An Indian Odyssey

The Call of Freedom
Social Justice: Who Cares?
Santas: They’re Everywhere!
Like a Rock
I commend William Johnsson for his excellent editorial “Like a Rock” (Oct. 8 World Edition). These are my sentiments exactly. We need to stick to basics and keep our eyes on the Rock, Christ Jesus. The Review doesn’t need to dabble in every mud puddle that comes along.

— Emily Minick
Redlands, California

My prayer is that more of God’s people will discover the Adventist Review and let it point them to the Rock, Jesus Christ. Many of the articles make me desire a closer walk with Jesus. I get ideas from our church paper on how I can serve my Lord better and hasten His advent.

Just before I read “Like a Rock,” my wife and I had come home from a NET ’98 program in which Dwight Nelson had preached a dynamic and convicting sermon about the Sabbath—“The Secret Charles Darwin Forgot to Remember.” It was awesome, like a rock that cannot be broken. I am so grateful that God called me to follow the Rock of truth at age 19—48 years ago. It’s wonderful to have been kept by His grace to be a Bible-loving, Sabbath-believing Christian all these years.

— Carl Hartman
Andrews, North Carolina

Trust and Obey
Calvin B. Rock’s response as to “why there is always tension about who believes what” (see “The Benefit of the Doubt,” Oct. 8) was nicely done from many sides, and he gave many reasons. The big one, according to inspired sources, is that we are confused about what we believe because we do not obey what we profess to believe. My theology impresses me that this will be one of the big things that will shake many out.

— Henry Welch
Condor, Alberta

The Final Deception
In Jon Paulien’s “The Final Deception” (Oct. 29 Special Issue), much space is given to a verse-by-verse commentary of Revelation 13 to establish the concept of a “counterfeit” trinity operating in this chapter. I fear that, in the publicizing of this concept, the prophetic interpretation of the symbols in Revelation 13 will be obliterated and that we will lose sight of the identification of: (1) the sea beast as a revitalized papal authority; (2) the earth beast as the United States; (3) the mark of the beast as Sunday law enforcement; and (4) the “42 months” being symbolic for a literal 1260 years ending in 1798, when the papal power received a “deadly wound.”

— Frances Averil
Silver Spring, Maryland

E-mail Correction
In the Oct. 8 Readers’ Exchange feature (Give & Take), you published a snippet about our need for correspondence regarding church planting work. It has been brought to our attention that the e-mail address was in error. I will have to admit that we did get a number of responses in spite of the error, and we praise Jesus for that and thank the Review for the avenue. Our correct address is: kjjjheck@xtra.co.nz. Our snail mail address is P.O. Box 377.

— Kim Heck
Alexandra, New Zealand

Reaching the Cities (cont.)
Thank you for Monte Sahlin’s “Mission to an Island Named Manhattan” (Oct. NAD Edition). Especially thought-provoking was the inset interview (by Andy Nash) with Pastor Samir Selmanovic. The pastor’s views of the people to whom he is ministering seem to describe many of the people I meet in my own world of work and business.

“They prize authenticity,” “it is about basic honesty,” “people are on their own journeys to God,” “unwilling to accept simplistic answers,” and “have great tolerance for mystery in matters of God” are all phrases that seem to fit.

I salute Pastor Selmanovic for his
courageous approach to ministry with the Church of the Advent Hope. It sounds as if a distinct contribution is being made to the lives of those who find their way to this church while living in this huge metropolitan area.

—Robert Visser
Beltsville, Maryland

Thou Shalt Not Kill

As an agnostic-turned-Adventist serving a sentence for a noncapital offense, I was appalled by the second paragraph of Leslie Kay's “Hungry for Love” (Oct. NAD Edition), in which her husband kills a rattlesnake. Our heavenly Father gave human beings a great responsibility when He gave them dominion over the animals of the earth. All life is very sacred to God. The Hebrew word translated “kill” in the sixth commandment is ratsach. This word means to dash into pieces, or murder.

As a commandment-keeping Christian in prison, I'm constantly a witness to humanity's thoughtlessness in violating this commandment. Nowhere in God's Word does He indicate that the sixth commandment applies only to human beings. Humans have no right to take the life of any of God's creatures except for self-defense or food.

The intentional squashing of a bug or beheading of a snake with a shovel is exactly the type of ratsach killing the sixth commandment forbids. Nothing in Kay's story indicates that the snake presented such an inherent danger to anyone that it shouldn't have been allowed to live. I feel too many Christians do not realize the sanctity of life as it applies to God's nonhuman creatures. Perhaps that is why so few today can realize the sobering lesson God intended by having the Israelites cut the throats of their own sacrifices.

—Eric Knapp
Calipatria, California

Online Bible Study

Thank you for publishing David Pendleton's “Virtual Veritas” (Sept. 17 Cutting Edge Edition). There is a Seventh-day Adventist website (not mentioned in the article) that has helped people find God's Word on the World Wide Web. One can find what the Bible says on more than 316 topics. The site is: www.bibleinfo.com.

—John Loor, Jr.
Spokane, Washington

Tithe Blessings

In the July 9 World Edition you printed an article about the Review and Herald Publishing Association giving tithe to the General Conference and how the finances improved after that (see Tim Crosby's "Review and Herald Publishing Association Revives a Tithing Practice"). Here is a similar story.

When we came back to Ishaka Adventist Hospital in 1993, the patient count was low most of the time. Some workers had to be laid off, and there were no funds to pay for long-needed repairs and development. All the while, my administrator husband and I had been discussing whether the hospital should return tithe and offerings; he said he had never heard of any Adventist institutions returning tithe from their income.

Then came this article. My husband took the matter to the house committee, and it was voted to start giving tithe to the Uganda Union. Our wards and rooms and even corridors are now overflowing with patients. We are running out of space and beds—and there isn't even an epidemic going on! The Lord has opened the windows for Ishaka, and we are so happy and thankful.

—Leila Rocero
Bushenyi, Uganda, East Africa

—Reckless

—To a Once-Believer
There is a certain (unsolicited) magazine that crosses my desk each month. Every so often, before placing it in file 13, I take a quick look, just for information. During a leaf-through of its May 1998 issue, one article arrested my attention. “Spiritism Engulfing the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” the title read.

Wow! I thought. What is this? I must not have been paying attention. How could I have failed to notice? They had me. I settled down to take a look. And what I found startled me.

One Student’s Story

If you were a teacher, and a student presented you a paper under the title quoted above, what sort of documentation would you expect to find? Wouldn’t you expect that there’d be some relevant quotations from one or two of the church’s leading magazines? Or some revealing statements from a half dozen or more of the church’s administrators, educators, or prominent laypeople? Or perhaps a reference to the results of some recent survey indicating a shift in the church’s historic position on the state of the dead?

And how would you grade that student if you discovered, after reading their paper, that the main evidence consisted of the alleged statements of just two Adventist students, one 16 years of age and the other 17? Do you see yourself handing out high marks for such elementary negligence?

But that precisely was the level of documentation I found in this piece. The first reference was to a Washington Post article about a student whom the Post described as “a Seventh-day Adventist and a Takoma Park [Maryland] native.” An admirer of Mother Teresa, the student is supposed to have described her funeral as “a celebration of what ... [Mother Teresa] has done and ... also a celebration of her spirit going on to a better place.”

Another Student, Another Story

“Six days later in the White Mountain Independent paper of Arizona,” the authors wrote, “a 17-year-old girl was reported as strongly supporting the concept of immediate life after death.” According to the story, a student at Northern Arizona Academy in Show Low, after undergoing a near-death experience following a road accident, told how she’d visited heaven during the ordeal, and met a friend who had been killed in another recent traffic accident.

So Is That It?

What better evidence could we ask for? Clearly the testimony of these two young students demonstrates that “spiritism [is] engulfing the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” And as if to clinch their argument, the authors refer finally to the findings of their highly scientific poll: during church meetings in Florida, central California, Norway, Brisbane, and Melbourne, they had asked each congregation “How many have heard a sermon on the topic of spiritism or the state of the dead in the past 12 months?”

The response, they said, was just about the same each place as it was in Florida, where “not one hand went up out of the more than 200 people present!”

It never dawned on the authors that the reason for the absence of sermons on those topics was probably a sense on the part of pastors that their congregations faced no significant problems in those areas. Such a positive conclusion apparently was never considered.

That’s bad research. Sloppy. With the aid of the Internet, and out of curiosity, we tracked down Priya Nowrangi, the Takoma Park student mentioned in the Post story. “What do you believe happens when a person dies?” I asked her, before intimating the reason for my call. “Basically,” she said shyly, “you die and remain in the grave till Jesus comes.” “How long have you believed that?” I continued. “I’ve always believed it,” she responded. She was unfamiliar with the statement cited in the Post.

We have many problems as a denomination, but I sense that confusion over the state of the dead is not one of them. And to go into print with the suggestion that the Adventist Church is engulfed in spiritism is irresponsible. And reckless.

That’s bad research. Sloppy.
STEPHEN CHAVEZ

A
fter nearly 20 years in pastoral ministry, I have friends and former parishioners living all over the country. So I'm often delighted to receive a letter or a phone call from someone with whom I've shared times of Christian fellowship.

Not long ago I received a phone call from someone I've known for many years. After an initial greeting, I asked, “So how are things going?” The words “Not very well” were accompanied by the sound of weeping. The person proceeded to tell me about the struggles and decisions that loomed imminent, making the future seem difficult and foreboding.

We talked for a while, and then, in an attempt to say something “pastoral,” I counseled, “Just stay close to the Lord and listen to His voice.”

Then came the plaintive admission: “But I don’t know how!” The person at the other end of the line was raised in an Adventist home, the product of an Adventist education. It wasn't information that was being sought. The words were rather a confession that the person was living a life far removed from the simplicity of childhood prayers, Bible classes and sermons, pat answers, and proof texts.

I know from experience that at a certain point in life formulaic answers fail us and we all have to discover the foundation of this thing called living the spiritual life. It's what happened when Jacob struggled with God and exclaimed, “I will not let you go unless you bless me” (Gen. 32:26).* Either God is going to be a central part of our lives or we're going to regard Him as a kind of heavenly fire extinguisher—useful in emergencies, but just part of the decor the rest of the time. Life is a meaningless, futile struggle if God isn't part of the combination of present experience and future expectations.

Our problem as a church is that for many years the phrase “surrender your life to the Lord” meant “let someone else do your thinking.” Countless administrative hours have been spent debating such personal matters as the length of a boy’s hair or a girl’s skirt, whether denim is satisfactory Sabbath attire, or whether women should wear pants.

An inward relationship with God always affects our outward behavior, but not vice versa. So it’s your responsibility—and yours alone—to establish a relationship with God, then follow Him only. God’s way of leading is as varied as the believers who claim Him as their Saviour. But this is what works for me:

Latch on to H is promises. It’s important not only to know that they’re there, but also to make them part of your life. Every spiritual blessing is available to you if you put your faith in the promises of God’s Word.

Linger in H is presence. Here’s a news flash: prayer is not a monologue; it’s two-way communication. In this process silence is not bad. Open your mind to the fact that God may be trying to communicate with you through an impression, a memory, a Bible story, or a recent conversation.

Take God with you as you run your errands, work, socialize, recreate. He wants to be part of your life, not just in the quiet place, but also in the busy place.

Be active. Inactivity in the Christian life is deadly. Acts of service (preferably beyond your circle of friends and family) are essential ingredients in staying close to the Lord.

Keep first things first. “The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). Christianity is a life of growth. But sometimes, with so many “add-ons,” it’s easy to lose your focus and believe that what you wear is more important than how you live, that what you eat is more significant than whether or not the Holy Spirit is living in you. It’s not a matter of doing one or the other; it’s a matter of doing the one without leaving the other undone (see Matt. 23:23).

Friend, you can call me anytime, and I’ll drop whatever I’m doing to talk with you about whatever’s on your mind. But you also have a Friend who will be with you and lead you as far and as fast as you’re willing to be led.

You can trust Him.

*All texts are from the New International Version.
GIVE & TAKE

WE LEARNED . . .

Mongolia, as experienced by 10 Canadian University College students on assignment with ADRA in the Gobi Desert:

... that camels spit.
... that one can bathe with only a basin of water.
... that the desert can be very cold.
... that two changes of clothing is enough.
... that the nomadic lifestyle—looking after animals, preparing food, finding water—is very hard work.
... that hundreds of homeless children survive bitterly cold nights by crawling into sewers.
... that straw bale construction is a low-tech, low-cost method of building sturdy, energy-efficient buildings.
... that communication and friendship transcend language and culture.
... that true happiness comes through service.

ADVENTIST LIFE

My small granddaughter Jillian and I were looking through a book when we turned to a lovely Nativity scene. I pointed to the three figures in the picture and asked Jill if she knew who they were.

"Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus," she replied confidently.

Then I pointed to one of the sheep in the scene and asked, “And what is this?”

Without hesitation, Jill replied, “Mary had a little lamb.”

—Shirley B. Powley, Lockport, New York

Since our retirement, my husband and I spend part of our winters traveling. One year when we were going to be away for Christmas, our daughter-in-law found this poem on our 8-year-old grandson’s dresser:

My grandparents have gone away
And tomorrow is Christmas Day.
I pray and pray and pray to Thee—
Why can’t they spend Christmas Day with me?

This grandson is grown now, but you may be sure that this changed our Christmas plans after that.

—Bea Creech, South Colby, Washington

GANG’S ALL HERE

NOLLAIG SHONA DAOIBH: With that Gaelic Christmas greeting students and teachers at the Grianach House School, an elementary mission school located on the emerald isle of Ireland, sent their wishes last year. In the third row center are the teachers: (left to right) Mary O’Hicci, Lynne Hollister, Ed Hollister (headmaster), and Iva Baasch. Grianach is funded by the local Galway church and the Emerald Health and Education Foundation, a member of ASI (Adventist-Laymen’s Services and Industries). For more on Emerald, go to http://www.cvja.edu/~emerald.

WE NEED YOU

Send Give & Take submissions to . . . Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74532.2564@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.
Sister, you have known the Sabbath truth for so long; how is it that you never shared it with us?"

This question from Brother Pospu Samuel left me dumbfounded. In the quiet that followed my cousin’s question, I could hear only the buzzing of insects in the humid Indian evening in the village of Mandapaka. Nor did I know what to say to fill that silence. It had never occurred to me or my husband, Baburao, that our relatives had been waiting for an invitation to join us in Sabbath worship.

On our previous visits to India from the United States we

ALMOST TIME: The congregation enjoys Sabbath school outside the church under a shamiyana before the ribbon-cutting ceremony.
would always visit our non-Adventist relatives, offer gifts, and spend a few days socializing and getting reacquainted. During weekends we had even conducted our own Sabbath services. Why then had we never invited them to embrace the new truth that we had found!

Brother Samuel and his family had long been devout Christians. In fact, most of our relatives in the neighboring villages knew Christ. But they worked on Saturdays and kept Sunday as their day of worship. How could we know that they had any interest in change? We'd never asked.

Was It an Omen? Here's What Happened.

The Lord continued to work on us from another direction, sending to this small village another of our cousins from 300 miles away. With no knowledge of Brother Samuel's earlier query, Cousin Kamala proceeded to ask virtually the identical question when she arrived: "Why haven't you told us?"

We took this as a double message from God to share our faith. And so we began witnessing to the third angel's message in Mandapaka.

Later the Southern Asia Division sent K. J. Moses to hold evangelistic meetings, during which many of our relatives chose to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, joining one or the other of three new (house) congregations.

Remarkably, however, Brother Samuel was not one of the new converts. Though he'd taken an active part in the evangelistic campaign—even leading out in music and inviting everyone he knew to the meetings—he would not accept baptism. This puzzled me.

Some 10 years passed. Then in 1995 my husband and I accompanied a team of 25 evangelists and physicians from the United States to participate in revival meetings in Vijayawada and neighboring towns. Strategically, we invited cousins Samuel and Elisha to come to Vijayawada with their families and spend some time with us during the meetings. (These meetings were part of a region-wide seven-site Real Truth crusade.)

"Brother Samuel," I asked my cousin just before the campaign concluded, "do you remember the question you put to me several years ago? Now it is the time for you to respond."

"I am ready to be baptized," he replied immediately.

Cousin Elisha, along with his three daughters, was also baptized. And Kamala (remember her?) also took her stand.

And There Were Others

A notable memorable baptism was that of Sathyam, our driver.
Christian whose religion requires certain rituals as well as “being good” to obtain eternal life, he’d accepted an invitation to attend the meetings. During our time together we answered his questions, explaining that Jesus gives us eternal life and that our good deeds have nothing to do with it. Two years after the meetings one of our pastors baptized him.

At that time we had a congregation of about 100 people attending church in Mandapaka, with no church building in which to meet. So for two years or more they met in the home of one of the members.

Then something wonderful happened. God used the entire Chedalawada family to build a church in that town.

We felt God’s presence while building the church in Mandapaka. We’d prayed for an engineer. God sent us one who was also an architect, and he stuck with us until the project ended. When funds got low, he put up his own funds to finish the job on time.

We’d prayed for a mason. God sent us the best mason in town. We told him, “You have four and a half months to complete the job. You can work six days, but you cannot work on Saturdays.” He hesitated. “You know we build churches for other denominations,” he said, “and they don’t mind us working on their holy day.” This is different, we told him. Under no circumstances should any work be done between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday.

And there was one other problem. A devout Hindu, the mason wanted to have a Hindu ceremony before starting the work on the building. “No,” we said, “that won’t be necessary. We will come and have special prayer before you start the work.” God would bless the work and finish it in time, we assured him.

And God did.

On December 20, 1997, William B. Chedalawada, 91-year-old patriarch of the family, along with a number of his children (including my husband), was present for the dedication service.
India: The Big Picture

BY GARY KRAUSE

If Global Mission were a business, we would cut our losses and give up trying to share the good news about Jesus in India. More than a billion people will be living there by the year 2000. More than 80 percent of the current population are Hindu, 11.5 percent are Muslim, less than 2.5 percent are Christian, and .025 percent are Seventh-day Adventist. In other words, there are scarcely 250 Adventists per million people.

Global Mission doesn’t quit, because there are no conditions attached to the gospel commission. We keep searching for ways to share the good news—not because of outrageous success, but because Jesus asked us to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

When the Global Mission initiative was voted at Annual Council in 1989, northern India was one of the four major global focus areas chosen. Since then there have been stunning breakthroughs, and the past six years have seen the most rapid growth in the history of the Adventist Church in India. Global Mission has specifically targeted India’s unentered north, where there are scarcely any Christians. In the state of Haryana alone live 17 million Hindus, and until recently just a handful of Adventists.

Global Mission pioneers are now working in more than 100 target areas in Haryana and have established hundreds of new congregations. These pioneers are Indian nationals who know the people, understand the culture, speak the language, and find ways to reach into the heartland of Hinduism.

Visiting Global Mission work in northern India is like stepping back into apostolic times. The pioneers are preaching, teaching, and healing the sick. Several hundred people have already been baptized, and when you see the pioneers smile, you know that God has big plans for India.

Gary Krause is Global Mission communication director for the General Conference.

Train Riders Take Notice

The church in Mandapaka stands near the railroad tracks like a beacon of light. Riders of the train tell us that every time the train passes by, some of the passengers raise their hands in reverence to the temple of God.

We have relatives in three neighboring villages, most of whose inhabitants are interrelated and belong to non-Christian religions. Non-Christians in India are joining the church in greater numbers than ever before in our mission’s history. Now we have Seventh-day Adventist congregations in all three villages. A mother church, to be completed from donations given by American friends, will be ready by January 1999.

Christ says that with His call comes the enabling. Christians are Christ’s jewels and must shine brightly for Him. Every soul in Christ’s kingdom has a sacred trust. “Let your light shine before men,” Jesus said, “that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16, NIV).

Yes, the Bible admonishes us to bring to our neighbors lighted candles from the Sun of righteousness and pour upon our friends the sparkling gems of light from the throne of God.

We praise God for Brother Samuel’s important question to us years ago. And we’re thankful for the new jewels in India that came as a result of it.

Sarojini Chedalawada worked for many years at the General Conference. She and her husband are now retired and live in Seattle, Washington.

Passengers raise their hands in reverence every time the train passes by our church.
ADVENTISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE? AS a church we've cut our teeth proclaiming the judgment theme of the three angels' messages. But it's sometimes alleged that our witness and actions don't match our rhetoric.

This shouldn't be the case, because our fundamental belief number 12 (about the preaching of the everlasting gospel) states, “Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.”

Witnessing, however, isn't just articulating sound truths; it's an experiential living out of justice and mercy. It's aligning one's life with Micah 6:8: “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (NIV). Adventists are committed to present truth and being abreast of the latest trends; consequently, we need to be more responsive to the catchword of the nineties—thinking globally, acting locally. How tragic if the Adventist Church developed a reputation for being indifferent to people's needs because we were preoccupied with our message and evangelistic agenda.

When we're exposed to suffering and injustice, are we guilty of shrugging our shoulders and thinking that ADRA (the Adventist Development and Relief Agency) or the Salvation Army will handle it? The world today needs Christians prepared to fight for social justice.

In the past some Adventists have been quoted as saying, “Social work mustn't distract us from our prophetic calling. Let others wait upon the tables of the needy and push the social justice wheelbarrow—our job is to preach.”
Attitudes are changing. Now many Adventists argue that the concept that we are the remnant means more than doctrinal purity. It must also involve a deep sense of social responsibility. They contend that if Adventists are to qualify as the remnant, then they need to take a more assertive and clear stand on key social issues.

Supporters of this more contemporary view of the remnant base their case on the example of the ancient prophets. For instance, Amos had a burden for social justice (Amos 5:24). He was more than a mouthpiece. He was a defender of the covenant—and that made him an activist for the poor and the oppressed.

Christ's first sermon (Luke 4:14-21) was riddled with numerous social justice connotations. Some scholars say it was an outline of His ministry of deliverance, based on the Jubilee prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3. Read the sermon; it's radical.

We're a prophetic movement; therefore, we need to live like the prophets. The status of a prophet is one of service and justice for God—not doctrinal smugness because we have the truth.

Adventists shouldn't indulge in denominational self-congratulation, but be community- and people-centered. It's time to be a prophetic movement.

A devoutist bore a more vigorous witness against the wrongs and inequities of society.

Bearing in mind that the church and state should be separate and civil disobedience is out, how can Christians champion justice and mercy?

1. Take a genuine interest in your neighborhood. Lobby the council, without being rude, for things that need improving. That might be for tidy parks, initiating an anti-litter campaign, or even the need for better maintenance on roads and bridges.

2. Get to know who is in need in your area. These people need visiting so they know the church cares for them, irrespective of their background. Helping disadvantaged groups could entail providing transport to town, mowing lawns, child minding, and helping people with language difficulties.

3. We can write letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines giving a positive Christian perspective on topical issues. People are hungry for good news. And we've sure got some. So let's share it. The media welcomes analytical, constructive letters—whining polemics usually end up in the bin.

Ellen White and Joseph Bates, two of our founders, were noted for their active support of temperance leagues. Ellen White often itinerated as a popular temperance speaker and drew large crowds.

A devoutist shouldn't sit back and passively watch multinational companies exploit and denude the environment. Nor should we ignore the insidious, manipulative influence of TV, violent videos, and pornography.

Christians are to be the salt of the world, and salt prevents decay. So why let society rot? Let's do something to arrest this trend. It doesn't mean we go overboard and jump on the political bandwagon. Nevertheless, society needs to know where Adventists stand on important issues.

Adventists have a reputation for being religious liberty watchdogs. That's important, but surely we have more to offer.

There's a lot we can do individually and corporately to demonstrate our concern for social justice—which, after all, is part and parcel of the everlasting gospel. But we can't proclaim a message without getting personally involved. We are called to witness, and we're commissioned to care.

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Bryan Vickery is the pastor of the Hamilton, New Zealand, church. This article is reprinted by permission from the South Pacific Division Record. Minor changes have been made to conform with American usage.
CHRISTMAS LONG PAST, A BEFRECKLED preschooler, I was being tugged around F. W. Woolworth's by my mother, who was intent on a spot of last-minute present-buying. On the way into the crush of feet and stab of elbows we had passed a Father Christmas. I had caught on to the Santa thing by then, and in any case, I never did have difficulty identifying cotton. That particular Santa, however, would have been picked out as a phony by even the most credulous infant. He spoke to no one, kept away from kids, and, we noticed, seemed intent on losing himself in the impossible seethe of bodies.

Those were the days when a woman carried her shopping in a basket held over her right arm, and not infrequently left her purse among the groceries. A t precisely what point my mother figured out Santa's game, I couldn't say. A tler a hush signal, she drew my attention to what Santa was doing. U sing his voluminous red sleeves for cover, he was attempting to remove a packed purse from among a shopper's food items.

"Excuse me, madam. But Father Christmas is trying to steal your purse!"

M y mother, normally a quiet soul, pronounced these syllables in ringing tones that could be heard two counters away. The shopper spun around to find Santa's fingers in the act of lifting her purse. He had no chance of escape. The store detective discovered quite a collection of purses and wallets under Santa's red clothes.

Since those distant threadbare times I have always identified Santa with the pocket-picking, purse-pinching, plastic-card-account-inflating aspect of the season of peace and goodwill to all people— but especially to shopkeepers.

A lthough I have long since pruned my present list to "children only," informing the remainder of the clan that the price of their gift has been blown on a check to my favorite charity, there is one aspect of those Christmases long past that I remember with a warm glow. No, it is not swirling snow. Most Christmas mornings of my memory, though bone-bitingly cold, were clear as a mirror and bright as the promise of heaven.

Christmas was the time when everyone came home. T here was only one flip side to this. It was, as I recall, always my turn to sleep on the floor. But no matter. Everyone was there, plus everyone's best friends. A nd it made for lively and laughter-filled times.

O f course, those times are long gone. We married our best friends. Then the magnetism that drew us together died with the couple who made it all possible. Even the house has gone, and the family who moved in after us called it "W its End." C heek!

T hose Christmases, needless to say, have not just gone for me and mine, but for almost everyone. T hey've been killed by T V and the advent of the "nuclear family" of M om, Dad, and 2.4 children. T he disappearance of the extended family— three generations, plus aunts and uncles and friends— has been bad news for millions. A nd now, strangest
of turnarounds, Christmas has been called “the loneliest time of the year.” Samaritan telephone lines are white-hot with the cries of those who, feeling their isolation more keenly than at any other time, are deciding to end it all.

Meet George. My wife insists we visit him on Christmas Eve. George, even in old age and in the advanced stages of Parkinson’s, is a handsome chap. When exactly his life went wrong, I couldn’t say; but his wife, children, and grandchildren, who never see him all year, don’t see why they should make an exception for Christmas. His speech is slurred, and there are tears in his eyes when we leave.

Meet Margie. She remembers those Christmases at home—Mom and Dad and five children, of whom she was one—as the happiest of times. But Margie never married. She has oodles of nephews, nieces, great-nephews, and great-nieces, and she never forgets a birthday. But the holiday season for Margie means plenty of cards, but no human contact whatsoever between drinks at work on December 23 and when she clocks in again on January 3.

Meet Mrs. Aitkin. She was once the center and provider for a family of four. They’ve each done well in the world and made her a grandmother. They used to write and visit occasionally. Now they have followed their fortunes to different places, and Mrs Aitkin does not have all their addresses. Last year she was admitted to a rest home, and worried that they wouldn’t know. I undertook to write to each of them at their last known addresses. Christmas brought three cards and one box of cookies, her son having forgotten that she was a diabetic. The local church people came to sing carols, but spoiled it a bit by asking for a “contribution.”

Meet Madeleine. She’s 13. Her mother left her at the Matthew’s Home for Children when she was 4. She said she would be back, but at 13 Madeleine is not holding her breath. She is tall for her age, and when she laughs, she throws back her head, opens her mouth wide, and shows white, straight teeth. But when she cries, I feel almost terrified; not as noisy as her laughter, her weeping has about it a hollow-ness and utter desolation of spirit.

George, Margie, Mrs. Aitkin, and Madeleine—together with the hundreds of thousands like them—do not want your money this Christmas. They like to hear your carols; they appreciate your cards and the nicely wrapped gifts your church sends them. But the gift they would really appreciate is in a more precious coinage. It’s your company—your place or theirs. They don’t want to be told “Jesus loves you.” They want to be shown.

So as we approach yet another “Santas: They’re Everywhere” Christmas, put your flexible friend away, keep your purse where “Santa” can’t get it—and prepare to spend yourself. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My lonely children . . .”
The ribbing was sharp but good-natured. “Let’s see if the Yanks can get it right tonight,” the pastor teased as we waited for the opening night telecast to begin. 

A appreciative laughter rose from around the auditorium, while several American students yelped in mock dismay.

“A s of 5:00 this afternoon we were getting 39 languages via satellite from the U.S.” he added solemnly. “The bad news is that none of them was English.” He stood there in the semidarkness as we stared at the test pattern on the screen.

“Hasn’t five minutes already passed?” he asked nervously. Suddenly images swept on the screen, and music rolled out of the auditorium speakers. NET ’98—one day and a worrisome 15 minutes late—had finally begun in Britain.

In the glow from the backlit red exit signs at the rear of the Newbold College auditorium, I studied the crowd at the Saturday night event. Fifty or more college students, many of whom I recognized from the student worship service of that morning, had been joined by more than 100 church members from the surrounding community.

Directly in front of my family and me were four non-Adventist guests, all past 60 years of age. I watched as they struggled to keep pace with the lyrics of the praise choruses that scrolled on the screen and smiled at the nervous banter between Shasta Burr and Bernie Anderson. From their vantage point, NET ’98 looked like a very American event indeed. Once they got past the “Hi, y’alls!” and the rapid-fire delivery, they would settle in to hear the clear, compelling preaching of the Word. At least that’s what I prayed would happen.

One night later we were gathered into the Holloway Road church on London’s north side by an enthusiastic group of greeters. “You’ve come from where?” they asked in obvious surprise. “The States—all the way from the States? Well, we must let some people know you’re here.” Still sporting the sneakers and jeans that we had worn for some quick sight-seeing on Sunday afternoon, my wife and I weren’t eager to be pointed out in an audience in which many men wore ties and half the women sported hats. Soon the pastors were warmly welcoming us, full of the good cheer that comes with great attendance.

“We had more than 500 persons here last night,” said Pastor Brighton Kavaloh, quietly proud of the hard work his congregation had done to bring friends and neighbors to the NET event. “As best we can tell, more than 150 were nonmembers. That’s the best news of all.” The numbers would be lower tonight, he explained, for Sunday night was hardly an optimal time for evangelism. But he and his team were still expecting 70 or 80 guests to register before the lights went off.
down. Outside, a flashing red signboard scrolled an invitation for last-minute walk-ins: “Hear Credible Answers to Crucial Questions.”

While the audience joined in a vigorous song service, I did the quick count for which pastors and evangelists are famous. More than 250 persons sat in clusters across the large sanctuary, ranging in age from very young children to elderly saints. While predominantly a Black congregation built around Caribbean and West African émigrés, the Holloway Road audience included Anglos and Asians as well in an easy, friendly fellowship. Secretly I wondered how a guest seeking anonymity—say, one in jeans and sneakers—might have fared with these gregarious church members.

If there was a more appreciative audience for Dwight Nelson’s presentation that evening, it’s difficult to imagine where it might have been. A powerful sense of “amen” rolled over the audience as Nelson’s words sank in: “It took the birth of a Baby to save us.” Bodies leaned forward in the worn wooden seats; heads nodded vigorously in assent. Here in one of the world’s largest cities, the American evangelist was striking all the right chords.

Three days later and 200 miles to the north, more than 70 members and guests filled the back two thirds of the

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**When Todor Needed Help**

**Michigan church rallies on behalf of Bulgarian member.**

BY KELLIE ANN TOMPKINS, WRITING FROM LANSING, MICHIGAN

Get the money together in three weeks? $3,500? Todor Simeonov, a Michigan State University student in chemical engineering, didn’t actually ask for the money. He simply stated the needs of his church in Gorna Oryakhovista, Bulgaria—projection equipment for NET ’98. The rest was left up to the 100-member University church in East Lansing, Michigan.

“I’m a terrible fund-raiser,” said Gary Heilig, the church’s NET ’98 coordinator. “I didn’t even want to talk to the pastor about it because we had spent so much already for our own NET ’98 effort.” But Pastor Roy Castelbuono said if Gary found a projector and members donated the money, go ahead.

On Sabbath, October 3, one week before NET ’98, half of the $3,500 had been raised. The deacons of University church placed pledge sheets on the pews before the 11:00 service. “This is our chance to help,” Pastor Castelbuono told the congregation. “We can participate in the world effort. Our church is going to move out in faith concerning this project.”

After the service enough pledges came in to pay for the projector. The pastor and Gary quickly faxed a letter confirming a sister-church relationship and a check to the Oklahoma company for the projector to be sent to Bulgaria.

Todor’s church in Gorna Oryakhovista was able to use the projection screen for NET ’98 instead of a 30-inch television. This 80-member church meets in a room that holds about 100 people. The room was overcrowded during the seminars. Pastor Trifonov plans on giving another NET ’98 presentation soon. He also plans to use the projector for various Bible study efforts in the surrounding towns.

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A HEART FOR BULGARIA: Growing up in an atheistic home in Gorna Oryakhovista, Bulgaria (pictured), Todor Simeonov had an Adventist friend who challenged him to study the Bible for himself. After two years of discovery, Todor was baptized. Though he now studies in the United States, Todor still cares deeply for his native Bulgaria—a country, he says, where most people either attend the Orthodox Church to worship saints no longer alive or have no faith at all.
Huddersfield church on the fourth night of the series. The brick-and-stone church in the working-class neighborhood almost literally vibrated with Nelson's message. "It's the surround-sound audio system we put in," said the young man at the back, beaming when I complimented him on the clarity.

I slipped into a cushioned pew beneath the giant image of the evangelist, whose head was nearly three feet high by two wide. Now, this is immediacy, I thought to myself, noting the intensity of faces all about me. Almost as if he were talking just to me.

If there were any misgivings about the American origins of NET '98, they were kept discreetly hidden. Choruses of murmured "amens" rose at every key point.

"We've had more than a dozen guests who've stayed with us through the first four nights," said local elder Eugenia Moses, "including several who just walked in off the street on the first evening. We're delighted with what the Spirit is doing here."

The Newbold College, Holloway Road, and Huddersfield sites seem typical of the unexpectedly strong response to NET '98 in the British Union. More than 10,000 church members and nearly 3,400 guests attended opening night, October 10, according to Dalbert Elias, British Union Ministerial director. At the halfway point of the series more than 13,000 Adventists in the British Union—71 percent of the total—had attended one or more of the meetings, bringing with them nearly 5,000 visitors. Seventy-four sites, mostly Adventist churches, hosted the live telecast throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, while dozens more showed tapes on a one-week delay.

"Do you think it was a good meeting tonight, Daddy?" my 8-year-old son wanted to know as we rode the late train home after one night's session. The hope in his question was impossible to miss.

"Yes, Evan," I said slowly, finding myself both glad and relieved at the British church's warm embrace of a "Yank" initiative. "It was a very good meeting."

International Health Food Association Continues in Ministry

BY EUGENE GROSSER, INTERNATIONAL HEALTH FOOD ASSOCIATION DIRECTOR

At a conference in Durban, South Africa, the International Health Food Association (IHFA) invited 46 representatives from church food industries to join with church administrators to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The conference gave attendees an opportunity to review progress in introducing a system of evaluation and accreditation similar to that which is used for church educational and medical institutions. IHFA members gave their enthusiastic support to this program, which will accomplish the initial evaluation of all companies by the summer of 2000.

For more than 100 years the Adventist Church has been engaged in the manufacture and distribution of healthful foods in support of its emphasis on health of body, mind, and spirit. From modest beginnings in local communities this ministry has developed into a highly competitive, successful (more than $285 million turnover in 1992) 25-country industry that produces approximately 160,000 tons of product per year.

Through the years the health food industry has retained its focus on ministry and on the counsels given through Ellen White. One of her themes in particular has shaped IHFA's recent work: "It is the Lord's design that the poorest people in every place shall be supplied with inexpensive, healthful foods. In many places industries for the manufacture of these foods are to be established" (Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 125).

In response to this counsel IHFA has committed itself, with the support of member companies, to the establishment of a food processing-based humanitarian project in Tanzania, East Africa. Malnutrition and poverty present major social problems in this country. Jose Luis Gomez, an experienced food industry administrator from Spain, will move to Arusha with his family to develop this project. IHFA believes that working to satisfy people's physical needs, a prominent feature of Jesus' earthly ministry, will prove to be equally effective today in reaching the poor with the good news of salvation.

The International Health Food Association continues in its mission of promoting a healthy lifestyle through the production and distribution of nutritionally sound food, not as an end in itself, but as a means of communicating the message of a returning Saviour and King.
The Day of the Whistling Shrimp

BY JONATHAN GALLAGHER, GENERAL CONFERENCE NEWS DIRECTOR

Back in 1955, at the height of the cold war, Premier Nikita Khrushchev told some East German dignitaries visiting Moscow that the day the Soviet Union gave up the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin would be the day a shrimp learned to whistle.*

Khrushchev never foresaw the fall of Communism and the rejection of its teaching across almost all its former domain. Today the Soviet Union is gone, and Communism abandoned.

The day of the whistling shrimp has come.

Yet though we know all this, perhaps we miss the significance of such events. We become accustomed to seeing rapid change in today's world. A nother day, another major news story... and we miss the point.

The point is that our world is changing faster than at any time in its history, and the rate of change continues to increase. The revolution in technology and information flow not only informs but blends the world together, as if the stage were being set for the final performance.

We cannot be indifferent and unconcerned, unmoved and uninterested in the latest news bombshell. Too many may have "cried wolf" in the past, but that must not lead us to ignore the warning sounds all around us now.

Unstable financial organizations.

A s Adventists we have truth for this time, and we need to share it. Time to wake up and, while listening to all the whistling shrimps, time to act.


NEWS COMMENTARY

Church Representatives React to International Religious Freedom Act

Adventist Church leaders attended the United States Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Act to respond to the International Religious Freedom Act signed into law by President Clinton on October 27.

John Graz and Richard Fenn of the Adventist Church's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department attended the November 4 meeting at the State Department.

Responding afterward, Graz spoke of the historic development symbolized by the act.

"This is the first time any country, let alone a superpower like the United States, has enacted a special law with the purpose of defending religious freedom abroad," said Graz. "The act calls for the nomination of an ambassador at large who will oversee the implementation of the law, together with a special adviser on religious freedom who will be part of the staff of the National Security Council and advise the U.S. president on these issues."

Commenting on its global implications, Graz said that the act could prove supportive of those who suffer religious discrimination and persecution.

"We appreciate religious freedom being a concern of the U.S. government, which has such an influence around the world. We trust the law will be well implemented, and not used for political purpose or national interest. The act is in contrast to those countries that are setting up state-sponsored 'sect observatories' and restricting religious freedom."

"Seventh-day Adventists are not linked to any law or government, but everywhere work for religious liberty for all."—Adventist News Network.

ADRA Helps Victims of Hurricane Mitch

In the aftermath of the worst natural disaster in Nicaragua this century, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is delivering desperately needed relief materials to thousands of refugees, reports Ed Baumgartner, ADRA/Nicaragua director.

ADRA personnel in cooperation with the Adventist Church are using a mobile clinic staffed with a medical team to give relief to those affected by the storm, serving several hundred people daily.

"What we see in our relief efforts is indescribable. People are suffering and have lost everything," says Ruben Rojas, an ADRA employee and member of the mobile clinic.

Baumgartner reports that ADRA is receiving more...
than US$100,000 to purchase medicines, temporary shelter material, blankets, and other relief supplies for victims of Hurricane Mitch.

A DRA is currently distributing 420 tons of a corn and soy blend cereal and 98 tons of vegetable oil, enough food for 57,000 people for one month, based on a ration size that provides 1,000 calories per day and 40 grams of protein.

With an estimated 750,000 homeless (one fifth of the entire population), 1,500 dead, and thousands missing, A DRA is moving quickly to bring relief to the country.

In Honduras, A DRA continues to house hurricane victims in five shelters on the mainland and in the Bay Islands. Members of the Comayaguela A dventist Church in Tegucigalpa collected enough relief supplies to fill a 40-foot container within two days. T he A dventist Church in the Cayman Islands also airlifted supplies for distribution.— A dventist N ews N etwork.

Hawaii Member Assumes Legislative Leadership Post

The Republican caucus of the Hawaii House of Representatives unanimously elected David A. Pendleton, an A dventist lay member and frequent contributor to the people that spirits work against us. A s a result, almost 50 became Seventh-day Adventists. T he converts’ grown children had counted on their parents’ maintaining contact with spirits to intercede for them. But these new Adventists now see this as “a waste of time,” which upsets their children. T he Mekong River, of Vietnam War fame, forms the northeastern border of this Asian country. Can you name it?

A . Cambodia C. Laos
B. Vietnam D. Thailand

Answers:

1. B. Indonesia. H ere the M uslim population approaches that of India and of Pakistan. T he 160,000 Adventists are finding new methods to reach their M uslim neighbors.

2. D. Thailand is home to 11,000 Adventists in a population of 60 million (a ratio of 1 to 5,500). Neighboring Myanmar (Burma) has a ratio of 1 to 2,500. T he world average is about 1 to 600.

— Compiled by D on Yost of the General Conference G lobal M ission O ffice.

David A. Pendleton

Review, as the new minority floor leader. T he position is considered by many as the number two leadership post in the caucus.

First elected to the state legislature in 1996 Pendleton, an attorney, previously served as minority whip for the caucus. He has also served as a youth pastor in his local church.

News Notes

✓ CompuServe U sers. Y ou can access the Adventist Review online each week within 48 hours of press time, and several days before the magazine reaches your home. T he Review is available free of charge in the Adventist O nline Forum (G O S D A).

If you have e-mail, you can also contact the Review staff online. Send letters, prayer requests, and subscription requests to reviewmag@adventist.org.

What’s Upcoming

Dec. 12 Health and Temperance Day
Dec. 19 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the North American Division
Dec. 26 Ingathering Campaign ends
Could you explain the meaning of the law that requires “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand” (Ex. 21:23, 24)?

This piece of legislation sounds barbaric and inhumane to many modern people. And until rather recently scholars tended to interpret it in terms of the practice reflecting a very early stage in the development of the Israelite legal system.

Fortunately, archaeological discoveries have unearthed legal materials from the ancient Near East that have facilitated a better understanding of this piece of legislation than can be found in more recent commentaries on the book of Exodus.

The law of “an eye for an eye” is usually called the law of retribution, or “lex talionis” (Latin, lex [law] and talio [like]; the punishment is like the injury), or the law of equivalency.

1. History of the legislation. The lex talionis is found in three passages in the Old Testament (Ex. 21:23, 24; Lev. 24:19, 20; and Deut. 19:21). A similar law is found in the ancient Mesopotamian code of Hammurabi. Earlier codes legislated financial compensation for bodily injuries, but Hammurabi seems to have been the first to require physical injury for physical injury. This has led some historians to conclude that there was a time when monetary compensation redressed personal injuries because the state did not consider them to be crimes against society.

The law of equivalency was a significant development in the history of jurisprudence in the sense that what used to be a private matter between two families was now taken over by the state and considered to be criminal behavior. This fits very well with the Old Testament understanding of offenses against others as offenses against the covenant community and against the God of the covenant.

2. The principle involved. The law of equivalency was an attempt to limit the extent of a punishment and to discourage cruelty. The principle of this legislation is one of equivalency; that is to say, the punishment should correspond to the crime and should be limited to the one involved in the injury (Deut. 19:18-21).

This law was a rejection of family feuds and the spirit of revenge that led the injured party to uncontrolled attacks against the culprit and the members of his or her family (cf. Gen. 4:23). The punishment was required to fit the crime, a principle still used in modern jurisprudence. I must add that in the Bible this law was applied equally to all members of society (Lev. 24:22), while in Mesopotamia it was limited to crimes against society’s “important” people.

3. The enforcement of the law. It’s difficult to determine to what extent this legislation was strictly enforced. We do know that in the case of murder the life of the murderer was taken—life for life (Num. 35:31). But apart from this, the formulation “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” etc., seems to have been a technical phrase used to express the idea of equivalency, leaving the court to determine the nature and extent of the equivalence.

“What he has done must be done to him” (Lev. 24:19, NIV) is used to indicate that the culprit should get what he deserves (cf. Judges 15:6-8, 11). The restitution could be monetary or in kind, as indicated in Leviticus 24:18: “Anyone who takes the life of someone’s animal must make restitution—life for life.” Obviously, in this case “life for life” does not mean that the individual who killed the animal was to be killed. The law provided the legislative foundation to establish proper equivalence in specific cases.

4. Jesus and the law of equivalency. The intent of the law of retribution was to ensure that the punishment corresponded to the crime in order to control the punishment inflicted on the guilty one. In Matthew 5:38-42 Jesus was not abrogating this important legal principle, but was rather inviting Christians in their daily lives to go beyond the letter of the law.

The implicit intention of the law—to eliminate personal revenge—was stated explicitly by Jesus; and He, in His own person and ministry, modeled it for us.

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.
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SHE WALKED THE STREETS OF Lausanne, Switzerland, Lozan Andonov had never before seen such an abundance or variety of food. Compared to this, my children are starving, he thought as he gazed on the bounty.

Lozan was with a Bulgarian Opera House delegation attending a two-week festival in Lausanne. His first visit to Switzerland highlighted the outstanding contrast between this country and his homeland. On his return to Bulgaria he said to his wife, Donna, “Our children are starving.”

“Why do you say that?” she asked. “We always have food.”

“I know,” Lozan replied, “but if you could’ve seen what I saw in Lausanne . . .” He looked at Donna and said, “When I saw all that food, it occurred to me that we must leave this country.”

“Lozan,” Donna whispered, “you can’t be serious. You know what will happen if we are caught.”

“Yes, I know,” he replied. Nonetheless, from that time Lozan anchored his determination on the words of Psalm 118:6: “The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

The Narrow Path

Lozan was born two years after the Communist Party took control of Bulgaria. He knew what life was like before Communism only from the stories his parents and grandparents told him. His mother was a Seventh-day Adventist Christian; his father was not.

After graduating from technical school Lozan went to work with the Bulgarian Opera House. A n exceptional craftsman, he eventually supervised 150 of the Opera’s employees. Lozan had done quite well materially. He owned a car, a country home, a bank account, and an apartment in the city. He also had his own lampmaking business. He was an elder in his church, and he covertly distributed Bibles.

Nevertheless, Lozan was deeply concerned about the future of his children, Monika and Eliza. Under Communist rule all the children belonged to the state and were required to attend public schools. Their names could not be placed on the church books. The Communists had closed all the church schools, confiscated the books, and fired the teachers. Lozan’s children had to travel a great distance to go to school; and they were taunted about their beliefs, their things were stolen, and they were kicked and mistreated by their fellow students. But they dared not complain to their teachers, and many times they came home in tears.

In 1984 a delegation from the Italian Opera House visited Bulgaria. Impressed with Lozan’s expertise, the head of the delegation invited him to visit Italy as a consultant. But because Lozan was not a Communist, his supervisor offered to send someone else instead. The Italians declined, and Lozan, unwilling to let the opportunity slip away, quit his job and spent two months with the Italian Opera Company.

On his return to Bulgaria Lozan got a job with the National Puppeteer Company. One morning his boss announced, “Lozan, we’ll soon be taking part in an exposition in Canada. I want you to make a puppet of a grandmother sitting in a rocking chair knitting. It must almost seem alive. Can you do it?”

Excited about the idea of visiting Canada, Lozan put all his creative energy into the assignment. The result was an amazingly lifelike puppet. However, his excitement was shattered shortly before the trip when his boss told him that he could travel with the puppet only if he joined the Communist Party.

Stunned by the news, Lozan heard himself say, “Then I’ll stay home.”

“Very well,” his supervisor replied. “Georgi will go.”

For several weeks bitterness shrouded Lozan. When the delegation returned to Bulgaria, he sought out Georgi. “What was Canada like?” he asked.

“Canada was nice,” Georgi replied, “but we also visited
Washington, D.C. I liked Washington best.”

This conversation kindled a great bitterness in Lozan. However, the Sunday morning after his talk with Georgi, Lozan awoke without the bitterness and anger he had felt. Somehow he knew everything would be all right.

After two seasons with the National Puppeteer Company, his former supervisor at the Opera House contacted Lozan and asked him to return to work. He did, and for a while things went well. But Lozan’s faith was again tested when he was fired for refusing to work on the Sabbath.

An Open Door

Lozan found a job as a laborer and with every passing day became more determined to flee the country. During this difficult time he held firmly to the words of Isaiah 59:1: “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.”

In 1987 Monika graduated from school, and Lozan decided that the time had come. Monika wanted to be a doctor, but she couldn’t get into medical school because she was not a Communist.

Lozan applied for visas to travel to Vienna for a vacation. State policy mandated that a family could not visit a non-Communist country without someone from the immediate family staying behind as security that those who left would return. Yet authorities inadvertently issued Lozan three visas instead of two. His eyes filled with tears. He wished he could say “Mama, I love you.” He didn’t know when he would see her again. Jesus, he prayed, please keep Mama safe, and when I see her again I’ll tell her how much I love her.

The next day Lozan and his family, with suitcases in hand, locked the door of their apartment for the last time, leaving behind nearly everything they owned. Without looking back, they headed for the airport and the flight that would take them to West Germany— and freedom.

Another Chance

Two years later, in 1989, Lozan decided to leave Bulgaria, this time for West Germany. Once more the entire family was granted visas to travel in West Germany.

This time the error was not discovered. Before their departure Lozan remodeled his apartment in the city so that no one would think that he was planning to defect. He also sold his car under the pretext that he needed a bigger vehicle for his business.

To protect his parents from any possible retaliation from the Communists as a result of his defection, Lozan told them nothing about his plans. If they were questioned by the Communists, they could honestly say that they knew nothing.

The day before the family left for

Epilogue: Lozan, Donna, and Eliza Andonov now live in Beltsville, Maryland, where Lozan runs a furniture upholstering business part-time and also works at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., creating props for musical and stage performances. Their elder daughter, Monika, attends medical school at Loma Linda University.

Lozan occasionally travels to Bulgaria to visit his father and take Christian literature to the believers in his former congregation. Lozan’s mother has passed to her rest. He never saw her again after saying goodbye to her at the train station.

*All texts are quoted from the New International Version.

Claudette Tang-Kwok is a legal secretary who works in Washington, D.C. She attends the Seventh-day Adventist church in Beltsville, Maryland.
But where do we go from here? We must know our origin before we can figure out our destiny.

BY GARY PATTERSON

The following article was condensed from a sermon prepared in observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations.—Editors.

S O GOD CREATED HUMANKIND IN HIS image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’ (Gen. 1:27, 28, NRSV).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see sidebar) is a secular document proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. But it carries deep religious and spiritual significance. And it may well be that, in terms of its intended impact on individuals and society, it can achieve its full results only in the context of religious practice and individual commitment to the principles of Sacred Scripture.

We Must Understand Our Origin

Recently while I was driving across town near my office, my mind wandered. I lost track of where I was and for a while could not recognize a single landmark—no streets, no buildings, no familiar scenes. Put plainly, I was lost.

I was reminded once again of the importance of knowing one’s point of origin. Looking at the map I had with me would have been of no value, since I did not know where I was. And without a point of origin, finding the desired destination was impossible. The crisis passed only when, as I continued to drive, I came to some recognizable landmarks.

The broader application to life was obvious. It’s only in knowing our point of origin that it’s possible to know our destiny. In this context the Creation motif of the first chapters of Genesis becomes normative both for the present reality of our lives and the destiny of the world. In human-kind God has given “a specimen of Himself.” Such a knowledge of origin and purpose for our lives not only informs, but mandates relationships among people as loving and supportive brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Embedded in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are words that call for the best and highest motives of the committed Christian. It speaks, for example, of “the conscience of mankind” and of “freedom of speech and belief.” It speaks of “faith” in the worth and dignity of the human person, concepts fraught with religious implications. And in articles 2 and 18 the declaration enunciates the principle of the freedom of religion and belief “in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

In fact, had this document originated among religious institutions, its scope would have been significantly reduced, for it would have run the risk of mingling church and state in a ruinous union, a prospect stoutly rejected by the declaration itself. Yet the implications are clear. It is in knowing the shared principles of Scripture and the declaration that the God-given freedoms of human rights may reach their highest and most noble accomplishment.

In other words, it’s in knowing who we are—our origin—that we may understand human rights correctly. As Ellen White puts it, “every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.” With such a concept of origin—of the sisterhood and brotherhood of the family of God—it would be born free.
basic heresy to reject the truth of human rights as they are derived from and exercised in God’s image.

In the extension of such a concept, it would be a violation of the authority of God Himself either to trample on or to fail to work for the rights of human beings created in His image. “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine,” Jesus says, “you have done it unto Me” (see Matt. 25:40).

We Must Know Our Worth

Before sin entered the world, it was enough to know who we were. Now, however—because of the tragic choices of the parents of our race—it is equally important to know whose we are. For there are now two opposing forces in the world—the forces of God and the forces of evil, each claiming our allegiance.

It’s a battle that has been raging unabated since the Fall, the battle for the souls of men and women. And God, unwilling that His children should be the helpless dupes of the enemy, has interposed the option of choice. He would not allow us to be the unwilling captives of evil. But neither would He impose His will on us.

God was so determined that we should have the choice of whose we are that He came in the form of Jesus, our Redeemer, to establish again that the decision should be ours. The issues of human rights are demonstrated not only in the design and creation of the world (which points to who we are) but also in the redemptive act of the cross (which gives us the choice in regard to whose we are). It was on the cross that God, in Christ, paid the ransom for our souls, both individually and as a fallen race. And it was in this ultimate sacrifice that He demonstrated His intent to preserve and restore His original plan for the creation of the world and humanity.

And We Must Be Sure Where We’re Headed

Knowing who we are and whose we are would be incomplete without a knowledge also of where we’re going. A map is of no use unless you know your point of origin and route of travel. But it is likewise superfluous if you have no destination.

In other words, it’s vital to know about our creation in the image of God and about our redemption through the sacrifice of Christ. But we cannot afford to forget the question of destiny. And that destiny is nothing less than restoration to the full potential of our creation as sons and daughters of God.

Several years ago a strange accident occurred in a sport fencing duel. As the opponents sparred with each other for advantage, the foil of one contestant inadvertently found its way up through the nose of the other, piercing the soft tissues of the nasal canal and going on up into the brain. The result was a loss for some time of the victim’s memory. For days the victim knew nothing of the past, and about our redemption through the scramble for power and territory and sustenance all but obliterates the rights of humanity created in the image of God.

In the search for a heritage and a future, the efforts of secular humanism have at times appeared to do noble things. Yet no matter how noble such efforts may appear, when the point of origin is in the motif of “survival of the fittest,” this default position will ultimately reject the very principles of human rights that secular humanism professes to uphold.

With no moral absolutes on which to draw, society sinks to insecure relativism, leading inevitably to narcissism and nihilism. That’s precisely as Lucifer would have it. The image of God is thus destroyed in humanity.

Yet even in the secular world—among those schooled in twentieth-century science and philosophy—there is an awakening to the realization that the needs of humanity and the individual cannot be found apart from God. In his 1997 book God—The Evidence, Patrick Glynn, scholar in residence at George Washington University, makes the following comment on secular ethics: “It was skin-deep morality, for at some level one had the secret atheist insight: if God is dead, then...”
Excerpts From the Declaration Cited in the Present Article

Preamble
Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people. . . .

Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. . . .

Article I.
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. . . .

Article 18.
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

The full declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (without dissent) December 10, 1948.

everything is permitted." 3

“...If you come to imagine that there is no moral order to the universe,” he continues in this line of argument, “then the incentives to good conduct, particularly in private life, are, unfortunately, much weakened. There is little to justify great self-sacrifice or deep personal commitment. Indeed, it is hard . . . to feel or express love to the fullest extent. Even if one cares for others and thinks one cares greatly, one is inclined to be guided in the final analysis by one’s selfish wishes. What is there in the nihilist’s universe to call forth sacrifice? And without willingness to sacrifice, one’s capacity to care for others is narrowly circumscribed.” 4

Of Lies and Half-truths
What then of origins? What of our identity? “Ironically,” Glynn concludes, “the picture of the universe bequeathed to us by the most advanced twentieth-century science is closer in spirit to the vision presented in the book of Genesis than anything offered by science since Copernicus.” 5

Perhaps we are now coming to the point where we have nearly exhausted the perversions of that great lie in the Garden of Eden. “You will not surely die,” the devil had said, “for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4, 5, NIV).

There was, indeed, a half-truth in this statement. They already knew good—in fact, that was all they knew. Would to God that were all any of us would ever know. And it was true—they would know evil when they ate. But the deception was that in serving Lucifer there was some advantage in knowing evil. Now it is all too clear. Centuries and millennia of life have only proved the reality that any deviation from the plan of God leads to destruction. Not that God is intent on destroying His children who disobey. Rather, destruction is inherent in evil itself. The choice is ours.

Contrary to the great lie in the garden, true freedom exists only in harmony with God’s law of love. Life outside that law is slavery to evil.

And one day evil will come to an end. The universe will be restored again to its harmonious and pristine setting as it came fresh from the hand of the Creator. And God will save those who by their own free choice have sought His kingdom of peace and joy, based on their acceptance of the redemptive grace of Christ. Our full human rights as creatures in God’s image will be restored as in the beginning. And we will go back, so to speak, to the future.

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshaded beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.” 6

W hen he wrote this article, Gary Patterson was the director of the Office of Mission Awareness at the General Conference, Silver Spring, Maryland.
Christmas Eve. The chill winter air hung like a curtain around a small building in a city in northern China. Inside all was warmth, light, and excitement as a small group of Adventists prepared their “church” for a special program to commemorate the birth of Jesus.

Then the believers began to hear scuffling footsteps and voices outside and turned toward the door with concern. Would a raid prevent them from having their worship service? Would some of them spend Christmas compromised in some way?

Their fear turned to amazement as the door burst open and in tumbled a group of young people—not one or five or 10, but several dozen, talking, laughing, and bumping against each other as they filled up the small space.

For a few moments everything grew quiet as the two groups faced each other. Then one young man stepped forward, bowed, and said respectfully, “Are you the people who know about Jesus?”

Always wary of contrived interference, the Adventists hesitated; then one said boldly, “Yes, we know about Jesus.”

Pleased murmurs and smiles broke out among the young people, and their spokesperson continued: “Good! We’ve been listening to the Voice of Hope on our radios, and they talk a lot about someone called Jesus. We like the programs and have been trying to find someone who can tell us more. A man in the town said that ‘Jesus people’ meet here. Can you help us?”

The Adventists responded to the youthful fervor with an equal amount of excitement, inviting the young people, mostly university students, to sit down; then they began to share the wonderful story of salvation. It was late, nearly midnight, when students and Adventists finally left the building in small groups, quietly, thoughtfully, full of the wonders of the night when Jesus was born, the night when Jesus was born in many young hearts for the first time.

Broadcasting 123 hours to China each week, 18 hours each day, Adventist World Radio is carrying the gospel message to hundreds of thousands of people who might not know Jesus in any other way. Please pray for people in China who seek spiritual nourishment; pray they’ll tune their radios to the Voice of Hope on Adventist World Radio.

Andrea Steele is director of public relations and development for Adventist World Radio.
They Still Go

A dventist Volunteer Service

The following persons left their homes during the year to volunteer their time to assist in mission work in other countries for short-term service. Please remember them in your prayers.

Kenneth Minsung Kim, to serve as English/Bible teacher, Korea Seventh-day Adventist Language Institutes, Seoul, Korea, of Odesa, Florida, left A msterdam, A msterdam, of Donna, Texas, left Nashville, Tennessee, of Yaounde, Cameroon, left July 21, 1998.

Wagner Kuhn, to serve as country director, ADRA/Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan, of Riverside, California, left May 17, 1998.

Samuel Donaldo Schmidt, to serve as theological professor, River Plate Adventist University, Entre Rios, Argentina, of Yucaipa, California, left March 1, 1998.

At Rest


Dean, Cyril—b. 1923, Calcutta, India; d. Aug. 12, 1998, Six Mile, S.C. He served in education for 40 years and developed and directed physical education programs for Pacific Union, Southern Missionary, and Canadian Union colleges. He is survived by his wife, Norma Jean; two daughters, Beverly Swafford and Shirley Dean; and two sisters, Una Flynn and Vera Hargreaves; and two grandsons.

Hagel, Emil M.—b. A pr. 23, 1910, Bowdle, S.Dak.; d. July 7, 1998, Staunton, Va. He taught elementary school in South Dakota and Iowa. In 1944 he became treasurer and Bible teacher at Oak Park Academy. He was secretary-treasurer of the South Dakota, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Potomac conferences and retired in 1976. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Ethel; one daughter, Bonnie Louden; one brother, Delpha Johnson; and two grandchildren.

Lefever, Jill Allison—b. May 17, 1925, Willa, N.Dak.; d. July 8, 1998, Vancouver, Wash. She taught elementary and secondary schools, and at Union College. For 25 years she taught music education at Walla Walla College for a total of more than 40 years in denominational education. He toured with the Walla Walla College brass choir and percussion ensemble in the 1970s and continued his musical interests and activities after retirement. He is survived by his wife, Donna; two sons, Michael and Douglass; four sisters, Ruth Daws, Edith Smith, Elaine Gildersleeve, and Lorraine Poulin; three brothers, Aaron, Alfre, and Lester; mother-in-law, Grace Hudson; and seven great-grandchildren.

Lucas, Ivy E.—b. 1907, Brazil, Ind.; d. June 9, 1998, Tullahoma, Tenn. She served as a teacher in denominational schools until her retirement in 1970. Her husband, Theodore Lucas, died in 1986. She is survived by one daughter, Cathy Snyder; two granddaughters; and one great-granddaughter.


Morneau, Roger—b. Apr. 18, 1925, St. Jacques, New Brunswick, Canada; d. Sept. 22, 1998, Modesto, Calif. He worked in sales from 1948 until he retired in 1984. He was the author of numerous books and was known for his faithful prayer ministry that he conducted with his wife, Hilda, until the time of his death. He is survived by his wife, Hilda; two sons, Donald R. and Daniel R.; one daughter, Linda A. Moneau; 12 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Paulson, Lawrence—b. July 19, 1911; d. Sept. 11, 1998, Canton City, Colo. He was a longtime Pathfinder leader in North America and was involved in the beginnings of the Pathfinder program, serving in California for many years. He was honored as “Mr. Pathfinder” at larger camporees in the West and participated in his last Pathfinder Camporee in 1995. He is survived by his wife, Sue.

Riffel, Benjamin—b. Feb. 14, 1914, Crespo, Argentina; d. May 13, 1998, Los Altos, Calif. He served as a pastor, publishing house representative, and colporteur leader for more than 45 years, working in various countries throughout Central, South, and North America, and Europe. He also authored two books. He is survived by his wife, Lidia; one son, Raul; one daughter, Marilyn Riffel-Krun; and two grandchildren.

Turner, Jack—b. May 17, 1913, Chicago, Ill.; d. Nov. 13, 1997, Camarillo, Calif. He served in the denomination for 37 years as a teacher and administrator in the printing field. He worked in California, Texas, New York, Trinidad, and Africa. He was also a World War II veteran. He is survived by his wife, Nomi; and one daughter, Janene Turner.
**Listening to the Melodies of the Spirit**

**CALVIN B. ROCK**

Do Seventh-day Adventists believe in hiring non-Adventist (even non-Christian) musicians to play the instruments during our worship services on a regular basis? They do it at some churches I know. There are a number of reasons to suggest that it is not the best of arrangements. The first is that an individual who helps conduct the presentation of gospel truth each Sabbath over a protracted period of time without accepting and obeying it is a negative example to other attendees, particularly our children and guests.

The second is that, as in all other efforts for Christ, only the Holy Spirit's blessings can make one's service truly effective. Those who hear truth and do not obey, although talented and attractive, cannot be instruments of the Spirit's use, as might be one who is less talented yet believes and keeps God's commandments.

A third reason is the commercial or “for hire” look that such arrangements give the worship service. Non-Adventist musicians who contract to play for our worship services often do so on a regular basis for other denominations as well. The business relationship that results clashes with the spirit of voluntary praise that drives true congregational worship.

If the hiring of musicians must be done, an Adventist believer should be the first choice; a sincere non-Adventist Christian whose person (dress and lifestyle) is not problematic, second. Hiring non-Christian musicians for such services is, in my opinion, not an option.

The following counsel from Ellen White apparently refers to the participation of non-Christian vocalists in Adventist worship services, not Christian instrumentalists. However, I believe the advice is instructive.

“Do not hire worldly musicians if this can possibly be avoided. Gather together singers who will sing with the spirit and with the understanding also” (Evangelism, p. 509).

“How can those who have no interest in the Word of God, who have never read His Word with a sincere desire to understand its truths, be expected to sing with the spirit and the understanding? How can their hearts be in harmony with the words of sacred song? How can the heavenly choir join in music that is only a form?” (ibid., pp. 508, 509).

We are told by Ellen White that the time will come when dairy products will no longer be safe. How will we know when that time comes? Will the General Conference give a pronouncement? And what advice do you have regarding preparation for this and the other troublesome times?

The statement of Ellen White is:

“The time will come when we may have to discard some of the articles of diet we now use, such as milk and cream and eggs” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 206). And I suspect that while no special pronouncement will be made, appropriate commentary will appear in various publications as well as in preaching and teaching venues.

How does one get ready for this and the even more serious crises ahead? By functioning faithfully in present circumstances; what one does in crisis situations is shaped by the way one performs in ordinary times, as expressed in the saying “Hard times do not make martyrs, they only reveal them.”

In other words, failure to conquer appetite and other weaknesses of the flesh now is what will make the more severe tests of tomorrow overwhelming. This was precisely the meaning of God's challenge to Jeremiah when He asked, “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” (Jer. 12:5).

On the other hand, victory over present temptations breeds confidence in God’s many assurances (e.g., Ps. 46; Isa. 43:2; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12:9) of conquering grace.

Calvin B. Rock is a general vice president of the General Conference. He holds doctoral degrees in ministry and Christian ethics.
One time when I was about 12 years old I was sitting at the table doing my homework when I saw a mouse. The next thing I knew, I had jumped up on my chair. This surprised me. Why was I standing on the chair? Such a tiny mouse—only about three inches long, if you didn't count the tail.

Why was I standing on the chair? I loved animals, even rodents—even my friend's hamster that bit me every time I tried to pick it up.

Why was I standing on the chair? In cartoons I had seen silly ladies scream and jump onto chairs when they saw a mouse. I had laughed at them—they looked ridiculous.

So why was I standing on the chair? When the little mouse scampered away, I sheepishly climbed down—thankful that my brother (the world's biggest teaser) hadn't seen me.

I had never seen a mouse in the house before. My reaction surprised me.

If you had seen me earlier that day and asked, "If you see a mouse, will you scream and jump on a chair?" I would have laughed at you and said, "Of course not. I'm not afraid of a mouse."

Other people often surprise us. We think we know them, and then they do things we never expected them to do.

What's amazing is that we also surprise ourselves and do things we never thought we would do. You can spend your whole life learning to know yourself.

The last book in the Bible is called Revelation. Do you know what the word "revelation" means? It means truth that has been hidden is revealed, shown, discovered. Revelation is a good description of what the Bible does.

We find truth in the Bible. God reveals Himself there. He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20, ICB).

And the Bible can reveal the truth about you. You may not know yourself that well, but God does.

King David often surprised himself by what he did and by what he found out about himself. He wasn't always pleased by what he discovered, but he accepted it and asked God to help him do better.

At the beginning of one of his songs David wrote, "Lord, you have examined me. You know all about me" (Psalm 139:1, ICB). At the end, he sang, "Lead me in the way you set long ago" (verse 24, ICB).
My two brothers and I grew up as children of missionary parents assigned to work in a developing country surrounded by lovely, caring, but very poor people. We developed friendships with the children and had wonderful times together. In spite of the poverty, lack of toys, and other material things, we kept occupied with simple games such as jacks, hopscotch, jump rope, football, and building forts, houses, and the like. The mission compound was surrounded by jungle, and exploration was exciting and fun.

Because my parents wanted to develop in us a compassionate and giving spirit, we were encouraged to share with our friends. Our parents wanted us to emulate the example of Jesus and the lessons He taught, such as: “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:9, NIV). At Christmastime we would pick one family with children and provide some Christmas items for them. For my brother and me this was very exciting. My mother was a good seamstress, and she would begin by making clothes—an outfit for each child in the “Christmas family.” Then I would help her make a rag doll, and my brothers would make or buy toys for the boys in the Christmas family.

Along with the toys, we would pack a box of food with home-baked bread and cookies; these were food items they rarely had. On Christmas Eve we would all go over to the Christmas family, deliver our packages, sing some carols, and watch their faces light up with joy. We too would be overcome with happiness and experience the promise that “whoever sows generously will also reap generously” (2 Cor. 9:6, NIV).

I remember doing this several times during my childhood, but the thought never occurred to me that something like this would ever happen with me as the recipient. My husband and I live comfortably. We aren’t needy, but I have found that “needy” presents itself in different ways. Our grown daughters live nearby, and as they were growing up, we tried to instill in them the idea of compassion and the importance of caring for others, telling them that “he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed” (verse 10, NIV).

One fall I developed an illness that made it impossible for us to celebrate Christmas in the usual way. I just didn’t feel good enough to decorate or cook, and my husband and I decided to keep things simple. No sending of cards, no tree, no decorating. We would provide a few gifts to share with our daughters and parents, but simplicity would be the order of the day.

A week before Christmas, about 4:00 p.m., I answered the doorbell to find my youngest daughter, a friend, her husband, and their three daughters with a beautiful fresh-cut Christmas tree. They came in, set up the tree, and decorated it while I sat and watched. The children did a beautiful job, and the tree was lovely. Three days before Christmas another friend came over with a whole Christmas dinner prepared to perfection. All I would have to do was turn on the oven.

That evening another friend came by with a gorgeous two-foot-high poinsettia plant to decorate my entry table. The next day the florist delivered a beautiful Christmas centerpiece from the institution where my husband works.

It was a Christmas I will always remember—made possible by people who cared.

As I mentally reviewed my parents’ example of selfless living and the “simple Christmas” my husband and I had planned, my mind turned to Ecclesiastes 11:1: “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”

Carolyn Briggs writes from Cherry Valley, California.