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**Adventist Youth Join Demonstrations Against Corruption in Honduras:** In Honduras, young Adventists are marching in the streets by the thousands, demanding remedies for national corruption that has led to a murder rate higher than any other country's on Earth....

**Adventists: The Most Diverse Religion in America:** While many Christian denominations trace their beginnings to a particular country or ethnic/language group, Adventists are far more ethnically diverse--recent demographic studies hammer this home and also provide fairly precise information about where so many Adventists go when they abandon their
childhood faith....

**Adventist Congregations in North America invited to Join a "Conspiracy of Compassion":** A leader in the North American Division has proposed a "Conspiracy of Compassion" to edify the Division's many large cities in the name of Christ—a lifestyle of service to the cities, rather than an invade-and-conquer military mentality typical of evangelistic efforts of the past....

**Korean Adventist Young Adults in America Chart a New Future:** On Sabbath afternoon, Aug. 8, during the East Coast Korean Camp Meeting in the United States, a "summit on the future" will convene to which young adults of Korean descent are especially invited. The Korean Church Association in the United States is made up of immigrants from Korea, and this meeting is part of the "English ministry" section of the organization, which involves largely second-generation immigrants....

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**The Supreme Court’s Recent Decision on Gay Marriage: Yet Another Vital Reason to Refocus on Jesus:** Guest columnist Val Loumber says the recent Supreme Court decision federally legalizing same-sex marriage went too far, as the majority of justices inappropriately engaged in legislative activity. How could that group of justices (most of whom are Christian) in conscience do as they did?...

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**Tenderly Caring for Our Wounded:** The General Conference Session in San Antonio has clearly produced a great deal of pain among Adventists; how can we as members help the hurting who are now making crossroads decisions in their lives?...

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Adventism and the Arts: Blue Mountain Academy Opera (FEATURE): How times change, when an Adventist academy in the US composes, rehearses, and produces an opera, using its own talent for a massive production! Who'd'a thunk!....

Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine (BOOK REVIEW): A number of conservative denominations born in the 19th and early 20th centuries rejected modern medical treatment as incompatible with reliance on God's healing touch. A new book by a physician analyzes various manifestations of this trait, and reviewer Edwin A. Schwisow interjects thoughts on the Adventist faith's decision to nurture a generally collegial relationship between its preachers and its medical membership....

Burial Pots (VISUAL): SM Chen shares a photo he took in China, which illuminates words from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."...

Nothing In My Hands, Chapter Eleven (PROSE): The continuing nonfiction account of the travails of Del Starr and family in mid-1900s US now takes the family to Oregon and to a major marital transition....
Australian Leader Questions Functions of GC

In a July 24, 2015, email sent to readers of the Australian-based Seventh-day Adventist Record, Director of Communications James Standish, offers some surprisingly candid thoughts about the value and function of the present General Conference system.

He admits that his candor may be a career risk to himself, so obviously his concerns are of a magnitude worth the personal risk. "I love our Church. I love it enough to take the career risk to talk openly about my concerns," he writes. His editorial notes specific concerns.

One is the financial cost of holding a General Conference. Using Australian Dollars he quotes estimates of $A45 million (USD 33 million) for the official organization and the supporting ministries represented. He asks if these donated funds are best spent every five years "competing...for positions and donor money," or if instead this amount might be used for a similarly funded 60,000 Adventists converging "on Paris, Lagos, Shanghai or Melbourne" for a city evangelistic effort every five years. Or feeding 25,000 starving children every day for the next five years?

But more than the cost of holding a General Conference are concerns about its agenda and its composition. Firstly, he notes that the conference stated we do not know how many Adventists there are in the world, and that our 18.5 million estimate is likely an overestimate. But even if there are that many Adventists in this world, the present system of delegates is clearly unfair and not representational of Adventism.

Referring to church membership statistics showing that over 50% of our members are female, Standish notes, "there is something troubling about a room of almost 2600 delegates debating the role of women in the Church, where only 17% of the delegates are women."

Also, the present program of many delegates being "ex-officio" limiting choices to ordained ministers who now by definition are male, makes the future changes for a representative General Conference almost impossible. "This produces a self-confirming circularity that is both unwise and unfair."

His main concern, however, were the votes that imposed restrictions on belief by one group in the church over another group in the church. "We believe God speaks to all. But we voted to shut down the conscience of others. We have no creed but the Bible. But we spent an inordinate amount of time debating jots and tittles in Fundamental Beliefs. As a movement, we are drifting very dangerously into the hierarchicalism, formalism and dogmatism that our pioneers explicitly rejected."

For solutions, he has suggestions, but was not able to offer a mechanism for implementing those suggestions. "We desperately need a far more transparent, democratic process for selecting delegates."

Do we have Adventist management experts, organizational counselors, legal minds, political advisors to lay out a plan for the Adventist church to retool the mechanisms to reach these goals? Pastor Standish's original article can be read here: James Standish "Thoughts" July 24, 2015.
Adventist Youth Join Demonstrations against Corruption in Honduras

From ANN, July 29, 2015: Adventist young people took to the streets of major cities in Honduras last week to as thousands of protesters from many faiths marched against government corruption. More than 10,000 Adventists holding signs and banners marched in Tegucigalpa, the capital, as well as in La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula, and dozens of other cities. In recent weeks, there have been dozens of marches demanding an end to corruption.

“Our Adventist young people gave a clear message to our Honduran population that unless citizens seriously commit to keeping all of the commandments of God, there won’t be positive changes to help the country forge ahead,” said Pastor Adan Ramos, president of the Adventist Church in Honduras. As part of the demonstration, Ramos spoke in the main squares of Tegucigalpa and La Ceiba.

The recent march was the third national event of its kind organized by the Adventist denomination since 2013 and an important one, said Ramos. Honduras, which has a population of just 8.7 million, has the world’s highest murder rate, with 90.4 homicides per 100,000 people, according to United Nations statistics.

Thousands of Adventist young people marched last year, while a national march to end violence against women took place in 2013. Ramos said that sharing hope and pointing people to Christian values will remain a priority in the coming months, with dozens of additional initiatives in the works.

The Adventist denomination in Honduras has more than 181,200 members worshiping in 678 congregations. The denomination also operates a hospital and several schools.

*The Adventist News Network (ANN) is the official news service of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.*
Adventists: The Most Diverse Religion in America

July 28, 2015: Adventists are the most ethnically diverse religious group in the United States, according to a news story published yesterday by the *Adventist Review*. In fact, Adventist Today has repeatedly reported this reality over the last few years. The story is based on a report released this week by the Pew Research Center, but it does not tell the whole story and may convey an impression that is not entirely factual.

Quoting the Pew study, the *Adventist Review* states that “37 percent of adults who identify themselves as Seventh-day Adventists are white, while 32 percent are black, 15 percent are Hispanic, 8 percent are Asian and another 8 percent are another race or mixed race.” It also states that the margin of error for the study is “less than one percentage point.”

What the *Adventist Review* did not report is that the margin of error quoted above is for the entire survey sample, totaling 35,071 interviews. The Adventist sub-sample totals 160 interviews, so the margin of error for the ethnic profile quoted in the paragraph above is nine percentage points. In other words the ethnic profile of the Adventist Church in the United States could be quite different than the information in the paragraph above.

There is no doubt that the majority of Adventists in the North America are from ethnic minority groups. The last study of Adventist demographics with a full sample that followed the same methodology as that used by the U.S. Census Bureau, conducted for the denomination’s North American Division (NAD) in 2007-2008 showed that half the Adventist population was white and half ethnic minorities. At the rates of change revealed by previous studies, the NAD undoubtedly passed over the threshold into a “majority minorities” profile by 2010 at the latest. (That study can be obtained online at [www.creativeministry.org](http://www.creativeministry.org), the Web site of the research center that conducted the demographic survey for the NAD.)

The Pew study also asked the Americans it interviewed to contrast their childhood religion with their current status. Only 51 percent of those who identified the Adventist faith as the denomination they were raised in reported that they are still Adventists. A total of 21 percent told interviewers that they now belong to a different Protestant denomination and one percent said they have become Roman Catholics. Six percent indicated that they have joined a non-Christian religion, and 21 percent identified themselves as not a part of any organized religion or “Nones.” The *Adventist Review* did not report this information.

A number of studies conducted by Adventist research agencies have shown that about half of the children growing up in Adventist families in North America have dropped out of the denomination by the time they reached their mid-20s. This began to be true during the Baby Boom generation, born from 1946 through 1964 and now middle-aged. It has continued to be true during the two more recent generations: the Baby Bust generation (often labeled Generation X by journalists), now in their late 30s and 40s; and the Millennial generation, today’s young adults.

Anabaptists, Lutherans and Pentecostals have about the same dropout percentage as do Adventists in the United States. Methodists, Episcopalians (Anglicans), Presbyterians, Reformed and Holiness denominations have significantly larger dropout percentages, according to the Pew study. Baptists and Catholics retain markedly higher percentages of their young people into adulthood, but have much larger percentages of inactive members.

Self-identified Adventists in the Pew interviews included very small numbers of individuals who reported they belong to one of six very small Adventist denominations: Advent Christian, Worldwide Church of God (recently renamed Grace Communion International), Church of God General Conference, Church of God (Seventh-day), United Church of God and Living Church of God.
Adventist Congregations in North America invited to Join a “Conspiracy of Compassion”

From NAD News, July 27, 2015: Pastor Jose Cortes, Jr., an associate director of the Adventist denomination's North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Association, has invited pastors and congregations to join a conspiracy:

What if our Adventist Churches across North America began a conspiracy? What if we decided in harmony with all the other churches across Bermuda, Canada, United States and the islands of Guam and Micronesia that we are going to love our cities like Jesus did? What do you think would happen if we ventured outside the walls of our churches, asked people about their needs, and did something transformational for individuals and communities?

What if our local churches conspired together to do the following?

- Respond to disasters in the community (fires, earthquakes, storms, tornados).
- Feed the hungry.
- Clothe the naked.
- Mentor children after school.
- Minister to prisoners, and also minister to their families.
- Visit and pray for the sick in the community regularly.
- Offer free Marital Counseling (married couples) and FREE Pre-Marital Counseling (engaged couples).
- Offer free Parenting Classes for parents.
- Donate space, free of charge, for community weddings and funerals.
- Advertise the Services of the local Adventist Pastor to conduct Weddings, Dedications of Babies, and Funerals, free of charge for the church’s community.
- Provide manicures and pedicures for battered women
- Celebrate communion with the homeless and bring them in when it is cold.
- Lead Toy Drives during Christmas.
- Stand against modern Slavery and the abuse of women, children and the elderly (not a silent church).
- Teach free Financial Management Classes (How to budget? How to buy a house? How to become debt-free? Financial Freedom, Income Taxes)
- Hold free Fitness classes.
- Connect with governmental leaders and work with them to support good causes regardless of their party affiliation.
- Hold a reception for community business owners and pray for their success.
- Promote and facilitate the adoption of children.
- Co-sponsor and organize concerts with well known musicians in some of our very beautiful, historic, landmark buildings, rather than having these buildings closed to the public most of the time.
- Organize and sponsor celebrations during special days and recognized holidays such as: New Year’s, Superbowl, Valentine’s, Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, 4th of July, Memorial Day, Labor Day,
Thanksgiving, Christmas, and others.

- Partner with the city and other organizations to serve as volunteers in events such as: marathons, fairs, festivals, and others.

What would happen with our churches if we would venture to open our doors more often, rather than just Saturdays, for a few hours, and Wednesdays for an hour? After all some other churches who don't have the beautiful and powerful message we have, keep their doors open all the time. What if we dared to distribute flyers in our communities, not with beasts on the cover, but offering the few services mentioned above and many others? What if we did this, not just for a day, or for a season right before the evangelistic meetings, but on a regular basis as a lifestyle? What do you think would happen?

(1) A relevant church is never empty. Jesus was surrounded by people constantly, He did not preach to empty pews, there is a reason why He always had a crowd.

(2) A relevant church reaches and reclaims its community. Jesus did that on a regular basis. He went to the synagogue, sat and read, and then went out to reach and reclaim His community.

(3) A relevant church retains its members. When a community of people are active and happy doing something good, which they enjoy, they don't leave; the total opposite happens, more people come, youth, young adults, adults, and children, believe me it can be viral. Jesus went viral, and that's why our church is here today because of what He did.

It's time for a "conspiracy of Compassion" in our Adventist churches in North America!

Pasteor Jose Cortes Jr., is an associate ministerial director who coordinates evangelism for the Adventist denomination in North America.
Korean Adventist Young Adults in America Chart a New Future

July 30, 2015: Sabbath afternoon August 8 during the East Coast Korean Camp Meeting in the United States, a “summit on the future” will convene to which young adults are invited. The Korean Church Association in the United States is made up of immigrants from Korea and this meeting is part of the “English ministry” section of the organization which involves largely second-generation immigrants who worship in the English language.

This is an "unprecedented" event, according to an announcement on the association’s web site. It involves a maturing step for a large immigrant group among Adventists in the United States.

Participants will work in small groups around tables and explore questions such as the following: Why are Korean American young adults leaving the Korean language churches during or after college? Why do some stay or eventually return? Are Korean language congregations still necessary for the second generation? What can English ministries in Korean churches offer English-speaking young adults? What can English-speaking young adults offer to the future of English ministries in Korean churches? How should these activities be organized in the future?

Each discussion group will select a leader and a scribe, and share a report of their ideas with the larger group. The reports from the discussion groups will be collected and collated by an editing committee into a written report from the summit to be shared with the Korean Church Association annual executive committee meeting, September 6-12.

The young adult summit will convene on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown where the camp meeting is also being held. The summit is scheduled for 2 to 5 pm Sabbath afternoon.

For more information about the event and the English-language young adult section of the camp meeting, go to this web page: http://aksdaem.com/events/yasummit/
On the Question of Women’s Ordination in the Adventist Church: This Is Not Settled

By Ervin Taylor, July 27, 2015: Following the vote on women’s ordination at the San Antonio General Conference (GC) Session, where 40% of the delegates voted to allow divisions to decide if they wish to ordain women pastors, the current GC president asked that the 60% no vote should decide this issue once and for all and that all discussion should now cease.

One should probably not comment immediately after such a disappointing event for fear of not being able to put that event into appropriate context, which might take months and even years to unfold. However, in this case, there is reason to set aside such counsel and proceed to immediately express an immediate response, subject always to continuing revision. Obviously, every individual will have a different take on what recently occurred, why it occurred, and what now might be an appropriate course of immediate and long-term action.

One possible immediate reaction to the combination of the unexpected strength of the yes vote and the statement of the current GC president might go something like:

This is not over. Although this battle has been lost, the campaign for justice and equity in the Adventist denomination for women’s ordination will continue unabated. The term of the current GC president (“He whose name cannot be uttered”) is only until 2020. He can do a lot of damage over the next 5 years, but at the next GC session another proposal will be presented, perhaps again to allow each division to decide if they wish to ordain women in their region. And the current GC president may be replaced. Between now and then, those unions and conferences who wish to ordain women will do so, and there is nothing that can be done about it, unless those opposing women’s ordination wish to cause open schism.

Another possible reaction is to suggest that the Adventist General Conference under the current president has rendered itself irrelevant. Let us now look to our local churches, local conferences, and academic institutions retaining integrity for forward-looking leadership and inspiration. They constitute the authentic Adventist Church of the future.

When the result of the voting was announced, someone of sound judgment (certainly not the current writer) was heard to remark: “The vote was important, but even more important will be what various individuals and groups advancing justice and equity in the Adventist denomination are going to do in response to this action.” Amen.
After Darkness, what? The Reformation claimed After Darkness, Light. What do we do when darkness overtakes the light? What do Adventists damaged by the unfortunate decisions of GC 2015 do now? Jack Hoehn has written a major article with suggestions on what do Adventists do after San Antonio to promote progress, growth, and change in Adventism.

By Jack Hoehn

BOKO HARAM

On a night in April, 2014, a group of religious extremists came to a school where teen-age girls were taking final exams in physics. This group has been known to target schools, believing that girls should not be educated and using them as cooks or sex slaves.

Although some of the girls escaped, over 234 were missing. The kidnappers told them they were “security forces” and herded them into trucks and then drove them to a forested area with fortified camps.

Houses in the town were burned down in the incident. But perhaps your house was saved. Most of these girls were Christians. So what should you have done the next morning if this was your town?…

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Jack looks forward to seeing you in the pages of **Adventist Today** print magazine. (And he thanks you for your interest in his online blogs.) You may sent him your personal comments at drhoehn@msn.com.
The Supreme Court’s Recent Decision on Gay Marriage: Yet Another Vital Reason to Refocus on Jesus

by Valery Loumber, July 30, 2015: Several months prior to the Supreme Court’s June 26, 2015, decision on gay marriage, I attended the investiture of a federal judge. An investiture is the ceremony at which the judge is introduced to the local public and community of attorneys, and it is when the judge formally takes his or her oath of office. This is the oath the judge took:

I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God. (5 U.S.C. § 3331).

I had heard this oath taken before, but it was not until this time that I realized the oath has serious implications for Bible-believing Christians in the final scenes of the great controversy between good and evil.

Here is the question that began to trouble me: How can any Christian take this oath, while disagreeing with the Supreme Court’s recent decision on gay marriage?

On one hand, if a person disagrees with the now recognized constitutional right of gay marriage, but he or she takes this oath, the person would be lying to those before whom and to whom the oath is given, i.e., God and the general public, in this case.

Taking an oath to “support and defend the Constitution[,] . . . bear true faith and allegiance to the [Constitution,] [and representing to] take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion” (5 U.S.C. § 3331), while actually rejecting gay marriage, is a misrepresentation of intentions in the fulfillment of the oath. The Supreme Court’s decision unequivocally holds that gay marriage is within the cluster of fundamental rights under the Constitution’s 14th Amendment. This right is now fully integrated in the Constitution.

On the other hand, if a person claims to reject gay marriage – even privately, but nevertheless takes the above oath with the intention of performing it, that person then is lying to those before whom and to whom the rejection of gay marriage was professed, i.e., God and/or other persons. We often forget that God holds us accountable for every word we utter, regardless of how or to whom we are speaking, God or people. That is, in our every word we represent God. We do not only represent our intentions or beliefs. We represent also the One with Whose name we identify ourselves. Thus, in our words, we either honor or dishonor Him.

Notice the absence of qualifiers from the following verses. “But I say to you that for every idle [or careless] word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12:36-37, NKJV). “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth . . . ” (Eph. 4:29a).

A story from the Old Testament tells about God’s perspective on our taking of oaths. Consider Israel’s obligation to keep its covenant to the inhabitants of Gibeon (and few other nearby cities), who tricked Israel to enter into the covenant by disguising themselves as ambassadors from an afar country. (See Josh. 9). Notice why Israel honored
their covenant: “But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers” (Josh. 9:18).

Israel was clearly looking for a way to get out of keeping their promise. The verse implies that if Israel had not promised before God not to attack Gibeon, they would have, at the least, considered breaking that promise.

However, when God’s people speak – as God’s people – it is as if God Himself speaks. And, “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent [or change His mind, NIV]. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19). “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:13). Israel was aware of this, and they did not dare break their covenant with Gibeon.

In other words, when we – who claim the prerogative of being God’s people – make promises to others, we are not to be held accountable only by those to whom we are making the promises. We are to be held accountable by God as well. God holds us accountable for every word we utter, regardless of how or to whom we are speaking, God or people, given that we represent Him here on earth.

This brings us to the next question, namely, whether a Christian disagreeing with the recent decision on gay marriage can any longer hold a public office in our country, without violating his or her conscience? It is a critical question because the oath quoted above is the oath taken by all federal civil service employees, all officers of the United States uniformed services, and it is the oath taken by all members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate, at the start of each new Congress.

More, the above oath is not far from the oath taken by the President of the United States, which also includes a promise to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.

“I [name] do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States” U.S. Const., Art. II, Sec. 1.

Now that the recent decision on gay marriage has become “the law of the land,” as some Bible-believing politicians have stated, can any such politician take an oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, without any mental reservation?

Laws impacting religious beliefs and freedoms are created and changed at a frequency never before seen in the history of our country. Yet, on some level, we think of overturning the tide of religious oppression by increasing our political action efforts, i.e., lobbying the right people, voting the right people into office, or voting even some of our own people into office.

But, while God still has faithful people in public office doing His will, it is undeniable that the above oaths and the rejection of gay marriage are irreconcilable without the violation of one’s conscience. The United States Constitution is mutating before our very eyes. It is changing to accommodate new trends in culture. And, it is not a document that can be accepted, rejected or defended in part. Defending the Constitution includes defending everything it stands for, including gay marriage. Thus, when taking an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, this includes protecting and defending the right to gay marriage.

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, political action to overturn the tide of religious oppression on our part would be futile, as our country will repudiate even its own existing laws in propagating falsehood. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near (Testimonies for the Church, vol 5:451).
In other words, the time will come – and it has already come, when human laws will no longer hold back the tide of religious persecution. It is what the recent decision on gay marriage does. The decision repudiates both Protestant and republican principles of our government. As a Protestant country, we have the freedom of religious practice and expression. As a republic, our government’s power resides in elected – and not selected – individuals who represent the citizens of our country.

In one stroke, the Supreme Court’s recent gay marriage decision has irreparably damaged both of these principles underlying our government. By disregarding the unfettered religious oppression the constitutional legalization of gay marriage is to unleash, the Supreme Court has grossly undermined the Protestant principles of religious freedom this country was established upon.

By ignoring the fact that new laws in our country are enacted by elected government officials, representing the country’s citizens – as opposed to a group of selected judicial officials, the Supreme Court has subverted our government’s focal republican principle. As Chief Justice John Roberts put it: “If you are among the many Americans . . . who favor expanding same-sex marriage, by all means celebrate today’s decision. . . . But do not celebrate the Constitution. It had nothing to do with it” (Obergefell v. Hodges, 135 S.Ct. 2584, 2626 (2015)).

Stated differently, the Court’s majority decision on gay marriage did something that was reserved for another branch of government, Congress, or that was reserved to another sovereign government altogether, the states.

Our country then is well on its way of doing what was predicted by Ellen White. Where does that leave you and me? Instead of focusing on what we can do to overturn the coming tide of religious persecution, let us focus on God’s work of preparing us for the trying time we know to be ahead of us. Let us focus on what God is doing in our hearts and minds. Let us focus on cooperating with God in the transformation of our characters. Let us focus on prayer. Let us focus on going to the cross daily. Let us focus on beholding our lifted-up Savior. Let us focus on the forgiveness He desires to bestow. Let us focus on seeking the merits of His blood for the washing of our sins. Let us focus on being baptized by the Holy Spirit, daily. Let us focus on putting on the mind of Christ. Let us focus on what God has done for us in Jesus and on what He wants to do in us by Jesus, so we are able to stand on the last day of God Almighty. Amen!

Val (full first name is Valery) Loumber lives in Northern California with his wife. Originally from Europe, he was born and grew up in an Adventist home (3rd generation SDA). He is passionate about ministry. For many years, he has been involved in various ministry work, including personal ministries, church planting, lay preaching, radio programming and, more recently, writing. He is an attorney and has been an extensive legal writer for over 11 years. Val also has tremendous interest in science, as he holds degrees in Biology and Chemistry.
Whatever Happened to Submission?

by Jim Hoffer, July 28, 2015: For quite some time now I have been a fairly faithful reader of AT, especially on Friday evenings or Sabbath afternoons. I do appreciate the various perspectives expressed and the healthy exchange of ideas. Sometimes I have posted a reply of my own, but mostly I just read in “silence,” almost feeling that my comments will probably not be read by anyone, or if read, ignored or brushed off. Some responses leave me very cold, especially from those who have left the church and hurl unkind remarks at our theology, or accuse us of “politics.”

Some of these folks think that American Adventists should still rule the church. (Bucks can make people into bullies.)

Yes, I too was disappointed with the way the voting went. But now there are these dire forecasts of the impending downfall or splitting of the church, etc., etc. And yet the church forges on through the years, emerging (and growing rapidly!) from controversies of the Ford or Brinsmead type, financial crises, and like scenarios. And this one will be no different, mark my words.

Look, folks, it is the message of the church that holds us together, not the hierarchy, not glitches here and there, or whatever. After 46 years of ministry I have seen this kind of thing come and go, and I have come to know and appreciate dozens and dozens of our leaders, and find them all to be upstanding individuals, doing their sometimes thankless jobs with excellence. I know Ted Wilson personally and have for many years. The resounding applause that greeted the announcement of his reelection and again at the worship service on Sabbath morning, is a testimony to his faithful leadership. And to charge him with negligence in not openly expressing his personal position on women’s ordination is positively outrageous. Don’t people know that the chairman is supposed to remain neutral? What did you expect—that he swing the vote one way or another by his influence? I am appalled at such a stab in the back!

Many of the naysayers are totally out of touch with the real Adventist church, those who are silently seeking to be like Jesus, to live out their faith joyfully, and to share this wonderful message with others by any means possible. The real Adventists are those who uphold the tenets of the church, and who humbly submit to Jesus, who is the real president of the church. The real Adventists are those who are in love with Jesus, His church, and the Adventist message.

Whatever happened to submission? Whatever happened to living out the words of Jesus when He said we must have the faith of little children? Why is there such arrogance? Whatever happened to love?

And you scientists out there—Sure, it’s great to be curious and have an investigative bent (and I would never suppress that). But why do we think we have to have all the answers now? Sure, perhaps the earth as an inert body existed before the creation of life. But any view that deviates from the simple Genesis account of the origin of life, the establishment of the seven-day week, mankind’s fall into sin, and the beginning of decay and violence and predation in nature, totally destroys the weekly Sabbath and even the plan of salvation itself. Therefore such a belief cannot possibly be right and effectively disqualifies one from being an Adventist.

If you are writing your comments to help the church, and because you love the church, then keep up the good work. However if you are one of those constantly negative, bitter individuals, whether still in the church or out of it, I will pray for you. Because that is not a very good way to make it to heaven!

Your friend in Jesus,
Jim Hoffer, retired pastor

Ringgold, Georgia
Tenderly Caring for Our Wounded

By Allan Martin, July 30:  In the aftermath of the General Conference Session in San Antonio, many young adults in the Adventist denomination are hurting, their faith wounded. The following short, practical article by a pastor was published by the denomination’s North American Division:

Let us tenderly care for our wounded.

Let us empathize and listen intently.

Let us not be so mesmerized by the mission beyond … that we neglect the mission within.

Let us do the mundane ministry, the ordinary ministry, the invisible ministry, the messy ministry.

Let us see those neglected and let our sight be our best expression of embrace.

Let us hear and let our attentiveness be our best expression of hope.

Let us come close and let our nearness be the touch of God.

Let us do unto others as we would have had them do unto us in our moment of need.

Here are five suggestions for pastors as they help Millennials and others process GC 2015:

1. Actively listen and empathize. Initially, it is likely most important to hear their heart and allow them to voice their emotions and reactions.

2. Avoid defending, fixing, excusing, or responding from your personal purview. Allow there to be some to focus on the member’s experience without lacing it with your own.

3. Apologize. To whatever degree there has been negative and hurtful consequences, it is healing to know there is an acknowledgement of the hurt and a sincere request for forgiveness.

4. Allow it to be messy. Permit members to process through their mix of feelings and reactions. Create a safe space for candor, while maintaining healthy conversation. This may take time and not resolve quickly.

5. Access additional resources. For some this will feel traumatic, even debilitating. Be sure to have supportive resources that can go beyond your pastoral care (i.e. counseling and therapeutic referrals).

Dr. A. Allan Martin is the teaching pastor for the Young Generation Church young adult ministry of the Arlington Adventist Church in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas.
After the Bread, What?

By Debbonnaire Kovacs, posted July 29, 2015

From John 6:24-35:

"The next day, when the people who remained after the feeding of the five thousand saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”

I've done it. Have you? I've been in some great need or depression or heaviness of spirit, and God has done a miracle to bring me out of it.

I've praised his name and told my friends about it.

Then I've thought, “Cool! I'll never be in great need or depressed or heavy in spirit again!”

And when the next rift arrives, one of two things happens: I forget all about the miracle, (like the disciples on the sea when the storm came and they thought they were going to die, with the Calmer of Storms and Feeder of Multitudes in the boat with them)…

…or…

I blithely expect the next miracle. I define the Great Creator as the Calmer of [My] Storms and Feeder of Multitudes [Me, to be precise], and I chase him down and say, “Hey! Where’s my bread?”

It's embarrassing. Sometimes...I really hate to say this!…

Sometimes I act as if the Most High is…

…my servant.

That’s the truth, God forgive me!

I must read and reread and take to heart the rest of the story:

[Jesus said]: “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”

And I must humbly ask, “What must we do to perform the works of God?”
And when Jesus answer[s me], “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent,” I must not sass back, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you?”

What?? “What work is he performing?!"

He’s bringing us life and light and salvation, that’s what. He’s asking us to share the loaves and fishes that he gave us to begin with. He’s asking us to keep our minds higher than our navels, and when we ask, “Sir, give us this bread always,” to be thinking not of what we want/need/must have this moment, but of eternal life. And his eternal promise:

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”
Adventism and the Arts: Blue Mountain Academy Opera

By Debbonnaire Kovacs, posted July 29, 2015

About half the students, faculty, and staff at Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, as well as some community volunteers, were involved in the academy’s recent production of an operatic drama called “The Exodus Story.” Director of music Lawrence Galera told AToday that the full number was probably over 100, counting cast, staff, orchestra, gymnasts, soloists, stage, lighting, and sound crews, as well as those who helped to promote the event. And you will get a chance to purchase a DVD (and help the school) by about September; they are working on producing it, and AT will inform you when it is ready.

“This is our second production—the first was Noah and the flood. I saw a lot of separation between the different departments in school, so I wanted us to all collaborate.” Officially, Galera collaborated with the English department, but he also called on gymnasts, musicians, and since the school doesn’t have an art department, they called on any artistic members of the school family for props, posters, etc.

Galera said he has “been in music all my life, growing up in the church.” He always enjoyed music of all kinds, but when he was in seventh grade, his grandmother took him to a theater production, and he was “captivated” by the combination of music with theater. In college he became “very heavy into opera.” He graduated from Andrews University with a Masters degree in instrumental conducting and began a doctoral program in choral conducting at Indiana University in Bloomington. IU, he said is a big opera school, and he gained experience in nearly all parts of production, from on stage to costuming to the orchestra pit.

“I realized I could use something like this to impact people for the Lord’s work, turning Biblical stories into theatrical productions.”

At BMA, Galera directs a vibrant music program which goes on tour every other year, and on the alternate years, puts on their own full opera. For those productions, “I write all lyrics and some of the pieces. Then I take some prominent music from the classical world and integrate that in, so kids get some exposure to all kinds of classical composers and their music, from Beethoven to Puccini. It's old music, but they really enjoy it.”

Galera says he has “heard a few views of people being against theater and drama, but no one has criticized it to me personally.” He feels that perhaps it is because he uses more of a traditional conservatory approach. “We get a lot of compliments. People love it.”

The July 2015 Columbia Union Visitor quoted two student actors. Senior Nolan Seidel said he joined choir in his freshman year, at first just for the credit, but that it became a ministry to him. Senior Courtney Doyle, who played Pharaoh’s daughter in the production, said she believed this might touch people whom a “normal church service” would not reach. They also quoted the Pennsylvania Conference Vice President of Education, Jeff Bovee, as saying he was “so proud of the students, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have worked to put together this amazing theatrical production.

Galera himself said he was overwhelmed—“far above and beyond my highest expectations”—with the work of the dedicated and talented community.

What's next? “Whatever the Lord inspires,” Galera said. He doesn’t know what it will be; he doesn’t plan it very far ahead. “Believe it or not, I actually started writing most of the music in December. By January I had four to five numbers, and I kept writing right up to the [May] show. In fact, one week before the performance, we had to scrap a whole piece and reinsert different orchestration because it wasn’t long enough for the narrator in that scene. The
Lord works amazingly, finding the right people for the ministry, putting things into place that make it work…it’s awesome!! After the show I just wanted to do the whole show all over again."

The school is working on producing a DVD of the entire opera. They hope it will be available by the beginning of the school year. Call the Blue Mountain Academy office (484-662-7000) to ask about it, or watch the Facebook page. (At the moment, you can see photos as well as video clips of preparation for the performance.) And AToday will inform you, as well.
Book Review: Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine

Reviewed by Edwin A. Schwisow, July 28, 2015:

I live in a “liberal” state on the "Left Coast," where the separation of Church and State is normally profound and sacrosanct. It is here that I became acquainted with several families who hold founding membership in the Followers of Christ Church, which prohibits its 1,000 or so members from seeking medical treatment other than through prayer and anointing by/with a pastor or religious healer. Several Followers of Christ parishioners I have known personally in those families through the years have died prematurely from preventable conditions, such as high blood pressure/stroke and adult-onset diabetes. A number of their offspring have died from devastating infections that could have been arrested with antibiotics. And it is here, in a small, religious population where the child death rate stood at 26 times that of the general population, that a conscientious prosecutor finally declared “Enough!”

(In acquiring the book, I was fascinated, as well, by the similarities between some practices of deeply conservative Adventists and the Followers of Christ. Members of the Followers of Christ not only practice baptism by immersion, but also communion that includes ritual washing of feet, and they restrict their Bible study to a literal reading of the King James Version. Church authority is highly male-centric and a great deal of stock is placed in repentance and good works as pathways to merit and salvation. Those who are deemed to fall short of essential godliness are shunned.)

That my father was a missionary physician and that I personally know several members of this congregation, a mere 30 miles or so from my home near Sandy, Oregon, prompted my interest in this informative and emotionally wrenching book, written by a physician, primarily about the conflicting religious and legal aspects of faith healing among those who believe seeking conventional medical treatment is a denial of the power of God.

I have personally pled with members of these families to use modern medical science as they would the foodstuffs in a grocery store—if and when they need food in the house, do they not go to a store and buy it? Yes, God has promised to supply all our needs, but he often does so through a grocery store or even a food bank. Is God limited in His power to heal, and must He confine himself to prayer and anointing alone as agencies of His blessing? Can He not also employ the ministry of dedicated Christian health-care workers? I suggested the names of several Adventist nurse practitioners and physicians in the area.

“No,” came the reply. “The Bible clearly tells us that healing for a Christian comes exclusively through prayer and anointing. There is no such literal command in the Bible regarding food. (Apparently the same literal application cannot not be associated with Philippians 4:19, which promises complete sustenance (not just healing), with no preconditions: “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”) Apparently at least some temporal effort must be invested to achieve the blessings of God.

Soon after this conversation, I learned by phone that an observant member of the Followers of Christ I had grown to know and love had suffered a devastating stroke at age 69. Yes, he had developed high blood pressure, and no, he had not sought traditional medical help for that condition. About a month after the stroke, he died an invalid in a nursing facility.

Then came the death of his son-in-law at age 47, from the effects of diabetes, a condition that had gone untreated through conventional means. His devastated widow assured me that in both cases (her father’s and husband’s deaths) everything had been done within the faith-healing tradition to restore them to health, but now the family
(despite the serious economic impact of their loss) was resigned to their deaths (though she herself told me that she was very tempted to seek conventional treatment for her own diabetic condition, in the wake of her husband’s death). She told me, however, that were it to become known that she had sought such treatment, she would be seriously disciplined by fellow members, and she trembled at the prospect of being disfellowshipped.

The author respects those who believe strongly in the power of God to bring healing, but through anecdote and analysis faults extreme belief systems for failing to also factor in the role of competent human assistance, especially in cases of the under-aged.

In fact, the string of deaths among members of the Followers of Christ during the past 30 years has galvanized interest in those, like the Followers, who unflinchingly deny their members any moral grounds for seeking conventional health-care. In their experience, true healing comes exclusively from on High, and this exclusive reliance on divine healing seems to affect other manifestations of 19th-century denominational Protestantism, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, who absolutely deny their members any moral concessions to receive transfusions of blood, even in cases of life-threatening anemia.

According to *Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine*, faith healing has always attracted “bad faith” practitioners who for purposes of controlling others, impose draconian behavioral restrictions. The strength of the US’s laws separating Church and State have paradoxically allowed such personalities to present themselves as benevolent healers and spiritual guides.

Yet the outgrowth of such arbitrary restrictions on members has always seemed to produce social stunting and physical detriment. Today the Followers of Christ have no pastor or leader and have reduced attempts to attract new members in the Portland area. The congregation is apparently (and tragically) dying out at a fairly accelerated pace, in part because of the religious injunction against seeking traditional medical treatment.

That the Followers of Christ hold several unusual beliefs in common with Seventh-day Adventists piqued my early interest. Without the ministry of Ellen G. White and the emphasis on lifestyle improvement and enlightened healing methods, could our denomination have drifted into a Followers of Christ/Christian Science mentality during its early stages? I believe this could have happened quite easily. It was no secret that early medicine in the US was seriously ineffective in healing many illnesses it claimed power to vanquish. A charismatic leader like Ellen White could have righteously spoken out against medical science of her day, then left it at that. But in her case she envisioned enlightened medical practice as a “right arm” of gospel proclamation, and this provided an early balance in the denomination between science and faith, working together for mutually valued goals. Today there seems to have emerged a stronger tension between so-called “liberal” scientific Adventism and traditional “conservative” Adventism that seriously questions the veracity of any scientific information that seems to contradict literally interpreted Bible statements. But by and large, the linking of medical science and gospel proclamation has been a key to the rapid numerical advance of the denomination throughout the world.

But this does not resolve the religious liberty question of what to do in the many cases where the lives of children are used like the handling of poisonous serpents to test the faith of their parents. Should caregivers be prosecuted for failing to invoke the help of conventional health-care in cases of life-threatening illness? The author sympathizes with that view as one of the only ways to help break the powerful hold of charismatic teachers who even in death wield powerful sway over their flocks, compelling them to submit to draconian prohibitions and practices that bring suffering and death untold, in the name of God.

*Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine*

By Paul Offit

Hardcover: 272 pages
Burial Pots

Photo by S M Chen, taken in China, 1980

“The paths of glory lead but to the grave.” (from 'An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' by Thomas Gray, 1750).
Nothing In My Hands, Chapter Eleven

By Del Starr, a pseudonym, all rights reserved.

Our Little Corner of the World

With five children and Kitty Mow, it was a long, arduous trip to Oregon. The family didn’t even stop in the valley but drove directly to their new home. It wasn’t so new but it was new to them and it was theirs! Their household goods would not arrive for a few days, but Dianne and Gary didn’t care. They had slept on the floor before and they would do it again. It was a gay and rowdy bunch that pulled into the driveway. Bowls containing food and water were put out for Kitty Mow to let her know that this was home and the family toured their house and land.

Gone were the days of living surrounded by walls that were always a neutral ivory color. Dianne could now have her yellow kitchen. In the new home there were windows on the corner of the kitchen, large windows on both sides of the L, looking out on the park-like yard. The one thing that Dianne had missed in her travels was the evergreen trees, and now she had one of her own—a large evergreen tree, only a short distance from the window.

The land upon which the house sat had been deeded to the county with the stipulation that it would never become a part of the city. It was also on the water table and mostly unbuildable. This provided Gary and Dianne a country-like setting in the middle of the metropolis of Portland. Opossums, raccoons and china pheasants were a common sight in the yard.

There were fruit trees—pears, apples, plums; there were two nut trees and even a small raspberry patch. There was plenty of room for a large garden and Dianne looked forward to being able to provide healthy, natural, home-grown foods for her family. She loved Oregon partly because it was home and mostly because of its temperate climate and the ability to raise beautiful produce and flowers. She looked forward to the moment she would plant her trademark Tropicana Rose. Once more she was in her own home on her own land.

The children loved the yard where they had trees to climb and bushes in which to hide. Dianne and Gary loved the solidity that the move seemed to give to their family.

The only shadow over Dianne’s life was her uneasy feelings about Gary, but she hoped that this too, would dissipate with the change in their life style. He would begin looking for work as soon as the household goods arrived and they were a bit settled.

The nights on the floor passed quickly and the day arrived when the moving van pulled up outside of their front door. Once more it was an extra Christmas as the children dug through the boxes in search of their favorite toys and Dianne and Gary tried to keep some semblance of order while they put dishes in the cupboards and distributed furniture.

Dianne was excited that the home had a very large book case that extended from floor to ceiling along the stairwell that led to the second level of the home. It was actually two stories high and provided plenty of space for her beloved books. As she lovingly placed the books on the shelves, she made sure that her books which bore the name Ellen G. White as the author were at hand near the top level so that she would be able to easily access them. She very often read herself to sleep in Ellen’s books. She found deep spirituality and what she believed were the answers to many of life’s situations in Ellen’s words. The Bible was so dull and unexciting with its begats, but Ellen added life to the Bible and Dianne knew that she could depend on the words of the prophet of the Seventh-day Adventist church.
They immediately found the local church and on the first Sabbath, loaded up the children and headed for church services. The family was welcomed to the church and made to feel comfortable. Elder Elmer Unterseher was the pastor and he was warm and friendly. The family felt at home and Dianne felt warm and secure. This was her heritage! This was salvation! She believed that only in the Seventh-day Adventist church would she find eternal life for herself and her family.

Gary found a job as a welder several miles away with a company that rented most anything one would desire. They were finally completely settled in and life began its routines. It was September, 1973.

It was a gentle winter that first year. It rained at night and the days were sunny and bright. Gary and Dianne were eager to get started on their first garden and when January arrived, Gary took shovel in hand and cultivated a place where Dianne could plant Chinese pea pods. With great anticipation they watched for the first tiny sprouts to burst from the soil. Dianne was tempted to set up heaters to rush the event but they were finally rewarded with the little sprouts. Gary began to cultivate more territory for the rest of the garden, all by hand with a shovel.

The days began to warm and Dianne began to plant seeds. There were carrots, radishes, beans, beets, corn, squash, melons, and of course, Dianne’s favorite, tomatoes. Soon there were rows of sprouts covering the area. Near the edge of the garden Dianne had planted cherry and pear tomatoes. These would be for the children and would hopefully keep them from tromping on the rest of the garden. And oh yes, there was to be another child. Dianne wanted to get as much done as possible before the new baby arrived in August.

At church, an evangelistic series was held and they attended each and every meeting. Gary had attended church with Dianne and was familiar with the beliefs, for Dianne shared Ellen’s words with him often. She was proud of the fact that Seventh-day Adventists had so much knowledge about upcoming events and how time would end and had specific instructions for how to live as pertaining to the way to dress, eat and conduct themselves. Dianne was a Seventh-day Adventist to the core, but had not rejoined the church since she had received the ill-fated letter while in Germany. At the end of the series both Gary and Dianne pledged their allegiance to the church. They took off their wedding bands and gave them to the pastor, requesting baptism. And so it was that Gary and Dianne became members of the church. Dianne was thrilled to be once more a part of the family of God.

Gary began to bring things home from work: a tool here, a can of paint there. Dianne was a little apprehensive but Gary seemed to suggest that these were things which had been discarded, and she wanted to believe the best. One day, however, he came home from work early, with a pink slip in his hand. Dianne knew that he was a good worker and was dependable. In her heart, she knew the reason for his termination but she never mentioned it to him nor he to her.

They kept their yard in a park-like condition, with the lawn neatly mowed and the 20-foot laurel hedge on one side of the property always clipped. They purchased a swing set and merry-go-round for the children, and Gary made a tire swing and built a sand box. The children carried bits and pieces into the nut trees and Gary helped them to design a tree house; simple, but it served the purpose and the children loved it.

The garden began to produce and meals were abundant with fresh vegetables. Dianne sliced tomatoes onto a large platter. Heaps of tomato slices were eaten daily in nearly their entirety. She purchased canning jars and what was not eaten immediately, she canned. Pickled beets, corn, beans and, of course, tomato sauce, sliced tomatoes, and tomato juice. They had planted ten tomato plants and all had thrived.

Very little watering was necessary, for the moisture underground watered it naturally. That first year they had a banana squash that was six feet long and about twelve inches in diameter. There was plenty of food.

Gary could not find another job and finally turned to some of the local training programs. In August, Kira was born.

Dianne now had her hands full with six children under the age of seven. Janetta was not in school for Ellen White says that children should not enter school until they are at least seven. Janetta’s birthday was in January and so
Dianne kept her home until she was very nearly eight years old.

Kitty Mow had taken the move easily as she had the previous moves and now produced a litter of kittens. Grandma Grace laid claim to one of them which she promptly named Kleine Mow (pronounced Cline and meaning Little Mow).

It really was a happy family. Weekends brought friends and relatives. They played croquet, badminton, and card games. They sat around in the yard and visited or had barbecues. Dianne bought a 30-cup percolator so that there would always be plenty of coffee. Gary was not working but it was a good life anyway.

All too soon it was time for Janetta to begin school. Dianne sewed school clothes for her, as did Grace. Because Ellen said she should not, Janetta would wear no pants to school, only dresses, but she would be beautifully dressed.

Dianne believed that it was the right of every Seventh-day Adventist to have their child in church school. She could not accept that her child might attend public school, where she knew there were many evils. It was a shock to realize that they must pay, and pay dearly, to place Janetta in church school but Dianne was determined. A job driving one of the school buses became available and she grabbed the opportunity. It would pay tuition and even leave some over for other things. When Janetta began school, so did Dianne. Gary was home to care for the other children during Dianne’s absence.

Dianne found that not only did the job provide Janetta’s education but she loved it. She interacted well with the children. She loved them and they loved her. Hers was a very long route and she picked up her first child, a first grader, at 6:25 in the morning.

She shared God’s nature with the children. Every morning they watched the sun come up over the mountains. They watched as housing projects went in and they watched flowers bloom and fade. Dianne had found her niche. It also afforded her time away from home in which she could do her own thinking and planning.

The next year found Brian ready for school also and the job driving school bus would pay his tuition as well as Janetta’s. Dianne made fast friends with the other drivers and with her boss. She was well liked by all.

She was happy except for the cloud of questions that still hovered over her regarding Gary and the fact that he was not working yet. They were back to arguing a lot and Dianne once more suggested that they obtain counseling. Gary consented and the sessions began. When things seemed to be a little easier between them, he again refused to continue with the counseling.

The training program with which Gary was affiliated provided education, so he enrolled at Mt. Hood Community College. Dianne was astounded at some of the books he brought home. One book in particular, bothered her greatly. It was called, “Open Marriage” and Dianne was not comfortable with the things it suggested. Being a reader, she had absorbed, with interest, Gary’s college books. Until now…

A red letter day! Gary found a job! It was with the Multnomah County Parks Department and finally, Dianne mustered up the courage to speak about his dismissal from the previous job. She did not accuse but found ways in which to mention that she felt that honesty was of the highest importance, not only in the home but also at work. Gary took her advice.

His job actually allowed him to use county materials and make things to take home. He built a teeter totter for the children, and when Cindy, the dog they had acquired in Portland, died, he made a headstone for her and she was buried under the big evergreen tree.

Kitty Mow had another batch of kittens. Dianne did not want her to bring the kittens into the house. They were so messy. A box was provided on the back porch, but Kitty Mow was not happy. One night she brought her kittens over the rooftop to bring them in the window in Dianne and Gary’s bedroom. Dianne firmly closed the window to prevent it from happening again.
It was time for Brad to begin school and once more Dianne drove the school bus. The school allowed for the buses to stay at the drivers' homes and this was much to Dianne's liking for she only had one vehicle to warm in the morning and there were no transportation costs to work. She could also stop at the store on her way home to buy groceries, so there were many pleasant byproducts of driving the school bus.

Gary and Dianne kept arguing. He wanted to try some of the things that were mentioned in the book he had brought home from college and though Dianne was reticent, she agreed. She wanted to save not only her marriage but her children's father. As Dianne had feared however, those things did not serve to make her marriage better but rather, made it worse.

Gary and Dianne's bedroom was on the second level of the home. A small V-shaped entry way separated the doors of their room from that of the girls. The entry way overlooked the living room and it was in that entry way that Dianne stood, late one night, when she had awakened. Gary was not in bed and Dianne wondered if there was a problem. As she stood in the entry way she saw Gary on the couch across the living room. Dianne was horrified! Once more she was faced with her husband in the blue dress and the fishnet stockings but added to it were women's undergarments. Silently, Dianne made, her way back, contemplating what she should do now. Gary had been so involved with himself that he did not realize that Dianne had observed him but she realized that it could well have been the children who saw him, rather than herself. She knew now what the cloud was that had hung over her for so many years.

It was Dianne's nature to avoid issues that would provide conflict. This was why she had not mentioned her concern about Gary's honesty when he had been terminated from his job. She did not know how to deal with the latest events but this time she knew that she must face Gary. This was something that jeopardized her children. Dianne would not tolerate it.

Rather than being embarrassed about his wife's observations, Gary seemed to take it all in stride. When Dianne asked about the women's undergarments, he told her that they were hers and made him feel close to her. Dianne did not know where Gary kept those clothes but she determined to learn. She found them in the storage area under the stairwell. This time when she confronted Gary she held up the garments and showed him that she well knew that these were not her undergarments. They would not fit her. Gary still was not embarrassed but Dianne was horrified. Gary expressed that he felt no concern that the children might observe him and Dianne was forced to make some decisions.

She finally contacted one of the elders of the church, whom she felt she could trust, and counseled with him regarding her dilemma. Ellen White said, and the Bible backed her up, that divorce should never be obtained for reasons other than adultery. Whereas in Dianne's first marriage there was no question and she had felt very free to obtain a divorce, now she was not so sure. She only knew that no matter what, she could not raise the children in that atmosphere.

The elder assured her that adultery is not only a physical act but is, rather, a violation of the marital vows and Gary surely fell into this category. With assurances to Dianne that he would never divulge the information he had learned, the elder departed and Dianne was left alone with her thoughts. She did not wish to hurt Gary, but she must obtain a divorce. She did not want others to become aware of his actions for fear that it might drive him away from God and the church forever and so Dianne bore her burden alone except for the elder, with whom she never spoke of it again.

Gary and Dianne were divorced. Dianne was now 31 years old.