

ADVENTIST Review

May 11, 2000

World Edition

Our Call to Mission

Mother's Midnight Errand
Being an Adventist in Y2K

LETTERS

The Church in Ireland

Our president, Harold Calkins, and others on our board would like to express our appreciation for the article by David Marshall, "The Greening of the Irish Church," in the March 9 *Adventist Review*.



For those who feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit to further the work in this mission field, we will be happy to send a brochure and our newsletter telling of the work being done in Ireland through the Emerald Health and Education Foundation, P.O. Box 8877, Redlands, CA 92375.

Thank you for calling attention to the great need in Ireland for the proclamation of the three angels' messages.

—A. June Smith
REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA

World Conference on Religious Freedom

Having read the *Review's* report on the World Conference on Religious Freedom held in New Delhi, India (Mar. 9), I couldn't help wondering whether we as Adventists are aware of the many sidebar issues the devil uses to lure us away from our commission to warn souls of the impending judgment and imminent return of Jesus. Could some of these include the trendy preoccupation with guarding the right for our organizations to operate freely, dispatching representatives on all-expenses-paid trips to "publicity events" in exotic world capitals? Or

what about commissioning legal "dream teams" of skilled lobbyists bent on alerting national governments to the need to recognize the fundamental right of religious liberty?

However well intentioned, could Adventist leaders be unwittingly supporting the growing New Age movement that champions the noble cause of "global religious tolerance" as one of the plans in its "one world" platform?

The great gospel commission doesn't call us to scurry all over the globe trying to protect our liberty from mean, intolerant governments. It calls us simply to preach the gospel. No government, no matter how totalitarian and despotic, can prevent individuals from receiving the gift of eternal life; neither can it stop the spread of God's final warning message. Not only does prophecy tell us that persecution will arise just before the Second Coming, but history shows that the gospel advances with even more gusto during times of persecution and hardship.

Do we really want our leaders to "hold hands" with all the "one world" advocates and celebrate our attainment of international brotherhood down here on earth? Let's not get sidetracked from carrying out our Master's prime directive.

—Derrick A. Shaw
SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO, CANADA

Goodies in the February 10 *Review*

The February 10 *Adventist Review* had a lot of goodies! I enjoyed "When Faith Triumphs," by Michael G. Hasel;

"The Mustard Flowers," by Denise Dick Herr; and "In the Spirit and Power," by Ivy Petersen. Thanks!

—Melody D. Snow
VIA E-MAIL

Tear Down Those Walls

I respect the intent of Roy Adams' editorial to break down artificial barriers ("Tear Down Those Walls," Feb. 10) that serve a divisive purpose. However, highlighting differences of gender or race ethnicity is not always a matter of fashion "in the name of objective research." In many cases it is a legitimate way to point out—and address—glaring inequities. For example, the fact that the proportion of African-American babies that die in the U.S. before their first birthday is nearly twice that of White babies is a shameful difference that has implications for uneven access to health and social services. Historical gender disparity in clinical and pharmacological research shows how research dollars have been allocated in this country . . . and so on. Sometimes "walls" serve an accountability purpose.

—Barbara Aved
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Just a note to thank Roy Adams for his thoughtful and highly relevant editorial "Tear Down Those Walls." I applaud his suggestion that there is a central connection between typesetting, i.e., labeling others, and the atrocities of violence we see around the world.

But I would go even further by say-

ing that labeling another can rightly be seen as essentially breaking the sixth commandment, "You shall not murder." To label or typecast someone is an approximation at best, never a full understanding or explanation. It may allow us to feel comfortable to pigeon-hole another person, but committing that act is always the way of violence.

—H. Bruce Messinger
VIA E-MAIL

Debate? What Debate?

Stephen Chavez, in his editorial "Debate? What Debate?" (Feb. 10), has made several perceptive observations about evangelism.

It makes little sense for visiting evangelists to go into non-Protestant countries, quickly present content suited to Bible-believing nineteenth-century Americans, and try to rush their audiences into baptism.

Chavez is right that the gospel should be communicated in a variety of ways. Its presentation should match the audience. In all situations, however, evangelistic programs should (1) join the people where they are and meet their perceived needs while (2) leading them step by step to where God wants them to be. This means determining where the audience is—what they need, want, and believe. If necessary, this may be accomplished through surveys. And evangelists must not rush audiences doctrinally, but rather withhold, until fairly late, any teaching they could find objectionable.

—Hector Hammerly
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA,
CANADA

Death—I Don't Like It

Myrna Tetz writes in her March 23 (AnchorPoints) *Review* editorial: "Death—I Don't Like It!" Neither do I! This is natural, since it was not God's plan for us to experience death. Tetz discusses death to sins.

Referring to her sinful pleasures,

Tetz says: "No, I'm not going to list them." I too am uncomfortable when someone brings out a laundry list of "sins." There are many admonitions against our tendencies to "sins," but I think we need to emphasize the "Christ in us"—Christ our righteousness, which is the everlasting gospel in verity.

We are told by Mrs. White that "there are many who try to reform by correcting this bad habit or that bad habit, . . . but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart. . . . The Scriptures are the great agency in this transformation of character. . . . The Spirit of God is working in him" (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 21).

Too many of us concentrate on our "sins" instead of on our "sin," which is separation from God! We do not really know Him; therefore we produce only occasional surface obedience instead of a heartfelt, natural response to His love. By beholding Him, spending time with Him, abiding in Him, practicing His presence, we become more like Him, and obedience becomes His response through us. There is a time to exhort others, but shouldn't we first lift up Christ? Like Paul, shouldn't we know nothing but Christ and Him crucified?

—Patricia Ridpath
BURNSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA

In Appreciation

I want to say a word of appreciation for the "Letters" page of the *Adventist Review*. My wife and I have been readers of this publication since F. D. Nichol was editor. Because of some provocative remark in the letters section, many times we refer back to an article we may have forgotten or missed. In the most recent issue I received, one such remark sent me back to the January 27 issue, which I had (horrors) completely missed. I spent Friday evening and Sabbath afternoon catching up. Thanks for a spiritual feast!

—Jim Seeley
ROCKY MOUNT, VIRGINIA

ADVENTIST Review

COVER STORY

8 Our Call to Mission

Living a life of adventure and service. Oh, and building up God's kingdom in the process.

BY DAVID GATES

ARTICLES

14 Mother's Midnight Errand

Everyone in the village knew her, even in the middle of the night.

BY VOYA VITOROVICH AS TOLD TO ANN VITOROVICH

22 Being an Adventist in Y2K

Opportunities or obstacles? It all depends on how you look at the future—and whether you know the One who's already been there.

BY BERT B. BEACH

DEPARTMENTS

2 Letters

7 Give & Take

13 The View From Here

18 World News & Perspectives

27 Bible Questions Answered

28 Adventist World Radio

29 Countdown to Toronto

30 Tuesday's Child

31 Reflections

EDITORIALS

5 When the Police Is the Criminal

6 An Irresistible Gospel

NEXT WEEK

Fasten Your Seat Belt

The road to freedom has a few bumps along the way.

ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ through stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.

Publisher General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Executive Publisher William G. Johnsson

Publishing Board: Jan Paulsen, Chair; Phil Follett, vice-chair; Lowell Cooper; William G. Johnsson; Robert E. Lemon; A. C. McClure; Ardis D. Stenbakken, Donald R. Sahly; Ted N. C. Wilson; Robert Nixon, legal advisor

Editor William G. Johnsson

Associate Editors Roy Adams, Bill Knott

Managing Editor Myrna Tetz

News Editor Carlos Medley

Assistant Editors Stephen Chavez, Kimberly Luste Maran

Editorial Assistant Ella Rydzewski

Project Coordinator Chitra Barnabas

Administrative Secretary Ruth Wright

Editorial Secretary Jean Sequeira

Art Direction and Design Bill Kirstein, Bill Tymeson

Desktop Technician Fred Wuerstlin

Ad Sales Melyne Tooley, Genia Blumenberg

Subscriber Services Steve Hanson

Consulting Editors: Jan Paulsen, Matthew Bediako, Phil Follett, Robert J. Kloosterhuis, A. C. McClure, Leo Ranzolin, R. L. Rawson, Calvin B. Rock, G. Ralph Thompson

Special Contributors: P. D. Chun, L. T. Daniel, L. J. Evans, Ulrich Frikart, Lee Huff, Israel Leito, Ruy H. Nagel, L. D. Raelly, Ron Watts, Bertil Wiklander

To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. (Please query before submitting long articles.) Include address, telephone number, and Social Security number, where available. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Editorial office fax number: (301) 680-6638.

E-mail: Internet: reviewmag@adventist.org
CompuServe network: 74617.15
Website: www.adventistreview.org

Subscriptions: US\$38.97 for 40 issues, US\$50.97 for 52 issues. Add \$10.20 postage for addresses outside North America. To order, send your name, address, and payment to your local Adventist Book Center or *Adventist Review* Subscription Desk, Box 1119, Hagerstown, MD 21741-1119. Single copy, US\$2.50. Prices subject to change without notice.

For changes of address: Call 1-800-456-3991, or 301-393-3257, or e-mail addresschanges@rhpa.org
For subscription queries: Call 1-800-456-3991, or 301-393-3257, or e-mail shanson@rhpa.org

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Adventist Review*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740-7301.

Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

The *Adventist Review* (ISSN 0161-1119), published since 1849, is the general paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is published by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is printed 40 times a year each Thursday except the first Thursday of each month by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association. Periodicals postage paid at Hagerstown, MD 21740. Copyright © 2000, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.
Vol. 177, No. 19

Come Closer Online



Get the latest
stories.

Tell us what
you think.

Revisit back
issues.

Visit the NEW *Adventist Review* Online

www.adventistreview.org

When the Police Is the Criminal

The dispatches could have come from virtually any town, anywhere. But here are three that caught my attention:

1. RIO BRANCO, Brazil—"The bodies have turned up one or two at a time, in ditches and tall grass on the edge of town. Most of the dead have been thieves and drug dealers, who in many cases across Brazil were tortured for hours or mutilated—a hand or arm chopped off—before being shot in the head at close range."¹

Who were behind such ghastly crimes? And why were Brazilian state police unable to crack the cases? "Federal police and human rights activists [now] say they know why: The civil and military police were themselves the killers."² One human rights group is reporting some 2,500 killings since 1997, a figure Brazilian federal law enforcement officials consider conservative.³

2. SASKATOON, Saskatchewan—"Tragically, it had become almost commonplace: young Indian men, half-naked, found dead and frozen in fields or alongside the road on the outskirts of town."⁴ Assuming substance abuse to be the cause, most locals went on with their lives, regarding such tragedies as self-inflicted.

Until recently. That's when the story of an out-of-town Indian forced the Saskatchewan public "to confront a more sinister possibility: that some of those drunk or drug-addled Indians may have been left out there by police."⁵ The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are now in the throes of a criminal investigation.

3. LOS ANGELES, California. "In the six months since [Rafael] Perez started talking, lurid revelations . . . have emerged . . . : allegations that cops raped a woman while on duty; accusations that a cop interrogating a handcuffed man beat him until he vomited blood."⁶ Perez, himself a rogue cop accused of stealing cocaine from police headquarters to sell on the street, has been spreading the dirty linen of the LAPD all over the public square for all to see. And it looks bad—very bad. As a result of the burgeoning revelations, some 4,000 prisoners in California jails are expected to have their criminal convictions reversed.

Betrayal

I think it's important to emphasize that the overwhelming majority of police officers in all civilized countries are good and decent public servants. If this were not so, anarchy would be the order of the day. These hardworking people, who risk their lives every day, deserve our affirmation and support. But we should condemn in the strongest terms the criminal conduct of those among their ranks who betray the sacred trust placed in them.

There's something about a police officer that strikes terror in most of us. They wear a badge. They have a gun. They represent the law. That's why their wanton disregard of that very law leaves us cold. However far from the scene, we feel betrayed, violated.

Last fall the CBS television program *60 Minutes* presented a devastating report⁷ on what's known in the United States as "the blue wall of silence," the near-universal refusal by police officers to report misconduct on the part of their colleagues. The program left me shaking my head in utter disgust and shock.

Sixteen-year veteran New York police officer Daisy Boria had been witness to a murder while on the job. She had seen Anthony Baez, a young man, "choked to death by police officer Francis Livoti, after Baez mistakenly hit Livoti's squad car with a football." After a long struggle, she at last decided to break with protocol and testify against Livoti.

Since her testimony in court, "she's been living in hiding." Just think of it: a law-abiding citizen living in hiding from the police! In the United States!

When police brutality (which I haven't touched) is added to this picture, we're looking at a truly egregious evil in our societies. It stinks. And I think Adventists everywhere should become noisy about it.



¹ Stephen Buckley, in *Washington Post*, Feb. 29, 2000, p. A1. (Buckley is with the *Post's* Foreign Service.)

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Steven Pearlstein, in *Washington Post*, Feb. 28, p. A9.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Adam Cohen, "Gangsta Cops," *Time*, Mar. 6, 2000, p. 30.

⁷ Ed Bradley, "The Blue Wall of Silence," Oct. 3, 1999.



An Irresistible Gospel

He was a sensation. An absolute sensation. The whole world knew His name, and most people wished He were with them when He was not, and loved it when He was.

Never had a person spoken as He did. The crowds pressed around until He could hardly move, and when He passed through a city or village, there wasn't a sick person left. As the best-known, the most sought-after man of His time, Jesus demonstrated remarkable dedication and brought fresh ideas, albeit not always welcome ones, to the religious leaders of His day.

Jesus was liked, not necessarily because of His preaching, doctrine, or knowledge, but because He loved the leper and the lesbian, the rich and the ruler, the beggar and the bedraggled, and everyone else. The only ones uncomfortable with His sometimes uninvited presence were the church leaders who worried about their status, positions, and paychecks.

Today, however, it could not be said that Seventh-day Adventists, who purport to be examples of the way Jesus lived, are the most popular people in the world, nor even a well-known people group. Maybe we've been so carefully taught that we must stay away from social or other events not sponsored by our church that in our isolation we cannot comfortably make friends with other Christians. After all, shouldn't we shield ourselves from worldly portrayals of sin? These people might lead us away from Christ and tempt us to indulge in common, worldly social practices.

If we followed the example of Jesus, the most sought-after man in Galilee, people would clamor to learn why we are known so well. Even the warnings we present about a system that has persecuted and legislated in the name of religion, and will again, might be more easily accepted if first they'd become acquainted with a group of people who cared and acted in loving and unselfish ways.

Let's face it. We're better at doing for ourselves than we are at doing for our communities. If we evaluated our spreading-the-gospel-to-the-whole-world mandate, we might notice the effort and resources put into publications, camp meetings, special events, concerts, and forums that are geared mainly for ourselves as compared to those we sponsor for our com-

munities. Churches produce newsletters distributed in-house,¹ local conferences send newsletters to the church members, unions circulate monthly publications reporting the news from the conferences who are reporting the news from the churches, and division offices communicate with the union offices, et al. Communication is important, of course, but maybe we should not have "left the other undone."

*We are better
at doing for
ourselves than
we are at
doing for our
communities.*

There's embarrassing research data telling us that less than half the population have ever heard the name "Seventh-day Adventist"—never mind know anything about us. We've been known to enter a town or city, put up signs, distribute handbills, rent a building, and invite the residents to hear such presentations as "The Man Who Split History" or "A Dream That Topped a Kingdom" before we have devoted time and money developing ministries to reach the community with our unadulterated love.

Why don't we as a church enable the establishment of outreach programs and facilities that emphasize humanity first, then doctrine? This approach might include taking a survey to discover the area's most pressing needs. Maybe you'll find that your city needs a day-care center. Or a safe home with job training for abused women. Or a center in the downtown core to provide meals for the homeless. Or why don't we personally become involved in other community activities so that we can befriend people groups other than our own?² There's no end to the possibilities. And the church would not necessarily need to provide funding. There are hundreds of organizations that support these kinds of projects.

If we looked intentionally, we'd find many ways to make the gospel nearly irresistible because individuals have first been reached by a loving Christian, attracted to a loving Saviour, and responded to the Holy Spirit's urging to live a committed life.



¹Exception: See *Adventist Review*, "The Little Church That Did" March special issue, p. 2.

²For some ideas, wait for the June issue of *Adventist Review*, and read "Where the People Are," p. 16.

GIVE & TAKE

ADVENTIST LIFE

I never cease to be amused by my young people's attempts to speak English. I am sure they laugh at my Swahili sometimes also. One day I told a young man to be sure to come to a function early. "Don't worry," he said. "I'll come before early."

Two days ago another came to ask if I had any socks he could have because, he said, "mine have many doors and windows in them."

—Ethel Twing, Tanzania, East Africa, in her newsletter *Greetings From Africa*. This seventysomething widow writes about her experiences abroad in the newsletter; she comes back to the U.S. almost every year to raise money for her mission work and then returns to Tanzania. This *Adventist Life* item was submitted by Sylvia M. Ellis, Vale, Oregon, a recipient of *Greetings From Africa*.

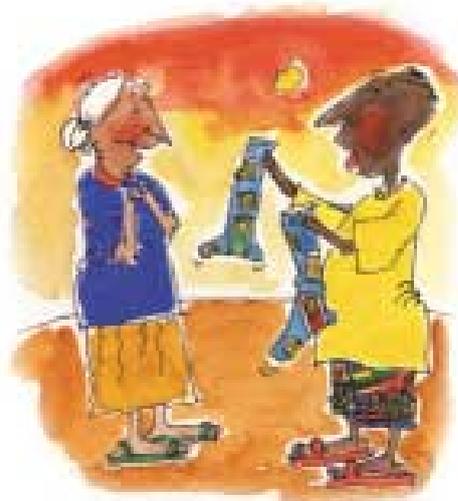


ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

At the end of this morning's worship service Ron Henderson, our pastor at the Warwick Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bermuda, issued a reminder for the 3:30 p.m. Bible prophecy study at the church. He said: "Don't forget the prophecy class at 3:30 today. We'll be going through the sealing . . . in Revelation."

—Bernice and Coggie Gibbons, Paget, Bermuda

JOTS AND TITLES

Here's a tip for (especially reluctant) musicians: Arrange hymns in a flowing medley. Choose a theme (i.e., faith and trust) and then one hymn each with three sharps, then two, then one; one hymn in C major; and one each with one flat, then two, three, four, and five flats. Play them in this order, using the diminished seventh of the key you are in to lead you to the next hymn (i.e., when playing the three sharps, play G natural after the last chord while turning to the next hymn in D major). Note that the hymns *must* be in a major key! I have marked these medleys in my *SDA Hymnal* with the theme and starting hymn on the back page, and then each subsequent hymn number at the bottom of the hymn. Choose some of the unknown and lesser-known hymns to get the congregation familiar with new tunes, or just please them with the well-known ones. Use for preludes and offering and even use the "loud" ones for the postlude. (I'd be happy to pass on my collection of themes and numbers.)

—Ros Landless, Benmore, South Africa

QUOTE

"We are not saved to sit in the grandstand."

—church elder Donald Maragh, in a June 22, 1996, sermon at the Spanish Town church in the Central Jamaica Conference

HELP! HELP!

We need your great ideas! We're running low in some Give & Take categories. We can especially use brief submissions to:

- Adventist Quotes (profound or spontaneous)
- Adventist Life (anecdotes—especially from the world of adults)
- Dream Center (church-related dreams)
- Jots & Tittles (church-related tips)
- Readers' Exchange (requests for correspondence on a specific topic)

Send submissions (which won't be returned) to Give & Take, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; fax: 301-680-6638; e-mail: 104315.2145@compuserve.com.



Letters

FROM THE FRONT LINES

A small glimpse into the struggles we face and the power of the God we serve

BY DAVID GATES

The following came to one member of our staff as e-mail letters from the author. Impressed, we share it here with a wider audience, preserving its original content largely unchanged.—Editors.

Andrews University, June 29, 1999

Dear family and friends,

In previous correspondence I've mentioned a strong sense of urgency that has strongly influenced strategic decisions taken during the past two years here in Guyana. Last month during personal devotions my wife, Becky, and I began asking God to either remove that conviction or affirm it. His response was neither vague nor slow in coming. Within days, a functioning TV broadcast station in Georgetown was placed fully under our control. Additionally, doors opened for the construction of TV broadcast stations overseas. Requests for new outreach programs were coming in from interior regions of Guyana. The opportunity to positively influence thousands for eternity was clear, but appeared far beyond our physical capabilities and available resources.

Our Experiment With God

During our time in Guyana, God had been leading us slowly to trust more fully in Him. At first we had been reticent to spend any of our bare survival budget of \$200 per



THAT'S US: Becky and I and the rest of the gang around our first airplane. (We have five children—two biological and three adopted.)

month for outside needs. However, as we began using funds in the service of others, we noticed that sufficient extra funds would come in. We began to experiment with God's trustworthiness by taking larger and larger risks each month as we committed our entire resources to serving others.

We discovered that we could not outgive God. The more we gave to others, the more we received. During this past year we regularly committed ourselves to monthly projects 30-40 times bigger than what our bare minimums used to be two years ago. We have experienced the truth that "the little that is wisely and economically used in the service of the Lord of heaven will increase in the very act of imparting" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 371).

“We are to impart of that which we have; and as we give, Christ will see that our lack is supplied” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 345).

Accompanying God’s clear call to include TV broadcasting in our ministry was the realization that such a move would demand a level of volunteer staff and resources well beyond

aged by what was happening in Guyana, have been asking for instruction and help to do likewise. *It was time . . . time to follow through on our decision to move ahead as if there were no limits.*

My wife and I, accompanied by my parents, knelt in prayer, asking God to lead us as a group, through personal Bible study and prayer, as we struggled

Several times during our negotiations it appeared that the sale would fall through. We would then kneel down as a family and ask God to please allow that to happen, unless He had separated this plane for our use. Within minutes following one of these times, the owner called back and accepted our terms.



WHEN THEY HURT: There is concern in the eyes of this malaria-stricken mother and child being transported by plane to the hospital.



FINAL JOURNEY: This elderly patient with advanced malaria was discharged from the hospital at his request, so he could die at home. He did.



AT THE DENTIST: The author, here doing extractions, speaks of a desperate need for volunteer dentists in the region.

any current possibilities. It was certainly a God-sized task, for whose success only God could take credit. Our past experiences prepared us to discard all preconceived limits of what God would do. We committed ourselves to accept any task given us by God, regardless of how expensive or impossible it might seem. We wanted to learn . . . we had to learn . . . to experience firsthand that the God we serve has *no limits*.

The First Giant Step

Just as our small two-seater bush plane had opened doors to influence and ministry in western Guyana, so now a faster, long-range plane was needed to work throughout the Caribbean and South America. From country after country, church administrators and laity alike, encour-

with a large financial decision, a choice that would seriously impact how we would work and risk in the future.

After several days we all had received peace on the subject. We decided to invest funds from the sale of a piece of the farm to partially finance the purchase of a small twin-engine aircraft, capable of safely and rapidly moving personnel and equipment between isolated regions and countries.

Based on my several years of flying one in Kentucky, we pursued the purchase of a Piper Twin Comanche with a Robertson STOL kit and a special Miller cargo-nose conversion. The aircraft we located for sale in San Jose, California, turned out (by coincidence?) to be the exact aircraft I used to fly years ago.

We purchased the beautiful, sleek six passenger aircraft and flew it across to Michigan, from where I then flew it down to Guyana.

The plane’s arrival in Guyana also brought with it 550 pounds of broadcast equipment for the TV station in Kamarang, as well as Dan Peek, an experienced missionary and electronics engineer who will be moving with his family as volunteers to Georgetown to head up the technical area of broadcasting.

The Implications of Our Decision

Our decision to purchase the plane implied a serious debt. The decision on our first small plane was similar, but with a much lower level of risk. The purchase of this twin required 75 percent financing, a step we would never have taken were it not for the conviction and peace all four of us shared.

We recognize that God’s truth is under frontal attack by the enemy, and



we believe that now is the time to act. We are not living in normal times. Nor will times ever again be normal. We are trusting God to help us pay off the balance of the debt on the aircraft within the six-month period that the loan was made available to us. Only He can provide the solution. He knows the amount. He knows what to do.

Washington family? Specifically ask God to circle them with divine protection and light from heaven, so that they will clearly perceive and

Andrews University, July 3, 1999

Dear Prayer Partners,

Winston James [director of education and stewardship for the Guyana Conference] and I called Mr. Washington yesterday morning, asking for an appointment with him and his wife. It was arranged for 4:30 yesterday afternoon. Winston and I prayed



WAY TO GO: The standard mode of transportation for the sick is the hammock. Sometimes caregivers would carry patients in this way for as many as four days through dense rain forests.



THERE'S ALSO THIS: Becky and our daughter Katie work hard the old-fashioned way to keep the entire family scrubbed.



IN NEED: This 4-year-old boy in the village of Kako, a benign tumor growing on his face, needs a maxillofacial surgeon to work with him. Unfortunately, we don't have that possibility in Guyana at the moment.

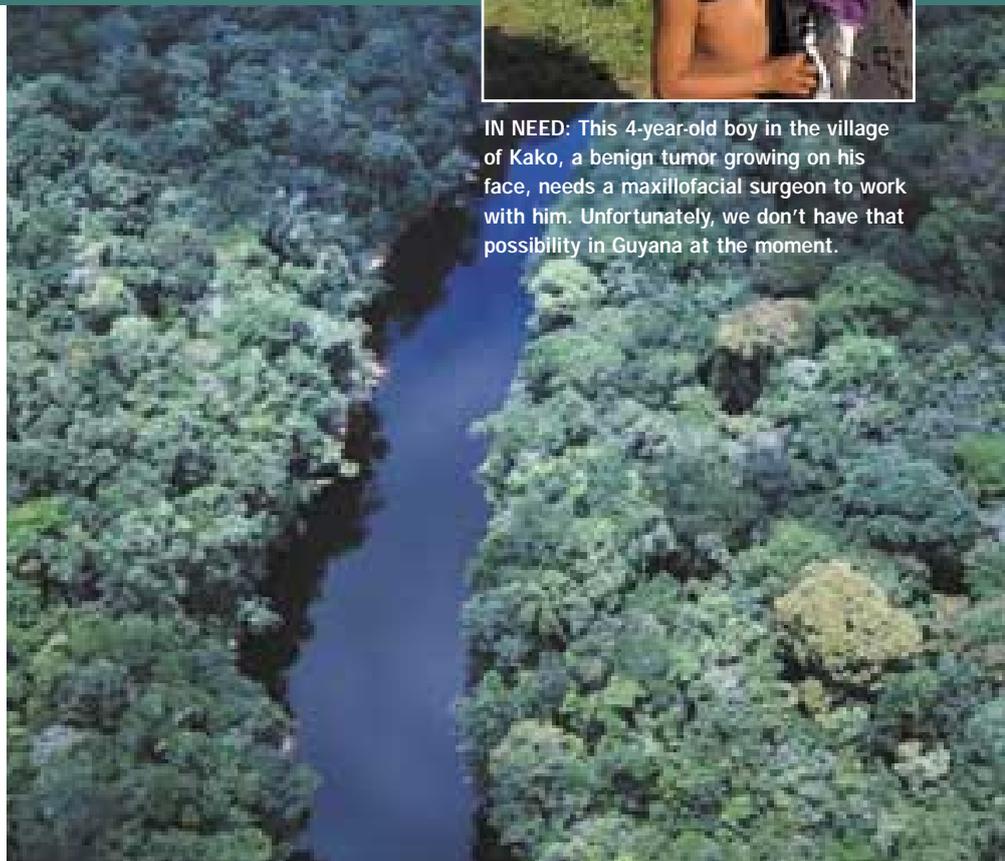
Andrews University, July 1, 1999

Dear Prayer Partners,

Mr. and Mrs. Washington, owners of channel 2 TV in Georgetown, Guyana, met several times with us during this week to discuss operating concerns and lay out strategic plans for upcoming operation and expansion. As we reviewed the philosophy of non-commercial operation, it became evident that they have been reconsidering their willingness to see the station operated noncommercially.

This is of special concern in that the station would remain profit-focused, instead of mission-driven. We would be led to pursue profitable programs, though they might conflict with our mission. Also affected would be salary-driven employees, rent to be paid by volunteers, etc. I am absolutely certain that there are unseen forces hard at work to prevent the station from being used by God.

Would you take a moment just now, pause where you are, and ask God to intervene on behalf of the



respond positively to the operational philosophy God would have us pursue. Some of you might want to make this a subject of daily or frequent prayer throughout this crisis.

together and individually throughout the day, asking God to intervene on behalf of His work.

I prepared a three-page document, laying out the faith philosophy under

PHOTO © DIGITAL STOCK

which I worked, and why all my previous proposals to pour funds into the project were dependent solely on pursuing the mission, not the profit.

We met at the Washingtons' home, at peace that God was in charge, but somewhat tense at the realization of how much hung in the balances.

After prayer together, both Mr. and

them, with sufficient also to pay rent for a volunteer staff who would be staying there. Winston had explained to them the history behind our faith operation. They had listened carefully and had appeared quite amazed to hear our story reconfirmed by another person.

She went on to tell us how during

and wanted to experience God's power in their lives.

There would be no rent for using the entire building, only minimal costs for upkeep. The station would operate with a totally mission-driven vision, and God would have to do the providing.

All of us welcomed the Sabbath yesterday evening with rejoicing. The

Why Guyana?



After nearly 15 years of working as overseas missionaries in Latin America, my wife, Becky, and I accepted a call to work for the Caribbean Union headquartered in Trinidad, and to teach at Caribbean Union College in Maracas, about an hour out of Port of Spain, the capital. My work with the union as director of computer service took me regularly to Guyana to work with our conference and hospital in that country.

While there I made a visit into Guyana's interior, where the Davis Indians live. After nearly 30 years of a socialist government, Guyana had just reopened the doors to church work, and the Indian believers desperately needed medical care and spiritual guidance. My wife and I, both R.N.s, felt that God had specifically prepared us for that work, especially given my experience as a denominational bush pilot. With the permission of the union and college administrations, we left behind my interdivision salary and went to Guyana as volun-

teers, to open up a medical aviation program. We decided to trust God completely with our resources. We would do no fund-raising of any kind. So far God has been very faithful and has provided completely for our needs and those we serve. He has provided two aircraft (soon to be joined by two more), operating budgets for them, and one boarding academy. In addition, He has helped us construct one TV station and has caused us to receive the donation of another completely operating station.

The Guyana Adventist Medical Aviation Service (which we founded and direct) has no sponsoring agency. However, we do work in intimate partnership with two other organizations that have asked us to help them: Adventist World Aviation and ADRA/Guyana. I am a board member of AWA, and two years ago agreed to become the country director for ADRA while remaining a volunteer. I've been in Guyana now for nearly four years.—David Gates

Mrs. Washington silently read the three-page document. Mr. Washington quickly identified key concepts and underlined them. He kept nodding his head yes to each one. We were praying.

When Mrs. Washington was finished reading, she spoke. They had invited Winston over to their home on Thursday evening and spent several hours explaining to him how they had decided to maintain the TV station as a company for profit, expecting it to produce an income for

the entire day Friday she had been feeling uncomfortable with the position they had taken. She finally called her husband by phone from her business, and together they decided that God was convicting them to withdraw their commercial interests in the station and accept the faith philosophy of our operation. Though a bit frightened by the idea of running the operation totally by faith, they acknowledged that they too believed that God would provide,

program is back on track, with even more commitment than before. God has intervened marvelously. One more spiritual battle has been won!

Thank you for your prayers and short notes of encouragement. I hope this experience will convince many that prayer changes things.

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. 65:24).

In closing, please ask God to



intervene on behalf of our aviation program. We are not in crisis, but are getting a serious runaround from government ministries. We need their favor, not objections. God can spiritually handcuff the opposition.

Trinidad, December 4, 1999

The cold front was moving in from the north as I headed south from Michigan to Illinois with AWA's Project Air Power beautiful yellow Cessna 182. Following several weeks of test flights and final inspection, the launching ceremony at Andrews Airpark had properly represented this "angel of mercy" as carrying God's love to thousands waiting for it in Guyana's dense rain forest. The participation and prayers of thousands of Pathfinders were reaching fruition.

Plane Provides Broadcast Support

Carrying evangelistic videotapes and professional video equipment donated for the new TV station in Georgetown, the plane departed our farm in Illinois for Collegedale, Tennessee—just ahead of the cold winter weather. There final adjustments were made to the aircraft, and Wayne Smith joined me as copilot for the trip down.

Wayne is a professional pilot and R.N., and recently completed aviation maintenance training at Andrews. He is expecting to begin full-time service with AWA in Guyana next year. Marcio Costa, who will someday be the primary pilot and mechanic of the Air Power aircraft, was unable to come, as he had a speaking appointment in Brazil. Marcio and his wife, Jane, an R.N., will be joining us next year also after Jane delivers their first child in February.

On Monday afternoon Wayne and I headed for Guyana, with overnight stops in Miami, Puerto Rico, Dominica, Grenada, and Trinidad. The stop in Dominica was for maintenance adjustments, but proved providential in that we discovered that recently

enacted laws now allow for private TV broadcast stations. The stops in Grenada and Trinidad were to support ongoing TV station projects there. During the entire trip, the HF radio worked perfectly. Full radio following was provided by my father in Illinois. Thanks, Daddy.

God Already at Work

Sunday morning the plane is scheduled to depart for Guyana. Word has already reached me through Winston James in Guyana that the Department of Civil Aviation is actively working on the paperwork for local registration and temporary operating permit until that process is finished. The plane hasn't even arrived yet, but God is already preparing the way.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that this plane will prove to be a strategic asset to God's work in Guyana. Through God's help, efforts to get the plane launched this year instead of waiting for early next year may prove vital to strategic evangelistic plans for

the future. We must not forget that "when God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work and gives assurance of success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward will be the success given. God can work miracles for His people only as they act their part with untiring energy" (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 263).

Thank you for continuing to hold up this ministry in prayer everyday.

Your brother in His service,
David Gates

David Gates is a volunteer medical missionary pilot and country director for ADRA in Guyana.



Take a Stand

It's a time when the country turns into a fool's paradise; a maddening, sickening frenzy takes over. The pounding, heavy beat of the music calls on its worshipers to "get on bad."

Thousands descend on the main streets in a wild abandon that defies the senses.

Drunkenness, debauchery, promiscuity, nudity—you name it, you'll find it. It's called Carnival—the reign of the Merry Monarch.

Into such an arena several young people recently dared to take a stand on the side of sexual purity. The organizers of the demonstration had apparently grown tired of the "safe sex" slogans, the condoms-in-schools campaign, and the fact that most persons are by now totally jaded with the death statistics from HIV/AIDS—that is, until a close friend or relative falls victim.

There's a lot of information out there, but the corresponding change in behavior is slow in coming. Christians looking closely at the scenario know that behavior modification does not come by simple outward conformity to a set of prescribed rules. A heart change is needed, an encounter with the One who makes all things new; then the motivation to do right will spring from within.

So when about 2,000 young persons and adults joined a march calling for sexual purity—chastity before marriage and fidelity after marriage—one needed to sit up and look in.

Responding to a desperate cry for help from government for a youth empowerment plan, a 15-member committee comprising several religious denominations joined forces for a pilot project entitled "Combating HIV/AIDS: Stand for Sexual Purity." The project was the brainchild of Pastor Hugo Murray, youth director of the South Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

To my mind, one of the most significant achievements of the event was the coming together of young people of different religious persuasions with one aim—to stand for sexual purity. There were Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Roman Catholics, Baha'is, Hindus, and Anglicans.

Pastor Murray told the gathering that virginity and chastity were more than words in a dictionary. "They are guarantees for psychological, emotional, spiritual, and, to a great degree, physical health and a measure of longevity."

*Young people
dared to take a
stand for sexual
purity.*

One married young adult of the Adventist faith felt it was important to offer her support. "We sent a clear message to the nonbeliever that it is still all right to keep virginity," Shelly Barzey-David said.

It was heartwarming and reassuring to see a young man brave enough to allow a full-figure photograph of himself on a national newspaper extolling the virtues of chastity. Kyle Dardaine, 20, a graduate of Hillview College, not only talks the talk, but walks it too. "I can speak on this because I have held my sexual purity.

"I tell the young people I know it's not easy—I face the same temptations with young women—but you can do it," he says.

Whenever Dardaine admits to sexual purity, raised eyebrows and stares follow. "Get real." "Yeah, right." "Whatever." But by God's grace he plans to stay sexually pure for his bride.

Dardaine is a member of the committee that planned the march that was held just two weeks prior to the reign of King Carnival. He is also a full-time youth minister with COOL Youth Ministry, part of the Catholic youth secretariat.

But how practical is all of this for young people brought up in an age when the very air one breathes seems tainted? The counsel of Ellen G. White to "guard well the avenues of the soul" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518) is the only way. A decisive stand must be taken moment by moment to turn one's gaze heavenward. Nobody said it would be easy, but thank God, "all his biddings are enablings" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333).

Albert Gray, 38, youth director of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies and a committee member, also took his stand. "I got married at age 23. I maintained my virginity until marriage. Today I am the father of two and doing well in terms of trusting God, living for God. People have to 'purpose in their heart' that regardless of what is happening, I am not going to defile my body."

Avian Joseph is a corporate communication manager who lives in Trinidad, West Indies.



Mother's Midnight Errand

She was a model wife and mother. But she had a secret that not even her husband knew.

BY VOYA VITOROVICH as told to ANN VITOROVICH

A BRIGHT WHITE FULL MOON LIT UP the night sky and cast an eerie glow over the fields of ripening feed corn and the stubble of already harvested winter wheat. A lone dark figure—a woman, short and stocky—walked in the middle of the road. With a sack slung over her left shoulder and a long walking stick in her right hand, she walked deliberately, taking long strides. In the sleeping silence of the Yugoslavian village, the soft footfalls of her opanke-shod feet and the tap of her walking stick on the compact gravel road resonated in repetitive staccato rhythm.

Under Cover of Darkness

It was Mother. In her dark kerchief, dress, sweater, and woolen stockings, her figure merged with the warm black September night. From time to time as she walked she shifted the heavy sack to the other shoulder and continued on her pilgrimage to her friend Mila's house a half mile (one kilometer) away. No one at home knew of her mysterious trips.

Somewhere in the distance a cock crowed at the midnight moon. Mother was not afraid of walking alone in the dark. She could stroll calmly through a cemetery at midnight.

The night air, tinged with the subtle scent of ripe corn tassels, smelled fresh and clean. Mother breathed it in deeply. She had come to cherish these special quiet times alone in the darkness with her God. In her imagination the two of them were the only ones in the world awake and about their business.

Ahead on her left loomed a long stockade fence that enclosed a trio of houses, where three brothers lived with their families. Their seven dogs of various mixed breeds were kept chained during the day and let loose at night. As she neared the first house where Zivadin, the youngest of the brothers, lived, his dogs started barking. Soon the other dogs farther along the fence joined in a chorus of bays and barks.

Suddenly the sound of chains clattering and clanging split the night air. Mother froze in her tracks. She watched as all seven dogs at different points leaped nimbly over the fence and onto the road. Each dragged behind it its chain with a wooden stump tied to the end.

At the same time, in the first house, Zivadin had a terrible toothache and could not sleep. Hearing the racket, he went to the window and peered outside. To his astonishment, he saw his and his brothers' dogs running loose toward the dark figure of a woman. She raised her stick overhead. The dogs ran up to her, stopped barking, then lined up as if at attention, their ears perked and their tails standing upright.

"I can't believe this!" The astonished man stared in wonder. "How did those dogs get out? Who is that woman? And what's she doing with that stick?"

He tried to rub the puzzling picture out of his eyes and again pressed his nose against the windowpane. "Why, that looks like—no, it can't be," he muttered to himself. "It is. It's Mara Vitorovich!"

As he continued to watch, the woman kept walking and passed his and his brothers' property. All at once the dogs resumed their barking. Then they broke formation, scam-

pered to the fence, and one by one leaped back over the fence into the yard, their chains and stumps clanging and bumping after them.

"It's this toothache!" he told himself, his head suddenly throbbing. He ladled a dipper of water from the covered bucket in the corner of his bedroom, swallowed two aspirin, and returned to the window. There on a patch of grass below his window lay his two dogs as peaceful and limpid as lambs. "It was a dream; I'm hallucinating!" he groaned, holding his jaw and lying down beside his still-sleeping wife.

By 1:30 a.m. Mother had returned home without further incident. She checked on her twins sleeping soundly in the crib made specially for them, then on her two girls. Finally she went to bed, as though nothing unusual had happened.

Was It a Dream?

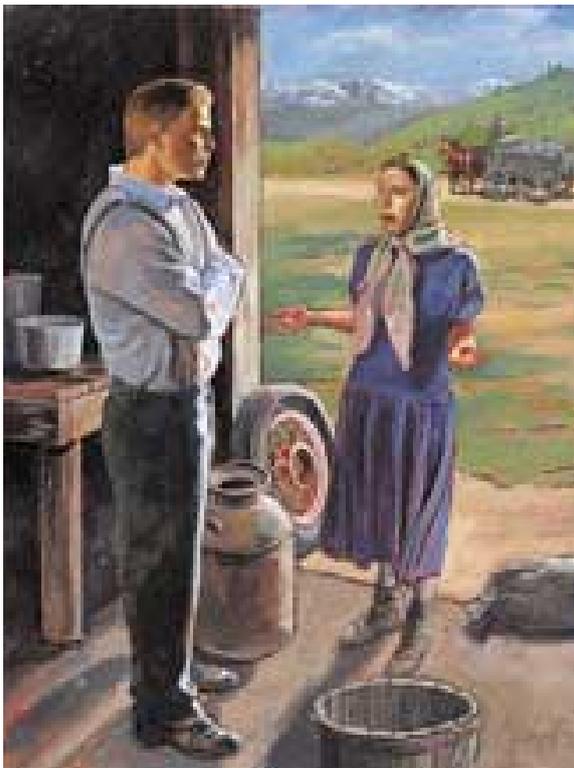
With wheat harvest coming to an end, the grinding season was in full swing. Farmers brought their new wheat to our steam-powered mill. On heavily loaded horse-driven wagons or oxcarts they came, depositing loads, each tagged with the owner's name and specifying the type of flour desired—fine, medium, coarse, white, whole wheat.

Hundreds of sacks, weighing from 110 to 220 pounds (50 to 100 kilograms), rose in crisscross layers to the open-beam ceiling of the upper platform of the mill. Other sacks already converted to flour waited on the lower platform for pickup. Soon the corn harvest would begin and the mill would continue working around the clock through December.

Around midmorning an unshaven and tired-looking Zivadin walked to the mill and stopped in the doorway on the lower level. Father, looking distinguished in his black-on-black braid-bound woolen jacket and gray britches, was rubbing some flour between his fingers to test its texture. When Zivadin spotted Father, he started to

call out, but then changed his mind and turned to leave. He stopped at the threshold of the platform and then turned back.

He fidgeted nervously; his small eyes stared blankly at the wall while his lips moved in silent rehearsal of his speech. Earlier that morning, when he had related his tale of the night before



to his two brothers, they had laughed. "Absurd! You're imagining things!" they had pronounced. "What would Mara be carrying in the middle of the night? Now, don't embarrass yourself by telling Ilija."

But Zivadin was determined. "Mara will tell the truth," he assured himself.

"Good morning, Zivadin," Father greeted him cheerily when after a while he noticed Zivadin standing just outside the open doorway, deep in thought and empty-handed. "What brings you here, my friend?"

"Ilija," Zivadin began timidly, "I came because something strange happened last night. I scarcely believe it myself." He dropped his eyes. "It's about your wife, Mara."

"My Mara?" Ilija asked, surprise in his voice.

"Last night I had a terrible toothache and couldn't sleep. Something happened around midnight . . ." Zivadin related to Father what he believed he had seen. "My brothers say I was hallucinating. They told me not to bother you," he concluded. Then he added emphatically, "I'm not crazy, Ilija." His eyes focused fervently on Ilija. "I must ask Mara. Whatever she says I'll believe, and I apologize in advance if I'm wrong."

Father smiled good naturedly. "Mara was with me and my boys until 9:00 o'clock last night. Yesterday was the twins' first birthday, you know. The mill has been running around the clock, so last night I slept here, as I often do during peak season. But," he chuckled, "Mara was definitely home last night sleeping with the children." His reply was casual and confident.

"Whoa, boy!" Another heavily loaded wagon drew up to the platform, catching Father's attention. "Mara should be here any minute to get some flour. You can ask her yourself." Father said, turning away toward his customers.

What Really Happened?

Within a few minutes Mother came through the side door, carrying in her hands an empty round wooden container. She was dressed in a navy-blue suit dress, kerchief, and stockings, wisps of blond curls peering out from under her kerchief.

"Mara," Father called to her, noting her arrival, "Zivadin wants to ask you something."

Mother placed the container on the wood floor beside a six-foot-square wooden tub filled with flour. It contained the miller's portion of flour paid as a fee by each farmer for having his grain ground. She smiled sweetly at Zivadin and walked toward him.

Zivadin's eyes darted back and forth. He spoke in low tones. "Mara, this is very embarrassing, but for my own sanity, I have to ask you something." He clenched his hands until

his fingertips turned red. "Around midnight last night I saw a woman walking on the road in front of my house. It looked like you, Mara."

"Yes, Zivadin, it was me," Mother answered straightforwardly.

Overhearing Mother's reply, Father dropped the sack he was lifting and whirled around, his tanned face a picture of disbelief.

"Ilija, I was going to tell you . . ." Mother's voice was apologetic as she turned to her husband. "I've been paying my tithe to the church—the 10 percent of income God requires." Searching Father's face and seeing question marks, she forged ahead. "I have no income, Ilija. You provide well for all my needs." She looked appreciatively at him. "But I wanted to give my own tithe and offerings to church. So Mila and I came up with a plan. We estimated the benefit I receive for my living expenses as well as the value of my labor. We decided it would be fair for me to take 10 to 15 kilograms [22 to 33 pounds] of flour from our bin twice a month and sell it. So every second Wednesday I take a sack to Mila's house. She sells it at half price to the poor and gives me the money. That's where I was going last night."

When Mother finished, Father was still staring at her. He looked confused and unsure what to say. Then he asked, his voice subdued, "How long have you been doing this?"

"Seven months," she replied.

Mother turned to Zivadin. "Last night when those dogs ran toward me, I nearly panicked. Then I remembered that I was doing God's business. So I raised my stick and spoke sternly, 'Satan, you have sent these dogs. In the name of Jesus Christ I command you dogs to stop barking!' And they did."

Zivadin could not conceal his immense relief. His face lit up like a lantern. "You are a holy woman, Mara. I feel like a new man. Now my brothers will believe me. I'm OK; I'm not crazy!" He shook her hand vigorously and then grabbed Father's. "Thank you! Thank you!" He walked out the door with a bounce in his step. "Wonderful morning!" "Nice day!" His cheery

greetings to the men feeding their horses outside while they waited their turn flowed back and then faded.

In God's Hands

Father and Mother remained alone, his figure towering over her. "Mara, Mara," he repeated, shaking his head. "I don't begrudge your helping the poor. We have much, and you know I'm fair in my business dealings." Mother nodded agreement. "You're a God-fearing woman, Mara. But since you became a Jew [a Sabbathkeeping Seventh-day Adventist], I can't get used to some of your new ways. Sometimes I'm embarrassed that you've become so different." Mother smiled her understanding and began loading the flour for her bread into her container while Father watched her thoughtfully.

The next year, just before wheat harvest in July, as the golden brown heads of winter wheat hung heavily from their stems, a sudden hailstorm hit the fertile plains of Macva. Just before the storm reached our fields, the winds divided, looped around our fields, and came back together. Everywhere around us ripened wheat lay smashed to the ground, some fields destroyed totally. Our wheat fields

remained intact, along with portions of the fields that bordered ours.

From surrounding towns, people came to see and to marvel. Zivadin was the first to come. For months afterward he related to anyone who would listen the story of Mother's midnight ordeal with the watchdogs. "Mara's God saved their fields because Mara was faithful and generous," he told them.

And Father looked on in wonder while Mother read to all who came the promise in Malachi 3:10, 11: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."

Voya and Ann Vitorovich live in Sebring, Florida. He is a retired architect, and she is a freelance writer.



H.M.S. Richards, Jr., Dies

Longtime broadcaster laid to rest.

BY ELDYN KARR, PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR, VOICE OF PROPHECY

H.M.S. Richards, Jr., speaker emeritus of the *Voice of Prophecy* international radiobroadcast, died of heart failure on April 11 at Glendale Adventist Medical Center in California. He was 70.

Pastor Richards had suffered from Parkinson's disease for several years and this winter was diagnosed with kidney failure.

Pastor Richards' father founded the *Voice of Prophecy* ministry on October 19, 1929, with a radio program on KNX, Los Angeles. Harold Marshall Sylvester Richards, Jr., was born six days later on October 25.

Early Years

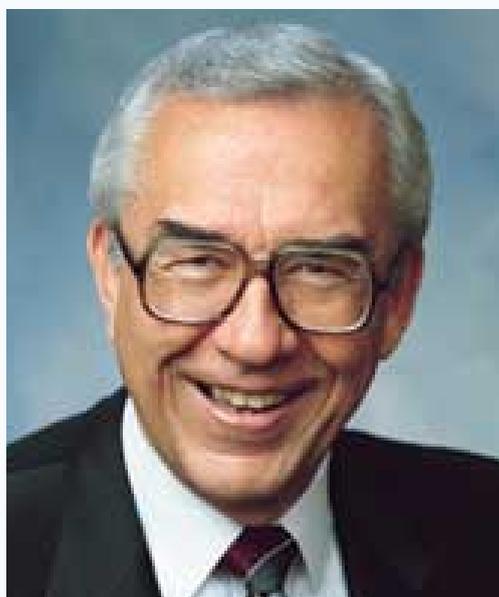
As a young man Harold never dreamed that he would continue in his father's footsteps as an evangelist and radio speaker. He had a serious stuttering problem, making speaking difficult and embarrassing. When he was a teenager his goal was to be a band leader.

When it became apparent that God was calling him to the ministry, he recalled his response: "If You want me to do this, You'll have to speak through me." Audiences through the years would never have suspected Richards' earlier stuttering if he hadn't used the story many times to demonstrate how God can use an imperfect human being to share the gospel message.

Richards attended Glendale Adventist Academy, where he sang in a male quartet, played in the band, and was a student instructor on the trombone. His education continued at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, where he played in the

band, participated in other musical activities, and was president of his junior class. He graduated in 1952.

Twenty-five years later, in 1977, Richards was named alumnus of the year by Loma Linda University, and in 1990 he received the first Alumnus



H.M.S. Richards, Jr.

of the Year plaque given by the School of Religion at La Sierra University. He was also awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas, in 1986.

Richards entered the pastoral ministry in Dallas, Texas. Other pastorates followed in Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Wichita Falls, Texas. In 1956, at a camp meeting in Keene, Texas, he was ordained to the gospel ministry, with his father officiating.

After his ordination Richards served as a pastor in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for four years. In 1960 he was invited to join the *Voice of*

Prophecy staff to assist his father as associate director-speaker. Their roles reversed in 1969, and the father assisted his son in the radio ministry until his death in 1985.

Faithful Assistant

After his own retirement in 1992, H.M.S. Richards, Jr., assisted his successor, Lonnie Melashenko, by answering letters from listeners and donors, visiting ministry friends, and speaking at camp meetings and churches. The *Voice of Prophecy* broadcast is heard either weekends or daily on 450 stations in North America. Overseas, programs in dozens of languages reach into nearly every country from more than 1,000 radio stations. A weekly television program airs on several satellite networks.

For many years the *Voice of Prophecy* radio program was heard only on Sunday and was generally devoted to presenting major themes of the Bible, complemented by quartet and solo musical selections. In December 1971 Richards launched a daily 15-minute broadcast that emphasized biblical perspectives on such topics as the Christ-fulfilled life, family relationships, healthful living, and God's wonders in nature.

Special Audiences

Richards was also influential in the *Voice of Prophecy's* development of materials to reach special audiences. These included Bible story broadcasts for children, in which Richards dramatized all the voices; print materials in the language of teens and young adults; radio spot announcements for stations that do not air religious programs; and video programs for use on closed-circuit television in hospitals and nursing homes. The latter were entitled

SeaWord and featured metaphors from the world of sailing, one of Richards' favorite leisure activities.

Dedicated "Ham"

Another hobby for Richards was ham radio. He regularly talked by shortwave with other hams around the world, including sailors at sea. He frequently contacted remote Pitcairn Island in the Pacific. In times of disasters and emergencies he used shortwave to set up phone patches that connected persons overseas with relatives and medical assistance in the United States.

Richards conducted monthlong evangelistic series in many cities across North America and shorter



H.M.S. Richards, Jr. joined his father at the Voice of Prophecy radio ministry in 1960.

series in many other countries.

Although he continued to take public speaking appointments until 1999, his last evangelistic meetings were in

September 1993, when he traveled to Brazil with his successor, Pastor Melashenko, and other staff to present rallies throughout South America's largest country.

Audiences ranged from 4,000 to 30,000. Meetings featured mass baptisms of as many as 1,200 persons in a single session, and by the end of the Brazil '93 campaign a half million persons had graduated from VOP Bible courses and more than 25,000 of these had been baptized.

Pastor Richards is survived by his mother, Mabel (age 100); his wife, Mary; their children, H.M.S. Richards III, Jon Lyall Richards, and Mary

Margaret Richards King; his sister, Virginia Cason; his brothers, Kenneth and Jan; seven grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

ADRA Land Mine Victim Rehabilitation Receives Support From Canada

BY BETH MICHAELS, ADRA MEDIA RELATIONS COORDINATOR

The Canadian government announced that it is contributing more than \$170,000 to rehabilitation and vocational services for victims of land mines in Yemen through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy and international cooperation minister Maria Minna announced the contribution on Friday, March 31, during the Canadian visit of Yemeni president Ali Abdallah Saleh.

"The widespread deployment of land mines is a human tragedy. They continue to kill and maim men, women, and children long after the end of the conflict," Minna said. "The personal cost to the victims, their families, and communities is overwhelming."

The Canadian government will channel the funds through ADRA/Canada. "ADRA helps land mine victims deal with their injury and provides them with physical therapy to learn how to use their artificial limbs," explains Kay Kierstead, ADRA Canada communications coordinator. "Later we teach them how to do a special stationary trade, such as accounting or sewing."

"Through this program Canada supports victims of land mines in Yemen by helping them rebuild their lives and reintegrate into their communities," Axworthy added. "In doing so, we can help Yemen come to grips with the deadly legacy of land mines and assist society in healing the wounds left by years of conflict." Yemeni officials estimate that a total of a half million land mines have been planted in the country over the past 40 years, during periods of civil unrest.

The new funds bring Canada's total contribution to mine action projects in Yemen to nearly \$1.5 million during the past two years. Funding for this initiative was reportedly provided for in the February 2000 federal budget and is therefore built into the existing fiscal framework.

The End of Doom and Gloom

BY SUSAN BOLLING, GRAPHIC DESIGNER, SWEDISH UNION PUBLISHING SERVICES

Millennium celebrations and millennium doomsday prophecies are now long forgotten. As January 1 dawned, Y2K fears proved to be largely unfounded. No global catastrophe shook the earth. Nuclear warheads remained on their launching pads, planes stayed in the sky until they reached their destinations, even elevators worked normally. Computers and communities alike survived.

In Sweden, life quickly returned to normal as after any other holiday season. The shops filled with people going to the January sales. Magazines were filled with plans for the future.

Early this year my local newspaper felt confident enough to print an article about the millennium and the end of the world. The idea of a day of judgment was attributed to Sumerian, Akkadian, and Babylonian folklore. The report said that at the beginning of year 1000 the Christian world held its breath, but since then it has not taken the words of

Moses or the end-time prophecies of Isaiah and Revelation literally. The last day is now the concern of only a few religious sects. In other words, humanity has perpetuated a myth of the imminent end of the world since the dawn of history. But here we are safely into the year 2000.

A Holocaust conference with visiting dignitaries and world leaders was held recently in Stockholm. They sought to understand why the Holocaust was allowed to happen—in order to prevent its recurrence. The end of all second millennium fears of doom and gloom. Peace and safety for all seems to be the goal.

Peace and safety? Sounds familiar. “For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people say, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them” (1 Thess. 5:2, 3, RSV).

It could well be that the day of the Lord is much nearer than most of us think.

NEWS COMMENTARY

NEWS BREAK

North America Clarifies Ordination Stance

In a statement released April 13 by North American Division president Alfred C. McClure, the division officers made it clear that the Adventist Church in North America has not changed its position on the ordination of women.

He stated that the church in North America would not break ranks with the world church decision not to ordain women, which was voted at the 1995 General Conference session. “We continue to stand by that position,” explained McClure.

Commenting on the March 16 announcement by the Southeastern California Conference executive committee to issue “ordained-commissioned” ministerial credentials to both men and women pastors, McClure said, “While we are supportive of efforts to end discrimination, the policy of the North American Division and the General Conference is that a minister is ordained to service in the world church and carries a credential reflecting that privilege.

“A minister who has not been ordained is issued credentials that are more limited in scope. The church has not recognized an ‘ordained-commissioned’ ministerial credential such as that voted in Southeastern California,

and the NAD officers urge that no attempts be made to blur the line between ordination and commissioning.”

The NAD statement comes one week after General Conference president Jan Paulsen voiced concern over the SECC vote.

New President Voted for Adventist Healthcare

The Columbia Union Healthcare Corporation board voted to appoint William Robertson as chief executive officer (CEO) of the nonprofit health-care organization that the Adventist Church sponsors in Maryland. Adventist HealthCare operates two hospitals, a number of nursing homes and skilled-care facilities, and a large home health agency.



William Robertson

Robertson is CEO at Shawnee Mission Medical Center in Kansas City. He is at the same time administrator of Saint Luke's Hospital South, a new 70-bed community hospital in Overland Park, Kansas. Prior to that, he served for eight years as executive vice president and, eventually, chief operating officer (COO) as well at Huguley Memorial Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas.

“We are very pleased that such an accomplished health-care executive, with a visible commitment to the

Global Mission Prayer Ministry

Please pray for the Myanmar Spiritual Foundation (MSF) and Global Mission students in Burma (now known as Myanmar).

Adventist work began in Burma at the turn of the century, but today there are fewer than 18,000 Adventists—and almost all are from among the Karen people. Until recently just 60 of the 40 million Burmese Buddhists had become Adventists. But in the past two years 200 Burmese Buddhists have become Adventists, thanks to the MSF, a new Global Mission initiative.



An Adventist meditation center has been built to accommodate new interests among the Buddhists.

Sabbath services are conducted in Burmese style, focusing on God without images. The liturgy includes a chanted commitment to Sabbathkeeping.

Another successful initiative uses Global Mission students. Each year Global Mission sponsors a Christian education for carefully selected students from non-Christian homes in unentered areas. Nearly 100 percent of these students become Seventh-day Adventists, go back to their

homes to share their faith, and lead people to Christ in extremely challenging areas.

PHOTO BY JOHN DUROE / MAP: CARTESIA SOFTWARE

NEWS BREAK

mission of Adventist health ministry, is coming to our organization," says Harold Lee, AHC board chair and Columbia Union Conference president.

Many States Not Using Tobacco Settlement Cash to Fund Smoking-Prevention Programs

Many states receiving payments from the tobacco companies in settlement of a joint lawsuit are not using the additional cash to fund smoking-prevention programs, say analyses already published.

According to reports received by DeWitt Williams, North American Division health ministries director, states are using these payments to fund such activities as road-building and water projects, and to reduce their general budget deficits.

"These reports are alarming, since they run counter to the promises made when these suits were filed," Williams says. "The states said they were suing to gain funds to reduce tobacco use, particularly among the young. It's disturbing to read that of the 30 states receiving tobacco settlement money this year, only eight are implementing full smoking-cessation programs as defined by the Centers for Disease Control."

A report by the organization Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids noted that the total settlement amount was

\$246 billion, but that "far too many states have failed to live up to the promise to protect our nation's children from tobacco."

The report concluded: "If current trends continue, the only winners will be the tobacco companies, which will be able to conduct business as usual. The losers will be America's children, who will continue to fall prey to tobacco industry marketing, and the American taxpayers, who bear the costs of sick and dying smokers."—*Adventist News Network*.

Correction

In last week's Newsbreak (April NAD edition) a sentence was inadvertently omitted from the fourth paragraph of the first story. The paragraph should read:

"This procedure could show the way for the rest of the [Adventist Church in North America] on how to handle this matter with equality and yet abide by the spirit and letter of Church policy," said Thomas Mostert, Pacific Union president. In a conversation with the *Adventist Review*, Mostert pointed out that this decision does not alter the distinction between ordination and commissioning already decided by the world church—men are ordained, but women are commissioned.

We regret the omission.—*Editors*.

Y2K BEING A N ADVENTIST I N

*A call for
down-to-earth common sense—
and a new vision*

BY BERT B. BEACH

The following article is the transcript of a sermon, slightly abridged, preached at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland, on Sabbath morning, January 1, 2000.—Editors.

IN HIS VISION ON PATMOS, JOHN THE revelator sees and hears a mighty angel roaring like a lion, announcing “that there should be time no longer” (Rev. 10:6).

During the past year we were more than ever obsessed with time. And on December 31 the pulsing of billions of atoms signaled the International Bureau of Weights and Measures outside Paris that we had moved at midnight into the year 2000. More and more people today are driven by time and an increasing obsessive passion for precision in time. The emphasis is on efficiency and making every second—every split second—count, in both work and sport. People now even shop around the clock by using the Internet.

And yet, more than ever time is a *riddle*. A millennium and a half ago Augustine expressed his predicament about time. In his *Confessions* he said: “If no one asks me, I know; but if any person should require me to tell him, I cannot.” Today we are probing the edges of the universe, but we still don’t understand time. The physicist Julian Barbour goes so far as to say that time doesn’t exist—it is simply an “illusion.” In the world of Sir Isaac Newton, space and time are fixed, separate entities of the universe. Then earlier this century came Albert Einstein (*Time* magazine’s “Man of the

Century”) with his theories of special and general relativity,

declaring that space and time are interrelated and relative like a rubber band. For many Eastern religions time is a circle turning on a scale, with no end and no beginning.

But the Bible says: “In the beginning God created” (Gen. 1:1); in the “fulness” of time God became human (Gal. 4:4); and in the end of time God comes again. For us who believe in biblical time, time is a line marching from Creation through redemption to re-creation at the end of the age.

Therefore, Adventists in Y2K must not be simply time-oriented and time-controlled, but rather, *Christ oriented*. And Christ is not relative. He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). He has overcome sin, and therefore He has overcome time, for time is the product of sin, and what time gives it takes away.

Adventists in Y2K are thus not time-constrained. They know that with God, a millennium is like one day. The Almighty obviously exists in a different dimension of time. God lives, so to speak, in an eternal present—2,000 years are like two days. So they do not become involved in ridiculous and puny time calculations, date settings, or trying to timetable God. Rather, they’re “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2), redeeming the relativity of time and space by living soberly, justly, and godly in this millennial world of time, “looking for . . . the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13), when there shall be “time no longer.”

Adventists need not fear today’s competing visions of the

universe, with reality becoming jittery and discontinuous, and the future at best only probable. With God the future is certain and our future secure, for “the foundation of God standeth sure” (2 Tim. 2:19).

The following represents my vision of what an Adventist should be in the twenty-first century.

1. A Person With an Evangelistic Vision

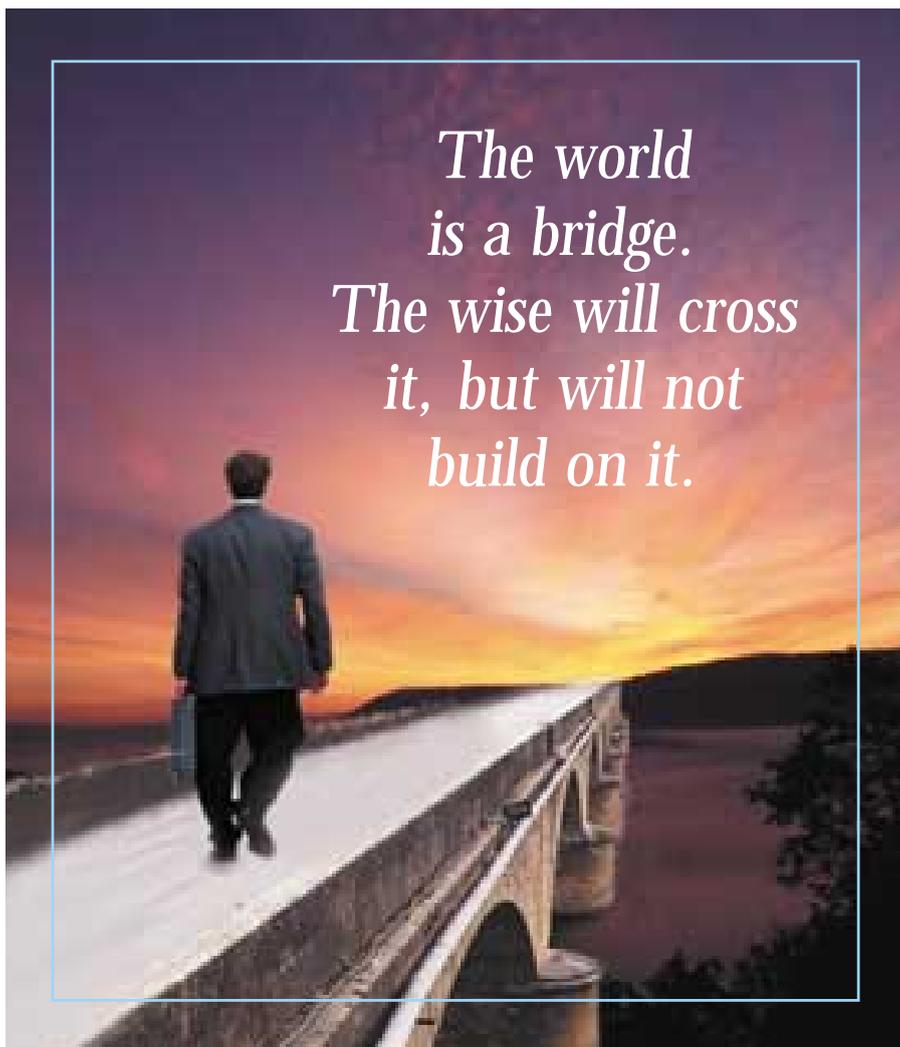
We have an abundance of bad news every day. In contrast, a Seventh-day Adventist is a purveyor of good news—that is what the Gospel is all about. Two thousand years ago the Saviour of the world was born. Faced with the Incarnation, all else fades into relative insignificance, and the universe bows low before the Child in the manger.

Our evangelistic space in Y2K never can be just local or just national. It must be global, for the world is the Adventist’s parish. Some of our pioneers started with a limited vision, but a more global vision soon came to the fore. My father used to talk about “going everywhere from everywhere.”

There is an increasing hostility to proselytism today. This perfectly good word has become a pejorative term. But every Adventist—indeed, every Christian—is called to be an evangelist in Y2K. We should use, however, only proper, ethical methods; and we should follow the triple Petrine principle (see 1 Peter 3:15), namely, *humility*, *respect*, *honesty*.

2. A Growing Person

Y2K is a challenge to growth. We dare not rest with the laurels of 2,000 years of Christian history—or a century and a half of Adventist history. Growth is of the essence.



Have you stopped growing? The last recorded words of the apostle Peter are: “Grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18, NEB).

Sometimes we meet a person after 15-20 years’ absence and we say: “Why, you haven’t changed at all!” Compliment? No. Actually, a pity. There should be growth, development, greater maturity. God has placed a blazing sun on our shoulders to explore our universe. We each have some 10 billion brain cells with an extraordinary number of possible combinations. Y2K provides an excit-

ing frontier to cross.

The process of growth will continue when time merges into that dimension we call eternity. Without the concept of growth, eternity becomes a terribly depressing thought.

3. A Pilgrim

Crossing over into Y2K territory, we can adopt one of two attitudes: (a) that of the permanent settler or (b) that of the searching pilgrim. The permanent settler favors the status quo and sees himself or herself as a mainstream, historical, established churchgoer. They tend to look more for roots than fruits, more for the seen than the unseen.

The pilgrim, on the other hand, lives more by faith. Like Abraham they go out, not knowing whither. Y2K Adventists must be pilgrims.

The words used in Hebrews 11 to identify the heroes of the faith define them as

“strangers,” “aliens,” “guests,” “pilgrims,” “people with no fixed domicile.” Like Abraham they expect “a city . . . whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

There is a saying found in postapostolic literature and attributed to Jesus: “The world is a bridge. The wise person will cross the bridge; however, he will not build his house [there].”

Adventists live in expectation. They are part of a movement. They are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” They’re not limited by time, but seek a country that exists in the dimension of eternity.

4. A Happy Person

Today we are living in a time of anxiety, “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26). We fear international terrorism, global warming and natural disasters, economic collapse, the galloping AIDS epidemic, crime and violence.

But Y2K Adventists are not confused people, governed by what Paul calls “the spirit of bondage again to fear” (Rom. 8:15). Instead, they have the spirit of hope. Like Moses we don’t have a short-view vision, but a long-range vision, “seeing him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27).

I was in Cairo January 1, 1975. I visited the hall of the mummies and saw the mummy of Ramses II, but I saw no mummy of Moses I! He refused time-limited pleasures and riches. Now he walks the courts of heaven.

Yes, Adventists in Y2K are to be a happy people, without “horse faces.” They do not expect disaster to strike at

any moment, but are full of apostolic optimism. There is a marvelous text in Job 8:21: He will fill your “mouth with laughing,” and your “lips with rejoicing.”

Says the hymn writer: “Joy to the world, the Lord is come.” But Adventists have a double joy, for the Lord is soon coming again. This event will inaugurate not a new millennium, but the millennium as a prologue of eternity, when there shall be (relative) “time no longer.”

Lift Up Your Hands and Head

So let us not be driven by time, but rather redeem the time. Let’s not be calendar-controlled, but Christ-centered.

We will need, as never before, a strong evangelistic vision; abundance in growth and conquest. And we’ll need to be always a movement, a pilgrim people traveling light, without unnecessary baggage, looking with great joy and happiness unto Jesus

(Heb. 12:1, 2), the beginning and end of our temporary calendar.

Momentous days lie ahead. Change will be accelerating. Conflicts, stress, and insecurity will be rampant as the prophetic scenario unfolds and reaches its climax. Distress and perplexity of nations will abound, and the church will be the object of increasing attacks by the forces of evil. Paul’s message to us Y2K heroes of the faith is: “Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees” (Heb. 12:12). And Jesus says: “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

Bert B. Beach, longtime public affairs and religious liberty director of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is (in his retirement) director of interchurch relations for the General Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland.



Unraveling Ancient Myths

In Job 41 God asks Job a series of questions about Leviathan. What kind of creature is it?

The biblical mention of Leviathan raises many interesting questions related to the mythological imagery found in the Bible. In dealing with passages in which Leviathan is mentioned it is useful to keep in mind ancient Near Eastern ideas. They will not determine the meaning of the text, but they will certainly help to clarify its meaning.

In Canaanite mythology Lotan (or Litanu) is a snakelike creature that threatens the order of the world, making it necessary for Baal or his sister to attack and defeat it. The noun means “the twisted one.” Leviathan, together with Mot, the god of death, and Yamm, the god of the sea, represented the forces of chaos. Mesopotamian myths describe a seven-headed monster that is defeated by Nabu (a wisdom god).

Scholars tend to associate the mythological conflict among the gods with the creation of the universe. The conflict-with-chaos motif describes the rise of a hostile monster, a god who defeats it, and the creation of the world.

1. *Leviathan as God’s Creature:* Over against ancient mythology, Leviathan in the Bible is described as one of God’s creatures. According to Psalm 104:26, God formed it, and it dwells in the sea together with many other “living things both large and small” (verse 25, NIV). The text does not provide enough information for us to identify it with any known animal; we can only say that it designates a large sea creature.

2. *Leviathan as an Invisible Enemy:* In His dialogue with Job God asked him a series of questions about Leviathan. The description of the animal includes characteristics of a crocodile (Job 41:13-17, 30) and those of a whale (verses 19, 20). Yet the rest of the description does not fit any known creature. The poetic description of the animal is thus transformed into a symbol of an evil power over which humans have no control and who threatens their very existence (verse 25).

3. *Leviathan as a Defeated Power:* The mythological image of Leviathan as a many-headed monster is used in the Bible as a symbol of the historical and spiritual powers that God has defeated on behalf of His people. In a passage that refers to the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites the psalmist

writes: “It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert” (Ps. 74:13, 14, NIV). The myth is historicized, and Leviathan becomes a symbol for the Egyptian armies.

However, the reference to a spiritual power behind Leviathan is not eradicated. The powers of chaos and destruction, represented by the sea and Leviathan, cannot overcome the Lord. The deliverance of God’s people means the defeat of these powers. The biblical writer acknowledges that behind the pagan

mythology lies an element of truth: There is in the world an evil spiritual power that opposes God and His people and that only Yahweh can overcome.

4. *Leviathan as a Power That God Will Destroy:* The language of Isaiah 27:1 is very similar to the language of a Canaanite text in which Lotan is called “the fleeing serpent,” “the twisted” one. That does not mean that the prophet was copying from that text, but that the language was common. The evil power represented by a snakelike animal will be destroyed forever, not by Baal but by the Lord. Now Leviathan has become a symbol of God’s apocalyptic enemies, whom He will confront at the end.

We find this same imagery in Revelation 12 and 20, where the ancient serpent Leviathan is identified as the dragon Satan.

Mythological language is used because it preserved a nugget of truth: there was a primeval enemy whom God confronted and defeated before the creation of the world. That power is not a god but one of God’s creatures, now a demon (cf. Job 3:8). History is the arena where that evil power displays his hatred toward God and His people, where he has been defeated again and again, and where he will finally be destroyed by the Lord.

Mythological language preserved a nugget of truth.

Angel Manuel Rodriguez is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.



One Gram of Hashish

ANDREA STEELE

How much would you pay to buy a postage stamp to send a letter? In some countries it would cost you a week's wages, and yet listeners to Adventist World Radio (AWR) make that sacrifice just to get in touch with the program Voice of Hope. In this story, a postage stamp was worth something altogether different.

Friendly Airwaves

"This may be the third or fourth letter I have ever written in my entire life."

So begins the letter of Abdulla,* who lives in a North African country, writing to the producers of the Arabic programs on AWR. He goes on: "I have found comfort in your programs, whose friendly waves I started hearing two weeks ago."

Abdulla then describes himself and his family. A 21-year-old from a poor family, he has four brothers and a sister—he's the eldest. They live in a remote place where transportation is difficult, except on market day. Abdulla teaches first and second graders.

Abdulla admits that he previously had no interest in radio, but without television or other "luxuries," he says that radio has become his "only friend." Even the radio Abdulla uses to listen to the *Voice of Hope* is not his own; a student lent it to him.

To Set the Oppressed Free

Now he relates his personal



anguish: "At 18 I became addicted to hashish, which has made me unsociable and lonely. I find all my comfort in the drug, while inside I am crying blood tears."

Abdulla then asks for religious literature and health booklets advertised on the radio programs. "Please send me the Holy Bible, too, because I am in extreme need of it."

So how did Abdulla find the money for a stamp for this letter? "I had to sacrifice a gram of hashish to buy the stamp," he says. (That's also why he uses a borrowed radio; his addiction to hashish has taken most of his money, to the point that he can't even afford a radio of his own.)

Is there hope for Abdulla? Yes! Through the ministry of the Arabic *Voice of Hope*, Abdulla's spiritual quest will be nurtured and encouraged. Letters will arrive regularly in his mail-

box. He will be invited to join the listener's club. His most heartfelt questions will be answered. He will be encouraged in his striving to break the hold of the hashish habit. Prayers for him will be offered daily.

That's the reason Adventist World Radio exists: to take the gospel to the suffering, the lonely, the addicted ones—no matter where they are—in their own language.

Pray that Abdulla will find a new kind of peace through the radio program and overcome his drug habit. Pray that he will stop feeling alone, by

meeting the Saviour.

*Abdulla's name has been changed and his country concealed to protect him and the Arabic producers of AWR programming.

Andrea Steele is associate public relations director of Adventist World Radio.

Correction: The Adventist World Radio report (Apr. 13, 2000) incorrectly reported the numbers of people who speak the following languages. The correct numbers are:

Chin	344,100
Japanese	125,000,000
Korean	75,000,000
Minnan	49,000,000
Romanian	26,000,000

We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused. —Editors.

PHOTO © PHOTODISC

How It Used to Be

He's been to 13 General Conference sessions. He'll be at this one.

BY RAY DABROWSKI, DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, GENERAL CONFERENCE

Today, as it has over the years, his office communicates vital stories about the church's past with a tour de force vision. Bert B. Beach, one of the most colorful personalities in modern Adventism, is ready to take you into his rich collection of facts and narratives. Though formally retired from the public affairs and religious liberty post he held at the church world headquarters until 1995, he looks forward to attending the session in Toronto, his thirteenth in a career of 50 years as an Adventist Church leader.

Differences abound when one compares the earlier General Conference sessions, such as 1946, and those organized these days, observes Beach. "One obvious difference is that the session in 1946 was a much smaller event. This was the first time that leaders of the church came together in a big way from around the world.

"It may surprise you to know that that meeting took place in the Sligo church which had recently been completed in Takoma Park, Maryland. It was the biggest church we had in the denomination, and we had, as I recall, fewer than 1,000 delegates in attendance there."

Scanning the past, Beach points to other differences between the bygone era and the way the denomination conducts its sessions. "In the early days, beginning in 1958, when my father was the secretary of the General Conference, one big event at the session was the mission pageant. My father would be on the platform, and



SLIGO CHURCH: Site for the 1946 General Conference.

he would just . . . ad lib the program of the pageant. Obviously he had prepared for it, but it was basically an ad lib. Now you have professional scriptwriters who prepare the program. The spirit of the session was more the spirit of a family and more of a pioneer church. Now it's more of a large, more professional church. And that makes some difference."

Today such megaevents impact the cities and countries in which they are held in a much bigger way than before. "We plan more to take into consideration the local community than we did before. We invite more public officials than we did in the past. Now we have more guests attending, including observers from other Christian churches. In the past the other churches practically always ignored our session. Perhaps one reason was that we had ignored them, too.

"And we are also intentional about having some activities outside, as we did in Utrecht. ADRA's Global Village made an impact on the community. So did youth activities and public con-

certs. Beginning with, maybe, the session in Dallas, Texas, in 1980, we started issuing public and official statements regarding issues that were of interest to the general public, and not only to ourselves."

Looking forward to Toronto, like every delegate, Bert Beach has personal expectations. He hopes that Toronto 2000 will be a meeting in which the global outreach of the church and its international character will continually be highlighted and that the meeting will not be viewed as "business as usual."

"With a smaller delegate number of 2,000, even though the church has several million more members than it did in 1995 in Utrecht, we can do better business than if we get so big that it becomes unmanageable to give people the opportunity to express themselves in speeches on the session floor. I would personally hope that we could bring down the size of the actual voting business delegation even further. I know of no other church that has anything that size."

Beach does not hesitate to explain that the one single thing that has made him proud of the church is its "tremendous growth and missionary activity and inspiring reports from the world divisions, highlighting evangelism in all parts of the world." Looking back at the past sessions, he is eager to speak about "the energy of the church. That has always impressed me in a great way. Now, we must never let the church get bogged down by majoring in minors. A session is a wonderful occasion, but it's more important to finish the work."

Julian's Big Day

Tomorrow's the day." Mom winked as she tucked Julian into bed. "When you wake up in the morning you'll be a whole year older."

"I thought this day would never get here," Julian yawned.

"I know," Mom smiled. "You've been looking forward to your birthday for a long time. After all, it's a big day."

"It's the best day of the year!" Julian exclaimed. "Well, maybe the second best. No, the first. No, the second best. I can't decide!"

"If your birthday isn't the best day of the year, what is?" Mom asked with a twinkle in her eye.

"Christmas!" answered Julian. "Didn't you know that? It's just as hard to wait for Christmas."

"So what makes one better than the other?" Mom asked.

"Well," replied Julian, "you get more presents at

Christmas. And the getting ready part is more fun because we shop and decorate and all that. Then on Christmas Day we usually have aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents here, or we go there. So that's a lot of fun. And plus, it's a holiday."

"And what about your birthday?" Mom prompted.

"Well, I have to go to school on my birthday, unless it happens to be on a weekend," said Julian. "But mostly it's not, and that's a drag. But you make cupcakes or something else for my whole class, and I get to pass them out, and everyone sings for me. That's good. And I get to choose what we eat on my birthday, so I don't have to eat any of that yucky cranberry stuff you make me eat at Christmas."

"And I get a party," he continued. "That's really good. I get to choose who I want to have come

over, and we play games and eat cake, and they sing and bring me presents. Hey—maybe I *do* get more presents on my birthday. How many kids are coming to my party?" Julian teased.

"Yes, I can see how it's hard to decide which is better," Mom answered.

"I think my birthday," answered Julian as he nestled his head into his pillow and closed his eyes. "My birthday is my special day. Everyone shares Christmas together, but my birthday is just for me. You'd better go, Mom, so I can get to sleep, because the faster I get to sleep, the faster it will be tomorrow!"

"Good night, darling," Mom whispered as she kissed Julian's forehead. "Sweet birthday dreams!"

Family Time

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

☞ Do you think God has a favorite day? What day is it?

Ask someone in your family to read Exodus 16:13-31. How did God's people know that day was special? Did everyone treat the day as special that first week? What happened to those who didn't? What do you think they did the next week?

☞ Do you look forward to the Sabbath as much as you do to your birthday? Why or why not? With your family make a list of three or four things you can look forward to doing this coming Sabbath. Make a list of three or four different things for next Sabbath. Put the lists on the refrigerator or somewhere else where you can see them every day.

☞ Sing a song about the special day God gave us.

☞ When you pray, thank God for His special day.



The Risk Less Taken

Like initials carved in a schoolyard tree, snatches of verse from an old green academy lit book weather in my mind. Among those I can call up for you now or repeat in the middle of the night are two lines from Edward Sill's "The Fool's Prayer":

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?"

Having been on the receiving as well as the giving end of the "ill-timed truth," most of us understand all too well its sharpness. Indeed, oftentimes we'd walk around the block to avoid confronting; we're so convinced it's better to be nice. But when a serious situation demands attention, what then? Without a degree in psychology, should we risk botching a confrontation? And if we confront, might we risk losing our friends?

Happily, we have at our disposal four superb textbooks on human interaction, known today as the Gospels. My reading of them bears out what the Old Testament prophet foretold in graphic language—that Jesus (relational authority par excellence) would not break an already bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick (see Isa. 42:3). In other words, He was careful about confronting.

Specifically, Jesus wouldn't scold weak people, burdening them further with discouragement. *That* kind of confronting just wasn't in His heart. The struggling always had His pity, and the fallen had His hand (cf. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 26).

Yet sometimes Jesus did confront. In this, He merely continued a practice observable from Eden.

"Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9),* He asked Adam and Eve after their disobedience, giving them little time to "stuff" their secret shame. "What is this you have done?" (verse 13). Already Jesus had decided to give His blood for these children of His heart, but they had to sense their need of it. Although they were still taking refuge in excuses, they had to face their sin. Many years later the prophet Hosea would verbalize the principle of rebuke and restoration like this:

"Come, and let us return to the Lord;
For He has torn, but He will heal us:

He has stricken, but He will build us up" (Hosea 6:1).

Nicodemus heard the Lord's "Where are you?" during a sur-

reptitious interview at night on a Mideastern rooftop. A man of much stature and little self-knowledge, he approached Jesus with a round of courtesies probably intended to establish rapport and initiate discussion.

"Most assuredly, I say to you," Jesus responded, ignoring the niceties and fixing Nicodemus with His eye, "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Nicodemus felt a rush of annoyance. He knew that term. Upon converting to the Hebrew faith, heathen were "born again." But not Jews. Not Jewish rulers.

"How can a man be born when he is old?" he feigned (verse 4).

Jesus recognized the pride that raises a person's hackles. He could have backed off. He didn't.

"Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" He persisted (verse 10).

That balmy night on the rooftop a confronted rabbi heard about the wind coming unseen and doing what it would, and felt a fresh breeze in his soul.

I'm impressed by Jesus' directness with the woman at Jacob's well. By His *indirectness* with critical Simon the Pharisee. And by His prolonged silence regarding Judas' sins.

Jesus understood people. He sensed when an incisive word was needed, and when it would do harm. At the heart of all the confrontations of Jesus was love.

To confront, or to be "nice"? To speak, or to keep our friends? Are these the right questions?

If the Spirit were to blow, say, like the wind, and revive us like living water, might we better sense the time to take the risk and the way to do it with care?

I like to think so. I like to think that, having first stricken us for our lack of love, He'd deftly bind us up.

*Scripture references in this article are quoted from the New King James Version.

Ann Burke is a freelance writer living in Yucaipa, California.

