED IN MATTHEW 25:36.

The thirst for the Living Water is inexpressible, and I am busy as never before, giving Bible studies and worshipping with them. I have to preach both on Sundays and Sabbath days and the other days teach them Bible, English, and electronics. While Jonah was sleeping in the bottom of the ship, the heathen were looking for Jonah. . . . May the Lord continue to bless you all in His ministry.

Your loving brother in Christ,
M. Alexander

CHOSEN VESSEL: Recent reports indicate that despite torture and death threats, imprisoned pastor Anthony Alexander is alive and well, preaching regularly and conducting Bible studies with fellow inmates.

“I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matt. 25:36, NIV).

You can further help by writing letters to Pastor Alexander and various authorities. For further information on how to write, please call 1-800-648-5824 or e-mail gminfo@adventist.org.
Andrea’s and Jessica’s Dilemmas

With so many other good options, why should a student attend an Adventist college?

BY MIKE MENNARD and JULIE Z. LEE

ANDREA DELMAN WANTED TO ATTEND an Adventist college for all the “advertised” reasons, the same reasons enthusiastically trumpeted by her local recruiter. She wanted to be near students who shared her Christian convictions. She wanted the spiritual options a Christian campus offers, such as worships, Christian concerts, after-glow, prayer groups. She wanted Christian friends and—if all went according to plan—a Christian spouse. These were the “perks” she had read about growing up in an Adventist school.

Unfortunately, Andrea wasn’t sure she could scrape together more than $15,000 for just one year at an Adventist college.

Instead, Andrea enrolled at a public university near an Adventist college. In doing so, she worked toward a B.A. in commercial drafting at a fraction of the cost of the Adventist college, all the while receiving the much-advertised benefits of Adventist education. She spent her weekends on the Adventist campus, attending Friday night worships and after-glow, Saturday morning Sabbath schools and worship services. She made so many friends on campus that most of them thought she attended the school. She even actively enjoyed the campus’s volleyball intramurals.

Andrea wasn’t trying to be cunning, just careful and cost-effective. Her decision was neither outlandish nor unique. So Adventist colleges are left to rethink the question: Why an Adventist college?

Jessica’s Dilemma

Thirty years ago the choice facing Adventist teenagers involved going to college—most likely an Adventist one—versus going to work. When Jessica Garay graduated from Antioch Senior High School in 1995, she faced a more complicated world.

In a job market that currently demands college degrees, Jessica’s options seemed fewer, yet more difficult. Her choices were not work versus study; rather, she had to decide which college or university to attend. Should she attend an Adventist college or try her hand at a state school?

Unsure at first, Jessica applied to both the University of California at Davis and Pacific Union College.

Once accepted to both schools, Jessica agonized over her next decision. “I knew that I was going to face the hardest decision of my life,” she says. UC-Davis is a nationally recognized school, particularly in physical therapy, her career of choice. She was glad that the campus was close to her home and tuition was dramatically less than that of any Adventist college. She wanted to make a decision that was right for her family and for her future. “I had to ask myself which college could provide me with the high-quality education I was looking for.”

In one sense, Jessica Garay was fortunate. Before ever filling out a tediously detailed college application she had already made up her mind to attend college, whether or not it was an Adventist one. A higher education usually leads to better salaries; on average, a student will earn $200,000 more in a lifetime for each year spent in college than a person with only a high school diploma will ever earn.

Furthermore, studies continue to prove that college education provides better job satisfaction and higher self-esteem. What’s more, a student with a college education tends to be a wiser time manager and a better planner for the future. Of course, these averages are just that—averages. What was most apparent to Jessica was the fact that if she wanted to
achieve her goals, she needed a college degree.

The unanswered question remained, nonetheless: Why an Aventist college?

Jessica weighed the pros and cons of choosing an Aventist college. The surface benefits came easily: Mom would prefer it; her friends from church would be there. Then she explored the deeper, more meaningful reasons.

**Friendships.** Having a roommate or classmate whose life has been positively affected by a spiritual relationship with God is no small benefit. After all, friendships formed in college often last a lifetime.

Crystal Edmister, biology major at Southern Adventist University, certainly appreciates this benefit, having first attended classes at her local community college. She says, “It’s such a blessing to be able to come back to my room and have my roommate comfort me after a hard test. My friends and I not only study and have fun together, but also have the privilege of praying and studying the Bible together.”

And one shouldn’t underestimate the lifelong friendships formed between students and teachers. As Jolene Harrell, communication major at Southern Adventist University, nears her graduation, she especially values the friendships she’s made with her teachers (apparently teachers are people too). “All of my teachers know my name and know quite a bit about me. They can give me one-on-one help if I need it, and I sometimes share some of my personal life with them.” And she also throws out this “shocking” realization: “Even many of my nonreligion teachers are great role models.”

These friendships with professors may account for the high graduation rate at Aventist schools. Nationwide, approximately two thirds of all college freshmen will not graduate; but students who do graduate often credit friendship with at least one professor as a factor in their success. What if students could easily befriend more than one?

**Freedom.** That's right, freedom. In most universities today, the opportunity to express overtly Christian views in the classroom without criticism is diminishing. Such freedom of expression has long been a staple of American education, but it is discouraged today as “sectarian.” Many argue that traditional Christian beliefs create a “hostile environment” for nonbelievers. At an Aventist college or university, teachers from each field of study will gladly share that God is relevant to their specializations—whether it’s quantum physics or graphic design.

The freedom is often most appreciated by non-Aventist Christians, such as Crystal Frutchey, recent English and education graduate from Pacific Union College. Crystal smiles at how many Aventist students, having spent their entire educational experience in Aventist schools, fail to appreciate this freedom. “Most would be surprised if they were to attend anywhere else and see what is being taught and what is not being taught.” She says of her classes, “The most important thing is the Christian environment. I can bring up God and issues of faith in class. My faith has grown and broadened from that.”

**Balance.** All colleges and universities explore big questions, but few of them offer answers. Aventist colleges and universities offer a dimension that other schools don’t: a balanced approach to life that brings faith and learning together. While offering the classics, such as art, music, history, science, and other components of a liberal arts education, the Christian college brings its faith to the college experience. In addition, Aventist schools make “service” an indispensable element in education, not just an extracurricular hobby.

By encouraging students to participate in programs such as the world missions, student-run church services, regular (or impromptu) Bible studies in the dorm, prison ministries, or soup kitchens, Aventist colleges are preparing students for lifelong service.

When Kara Cromwell, biology major at Columbia Union College, first visited CUC’s campus in Takoma Park, Maryland, she had no plans to attend the school. She’d already been accepted into Johns Hopkins University with scholarships; and, having attended Aventist schools for her entire life, she wanted to “run away” from yet another Aventist school. But when the school presented a slide show about the school's world missions program, she began to think differently. “I really believe in service,” Kara says, “so why should I run away from a place that emphasizes that?” She decided then “to go to a school that can offer me opportunities for service, as well as my education.”

**Spiritual Growth.** Higher education has often been compared to “soil” and students to seeds. During the college years most students begin to define themselves, to determine their values, and to become the individuals who will face the real world. In other words, students begin to develop roots. At Aventist colleges and universities students are surrounded by faculty, staff, and peers who create a safe environment for exploring diverse ideas without uprooting their faith.

Spiritual growth cannot take place without roots, and a time of nurturing will help those roots take hold. This
was key to Craig Chaya's decision. A medical student at Loma Linda University, Craig says, “I decided to attend an Adventist college rather than a public school because I wanted to be at a place that challenged my faith. But at the same time, I wanted to be nurtured in areas I felt weak in.”

The Uneasy Side of Adventist Schools

Jessica was impressed with the pros of Adventist colleges and universities. But there were concerns as well.

Many prospective students worry about being isolated from the “real world.” Others disagree strongly with lingering disputes over surface issues, such as jewelry, contemporary music, and competitive sports. But the greatest concern among prospective students and their parents is the one that kept Andrea Delman away—money.

Adventist colleges are expensive, to be sure. At the turn of the century, tuition at an Adventist college was about $14 a year. Today most ask for more than a thousand times that figure, which means that many students leave private colleges and universities in North America, Adventist schools rank in the lower third in cost. What’s more, U.S. News also ranked at least one Adventist college in its top 10 list of “best values,” a ratio based on quality to price.

The national magazine’s debt rankings tell us more about the students who attend Adventist colleges than the colleges themselves. More than most schools, Adventist colleges are keen at finding ways to help students pay for a private education, and some of these involve loans. As Glen Bobst, director of student finance at Pacific Union College, says: “Students should never say they cannot afford an Adventist college until they have actually sat down with one of our financial counselors. I guarantee, most will be surprised at what they find.”

Jessica and Andrea Make Their Decisions

After weighing the pros and cons, Jessica Garay chose an Adventist college. She is currently a senior at Pacific Union College. Now in her final year as a physical therapy student, Jessica says, “Christian education was the wisest decision of my life. Having gone to a public school, I noticed the difference immediately. People were so willing to help. And both students and teachers actually made an effort to be friendly.”

Andrea Delman, after two years of

Going the Extra Mile

I had the privilege of traveling with Into the Light, our Canadian University College singing/recruiting group, to several camp meetings across Canada last summer. After an exhausting flurry of appointments at the Ontario Conference camp meeting, we accepted the invitation of several lay leaders from one of Toronto’s downtown churches to join them for a street-witnessing service on Sunday evening.

The five young people were exhausted— as were Stephen Payne, our vice president for marketing and enrollment services, and I. Yet we believed this would be a good opportunity to meet a different set of needs than those at camp meeting.

As we drove through a rather rundown section of the city, I found myself inwardly grumbling. Hadn’t we already given enough? Did we really need to go out of our way to do something that wasn’t even on the schedule? How much more could we ask of our students?

Eventually we found the two woman who had invited us to help them. We carried sound equipment, helped set up the generator, gathered the hymnals and Bibles, and circled together for prayer. While part of the group began to sing, several of us invited children and adults from a neighboring park to join us.

Something amazing began to happen, both in our group and in my heart. Not only did people begin to come, but all of us began to smile. Surrounded by men and women, boys and girls—individuals who really could use some good news—we were surprised by the warm response of the group and the clarity of the gospel message.

At the conclusion of the singing, while we were making our way back to our van, several of those who had gathered for the meeting hugged the students and thanked them. As we drove off, one of our young men remarked, “That was way outside my comfort level. But I’m really glad we did it.”

I’ve grown accustomed to hearing such responses from the young adults I have been privileged to work with. I have personally been invigorated as I have watched students build houses and churches on short-term mission experiences in Honduras, as I have seen collegians develop a mobile soup kitchen for hungry children, conduct underwear drives for
enjoying an Adventist college vicariously, talked with a financial aid counselor at the Adventist college nearest her. She was shocked at the scholarships, grants, and loans available to those willing to plod through endless paperwork (and no one will deny there is paperwork).

When Andrea began to attend the college outright, she discovered that she had been experiencing only a fragment of the overall experience. “The difference between an Adventist college and other colleges is night and day. An Adventist school is a whole-mind, whole-body, whole-life experience. I wish I had been brave enough simply to ask a few questions.” She changed her major to occupational therapy. And shortly after her recent graduation (and wedding), she found work as a therapist, largely because of the contacts she had made during her last year of college.

The Future Rests in Its Past

Who would have guessed that today’s Adventist institutions would rank among the best in North America? Most have received high marks in national magazines. More than ever, students are entering prestigious graduate schools because of their time at an Adventist college. David Pizarro, a graduate student at Yale University, says of his four years at Pacific Union College, “My teachers prepared me in ways the students I now meet have never experienced.”

Still, world-class academics will never sufficiently answer the question Why an Adventist college? Despite the accolades Adventist higher education almost takes for granted, not one Adventist college will ever compete academically with Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, or even Brigham Young; none is large enough or wealthy enough to match their resources. In that way, the answer must remain the same today as it did when the church founded its first college in 1874 at Battle Creek.

Back then our founders were scarcely prepared for the task of starting a college, but they had in mind a radically new idea—an education of the whole person: mind, body, and spirit. The first president of Battle Creek College and Healdsburg College (now Pacific Union College), Sydney Brownsberger, envisioned something beyond a “Bible college”—a place of legitimate academic quality. And yet, Christianity would not be a compartmentalized subject, but rather an encompassing mind-set that would permeate all subjects.

Today, 125 years and more than 80 colleges later, this radical concept continues to make Adventist colleges and universities worldwide different from most others.

As for Andrea Delman and Jessica Garay, they have no regrets. Attending college has allowed them to prepare for the careers they’ve dreamed about. However, attending an Adventist college has given them more—much more. Looking back, Jessica says, “High school prepared us for college, but college prepares us for life.”

And life—thank God—is more than a career.

Mike Mennard is a senior writer in the office of public relations at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California. Julie Z. Lee is the media relations coordinator at Pacific Union College.
The Countdown to Toronto Begins

General Conference session information you need to know

Of the 10 million members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2,000 have delegate credentials for the upcoming fifty-seventh General Conference session in Toronto, Canada, from June 29 to July 8. But that's certainly not the total number of people expected to attend the meetings in Canada's largest city next summer. More than 60,000 Seventh-day Adventist members and visitors from all over the world will come to the Skydome to hear reports of the progress of the gospel, observe the church in a business setting, and renew friendships during the 10 days of meetings.

“The theme ‘Almost Home’ sets the tone and atmosphere for the session,” wrote General Conference president Jan Paulsen in the general information brochure. “Daily devotional and inspiring reports from the world division will augment the hours reserved for the business agenda. This marvelous celebration of fellowship, focusing on the hope and nearness of Christ’s return, provides an opportunity for spiritual refreshing and a renewal of commitment to our mission to live, demonstrate, and spread the gospel to all the world.”

Maybe you are trying to decide whether or not to attend this every-five-year assembly. In that case, probably one of the most important deciding factors is: How much will it cost? If your country's dollar is worth more than the Canadian dollar, there are definitely some perks. Of course, the opposite is also true, and we'll give some comparisons as of today.

Currently (on September 23) 1.48007 Canadian dollars equal an Argentine peso; .954142 equal an Australia dollar; .2440 equal a South Africa rand; and 1.4726 Canadian dollars equal a United States dollar. This information is updated and available daily on the Internet ("Ask Jeeves" knows the answer). You’ll want to become acquainted, if you are not already, with the international system of measurement. Weather temperature reports are given in degrees Celsius, gasoline and other liquids are sold by liters, grocery items are sold by grams and kilograms, and distances posted in kilometers.

Accommodation would no doubt be the major expense and an important consideration as you decide whether or not to attend. Hotel rates for double occupancy in the downtown area are priced from $75 to $240; in the airport area the rates run between $85 and $123.
Unless you are from the United States, entering Canada will require visas issued by the Canadian Embassy in the country where you reside. If you are from the United States, you can usually cross without difficulty or delay, and without a passport or visa. You should, however, have available some identification, such as a birth certificate or evidence of U.S. citizenship, and proof that you live in the U.S., such as a driver’s license. Naturalized U.S. citizens should carry a naturalization certificate or some other evidence of citizenship and permanent residents who are not U.S. citizens are advised to carry the resident alien cards.

There is an official brochure for GC session 2000 available to you that highlights information you will need as you consider spending 10 days in Toronto, Canada, in the summer of 2000.

Here are some topics explained in the brochure:

- What you will need for entry into Canada
- Importing goods into Canada
- Bringing a vehicle into Canada
- Canadian currency, money exchange, and use of credit cards and ATM cards
- Goods and services tax (GST)
- Provincial sales tax and visitor rebates
- Medical services and health insurance
- Units of measure, electrical voltage and connections
- Weather
- Transportation

The brochure includes a housing application form that you may complete and mail or fax to the GC Session Housing Bureau in Canada (they aren’t taking phone calls). You may access this brochure and the housing application through the official website of the General Conference: (www.adventist.org) or request one by e-mail (gcsession@gc.adventist.org). Or, you may write to GC Session Management, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; call 301-680-6216; or send a fax to 301-680-6290 to request the brochure by mail.

The Adventist Review will feature information each month about the church in session, the location, and such other topics as additional programming during the session (i.e., women’s ministries, Global Mission, youth activities [there’s lots], side trip attractions, musical highlights, translation services, topics to be addressed in the business sessions, and much more).

Adventists Seek to Improve Race Relations at Summit

To answer the call in President Clinton’s initiative to improve race relations, including those in the faith communities, the Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted a leadership summit. Themed “Racial Harmony in the New Millennium: Making It Happen,” the event took place at the world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, October 27-30.

“We accept President Clinton’s call to action and are prayerfully and objectively addressing concerns within our diverse congregation, seeking to improve race relations, and taking steps to prepare our members for life and ministry in the twenty-first century,” said Alfred McClure, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

The four-day event, one of the first for faith communities, convened with an interfaith prayer breakfast involving community and political leaders and clergy of various faiths. Plenary sessions, 21 workshops, small group breakout sessions, and a Great Conversation on Race panel discussion has created an environment for constructive dialogue and a quest for creative solutions. The program ended on Saturday, October 30, with a worship service celebrating diversity.

Look for more about this summit in the December North American Division issue of the Adventist Review.

Adventists Continue to Aid Victims of Taiwan Earthquake

Taiwan Adventist Hospital, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and Seventh-day Adventist members continue to aid victims of the September 21 earthquake and to provide relief supplies.

“The local government is mobilizing all its resources to furnish emergency rescue and disaster relief to the numerous hard-hit areas, and we are providing support,” reports James Wu, communication director for the Adventist Church in Taiwan. “We thank the many international rescue teams that have provided modern equipment to look for survivors. Disaster relief materials are flowing into the supply centers as soon as travel routes are made possible.”

The latest figures, says Wu, show 2,146 deaths, 8,544 injuries, and more than 200 still missing. Some remote mountain villages have yet to be reached in the assessment of the earthquake’s impact. The government is asking for local and international assistance to help affected areas rebuild lost homes and communities.

Taiwan Adventist College and Taiwan Adventist
An Uncertain Future

BY: MERLIN NICHOLS, CAMPUS PRINCIPAL, NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE, CHETWYND, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

A recent news item on Canada's Pacific Rim has diverted public attention, temporarily, from the usual fare of aboriginal land claims, treaty negotiations, eco standoffs between multinationals and environmentalists, government prevarication, and other stories of sleaze and turpitude.

Between July and September more than 600 migrants—men, women, and numerous unaccompanied children—arrived in leaky hulls on the wilds of Canada's northwest coast, intent on slipping ashore, evading discovery, and ultimately making their way to sweatshops in New York. Authorities believe that at least one boatload of migrants did exactly that before the discovery, of the human smuggling operations.

Visions of the determined migrations of our forebears come to mind. But this is almost 2000. The established societies of North America have expectations of who and how many will be admitted each year to these shores. However, with the enormously increasing population pressures in almost every sector of the globe, controlling the flow of migrants to an area still seen by many as free, open and prosperous is a problem that can only get bigger. Add this to the other problems to be addressed in 2000: unstable finance, decay of infrastructure, fear of violence within and without, the backlog of aboriginal claims, the poisoning of our air, land, and water, and all governments have their work cut out for them.

Adventists being compelled to carry a bigger part of that burden should come as no surprise. Voluntarily or otherwise, we will carry it. I believe that the way we choose to carry that burden now will have long-term significance for us in North America as well as for those who are willing to risk 5,000 miles of stormy Pacific and a wet landing for an uncertain future here.

NEWS BREAK

A cademy are very close to the epicenter of the quake and are serving as disaster relief centers for the area. Among the 500-plus students and staff, no casualties have been reported. However, the parents of two students were killed in their home areas.

The college administrative building and classrooms are in bad shape, reports Wu. According to the preliminary survey by the architect, the classrooms and administrative buildings cannot be used for classes.

“Among the approximately 7,000 Adventist members in Taiwan, we have heard of three confirmed deaths in central Taiwan,” says Wu. “In Hur Ping village, the wife and two grandchildren of a deacon at Swang Chi church were killed when their house collapsed. Six local churches are reported damaged.”

To continue the rehabilitation program, a Taiwan Earthquake Relief Fund has been established to assist the victims. The donations will be used to assist local churches, the college, and the general public in need of help.—Adventist News Network

ACS Continues Relief Efforts Following Hurricane Floyd

Adventist Community Services (ACS) continues serving communities that were ravaged by floodwaters from Hurricane Floyd. Working in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the American Red Cross, and other disaster response organizations, ACS is providing supplies and assisting with cleanup in four eastern states.

Volunteers are continuing their work in North Carolina, where ACS is operating three multiagency warehouses. The warehouses have been hosting 20 to 30 tractor-trailers a day, and receiving water, clothing, and other goods. More than 1,000 have helped in the effort.

In New Jersey the Teaneck church collection center has been closed, and a new facility is now accepting donated goods. The Second Harvest Food Bank in Hillside, New Jersey, is working with ACS disaster response teams to collect and distribute goods to those still in need.

The work in Virginia is beginning to slow down; however, ACS volunteers are continuing to help the community, working with seniors, the disabled, and people needing assistance with cleaning and moving in their homes and apartments. ACS volunteers have also been helping pass out supplies and distributing more than 350 gallons of water to the people of Franklin, Virginia.

According to Minnie McNeil, Allegheny East Conference disaster coordinator, Pennsylvania has also been very active this past week collecting goods and dis-
AWR Letter Box

“I would like to thank you for opening the living God for me. I have found the truth, thanks to your programs and lessons.” Lyubov, Russia.

“I can see why you announce your station as the Voice of Hope.” Alan, United Kingdom.

“This was the first time I was able to pull in your station. I enjoyed your program; it was excellent! I will be listening for you again.” Denton, U.S.A.

“When I found your station by coincidence, I found the thing that I was looking for. Your programs are of interest for Christians and non-Christians alike. O God, I ask You to bless my brethren working at AWR to spread Your teachings and the message of Christ.” Raheem,* Yemen.

* pseudonym.

For more information about Adventist World Radio, write to: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600; or call toll-free: 1-800-337-4297; e-mail: awrinfo@awr.org; website: www.awr.org.

World Mission Givers

Ingathering has been a fixture of Adventist church life in North America for almost 100 years. It changed in 1999 to become ADRA Annual Appeal—with new appeals materials and new spending guidelines. In the August 1999 NAD edition of the Review, we incorrectly printed the top five conferences in per capita fund-raising for the 1998 Ingathering campaign. The correct top five, gleaned from the 1998 Ingathering reversion report from the North American Division Treasury Department, are as follows.

Top Five Conferences in Per Capita Fund-raising for the 1998 Ingathering Campaign:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Conference</th>
<th>Per Capita</th>
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<tr>
<td>Newfoundland/Labrador</td>
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<td>Oklahoma</td>
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<td>Greater New York</td>
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<td>$15.08</td>
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<td>Mountain View</td>
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What’s Upcoming

Oct. 30 Ingathering begins
Nov. 1 Monthly Focus—Health
Nov. 6 Stewardship Sabbath
Nov. 6 Week of Prayer begins
Nov. 13 Human Relations Sabbath
Nov. 20 Welcome Home Sabbath
Nov. 27 Bible Sabbath

NEWSBREAK

After Floyd: Adventists in Bahamas Help Rebuild

Hurricane Floyd dumped tons of water across the islands of the Bahamas, destroying livestock and vegetation. Roads and bridges were also badly defaced, making it necessary for residents to travel by boat or plane.

A number of Seventh-day Adventist churches were damaged. The Marsh Harbour church in Abaco and the Rock Sound and Tarpum Bay churches in Eleuthera sustained damage to roofs and ceilings. In New Providence a section of the roof of the new conference building was torn away by the hurricane’s wind gusts, and a similar incident took place at the H. D. Colburn gym situated on the grounds of Bahamas Academy Secondary School in New Providence.

Church members were also affected by roof destruction and flooding. Many families experienced severe flooding in New Providence and in Abaco, requiring them to evacuate the premises.

Despite the wide devastation of Hurricane Floyd, church members and the general population are in good spirits. Only one fatality was reported in the region, and the work of rebuilding has begun. The government of the Bahamas has deployed key agencies to assess losses and to render relief assistance. Electricity and telephone lines are also being restored.

In the wake of Hurricane Floyd, a relief fund has been established by the Bahamas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.


What’s Upcoming

Oct. 30 Ingathering begins
Nov. 1 Monthly Focus—Health
Nov. 6 Stewardship Sabbath
Nov. 6 Week of Prayer begins
Nov. 13 Human Relations Sabbath
Nov. 20 Welcome Home Sabbath
Nov. 27 Bible Sabbath
The year 2000 has been voted by the North American Division as the “Year of Youth and Young Adult Evangelism.” In preparation for this historic year, the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division is partnering with the Adventist Communication Network (ACN), the Center for Youth Evangelism, and other sponsors in launching the Genesis 2000 (g2k) evangelism initiative. G2k will start with a live via-satellite millennium celebration from four national sites on December 31 and continue throughout the year with evangelism training events and organized grassroots outreach campaigns across the division.

The g2k initiative is where the corporate church meets local church efforts. It will harness the talents of thousands of willing and passionate young adults who have a burden for saving souls. “G2k is more than a millennium celebration,” says José Rojas, director of youth and young adult ministries in North America. “The partnership between the Adventist Church and this generation, and the training and outreach that will occur in the coming months, will be winning souls long after the year is over.”

In the past few years there has been a wave of young adult (ages 18-35) activism that has been manifested by events such as eXcite 98, Unite 99, and a surge of supportive young adult ministries.

Training events will be held across the division during 2000 by young adult ministry professionals from Giraffe University to teach attendees everything from old-fashioned door-to-door canvassing to electronic ministry. Then, supported by the resources provided by the young adult network CONNECT, young people will be sent out to do local ministry.

If you would like more information about the uplink, training, or outreach, visit the Genesis 2000 website at www.gen2k.org or call 1-800-SDA-PLUS.
I am a 52-year-old woman with 90-year-old parents who have spent their lives ruining mine. My mother was neglectful, while my father was abusive, domineering, and overbearing. To this day the abuse continues, with total alienation from family my only option. I believe my parents are responsible for the way I turned out and will answer for it in the judgment. Do you agree?

While I am truly saddened that those who might have made your life the happiest continue to be the source of so much grief and misery, I am concerned that you appear to be locked into a blaming mode that is crippling your ability to move forward with your own life and stymieing your opportunity for present happiness.

Let me state unequivocally that there is never any excuse for abuse. No person—child, teenager, or adult—deserves to be treated with anything less than kindness and compassion. What happened during your childhood years was not right. The suffering that was inflicted upon you during the most vulnerable point of your life ought never to have happened.

Having said that, I believe that focusing on your past is only investing more power into the horrifying events and allowing their grip to shape your entire adult life. You are more than four decades beyond the events you detail in your letter. While you state that the emotional abuse still continues, I must point out that you are allowing a frail old man and a woman who can barely walk across her living room floor to prohibit you from experiencing life successes.

At what point, I must ask, are you willing to relinquish the power that these two ornery people have on your life? At what point are you willing to stop focusing on what is wrong with your parents and take ownership for your own actions?

I would advise you to begin your journey by acknowledging that you have been deeply hurt and that the pain you carry with you is affecting your every move. Then take a close look at the weakness, humanity, and vulnerability of your parents. As hurtful and cruel as they might be, they are simply two tired old people who too have been battered about by life. By the grace of God, release the power that these frail, aged people have on you.

There are a number of philosophies and outlooks that shape the views of counselors and professionals as they seek to help people such as yourself. One of the most powerful paradigms for effecting life change is the belief that your future has as much power to shape your life as your past. Such a view suggests that you shape an image of the person you would like to be and focus on this goal, this dream, this vision as you take steps toward achieving it. I find such a philosophy to be consistent with Christian principles.

In looking at people, Christ never emphasized the crippling effects of their past, but held out before them the fresh promise of their future. Ellen White wrote, “In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men [and women] as they might be, transfigured by His grace— in “the beauty of the Lord our God” (Education, p. 80).

You are 52 years old. A half century is long enough for you to pay the penance of having two parents who failed miserably in their child-raising duties. Letting it go does not mean that what happened to you is OK. It will never be OK.

But neither is it OK to allow the power of the past to ruin the present and quell the bright promise of the future. It is time that this 100-pound weight be put down. It is sapping your strength, draining your optimism, and consuming every ounce of your energy. Take a deep breath, focus on the healing power of Jesus to transform you into the person that He already sees, and put down that weight. The rest of your life awaits you.

Sandra Doran is a teacher and administrator who holds a doctoral degree in education. She writes from Reading, Massachusetts.
Joyful, despite their separation, and the assurance that she would be in his thoughts.

Sensing others nearby, Hans glanced up to see several of his buddies crowded around. Suddenly one of them blurted, “Say, Hans, we noticed that you’re a Christian, and, well, with Christmas coming up and all, we thought maybe you would give us a little Christmas service.” A chorus of agreement rose from the other men.

“Well”—Hans was thoughtful for a moment—“I suppose I could read the story from my Bible.”

“That would be great,” said the spokesman with a relieved grin.

And so Hans did just that. On Christmas Eve the soldiers all gathered around the fire. They listened to the Christmas story and a short sermon, then heartily joined with Hans in singing the songs they knew from childhood, especially “Silent Night.” The service gave them a welcome brief respite from the homesickness that seemed especially intense that night.

The next few days were uneventful, but Hans was pleased to write to his wife that after his Christmas service there seemed to be a more peaceful air throughout his unit. Especially noticeable was the fact that there were fewer curses ringing through the air. Hans was glad to think that the Christmas service might have made an impression on their minds.

## A Higher Authority

On an early January day Hans’s unit was trudging through the snowy fir forests so typical of that part of Russia. The bitter wind whistled around the trees. The soldiers pulled themselves as far into their coats and hats as they could.
The deep snow made walking difficult, and morale was low. Without much warning they broke out of the thick shadowy forest into a flood of brilliant sunshine reflecting off the deep untouched snow of some hibernating farm fields. In the distance they could see a lonely farmhouse with smoke floating peacefully out of a tall chimney.

The soldiers shouted excitedly at the thought of a warm house and good homemade food. They hurried across the fields and charged through the yard of the farmhouse. Shouting, they pounded on the door with their rifles. Not waiting for an answer, they shoved open the door and roughly hustled the terrified family outside without even letting them find coats. None of the German soldiers spoke any Russian. Rather than trying to communicate what they needed, they simply shoved the family against the wall of their house to watch as their home was looted.

The farmer and his wife huddled close to their children, trying to keep warm and comfort the crying children. Instead of joining the free-for-all, Hans stood near the family.

The soldiers gleefully emptied the kitchen of a still-warm meal and every other morsel that reminded them of home-cooked food. Then they turned their attention to the other rooms. They rummaged through closets, drawers, and chests. The chests were full of the most wonderful treasures the freezing men could imagine—thick fur coats, hats, mittens, and boots. These clothes were quickly distributed among the shivering soldiers, who grinned in anticipation of the warmth they might add.

As one of the soldiers exited the house, his arms filled with fur, he noticed H ans standing silently, watching. Filled with enthusiasm, he hurried over to Hans and shoved a thick warm fur coat into his arms. “H ere, H ans, send this home to your wife. She’ll love it!” his friend shouted.

“My wife is a Christian,” replied H ans quietly, “and she does not wear stolen fur coats.” With that, Hans turned toward the farmer’s wife and handed her the coat. For a moment she looked stunned. Then her face beamed the “thank you” she could not communicate with words.

Her husband, listening to the exchange, heard one word that he recognized and now repeated: “Christian.” Despite the milling soldiers, he rushed into the house. He returned more slowly, carrying in his arms a large book with a picture of the cross on it. He reverently opened it, and Hans watched curiously as the man turned to the final book of the Bible.

Although Hans could not read the Cyrillic characters, he realized the man was pointing out the chapters for Hans to count. Stopping at chapter 14, the man began counting down the verses, pointing especially to four of them. In astonishment Hans immediately recognized the text. It was Revelation 14:9-12, the third angel’s message. Hans began to smile and nod enthusiastically. By sign language they quickly confirmed that they were both Seventh-day Adventists.

Then the honest German soldier and the frightened Russian farmer, both caught in a terrible war, embraced, brothers in the faith.

Emily Brandt is a student at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.
ONE MORNING a small boy living on a North Dakota farm awoke in great pain. Recognizing their son was deathly ill, his parents were greatly alarmed. Rushing him to the nearest hospital, 75 miles away, they discovered that his appendix had ruptured. Peritonitis had set in, and poison was spreading rapidly through his body. Doctors quickly inserted a tube into his side to siphon away the deadly toxin. Feverish days turned into frightening weeks.

Miraculously, the boy survived. Through the long months of isolation and recuperation in the family’s farmhouse, a conviction grew within the youth that God had spared him. “It seemed to me that God had given me a second chance at life, and I prayed for guidance to use my life in ways that would please Him most,” he would later write.

Face the Light

This simple prescription can place a rainbow in the cloud around us.

BY VICTOR M. PARACHIN
To pass the time, the boy began to play sounds on his father’s old accordion. And the more he played, the more he enjoyed it. Had it not been for the “terrible” experience of a ruptured appendix, the boy probably would never have developed an interest in music. But he emerged from that experience with a deep faith in God and confidence in himself. Following his interest in the accordion, Lawrence Welk left his North Dakota farm and became a gifted musician and host of one of America television’s most popular programs.

Key to Welk’s future success was the fact that as a youth he chose to face the light in his life rather than curse the darkness.

Scripture consistently reminds us not to adopt the “victim” posture in life. In the face of adversity and difficulty, it urges us to maintain confidence that the clouds will lift, that the darkness will give way to the dawn, that the power of God is not limited. Notice these compelling biblical passages:

- Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.”
- 2 Kings 6:16: “‘Don’t be afraid,’ the prophet answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’”
- Psalm 30:5: “Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”
- John 16:20: “Your grief will turn to joy.”
- Psalm 118:6: “The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.”

Facing the light opens the windows of the soul, permitting the majestic grace of God to flow freely and creatively through our lives. It’s being in partnership with God.

Here are four pointers toward that end.

1. Remember that tiny actions matter.

Eastern religious leaders often remind their disciples that even a little poison can cause death, and that a tiny seed can become a huge tree. Buddha, for example, taught that “even tiny drops of water in the end will fill a huge vessel.”

And Jesus said, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:20).

The practical application of Jesus’ teaching is that the “mountains” of life—our heavy burdens, dashed hopes, crushed dreams—can be transported and transformed when we exercise faith, however small.

An inspiring example of this is the case of James R. Jeffreys. When he was born in 1932 with osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bone disease), doctors held out no hope for the family, predicting the infant would not live more than a year. If by some miracle he survived the first 12 months, they said, he would be so totally disabled that he could never live a productive life.

Yet James Jeffreys did live. In order to continue his education he rolled his wheelchair two miles a day to and from high school. By the age of 21 he had opened his own shop, becoming a successful cabinetmaker. Jeffreys was also a prizewinning drag racer. Using a car equipped with special handheld controls, he has won 14 racing awards.

He married a nurse. They had two children and then adopted seven more when they learned there was a 50 percent chance their own offsprings could inherit brittle bone disease. One of their adopted children is blind; one was crippled by polio; one has a spinal disorder; one was born with no legs; and one suffers from diabetes. Four of the children are biracial, and two are Korean. In 1977 Jeffreys was named Outstanding A dult of the Year by the American Brittle Bone Society. The governor of New Jersey, where Jeffreys was born and lives, proclaimed a James R. Jeffreys Day, declaring that “the life and career of James R. Jeffreys serves as an inspiration and a source of strength to all persons afflicted with physical handicaps.” Jeffreys is a glowing example of someone who made great gains by first taking small steps. Tiny actions bring big gains.

2. Apply the three D’s.

Any problem, no matter how great or complex or seemingly insurmountable, can be shaped and structured when people apply the three D’s: diligence, determination, and dedication. Scripture urges us, when facing great challenges, to exercise those qualities in order to emerge victorious. “Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth,” declares the writer of Proverbs (10:4). And 2 Chronicles 15:7 states: “But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.” One who applied these spiritual principles to beat back discouragement was Jacob Riis, the journalist and social reformer who did so much to improve living conditions for the poor in New York City during the late 1800s.

When asked what he did to rise above his own discouragement and depression, Riis shared his unusual but effective approach. He said that he would go to a place where a stonemcutter was working. There Riis would simply watch him. Blow after blow, the stonemcutter would bang away at the stone with his hammer and wedge. He might strike it 100 times with no apparent effect. But on the 101st try the stone would crack. The 101st blow...
didn’t crack the stone by itself, Riis realized. Rather, it was the cumulative effect of the 100 blows before it that brought success.

Facing the light sometimes means working hard for a long time without seeming to make any progress, then one day the stone cracks—a major step forward is taken, a goal achieved, an obstacle overcome—and hurting gives way to healing.

3. Make the most of what happens.

Take advantage of adversity. Seize the initiative when stormy times come. “There is no object that we see, no action that we do, no good that we enjoy, no evil that we feel or fear, but that we may make some spiritual advantage of all,” notes Anne Bradstreet in Spiritual Illuminations: Meditations for Inner Growth.

Recently Howard Swan, a nationally recognized voice teacher and choral director, died in California at the age of 89. Ironically, his success as an educator and choral director came because of a “tragic” event that struck his life. In 1937, at the age of 31, he woke up with a paralyzed vocal cord and no voice at all. It ended his growing career as a vocal soloist. Although he regained the power of speech two years later, he was left with a high squeaky voice completely unsuited for performance. He regained complete voice control in 1970, when he had a then-new silicone treatment for the vocal cords. “There’s a bit of providence in this whole picture,” he recalled. “If I had stayed in solo work, I wouldn’t have amounted to very much.”

Because of the experience of losing his voice, he consulted voice experts, studied every book available, and became an expert on how the voice works. Unable to illustrate with his own voice, Swan had to find words to provide the explanation. “I think this made my pupils a lot more independent. I just didn’t sit in a corner and say ‘Do it this way’ and open up my mouth. I had to find other ways to teach.” Thus out of the ashes of a destroyed vocal career a new opportunity presented itself to Harold Swan. Making the most of his otherwise devastating experience, he became one of the most sought-after voice teachers in North America.

4. Thank God anyway and always!

This well-known advice from the apostle Paul reveals profound spiritual and emotional insight: “Give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thess. 5:18). No matter what cruel blows may strike, learning to face the light means finding reasons to be grateful. Doing so transforms our perspective, and as we count the blessings that remain and continue to shower upon us, the present difficulties feel less intimidating and we become more hopeful.

Gratitude is always the cure for despair. During an interview actress Patricia Neal recalled the tragedies that pounded her life one after another. When her son, Theo, was 3 months old, his carriage was struck by a taxi running a red light on New York’s Madison Avenue. Injuries sustained required eight brain operations and resulted in years of care. Not long after her son recovered, Neal’s daughter Olivia died at 13.

Later another blow came while bathing her other daughter, Tessa, when Neal suffered a series of massive strokes that left her semiparalyzed, severely impaired her speech, and left her confined to a wheelchair. Neal fought back courageously and made a remarkable comeback. The interviewer asked Neal: “How do you manage to retain that warm spirit and glow after all you have been through?” The actress honestly admitted experiencing a “dark night of the soul” following the death of Olivia and during her paralysis. However, she learned to face the light and emerged to declare her gratitude: “The world is fantastic. I thank God I am alive!”

There is this one additional tip for facing the light. I take it from the wisdom of Oswald Chambers’ observation, “Darkness is my point of view . . . light is God’s point of view.” Learning to face the light also means trying to view events from the divine perspective.

* All Scripture references in this article are from the New International Version.

Victor M. Parachin is an ordained minister and freelance writer. He is the author of several books and writes from southern California.
Shining the Image

Graduates of one Adventist university tell how the Christian ethics they learned in college prepared them for business and witness in the secular workplace.

BY CHARLOTTE MCCLURE

When she was asked to plan the Friday evening program for alumni weekend, Sharon Dudgeon asked, "What should I feature?"

A member of the Andrews University Alumni Board, Dudgeon had helped plan the theme for the weekend activities, "The World Is Our Classroom."

Dudgeon decided to develop an idea to compliment the church for its commitment to Christian education with Seventh-day Adventist values. "We moan and groan about the people who go out the back door, but we focus very little on the ones who stay," she said. "How many people in the secular field feel affirmed as contributing members of the church and society?"

"We have prominent people among Andrews graduates, ambassadors and people in high-profile positions," Dudgeon said. "But because making a video and bringing people in is expensive, we focused on 'the world around us' instead of global geography." She brainstormed with faculty to select good solid people who take their principles with them when they graduate. They were intentional in showing the richness and diversity of the church.

She decided that a video presentation would serve several purposes. The "live pictures" could be inspiring to alumni, faculty, and current students, and the video could be used to recruit potential students and encourage their parents. With that in mind—and the budget constraints—Dudgeon called department heads at the university and asked them for recommendations of people who were working in the career areas of their degrees and had stayed in the neighborhoods around Berrien Springs.

Nine people in the region were interviewed in their places of employment. They were filmed in a nuclear plant, two hospitals, a company that manufactures spectrometer equipment to analyze chemical elements, a tree nursery, and a local high school. A few current students at Andrews were also interviewed.

Charlotte McClure is associate publisher of the Adventist Review.
MODELING LIFE VALUES: Kendra Manuel (1998) is an English teacher at Berrien Springs High School. She believes that because of her Christian perspective, she carves out more time to talk with students and listen to the issues and difficulties in their lives. She credits her teachers at Andrews, especially those in the English and Communication departments, with showing her how to find ways to teach Christian principles in the classroom.

“My teachers modeled for me that you can draw morals and lessons and life values from literature and different things in classes. And they were willing to take time outside of class to find out about the things I’m interested in, my likes and dislikes.”

CHRISTIAN ETHICS: Sara Bainbridge (1998), a medical technologist at Lakeland Medical Center, wanted to do something in the medical field, but didn’t want to be a doctor. Now she runs tests on specimens that come into the lab; fluids that tell what’s going on in the human body. “I try to do the best that I can, the way that God would want me to do my job,” she says.

“Going to Andrews was very good in that way. All of my teachers had very strong ethics, and they imparted that to me and to all the students in our daily classes.”

RESPONSIBILITY: Melphine Ponniah (1998), a medical technologist at Watervliet Community Hospital, was undecided about a career until she enrolled in a hematology class.

“I’m one of two microbiologists in this hospital. I identify the organisms that come from various cultures and also tell the doctors what antibiotics are susceptible and can be used to cure the patient,” she says. “I’m here alone at night; nobody is watching me. But I believe in getting things done, in hard work, and being honest.

“I think teachers at Andrews show us in their classrooms every day how to be Christians. I always remember our teachers telling us that if you’re honest in the little things, you’ll be honest in the big things, and the big things in my case make the difference in people’s lives.”

CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER: Carlos Guerra (1984) is a product leader at Leco Corporation, a company that makes products such as the protein analyzer used to make measurements for the little label on a box, jar, or package that identifies the number of grams of protein per serving. While it may seem like an unusual environment to share Christ, he finds subtle ways to share Christian love with his coworkers.

“I function here as an analytical chemist. We manufacture analytical instruments, and I work with a team of engineers toward the development and design of that instrument. What it means to me being a Christian in the workplace is providing an example of Christlike character through the things I do, through the way I interact with my coworkers, through my work ethic,” he says.

“Andrews University was a great environment for developing my Christian ethics, through the examples set by the professors and through the spiritual environment that they provided in all activities.”
CUSTOMER SERVICE: Dwight Schwarz (1984), financial manager at Twixwood Nursery, began working at the nursery while in high school and continued on through college, when there was an opening for a finance officer.

“The business had grown from a small family-oriented business to one that could handle the larger marketplace and larger personnel base. Knowing what it takes to produce a plant and figuring out the costs involved goes well with what it takes to expand the nursery further. Good business is treating the customer as you would like to be treated; or better yet, giving them more than they ask for, more than they expect. That’s what God has given to us, a lot more than we deserve or expect.

“A real benefit of going to Andrews and getting a good Christian education was developing that relationship with God, which in turn corresponds with how you relate with your customers, giving them the best that they can get for their dollar in the very competitive marketplace.”

MISSION: Tabby Njoroge, a current student, has made her career choice.

“I chose English because it’s always been something I’m interested in. It’s a second language for me. It’s a fascinating language, so I wanted to learn more about it. My dreams are to teach English in my country, Kenya, to teach the people how to use English, how to speak it well,” she says.

RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST: Lisa Umphrey (1994) has held many positions of responsibility at Cook Nuclear Plant and is now assistant to the plant manager. When the plant told her to go get a degree, she enrolled at Andrews. While a student there, she became a Seventh-day Adventist.

“Andrews really helped me develop as a Christian. Teachers and students were always willing to answer any questions that I had—about the Sabbath, what it means and what it’s about. They were always willing to very openly and honestly share their beliefs with me,” she says. “They also had a certain calm and peace about them that I
BLENDING SCIENCE AND RELIGION: Devin Zimmerman (1982), a neurologist at South Bend Neurology, sees patients all day, making rounds at three hospitals. He makes sure that tests have been done and carefully looked at, and maintains a private practice with other Christian physicians.

“One of the unfortunate tasks I have is to care for patients who have suffered cardiac arrest. They are in coma, and I have to discuss with families about life-ending issues,” he says. “There are times when I have the capability of praying with them, which they don’t often see with a physician.

“Attending Andrews University was very helpful in developing my Christian ethics, and I was fortunate to be a member of the Science Department there. The faculty took a very active part with the students. I still view the chemistry faculty as part of my family. Dr. Ralph Scorpio was one of the key mentors for me. He started every single class with a discussion from scientific principles or Christian principles or combining the two in a very effective manner to lead students to Christ as well as show how science and religion can mix.”

ACTION AND INTERACTION: John Roosenberg (1995), Ph.D. candidate at the University of Notre Dame, finds it powerful to observe how interaction with people speaks of Christian character as articulately as words.

“A typical day for me usually involves going into the lab, where we work in synthesis of biologically active molecules in the compounds we’re interested in,” he says. “Being a Christian in the lab that I work in is probably most seen through activities and interactions with my coworkers. It’s often not the case that we will talk about Christianity, but it’s interesting how people recognize that I’m a Christian just by day-to-day activities and the way I handle myself. People will say something like ‘Yes, I knew all along that you were a Christian because of the music you listen to or the activities you’re involved in; it’s really obvious.’

“My stay at Andrews was helpful for several reasons. It’s a very nurturing environment. They’re interested in you as a person and not just as a scientist. The very Christian way a professor always has time to talk with you and discuss various ideas is often not found in a non-Christian area.”

think comes with having a relationship with Jesus Christ, and that’s very desirable when you’re searching for that in your life. They were very good at making sure we were friends, and that helped lead me in developing a relationship with Christ.

“Being a Christian affects my work here in the Cook Plant in a few different ways. Number one is the Sabbath. Most of the people here consider the Sabbath a regular workday here at the plant, and whenever I approach a prospective supervisor about a position, I make sure I say, ‘I believe in keeping the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. If you have a problem with it, we need to talk about my religious beliefs.’ And they need to respect that or I’m not the right person for the job.

“I think one of the unique, challenging things about being a Christian is being able to hold yourself accountable and others accountable while still having genuine Christian love for people.”

RELEVANCE: Sarah Holmes, current student in Andrews School of Business, is an economics major.

“I chose economics for a variety of reasons. I’ve always had an interest in history and political science and business, and I like to know how the world works. Sitting in class with Dr. Malcolm Russell was an inspiration to me. It was so fascinating the way he explained complex economic principles in a revelant way for today’s world.

“My long-term goals and dreams for my future are to eventually go into international law. I’d like to help other countries solve their economic and legal problems, maybe work in a Third World country, and help them solidify their economy and maybe make a better legal system that would support that economy.”
A Marriage Made in Heaven
An Adventist hospital where excellence is a way of life

BY ROY NADEN

As I walked through the foyer of Shawnee Mission Medical Center (SMMC), I struck up a conversation with a woman and casually asked her what she thought of the hospital. She hesitated, then responded, "I'm very biased." I noticed her eyes had become misty.

"My mother died here the other day," she said softly, without looking up. I expressed empathy at her loss. But she brushed it aside: "No, it's not like that. Actually, it was... quite an experience.

"The nurses in oncology and the chaplain were amazing," she went on, her voice now rising, "not just to Mother, but to our whole family. They just lavished care on us." She had completely changed, energized as she relived the experience.

An Excellent Place
Recently I spoke with Bill Robertson, senior executive officer of Shawnee Mission Medical Center. He casually mentioned that the hospital had just won the Kansas Excellence Award, the premiere quality award in the state of Kansas. It's modeled on the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The governor of Kansas had presented the award that showed Shawnee Mission Medical Center on the leading edge of quality and excellence among all the businesses in Kansas.

Bill Robertson has a passion, and everyone knows about it. He wants a successful marriage between excellence in health care and dynamic spiritual life. He wants SMMC to be a place where patients and visitors will know that they're in the presence of angels—both human and from above. It's a goal that every Adventist hospital strives to achieve, but in a time of HMOs and managed care, it takes enormous creativity to attain. However, SMMC is succeeding.

At the main entrance, on a wall beyond a grand piano at which appropriate music was being played, I saw a figure that had to be the Lord. At a distance I could make out the head of a lion, a horse, and a human figure. It drew me. Coming closer, I was fully engaged by a wall of bronze by the renowned sculptor Lorenzo Gheglieri. It depicted Jesus enjoying His work at the end of Creation week. Genesis of Love, a symbol of the institution's belief in God's creative and re-creative power, came as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. John Fallon, non-Adventist friends of the hospital.

At the entrance of the nationally recognized Women's Center there is a dramatic white stone sculpture. A massive hand from above extends to a slender hand reaching up from below. It bears the caption "Into Thy Hand" and is another gift of appreciation.

This museum-quality art, sculpture, and bronze compel you to stop and gaze and meditate. Then there are these exceptional employees, the key to building a rich culture.

An Award of Excellence
When administrators considered applying for the Kansas Excellence Award, this question came instantly to their minds: "Would a secular awarding organization recognize an overtly Christian organization?" There was only one way to find out.

The criteria applied in the Kansas Excellence Award are based on the highest national standards. When SMMC decided to apply, they knew they would have to demonstrate a very high level of quality.

Spiritual life is normative only if it flows spontaneously from the top. Robertson knows that, so he sends out a weekly message every Monday morning, "The Good News," which tells a contemporary inspirational story and includes a text of...

Consulting company based in N associates, a research and consulting company based in Seattle, Washington.
Michelle rolled over and opened her eyes. The house seemed awfully quiet for a school morning. She rolled the other way to get a look at the clock. 9:00! She and Jason were already an hour late for school! Why hadn’t Mom woken them up?

Michelle jumped out of bed and headed for her closet to pull on some clothes. But out of the corner of her eye she caught a glimpse out of the window. Now she knew why the house was quiet, and why Mom had let her sleep late. The world was blanketed in a soft cover of fluffy white. Snow day!

“Jason, wake up!” Michelle called as she banged on her brother’s door. “It’s a snow day! Come on! I’ll beat you outside.”

“Wait just a minute,” Mom appeared from around the corner. “Don’t you kids want some breakfast before you head outside?”

“Nah,” said Michelle as she rumbled through her closet. “I’m not hungry yet. Do you know where my gloves are?”

“Mom,” pleaded Jason as he struggled into his snow pants. “A round here the snow usually doesn’t last very long. If we don’t hurry, it might all be gone. We’ll eat later.” And so Mom watched quietly as the kids scrambled into their clothes and dashed out the door.

The sounds of whooping and hollering filled the air as Michelle, Jason, and the kids next door threw snowballs, made snow angels, and built a snowman. They stuck their heads back in the house just long enough to ask for a hat, scarf, and carrot for their new snowy friend. They rolled and tumbled, laughed and shouted. And in a while they were frozen stiff and ready to come inside.

“Your lips are blue and your fingers are like little iccubes!” exclaimed Mom as she helped Michelle pull off her cold, wet clothes. Michelle’s teeth chattered as mom wrapped a blanket around her. “Go straight to the bathroom,” ordered Mom. “I’ll start a warm bath for you.”

“Jason, are you frozen too?” asked Mom, as he pulled off his boots and soggy socks.

“Just my feet,” answered Jason. “What I am is starving. Can we have some breakfast?”

“Hey,” laughed Mom. “Remember that I offered. You’re the ones who decided snow was more important than food.”

“Well, then it was!” grinned Jason. “Now it’s food.”

“I dare say getting warm is the most important thing right now,” replied Mom. “Get into some dry clothes, then wrap your feet in the heating pad to warm them up. I’m going to help your sister get warm and dry. And after that, how do waffles sound?”

Fun, warmth, food. Those may seem like some pretty important things. But Jesus knew that even food is not the most important thing in life. What is? “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, NIV), said Jesus.
It’s 11:00 on a Friday night when the phone rings with a most unwelcome message.

One of my wife’s American relatives is making an unplanned trip to Toronto and is stopping by for Sabbath lunch, if that is O.K., the caller informs. They would have called, but they have misplaced the telephone number, so they asked the messenger to deliver the news.

If that is O.K.?

I want to say, “Of course it’s not O.K. Do they expect me to go and cook now? How do they even know we’ll be home? What if we’d had plans? Isn’t this a bit of an imposition?” But it’s family, distant and infrequent though they may be. So why shoot the messenger?

I tell the caller that my wife isn’t home; she’s away attending a wedding in California. It’s me, the three kids, and a houseguest. And I’m the worst possible cook. In fact, my 14-year-old son has assumed the duties of warming up the scrumptious meals his mom so dutifully prepared before she left for the weekend. I tell her all this, but there is no escape.

“We’ll see what happens tomorrow,” I sigh, then hang up and go off to bed.

Sabbath morning dawns warm and sunny. We travel to church, but the promised guests remain my little secret. From the rostrum I scan the congregation. I’m lucky, it appears. They are nowhere to be seen. Then, oh, no, there they are.

We greet at the door as the platform party pauses to shake hands with the departing parishioners.

“Great. You made it.”

“Yes, we got lost and went about an hour out of our way, but the Lord is good and we made it back.”

You should have just kept going, I want to say, but I can’t. She continues:

“I met my friend and her daughter. And you know my husband and our daughter.”

Five of them! That means Sabbath dinner for 10. I am crazy. I should tell them I’m on my own; that might discourage them.

“Rochester.”

“Yes, just me and the kids. We didn’t know you were coming till 11:00 last night, so we’re not prepared at all.”

“Oh, no. Well, I guess we could go back to the hotel.”

I can’t let them do that—on the Sabbath, when they could at least fellowship, if not feast, with us. I must do the right thing. But first I have to tell my son, the little chef.

“Guess who’s coming to dinner?” I say. “Rochester.”

“The whole city?”

“No, your mom’s relatives.”

“Dad, you’re crazy. You didn’t tell them Mom wasn’t here?”

“Yeah, but they are here already.”

“What are we going to feed them, Dad?” asks the older, calmer, practical son. “How are you going to manufacture food for two extra people?”

“Five, not two.”

Talk about Mutiny on the Minivan. I tell them they are about to witness one of the most oft-repeated miracles in the Bible. Jesus was about to prove this miracle is no mere story or wild tale told by strange Hebrews.

“Yeah,” they say mockingly.

Mom had left her “five barley loaves and two fish” in the form of her Sabbath special, Swiss Stakes, rice, and peas. She’d also rustled up a pasta salad. Corn, meant for Friday night’s supper, had mysteriously disappeared the previous night, only to be found now. We found a loaf of French bread in the freezer. The visitors had brought some rice, plus a large apple pie for dessert.

I’m still full from that meal. The relatives are still licking their fingers. And just as at the feeding of the 5,000, we had enough leftovers to feed another five people on this Sabbath day when my children learned firsthand that God still performs miracles.

“Every Sabbath, all around the world where Adventists gather, this miracle is repeated,” I tell them. And they have reason to believe.

Royson James is a columnist for the Toronto Star.
Laura listens silently as a group of her friends discuss their children’s school problems. One child has attention deficit disorder. One is dyslexic. Another has a number of disabilities that have cost his parents heavily in time and money just to get him through another grade. “Laura’s lucky,” somebody says. “Her kids are smart.”

There’s really nothing she can say. They are smart—gifted, in fact. She knows that they are twice-blessed and thanks God for it, but sometimes she finds herself wishing they were just average kids so that she could join in the conversation and reach out for a little support. She knows she really can’t—how can she begin to explain the cumulative fatigue of seven years of sleep deprivation caused by brilliant little minds that can’t stop working even when their bodies are tired? Who would believe the energy it takes to keep up with children whose quest for information is an endless driving need that must be fulfilled? And how can she tell other mothers whose children are struggling in school that her children, though far ahead of others their age, face a potentially crippling educational experience without the support of friends or school? It’s hard to explain what she knows to be true—that a complex and varying set of social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics make “gifted” a difficult thing to be.

Highly gifted children occur more rarely—about one in 1,000—and exceptionally and profoundly gifted children, the ones we typically think of as geniuses, occur as rarely as one in 10,000 to one in a million.

Just like other children and snowflakes, no two gifted children are the same, but they do tend to have some traits in common. They are most often characterized by a relentless curiosity and a fierce drive to learn. When a project catches their interest they can demonstrate an amazing attention span, while showing zero tolerance for any subject they consider boring. A young child they may carry the “but why?” syndrome to a level that drives parents to distraction. Many need little sleep, even as babies, and display an incredible amount of energy. They may be obsessed with societal issues and driven by perfectionism at a very early age.

Socially, the path of a gifted child is full of pitfalls. Some of these children are born leaders, but many more face serious social difficulties. Their minds work differently than the minds of other children; their interests and activities are also often different. The idea of fun for a 6-year-old gifted girl may be working on her stamp collection, conducting a sci-
ence experiment, or playing a game of chess. If she does settle down to a game of dolls, another child may be thoroughly bewildered by her extensive vocabulary and vivid imagination. Very few children her own age share her interests, while older children who might be more her intellectual equals don’t want to be bothered with “a little kid.”

For girls this problem only intensifies with age. Gifted teenage girls frequently learn to mask their abilities and desperately pretend an interest in boys, clothes, and popular music in an effort to fit in. No wonder—the alternative is decidedly unattractive. Television and movie portrayals of the geeky teen that nobody else wants to associate with are standard fare. Even gifted adults often report a sense of isolation, a difficulty in feeling like part of a group.

Unfortunately, the child who already feels isolated and outcast may not even find a refuge in God. Some of these children bypass the usual childhood period of unquestioning faith and find themselves deep in a morass of spiritual questions before they are emotionally ready to deal with them. A 6-year-old reads about the big bang theory on his own and announces that “based on the evidence, I don’t think there is a God.” A 4-year-old wants to know why God created the devil in the first place, and why He doesn’t stop him from hurting people. Coming to these questions and ideas so young, and with so little experience to build on, they tend to see things as black and white. Problems that challenge adults, such as the knowledge that God sometimes allows people to be hurt or die, the way that prayers seem to go unanswered, and the evil and suffering in the world, are positively overwhelming for a sensitive and vulnerable young child.

Even school, the one place where a gifted child is expected to excel, frequently becomes another battleground. Moderately gifted children begin each grade already having mastered at least 50 percent of the curriculum; a more highly gifted child will have mastered a higher percentage. Not only does this child begin by knowing much of the material, but they learn rapidly, without the need for repetition, and will quickly acquire any knowledge they don’t already possess. Upon entering first grade, for example, a moderately gifted child may very well be reading at a third-grade level or higher. They may thoroughly understand the concepts of not only addition and subtraction, but multiplication and long division as well.

Unfortunately, the typical classroom is not designed for a gifted child to display their abilities. The logical step-by-step progression and repetition required by other students may be completely foreign to their nature. Rather than doing excellent work and getting straight A’s, a gifted child, bored by work that they have mastered long ago, may attempt to alleviate their boredom by a variety of unfortunate misbehaviors. Some children become daydreamers—a solution with the dubious advantage of at least not disrupting the rest of the class. Others decide that if their environment is boring, it is up to them to create some interest. They talk, they wiggle, they wander about the classroom. Sometimes they get in trouble on purpose, believing that even negative excitement is preferable to none at all. There is a danger that after many years of boredom and educational neglect, children may become hostile and obnoxious and give up on school altogether. In fact, the dropout rate among gifted children is statistically higher than it is for more average students, and many of those who manage to stay in school function as serious underachievers. A few excel and live up to

A variety of social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics make “gifted” a difficult thing to be.
their potential.

In an attempt to ameliorate these difficulties, some schools develop special gifted programs or allow gifted children a special individualized program within the regular classroom. Few small private schools, however, are willing or able to make these concessions. Teachers are already overworked, and as most teacher education programs provide little more than a class or two on the subject, they are often uninformed and unprepared to deal with these demanding and complex students. The prevailing attitude of schools seems to be “These kids are smart—they don’t need any special intervention. We need to focus on kids who have real learning problems.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. Gifted children need special programming just as desperately as children who are developmentally delayed. In fact, a moderately gifted child learns as differently from an average child as does a child who is moderately disadvantaged mentally. Nobody would expect the child with an IQ of 70 to work in the same way and at the same pace as the child with an IQ of 100, yet we regularly expect children with an IQ of 130 or higher to do just that. The higher the IQ, the greater the dilemma: there is as wide a gap in learning styles between a highly gifted and a moderately gifted child as there is between an average child and a child who is mentally disadvantaged. Every child has the right to an appropriate education, and yet a multitude of gifted children come home from school, day after day, demanding, “When do I get to learn something?”

Parents who know that their children are gifted and who understand their needs work hard to provide this appropriate education for their children. Many work with schools and teachers to arrange compacting and acceleration so that their children can move ahead as they are able. Some parents spend large sums of money to put their children through expensive private schools that provide special programming for exceptional children. Other parents withdraw from school altogether and resort to home schooling—a method with the advantage of providing a completely individualized program.

As a church we could do much more to assist these parents or their children. Both church and school must recognize the existence of, and make concessions to, either their special needs or their exceptional abilities. Perhaps in our belief that God uses the humble and the weak, we mistakenly cast aside the brilliant. And yet it is God who has created these special children. He has blessed them with superior intellectual ability, and surely He expects that ability to be developed and used for His glory. We are His hands and His feet, and surely it is our responsibility to care for all of God’s children, not only the undeserving and the lost, but the twice-blessed as well.

Kerry Schafer is a freelance writer who lives in Pasco, Washington.
just the other day I realized I was doing it again. My walls were all up; my defenses were ready. And I had managed to be several different people within a few hours. Why? There were just people out there. My car pool partner saw one person (“I’m barely awake, let alone organized”). My children saw another (“I’m strong and in charge”). My students saw a third (“I think you’ll be wonderful if you just believe me and work as hard as I tell you to”). To my children’s teachers I’m trying my best to make them believe I’m on their side with the discipline while convincing them of my children’s obvious, though occasionally misguided, intelligence. To my parents I’m still the “good little girl” who is attempting to postpone age-induced role reversal. To the telephone marketer I’m the cool but (I hope) polite lost cause, salewise.

The list of personality changes goes on and on. I’ve covered my feelings with socially acceptable actions so often it seems I’m wearing a succession of masks. And I wonder if there are any real people or if we’re all just a series of masks.

In spite of all our masks, though, we need to remember the text we learned as cradle rollers, “Thou God seest me” (Gen. 16:13). These were the words of Hagar, Sarai’s servant/handmaid (slave) who was given to Abram for a concubine when it seemed Sarai would never have her own child. Marriage contracts often specified that the wife must produce an heir. If the wife remained childless (a woman of that culture’s worst humiliation), she was required to procure a surrogate to ensure an heir. Hagar was the chosen surrogate. Once Hagar conceived, she “forgot” that Sarai was the boss and looked on Sarai “with contempt” (verse 4, RSV). And Sarai, already jealous that Hagar had both her husband and a baby that should have been and legally was hers, started treating Hagar so badly that she ran away.

Here is the difference between God’s dealings and the world’s. Sarai, humiliated by barrenness and her servant’s attitude, wanted to send Hagar away. Since sending slave wives and children away was not allowed.* Sarai dealt so harshly with Hagar that she left of her own accord. God cared enough about Hagar that He sent an angel to tell her to go back to Abram’s camp. He added that if Hagar remembered Sarai was boss, things would work out and her son would be the father of a great nation. Hagar’s response was “Thou God seest me.”

This isn’t about God keeping a close eye on our behavior, good or bad. This isn’t a “Santa Claus” God whose tally sheet of our good and bad actions is the final reckoning. This is the God who saw the human wreckage created when Abram and Sarai tried to fulfill God’s promise in their own way and cared enough to let Hagar know she was cared for. This is the seeing God who sees the heart, understands, and makes a way to tolerate society’s inequities—even for the least in human standing, the handmaiden.

What a comfort this is: “Thou God seest me”! I may have worn masks so often that I’ve forgotten who I really am, but God knows every facet of the “real me.” I may have no idea how to remove my masks, but He sees what I meant to do, to say, to be. He sees the social situations, frustrations, and fears that may keep me from being my best. Like Hagar, I may have talked my way into trouble (again!). He tells me how to make the best of it. He tells me to pick up the pieces of my life, give up my pride, swallow a few indignities, and go back to work—remembering who’s the boss. And then God promises to make up for society’s wrongs by making the offspring of my life into something great, after all.

“Thou God seest me.”


Evelyn Pursley-Kopitzke is a musician who writes from Blountville, Tennessee.
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