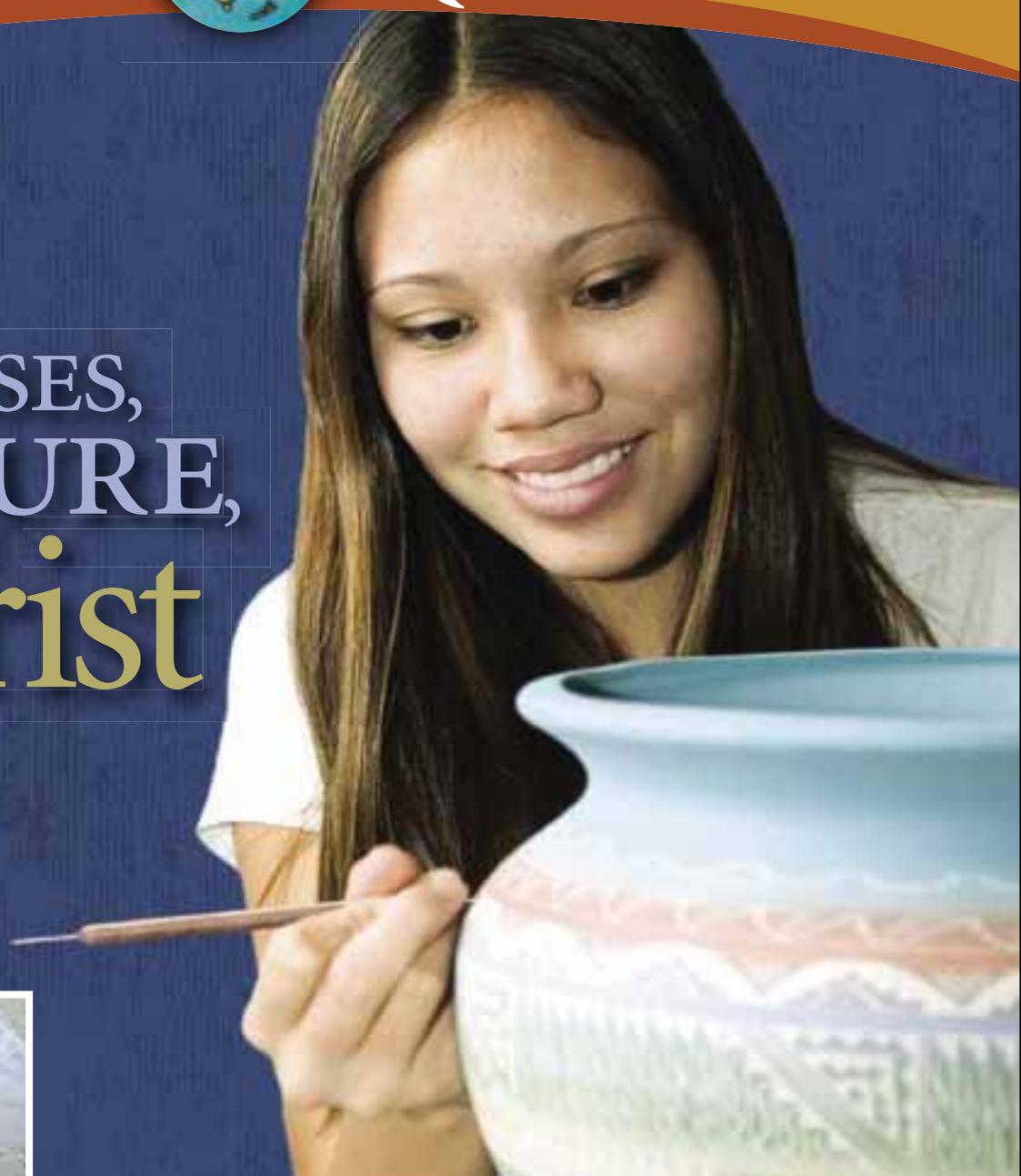


September 2009

ADVENTIST WORLD



CLASSES, CULTURE, *and* Christ



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WORLD VIEW

Healing—Above All

The sermon was over. The appeal song had been sung. I had offered words of benediction, concluding a

series on the healing power of Jesus.

Just then, a pastor stepped to the microphone.

“We’re going to do something a little crazy here tonight,” he said with obvious apprehension. The congregation stood stock-still, uncertain what to do.

“Exactly four years ago,” he continued, “just after performing a piano duet in this building, one of our pastors’ wives had a terrible car accident on the way home from camp meeting. The accident left her with permanent injuries to her arms and legs. But tonight, four years later, she is back at the piano with the same colleague, playing with one hand as her testimony to God’s healing power.”

Stunned, the hundreds found their seats as the first notes of the unexpected duet began to cautiously emerge from the sounding board. I watched lips all across the hall forming the worship words:

*“Above all powers, above all kings;
Above all nature and all created things ...”*

Almost as if we were witnessing four years of healing compressed into a moment, we felt the music surge and flower, growing in confidence as fingers found familiar

patterns. Chord stacked on chord, just three hands playing, the music swelling on the hopes of many in the hall who had been praying that such a grace might someday happen.

The pastor who had made the introduction was now weeping. Dozens swept away the tears with hands and handkerchiefs, while others—men and women—let them fall in quiet amazement.

*“Crucified, laid behind a stone;
You lived to die, rejected and alone;
Like a rose trampled on the ground,
You took the fall and thought of me,
Above all.”*

The applause was instantaneous and insistent. Hundreds rose, not to honor the musicians, but to celebrate a healing still in progress and a story we will never be able to forget.

God’s people are justly hungry for such moments, for they are evidence that Adventism, at its core, is about changed lives and healed spirits, not only changed ideas. Let’s covenant to tell—and sing—the stories of Christ’s healing when we gather in His name. Worship, at its heart, is our weekly celebration of the love that finds and heals us. And it’s our anticipation of the day when Jesus will make all things beautifully new.

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

Paulsen Says Church’s Health Focus Can Help Heal the World

Adventist Church moves to strengthen global health partnerships.

■ Seventh-day Adventists should partner with other health organizations in offering primary health care globally, a request that urges the denomination’s members and institutions to shed individualistic approaches to offering care in communities, General Conference president Jan Paulsen said July 7.

Paulsen’s remarks came on the opening day of a global health conference, which is exploring ways to achieve public health goals through

partnerships and the role faith-based organizations (FBOs) play in such an effort. Church health leaders also hope to demonstrate the role spirituality and wholistic living can play in primary care and find common ground when working with partners. (For the full text of Paulsen’s remarks, see pages 8-11 in this issue.)

Recently the World Health Organization (WHO), a United Nations agency, has sought to bolster partnerships with FBOs, which deliver



PROMOTING PARTNERSHIP:
Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,

addresses the Global Conference on Health and Lifestyles in Geneva, July 7. Conference organizers are seeking to bolster partnerships with the World Health Organization, which, like the Seventh-day Adventist Church, works to improve health globally.

ANSEL OLIVER/ANN

WORLD REPORT

as much as 40 percent of primary care in some nations.

On July 6, Adventist Church officials met in a high-level conference with WHO leaders in Geneva to explore effective ways of partnering, particularly by implementing the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Leaders from both organizations have met several times in the past two years, their work culminating in the Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle in Geneva.

In his keynote address Paulsen urged community involvement as a way for Adventists to express their own values in an age of globalization. Such involvement, he said, would define the public's perception of the

funding, and supporting professional medical health care through its network of more than 600 hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries. The denomination's 150-year health focus also emphasizes health education, advocacy of vegetarianism, and living alcohol- and drug-free.

Paulsen also addressed concerns that partnerships would be at odds with the church's mission, saying, "Some have been critical, and rightly so, of an eschatological perspective that serves simply to reconcile us to current miseries. Awaiting [Christ's return] is not a passive exercise, but something that demands action [in] the present."

The church's emphasis on health, Paulsen said, should not just be one of treating disease, defining what is healthful to eat or drink, or the training of medical professionals.

"Our approach to health is a concept that encompasses all that contributes to the fullness and completeness of human existence," he said.

A WHO officer noted that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the past has sometimes acted in a closed manner, but said he welcomed the partnership.

"I think the Adventist Church is ready for official relations with us," said Ted Karpf, an officer with the Department of Partnerships and UN Reform at the World Health Organization.

"The church is here as partners to begin with, so some change has happened already," Karpf said.

Addressing the gathering, Jean Duff, executive director of the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty, recognized the Adventist Church as "a faithful partner in

mobilizing their health assets and congregational infrastructures" to collaborate in an interfaith antimalaria program in Mozambique.

Several of the church's health ministries leaders said they welcomed Paulsen's comments.

"I think he set a new direction," said Chester Kuma, associate Health Ministries director for the church's South Pacific region. "He provided a great challenge to the church, getting us back to basics. It's a good reminder about compassion and helping the poor."

Elie Honore, Health Ministries director for the church's Inter-American region, said Paulsen's comments weren't aimed only at church health leaders but at many segments of the church. "We have education represented here [at this conference], and ministry, as well as leadership," Honore said.

"He reminded us of the questions we should be asking. We're not going to just stick to ideas or theories but open our eyes to the community and fulfill our mission as a church."

The Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle continued through July 10. Other speakers and workshop presenters included David Williams, professor of public health at Harvard University; Sir Michael Marmot, director of the International Institute for Society and Health; and Alex Ross, WHO director for the Program on Partnerships and United Nations Reform.

—Reported by Ansel Oliver, assistant director for news, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In China, Mongolia, Adventist Literature Evangelism Thrives

■ If Christianity is to make a continuing impact in Mongolia and China, local Seventh-day Adventist



church's approach to primary care.

"An individualistic, inward-looking conception of Christianity is utterly at odds with the Savior who reached out to restore blind men's eyes, cured lepers, and healed an emotionally broken woman," Paulsen said. "We cannot express our faith, our desire to imitate Christ, in seclusion."

Paulsen spoke to some 500 world church leaders in a packed lecture hall at the University of Geneva, the site of the conference.

During his half-hour speech, Paulsen said the church would continue to prioritize facilitating,



PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT

Left: CONSULTATION: Wilmar Hirle, center, briefs Northern Asia-Pacific Division publishing staff on book sales. **Right: HEALTH MAGAZINE:** Northern Asia-Pacific Division president Jairyong Lee and publishing director Dae Sung Kim hold a copy of *Best Life*, a new Seventh-day Adventist health magazine for China.



WILMAR HIRLE

the beginnings are small—only 5,000 copies are now circulating—both the need and the potential are great. Many of China’s 1.3 billion people are confronting pollution, stress, and crowding in large cities. Millions struggle with tobacco and alcohol use. As a result, reliable information on how to address health concerns will likely be of continuing interest as the nation’s development moves forward.

October 2008 saw the launch of *Best Life*, and Lee said the division hopes to increase the circulation to 50,000 in the next few years.

“We understood there may be some difficulties,” said Lee, “but the Lord has helped us. When we saw the first issue of the health magazine [come off the press] we gave thanks to the Lord.”

In past years it has been difficult to get permission to publish from the Chinese government, particularly in the case of religious publications. Chinese Adventist leaders say they feel blessed to have had the cooperation of the government with *Best Life*.

Recently the decision was made to publish the book *Life of Jesus*, an abridged version of *The Desire of Ages*, in large quantities for the Chinese population. According to Hirle, the Chinese publishing leaders are hoping for a first printing of 1 million copies.

“I’m very excited about this project,” Lee said. “In China ... previously they did not have enough literature and printed materials. If

leaders say, there’s a need for more literature in local languages. Wilmar Hirle, associate director of the General Conference’s Publishing Ministries, visited Adventist leaders in China and Mongolia recently in order to discuss the growth of the Adventist Church and its increasing need for the translation of Adventist literature into native idioms.

Hirle met with local leaders in Beijing to question them about the growth of the Adventist movement in China and the commencement of an Adventist health magazine. Jairyong Lee, NSD president, and Dae Sung Kim, NSD publishing director, described the current situation.

“China is a great country in many ways,” said Lee. “It is the largest country in the world in terms of population. However, it is also the most challenging country as far as our Adventist mission is concerned because of the political situation. I can see tremendous potential for the work of the Adventist Church.”

According to David Ng Kok Hoe, Chinese Union Mission publishing director, there are nearly 400,000 Adventist members in China being

led by 100 pastors. There are no conferences or unions, but simply parent, daughter, and granddaughter churches.

Out of the more than 6 billion people living on earth, fewer than half are able to read the Adventist message in their native language. Until recently, Adventists in China had never had an official program for literature evangelism. The “A Book for Jesus” program was created to reach those who do not have an opportunity to read Adventist literature.

“[This] is a tremendously large project,” Hoe said. “I’m sure if we were going to do this with our own knowledge it would be impossible. But we have a big, worldwide Adventist family, and this world belongs to God.”

Speaking with Hirle, NSD president Lee said there are approximately 200 Christian bookstores in China, and they are planning to open five Adventist Book Centers in the near future.

The leaders also discussed the creation of the first Chinese Adventist health magazine *Best Life*. Although

WORLD REPORT

we can print *Life of Jesus* into the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of copies and distribute it through our church members, we will have a tremendous impact on our local communities.”

Hirle also traveled to Mongolia to discuss the ever-growing need for literature evangelism. According to Paul Kotanko, president of the Mongolia mission field, “In Mongolia there are only 2.9 million people in an area slightly smaller than the state of Alaska. Since 1990 and the end of Communism there has been a renewed interest in religion. Today, under the Mongolian constitution, which provides for religious freedom, Christians account for only about 3 percent.”

Seventh-day Adventist books have not yet been translated into Khalkha Mongol, the language spoken by 90 percent of the Mongolian population. According to Hirle, five books, including *Signs of Hope*, by Adventist evangelist Alejandro Bullón, are currently being translated into the native language.

“This project will be very beneficial,” said Kotanko. “There is a great need for literature we can present to the public. The most pressing need is for translators and editors who understand the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and teachings to translate materials into the Mongolian language.”

Kotanko also said the Mongolian church is made up of young, enthusiastic members who are eager to read books pertaining to the truth of Jesus. —Reported by Erica Richards, Adventist World editorial intern, with information from the Publishing Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



STUDY AUTHORS: Researchers David Wilkinson and Peter Phillips of Durham University surveyed biblical literacy in the United Kingdom.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY PHOTOS

Bible Knowledge Is Declining in the U.K., Researchers Say

■ Knowledge of the Bible is declining in the United Kingdom, with fewer than one in 20 people able to name all Ten Commandments, according to a recent Durham University survey.

Funded by an association of national churches, charitable trusts, and Bible agencies, more than 900 people from faith and nonfaith backgrounds were surveyed at various locations throughout England and Wales about their knowledge of the Bible.

Initial research findings from The [British] National Biblical Literacy Survey 2009 showed that 62 percent didn't know the parable of the prodigal son and 60 percent couldn't name anything about the good Samaritan.

Forty percent didn't know that among Christians the tradition of giving Christmas gifts came from the story of the Wise Men bringing gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Jesus.

While only 5 percent of people could name all the Ten Commandments, 16 percent couldn't name any.

Despite the success of the musical

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, 57 percent knew nothing about Joseph and his brothers.

Churchgoers who were surveyed also showed a lack of biblical knowledge, with 72 percent knowing nothing about Daniel in the lions' den; one respondent thought Daniel was “the lion king.”

Another said David and Goliath was the name of a ship, while 57 percent were unable to talk accurately about the stilling of the storm, when Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee.

Knowledge of the Bible is declining particularly in the under-45 age group.

Half of the under-45 population could not give accurate information about Samson and Delilah, compared to a quarter of over-45-year-olds.

Similarly, 33 percent of under-45-year-olds couldn't name anything about the feeding of the 5,000, compared to 12 percent of over-45-year-olds.

Younger interviewees told the researchers that the Bible was “old fashioned” and “irrelevant.” —Reported by Erica Richards, Adventist World intern, with information from Durham College.

Into Cyprus

By
HANS OLSEN



According to Greek mythology, Cyprus is the birthplace of the goddess of love, Aphrodite. In reality Cyprus, an island nation in the eastern Mediterranean, has historically been anything but a place of love, as it has been fought over for thousands of years. Cyprus has been conquered and ruled by the Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, Roman, and British empires.

Today Cyprus is a popular tourist destination—particularly for northern Europeans seeking its sandy beaches and warm, dry weather. The island joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, and as of January 1, 2008, the euro is its national currency. Cyprus has a strong economy, above average for the EU. Beyond tourism, Cyprus' economy depends on agricultural products such as grapes, citrus, vegetables, and meat products.

After generations of foreign rule, Cyprus gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. Three years later tensions between the Greek Cypriot majority and Turkish Cypriot minority came to a head and a brief civil war broke out. United Nations peacekeepers arrived in 1964 and tried to keep periodic outbreaks of violence to a minimum. A demilitarized zone—known as the

green line—was created dividing the north, consisting primarily of Turkish Cypriots, from the south, where most Greek Cypriots live.

Adventists in Cyprus

The first Adventists, Moses Boursalian and his family, came to Cyprus in 1912 as tentmaker-style missionaries. Moses sold homemade combs, traveling by donkey from village to village telling people about his beliefs along the way. Moses' son, John, became the first Adventist literature evangelist on the island several years later. By 1930 a small group of 30 people worshipped together in Nicosia each Sabbath.

For many years no ordained ministers lived on the island. Church leaders visited only occasionally to conduct baptism and Communion services. In 1932 Canadian missionaries R. S. Greaves and his wife, who had spent many years working in Greece and Turkey, retired in Cyprus and worked as pioneer missionaries.

In 1964 J. Sherwood Jones was appointed president of the Adventist

Church in Cyprus, after years of the church being administered from Beirut, Lebanon. Soon afterward Cypriot and grandson of Moses Boursalian, Moses Elmadjian, was appointed secretary-treasurer of the mission.

The Adventist Church still struggles to gain a foothold in Cyprus. Most Cypriots go to church to celebrate Christmas and Easter, and to attend baptisms and funerals. The majority of Adventists in Cyprus are foreigners, whose jobs have brought them to the island.

Cyprus is one of many countries that make up the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This division is hosting "Follow the Bible" this month. "Follow the Bible" is an initiative sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to stimulate a deeper interest in reading the Bible. The journey will conclude at the General Conference session in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., in June 2010.

To learn more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church's worldwide mission work visit: [www. AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org).

CYPRUS	
Official Name:	Republic of Cyprus
Capital:	Nicosia
Major languages:	Greek, Turkish, and English
Religion:	Greek Orthodox, 78%; Muslim, 18%; Other, 4%
Population:	1.02 million*
Adventist membership:	71*
Adventist-to-population ratio:	1:14,208*
*General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, 145th Annual Statistical Report	



PHOTOS BY GEOFFREY SMITH AND CHRISTINA PAPADOPOULLOU

WORLD VISTA

CHRIST'S HEALING

in a Changing World

By JAN PAULSEN

What is the future of Seventh-day Adventist health ministries as it faces the challenges of a rapidly changing global environment? Following is an adaptation of the keynote address given by General Conference President Jan Paulsen on July 7, 2009, at the Health and Lifestyle Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the rise of the “prophets of secularization”—sociologists and political thinkers who predicted the decline of religious faith as a force in society. They simply took for granted that the more people were exposed to economic, scientific, and political advances, the more quickly they would shake off the old-fashioned shackles of faith. The death of religion was simply a matter of time.

The obituaries, though, were premature. We find ourselves today in a world where religious belief is clearly a significant and, in many places, a growing force in society. Instead of “secularization theory,” sociologists are now more likely to speak of a “post-secular” age.

But there is another powerful force of the twenty-first century, a force that is wholly a product of recent decades. Unlike religious belief, it is newborn, it is brash, it has few moorings in the past: I am speaking about the process of globalization, which is re-creating humanity’s social structures within a span of time that is quite simply breathtaking. Globalization acts as a vast, dynamic “transport system” that carries ideas, values, and people and deposits them anywhere and everywhere. Barriers

of language, culture, and geography are no longer as meaningful as they once were. No institution—public or private, religious or secular—remains untouched.

Globalization is a fact; it is happening; it’s as unavoidable and unknowable as its ultimate consequences. Religion, similarly, is a reality that is with us. It’s here, and it’s a powerful force both within the lives of individuals and in the societies where they live. These two forces—globalization and religion—live together, interact with each other, and are often intertwined.

Guiding Values

For the health ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, surveying the changing global landscape on which it conducts its mission, these are significant issues.

As we walk into the future, there is no question that our commitment remains strong. We continue to place a high priority on facilitating, funding, and supporting professional medical and health care through our network of more than 600 hospitals, sanitariums, clinics, and dispensaries; through nutrition and other health programs; and through our advocacy of vegetarianism and alcohol- and drug-free living.

But while our commitment is clear, I believe it’s time to reflect in more depth on the values that should anchor us as we step onto the shifting ground of our changing world. And more than this, to ask ourselves what values we can, in turn, imprint upon this terrain. What unique mark can we make?

We need to ask ourselves: What does a distinctively Adventist approach to health ministries look like? What does it offer that isn’t already being offered by any number of alternate providers?

Let’s consider briefly four strands of thought woven throughout Adventist heritage and identity that are central to the health ministries of our church and which, I hope, will continue to guide us into the future. Obviously, this is



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



ANSEL OLIVER



not a finite list of values, but can perhaps serve as a starting point for an ongoing conversation.

Theology of Connection

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matt. 25:35, 36, NIV).

For Seventh-day Adventists, our model for relating to other people finds its beginning and end in Christ’s radical identification with humanity. An individualistic, inward-looking conception of Christianity is utterly at odds with a Savior who reached out to restore blind eyes, cure lepers, and heal an emotionally broken woman.

Quite simply, we cannot express our faith—our desire to imitate Christ—in seclusion; our values and our beliefs find their true meaning only within the context of human relationships. In the words of my former teacher Jürgen Moltmann, “Likeness to God cannot be lived in isolation. It can be lived only in human community” (J. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 222).

So what does it mean to live in connection with others? It means that your problems are not yours alone; they are also mine. It means having a sense of solidarity with humanity that makes me vulnerable, also, to its hurts and pain.

Living in connection with others means seeing the large problems of society as *collective* human problems. I begin to see that poverty, for instance, is not just the result of random circumstances or arbitrary luck. If I live in comfort and someone else lives in distress, could there be a material

relationship between these two conditions? Perhaps there is. In admitting this, my sense of isolation diminishes and my sense of responsibility for others grows.

How will this value express itself within the health ministries of our church? By deliberately placing ourselves in those places where there are “gaps” in access to health care; in offering service that pays no heed to a person’s religious, economic, or cultural background; in avoiding “parochial” thinking by forming creative partnerships with others who share our goal of relieving human suffering—be it a government agency, another faith-based organization, a local church or mosque. It means being motivated by self-giving love, not the desire for financial profit or increased influence.

Ultimately, living in connection with others means that “when we see human beings in distress, whether through affliction or through sin, we shall never say, This does not concern me” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 504).

Theology of Human Dignity

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Gen. 1:26).

Whatever the *Imago Dei* means—and who has a complete definition of it?—it touches the whole person. God made us in His image—physical, spiritual, moral, social, emotional, intellectual beings.

But for Seventh-day Adventists, the immeasurable worth of every person derives from more than just this stamp of the Divine given at Creation. Human dignity springs not just from our origins but also from our potential and our destiny. This concept profoundly shapes the way we deal with people. In all our healing ministries, we see in each

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person not just “what is,” but “what is possible.”

It means also that we must, at times, have the courage to “wade into the fray,” to recognize and condemn structures or practices that diminish the dignity of our fellow human beings. This isn’t new territory for us. Hear the words of former General Conference president Arthur Daniels spoken about the ministry of Ellen White: “Slavery, the caste system, unjust racial prejudices, the oppression of the poor, the neglect of the unfortunate,—these all are set forth as unchristian and a serious menace to the well-being of the human race, and as evils which the church of Christ is appointed by her Lord to overthrow” (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 473).

Simply put, acknowledging the image of God in humanity means that *we value people above everything else*—and this fundamental premise runs throughout all we are and do as a church.

Theology of Hope

“Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5, KJV).

For Seventh-day Adventists hope is a grand theme, an essential part of our spiritual “genetic blueprint.” But for us, hope doesn’t just point forward toward the grand epilogue of human history—the “what is to come.” Hope is the lens through which we view past, future, and present.

Our hope looks *backward* to the reality of Christ’s death and resurrection and finds there its touchstone. It’s a hope that looks *forward* to the moment of ultimate transformation—when all things are made new—and finds there its ideal, its motivation. And it’s a hope that looks *outward* to the realities as we meet them today and asks, What then can we do to start bridging the gap between what is and what is to be?

Some have been critical, and rightly so, of an eschatological perspective that serves simply to reconcile us to current miseries—an “apocalyptic lethargy.” But for Seventh-day Adventists the renewal of all things is not just a future event in history; it’s a process of renewal that begins now. Awaiting the “blessed hope” is not a passive exercise, but something that demands action in the present.

The healing ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is primarily about awakening hope—physical and spiritual. Although physical needs are often the most apparent, they are indivisible from emotional and spiritual needs. In ministering to the body, we can never ignore the spirit; and the most basic need of the spirit is hope.

Theology of Wholeness

“The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:42, 43).

In Christ’s death and resurrection, we see vividly and

starkly displayed the extreme contradictions of the human experience: the corrosive power of sin, and the creative power of God; the decay of fallen humanity, and God’s ability to renew and transform; the agony of separation from God, and the triumph of God claiming His own. In the death and resurrection of Christ this dialectic between decay and wholeness provides an unparalleled display of God’s creative and redemptive power.

Bringing wholeness out of decay, healing out of sickness, finding peace in chaos, bringing light into the darkness—this is the task that the followers of Christ have been given.

For Seventh-day Adventists, “wholeness” has another dimension. Our spirituality embraces the *whole* of human life; it recognizes that “the relation . . . between the mind and the body is very intimate” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 241), that we don’t live our lives in “segments” where physical health is merely a “piece” that can be separated from the totality of our existence.

Our approach to health is not just limited to the treatment of disease, or to defining what we eat or drink, or to training medical professionals; it’s a concept that encompasses all that contributes to the “completeness” of human existence.

Health ministry is therefore indivisible from our commitment to education, to human rights, to humanitarian work, to environmental care, to our desire to be a force for good in our communities. All these commitments find their beginning and end, their meaning and objective, in our spiritual mission, which gives life and force to all we do as a church.

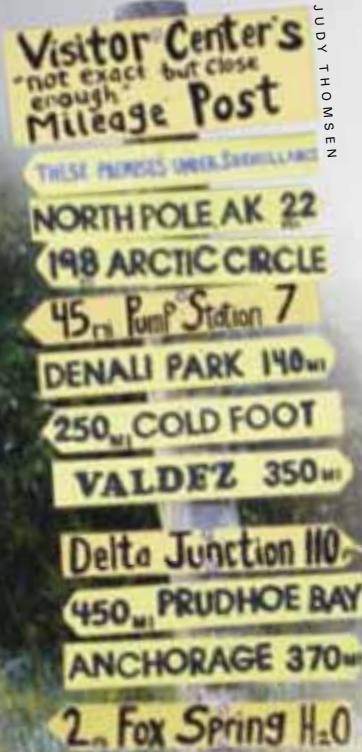
A Good Life

This is where we stand today—at the edge of a new world that we can’t yet fully imagine, where the shifting plates of technology, economics, and politics are still re-creating our global landscape.

What will tomorrow look like? I don’t know; but I know that it’s not to be feared.

How will the health ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church impact tomorrow? I pray it will hold strongly to its commitment to create connection, promote human dignity, and offer hope and wholeness; that it will continue, in a multitude of ways, to help people achieve a “good” life.

In that simple word “good” lies an immense range of ideas—the ability to live fully, to love deeply, to breathe freely, to experience joy and the absence of fear, to know a hope that exists outside the bounds of what is finite and that will take us into God’s eternity. This is the good life Christ holds out to us; this is what defines the mission we have been given. ●



NORTH AMERICA'S Last Frontier

By
JUDY THOMSEN

All Alaska is a mission field; conditions on St. Lawrence Island present their own set of challenges.

Alaska is rich with unmistakable beauty. Majestic Mount McKinley; the dynamic, glaciated landscape and diverse wildlife of Denali National Park; miles of dense, lush forests and mountain ranges; hundreds of clear blue lakes and rivers; rich stores of natural resources; desolate tundra and windswept coastlines—it's all there, and given intriguing names such as Yakutat, Knik, Skwentna, North Pole (a town), and 197½ Mile Creek.

And there's more: winter with its icy temperatures, dog mushing, and the Iditarod (a 1,150-mile sled-dog race through Alaska's wilderness). Days when the sun barely rises; and days when the sun never sets. Wildlife abounds: whales, walrus, formidable grizzlies, and also moose—a possible 1,300-pound deterrent to leaving for work because one stands between your front door and your car.

My husband, Halvard, and I were thrilled when Ken Crawford, president of the Alaska Conference, invited us to visit this U.S. state.

"Alaska is a frontline mission field

within the Adventist Church's North American Division," Ken said. "Come and visit some people and places."

So we went—and had a taste of many of Alaska's unique features.

Flying High

Ken accompanied us on our flights to Kotzebue, Nome, and finally St. Lawrence Island. In Nome, a town that looks surprisingly like the "old wild west" in nineteenth-century America, we shopped for groceries and found food prices to be extremely high. Currently, a gallon of milk costs nearly \$10, and a 19-inch pizza goes for \$34.

Ken, a pilot himself, explained that small-plane travel is essential in this region, because many villages have no other access to outside communities. One room at the Nome airport houses ticketing, a waiting area, security, and baggage claim. Our pilot loaded luggage into Bering Air's 12-seat Beech 1900, then climbed into the cockpit for the flight across the Bering Sea to Gambell. The island is actually closer to Russia than to the mainland, and the outline of the coast is clearly

visible some 40 miles distant.

A small settlement of wooden houses came into view as we approached the airstrip. Wispy fog hovered on the outskirts of the village. The ever-present ATVs brought a convergence of people, who met friends and family or picked up mail and a pizza.

In a way, life on St. Lawrence Island is simple—no freeways, cars, shopping malls, crowds, or demanding jobs. Streets have no names. In the summer no darkness comes to alert you that nighttime is approaching; and if the temperature should rise to 60 degrees, the native Yup'iks likely would call it a heat wave.

Life here, however, is also harsh. Frigid, below-zero temperatures and



Judy Thomsen is correspondence editor for *Adventist World*. Her husband, Halvard, is assistant to the president of the North American Division for Administration.

snow inundate the towns in winter, when snow machines are the common mode of travel. A polar bear skin thrown across a porch railing is evidence of danger in the outdoors. The isolation makes it difficult to get supplies to the island, resulting in a high cost of living. For dental or medical appointments or even the delivery of a baby, residents must schedule a flight to Nome or Anchorage.

Both Gambell and Savoonga are small villages with populations between 650 and 700. Everyone knows their neighbors—in fact, each person most likely knows everyone else in town.

The Seventh-day Adventist churches in Gambell and Savoonga—one in each town—are well-used on Sabbath, but the parsonages have been empty for quite some time.

Real Jewels

Clement Ungott, an Adventist since 1971, is the head elder of the Gambell church. He was born in Gambell—it's his forever home, he says. The parents of his wife, Irma, were Adventists, and it was Irma who initiated his interest in the church.

"I decided of my own free will when I accepted the truth," Clement said. "My mother was disappointed [at first], but before she died she accepted the Sabbath too."

When Clement was young he was friends with Irma's brother, but Clement had a special interest in Irma, as well. As was the custom, he lived with her family for a year. He was given a lot of tasks to do—often not the most desirable—to "prove himself." With eyes twinkling and a little lift of her eyebrows Irma said, "They have to buy us." Clement and Irma have been married for 47 years.

Witnessing opportunities, keeping the Sabbath during times of the year when the sun never rises or sets, staying in touch with church leaders in the Alaska Conference or others

KEN CRAWFORD



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Top to bottom: LOST TOO SOON: Whalebones mark the cemetery located outside Savoonga. Many crosses bear names of teenagers and young adults. **ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS:** Clement and Irma Ungott. **LIFE IN ALASKA:** A polar bear skin and bleached whale bones are interesting contrasts to life in the lower United States. **HISTORY IN THE MAKING:** Nathan Noongwook (right/behind dog team) stands next to the sled as the last U. S. mail run via dogsled in Alaska prepares to go from Gambell to Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island. Noongwook was the father of Adventist Chester Noongwook, who made the last mail run in 1963.

in the world church—these could be challenges in Gambell and Savoonga. But when asked about it Clement expressed only one need—a full-time pastor. “Pastors are always welcome,” he said. “I call it back-up.”

For Irma there is no place like St. Lawrence Island. “I love my home,” she said. “I never want to go away, even to Nome.”

The Village Store and More

Gambell resident and Adventist church member **Gerard Koonooka** welcomed us to his home about 11:30 at night—it was as light as day. As a young girl, his wife, Esther, attended the Bristol Bay Adventist Mission School near Aleknagik and was baptized. When Gerard was baptized it was indoors in a makeshift baptismal tank, because the lake was covered with four feet of ice. As he stepped out of the tank, the water dripping from his robe froze on the floor.¹

Gerard owns a business in Gambell. Years ago he wanted to open a general store, but the policy of the wholesale company from which he would purchase supplies was to extend no credit to Alaskan natives. But with financial help from then Alaska Conference president Joseph Hansen, Gerard got a start. His few shelves quickly grew to a full-fledged business, which has expanded to include hardware and many other items. He now also serves as the island’s Internet provider.

Chester Noongwook, a church member who was baptized last summer, was sitting at his kitchen table when he welcomed us. With his retirement in 1963, regular sled-dog mail delivery ended in Alaska. A plaque from the United States Postal Service hanging in a prominent place is a reminder of his dedication to a job that could not have been easy—“Neither snow nor rain ... nor gloom of night” would surely have been realities for Chester.

Between There and Here

Television and the Internet have brought in the outside world. Whale and walrus meat drying on wooden racks and aging whale bones near the shore contrast sharply with what is seen on the television screen. The youth are caught between two worlds—the island could never provide a life like that shown on television. Many of the youth and young adults feel trapped by tradition, lack of means, and inactivity. Yet of those who leave, few stay away. The culture shock is simply too great.

The writing on the outside of town building walls declares: “Boring Boring Big Time,” “I Wish I Die Now,” “I Can’t Wait Till It’s My Turn.”² Depression is common, and many feel that alcohol provides them with an emotional way out. Tragically, suicide does, too. Many teens attempt to end their own lives. Wooden caskets buried only partially in the ground because of permafrost attest to the successful ones; crosses reveal that too many teens, too many young adults, have died.

Carol Seppilu is 22 years old. At the age of 16 she attempted suicide, waking in the hospital to learn that she had shot off the lower right side of her face. A mask covers her disfiguration, and she breathes through a tube in her throat.

“Alcohol is very dangerous,” she said, struggling to talk. “You don’t know what’s going to happen. It takes over and destroys you.”

Nine of Carol’s friends have been lost to suicide in the last six years.

Tears trickled down Carol’s cheeks. “We need faith-based help, someone to talk to about faith to keep strong,” she said. “I’m glad to be alive. I want to help my people.”

Other tragedies also touch the church. With tears in her eyes, Irma Ungott told of the heartbreak in her family. More than a year ago one of Irma and Clement’s four sons simply disappeared.

Who Is My Neighbor?

St. Lawrence Island is just one example of why Ken Crawford calls Alaska a mission. Though organized in 1929, the sheer size of the territory has deterred the progress of the church, and could discourage a less optimistic leadership. Financial constraints are a big factor—there simply aren’t enough workers. A church membership of 3,731 is divided among 38 churches and 15 pastors, meant to cover Alaska’s 586,400 square miles.

Alaska Update

Southern U.S. residents Bill and Louise Hawkes heard an appeal by Ken Crawford at the Carolina, United States, camp meeting in 2008 and responded. They volunteered to move to Savoonga and are developing a suicide prevention program. Both are nurses with many years of experience. They began their life in Savoonga in February 2009. They’re finding that there’s just no place quite like the Arctic.

Retired couples, taskforce workers, student missionaries, volunteers—dedicated people can make a difference for the many who need the Lord and His healing touch. The latest word from Ken indicates that the majority of the conference’s mission slots for one- and two-year periods have been filled, and he says he’s thrilled. Many villages that had an Adventist presence at one time will now have it again.

As former Gambell and Savoonga pastor Rick Binford says, “God can use whoever is willing to be used.”

To view an online DVD about the challenges in Alaska as well as a list of volunteer opportunities, go to www.alaskaconference.org.

¹Nadine Toler Hansen, *Alaska Mission History. The Beginnings of Seventh-day Adventist Work in Alaska, 1896-1983*, p. 433. Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Printed in China.

²Gene Weingarten, *The Washington Post*, May 1, 2005, p. W.22.



Hidden

By
OLGA VALDIVIA

FAULTS

A lesson in loving others

*“Who can discern his errors?
Forgive my hidden faults”* (Ps. 19:12).*

There was a time in my Christian life when understanding what David meant by “hidden faults” was crucial to me. How is it possible to violate God’s law if we don’t realize we are sinning? Are we still guilty of sin? Do we still need forgiveness?

The “hidden faults,” or sins, mentioned in Psalm 19:12 refer to unintended sins, sins we commit without realizing

we are committing them. They can be things that we ought to do, but somehow we neglect to do, such as a father’s negligence to correct a child who needs correction. It could also mean apathy toward someone’s pain or loss, or not taking the proper action against those we see inflicting harm to others, taking property, or destroying the bonds of community. Hidden sins don’t necessarily have to cause scandal, as adultery; but even so, they defy God’s law of love and misrepresent His holy character.

Too Little, Too Late

Until the day I met the woman in the red suit, I didn’t realize the adverse effect hidden sins could have upon my soul or how they could weaken my relationship with God. Because I often saw her dressed in a red business suit and had not bothered to know her real name, she was simply that: the woman in the red suit, another silhouette fading



Olga Valdivia works in the office of the Attorney General in Idaho, U.S.A.

into the vastness of the white marble halls of the state capitol building, where we both used to work.

Coincidentally, the office of the woman in the red suit was located right across from my office. Even so, many years passed before I learned her real name. Perhaps it was her shyness that kept me from reaching out to her. She was as shy as an early spring sky, and her green, gentle eyes seemed to dance in their extraordinary bashfulness, as if somehow pleading for a “hello” that I always offered her in a hurried and impersonal way on those occasions we passed in the hallways.

Limited, it seemed, by her vague and distant approach, I soon started perceiving her not as a person, but rather as a structure, almost as if she were part of the building. Thus, in that sense, I expected to see her there forever.

But one wintry morning, our office was suddenly saddened by the appalling news of Marci Smith’s death. Like all of us who worked at the capitol building, Marci Smith should have had many friends and family. However, she had been dead for a week before somebody noticed she was missing. A neighbor who reported a strange, putrid

Hungry for Love

I didn’t know it then, but my negligence and lack of interest in others constituted “hidden sins” that offended God. No wonder the psalmist prayed: “Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression” (Ps. 19:12, 13).

Our tiny world is hungry for love, for the kind of deep and sincere love capable of lifting discouragement and filling our hearts with hope.

Nevertheless, many times, by our exacerbated individualism, we deprive each other and deprive ourselves of love. Our wonderful heavenly Father wants us to remember that love is the only attribute of this present life that will be found unchanged in the future life. He desires that we understand the importance of freeing ourselves from hidden errors, from sins that would make us susceptible of forgetting that we are called upon to love as God did, to make love the moving force of our lives. ●

*All scriptural references are from the New International Version.

Until the day I met the woman in the red suit, I didn’t realize the adverse effect hidden sins could have upon my soul or how they could weaken my relationship with God.

odor emanating from her apartment brought in the police, and that’s how her body was finally discovered.

I was angry at the world. How was it possible for someone to die and not be missed? I assured myself that Marci Smith’s fate would have been different, had I been her friend. Surely she would not have died alone and neglected as she did. Then, all of a sudden I realized that I didn’t really know who Marci Smith was or what she looked like.

I desperately tried to put a face to the name, but “Marci Smith” was just a sad song that played over and over in my brain, a song without a face.

How terribly inadequate and at fault I felt when I was finally given a description of the deceased and suddenly realized that *Marci Smith was the woman in the red suit*, the no-name woman whom I never took the time, nor the care, to get to know. I prayed to God, wishing there was more time. But, sadly, my opportunity to love Marci Smith had sadly passed.

Questions to Think About

1. How can we discover what our “hidden faults” are? How can we overcome them?
2. How can we exemplify Jesus’ love to those around us?
3. Have you ever learned that you have unintentionally hurt someone, but it’s too late to undo the damage? What should you do then? And what can you do today to let someone know you care about them?
4. What other spiritual applications can be taken from this story?

CLASSES, CULTURE, *and* Christ

*Holbrook Indian School
centers on all three.*

By
SANDRA
BLACKMER



SARAH LEE/NAD EDUCATION

Carefully rolling her long, black hair into a bun and wrapping it four times—twice on each side—and tying it with white yarn, Krystal peered at herself critically in the mirror. Her pleated, velvet skirt and blouse, woven sash belt, and concho displayed designs in the deep, rich colors of turquoise and terracotta. She then slipped on leather knee-high moccasins and threw a shawl around her shoulders.

My family would be pleased to see me in my Navajo clothes, Krystal thought. *I'm glad I'm allowed to wear my native dress here, even though I don't do it often.* She then grabbed her textbooks off the desk and hurried to class.

Unlike most other schools off the reservations in the U.S. state of Arizona, Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School not only

allows but encourages its students—most from the Navajo tribe—to embrace their Native American culture and keep alive their traditions.

“Even though academics are very important, Holbrook’s main mission is to teach the students about Jesus,” says principal Janet Claymore-Ross. “But we also promote respect for their native culture.”

Claymore-Ross, a member of the Lakota tribe and the first Native American principal since the school was established in 1946, says that many of the values held by Native American people are the same as those cherished by Christians.

“They value honesty and respect for each other as well as for nature,” she says. “If we really are Christians, if we really follow what Jesus says

in the Bible, our beliefs blend with much of what they have learned.”

A Unique Ministry

Holbrook Indian School—HIS, for short—is a K-12 Adventist boarding mission school for Native Americans situated on 70 secluded acres about 90 miles east of Flagstaff, Arizona, United States, and 225 miles northeast of Phoenix. Almost all of its 64 students come from reservations in Arizona and other surrounding states and are not members of the Adventist Church. Some, such as Krystal, arrive on the school campus as young as 4 years old. Ten years later and now a sophomore, Krystal is still there—and thoroughly enjoying her experience.

“I like it a lot; I liked it even when I first came,” Krystal says. “At home



SANDRA BLACKMER



SANDRA BLACKMER

Left to right: POTTERY MAKING: Holbrook’s students are nationally known for their skill in pottery making. **ADMINISTRATION BUILDING:** Holbrook’s administration building houses both offices and classrooms. **A LONGTIME STUDENT:** Krystal, now a sophomore at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, has been a boarding student there since she was 4 years old.

arts, mathematics, communication, and technology, such as welding and small-engine repair. The students are also nationally known for their skill in pottery making, a class currently taught by former student Lynessa Stanley. The primary mission of the faculty and 14 support staff, however, is to help prepare the students for a life of service to others and for eternal life with Jesus.

“We have baptisms every year,” Brown says. “Some of the students do it because their friends are doing it, but most do it because they really believe.”

She adds, “Baptism makes use of ceremony, and the Native American community is very ceremony-based. When they’re baptized the students say, ‘Now I need to live my life as a Christian.’ It’s their passage into this new life.”

Day-to-Day Faith

Holbrook is supported by the Pacific Union Conference, and is the only union-supported school in the Adventist Church’s North American Division. The union subsidy covers about 25 percent of the school’s operating budget. Other funds are provided through tuition, room, and board—\$75 a month for those in high school; \$65 a month for elementary—but most families can’t afford to pay it.

“Our operating budget depends mostly on donations and money left to us in wills,” Claymore-Ross says. “We basically go on trust and faith that the Lord will supply the money.”

And He obviously does. To exemplify God’s care, Claymore-Ross tells of a time she asked the associate business manager, Eunie Banuag, “How are we doing?”

“We really need to pray,” Banuag responded, then added, “We’re going

there was no one my age to play with, and here it was fun staying in the dorm and eating different foods. The school has lots of activities, the classes are fun, and we go on field trips, like to the Petrified Forest or to the park to play games and have a picnic.”

Krystal’s parents separated when she was young, and her grandmother—whom she stays with during home leaves and weekends—believed that Holbrook would provide Krystal with stability, nurturing, and education. Although not an Adventist, her grandmother was also confident that the school’s values would not conflict with her own and that it would instill pride for Krystal’s cultural heritage.

“Krystal speaks her native language and is able to plant and grind corn,” says vice principal and

registrar Shannon Brown. “The Navajo culture keeps alive many of the ancient traditions. Our students have to learn how to dye wool and weave cloth before they can graduate. So Krystal can do all the things expected of a traditional native woman.”

Most important, Krystal has learned about Jesus at Holbrook—that she has a Savior who loves and cares for her. Although she has not yet made a decision for baptism, she says she is “working her way there.”

Quality Academics—And More

Holbrook is accredited through the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities. Its 18 full-time certified teachers and administrators provide instruction in the sciences, liberal



Sandra Blackmer is an assistant editor of *Adventist World*.

to have to take some money out of [one area of the operating fund] in order to meet payroll.”

“Is there any other way?”

Claymore-Ross asked.

“I don’t think so.”

“Then let me get my mail and then we can prepare the paperwork to do that.”

Claymore-Ross picked up a handful of letters and opened the top one. Inside was a check for \$30,000—the exact amount needed.

“It just continues to be like that,” she explains.

The development and public relations director, Barbara Willis, corroborates these experiences.

“Sometimes a check comes in the mail on the very day you need it,” she says. “Sometimes it’s a phone call. That person may be contemplating a gift, and maybe they’ve been contemplating it for a week, but it

comes on the very day that you need it. It’s a daily faith walk.”

Meeting the Challenges

Most of the students at Holbrook come from low-income and single-parent or no-parent homes, bringing with them what Claymore-Ross describes as “severe emotional and abandonment issues.” Physical and emotional abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, and violent gangs are everyday realities for these youth, she says.

“Alcoholism is definitely a big issue,” Claymore-Ross says. “Last year we hired a vice principal [Shannon Brown] who has a school psychology degree, and it’s made a huge difference in the way the kids are getting counseling. They are coming to her for help. It’s a big improvement.”

Brown concurs that the challenges at Holbrook can seem daunting.

“A lot of our parents send their children here because they’ve gotten involved in drugs and gangs,” Brown says. “Parents know that when their children are here, their children are safe.”

Describing Holbrook as a school of second chances, Brown explains, “Some of the kids who come had gotten involved either with drugs or alcohol or got into fights. One of our boys came from public school, and he was on probation for alcohol use. He told me he wanted to make a new start. ‘I’m going to be clean’ he said—and he has stayed clean. His grades are good. He’s a junior this year, and he’s already expressing interest in Adventist colleges.”

“We have our success stories and our not-so-successful stories. But we hold on to the successful ones,” she says.

Math and Bible teacher Arthur Miller has taught at Holbrook for 11 years. He says he didn’t want to do the

PHOTOS BY SARAH LEE/NAD EDUCATION



Right: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Janet Claymore-Ross, a member of the Lakota tribe, is the first Native American principal since the school was established in 1946.



SANDRA BLACKMER

ACADEMIC AND SPIRITUAL MISSION: Holbrook’s 18 full-time certified teachers and administrators provide instruction in the sciences, liberal arts, mathematics, communication, and technology such as welding and small-engine repair. The school’s primary mission, however, is to help prepare the students for a life of service to others and for eternal life with Jesus.

“average, everyday thing. I wanted to do something where I can share my faith on a daily basis and really make a difference.”

“This is definitely a mission field,” says Miller, recipient of the 2009 Excellence in Teaching Award from the Alumni Awards Foundation. “Most of our kids aren’t Christians, let alone Adventists.”

The school deans see some of the challenges more directly than other staff. Associate boys’ dean Sam Hubbard, who has worked at the school for three years, says the spread in ages is a unique feature.

“High school kids have different problems from the little ones,” Hubbard says. “But they’re all learning about Jesus.”

Hubbard describes the dorm setup for those in the younger elementary grades as more “open and community based.” The older students live in individual rooms, as in a typical school dormitory.

Addressing short-term realities, Hubbard says, “We may not see a lot of results right away in the spiritual and emotional growth of the students, but in the long-term, their experience here will make a difference in their lives.”

Continued Success

The challenges as well as the successes of the school are not new. Idaho Conference Education superintendent Paulette Jackson served as Holbrook principal for more than three years—July 2003 to December 2006. Although she sees the school’s mission as multifaceted, she says one of its prime objectives is “to provide a safe place for kids to learn about Jesus”—and the school seems to accomplish that objective.

“We just never had any trouble on campus,” Jackson says. “Gangs are the biggest problem on the reservations, but even though we took some kids in who were trying to get out of gangs, we never had any trouble on campus. They were very safe.”

Jackson believes another reason parents send their children to Holbrook

is that they are free to retain their culture within the school environment. “They could wear their native clothing any time they wanted to,” Jackson says. “We taught native history, and it was incorporated throughout the curriculum.... Even when we taught them about God, we taught them in a way that related to nativeness.”

Jackson admits, though, that Holbrook can’t solve all the problems. “There are only one or two Adventist pastors for 300,000 people on the Navajo reservation,” she says. “They have no youth programs; they have nowhere for these kids to go for support once they leave Holbrook. It’s very discouraging.... Sometimes after they graduate the students come back to visit. They’ll help out in the cafeteria, stay in a guest room. It’s a comfortable place for them. They feel like it’s their home. It’s a great place.”

Beyond Graduation

Principal Claymore-Ross, who holds a doctorate degree in Educational Administration and whose husband, Duane, also teaches at the school, says several options are available to Holbrook graduates.

“Some go on to Adventist colleges, but most of these kids go back to the reservation,” she says. “They find work as auto mechanics, welders, they can become doctors—everything that a person does on the outside can be done on the reservations. They have community colleges on the reservations, so they can go to college there.

“They also see military service as a very good choice to make. It pays for their education, and it’s very structured. Native American people have been brought up to respect the military because their warrior society is very well respected.”

Helping Others

Witnessing to and helping those in the local communities have strengthened the school’s image with its neighbors. As part of Holbrook’s curriculum, faculty members

transport students into town every Friday afternoon to pick up trash, do yard work, and read to children in the public school kindergarten class.

“Because of this, people in the community feel very good about Holbrook,” Miller says.

Faculty member Lowell Jenks and a group of students travel one hour each Sabbath morning to worship with people who are keeping Saturday as the Sabbath but who are not Adventists. The school is planning to hold an evangelistic series there this summer.

The Union’s Perspective

Pacific Union Conference associate education superintendent Thambi Thomas sees Holbrook as a success story.

“The children here come from challenging backgrounds; in some cases families are almost nonexistent,” Thomas says. “I talked with one young woman who told me her parents are divorced. ‘Whom do you stay with when not at the school?’ I asked her. ‘I stay at my grandma’s.’ ‘Do you like it here?’ I asked. ‘I love it. People here care about me.’

“For kids growing up in a dysfunctional home or where the family structure is not strong, Holbrook is a haven,” Thomas says. “There is a deep commitment on the part of the teachers. I take my hat off to them.”

The Words of a Child

Holbrook students, such as 8-year-old Adrian, overwhelmingly express love and appreciation for the school. This young man, however, is philosophical about his experience there.

“I play around and sometimes get into trouble,” he admits candidly, “but it’s a good school; I really like it here.” Although his favorite things include pottery and physical education classes, he stresses, “I think [the school is] good because you learn about Jesus here. I like that.”

For more information about Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, go to www.hissda.org, e-mail hisnativechildren@yahoo.com, or call 928-524-6845.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Nobody needs to feel shy about asking this question. You are not a stranger to the Spirit of God. Chances are, you were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and yes, also the Holy Spirit—a deeply significant action. This trio of names often appears together throughout the New Testament, though not always in the same order or with the same synonyms. Their identity, nature, and mutual relationship have been understood in different ways by Christians throughout the millennia. Most Christians (including Adventists) favor the Trinitarian understanding, according to which none of these names can be equated with another, but all of them share the same divine nature.

Admittedly, this is a difficult subject. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit think, speak, and act always together in the world, since the oneness of God is real. Telling these divine Persons apart from each other, then, requires careful attention to the biblical evidence.

How Did the Spirit Act in the Past?

The Spirit is not merely a power, even though we created beings know and experience Him as power. Jesus Himself reminded us that the name “Spirit” (literally, “breath” or “wind” in the biblical languages) is given to Him because, like a powerful wind, He is invisible but effective (John 3:8). In the beginning, this power manifested itself as “the Wind of God,” as some translate Gen. 1:2.¹ The dove hovering upon the face of the water at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:16) reminds us that, at the beginning of Christian life, the same Power creates and enlightens again, for “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17).²

Scripture presents the Spirit of God as a moral power within the human conscience (Gen. 6:3) in order to “convict the world of guilt in regards to sin” (John 16:8). Subsequently, He appears as an intelligent power enabling the wisdom of righteous people such as Joseph (Gen. 41:38).

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HOLY Spirit

Pharaoh noticed this power, just as the people of Israel did when Saul was transformed “into a different person” (1 Sam. 10:6-11).

A very important Old Testament passage dealing with the concept of the Trinity can be found in Isaiah 63. In order to save Israel (verses 7, 8), God, “our Father” (verse 16), sent the “Angel of His presence” (verse 9) who often speaks as God Himself in the Old Testament. Tragically, the people to be redeemed, rebelled against their Savior and “grieved His Holy Spirit” (verse 10). In consequence, the prophets envisioned a future day, in messianic times, when a new covenant would be completed, with a *new* spirit in *new* hearts (Eze. 11:19, 20; Jer. 31:31-33).

These times were inaugurated with the “overshadowing” of Mary by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), which enabled her—being a virgin—to conceive a “holy being.” This special birth differed from the Spirit “filling” a merely human baby, such as His cousin John (Luke 1:15), for a particular life mission. John foretold a future immersion in the Spirit (Matt. 3:11), which Jesus explained as the new birth from the Spirit (John 1:13; 3:5-8), fostering an inner “new self” while the old decreases in power (Col. 3:10, 11). This presence is the “indwelling” of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9, NKJV). It is a permanent gift of God that makes us His daughters and sons and so heirs of eternal life (Rom. 8:11, 17; 1 John 3:1, 2). It is never denied to those who seek it sincerely (Luke 11:13).

This same Spirit also gives gifts that are diverse (1 Cor. 12:7-11) and are given to specific members (verses 27-31) “just as He determines” (verse 11). Their purpose is to enable specific actions within the concerted total mission of the church as an organic whole, namely, the body of Christ.

The mission of the church is greatly advanced by the “fullness” of the Spirit, which leads to renewed enthusiasm and boldness in Christian witnessing (Acts 4:29; Eph. 6:18-20). While the indwelling is permanent, the fullness of the Spirit must be sought repeatedly through prayer (Acts 4:31) and other inspirational forms of worship (Eph. 5:18, 19).

How Does the Spirit Support Christians Today?

As a believer, you are probably aware that the Spirit, in His moral-power capacity, awakens your conscience through God’s revealed will, the law (Ps. 40:8), which the Spirit revealed in the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:21), the Word that led you to Christ (John 5:39, 40). He is your *Paraclete*, or divine

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13).

Supporter (John 14:16, 26).

Less well assimilated is the fact that the Spirit enables each believer to be an intelligent part of the *ecclesia*, the ancient term for “assembly,” which is somewhat obscured by translating it “church.” None should feel relegated to a class of mere “lay people,” let alone an “audience” that simply sits in the pews. The Spirit of Christ empowers all believers gathering in His name to act with authority (Matt. 18:19, 20). This should lead them to take their assembly duties very seriously, both in disciplining erring members (verses 15-20) and in the selection and support of leaders (Acts 6:2-5).

After Christ there is no longer any separation between priestly and “lay” tribes. God’s people today are composed entirely of priests and priestesses (1 Peter 2:4, 5), whose anointing took place during their baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and, yes, the Holy Spirit. As such, you and I can participate in the task that defines all priesthood: to represent before God our fellow human beings who are in search of forgiveness, sympathizing with them in the awareness of our own weakness, inviting them into God’s presence, and interceding for them accordingly (Heb. 5:1, 2). While continuing to pray for the fullness of the Spirit, we should never forget that we already possess the “anointing from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20). ●

¹ See Gordon J. Wenham, - Biblical Commentary 1 (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987), pp. 16, 17.

² Except otherwise noted all Scripture quotations have been taken from the © New International Version.

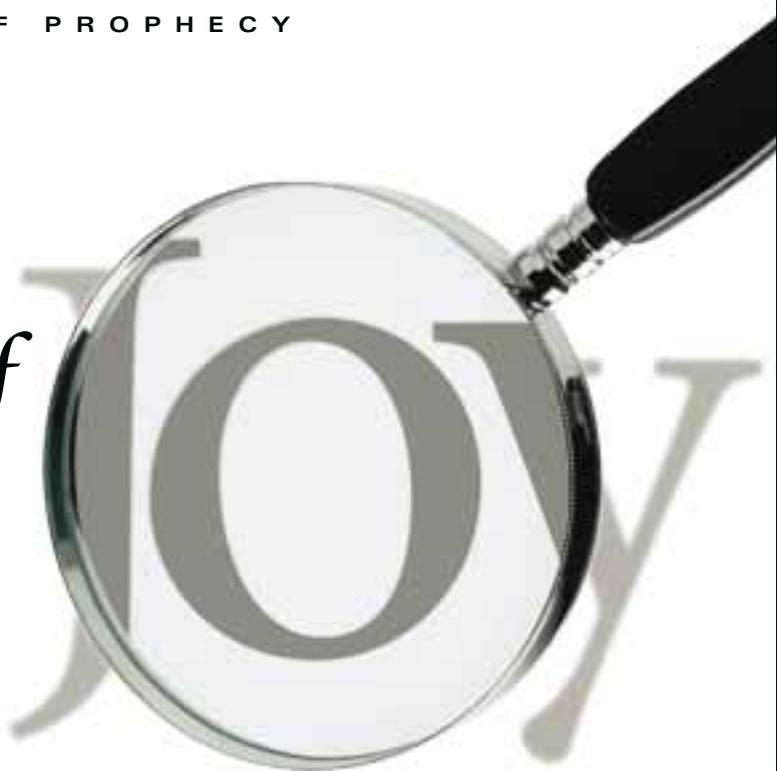


Aecio E. Cairus, Ph.D., a native of Uruguay, is professor of systematic theology in the Theological Seminary of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Philippines.

Through the Lens of

Joy

By JUD LAKE



Ellen White had every reason to be joyless. At the age of 19 she experienced a devastating accident that left her in bed for months and deformed for life. The “Great Disappointment” of 1844 left her youthful heart wondering why Jesus did not come. Her early visions were ridiculed and rejected by many who heard them. Her husband died at age 60, and two of her four children died in their youth. Throughout her 70-plus-year prophetic ministry critics worked feverishly to discredit her every word. Even some of her followers repeatedly rejected her counsels.

Joy in the Journey

Yet, in spite of all this opposition and discouragement, she would write in 1902: “Heaven is full of joy” and “resounds with the praises of Him who made so wonderful a sacrifice for the redemption of the human race.”¹ Those who will one day “join with the angelic choir in their anthem of praise must learn on earth the song of heaven, the keynote of which is praise and thanksgiving.” Such was her understanding of the role of joy in the Christian life. In the midst of trials and disappointments, Christians can learn that they have every reason to be joyful.

While commenting on Jesus’ words in John 15:11 she wrote:



Jud Lake, Th.D., D.Min., is professor of Preaching and Adventist Studies at Southern Adventist University and loves to share the joy of Jesus in his classroom.

“For all who receive Him

“Why should not our joy be full—full, lacking nothing? We have the assurance that Jesus is our Saviour, and that we may freely partake of the rich provision He has made for us. We may believe on Him, knowing that He will give us grace and power to do just as He bids us. He has given us every assurance that He will fulfil all that He has promised. It is our privilege to seek constantly the joy of His presence. He desires us to be cheerful and to be filled with praise to His name. He wants us to carry light in our countenances and joy in our hearts. We have a hope that is far above any pleasure the world can give; why should we not then be joyful?”²

Ellen White is very clear that the assurance of salvation, companionship with Christ, and the rich provision of God’s promises are mighty reasons to be joyful. “Christ dwelling in the soul is a well-spring of joy,” she declared. “For all who receive Him, the keynote of the Word of God is ‘rejoicing.’”³

Life’s Challenges and Frustrations

This understanding and experience of Christian joy did not come easy in Ellen’s youth, however. As a young girl, she experienced a major setback when, in the fall of 1836, she was hit with a rock thrown by a classmate that left her seriously injured. Convinced that she was dying, the young 9-year-old Ellen gave her heart to Jesus in simple faith. Several months later, on January 25, 1837, a dramatic aurora borealis lit up the New England sky. Young Ellen remembered the event

vidily, because her mother took her to the window and she saw the glow in the heavens, the “red and angry” lights that made the “snow” look like “blood.” The neighbors were frightened but young Ellen was happy. She thought Jesus was coming and clapped her hands as if her suffering were over. “But I was disappointed,” she later recalled; “the singular appearance faded away from the heavens, and the next morning the sun arose the same as usual.”⁴ The prospect that she must continue living in the midst of her suffering extinguished Ellen’s short-lived, childlike joy.

Over the next four years she struggled with discouragement and depression. Because of her poor health, she could not return to school and gave up her hope of an education—something she very much desired. “I was unreconciled to my lot,” she wrote, “and at times murmured against the providence of God in thus afflicting me.”⁵ She experienced strong feelings of guilt over her resentment. Her simple faith in Jesus disappeared, and she was left in darkness. This feeling was compounded by her belief in an eternally burning hell, exacerbating her fears and agony of soul.

theme in her understanding of the Christian life. “Our God is a tender, merciful Father,” she penned in 1892. His service should not “be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise.” Rather, it should be a “pleasure” for His children to take part in His service. “He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love.”⁸ Although Ellen experienced depression at times, she “struggled against the feeling” and affirmed: “I know that God wants His joy to be in us, that our joy may be full.” After all, “He has a heaven full of blessings, and these blessings He will give to us, if we will take them.”⁹

Her most memorable discussion of Christian joy is found in the last chapter of *Steps to Christ*, entitled “Rejoicing in the Lord”:

“Many, walking along the path of life, dwell upon their mistakes and failures and disappointments, and their hearts are filled with grief and discouragement. While I was in Europe, a sister who had been doing this, and who was in deep distress, wrote to me, asking for some word

[Jesus], the keynote of the Word of God is ‘rejoicing.’”

Blessed Assurance ... Jesus Is Mine!

Fortunately, a breakthrough in her spiritual experience occurred at the Buxton, Maine, Methodist camp meeting late in the summer of 1841. Upon hearing a convicting sermon on righteousness by faith, Ellen cried out to God for salvation. “As I knelt and prayed,” she recalled, “suddenly my burden left me, and my heart was light.... I can never forget this precious assurance of the pitying tenderness of Jesus toward one so unworthy of His notice.”⁶ The culmination of Ellen’s conversion experience was a counseling session in 1843, initiated by her mother, with the Millerite Methodist minister Levi Stockman. Ellen poured out her heart to Stockman, who in turn told her about the “great love of Christ and the plan of redemption.” This meeting with Stockman, followed by a significant prayer-meeting experience later that same day, transformed young Ellen’s entire Christian experience. She later wrote:

“My views of the Father were changed. I now looked upon Him as a kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant compelling men to a blind obedience. My heart went out towards Him in a deep and fervent love. Obedience to His will seemed a joy; it was a pleasure to be in His service.”⁷

This experience of joy in God’s service stayed with Ellen the rest of her life. It would become a significant component in her philosophy of Christian education and a distinctive

of encouragement. The night after I had read her letter I dreamed that I was in a garden, and one who seemed to be the owner of the garden was conducting me through its paths. I was gathering the flowers and enjoying their fragrance, when this sister, who had been walking by my side, called my attention to some unsightly briars that were impeding her way. There she was mourning and grieving. She was not walking in the pathway, following the guide, but was walking among the briars and thorns. ‘Oh,’ she mourned, ‘is it not a pity that this beautiful garden is spoiled with thorns?’ Then the guide said, ‘Let the thorns alone, for they will only wound you. Gather the roses, the lilies, and the pinks’ [pp. 116, 117].”

As Ellen White looked back over her own life she found every reason to be joyful. She still challenges us to discover the same joy today! ●

¹Ellen G. White, “A Word of Cheer,” *The Southern Watchman*, December 4, 1902 in *Ellen G. White Writings Complete Published Edition CD-ROM* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 2005), paragraph 2.

²*Idem*, “That Your Joy Might Be Full,” *Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1909, in *Ellen G. White Writings Complete Published Edition CD-ROM*, paragraph 4.

³*Ibid.*, paragraph 3.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 11; other eye witness accounts of this celestial event are found in Charles Bowen, *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1838* (Boston: Charles Bowen, 1837), pp. 80-83, accessible online at books.google.com.

⁵Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 13.

⁶*Idem*, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1915), p. 23.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁸*Idem*, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1956), p. 103.

⁹*Idem*, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1903, p. 32.

The Nurse Who Could Fight

By MARCOS PASEGGI

Pedro Kalbermatter was God's mighty warrior in the highlands of South America.

Pedro Kalbermatter looked through the window of the mission school in Azangaro, in the Peruvian high plateau between the Andes Mountains.* He knew this Sabbath was the day marked by his enemies to kill him first, then shoot the Indians, and finally break down the mission walls. He could see the dust of the mob approaching. It was led by landowners who would not accept that this "Protestant heretic," as they called Pedro, educated the Indians and taught them to quit drinking. The landowners' money depended on the Indians' slave work, and they knew drunken and disheartened Indians were easier to manage.

When Pedro had started to build the mission, more than 700 Indians had volunteered to help. Eventually, he came to gather a group of 1,200 faithful helpers. But on this particular day, more than half of his

Indians had already left in fear. Pedro felt alone.

Pedro decided he and his remaining Indians would fight and die for the mission, if necessary. He had some firearms and ammunition in a hole under his cot. He thought the time had come to use them. But he felt uneasy. Before retrieving his revolvers and shotguns, he knelt in prayer, asking God for guidance. As he prayed, great peace filled his soul. He heard God's voice telling him: "Mine is vengeance; I will defend you."

Pedro left his firearms and returned to the window. He decided he would go out and meet the mob, and so he told his assistant.

"But Master—said the Indian—you are going to get yourself killed."

"I'm going out," Pedro answered.

"Then at least take a firearm," said the Indian.

"I'm taking the best firearm" he said. "Give me my Bible."

Then he opened the front door and went out.

But how did a country boy from the Argentinian flatlands end up fighting for God on "the roof of the world"?



A Country Boy Surrenders His Heart

Pedro Kalbermatter was born into a family of Swiss immigrants who had moved to Argentina in the last decades of the nineteenth century. They lived on a farm in the prairies. From the time he was a little boy he had learned to take care of his father's sheep and protect them from lurking foxes and snakes.

Every evening, Mother Kalbermatter used to read to her family about the unending torments of hell awaiting those who did not behave, but those readings did not prevent the Kalbermatter boys from getting into frequent fights.

One day, however, a colporteur sold some religious books to the family and they began to read these books. Very soon they learned about the Sabbath, the Second Coming, and God's health principles. Convicted, the family decided to be baptized. Since they lacked a pool, a visiting pastor agreed to baptize them in the well they used to water the cattle. Now the neighbors saw that the Kalbermatter boys were not fighting anymore, and that they had quit smoking and drinking!

Pedro felt God wanted him to be



Marcos Paseggi is a professional translator and researcher writing from Argentina.



Left to right: A TALL AND BLOND INDIAN CHIEF: Pedro dressed in the costume of the Indians of the Andes highlands, where he worked as a nurse, teacher, and pastor for 20 years. [p. 7 of book/see footnote]

PART OF THE FAMILY: Shown are Pedro's parents and nine of his 11 brothers and sisters in the 1920s. Pedro was already working in Peru when this picture was taken. **REST OF A WARRIOR:** Just a few blocks from the school that prepared them for the mission field, Pedro and Mina await the glorious morning of the resurrection.



PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED BY THE AUTHOR

a missionary, so he decided to attend the Adventist school in the province of Entre Rios, but three months after Pedro got to the school, he was drafted into the army.

From Soldier to Nurse

In the army Pedro refused to work on Sabbath, so he was whipped, beaten, and finally taken to jail. Pedro, who had been always ready to fight, was now praying for self-control. After one year of misery and prison, he was finally set free.

Pedro returned to the Adventist school, where he became a nurse. Since he was single, he had no chance of being sent to the mission field, so he worked in the neighboring city of Rosario for seven years, where he also met another Adventist nurse called Guillermina (“Mina”), who would become his life companion.

Pedro and Mina got married and had two sons, but when they were invited to work in the Peruvian highlands, they gladly accepted. After days of traveling by train, truck, and boat, they got to their new workplace in the winter of 1919.

The situation they found was far from ideal. The Kalbermatters saw that

the Indians were mistreated and suffered destitution and neglect. However, every attempt to improve their condition was met with fierce opposition. The first mission school in the town of Saman was destroyed. Then Pedro went to Azangaro, where we find him on the day he went to meet an angry mob, armed only with the Scriptures.

The crowd could not believe their eyes. The Protestant heretic was walking toward them, unarmed. He was smiling. They told him they would kill him, and started firing into the air. But Pedro did not retreat. On the contrary, he assured them the school was there to stay. Finally, the mob rode away, victim of a strange fear.

That evening, Pedro conducted a thanksgiving service for being alive. From then on, the mission thrived.

God's Mighty Warrior

Pedro's methods of confronting opposition were not always understood by his fellow workers. Some of them thought that Brother Kalbermatter was sometimes too ready to fight. Finally he was summoned by the Adventist leaders. “You have only baptized 200 people

in three years,” they told him. “Stop fighting and spend more time spreading the gospel.”

Pedro humbly accepted the leaders' rebuke. The next time two pastors came to visit and baptize the candidates, they found Pedro had 600 people ready for baptism!

The following year, Pedro invited the church leaders to an Indian congress. Besides the local delegates, the congress was attended by Adventist leaders from the union, the division, and even the General Conference. Some of the delegates, however, did not make it on time. They were attacked as they were walking down the mountains. They were beaten, stoned, and trampled upon with horses. They finally got to the mission bleeding, with broken bones and severe bruises. Pedro began to treat them, but by now the Adventist leaders were really scared! When they tried to leave after the congress, a menacing mob formed and tried to stone them. But Pedro faced the mob, spurred his horse, and helped everyone to return safely home. After that incident, nobody ever criticized Pedro again. Everyone understood that Pedro was the man for his time, God's chosen warrior to spread the gospel under the most challenging circumstances.

As the years passed, Pedro became one of the most beloved nurses in the region. Even the landowners learned to respect him. More than once, Pedro cared for the same people who years before had sworn to kill him.

After 20 years of working in the highlands, Pedro and Mina returned to the farmland plains of Argentina, not far from the Adventist school that had prepared them for mission service. Until his death in 1968, he never ceased to tell of God's amazing protection, especially on that day when he faced a raging mob with the most powerful Book ever written. ●

*This article is based on Pedro Kalbermatter's own account in *Veinte años como misionero entre los indios del Perú* (Paraná: Nueva Impresora, 1950); and Barbara Westphal's *A Man Called Pedro* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1975).

QUESTION: *Please explain 2 Peter 2:4 (NIV): “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment ...”*

In this connection we should also consider a similar passage in Jude 6 (NIV): “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” Let’s examine the context, discuss the nature of the prison, and comment on the sin of the angels.

1. Context: Peter is discussing the work of false teachers. According to him, their presence among God’s people is not new (2 Peter 2:1). One thing is certain, however: they will experience the judgment of God. To support his argument, Peter uses three biblical examples of sin leading to judgment: the experience of the angels, the punishment of the antediluvians, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The context in Jude is similar. He also deals with false teachers, and his three examples of divine judgment are: the rebellion of the Israelites in the wilderness, the fall of the angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah. These cases show that God will intervene against false teachers. These passages are not specifically about the nature of the sin of angels, or about the place they are sent.

2. The Prison: Peter uses vivid language to describe the fate of evil angels. God “sent them to hell, putting them in gloomy dungeons.” In the Bible “hell” is the realm of the dead, the tomb. The common Greek word for “hell” is *hadēs*, which designates the place of the dead, the underworld. But in this case Peter uses a different word, a verb: *tartaroō*, “to cast into/to hold captive in tartaros.” In Greek mythology *tartaros* designated the deepest area of *hadēs*, reserved for the punishment of disobedient gods. Peter uses this image to express the idea that fallen angels are now in prisons of darkness and death, separated from the divine source of life. This is not a literal prison, because demons are still active in the world of humans (e.g., 1 Peter 5:8; Jude 9).

This is supported by Jude, who simply says they are chained and imprisoned in darkness. By the way, the phrase “gloomy dungeons” in Peter is sometimes rendered in Greek manuscripts as “fetters of darkness.” In the ancient world, prisons were in many cases dark dungeons, an appropriate symbol for the tomb (cf. Rev. 1:18). Apparently, ancient prisons did not have the purpose of incarcerating criminals as a form of punishment. Those in jail were often committed to hard labor. But in most cases, the prisoners were awaiting judgment or the execution of the penalty already pronounced against them (cf. Lev. 24:10-12; Num. 15:32-36). According to Peter, fallen

angels are incarcerated in spiritual darkness, in the realm of death, awaiting the execution of their sentence. They have already been judged.

3. The Sin: Neither Peter nor Jude tells us the nature of the sin of the angels. According to Jude, the angels “did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home.” The fall of the angels from heaven is described as abandoning their appointed roles in heaven, their original home. The common view among scholars is that Jude used Genesis 6:1-4, as interpreted

by Jewish intertestamental literature, to refer to the fall of the angels when they abandoned heaven and had sexual relations with women. They argue that the context in Jude is about sins of immorality. That interpretation hardly fits the context of Peter. Although one cannot totally rule out that possibility for Jude, it is always better to go with the witness of Scripture itself and avoid speculation. The idea expressed in both passages seems to fit Isaiah 14 better, where the fall of Lucifer is narrated: “You are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit” (verse 15, NIV); as well as Revelation 12:1-4, 7-9, where the casting out of the angels is preceded by a war in heaven.

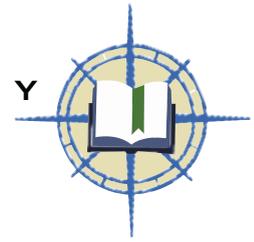
To conclude: The final fate of evil angels is fixed. Meanwhile, beware of false teachers in your church, and beware of their greed (2 Peter 2:2)! ●

Gloomy Dungeons for Evil Angels

By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ



Angel Manuel Rodríguez is director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.



R E V E L A T I O N ' S

End-time Conflict

By
MARK A. FINLEY

The book of Revelation in the Bible describes the age-long conflict between Christ and Satan. Throughout history Satan has attempted to destroy God's plan for this world. He has attacked and persecuted God's people. He has deceived people through His falsehoods and manipulated minds through his lies. The evil one has used torture and death to accomplish his purposes.

In spite of this oppression, Christ's followers have not yielded their faith. Their love for Jesus has kept them secure in times of fiercest opposition. Their commitment to His cause has kept them loyal in the face of life's greatest trials. In today's lesson we will study how we can triumph with Jesus over all of the forces of evil and reign with Him through all eternity.

1. Where did this conflict between good and evil begin?

"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought" (Rev. 12:7).

The conflict began in _____.

In your own words, describe why you think God allowed such a conflict to break out in heaven.

God respects His creatures' ability to choose. To take away their power of choice is to take away their opportunity to love. To take away the opportunity to love is to take away their ability to think, reason, and be truly free. Beings who are not free are in bondage or slavery. God's love longs for His created beings to experience life in all its fullness.

2. Who won this first battle in heaven?

"And the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not _____, nor was a place found for them in _____ any _____" (Rev. 12:7, 8).

The devil and his angels lost this first battle in heaven. In fact, the devil has never won a battle against Jesus. Jesus is the Conqueror whose almighty power is placed at the service of every disciple who seeks to remain faithful to Him.

3. Where did the devil go when he was cast out of heaven?

"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9).

The devil was cast to the _____.

The devil has made it his special work to deceive and destroy God's people through the centuries. Revelation 12 tells the story of his attempt to destroy Jesus when He was born, and persecute His people throughout the centuries. Although Satan has always oppressed God's people, the war will intensify in the last days.



4. On whom will Satan focus his attacks in the last days?

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17).

Satan will make war with those who _____ the _____ of _____

and have the _____ of _____.

The word “offspring” means “descendants of.” The King James Version of the Bible translates this expression as the “remnant.” The remnant, or descendants, of our Lord are those men and women who remain loyal to Jesus and faithful to His commandments. Through His grace they stand firm for the truth of His Word.

5. Revelation 17 reveals that there will be a massive church/state alliance in the last days. Oppression and persecution will replace religious freedom. How does Revelation describe this union?

“These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast” (Rev. 17:13).

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army” (Rev. 19:19).

This confederation of church/state powers is of one _____.

They oppress God’s people and eventually gather _____

to make _____ against Him.

6. Who will win earth’s last war?

“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

The _____ will _____ them, for He is

_____ of lords and _____ of kings.

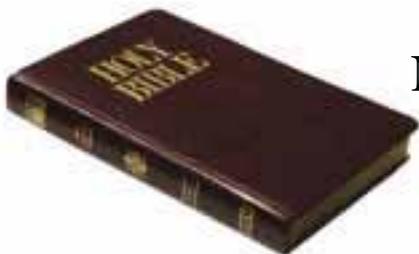
7. How will this war eventually end?

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever’” (Rev. 11:15)!

The _____ of this world have become the _____

of our _____ and of His _____.

Good news on the way! Satan and all his evil forces will be defeated and destroyed. God’s eternal kingdom will be established. We need not fear; we’re on the winning side. Christ and His kingdom will triumph at last, and we will triumph with Him.



Next month’s study will focus on
“**Revelation’s Last-Day Church.**”

LETTERS

Creation and the Creator

Thank you, Angel Manuel Rodríguez, for your honesty in answering the question about teachers in Adventist universities who no longer believe in a six-day literal creation (see “Honoring the Creator God,” July 2009).

Here’s another question: What should Adventist leaders do to stop professors from teaching that God did not create the world as told in Genesis? It seems they must be held responsible for hiring evolutionists and allowing them to teach their beliefs in classes at Adventist schools.

MARILYN MORGAN
Kettle Falls, Washington,
United States

Disturbing Trend, or Numerical Error?

In the July 2009 *Adventist World* article “Into the Russian Federation,” the region is listed as having 51,875

Adventist members and a church growth of minus 1 percent. That is discouraging news. I worked in Russia for the Euro-Asia Division for 15 months in 1992/1993 and the membership was bigger at that time. In the 2006 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook*, the membership is listed as 143,459 members. Either they have lost an awful number of members, or the figure in *Adventist World* is incorrect.

JAN T. KNOPPER
Australia

Thank you for your letter. While you have correctly stated membership figures from the 2006 Yearbook, it must be noted that those numbers reflect the entire division, not just the Russian Federation. The 2009 Yearbook states that the Euro-Asia Division’s membership is 136,900.

—EDITORS.

Thanks; and a Request

Thank you very much for publishing *Adventist World*. We are really blessed by this publication. I have a request: in following issues could you deal with the 144,000 and the seal of God? I think, in our time and age, these topics need greater emphasis placed on them.

N. KHUMALO
Belmont, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Correction

Sir Patrick Linton Allen, the Seventh-day Adventist pastor who is now Governor General of Jamaica, is a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and not a Knight Commander as was erroneously reported in the August 2009 issue of *Adventist World*. We regret the error.

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 the 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

Please pray for my health and that God’s grace may abound in my life and in the church’s work in the Central African Union.

ELEVE, Cameroon

Pray for my brother who will be undergoing heart surgery. Also pray that I get a job.

TABITHA, Kenya

I am about to become engaged, but my boyfriend and I are not of the same faith. Pray that the Lord shows me what will be better for my future.

VALERY, Haiti

I really need a job in which I don’t have to work on the Sabbath. I worked at one of the biggest broadcasting companies in Malaysia, but I know Jesus really missed me being in church every Sabbath.

VIA, Malaysia

Please pray for my fiancé and me. I lost my job due to the financial crisis and do not have work. I ask God for patience, wisdom, and humility.

WENDY, England

We are living through a very dark period here in the Republic of Congo—assassinations, rapes, fires—especially in Kanyabayonga, Kirumba,

Kaina, and Kitsumbiro. Please ask the Lord to intervene.

BUSIKU, Democratic Republic of Congo

We are starting a new musical group with young people from a church in La Paz, Bolivia. We want to use our talents to let other people know about Christ and the three angels’ messages. Please pray for us as we embark on this endeavor.

MARCO, Bolivia

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.

Update: AWR *Turning to Radio in Southeast Asia*

On July 16, 2009, Adventist World Radio began airing programs in the Lao language to listeners in the country of Laos. “This is a historic occasion,” says AWR president Ben Schoun, “as this is the first Adventist media broadcast to the people of Laos in their own language. In addition, with our launch of Thai programs last fall in Thailand, we now have complete coverage of southeast Asia. We will soon add programs in Hmong, for listeners scattered throughout southern China and the northern areas of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand.”

“It has been said that Buddhist countries become the grave for Christian missionaries,” says Surachet Insom, AWR Thailand coordinator. “Thailand is a country where the Adventist message has been preached for a century, yet there are only 12,000 people who have accepted the gospel. The church has tried its best methods to convey the message to Thais, with very few results. The population has greatly increased in the last few decades, and the challenge for the church is how we can communicate Christ to vast groups of people. Radio ministry has come to the attention of some church leaders and members.”

AWR’s Thai programs started being broadcast in October 2008, via shortwave and four local radio stations. Millions of people are being reached, and stories are already coming in of how this radio ministry is shaping the lives of listeners.

In the northern province of Lumpang, a housewife named Pornsawan called and asked for “Treasure of Health” lessons. Later she came to visit the local church and introduced her friends to *New Life Radio*. One of her friends, Natchahathai, is a former devout Buddhist. A new Christian, Natchahathai was still looking for “better light.”

She came to the Adventist church, where she learned about the true Sabbath and was moved by the Adventist health message.

After Natchahathai met with Pastor Insom, she made a commitment to quit drinking coffee the next day. She is now helping with the radio program and is telling others of her newfound truth. Although Natchahathai has been warned by her former church pastor and friends not to join the Adventist church, her husband has joined her in Bible studies.

Insom says: “Please pray for Thai Buddhists who hesitate to attend Christian evangelistic meetings but listen to our radio program in their own homes. This is the key to our new approach to millions in Thailand.”



Top: ON AIR: Students volunteer to record for the young people’s program in Lumpang, Thailand. **Bottom: RADIO PERSONALITY:** A live radio program in Lumpang, Thailand, with Mrs. Sompong, who is a well-known radio speaker; she was trained by AWR.

ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO

“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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The *Adventist World*, an international periodical of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The General Conference, Northern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists®, is the publisher.

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Adventist World is published monthly and printed simultaneously in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Korea, and the United States.

Vol. 5, No.9

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

He Should Have Already Come...



This month, a reader shares a conversation about the end of time.

Not long ago, we traveled to a friend’s wedding. On Sabbath afternoon, some friends invited us to go with them to visit one of their favorite places near where we were staying. We visited the place, which boasted a wonderful view overlooking a valley. Then they suggested that we continue on with them to another spot they liked. We agreed.

We got there about an hour before sunset, and the gate was closed, but there was a large group of young people standing around inside. We were allowed to enter, and some of the friendly young people came and spoke with us, explaining that they had come to this country place to spend the weekend and to get some religious training—a sort of spiritual retreat. Many of them were college students, or worked in the big city nearby.

We talked about religion and about their beliefs. As we talked with the leader, he reminded us that the time of the end is near. He said, “Remember all the tragedies of 1999?” And he mentioned the earthquakes, floods, and other problems that year had brought. He went on to say, “The earth as we know it should have ended then. But God, in His mercy, chose to delay the end, so that more people could know Him and be saved.”

A bell rang as we were talking. The young people filed into a meeting room and began harmoniously singing choruses. It almost felt as though we were on an Adventist campus for sundown worship. In reality, we were visiting Thailand, and this place was a Buddhist temple. The teacher and students were not talking about Christian beliefs, but rather their own Buddhist beliefs.

Leaving the place, we talked about how the conversation that sounded so “Adventist” was really a conversation with non-Christians. What is the difference between our beliefs and theirs? Obviously, less than many of us think. But it revolves around the great gift of salvation by grace. We do not have to do good in this life, hoping to be reincarnated into a better body and eventually, if time lasts long enough and we’re good enough, we might reach Nirvana*. God has sent His Son so that we can be saved—not through any work of our own, but through His blood. We don’t have to live many lives in order to reach heaven. All we have to do is believe, and we will have eternal life (John 3:16).

Salvation is a gift. But we should live each day in grateful recognition of what God has given us, for of all the religions of the world, only Christianity has a loving God who gives salvation to His children. Can you imagine why anyone who has received a gift so great would *not* want to tell the whole world about it? What are you waiting for?

—RONALD VYHMEISTER, *Silang, Cavite, Philippines*

* A Buddhist term describing the absence of care, pain, or desire.

The
PEOPLE'S
PLACE

ADVENTIST LIFE

I was a very young and timid girl at the time I had an incredible experience. One evening I went to a small town in Brazil with my mother and three sisters. After getting some sewing material Mother needed, we were on the return journey home. It had already become quite dark, but the sky was filled with brilliant stars.

We walked fast, but one of my sisters and I fell a bit behind the

others. I looked to the right side where trees and a couple of houses stood—one of which belonged to a member of our church. That's when I saw a beautiful, shining angel. He was covered with a radiant light. He was flying toward heaven. I exclaimed, "An angel!"

My mother turned to look but

saw nothing. Many years have passed since that night, but I still see him before me wherever I go as I claim the promise in Psalm 34:7: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them." (NIV).

—Mirtes Miers, Clanton, Alabama, United States

SHARE WITH US!

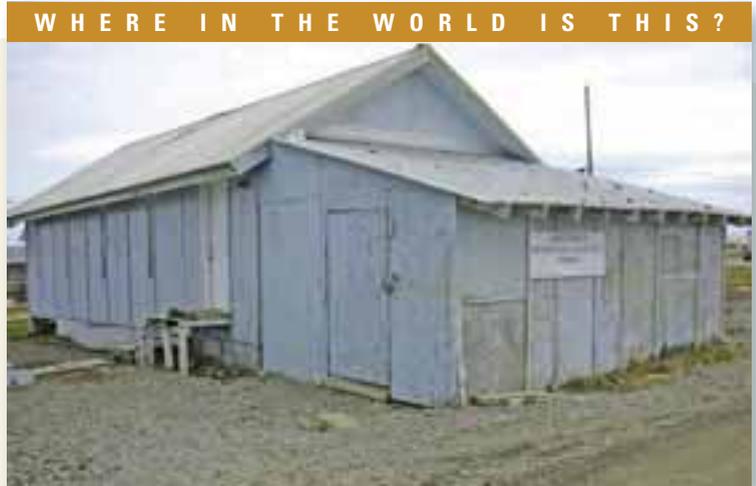
The People's Place is a cornucopia of items from across the world; these are short slices of life that will make readers think, laugh, and enjoy their Adventist family more. We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

QUOTES (profound or spontaneous)

ADVENTIST LIFE (anecdotes, humorous or profound)

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR (high-quality photos *with* short biographical profiles of newly baptized members, Adventists engaged in active community service, or small groups undertaking new efforts in sharing the gospel; maximum words: 75).

E-mail to marank@gc.adventist.org; fax to 301-680-6638; or send to World Exchange, *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 USA.



JUDY THOMSEN

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"When what you have in your hand is not enough of what you need, when you give it to Him, what is in your hand becomes your seed."

—Pastor Daniel D. Saugh, during his sermon entitled "What's the Catch?" at the Meadowvale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario, Canada

ANSWER: In Savoonga, Alaska, United States, Adventists attend church in this building, which is located off Alaska's coast on St. Lawrence Island. The Savoonga Seventh-day Adventist Church has 38 members. When a pastor or conference worker comes from the mainland, members readily gather for singing and a prayer meeting. See this month's special feature inside for more on the church in Alaska.