

*Come and hear,
all ye that fear
God, and I will
declare what
he hath done for
my soul.*

Psalm 66:16

The THIRTEENTH MEETING

Gene Anderson

J. Philip Williams

Clinton and Cleo Foreman

Blondel E. Senior

Robert L. Sweezey

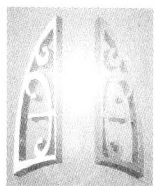
Don F. Gilbert

Jay and Linda Gallimore

Jerry Wernick

Jerry Chi

Don Corkum



TIME WELL SPENT

By Gene Anderson

AS A youth I had thoughts of entering denominational service in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Instead, I chose a business career and built several corporations based around the automotive aftermarket. These corporations became a multimillion-dollar enterprise.

While business was my full-time vocation, I also enjoyed my avocation of working in the local church. I was honored to serve as junior leader, youth leader, finance committee chairman, building committee member, and church elder. I also was elementary school board chairman for 28 years and vice chairman of our academy board.

Although I gave many hours to church work, it was only an avocation. I had long dreamed of dedicating myself full-time to some ministry for the Lord. So when I sold the businesses and retired, I was free to see what God had in store.

At that time I saw a need in the church for a stronger ministry to singles. I decided to invest my time and talents in that area. At first I worried that people might not accept a businessman—rather than a pastor—as leader in a church ministry. However, I quickly found much appreciation for bringing Christian business principles into a ministry.

My time hasn't changed much. I still work more than 60 hours a week traveling, listening, and sitting in executive meetings. I still design master plans, prepare budgets, and plan advertising. However, the end result is different. This time my effort is not in products, but people. My sense of satisfaction and fulfillment is found, not in the financial bottom line of an annual report, but in a flood of intangible and immeasurable rewards.

When I see people in Adventist Singles Ministries begin to heal from their pain, grow in leadership skills, and finally reach out in mission, I share in their initial relief, growing confidence, and joy of accomplishment. Every time I hear of local and regional church administrations expanding their interest in singles, I know I have contributed to my church. Whenever people tell me of experiencing a new connection to God and the church instead of the aching alienation they felt before, I share in their sense of belonging. When I hear of persons baptized or reclaimed for the church because of Adventist Singles Ministries, I feel success.

By faith I can already experience what for me will be the ultimate in fulfillment: when in heaven, someone tells me he or she is there because of Adventist Singles Ministries.

My time and talents were once consumed in a business vocation. Then I made the decision to invest all of that time and talent in my avocation for the Lord. The present rewards are far out of proportion to the sacrifices. The future rewards only God knows.

Everyone who has left houses . . . or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. Matthew 19:29, NIV.

Gene Anderson is North American president of Adventist Singles Ministries in Smyrna, Georgia. He is a member of the Lakeview Seventh-day Adventist Church in Smyrna.



A GROOM'S DILEMMA

By J. Philip Williams

I REALLY wanted to do it right. I'd read two or three etiquette books. I knew exactly what the bridegroom's responsibilities were, and I wanted to do it "by the book." There would have to be a rehearsal dinner, gifts for the groomsmen, a special gift for my bride.

Nice wishes these were, and that's all they'd remain. I had no money.

But I did some calculation. If I delayed paying my seminary tuition bill, skipped the rent one month, gave a bit less in church offerings, and "borrowed" part of the tithe, I could swing it.

No. I couldn't do that. My convictions about personal responsibility with God and others wouldn't permit it. I'd have to find some other way.

What about my mother? Surely she'd empathize with my need and suggest a solution. But a letter home expressing my "necessity" went unanswered.

After days of waiting to hear from family and coming up blank with other solutions, I realized it was going to be just me, my faith in God, and His promises to provide according to His will.

One week before the wedding, after paying tuition, making a deposit on our new apartment, and meeting God's expectations, I discovered, to my surprise, that I had a small surplus. Small indeed, but I was grateful. It would buy me a snack to eat on the bus trip to my wedding.

The night before I was to leave I was returning to campus from a preaching appointment when my ancient car died on a country road during a rainstorm.

"There goes my snack money," I sighed.

Kind occupants of a nearby farmhouse helped me contact friends. These friends got me back to the campus and promised to tow "Nellie-Belle" to the school in my absence. They told me not to postpone my bus trip. I pushed my faith in God's promises to a higher level. God must have something better in store.

After morning devotions the next day, I waited for my ride to the bus station. I reflected on my circumstances. Two months had passed since my struggle began, and heaven was still silent.

The phone rang. Mother was calling long distance, saying she was now

OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

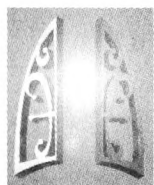
responding to my two-month-old letter. “I didn’t realize it was that big a concern,” she said.

Then there was a knock at the front door. My ride to the bus station? No. A man I didn’t know (and still don’t) stood there, asking for me. He handed me a small box and left.

The box held two things: money in coins totaling a seminarian’s small fortune and a note that read, “Hi, I’m Gabriel. Spend this money on your wedding, or you’ll turn into a toad!”

“Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:31-33, NIV.

J. Philip Williams teaches music and Bible at Jefferson Adventist Academy in Jefferson, Texas. He is a member of the Jefferson Adventist Academy Seventh-day Adventist Church.



HE MAKES THINGS HAPPEN

By Clinton and Cleo Foreman

DURING camp meeting in 1995 we heard that the 35-member Peace River, Alberta, Adventist Church needed to raise \$15,000 to renovate a building to be used for a church school. The people of that community had requested the church to start a school.

As we drove home from the meeting we talked about how much our share should be for their project. We decided on the amount we would like to give and over what length of time. We had no idea where the money to meet our commitment would come from.

Some weeks earlier we had given a quotation on a job that had never materialized and we had forgotten about it. When we arrived home that evening, we found on our fax machine an order for that very job.

Quickly we figured out what the profit would be and subtracted the tithe. To our delight, and amazement, the remaining amount would cover our pledge with \$38 left over.

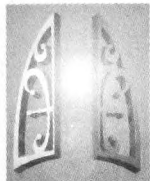
We have found that when we move forward in faith, God makes things happen.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. Luke 6:38.

Clinton and Cleo Foreman are owners of C and C Specialties in Lacombe, Alberta. They are

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members of the College Heights, Alberta, Seventh-day Adventist Church on the campus of Canadian University College.



MONEY IN THE TRASH

By Blondel E. Senior

OUR ministry is Advent Home Youth Services, Inc., a residential treatment program for boys with special learning needs. Working in this self-supporting ministry has taught us lessons of faith and trust in God.

In February 1989 we were planning to relocate our ministry from Florida to its present home in Calhoun, Tennessee. Prior to moving we had to do significant remodeling of the new facility.

Due to a material shortage the remodeling was delayed for several months. One week we anticipated moving, and the next week we were delayed. The packing and unpacking went on for several months and had a significant negative impact on our program. For one thing, our routine fund-raising efforts were disrupted, and our cash flow dried up.

Soon we had spent every penny remodeling the house to meet state licensing guidelines. By June 1989 we were ready to move, but our reserve funds were nonexistent. To keep operating, we reluctantly paid our bills with credit cards, which were reaching their credit limits. We finally moved, and times were hard.

One afternoon my wife, Gloria, and I were in the office sorting through boxes of papers. I had just written \$1,400 worth of checks to pay bills, but I did not have a penny in the bank.

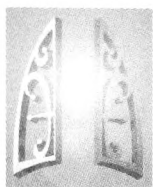
Since our only source of money came from God, we prayed right then that He would provide the money to cover those checks. I took the sealed envelopes to the letterbox and sent them on their way.

My wife went back to her work cleaning out loose papers. As she sorted through one box, throwing some papers away and keeping others, she found a small, unopened envelope. It had been postmarked three weeks earlier. She quickly opened it and found a check for \$1,400.

Over the years we have learned many lessons of faith. One lesson that stands out is this: If we take God at His promise, He is able to answer our prayers before we ask.

Your Father knows what you need before you ask. Matthew 6:8, NIV.

Blondel E. Senior is director of Advent Home Youth Services in Calhoun, Tennessee. He is a member of the Bowman Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church.



FROST IN THE VALLEY AND FRUIT ON THE TREES

By Robert L. Sweezey

MY BOYHOOD years with my parents and siblings on a fruit farm created many lasting impressions of God, His power, and His loving care. We depended on the income from the sale of our crops, and the success of our crops depended on the elements of nature. I was blessed to grow up in a home that knew the God of nature.

In the spring in our mountain valley we were always vulnerable to damaging frost. In those days frost protection was generally not used for the fruit. I remember watching my father peer into the darkness in the direction of the orchard. His pensive gaze was interrupted only by a concerned glance at the falling mercury in the thermometer. On many spring nights I sensed his worry and could almost hear his silent prayer for God's protection.

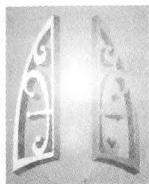
One night in particular remains imprinted on my mind. The fruit buds were at a critical stage, and the mercury was dropping too fast. My father's private, prayerful concern turned to outright anxiety. He gathered the family together, opened the family Bible, and read from Malachi 3:10, 11: "Bring ye 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." The urgency in his voice as he read and prayed made me understand that, in the most direct sense, we were *claiming* that promise.

Later that summer my joyful heart swelled like the plump fruit that weighed heavily on the trees in our family's orchard. I watched the adults prop up branches to keep them from breaking. It wasn't that way elsewhere in our valley. The local fruit packing plant didn't even open that summer. There wasn't enough fruit in the valley to make it a viable operation. So my family had to endure long, hot rides in the truck over the mountain to get our bumper crop to market.

We didn't mind.

**And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.
Matthew 21:22.**

Robert L. Sweezey is president of Adventist Risk Management, Inc., in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is a member of the Baltimore First Seventh-day Adventist Church.



GREEN GIANT AND THE SABBATH

By Don F. Gilbert

FOR several years my wife and I had earned our college tuition by renting a farm and growing cash crops. One of our crops was sweet corn for the Green Giant Canning Company. The company provided the seed and set the date for planting. After harvesting the corn for freezing or canning, Green Giant sent us a check for payment.

One year, as usual, we made our arrangements with Green Giant and planted the corn. It came up in lovely green rows nearly half a mile long. We cultivated it and provided tender care. With plenty of rain from the Lord that summer, we expected a good harvest. We often walked through the field as the corn grew, just to enjoy the tall, lush green stalks and to think about harvest time.

Our contract with Green Giant included our stipulation that the company would never send harvesters to the field on a Sabbath to pick the ripened corn. That year the pickers came on a Friday. We explained to the field superintendent that they must quit picking by 6:30 p.m. regardless of whether they had finished. He brought in extra equipment and said he would do his best.

Sweet corn to be used for canning must be picked during a very narrow window of time. When the moisture content of the kernels reaches precisely the right level it must be picked. A difference of even two days can determine whether the crop is usable or lost.

By our 6:30 evening deadline only about half our crop had been picked. We would lose the rest because the harvesters wouldn't be back in our area for a while. I watched at the gate as the trucks and the last large tractor-mounted picker left our farm. The picker driver throttled down his engine as he left and said, "Gilbert, you're crazy. We have working lights and can work all night to be finished by morning." I said, "No, thank you."

My wife and I experienced that feeling of inner peace and confidence we have when we do what is right, no matter how difficult. That Sabbath was special.

Two weeks later the field man from Green Giant called and said he was in the area of our farm. He saw our remaining corn, and it still looked so green that he again had checked the moisture content. It hadn't changed from the picking date two weeks earlier. Would I agree to his bringing in the equipment and finishing the field? He said that never before had he seen anything like this happen, and he could not understand how the corn had maintained its exact moisture content for such a long time. I quickly thanked him and gave the go-ahead to finish the harvest.

We knew the reason the corn had maintained its perfect harvesting condition. God had answered our prayer. He had rewarded our faithfulness to keep the

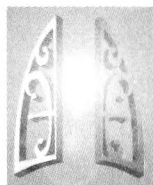
O V E R A N D O V E R A G A I N !

Sabbath. And He had used that faithfulness as a witness to the Green Giant Canning Company of His power and His grace.

Irene and I went back to college with our tuition money in hand and joy in our hearts. God is very good.

If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day . . . ; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 58:13, 14, RSV.

Don F. Gilbert retired in 1995 as the treasurer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. He lives in Gentry, Arkansas, and is a member of the Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church. This story originally appeared in College Faith: 150 Adventist Leaders Share Faith Stories From Their College Days (Pacific Press, 1995).



OUR FIRST AND BEST CHRISTMAS

By Jay and Linda Gallimore

IT WAS a great decision, getting married just before our senior year of college. We had been sweethearts since academy and were ready to make that lifelong commitment. The Lord blessed Jay's summer canvassing, and wedding bells rang in August. We knew that being married our last college year would mean living simply and carefully, but we were ready for the adventure. Jay went to work from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in the bakery at \$2 an hour. At the end of the month we were able just to make ends meet.

Then came Christmas. In all of our budget planning, Christmas just didn't get figured in. We managed the basics for other family gifts and even had a little money left over that we would use to buy each other a small gift.

During this time Linda was doing her student teaching at a local public school. She got acquainted with a 9-year-old girl who came to school without adequate winter clothes and never wore a coat. Even in Tennessee a winter coat is important.

Not wanting to embarrass anyone, Linda asked the classroom teacher about the situation. The teacher made careful inquiries and found out that the home was very poor; the child didn't have a coat, and the family had no means for getting her one. However, since they were a proud family, the teacher felt they wouldn't accept one if they knew someone was giving them one for charity's sake.

How could we help? What could we do? After some thought we said to each other, "Instead of buying each other a Christmas gift, let's buy a nice coat for this little third grader." We thought the family might accept the coat if it came as a

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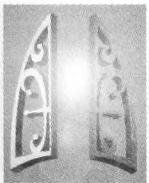
Christmas gift. We had a lot of fun picking out a coat, more fun wrapping it, and excitement in having it delivered anonymously.

So for our first Christmas we had no gifts for each other under the tree. But our hearts were wonderfully warmed when “our” little third grader came to school thrilled and cozy in her new coat.

While we didn’t do anything heroic and there really wasn’t any self-sacrifice to speak of, the Lord gave us an opportunity to share in addition to our tithes and offerings. Even though it was a little thing, its memory has brought us a great deal of pleasure—more pleasure than all the gifts we’ve given to each other since.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Matthew 7:11.

Jay and Linda Gallimore live in Lansing, Michigan, where Jay is president of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Linda is a certified public accountant. They are members of the Lansing Seventh-day Adventist Church.



BROKEN DISHES ARE BEAUTIFUL

By Jerry Wernick

IN 1980 my wife, Linda, and I moved to 35 acres of wilderness property overlooking Glacier Park in Montana. We wanted to build a country home where we could raise our family in a pristine natural setting.

We were just beginning to savor the quiet serenity when some friends asked if we would consider teaching their children in our forest environment. We had taught for a number of years in church schools, but a private school—in our home—was another idea altogether. Did we really want seven teenagers tracking dirt on our carpets, breaking our dishes, and poking big holes in our peace?

We decided, reluctantly, to give the idea a try. Word spread about our wilderness-based school program, and soon our home was filled with enthusiastic young people. They brought joy and laughter as well as much work. Sure enough, the carpets began to wear, and dishes and ax handles started breaking with alarming frequency.

In September 1988, the very day another school year was to begin, a forest fire broke out just five miles west of our property. Fierce winds whipped the flames into a rushing firestorm. Within a few hours a half-mile-wide wall of fire was approaching our property. We offered earnest prayer for protection, set sprinklers around the buildings, and prepared to evacuate.

As the inferno crested the top of the hill above our home, we thought back

to our decision to open our doors to teenagers. How thankful we were that our greatest treasure was wrapped up in the lives of young people, beyond the reach of the devourer.

In spite of strong prevailing winds, the crown fire stopped at our hill while racing directly down our south property line and jumping the river into Glacier Park. We were eventually surrounded on three sides by flames, and we fought a ground fire on our place for 10 days. None of our buildings or mature trees were harmed.

With renewed assurance of God's leading, we began school two weeks late that year. Many more young people have enjoyed the lure of the wilderness since then. The work and study, camping and rafting, amidst the majesty of God's handiwork has increased their faith and deepened their commitment to their Creator.

Yes, we're still replacing dishes at our house, but our hearts are full.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. Luke 6:38, NKJV.

Jerry Wernick lives in Polebridge, Montana. He is a member of the North Glacier, Montana, Seventh-day Adventist Church company.



A THANKFUL STEWARD

By Jerry Chi

MY OWN learning experience as a student in higher education has been full of challenges and struggles in faith. When I decided to attend an Adventist college, my father severely punished me and terminated all financial support. So I had to work 40 hours a week on and off campus and spend every summer as a literature evangelist in order to finance my tuition.

In my first year of college I had the opportunity to take the national university entrance exam and was blessed to pass it. I regarded this privilege to attend university as an honor and thought I could learn more in a public institution. However, after one semester, I had to quit my program because I had a chemistry lab during the entire Sabbath. The professor would not tolerate any absence. Even at the time I felt that it probably was God's will to turn me around. So I returned to our Adventist college and devoted myself to becoming a minister.

Two years later the government ordered me to fulfill the military-service requirement for two years. Because of my uncompromising attitude about keeping the Sabbath, I was sent to military prison during the first two months. After repeated torture and persecution I was released and given a concession that allowed me to keep the Sabbath for the rest of my military life under probation, with limited vacation.

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After that two-year nightmare I went back to college to work on my unfinished theology degree. One day a church leader encouraged me to take a business major in order to help improve our church administrative system. I regarded his suggestion as God's calling again. I believed that switching to business would help me to achieve my goal to make a significant contribution to our church.

After studying for five years and teaching for three years in our Adventist college in Taiwan, I went to Andrews University and completed M.B.A. and Ph.D. degrees by 1995.

As I was completing my dissertation I prayed that God would allow me another opportunity to explore more from a state university so that I could serve our schools better. I was amazed at how quickly God answered my prayer. He provided me with several full scholarships, including free tuition, regular salary, and grants that sufficiently supported the pursuit of my second Ph.D.

Away from the Adventist education environment, I found it easier to envision the needs and necessary reforms in Adventist schools. Again I had to live out my convictions as a Sabbathkeeper when I knew my student colleagues used the day for intensive study in the library.

In the beginning of 1996 I received offers of teaching jobs from three state universities, including the one where I was finishing my second Ph.D. But I decided to dedicate myself to Adventist education. Very soon I found a position at Southwestern Adventist University.

Now I regularly remind myself that I am just the steward of the opportunities God has given me for His service. I have nothing to be proud of about myself and every reason to be thankful for His great blessings. This is my testimony.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. Psalm 115:1, NIV.

Jerry Chi is assistant professor of business administration at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. He is a member of the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church. This story originally appeared in More College Faith (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Worthy Books, 1997).



A BETTER BROKER

By Don Corkum

DURING the summer of 1997 my father decided he could no longer live on his own. My brother and I and our wives took on the task of selling all the contents of his home.

We lived a considerable distance from the property, so we arranged with a broker to conduct an estate sale. We decided not to do the sale ourselves, since

we never had been involved with such a project and had little time to learn how. The company agreed to do the advertising and to conduct the sale.

Just a few days before the sale we arrived in the area to get the house ready. To our dismay, we learned that the broker had made no arrangements. In fact, due to a death in his family, he still was not available. We had placed the project in God's hands, so we couldn't understand this turn of events. We felt a stewardship responsibility to our father to do the best for his sale. He needed the money at this time in his life.

After several attempts, we finally made connections with the broker. Perhaps embarrassed that he had let us down, he offered to buy the contents of the home himself and take it all off our hands. But we wondered if perhaps he was taking advantage of us. His offer was considerably lower than what we hoped to realize from a regular sale. Our father and each one involved in the project had sought to be faithful in their stewardship with God. We decided to place the project before God again. Before we prayed, each of us had a different idea about what to do. But after praying, we were unified in the conviction that we should conduct the sale ourselves. We put a classified ad in the paper, even though it would get in only on the day of the sale.

We contacted the sale broker again and told him of our decision. He said he would come over free of charge and help to do pricing. We wondered whether we should trust him. However, we asked him to come. He spent a couple of hours helping us; and when we offered to pay him, he said, "All I ask is for you to pray for me." He could see by our literature that we were Christians. We had a prayer and a lovely visit, and we shared literature with him. We later sent a gift of appreciation.

Several people had told us that Saturday would be the best day for a sale. Of course, we shared how Sabbath is our special day of rest. We advertised the sale for Friday and Sunday. One hour before our advertised sale time on Friday, people were knocking at the door. The stream of people continued for about eight hours. We couldn't stop even to eat.

The guidance we had received in organizing the sale was invaluable to us. We sold virtually everything in the house, which had been home to the family for more than 50 years. We made considerably more than the broker had originally suggested we could expect from the sale. We then could see God's hand in leading us to do the sale ourselves and making the arrangements Himself.

We could do no other thing but to praise God for providing for the needs of our family as He has promised. What a great God we serve!

My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19, NKJV.

Don Corkum is president of the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Madison, Wisconsin. He is a member of the Madison East Seventh-day Adventist Church.