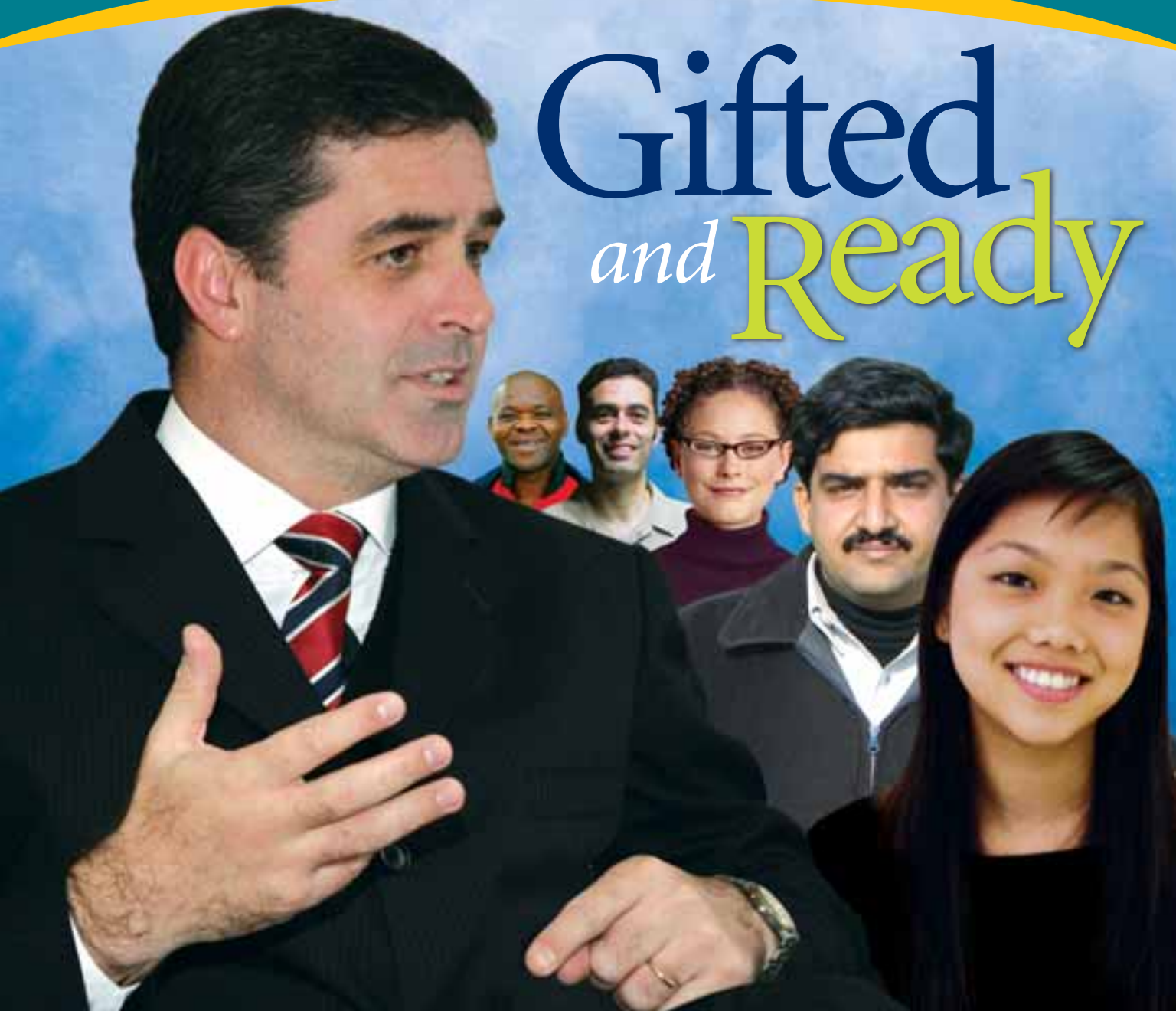


June 2007

ADVENTIST WORLD



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ABOUT THE COVER: New South American Division president Erton Köhler represents a new generation of Adventists moving into leadership.



From the EDITOR'S PEN

No Age Limit

“Let no one despise your youth” (1 Tim. 4:12), Paul wrote to his young colleague in A.D. 57, suggesting that it somehow lay in Timothy’s power to shape how other—and older—believers might relate to him. The apostle was certainly consistent: his overarching vision declared that neither membership nor leadership in the church of Jesus is dependent on any human category—race, gender, ethnicity, social status, or age.

Lest church members make the typical human assumption that increasing age inevitably brings superior wisdom or skill, Paul specifically ruled out age as a category by which to evaluate a believer’s fitness for leadership. In Christ, as he famously declared to the Galatians, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). It is giftedness, not age, for which the church ought to test when seeking for leaders. According to Paul, Jesus sees the members of His church through the gifts He has given them—“some ... apostles, some

prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:11)—and not through frequently divisive human categories.

Today’s global Adventist Church is increasingly a young church, filled with millions of children, youth, and young adults whom God has called to be a part of His remnant people. In many divisions of the church, significant majorities of those in the Adventist family are under age 35. In other places, the average age is lower still.

The biblical teaching on spiritual gifts requires us to believe—and live by—the understanding that all of these members who have truly accepted Jesus into their lives have been equipped by Him for service to His church and for their world. This includes the challenging truth that Jesus, in His wisdom, may have given gifts of leadership to those whose chronological age and experience might not traditionally seem to warrant important positions of service.

Let the church test to confirm that its youth and young adults have truly been gifted by the Spirit to lead in these last days. And when they demonstrate that they can “be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12), let’s make certain that we follow and support them.

—BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

ENGLAND: Adventists Join BBC Commemoration of Slave Abolition

■ The London-based Adventist Vocal Ensemble on March 25 joined a special British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) program commemorating the bicentennial of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act passed by the British Parliament in 1807. The group also performed in a commemorative service in Westminster Abbey, led by Queen Elizabeth II, along with Britain Prime Minister Tony Blair, religious leaders, and descendants of slaves among the 2,000-strong congregation.

Members of the ensemble are all

descendants of those who survived the transatlantic slave trafficking. They shared their story through music and testimony on peak-time BBC programming with a viewing audience of more than 4 million.

The passing of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act effectively brought to an end the barbaric transatlantic trade between England, West Africa, and the Americas.

“I am grateful that many were

willing to take a stand in the face of much opposition to ensure the end of this inhuman trade,” said Ken Burton, who leads both the Vocal Ensemble as well as the London Adventist Chorale, which also participated in the celebration. “People from all



PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS: The London-based Adventist Vocal Ensemble.

COURTESY OF BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE

WORLD REPORT

walks of life, both Black and White, men and women, dedicated their lives to seeing the end of the evil horrors experienced not only by Africans but even by many of the Europeans who worked the ships who were often tortured and beaten.”

The hymn *Amazing Grace*, written by former slave ship captain and abolitionist John Newton, was sung in churches and other special services across the United Kingdom to celebrate the bicentennial.

MALAYSIA: Penang Hospital Celebrates International Women's Day

■ Penang Adventist Hospital celebrated International Women's Day on March 25, 2007, by jointly organizing an event with the Women's Centre for Change in a local mall.



Left: AM I HEALTHY? Penang Adventist Hospital staff conducted health screenings. **Right: OVERFLOW CROWD:** Some 800 people participated in the activities held in a local mall and organized in part by Penang Adventist Hospital. The event commemorated International Women's Day.

COURTESY OF PENANG ADVENTIST HOSPITAL

About 800 people, accompanied by 20 musicians, took part in a community “Walk Against Violence” to raise awareness of an increase in burglaries, rapes, and other violent crimes in the community. Participants carried colorful placards and banners with messages of safety and nonviolence.

After the walk games, quizzes, a sushi-rolling competition, health screenings, and health talks were held in the mall. Several local city officials also participated in the program. —*Penang Adventist Hospital Community Health/AR.*

NEWS COMMENTARY

The Downside of Blogs

BY GARY KRAUSE, *director, Office of Adventist Mission, World Church Headquarters*

A recent survey of British teenagers shows that 47 percent are involved in “blogging”—posting diaries on the Internet. On these Web sites, or blogs (short for Web logs), they comment on every conceivable topic, and even a few inconceivable ones.

Of course blogging isn't just for teenagers. Millions of people of all ages from all parts of the world now use the Web as their personal pulpit. Most blogs allow readers to post their responses, thus creating online conversations that anyone can join. It's estimated some 60 million blogs currently exist, and this number is expected to increase to 100 million blogs by the end of 2007, when, according to international research firm Gartner, the number will level off.

A rapidly increasing number of Seventh-day Adventists are joining the bloggers—sharing their thoughts with a potential audience of millions, but a real audience that may be only a dozen or so family members and friends. A few seconds of searching reveals Adventists blogging on topics such as homiletics, gender justice, evolution, legalism in the Adventist Church, Adventist television, Christian filmmaking, Adventist mission, the Sabbath school Bible study guides, the war in Iraq, marriage, and politics.

Blogs can be fun, instructive, and constructive. But there can be downsides. They can take a lot of time. They can substitute talk for action. What should remain private often becomes public. And in the heat of the moment, and with a single keystroke, bloggers can post something they soon regret—but after the world has had an opportunity to read it.

For Adventists, there's potentially a bigger downside. Could blogs be yet another distraction from genuine one-on-one friendship? Perhaps another reason to step back from the kind of personal interaction with neighbors that has always been the cornerstone of Christian community and outreach?

Let's hope not.

WORLD REPORT

Spring Meeting 2007

Church leaders highlight evangelism, finances, and member retention

By SANDRA BLACKMER,
Adventist World news editor

Almost 100 General Conference Executive Committee members from the Adventist Church's 13 divisions converged on the church's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, April 10 and 11, to assess mission, vote policies, and discuss other matters of church business.

Tell the World

Spring Meeting 2007 took off on a high spiritual note, beginning with a two-hour presentation on the world church's evangelistic initiative Tell the World, whose primary mission is to provide a way for every person in the world to hear the gospel message within the next five years. GC vice presidents Michael L. Ryan, Lowell C. Cooper, and Mark A. Finley led the multimedia event.

Describing the Adventist Church as being "not a bureaucratic institution involved in administrative trivia but [an organization] focused on mission—its evangelistic mission," Finley reminded attendees of the church's continual growth since its beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.

About 3,500 members worshipped in a few dozen churches in North America in 1863, and today the Adventist Church comprises more than 14 million church members worldwide, Finley reported. He also presented world ratios ranging from one Adventist to every 373,143 people in the world in 1863, to one for every 1,268 in 1980, to one for every 430 in 2006.

Finley added that it took the church 107 years, from 1848-1955, to grow to 1 million members; 14.7 years, 1955-1970, to reach the 2 million mark; and 3.3 years, 1983-1986, to hit 5 million. Since 1986, the church has grown by a million members every 12 to 18 months, he said.

"Tell the World is making an impact today of huge proportions for Christ and the kingdom of God," Finley said.

Division Reports

Leaders from several of the church's world divisions gave reports and multimedia presentations depicting Tell the World initiatives in their regions.

Euro-Asia Division president Artur A. Stele reported that almost 12,000 satellite sites received the satellite downlinks from Kiev during a recent evangelistic series, resulting in 3,068 people baptized. He added that a new church Internet site had some 4 million hits in just two months.

Paul S. Ratsara, president of Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID), said his division is targeting Johannesburg, South Africa—with a population of about 3.2 million—for evangelism. The church leaders' focus is training lay members to become soul winners. "The people are on fire for God," Ratsara said.

Following Ratsara's presentation, Finley added that in one SID pastoral district, 273 members scattered in a few small churches were empowered for evangelism through prayer and training. They began holding evangelistic meetings, and 3,000 people were baptized by the end of the first series. Two and a half years later, the district membership has grown to 21,000.

In the Trans-European Division, which comprises regions as diverse as Iceland, Egypt, Denmark, Iraq, and the United Kingdom, president Bertil A. Wiklander shared the division's goals of planting 350 new churches, developing 1,500 small groups, and conducting 3,000 public evangelistic meetings, with one of every 10 conducted by youth.

"Public evangelism can still work in Europe," Wiklander said, "but it is not the only method we use." He then described "innovative community outreach" organized mainly by youth and young adults using small-group evangelism and church-planting initiatives.

Wiklander added that 120 people in war-torn Darfur in western Sudan were recently baptized.

GC Initiative Updates

GC department directors reported on new world initiatives and advancements in technology.

Benjamin D. Schoun, president of Adventist World



THE PRESIDENT: Jan Paulsen, president of the Adventist World Church, says having in our hearts a love for people will help retain members.

SANDRA BLACKMER

WORLD REPORT

Radio (AWR) and coordinator of the Tell the World initiative for media, informed Executive Committee members that AWR is adding new languages to its programs in Africa and Asia. The broadcasting organization has also presented the AWR Signal Award to North West and North East Nigeria conferences in recognition of their progressive outreach to Muslims living in their regions, using AWR as the primary outreach tool.

The GC Communication Department now has a podcast of news that averages 350 hits a day, Schoun said. And Adventist News Network has about 6,000 regular subscribers and an additional 7,000 hits a day from nonsubscribers.

The worldwide publishing work is alive and well. Schoun noted that literature evangelists have sold more than 12 million copies of books and magazines, and church members have distributed 14 million missionary books and given away free 5 million copies of church magazines during the past year.

The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean and the Euro-Africa divisions have opened two new media centers in their regions to assist in the Hope Channel television outreach. Hope Channel is opening a new channel for Romanian broadcasts, and also is working toward opening another channel for China by August 2007.

"This is a major development," Schoun said.

GC Women's Ministries director Heather-Dawn Small affirmed that women worldwide are committed to

improving the quality of life for women and sharing the love of Jesus by focusing on issues such as literacy, abuse, poverty, and women's workloads.

"Women's Ministries believes we need to touch people in their area of greatest need," Small said.

Closing the Back Door

Executive Committee members on Tuesday of the session voted to adopt an appeal from the GC Council on Evangelism and Witness to church leaders and members to curb membership loss.

Presented by GC vice presidents Lowell C. Cooper and Mark A. Finley, the Council's two-and-a-half-page statement indicated that although more than 5 million people were baptized into the Adventist Church from 2000 to 2005, nearly 1.4 million members walked out the back door and left the church.

During the last quinquennium some divisions began a review of active membership, Cooper said, resulting in higher-than-usual membership loss ratios.

"Current indications are that annual membership losses for reasons other than death equal approximately 28 percent of membership accessions," and this "is not limited to new members," the statement read.

The document cited research suggesting social and relational factors play a much larger role in a person's dissatisfaction with the church rather than disagreement with church doctrine.

The statement suggests new members will most likely remain in the church if they are able to articulate their beliefs, form friendships within the congregation, and engage in ministry. To accomplish this, local church boards should, among other things, review membership care strategies, study membership accession and loss patterns, repeat Bible instruction, develop friendships and small groups with new members, and encourage new members to become involved in church outreach and other activities.

Executive Committee members who spoke to this issue were unanimous in their support of the appeal; however, some questioned how greater attention to member retention can be made part of the culture at the local church level. Suggestions by some participants included establishing an accountability process for local leaders, board members aggressively focusing on designing a discipling-oriented church, and cultivating a spirit of true love and concern for others.

"We have to have in our heart a love for people,"

PHOTOS BY SANDRA BLACKMER



Left: WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY? GC undertreasurer Steven G. Rose (left) and treasurer Robert E. Lemon report that both tithe and mission giving have increased.

Right: WORLD INITIATIVES: Heather-Dawn Small, director of GC Women's Ministries, told attendees that "we need to touch people in their area of greatest need."

WORLD REPORT

Paulsen said. “More than anything else ... this will help us to retain our members.”

Tithe Giving and Offerings Climb

“I never cease to marvel that God, with all the angels at His command, has chosen us, sinful human beings, to tell the world of His love for us and of the plan of redemption,” GC treasurer Robert E. Lemon said in his opening remarks of the treasury report.

Lemon then announced worldwide tithe was up 10 percent in 2006, and NAD tithe up by 3 percent, compared to the previous year. This was in spite of only 52 Sabbaths last year compared to 53 in 2005. The 2006 total tithe came in at more than US\$1.6 billion; total tithe in 2005 was almost \$1.5 billion.

The amount designated for the GC World Budget in 2006 was \$83.7 million, up 5.7 percent from 2005, Lemon said.

Mission Giving—A Shift in Trend

Mission offerings are also on the increase, a turnaround from the declining mission giving during the past half century, Lemon noted.

“Local offerings from divisions other than North America increased from 23 percent of tithe in 1950 to 36 percent in 2005,” Lemon said. “Mission offerings during that same period, however, declined from 36 percent of tithe to less than 4 percent.”

Lemon reported that the years 2002 to 2006 showed a world mission giving increase of 33 percent—from \$24.1 million to \$32.3 million—in divisions other than North America. In the North American Division (NAD), the increase in 2005 was more than 4 percent, and about 6 percent in 2006, twice the percentage increase in tithe.

“A shift in trend is clear,” Lemon said.

Lemon then emphasized a need to direct a larger portion of the World Budget—currently less than 7 percent of total tithes and offerings—toward entering regions of the world where there are few Adventists, especially the 10/40 window territories.

Nominating Committee Report

The Executive Committee elected three people recommended by the Nominating Committee to serve in GC positions:

- Juan R. Prestol, NAD treasurer for nine years, was elected as General Conference undertreasurer, succeeding Steven G. Rose, who has accepted a call to serve as vice president of Financial Administration for Walla Walla College.



Top: NETWORKING: Spring Meeting attendees take time to talk with one another between meetings. **Left:** MEMBER RETENTION: Pacific Union College president Richard C. Osborn shares his views following an appeal to church leaders and members to curb membership loss.

Middle: NEW GC UNDERTREASURER: Juan R. Prestol

Right: NEW DIRECTOR OF GC AUDITING SERVICES: Paul H. Douglas

PHOTOS BY SANDRA BLACKMER

- Paul H. Douglas, an associate director of GC Auditing Service (GCAS) who was based in the Inter-American Division in Miami, was elected director of the GCAS. He succeeds Eric A. Korff, who retired after 14 years as director.
- Lucas da Silva, a staff auditor for GCAS, was elected to fill the role of associate director of the department, based in the South American Division.

World church president Jan Paulsen also announced that Lisa Beardsley, associate director of the GC Education Department, was appointed chief editor of *Dialogue*, a magazine for Adventist students studying at secular schools.

Change of Venue

Annual Council 2007, originally scheduled to be held this fall in Kiev, Ukraine, is changing locations to the World Church headquarters. Citing “insurmountable logistical challenges” as the reason for the change, Paulsen announced the plan is to convene Annual Council 2008 outside of North America. He added that the new venue is yet to be determined, but the city of choice “will probably be somewhere in Asia.”

For fuller coverage, go to www.adventistreview.org/article.php?id=1099.

WORLD VISTA

For the past four decades the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been engaged in conversations with other Christian groups. After careful consideration the General Conference has decided to expand this witness to include conversations with representatives of other world religions. This is a development that, I believe, pastors and members around the world will find interesting—and that some may think is long overdue! Let me share with you the thinking that lies behind all conversations into which we enter: what leads us to get involved, and what we hope to accomplish by them.

All our conversations with whatever groups are driven by mission. We are no longer a small church: our official count of members is now about 15 million, with those who identify themselves with us in some way probably 25 million to 30 million. In some parts of the world Adventists occupy major positions in government and society, with Adventists a significant percentage of society having an ever-increasing impact. So we find a variety of people in leadership roles—religious or otherwise—who want to know more about us. Who are we? What are our values? Where do we stand on particular issues?

We owe it to the Lord and the mission He has entrusted to us to let the world know who we are. The apostle Peter told the believers in the early Christian church: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV), and so must we. Some people have very distorted ideas about Adventists. Some confuse us with other groups. Because of our global range and our outreach, we are vulnerable to caricatures that arise either from ignorance or dislike of the positions we hold. We have to deal with these realities, and that is best done in a

Telling *the* Who Who

By JAN PAULSEN

conversational, nonconfrontational setting in which serious study is given to remove misunderstandings and accompanying prejudices.

We also can learn much from these thoughtful conversations with others. Because of our mission, we encounter a large variety of religious groups. We need to ensure that we have understood them correctly, so that we do not distort or caricature their beliefs and values. The Lord of the mission calls us to be absolutely fair and honest in all our dealings.

In her day Ellen White entered into cooperative relationships with other Christian groups in particular areas. She was one of the foremost Christian leaders in the United States in the cause of temperance, often speaking to large audiences against the evils of the liquor traffic. By doing so, Ellen White helped tell the world of her day who Adventists are and what we stand for.

In entering into conversations with others, Adventists seek primarily to understand and to be understood. We do not seek union of any sort—we have not joined the ecumenical movement and will not. Our mission is one that cannot be diluted or restricted by ecumenical alliances. During the course of a conversation we may explore areas of possible joint endeavor, such as religious liberty concerns, and in this we are following the path trod by Ellen White.



Jan Paulsen is president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

World We Are



Currently the church is involved in conversations with the World Evangelical Alliance, the Salvation Army, and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Representatives of the respective groups—who are almost all theologians—meet for several days each year or every other year to consider and discuss scholarly papers on agreed-upon topics. Our approach in all these papers is to be transparently open, arguing our positions from the Bible, forthrightly but graciously, holding nothing back, and letting our message bear witness to its credentials. We have observed time and time again sharp changes in attitude as those from “the other side” understand better who we are and what we really believe.

As we continue to grow, the demand for increased exposure will become only greater. Quite apart from the conversations currently in progress, other Christian bodies have expressed a desire to talk with us. At the level of government, more leaders of various nations want to know more about us. And as our mission takes us to “every nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev. 14:6, 7), we find ourselves interfacing with the non-Christian religions of the world. As with many of the Christian bodies, these groups know little about us, or hold mistaken ideas of stereotypes that can hamper our mission as we work among them. And we, again, owe it to them to gain an

accurate understanding of their beliefs and values.

With the increasing need of conversations with other groups, the General Conference has sought to give this area of witness an even sharper focus. We have asked William G. Johnsson, who recently retired as editor of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*, to come back to help in this endeavor. Working on a part-time basis, he is assisting in the discussions with other Christian bodies, and will spearhead initiatives for conversations with the non-Christian religions. With the latter, the initial concern will be to engage representatives of Islam in conversation. That is a challenging but much needed dimension of our mission. Pastor Johnsson has been involved in the conversations of the past 20 years with other Christians, and having served in India for 15 years, has a broad knowledge of world religions.

We will keep the world church informed of progress in all these conversations, as we have done in the past. And I ask you to pray that all who are chosen to represent the church in these important discussions will be given wisdom from above and the Spirit of Jesus as they seek to share the message we love in clarity and kindness. 🌱



WINDOW

Into Sudan

By HANS OLSON



to work in Sudan. During the civil strife of the 1960s the church lost track of all members. By 1969 the then Middle East Division declared Sudan an unentered country. In 1973 Adventist Church work was officially reopened.

Today Global Mission pioneers and other lay evangelists are an active part of the Adventist Church's outreach in Sudan. The country has only nine pastors for the more than 13,000 church members.

In 1979 the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) began work in Sudan with a primary health-care program. Since then, ADRA has broadened its scope to include food security, emergency relief, water resource development, and sanitation and community development.

To learn more about the Adventist Church's work in Sudan, visit www.AdventistMission.org. Read inspirational stories from Sudan in the online quarterly Mission magazines or browse a missionary blog by Darrel and Kristina Muehlhauser from the South Sudan Field.

Known in Bible times as Cush, Sudan is the largest nation in Africa. Two civil wars and the recent regional violence in the west-central region of Darfur have decimated the infrastructure of Sudan during the past half century. Since the country gained independence in 1956 Sudan has experienced fewer than 10 years of peace.

By some estimates more than six million people have been displaced within or outside Sudan since the second Sudanese civil war broke out in the early 1980s. In 2004 widespread violence broke out in Darfur, which has reportedly displaced some 2.5 million people within Sudan. According to some estimates another 180,000 people have been killed. Peacekeeping forces are working to establish peace within Sudan, but refugees continue to spill into neighboring countries, which is further destabilizing the region.

Sudan lies just south of Egypt and north of Kenya and Uganda along the Red Sea. In a sense Sudan marks the line between the Middle East and Africa. The north is mainly Islamic Arabs and the south is predominantly animist and Christian Africans. The Blue and White Niles join in the capital city of Khartoum, to form the famous River Nile, which flows north through Egypt and into the Mediterranean Sea. Today more than 40 million people live in this country, which is just a little more than a quarter of the size of the United States. About 140 ethnic groups

and nearly as many languages divide much of the country.

The country is rich in natural resources such as petroleum, natural gas, metals, and minerals. In 1999 Sudan began exporting crude oil. Thanks in part to oil revenues, last year Sudan posted a 10 percent economic growth rate. Yet nearly 80 percent of the country depends on the tenuous agricultural industry for its livelihood. Civil unrest, adverse weather, and weak world agricultural prices have kept most of the society below the poverty line. Only a quarter of Sudanese are literate.

Farris Basta Bishai, an Egyptian pastor, and his family moved to Khartoum in 1953. Their first two converts went to Middle East College in Beirut, Lebanon, before returning

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build permanent dormitories at Eyiera Adventist Vocational Academy in southern Sudan, if the offering is large enough.



SUDAN	
Capital	Khartoum
Languages	Arabic (official), 117 other tribal languages
Religion	Sunni Muslim 70% (in north), Christian 5% (mostly in the south and Khartoum), indigenous beliefs 25%
Population	40.2 million
Adventist membership	13,000
Adventist to population ratio	1:3,081



Dental Issues

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

There seems to be some controversy about adding fluoride to the water supplies. What is your opinion on the matter?

We are not dentists, so our answers probably should be taken with a pinch of caution. When fluoride is added to city water supplies, it is done in a quantity calculated to one part per million parts of water. This is not a heavy concentration, as many natural springs gush water with much higher concentrations.

The fluoride is deposited, along with calcium and phosphorus, in bone and teeth. If heavy concentrations of fluoride are consumed, bone appears denser on X-rays; although this apparent density does not translate to stronger bones. In teeth, however, resistance to cavities builds with higher fluoride concentrations. Where fluoride has been added to municipal water supplies, dental decay has been shown to decrease in the population—and particularly in the teeth of children.

Large dosages of fluoride—and by that we mean many multiples more than that added to water supplies—may be associated with discoloration of the teeth. Very large doses can cause abnormal bone formation, and other effects.

There are always people who make more of a matter than what should be made. We need to be aware of the harmful effects of high quantities of fluoride, but not alarmed.

Our opinion is that fluoridation, to a concentration of one part per million, is probably a smart thing to do.

My granddaughter's teeth (the front ones) have rotted down to the gums. I have never seen anything so bad. Do you think she has faulty teeth?

Not likely! One of us used to practice as a pediatrician, and knows this condition well. Her rotting teeth are a result of the child having a constant supply of sweetened drinks or milk. Additionally, such children often go to bed with a bottle or sippy cup, so the teeth are bathed day and night in sweet liquids. Bacteria love this environment and quickly rot the teeth.

Fortunately, new teeth will come in for small children. However, it is likely that a “sweet tooth,” or craving for sweets, will have been created. Sugar has a very harmful effect on teeth.

While talking about dental cavities, we should mention dried fruits such as dates and raisins that may stick to teeth and promote decay.

In fact, after eating food, children and adults do well to brush

their teeth to remove food particles that promote decay.

Oral hygiene requires we brush our teeth daily and after eating. This is another good reason not to eat between meals. The use of dental floss to clean between teeth also helps. While one is brushing one's teeth, remember to brush the tongue and remove food matter that may coat the back of the tongue and cause bad breath (halitosis). Use a soft toothbrush, and brush from gum down the teeth, rather than scrubbing across the teeth.

I have a tooth that is very sensitive to temperature change. My dentist did an X-ray and said I need a root canal. I'm rather afraid, and want to know what you advise.

A root canal treatment today is virtually painless. Now, we realize that doesn't mean there is not a lot of pain in the condition that calls for the root canal to be done!

Often an infection around the apex of the tooth is causing severe pain. A root canal treatment permits the drainage of the infection, the killing of the nerve supplying the tooth, and then—once the infection has been controlled—a filling of the root canal.

Although many general dentists perform root canal treatments, special cases should be referred to an endodontist, a dentist who specializes in root canals. A clean, uninfected root canal is, on some occasions, treated at a single sitting, but be prepared for a second or third visit.

We suggest that you follow your dentist's advice—he or she knows much more about this than we do!



Allan R. Handysides, M.B., Ch.B., FRCPC, FRCS, FACOG, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.



Peter N. Landless, M.B., B.Ch., M.Med., F.C.P.(SA), F.A.C.C., is ICPA executive director and associate director of Health Ministries.

Grace and

What my family taught me about God

M

Two words have been playing on my mind these past months: “grace” and “mercy.” And all the questions I have asked about them come down to one main question: How do I live so that my life demonstrates grace and mercy?

I have heard many an eloquent sermon preached on these two words, and many times I’ve told myself that there was no way I could show that kind of grace and mercy to others in my life. I still can’t claim to have mastered these godly traits, but I’m getting there with God’s help.

When my son, Jerard, was about 11 years old, he did something wrong. I can’t recall now what it was, but it was one of those times when mothers say to children: “Wait until your father comes home. He’ll deal with this one.” And so we waited.

What My Husband Taught Me

When my husband, Joe, arrived home, I told him of his son’s bad behavior and said, “This one’s all yours. I’ve had enough for one day.” But in saying that I did not quite relinquish my hold on the problem,



Heather-Dawn Small is the director of Women’s Ministries at the General Conference in Silver Spring, MD.

for I also wanted to know how Joe would handle it. What punishment would he use? He told me not to worry; he was handling it.

I remember he took Jerard into his bedroom while I remained in ours. I did not wait long, for after about three minutes or so he returned to the room.

I was confused. Punishment did not happen that quickly! He usually talked first, then punished after.

“Are you finished already?” I inquired incredulously.

“Yes,” he said.

“What did you do? That was very short,” I said.

“I did as you requested. I dealt with it,” he replied in his usual calm manner.

By now I was really concerned. What had he done to my baby? So I asked again. “Honey, what did you do?”

“I dealt with it,” he said again.

My anxiety level rising, I said in a raised voice, “I know, but *how* did you deal with it? What *did* you do exactly? *Give me details.*”

“I spoke to the boy about what he had done. He confessed his wrong. I asked him what punishment he thought he deserved. I agreed with what he said. And then I told him that even though he deserved severe punishment, I was not going to punish him.”

“What!” I said. “Not punish him! Why on earth not?”

“I decided to teach him a lesson about God’s grace and mercy. He knew he deserved to be punished. As a matter of fact the punishment he suggested was greater than what I would have done. But instead I told him that I would give him grace and mercy. The same grace and mercy that God gives us each day when we sin. I thought it was the ideal time to teach him this lesson. And now, he’s thinking about what I said. We’ll talk again later.”

I knew that what Joe had done was right. He could not have chosen a better time to teach our son this lesson. Yet as I think back on that day and what my husband did, I wonder: *Do I do the same to others?*

When we come to God and repent, He gives us two things: grace and mercy. There are many definitions for these two words, but here are the two that I like the best. Mercy does not give us what we deserve. Grace gives us what we do not deserve.

Mercy Beyond Words

Ephesians 2:4-9 tells us that God is rich in mercy because He loves us so much! Even when we were dead in our sins, He raised us up so that He could show us grace. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (verses 8, 9).

So what can we learn about

By HEATHER-DAWN SMALL

ercy



I discovered that God's mercy is not an emotion but an action. It's not a feeling, it's something you do.

mercy? First of all, *Mercy is the foundation of forgiveness.* The two are inseparable. In order to forgive someone we must also have mercy. “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (verses 4, 5).

Then I discovered that *God's mercy is not an emotion but an action.* It's not a feeling; it's something you do. Ephesians 2:6 says that God “raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” This is not just words; this is action. When God extends mercy, He does something. And what God extends to us, He expects that we will extend to others.

Then There's Grace

Grace, I've discovered, brings with it a number of other gifts. I call them “grace gifts.” Ephesians 2 tells us that some of these grace gifts are *salvation, inheritance, forgiveness, and adoption.*

Let me share with you one of my favorite passages of Scripture and some grace gifts I found in it. The passage is 1 Peter 1:3-5. In verse 3 God shares the gifts of mercy, hope, and salvation. Then in verse 4 He gives us the gift of an incorruptible inheritance. And finally, in verse 5, He gives us the gift of His power to keep us in spite of life's many trials.

Two gifts—grace and mercy. Without them we'd be most miser-

able. How good God is to give us these gifts when we don't deserve them, can't earn them, but yet can't live victoriously without them!

She Chose Joy

Remember the definitions I shared earlier? *Mercy does not give us what we deserve. Grace gives us what we do not deserve.*

The challenge we have is to give to others these gifts of grace and mercy that God has given to us so freely. Our colleagues at work, our neighbors, family members, the driver who cut us off on the road ... not easy, is it? I know, but it's doable with God's help.

Paul reminds us that people should not see us, but Christ working through us. This means that our challenge is not to show God's grace and mercy to others, but to *live so close to God that He can extend His grace and mercy through us to others.*

Remember the story of the little maid in 2 Kings 5? Naaman had forcibly taken her from her family. It

was a violent act, one against her will. She'd left behind everything she'd known and loved and was now living in a country not her own. The food was different, the people dressed in strange ways, and the language was new to her. She'd lost her freedom but not her power of choice.

She had two choices: *joy or anger.* She chose joy. She chose to serve her new master with love and compassion. She chose to reflect in her life the attributes of the God she served. She chose to extend to Naaman God's grace and mercy.

So how about you and me? Each day we have choices to make. We can choose to give grace and mercy, or we can choose to hold on to our anger and pain. There's only one way we can show grace and mercy to those who wrong us—and that's by allowing God to live in and through us.

I thank God for His grace and mercy, for without it I would never make it to the kingdom. What about you? 🍀

Something happened while on the way to the airport that changed my life.

I was returning to my ESL teaching role in Japan after a visit back home in Australia. The person driving me to the airport stopped at a set of traffic lights. As I sat in the backseat of the car, I noticed some people on the side of the road. Their clothes looked dirty and torn. They appeared poor and homeless. From across the road I saw a woman holding a baby. Our eyes met, but I quickly looked away and continued my conversation with the driver. A few seconds later I looked to the side, and there was the woman and her baby right by my window. The woman held the baby up against the window. She asked for money, and gestured that it was to feed the baby. I couldn't see the mother's face clearly, but I saw the baby's. He looked poor and sad, and his eyes told me he needed love.

Many thoughts ran through my mind. The driver quickly locked all four doors and said, "She is using the baby." My heart wanted to help her, but my immediate reaction was *No, I don't want to give this woman money. I'm not sure where this money will go. It could be for drugs or alcohol.* Another thought came to mind, *But what if she is really in need?* I quickly put those thoughts behind me and ignored the woman and her baby. I looked straight ahead to the driver as we talked about the problems of poverty in the world. It seemed that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The woman and her baby disappeared from my window. I felt relieved that she was gone; but then another thought came to mind: *Whatever you do to any of these, you*

have done unto Me. They were Jesus' words.

Then I remembered that in my bag next to me were some dried apricots that I carried with me as a travel snack. I could have given this woman these dried apricots, and the baby would have eaten something for breakfast. If I were willing to give, I would have thought of it.

Jesus visited me in that woman. But I rejected her. I ignored her. And in ignoring and rejecting someone in need, I had rejected and ignored Jesus. I will never forget how bad I felt that day. All I could think about was that baby looking back at me through that car window. I cried as I prayed with all my heart for that mother and her baby. That day in the airplane, I prayed that God would give me another chance; that He would visit me again.

25 Days Later

While waiting at Hamamatsu station for my Japanese Brazilian friend Thaty to pick me up, a man came up to me and asked in Portuguese: "Are you Brazilian?" He looked clean, although he was in desperate need of a shave, and his teeth looked gray and rotten. I answered him. And then he began asking me for money. He said he wanted to have a shower at a place that charged 500 yen. He was also asking me for money to buy food. My first immediate reaction was *No, I don't want to give him money. I'm not sure where this money will go. It could be for drugs or alcohol.* Then my mind took me back to the baby's face in the window.

I also had my travel snack with me, so I gave them

The Return Visit

By CARINA GONCALVES

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me"
(Matt. 25:45, NIV).

to him. As we talked I found out that he had been living there at Hamamatsu station for two months now, and he was looking for a job. I told him I was a missionary and an English teacher for a Christian church. He then asked me if I had a Bible I could give him. I was shocked to hear this question. But my first immediate reaction was “No.” I had my Portuguese Bible with me, but I didn’t want to give it to him. It was my only Portuguese Bible, and I had bought it the last time I was with the Brazilian church. It was special and dear to me.

I offered to buy him some food to eat. I was a little scared, but I put my fears behind me because I knew God was with me. The man took me to a bakery. He walked into the bakery and was just about to pick up a bread bun with his hands when I stopped him and showed him the tray and the tongs. (At a bakery in Japan, the bread buns are arranged on the display shelves. The customer selects their purchase and places it on the tray before presenting it at the register.) He got one bread bun, looked at me, and said, “Thank you.” I then said, “It’s OK; you can get more.” He got another one, two, three, four, five, six, and seven! After I bought him the bread I gave him the change, about 300 yen—enough for a shower. He asked me for more money so he could clean himself up. I said, “OK, I’ll give it to you.” I told him I would pray for him. He said, “Thank you. Will you pray for me now?” I was shocked to hear this from him. And at this point I thought to myself, *OK, Carina, now it’s time to stop being selfish*

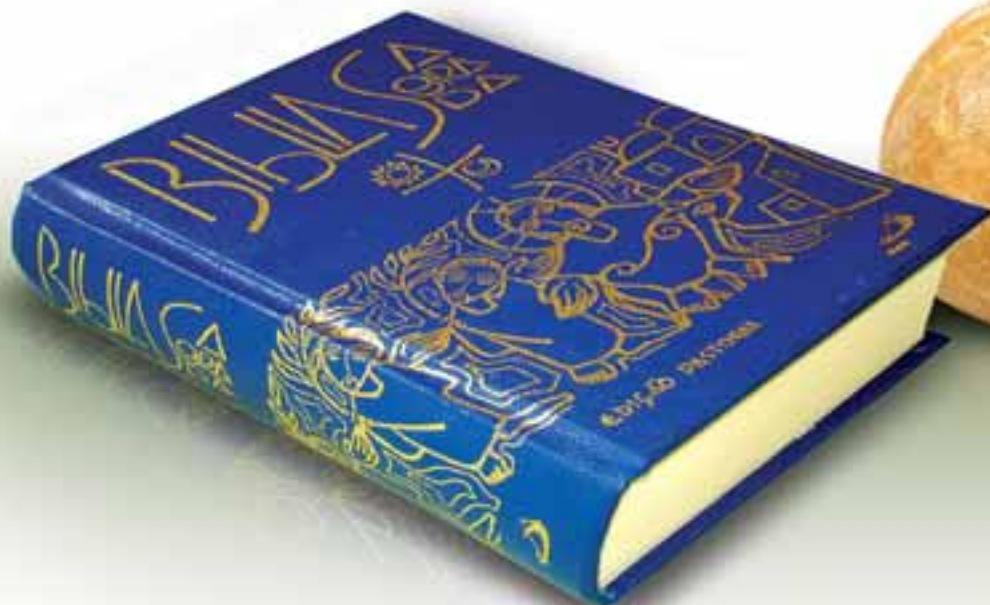
and give him your Bible. He needs it more than you do.

I reached down into my bag and took out my Portuguese Bible. I handed it to him, and he thanked me. As I handed him the Bible, he asked me, “I have heard that God can change people’s lives. Can He change my life?” I was so surprised to hear this that I didn’t answer him right away. He said it again. “I have heard that God can change people’s lives. Can He change my life?” He continued, saying, “I have been through a lot, and I am tired of this life.” I assured him that God can change his life. All he needs to do is ask. We ask God by praying to him. And God talks to us as we read the Bible. Again he asked me to pray with Him. So right there in front of the bakery at Hamamatsu station we prayed. I prayed, and then he prayed for the first time. He thanked God and asked God to change his life.

After our prayer Leo looked at me in the eyes for the first time, smiled as he shook my hand, and said, “Thank you, thank you, thank you, and thank you very much.”

That day Jesus visited me again. But this time I did not ignore or reject Him. God gave me another opportunity to share His love with someone in need, and this time I did not let the opportunity pass. 🌿

Carina Goncalves served at the Adventist English Language School in Yokohama, Japan, from May 2003 until August 2004.



Gifted and Read

He's one of the youngest leaders the church has chosen in decades, and his story is inspiring millions of young Adventists around the world.

In October 2006, the Executive Committee of the South American Division voted to recommend 38-year-old Erton Köhler as the new president of this large, dynamic region of the world Seventh-day Adventist Church. Subsequently elected by the General Conference Executive Committee, Köhler assumed his new responsibilities on

January 1, 2007. Adventist World editor Bill Knott met with the new president on January 31 at Newbold College to learn about his new role, his challenges, and his vision for youth and young adults in leadership.



ANDREW SANSOM

KNOTT: Church records indicate you are the youngest president of your division ever and the youngest vice president of the General Conference in more than a century. How does the fact that you are much younger than many of your peers affect you?

KÖHLER: I try not to think about it. If I think about the challenges in our division, if I think about the size of our division, and if I think of my position in history, I get very nervous. My approach is that I need to simply pray and to work. When I went to my previous role in the South

American Division to work with youth ministry, I was just 34 years old. Some people said, "This is a big challenge for you. You are a very young man. You need more experience to work in the division." And I told them, "I don't worry; I work. If I think of my age and my challenges, I'll have problems." I'm praying and working and inviting the people to work together.

Did you have any idea before last October that you might be asked to fill this role?

No—I am a young man! I thought the church would elect a person with more experience. It was a surprise to me, and I accepted the position trusting in God, believing He can help me. My father was a pastor, a conference president, and a union conference secretary, so I know the responsibilities that come with leadership. I hadn't worked specifically in administration, but I had worked in youth ministry for about 13 years—in south and northeast Brazil, at the conference, union, and division levels. My confidence was in the election system. The people voted thoughtfully, and they elected me. They had good options to choose among, but if they elected me it was because the church wanted it. That's how I could accept the position with tranquility.

What message does your election send to Adventist youth and young adults in South America and around the world church?

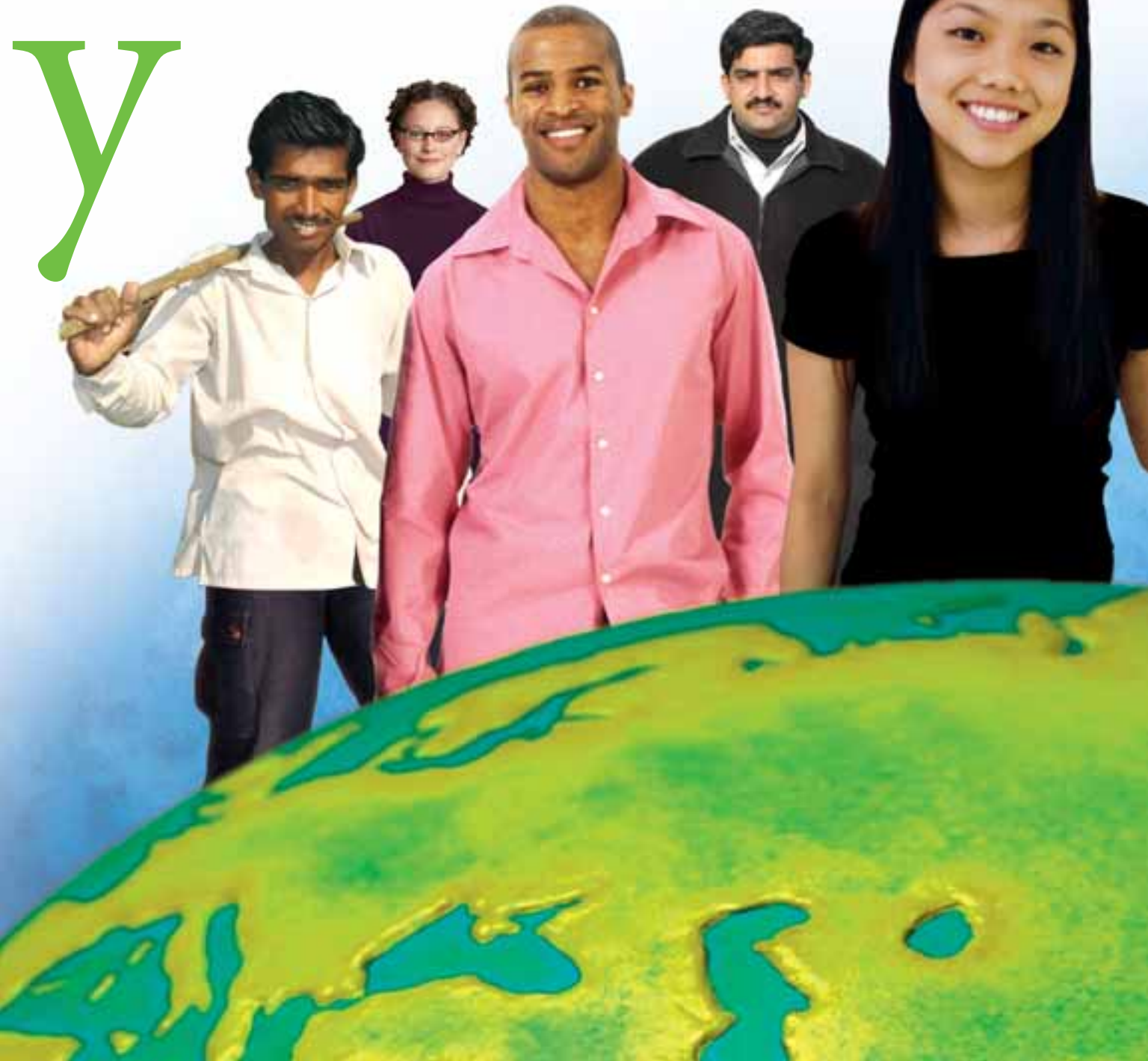
I believe my election is an invitation for the young people of the church. I spoke about this in Brazil recently. If a church elects young people to lead, the church is saying that young people are needed in the church. The church shows it believes in young people, not just in words but in action. For me, it's an opportunity to show young people that we need their involvement at the division level of the church. That's why I'm inviting young people to talk to me, to present ideas, share their opinions. I'm listening to what they are saying.

I can tell that our youth and young adults are very happy because they feel they have an open door in our

division. They can say, "The president is my same age; I can talk with him." They're glad because they have a representative and an open door with leadership. The young leaders in our work are certainly happy, too. It's an opportunity for them to call me, to speak with freedom about things that trouble them or dreams they have for this church.

Sometimes I hear of gifted young adults who are troubled because they think they'll have to wait another 20 years or so before they can use the gifts God has given them to serve the church.

During Bible times, God called many young people to lead. God believes in



young people, but in our modern world we say: “No, today we need a more experienced person.” God can choose young people today. Young people helped to start this church, and I believe young people have a special responsibility to finish the work of the church. And yes, I’m an example of this.

Being young isn’t always perceived as an advantage. How have some of the older and more experienced leaders responded to your new role?

Our division, like many others, has a large number of senior leaders. I can tell that some of them are finding it diffi-

cult to accept me because of my age. But we can work together: we need time to reorganize and collaborate. I understand our more senior leaders and the challenge that this seems to them, and I’m grateful that most of them have accepted me very well.

You weren’t unknown to them, were you? They had seen your skills over many years and found the opportunity to assess your leadership gifts.

Two points here are probably most important. I was already working in the South American Division, so I was



ANDREW SANSON

God believes in
but in our
say: “No, today
experienced

known. I wrote a one-page article each month in our *Revista Adventista*, our *Adventist Review*. The church knew my opinions, my points of view. I’m a younger man, true, but my ideas were well known.

Second, I’ve always been young in the roles I’ve served in. My second pastoral district was in one of the largest churches in Sao Paulo—more than 1,500 members. I was single, the only pastor, and not ordained. The local church at first thought that the conference was crazy for putting me there. I was young, but I had a beautiful time in that church. I moved to the conference department level at 25, to the union conference when I was 28. And at each move some people said, “But the man is young.” Yet the church knew me and had grown confident in my ability to lead. When I went to the division I was young—just 34. Church members need to know the young adults and their points of view in order to be confident in selecting them for new roles.

You have a lot of confidence that when the church makes a decision, it is confirming something God wants to happen.

Yes, I’m very confident

because, in my case, I was able to watch the whole process. We had many good options here. The church could elect other good men, but God directed the whole process. When the election was over, I could see the result was a surprise for everyone, but the majority voted for the name that created the surprise. The people could see I was confident that this was the better option now. This confidence comes from God, I believe.

What would you say now to a 16-year-old who believes that God may be calling him or her to ministry or leadership in the church?

What does your story tell them?

I can tell them that God is calling young people: I'm an example. If they have a calling to serve God and the church, they need to move ahead because both church and God need young people involved. Our church in South America and

young people,
modern world we
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person.”

many other parts of the world is a young church. In South America our statistics show that almost 60 percent—58.89 percent—of the members are under age 35. When you look at our pastoral councils you discover that 80 percent of our pastors are young pastors. We have a young church and a young ministerial workforce. When I travel to different regions of our division I see young people working.

My election and the quantity of young pastors that we have is a calling for other young people. Young people are being called to serve: almost 150 new pastors were called just this last year in Brazil alone, and this happens each year. Where our church is growing rapidly right now, as in Brazil, a key reason is the young pastors. They accept the challenges; they have a big view; and they work very hard for the church.

Tell me about the challenges you are going to face in leading the South American Division. What are the challenges you pray about the most?

I'm just learning the full extent of our administrative situation now. We certainly have a challenge to help the church to grow completely. That's my vision. I don't accept the idea that the church needs to grow in only one direction. I believe the church needs to grow completely—in its education system, in its health system, in churches, among ministers, in all different places. We need to grow with the community, in cooperation with the government where we can, and to grow consistently. This is the model I used

in youth ministry, and it has worked very well for us. That's the first point.

Our biggest challenge—the one I'm speaking and preaching about—is one for each member in South America. My challenge is for each member to be working with at least one other person. We will build a good system, a good structure—telecommunications, TV, radio, Internet, a Bible school, publications—that can help to support what members are doing. But our biggest challenge is to get each member working with at least one other person.


Each year we baptize more than 200,000 people in South America. That's a wonderful number, but if each person (of the 2.6 million members in the SAD) worked with one other person, in one year we would baptize almost three million people. The biggest challenge is to involve each member with the mission of the church.

What do you say to those members, young or old, who don't think they can trust church leadership to do the right thing?

I talk to many people who don't trust or accept the leadership God has put in the church. Each time a person talks with me and criticizes me or the church, I try to say, "My friend, you need to know our work better."

First, I dialogue with those who are concerned. Second, I present my work system. Third, I listen to people. These three points help people find a different view. The majority of critics of the church are people who don't listen. They voice their criticisms, but don't want to listen. I've received many, many e-mails from people critical of the church: I answer every e-mail that I receive. Many people reply, "Thank you, Pastor; I didn't think you would answer. Thank you: I understand the vision now. I had doubts. Thank you for helping me." If I can't help I send them a person who can help them. When these people are helped they get a new vision. They want to speak with leaders. They want to feel loved by their leaders. My work is to stay close to these people. If someone has a problem with the church, come, let's talk about it. I can help, and I can listen.

When you pray, what are the things you are asking God for right now as a leader?

I talk with God every day about one thing: I need wisdom. I have challenges; I have problems; I have many responsibilities, but I need wisdom. During the first quarter our Sabbath school lessons were about Solomon. It's a reminder that I need to pray for wisdom, and to use it correctly. I pray every day, "Father, I need wisdom and I need good conditions to use this wisdom for the church." I can give my best effort, but I need wisdom to lead with balance and justice. I pray for others things, too, for many different things that come up each day, but wisdom is my first request. 

NUMBER 21

Have we Given up on Giving Up?

By INGO SORKE

Two thousand years ago God gave us more than we could ever give back.

My calculator and I were staring at each other.¹ It was my junior year in college, and I had finally received my money from summer camp and a mission project. Since I was preparing for the ministry, I thought I might as well keep the tithe portion (Is there anything new under the sun?). Same bucks, same bucket. Although I didn't have Malachi 3:10 in mind at the time, the still small voice convinced me to tear a check out of my checkbook and fill out one of those little tithe envelopes.

One week later I found a letter from Southwestern Adventist

University in my mail. Faster than I had written the check, I tore into the envelope. *Congratulations, Ingo.*

We are pleased to inform you ... I had been given a scholarship 10 times the size of my tithe check!

The incident prompted me to take a closer look at tithing.

A church once ran the following sign: "We give God a lot of credit, but we hesitate to give Him cash!"

From the start Adam received gifts from God. *God's presence meant God's presents.* First, God gave him food (Gen. 1:29). Then He added a woman to an already breathtaking environment (Gen. 2:22). After Adam and Eve messed up, God did not stop giving. He always stood ready to provide and bless.

But if God's *presence* implies God's *presents*, our *presents*, conversely, invite His *presence*. Cain quickly figured that out when the wrong gift meant a loss of God's presence. With a sense of tragic finality, Genesis 4:16 reads: "Then Cain went out from the

presence of the Lord" (NKJV). Someone said that giving is living and living is giving.

Why 10 Percent?

Because I come from a Lutheran background, 10 percent to me seemed like a huge chunk,² and 10 percent plus offerings turned out to be one of the more significant numbers on my tax return on April 15!³ Is this the church in pursuit of the purse?

The number 10 appears to be the lowest negotiable denominator for God.⁴ "Abraham stopped bargaining with God over sinners in Sodom when he reached the number 10. God came down on Sinai and gave Ten Commandments. And remember Daniel's 10 days of testing?"

Why isn't it 50-50? That would have been a fair deal, don't you think? Or even 60-40. After all, He is God, and it all belongs to Him in the first place.

Graphically, 10 percent doesn't look all that bad. *You give God a*



Born in Germany, **Ingo Sorke** was copastoring the Highland Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Antonio,

Texas, when he wrote this article. It first appeared in *Adventist Review*, October 12, 2000, pp. 22, 23.

piece of His pie, and He just might share His dinner. If you are not currently tithing your income, take a look at the complete picture of Malachi 3. We all have our bills, wills, and ills. But lest we forget, tithing is more than just cash out of our pockets. The issue of tithing is packed into the awesome dynamics of God's presence in our lives.

Malachi 3 resembles a tasty sandwich with a juicy chunk of theology tucked in the middle to chew on. Graphically, we may represent it as follows:

Introduction

3:1-3 Presence of God announced: "I am coming soon"

3:7 Presence of God intensified: "I want to come to you now."

3:8 Presence of God endangered: *thieves in the house of God*

3:9 No presence of God: *curse!*

3:10 Tithing: *curse reversed by blessing from heaven*

3:11, 12 Tithing in place: *Curse reversed; presence of God positively affecting life*

Conclusion

4:1 Presence of God reasserted: "I am coming soon."

The Bigger Picture

"My 5-year-old son was proud of the fact he had graduated from bow ties to a necktie just like Dad's. But one Sunday morning, with his hand clutching the tie, he said in a panicked whisper, 'Dad, why did the pastor say they're going to collect the ties and offering?'"⁵

Tithing presents not just a question of bills and bucks! Tithing directly touches on the bigger picture of the presence of God in our lives and in the lives of others.

Have we given up on giving up?

According to Larry Burkett, more than 37 percent of adults who attend church at least once a month give about 2.5 percent of their income to God's work.⁶ While Adventists may rank a little higher, the question still lingers in the air: Have we given up or are we giving up? "What goes up must come down," the saying goes. Malachi 3 scripturally transforms that truth into a fascinating venture of faith; for in Malachi, what goes up comes down—with a bonus! The acronym is apropos: T-I-T-H-E: *Treasure Invested Toward Heaven Expands!*

Tithing taught me:

- that I needed a systematic money plan.
- that commitment to 10 percent grants clarity for the other 90 percent.
- that my money has a vertical dimension—in both directions.
- that five loaves and two fish can still feed 5,000.⁷
- trust. Not crisis-free trust, but trust that's crisis-proof.

■ that 2,000 years ago God gave me more than I can ever give back to Him.

Richard Braunstein said: "It is possible to give without loving, but it is impossible to love without giving."

Indeed, there are "weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23). But in Jesus' own words, "these you ought to have done, *without leaving the others undone.*" And that "other" refers to tithing. Yes, I have stopped "paying my tithe." I have started giving it up.⁸

¹ Yes, I use a calculator to figure out 10 percent. I was never good at math.

² In my home country of Germany the amount passed on by the government to the state churches is less than 10 percent of one's personal income tax.

³ April 15 is the deadline for income tax returns in the United States.

⁴ Jacques Doukhan, *The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987), p. 18.

⁵ G. Brian Manning, *Kids of the Kingdom* (Sudbury, Ontario)."

⁶ Larry Burkett, Christian Financial Concepts, Inc. Newsletter, April 1998.

⁷ Somehow I have a feeling that God gets a kick out of doing that for us!

⁸ Apologies to Frank Kafka, a European author whose parable "Give up!" depicts a man searching for the railway station. "Give up, give up!" is the only response he gets.

Stewardship

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources.

We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Hag. 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27.)

This article addresses the church's need to trust and empower young men whom God has equipped for many kinds of service. As she made very clear throughout her ministry, the author also deeply believed that God calls women to serve Him in spreading the gospel.—EDITORS.

TRUSTING Young

The church may inquire whether young men can be trusted with the grave responsibilities involved in establishing and superintending a foreign mission. I answer, God designed that they should receive training in our colleges and by association in labor with men of experience, so that they would be prepared for departments of usefulness in this cause. We must manifest confidence in our young men. They should be pioneers in every enterprise involving toil and sacrifice, while the overtaxed servants of Christ should be cherished as counselors, to encourage and bless those who strike the heaviest blows for God. Providence thrust these experienced fathers into trying, responsible positions at an early age, when neither physical nor intellectual powers were fully developed. The magnitude of the trust committed to them aroused their energies, and their active labor in the work aided both mental and physical development.

Young men are wanted. God calls them to missionary fields. Being comparatively free from care and responsibilities, they are more favorably situated to engage in the work than are those who must provide for the training and support of a large family. Furthermore, young men can more readily adapt themselves to new climates and new society, and can better endure inconveniences and hardships. By tact and perseverance, they can reach the people where they are.

Strength comes by exercise. All who put to use the ability which God

has given them, will have increased ability to devote to His service. Those who do nothing in the cause of God, will fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. A man who would lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs, would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers, not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength which he already had; he becomes a spiritual paralytic. It is those who, with love for God and their fellow-men, are striving to help others, that become established, strengthened, settled, in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not by impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire period of life.

How is our light to shine forth to the world unless it be by our consistent Christian life? How is the world to know that we belong to Christ, if we do nothing for Him? Said our Saviour, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." And again: "He that is not with me, is against me." There is no neutral ground between those who work to the utmost of their ability for Christ, and those who work for the adversary of souls. Every one who stands as an idler in the vineyard of the Lord is not merely doing nothing himself, but he is a hindrance to those who are trying to work. Satan finds employment for all who are not earnestly striving to secure their own

salvation and the salvation of others.

The church of Christ may be fitly compared to an army. The life of every soldier is one of toil, hardship, and danger. On every hand are vigilant foes, led on by the prince of the powers of darkness, who never slumbers and never deserts his post. Whenever a Christian is off his guard, this powerful adversary makes a sudden and violent attack. Unless the members of the church are active and vigilant, they will be overcome by his devices.

What if half the soldiers in an army were idling or asleep when ordered to be on duty; the result would be defeat, captivity, or death. Should any escape from the hands of the enemy, would they be thought worthy of a reward? No; they would speedily receive the sentence of death. And is the church of Christ careless or unfaithful, far more important consequences are involved. A sleeping army of Christian soldiers—what could be more terrible! What advance could be made against the world, who are under the control of the prince of darkness? Those who stand back indifferently in the day of battle, as though they had no interest and felt no responsibility as to the issue of the contest, might better change their course or leave the ranks at once.

The Master calls for gospel workers. Who will respond? All who enter the army are not to be generals, captains, sergeants, or even corporals. All

Soldiers

By ELLEN G. WHITE

God's church needs the energy and gifts of all its members.




have not the care and responsibility of leaders. There is hard work of other kinds to be done. Some must dig trenches and build fortifications; some are to stand as sentinels, some to carry messages. While there are but few officers, it requires many soldiers to form the rank and file of the army; yet its success depends upon the fidelity of every soldier. One man's cowardice or treachery may bring disaster upon the entire army.

There is earnest work to be done by us individually if we would fight the good fight of faith. Eternal interests are at stake. We must put on the whole armor of righteousness, we must resist the devil, and we have the sure promise that he will be put to flight. The church is to conduct an aggressive warfare, to make conquests for Christ, to rescue souls from the power of the enemy. God and holy angels are engaged in this warfare. Let us please Him who has called us to be soldiers.

All can do something in the work. None will be pronounced guiltless before God, unless they have worked earnestly and unselfishly for the salvation of souls. The church should teach the youth, both by precept and example, to be workers for Christ. There are many who complain of their doubts, who

lament that they have no assurance of their connection with God. This is often attributable to the fact that they are doing nothing in God's cause. Let them seek earnestly to help and bless others, and their doubts and despondency will disappear.

Many who profess to be followers of Christ, speak and act as though their names were a great honor to the cause of God, while they bear no burdens and win no souls to the truth. Such persons live as though God had no claims upon them. If they continue in this course, they will find at last that they have no claims upon God.

He who has appointed "to every man his work," according to his ability, will never let the faithful performance of duty go unrewarded. Every act of loyalty and faith will be crowned with special tokens of God's favor and approbation. To every worker is committed the promise, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." 

This article was selected from one that first appeared in the July 17, 1883, edition of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*). Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.



No Permission Needed

By
ADRIEL
CHILSON

*The colorful tale of Adventism's
first missionary to Europe*

Adventist Church leaders in Battle Creek were dumbfounded—and overjoyed.

A scant four years after the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863, they held in their hands a letter from Sabbathkeeping Adventists in Tramelan, Switzerland, requesting the services of a minister from America.

How could this have happened? There was no organized work in Europe—no missionaries, no pastors, no literature ministry. Six years before the denomination found the wherewithal to sponsor J. N. Andrews as its first “official” overseas missionary to Europe, God had already planted the truths of Adventism there through the efforts of a Polish-born “unofficial” missionary.

To M. E. Cornell’s tent meetings in Findlay, Ohio [United States], in 1857, came a tall, dignified man of striking appearance. Thirty-nine-year-old Michael B. Czechowski was a well-educated former monk and Catholic priest who had left his ancestral faith seven years earlier.

Czechowski’s investigation of the Bible had begun as a young priest when he determined to believe and preach nothing but truth, a quest that quickly brought him into conflict with Catholic doctrine. Intent on challenging what he had come to believe were the erroneous teachings of his church, he traveled to Rome and sought audience with the pope. When his complaints fell upon deaf ears, he disassociated himself from active ministry and threw himself into revolutionary movements designed to free his homeland. By 1850 he had been released from his priestly vows, and later that year married Marie Delavouet in Brussels.

In 1851 the couple moved to the United States, where Czechowski accepted Baptist teachings. Through Cornell’s ministry in Findlay, Ohio, however, Czechowski embraced the Bible Sabbath and the messages of Revelation 14 and was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist. Shortly there-

after, he traveled to Battle Creek and met with church leaders there. His evident talent and determination soon brought him his first ministerial assignments.

After several years of successful labor among the French Canadians in upstate New York and Vermont, Czechowski and his family moved to New York City to labor among the swelling population of European immigrants. Writing of his work there, he noted: “I have had the privilege of preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the highest Italian dignitaries in this vicinity, who have listened to me with much interest and encouraged me to go to Italy. Still, I feel there is a great responsibility resting upon me in regard to my dear unfortunate Polish nation, and I must do all in my power to enlighten them in regard to Scripture truth; and also other European nations to whom I could have access. It is my purpose to establish myself in the valley of Luserne near Turin, among the French Waldenses.”

Czechowski’s enthusiasm to take to his home continent the truth he had embraced brought criticism from fellow Adventists. Although James and Ellen White expressed their confidence in him and gave him the sizable sum of \$100 for his intended mission, few others followed their lead. Disappointed in his church, yet determined to carry forward the mission he believed God had given him, he turned to friends in the Advent Christian Church, who promised token support. Accompanied by his family and Annie Butler (sister of future General Conference president G. I. Butler) as his secretary, Czechowski sailed for Europe in May 1864.

Almost immediately upon arriving at Torre Pellice in the Waldensian valley of Piedmont (northern Italy), Czechowski rented a hall for evangelistic purposes and with undaunted zeal devoted himself to proclaiming the Third Angel’s Message.

Czechowski’s charismatic personality brought him both



translators and numerous invitations to address large Waldensian congregations. Success attended his efforts, and he established the first Sabbathkeeping company in Torre Pellice.

The tireless evangelist soon extended his outreach to other cities—Turin, Milan, Bergamo, Venice, and Bresseis, winning converts in each place despite mockery and much persecution from the local clergy. His converts included Catherine Revel and Jean Geymet, the first baptized Seventh-day Adventists in Europe.

Civil war in Italy prompted Czechowski's decision to transfer his labors to Switzerland. A party consisting of his immediate family, his brother, Annie Butler, and Jean Guymet left Torre Pellice in September 1865, traveling to Mt. Cenis in the Italian Alps by rail coach. There, lack of funds forced them to complete their journey over the Alps on foot.

Scarcely allowing time to get settled, Czechowski again plunged into public evangelism. Despite intense opposition, he soon baptized three converts in Lake Neuchatel.

Czechowski's next four years of labor in Switzerland produced numerous Sabbathkeeping companies, the largest of which was Tramelan. With the financial backing of his friend Count Cuicciardini, he secured his own printing press on which he printed thousands of pamphlets and a weekly paper, *L'Evangile Eternel* ("The Everlasting Gospel").

Owing to the fact that he had been financially supported by individual First-day Adventists (though not by their denomination) Czechowski didn't inform his converts of the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or its Battle Creek headquarters. Quite by accident, Albert Vuilleumier, Tramelan church leader, found a copy of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* in Czechowski's room, and immediately addressed a letter of inquiry to Battle Creek. Church leaders were amazed and thrilled to learn of Sabbathkeepers in Switzerland.

A series of staggering setbacks reminiscent of the first chapter of Job soon befell Czechowski. Unlike the ancient man of God, however, the missionary didn't respond with deep trust and patience.

In March 1867, the house he rented in Tramelan burned to the ground, destroying nearly all his possessions. He then had a large house built to serve as his home, chapel, and printing office, but the venture, mortgaged to the hilt, proved far beyond his financial capability. The Advent Mission Board in America had cut off all support, and when he could not redeem the notes payable December 31, his empire simply collapsed.

Frustrated and discouraged, Czechowski foolishly abandoned both his converts in Switzerland and his family, leaving both groups to fend for themselves....

Czechowski's last few years are shrouded in mystery.

Records indicate that during his wanderings he helped to establish an Adventist congregation in Pitești around the family of Toma Aslan. Only isolated references to him, most of them negative, appear in correspondence from the Tramelan believers. He died in Vienna, Austria, in 1876, only a few hundred miles from the place of his birth, closing one of the most remarkable life circles in the history of early Seventh-day Adventism.


Michael Czechowski's story illustrates that God must always use flawed human beings to accomplish even His grandest designs. The very qualities that ultimately caused his rupture with his Swiss converts were nonetheless still used by God to take the message to other regions.

Ten years before the Seventh-day Adventist Church rallied itself to send J. N. Andrews to Switzerland, this singular missionary was already sowing the truths of Adventism across Italy and Central Europe, a grace that Andrews and others later gratefully acknowledged.

Czechowski's diligent efforts in Torre Pellice led young Catherine Revel to become the first Seventh-day Adventist in Europe, and in turn her faithful witness led to a large Adventist church. Catherine's grandson, Alfred Vaucher, went on to teach Bible at Seminaire Adventiste in Collongesous-Saleve, France. From Torre Pellice also came Jean Geymet, Czechowski's coworker and Adventist pastor.

From his labors in Switzerland came the Vuilleumier family among whom was Albert, an evangelist and elder of the Tramelan church, and Ademar, early leader in the church's publishing work. From Tramelan also came James Erzberger, leader of Adventist work in Germany; the Roth family with 12 children, most of whom became church workers; and S. D. Harnhardt and his son, Jean-David, both ordained evangelists. Jean Vuilleumier, son of Albert, gave 50 years of service to the church.

With his deep experience in European culture and sensitivity to Roman Catholicism, Czechowski accomplished what no American-born missionary could have done in planting Adventism on the continent.

It is yet another testimony to the goodness of God that He could use the cautiousness of church leaders and an admittedly flawed messenger to plant His truth in the middle of Europe. From that less-than-perfect beginning, and through the efforts of one very determined man, His Spirit has raised up "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" who will one day rejoice in the presence of the Lamb. 



Adriel Chilson (1919-2005) served for more than 50 years as a pastor and evangelist. This article is adapted from one that first appeared in the *Adventist Review* in May 1998.

The word “Apocrypha” is Greek for “hidden things.” No one knows for certain why some Jewish books were designated by that title. Perhaps they were originally thought to contain a kind of secret knowledge, available only to a particular group. The books of the Apocrypha were produced between the third century B.C. and the first century A.D. The list of books or materials generally included in the Apocrypha are: 1, 2 Esdras; 1, 2 Maccabees; Tobit; Judith; additions to Esther and Daniel; Prayer of Manasseh, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah; Psalm 151; Sirach (Ecclesiasticus); and the Wisdom of Solomon. Most of those books were incorporated into the Old Testament canon of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

1. *The Apocrypha and the Greek Version of the Old Testament:* It is usually argued that the Apocrypha was originally included in the Greek version of the Old Testament, and from there it came into the Christian Bible. But that is far from certain. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), began in the first half of the third century B.C. At that time it was almost certainly a translation of only the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch or Torah). Little is known about the process that led to the translation of the rest of the Old Testament into Greek, particularly to the translation or incorporation of the books we call the Apocrypha. We do not know the exact books included in the Septuagint during the time of the apostles. Neither do we know whether there ever was an official list of apocryphal books. We do know that Jews never considered those books to be part of the Hebrew canon. But we also know the Jews esteemed them and read them. Manuscripts or fragments of some of the books have been found among the Dead Sea scrolls.

2. *The Apocrypha and the Christian Church:* It used to be believed that Christians took as their Bible the larger Jewish Alexandrian canon that included the Apocrypha. That idea has been totally discredited. In the early centuries of the Christian era there was some debate among Christians concerning those books. The most-well-known case is that of Jerome (A.D. 345-420). He decided to translate the Old Testament into Latin using the Septuagint,


which then already included most of the apocryphal books. But he decided to base his translation on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Although he included the Apocrypha in his translation, he made it clear that those books should not be considered part of the inspired canon and should not be used to establish Christian beliefs. His canon was the short Hebrew canon. Nevertheless, he considered the Apocrypha worth reading.

Augustine argued that a Latin translation of the Bible should be based on the Septuagint so as to contribute to the unity of the church in both the east, where Greek was used, and in the west, where Latin was used. He argued for regarding the Apocrypha as inspired, and his views prevailed. The Latin Bible (the Vulgate) became the official Bible of the Christian church.

3. *The Apocrypha and the Reformation:* The Reformers revisited the questions of the Apocrypha. In his translation of the Bible into German, Martin Luther included the apocryphal books, but, like Jerome, did not consider them equal in authority to the Scripture, and established they should not be used to define Christian doctrine. Reformed tradition totally excluded the Apocrypha from the canon, accepting instead the shorter Hebrew canon.

One of the reasons for the rejection of the Apocrypha was that the books supported some erroneous views, contrary to those promoted by the church as Christian dogmas. For instance, they support the idea that human works

contribute to salvation (Tob. 4:7-11), that saints can intercede for others (2 Macc. 15:13-14), and that atonement can be made on behalf of the sins of the dead (2 Macc. 12:39-45).

Today many Bible versions and translations include the apocryphal books. Although not considered inspired by God, they contain information that contributes to a better understanding of the development of Jewish thought during the period between the Old and New Testaments and provide useful cultural, historical, and religious backgrounds for the study of the New Testament. 

What About the Apocrypha?



QUESTION:
I notice some Bibles include a number of books called the Apocrypha. Why is that?

By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

Angel Manuel Rodríguez is director of the Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Research Institute.

The Power of the Word

BIBLE STUDY



By MARK A. FINLEY

Have you ever wondered why God's Word is so powerful in changing lives? For centuries the hopeless, the desperate, the enslaved, the discouraged have discovered new strength from reading God's Word. Why? In today's lesson we shall discover some answers.

1. What is so different about the Bible from other uplifting literature?

Circle your answer in the passage below.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

The Greek word translated "inspiration" in the Bible literally means "God-breathed." When God created the human race in the beginning, He breathed His life into our first parents. When we read the Bible, God breathes the life of the Spirit into us, and we become spiritually alive again.

2. List the five qualities of Scripture mentioned in the text below.

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

3. What part does the Bible play in the process of being born again? Fill in the blanks.

"Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23).

We are born again through the _____.

As we read God's Word, the Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus. When we discover Christ's love in the Word, we are changed forever.



4. What did Jesus counsel us regarding His Word? Write your answer on the line below.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

Jesus counseled His followers to _____.

To live by God’s Word means to allow its principles to guide the decisions that shape our lives every day.

5. God uses two symbols to describe what His Word does on the lives that it touches. List both symbols.

“Is not My word like a fire?” says the Lord, ‘and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’” (Jer. 23:29).

a. _____

b. _____

Why do you think the Bible uses these symbols?

6. What do we find by reading God’s Word? Circle the answers found in these passages from Psalm 119.

“Your word has given me life” (verse 50).

“Your word is a lamp to my feet” (verse 105).

“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (verse 130).

“Remember [Your] word ... upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in affliction” (verses 49, 50).

“Revive me according to Your word” (verse 25).

7. What is the purpose of all Scripture? Write the answer on the line below.

“You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

The purpose of Scripture is to reveal _____.

God’s Word revives our souls. It gives newness to our spiritual life. It provides guidance in our decision-making process. It comforts us in affliction. It strengthens us in our weakness. God’s Word reveals Jesus, who to know is life eternal.



Next month’s lesson is about prayer.

Look for **“Prayer is Vital,”**
in the next issue of *Adventist World*.

LETTERS

Women in Leadership

I am writing in reference to Jan Paulsen's interview in *World Vista* on "Women and Ministry" (*Adventist World*, April 2007). Ellen White writes this: "It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God" (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 96, 97).

B.P.

Georgia, United States

This letter is a response to the interview with Jan Paulsen on pages 8 and 9 of the April 2006 *Adventist World*.

I was delighted to read the affirmation for women in ministry coming from our world president. I hope it serves to raise awareness, distill prejudice and false conceptions, and facilitate more women serving their church in whatever role God has called them.

I was dedicated to the Lord as an infant (not as "just the thing to do" but solemnly dedicated) and have felt God's calling in my life since the age of 5. Seriously. My ministry began as a 5-year-old singing for the congregation. At 12 and 13 I gave Bible studies to my public school classmates during study hall. I would have gone as a student missionary at 14 if anyone would have allowed me to. At 18 I was a camp counselor, at 19 a colporteur, at 20 a pastor's wife. I have served my church for 49 years (I'm

54, but I began at the age of 5, remember).

I have been a Sabbath school teacher/superintendent, children's ministry coordinator, prayer coordinator, personal ministries coordinator, spiritual counselor and coach, minister of worship, field school of evangelism team coordinator, president of various Shepherdess organizations, and Discover Bible School secretary. My husband and I have conducted evangelistic meetings in the U.S., Poland, Russia, and Malawi. I have intentionally chosen not to seek full-time secular employment in order to have the time and energy for these ministries, almost all of which have been on a volunteer basis (I was briefly paid a stipend salary for about 2 1/2 years).

I have availed myself of personal enrichment and professional training at every opportunity. Out of 150 enrollees from RMC in NADEL's Lay Evangelism Training Program, I was one of three who completed the course of study and graduated with a Certificate in Lay Evangelism. I am currently enrolled in the MaPMin program with Andrews University. I have an associate degree in secretarial science, a bachelor's degree in music education, and certification in women's ministry with The American Association of Christian Counselors. I am seriously, intentionally dedicated to the work of God's kingdom.

On page 9 I read this statement, "It's not always easy to find available individuals—women who have had some experience in a leadership role in a decision-making forum of the

church and who also have the time available to attend meetings."

Since my work is volunteer, I have the time to attend meetings. I have never been so bold as this. The above paragraphs are not meant to expound on my qualifications, but to emphasize and verify my personal commitment to the church. If the church is serious about "seeking women willing to make a personal sacrifice in order to be involved in a forum that makes decisions for the church," then I would like to volunteer my services.

RENEE MCKEY

North Dakota, United States

The First Mongolia Language School

I was excited to see Mongolia making it into *Adventist World* again. This is great! Even though I no longer work there, I am happy to read all about what is happening there and hope to continue to read about how the work is growing.

I am writing to let you know that a mistake was made in two articles that needs to be corrected (see *Adventist World*, Feb. 2007, p. 3; and March 2007, pp. 8, 9).

The language school that was recently opened in Mongolia is not the first Adventist language school. Adventist International Language Center opened in 2000 and was registered with the Mongolian government to operate in Ulaanbaatar.

LETTERS

Adventist volunteers came to teach from Canada, England, Australia, and the United States. AILC was even listed in the SDA *Yearbook* as a Mongolia Mission Field entity. For two years an AILC branch also operated in Darkhan city. I believe the volunteers from these places, the Mongolian staff that worked at AILC, and the people baptized as a result of attending would be disappointed to see that the language school recently opened by the Korean SDA Language Institute is referred to as the first Adventist language school by our official Adventist magazine.

DALE TUNNELL,
FORMER DIRECTOR OF
MONGOLIA MISSION FIELD
Tennessee, United States

Thanks for Showing Us the World

I am so glad that our church members can now have access to reports coming from the different parts of the world church via *Adventist World*. Please continue to publish articles that motivate our lay people in the work that they are assigned. We need to uplift our church members who are working unknown and unrecognized. We love to hear stories coming from the front line of the work.

We at Romblon Adventist Mission continue to pray for the continued success of our publication. God bless, and more power to the staff and workers of the *Adventist World*.

ORLEY M. FAJILAN
Romblon, Philippines

Please Send More

Thank you very much for your magazine. I just received and read this one copy, the July 2006 issue. I am thirsting for more knowledge about God. Please send me more of them.

JACOB RUZAI
Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Our advice to this reader and others with similar concerns is to contact your union or division office. We are gratified that the magazine is filling this important need.—EDITORS.

Letters Policy: Please send your letters to the editor to: letters@adventistworld.org. Letters must be clearly written and to the point, 250-word maximum. Be sure to include the name of the article, the date of publication, and page number with your letter. Also include your name, the town/city, state, and country from which you are writing. Letters will be edited for space and clarity. Not all letters submitted will be published.

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I would like to request a special prayer for my girlfriend who has a disease. I really love my girlfriend and I don't want to lose her. I think prayer is the best way to stop my anxiety for her. Thank you very much.

RAIM, *Philippines*

Please pray for my father. He hasn't been feeling well for the past two years. It is also my wish for him to know Jesus and be baptized.

I would also like to thank the Lord for letting me know Him and allowing me to experience His wonderful power. I hope we all seek His power to be our shield.

RACHEL, *Zimbabwe*

I am asking you to please pray for my son Levi (7 months old), who is suffering from asthma. Also pray for me to successfully finish my attachment

so that I can open my own workshop repairing phones (if it is God's will) so we can be financially stable.

VINCENT, *Via E-mail*

Please pray for me—for my life, health, and spiritual health. Also pray for the welfare of my girlfriend; and for my parents, sister, and two brothers in Honduras. Thank you!

ISMAEL, *United States*

Good day! Please pray that God gives me wisdom and I can pass the Korean language test. Pray also that I can find a good-paying job in Korea. It would be a big blessing for my family and me if I can get a job there.

GIOVANNI, *Philippines*

Please pray for me that God will answer my prayer for a good life partner from within the church.

CHIDO, *Zimbabwe*

I would like to share one experience with my fellow believers. In 1994, when I was at a secondary school, I met a beautiful girl. I discovered that she already had a fiancé. Since her character impressed me, whenever I prayed for a wife I asked the Lord to give me a woman of similar character. God is faithful! He answered my prayers and actually gave me the same girl six years later!

I do not take this for granted. The Lord is faithful in His promises and He gives us the right gifts at the right time. Do not be weary in your prayers. God is going to answer you regardless of time and space.

KOPEKA, *Malawi*

The Place of Prayer; send to prayer@adventistworld.org. Send us your prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer). Keep your entries short and concise, 75 words maximum. Items sent to this category will be edited for space and clarity. Even though we will pray for each entry during our weekly staff meetings, not all submissions will be printed. Please include your name and your country's name with your entry. You may also fax requests to: 1-301-680-6638; or mail them to *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

“Behold, I come quickly...”

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ, uniting Seventh-day Adventists everywhere in beliefs, mission, life, and hope.

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Vol. 3, No. 6

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

This month a reader shares a witnessing moment.

When Love Grows Deeply

An elderly woman was pleased with my charm. When I first met her, she kindly asked me to visit her and gave me her address. She and I talked about Sabbath-keeping. She showed me her Bible and books of Ellen G. White. I became amazed as she told me that she was an Adventist and that her father had been a pastor many years ago. She was not proceeding in her faith because her husband had told her not to talk about religious matters. She was in deep sorrow because she never brought her two children to the truth. For 30 years she longed to meet someone who was of the same faith. And then we met each other.

Every time I visited her, I offered a prayer; and in my personal devotion, I prayed for this woman. God answered my prayers and soon she wished to begin keeping Sabbath again. One day I was speaking about the soon coming of our Savior. To my surprise, she gave me money to buy flowers to set on my salon table. The woman instructed me to go to a special flower shop and buy a specific and unique combination of flowers. She wanted me to get the freshest and most expensive flowers, and she made sure I had enough to cover the cost.

Every day I saw the blend of different shapes and colors. Similar contours, each figure in this bundle of blossoms was perfect and beautiful. Not one was hideous or repulsive. As I studied the blossoms each day my attention focused on another aspect: spiritual beauty. The “peculiar” people of God have a unique glamour. Our God is perfect and His love is beautiful and everlasting. The sweetness of His shadow reflects in us.

People of God delight in engaging with other people. Yes, we Adventists profess to be tender, smart in giving the message, and elegant in bearing (notwithstanding that we do have subversive natures that are predisposed to pride, selfishness, and deceit). But we often fall short of the goal of loving people well. This too was another reason for the woman’s departure from the church.

As she confided in me her hurts, I, thinking about those lovely flowers, responded, “We have to polish the dullness from our spirits and preserve our beauty like the flowers.”

I also shared with her Mrs. White’s words in *The Desire of the Ages* (p. 468). The path may be steep and rugged, but Jesus has traveled that way; His feet have pressed down the cruel thorns to make the pathway easier for us.... Jesus thought upon the souls all over the earth who were misled by false shepherds. Those whom He longed to gather as His pastures were scattered among wolves, and He said, ‘Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and they shall become one flock, one shepherd’ (John 10:16 RSV).”

The power of love is the image of Jesus seen in our lives. We can unite together to finish His work on this earth. Then we shall be one bouquet, intact, with bundles of joy—and enclosed in His loving arms forevermore.

—ESTRELLA ANACLETO JORDAN, Prilly, Switzerland



DIANE MILLER

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



BEVERLY KOESTER, MISSIONARY IN THE SO. SUDAN FIELD

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Husband and wife Nestor Osman and Gretel Dupertuis from Argentina have been volunteering in Roysse, Norway, at Norwegian Junior College since August 2006. At the school, Nestor works as the boys' dean and leads out in a Pathfinder group, while Gretel works in the school's kitchen and teaches Spanish at the nearby Adventist primary school. Together, the couple also leads worships and organizes Saturday night activities. However, what Gretel calls "the real work that we do" is sharing Christian principles with students, giving them advice, and, sometimes, just

lending a listening ear. "That," says Gretel, "is what we like about being here."

Nestor and Gretel are enjoying their year in Norway and plan to return to Argentina in July. They encourage anybody who wants to volunteer to do it. As Gretel says, "God needs you and your desire to help others." If you would like to read stories about other Adventist volunteers around the world, or learn about how you can participate in the volunteer program, go to www.adventistvolunteers.org.

—Courtesy of Adventist Volunteer Service



EIRIK ANDRÉ EIDSA

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The first four commandments are vertical; pointing upward to show how we should treat God. The last six commandments are horizontal; pointing to show how we should treat the people around us. They make a CROSS."

—Joe Anderson in Sabbath school class, Dayton Community Chapel of Seventh-day Adventists, Dayton, Tennessee, U.S.A.

ANSWER: This photo is a scene in the Troodos Mountains on the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Turkey. There is one Seventh-day Adventist church in Cyprus, with 74 members. Currently, the Middle East Union is headquartered in Cyprus.