

January 2012

ADVENTIST WORLD



Faithful Under *Fire*



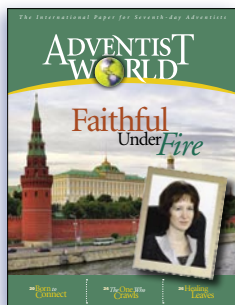
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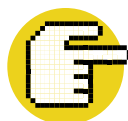
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Change ... and Faithfulness

As you open this sixty-fifth edition of *Adventist World*, you'll notice several modest but important changes that we hope will increase the value of this faith-building journal to you and all those with whom you share it.

- A brighter, easier-to-read Table of Contents, helping you to quickly find favorite sections and columns;

- A redesigned World News section, highlighting stories you need in order to stay informed about the progress of the church in nearly 200 nations;

- A new look for the "Bible" pages in the journal—Angel Rodríguez's "Bible Questions Answered" and Mark Finley's "Bible Study";

- A reimagined "Idea Exchange" in the magazine's last four pages, full of facts, prayer requests, letters, and survey results that keep you connected with millions of fellow believers around the globe.

Our commitment to bringing you the best that Adventism has to offer—in news, mission stories, health information, Bible study, Adventist Heritage, and devotional reading—hasn't changed at all, however. The team of dedicated professionals who produce this magazine—assembled from seven countries and speaking six languages—begins each edition with prayer and bathes each part of our production process in prayer. We know this magazine changes lives: you tell us so, in dozens of letters from everywhere each month.

Pay special attention to this month's cover feature, "Faithful Under Fire." Andrew McChesney's remarkable story of a young Adventist woman in the Russian government is a powerful witness to the best this movement has to offer in both loyalty to God and service to others. Ponder your own commitments as you read, and pray for the many Adventists whom God has called to serve in government positions around the world.

Keep the kingdom always before you.

Bill Kauts



WORLD REPORT

Adventists Do Good in Bahamas, Prime Minister Says

■ The national leader of the Bahamas applauded the Seventh-day Adventist Church recently for its contributions to society and ongoing work in the community.

Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham called the church a "beacon of faithful service and Christian stewardship in our country," citing Adventist work among young people and in support of strong families and healthy lifestyles.

"You've also made an important contribution to education in the Bahamas, molding the lives of young men and women who have, in turn, contributed to the community and national development," Ingraham said.

The prime minister's comments came during the October 30, 2011, dedication ceremony for the new headquarters of the church's Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission. The administrative region oversees Adventist Church work in the Bahamas, Cayman

Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Previously the union mission served a constituency of nearly 30,000 Adventists from temporary headquarters in the Summer Winds Plaza, also in Nassau.

Ingraham previously commended the Adventist Church when the Bahamas parliament voted in May to recognize the church's then newly established Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission as the legal entity of the church in the Bahamas. Church leaders first created the union mission when they split the former West Indies Union Conference into two administrative regions to recognize church growth and financial autonomy in the Caribbean.

Israel Leito, president for the Adventist Church in Inter-America, told Ingraham that Adventists in the Bahamas appreciate the high



COMMENDATION: Bahamas prime minister Hubert Ingraham commends the Adventist Church during the October 30, 2011, dedication of new headquarters for the denomination's Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission.

ABEL M. RODRIGUEZ/IAAD

Continued on next page ▶

WORLD REPORT

level of religious freedom the country's government grants.

In his keynote address Leito also reminded the audience why they had gathered—to dedicate not the building itself, but the people who work there “to serve God’s people and the community.”

Brazil Previews *The Great Hope* Book Effort

■ Hundreds of South American Seventh-day Adventist leaders and their spouses spent a late 2011 Saturday morning distributing copies of *The Great Hope*.

The missionary sharing book is a modern-language version of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White’s *The Great Controversy*, which traces God’s leading throughout history and provides answers for today’s unsettled world.

Adventists worldwide have pledged to share millions of copies of the book with friends and neighbors in 2012 as part of the world church’s Revival and Reformation initiative. In the church’s South American Division alone, leaders plan to distribute 52 million copies of the book. The region is known for wide-scale literature distribution campaigns.

The October 29, 2011, distribution was a preview of the main distribution, which is set to begin in March 2012, church leaders there said. In one region of Brazil alone, more than 120 pastors and their spouses handed out 5,000 copies of *The Great Hope*. Similar distributions were conducted in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina, Chile and Brazil.

One recipient, restaurant owner Rosa Maria Dantas Ferreira, welcomed the copy of *The Great Hope* she received. She told church leaders that



NEUBER DE OLIVEIRA

HERE’S “HOPE”: An Adventist pastor hands a copy of *The Great Hope* to a convenience store employee in Brazil. Adventist leaders in South America distributed thousands of copies of the missionary sharing book on October 29, 2011.

the book was the motivation she needed to seek God.

Ertion Kohler, Adventist Church president for South America, said the distribution comes at a time that people worldwide are looking for answers. *The Great Hope* offers a balanced Biblical perspective on the world’s final events, he said.

In Germany, Adventist Chaplain Honored for Saving Babies

■ An 11-year effort in the Berlin, Germany, district of Zehlendorf, to save infant lives has been recognized by the national government. Gabriele Stangl, chaplain of the Waldfriede Seventh-day Adventist Hospital there, was awarded the Federal Republic of Germany’s Medal of Merit in a ceremony led by Steglitz-Zehlendorf mayor Norbert Kopp.

The “baby hatch” is a specially constructed box, with sensors, but without video surveillance, where an infant can be placed anonymously. “If a mother opens the door and places a newborn in the warming bed,” Stangl



STATE HONOR: Seventh-day Adventist chaplain Gabriele Stangl, with Norbert Kopp, district mayor of Steglitz-Zehlendorf, Berlin, at a ceremony during which Stangl received the Federal Republic of Germany’s Medal of Merit for her work with abandoned babies

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explained, “sensors send a delayed alarm to the continuously manned gatehouse, so that the mother has enough time to leave the area undetected.” The baby will be immediately brought to the hospital’s nursery, and receives any necessary medical care. Foster families are assigned to care for the children, who can be reclaimed during an eight-week period; otherwise, the children are made available for adoption.

Stangl got the idea after counseling a dying 80-year-old woman who’d regretted the death of her baby, as well as others who were concerned about being identified as being pregnant, for various reasons. The north German city of Hamburg had established a similar refuge, and Stangl, working in her spare time, established such a program at Waldfriede. During its 11 years of operation, about 20 infants have been placed in the baby hatch, and another 110 women were able to anonymously give birth at the hospital.

The 91-year-old Waldfriede Adventist Hospital has 170 beds and served 9,000 inpatients and 18,000 outpatients last year.
—Herbert Bodenmann, *Adventist Press Service, Switzerland*

Cuban Adventist Pastors Meet in Historic Retreat

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba gathered its 150 ministers and their families for a historic retreat in Santa Clara last fall. The event, which took place September 23-25, 2011, became the first in 50 years to gather so many pastors and family members to unify and network as they strive to shepherd the fast-growing church on the island.

“It has been such an accomplishment to gather our ministerial body

LETICIA DE LOS SANTOS/IAD



CUBA MEETING: Ministers and their families gathered to participate in the first pastoral retreat of its size held in Santa Clara, Cuba, on September 24, 2011. The event allowed pastoral families to unify and network as they strive to shepherd the fast-growing church on the island.

for this council,” said Pastor Aldo Perez, president for the church in Cuba. “We came together to share spiritual messages, spend time with pastoral families, pray together, and unify efforts to continue the great mission to spread the gospel.”

Nearly 400 met at the Canaan campground in central Cuba to participate in messages addressed to ministers, the ministry of pastors’ wives, and the nurturing of pastoral children.

Hector Sanchez, ministerial secretary for the Inter-American Division, spoke and encouraged pastors and their families to continue serving God as chosen leaders endeavoring to fulfill the mission of the church to a needy people on the island.

“Councils like this give the pastor and his family the opportunity to renew their commitment and calling and feel that their church has not forgotten nor abandoned them,” said

Sanchez. “It’s about the identity of the pastor coming together with his identity as a husband and father.”

It was the end of a four-region visit across Inter-America for Pastor Sanchez, one that he will never forget. “It was an indescribable experience to be with our pastors, pray with them, and hear of the great blessings taking place throughout the church in Cuba,” he said.

Leticia De Los Santos, director for shepherdess ministries for the church in Inter-America, spoke to pastors’ wives on how to develop a strong supporting ministry in the church and addressed dozens of children of pastoral families on their purpose and legacy in an uncertain world.

Organized in 1905, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba has more than 32,000 church members worshipping in more than 280 churches and operates three conferences, one mission, and a seminary.

Wilson *Visits* Japan, Encourages Adventists, Quake Victims

Gets briefing on evangelism's challenges in nation

By SUKHEE HAN, NSD Communication Director, with Adventist World staff



■ The challenges of evangelism in an unfriendly environment were brought home to Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference president, during his visit to Japan in November 2011.

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has had work in Japan for more than 100 years, there are only approximately 15,000 church members in a nation of 128 million people. In 2009, according to statistics, 261 people joined the church in Japan, but 207 either died or were listed as “dropped or missing,” meaning a net gain of only 54 people.

Asking about this, Wilson was told by local leaders that Japan is a highly secular society, and that it is difficult to bring the Adventist message to people unfamiliar with and largely uninterested in Christian teachings. They also conceded that some Adventist members might have lost their enthusiasm for evangelism over the years.

“I realize that the Japanese Adven-

tist Church is faced with many difficulties and challenges, but the Lord will surely do a miracle here if the church is armed with God’s Word and the Holy Spirit,” Wilson told Japanese church administrators in response.

Spending approximately a week in Japan, the world church leader was joined by Nancy Wilson, his wife, as well as Northern Asia-Pacific Division executives Jairyong Lee, president, and Akeri Suzuki, executive secretary. Masumi Shimada, president of the Adventist Church in Japan, welcomed the group to Hiroshima, the first stop in Wilson’s multicountry visit. A port city and military center for Japan’s Imperial Army, it was destroyed by an atomic weapon on the morning of August 6, 1945.

“Although Hiroshima was devastated by an atomic bomb,” Wilson told 400 students and church members who gathered in the auditorium of Hiroshima Adventist High School, “it has

been developed as a symbolic city of peace through indomitable willpower and the courage of the Japanese people. When we stand firm upon God’s Word, depend on the Lord, and do our best in preaching the gospel of ultimate peace, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Japan will be definitely revived.”

Also in Hiroshima, Wilson met Sumiko Ueki, a survivor of the atomic bombing. Now 83 years old, she worked at a Hiroshima munitions factory. The factory was just 1.2 miles (two kilometers) away from the bomb-struck area, but fortunately she had a narrow escape from death. After that incident she sent her daughter to an Adventist school, and she herself later became an Adventist.

On November 2 the group went to Okinawa and visited Okinawa Junior High School, where students performed traditional Okinawan music. Leaving the school, they went to the place where Adventist U.S. Army



Opposite page: WILSON PREACHES IN JAPAN: Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference president, preaches at a church in Japan during his recent visit to Seventh-day Adventist congregations and institutions there. Adventism has been active in Japan for more than a century.

Above: HIROSHIMA SURVIVOR: Wilson and his wife, Nancy, are among those meeting Sumiko Ueki, an 83-year-old survivor of the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Jaiyong Lee, Northern Asia-Pacific Division president, is in the center of the photo. **Left: YOKOHAMA HEADQUARTERS:** Jaiyong Lee, Ted N. C. Wilson, and Masumi Shimada, Japan Union president, pause for a photograph outside the regional Adventist headquarters in Yokohama.

NSD PHOTOS

medic and conscientious objector Desmond Doss saved the lives of his fellow soldiers during the war, and were reminded of Doss's dedication to the Lord and the nation. Doss, who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, died in 2006.

In the evening, church members heard Wilson speak on revival at the Okinawa Adventist School. Among those in the congregation was Pastor Saburo Arakaki. He was sentenced to

death for murder during World War II and imprisoned in Hawaii. However, he repented while in prison and fortunately was given a special amnesty. Coming back to Japan, he studied theology and became a minister.

When they spoke after the meeting, Wilson told Arakaki he appreciated his efforts in developing mission work on Okinawa as well as the establishment of an Adventist school there. Arakaki thanked Wilson for visiting

Okinawa as a world church president, and said he is praying for Wilson.

Traveling to the tsunami- and earthquake-stricken city of Fukushima by bullet train after a flight back to the Japanese mainland, Wilson told local church members from that city and neighboring Sendai that the global Adventist family stood with the area's victims.

"On behalf of Seventh-day Adventists around the world, I give my deepest condolences to those in the Fukushima and Sendai areas who are still suffering from the affects of the tsunami, earthquake, and radiation release," Wilson said. "Psalm 121:2 says, 'My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.' The Lord alone keeps us from all harm and saves us. As no branch can bear fruit by itself, we should be close to the Word of God, who is our Creator, our Redeemer, our Savior, and our Lord. I hope you can overcome all your sufferings through His words and finally triumph in the name of Christ."

On Sabbath, November 5, 2011, Wilson spoke to 1,300 members at the Yodobashi church in Tokyo's Shinjuku district.

Wilson said, "As the name 'Seventh-day Adventist' reveals, we are a unique and special people who have a mission to preach the good news of the Lord's second coming. This work must be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit."

During his trip to Japan, Wilson visited several church institutions, including the Japan Union Conference, Tokyo Adventist Hospital, and several Adventist schools. The journey also took him to the Republic of Korea and to the 2011 year-end meetings of the church's Northern Asia-Pacific Division. ■

Adventist World editor Bill Knott recently talked with General Conference president Elder Ted Wilson about the church's historic decision in late 2010 to issue a public appeal for change.

Fifteen months ago General Conference leadership committed itself, in a very public way, to a personal experience of revival and reformation. They issued a call to the church, which we published in the January 2011 *Adventist World*, urging church members everywhere to look seriously into their own lives as well as our life together. You have traveled to every continent (except Antarctica) this last year, and you've been sampling the church's engagement with this idea. What have you heard?

The response has been phenomenal, and I believe it's due to the power of the Holy Spirit, in addition to the work and prayers of many dedicated people. This illustrates what revival and reformation is about, as outlined so beautifully in 2 Chron. 7:14: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (NKJV).

This call from church leadership has struck a resonating chord in the hearts of church members because committed believers recognize that this church is more than just another denomination. It has a destiny and a real purpose – a heaven-born mission. The reason a person became a Seventh-day Adventist may have become a little bit dusty in his or her life, but when they take the time to reflect, they remember why they joined this movement, or why they chose to stay. Then comes the recognition that we need to prepare ourselves and others for Christ's coming, and we do that through our submission to Him. We don't work our way to heaven and



One Year Closer *to the* Kingdom

engage in salvation by works. We come to the Lord and ask Him to fully control us, realizing that we are completely dependent on Christ for our salvation.

Do you think the emphasis on revival and reformation has changed the leadership culture of the church, and if so, in what ways?

Yes, I do. In many cases it seems to have created a much sharper picture of urgency on the part of many leaders. They recognize why we are in administration—not to perpetuate a complicated organization, but to proclaim a message, to prepare a people. That recognition seems to have changed a number of leaders.

Even in this building [the world headquarters]?

The impact is especially visible here. We don't want to major in the minors. We want to focus on the important things. We want to be Christ-like in our relationship with others, within our work, realizing that our ultimate objectives are larger than job security and self-preservation. Our objectives become heavenly objectives as we see a much bigger picture than ourselves, and the Great Controversy theme becomes more vivid in our thinking.

You've implied that revival and reformation is not a program, and there seems to be a lot of evidence for that. I've followed this from the beginning and have never seen a particular methodology enacted as part of this initiative. And yet it's everywhere around the world already. That suggests believers are appropriating revival and reformation in very personal ways.

Absolutely. I also think it has increased our awareness as administrators and leaders for the need of simple, humble prayer. Just this morning in the GC Administrative Committee we had a substantial prayer session. There's something about praying together—asking for God's wisdom, and not simply offering an introductory prayer.

Most of the emphasis I've heard in the last year has focused on the revival part of Revival and Reformation. But there's clearly a sequence here. What do you see reformation coming to mean? It will take a while, undoubtedly, to unfold in the life of the church. How does a Seventh-day Adventist Church that has been reformed look different than the one we see now?

I think it will appear in a more simplified manner. Life will become starker in its comparisons. Decisions will be

made because of strong Biblical principles, not for expediency. Reformation will take place in the way that we deal with matters of eternal consequence. It will change the way we use our money in the church, and personally. It will change our use of time and talents. Reforming means to change something: if nothing ever changes, then we've just gone through a meaningless exercise.

In my own personal life, it means addressing issues such as how do I make the time for spiritual growth in spending time with the Lord in my busy program? Am I spending the necessary time to walk two miles (3.5 km) a day? Am I organizing my time so I will get adequate sleep?

As leaders, it causes us to ask how we will look at large issues that affect the entire church. With our educational system, how will we make our schools as redemptive as possible and as Seventh-day Adventist as possible? How will we organize our local churches so they aren't simply performing a routine Sabbath exercise, but will truly feed us from the Word of God and motivate us to do practical missionary work? How will it change our view on what we eat and how we share our precious health message with our neighbors? How will godly reformation change our entertainment habits and all kinds of lifestyle choices? What will it do for our evangelistic outreach—personally, and as a worldwide church?

You believe that the momentum which began with this initiative has a long trajectory?

Revival and reformation is the foundation of everything we are building on until the Lord comes. It's not just a declaration: "In five years we will all be reformed." It has to be a daily experience, and it has to focus on the relationship each one of us has with Jesus.

You suggested some corporate reforms as well as personal ones, and you used the term, "simplified." Can you elaborate?

The world is far too busy and complex, and some simple order has to emerge sometime or we'll all be overwhelmed by the complexity of life. I think the Seventh-day Adventist message brings a simpler approach to how we order our personal lives and our common life together.

We need to live with a sense of balance that only comes as the Holy Spirit leads in our lives. We can't do these things on our own. The "simple" aspect of life doesn't guarantee that your life necessarily becomes less complicated, but perhaps it will become less frenetic. With the leading of the Holy Spirit, you'll learn to put things into proper perspective and priority.

We don't have to do everything as a last-day movement: we can't do everything. So we have to prioritize. One of the biggest hazards of being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian in these last days is that the devil tries to distract us in every possible way from the mission objectives of the church. He wants our lives to become so complicated that we are simply running around, not focusing on priorities. The Holy Spirit helps us to get our personal and corporate priorities straight. It's like the re-set button on a computer. The computer jams up and we get frustrated. Just re-set it or pull the battery out, and start over.

Out of that change comes a new path, a clearer, simpler structure that lets you again see your way toward an objective. For many church members who are living the daily life of faith in very challenging situations, where there is no institutional culture around them, what does it mean to talk about revival and reformation?

I think it gives them an anchor, not only in the present, but also in the future. It's something that helps guide them toward an ultimate restoration of what it means to be a son or daughter of God. For many who don't have a lot of material goods in this life, it's much easier to comprehend the value of eternal life.

For those of us who seem to have been blessed by living in cultures where we have considerable material gain, our lives are actually more cluttered. The ones who have less can often see more clearly the ultimate picture of restoration. Those of us who are distracted with the comforts with which we surround ourselves aren't quite sure whether we need to have that future immediately or want stay around here a little longer.

It's no secret that the church in the southern hemisphere is growing more rapidly, more dynamically, than in the northern hemisphere. That's a big generalization, but are we being taught something by the way the Lord is working in what we used to call developing nations? Are we learning from them?

I'm not sure we are learning from them as much as we should, but they are certainly teaching us something. I hope we are learning that life is more than just achieving. It is submission to the Lord and to values that far exceed anything we could gain on this earth. We're all being taught lessons by believers in developing regions who are modeling what it means to give everything we have and everything we are to the Lord and His cause. ■



A One-Day Church

Namatunu, Malawi

"It's just a small way from town. Just 20 minutes."

We accepted Elijah's assessment of the distance and settled down for a 20-minute ride through the stony Malawi hills from Blantyre to Elijah's village.

About 20 minutes later we broke free from the congested city roads and began threading through the hills with Elijah and Richard, two of Maranatha's Malawian employees.

They pointed in various directions along the way. "See, right there on the hillside gleaming beside the thatched roofs. We built that church up there! And down there beside the sugarcane—that's a church we built too!"

Two hours later Richard stopped at the top of a long hill and pointed far across the valley. "That's where Elijah lives."

And that's when Elijah took over, telling the story of learning about Jesus from a colporteur who had sold him a copy of *The Desire of Ages*.

Richard drove another five minutes down the road, and then Elijah called for a stop.

"When I heard that Maranatha was going to be building churches in my country, I knew we would have to have one for our church. We asked a landowner how much it would cost to buy a lot large enough for a brand-new One-Day steel church. He sold us this plot right here for US\$1,000."

Just off the road, clinging to the red dirt hillside, gleamed a brand-new one-day Church.

"We didn't have any money," Elijah continued, "but one of our elders said we ought to raise chickens to pay for the land. I went to town and bought 16 chickens—one for each family—and we dedicated them here, asking God to make those chickens make so many chickens that we could sell many eggs and many fryers and pay the owner his \$1,000 so we would have a place to plant a new Seventh-day Adventist church."

We watched as the church members walked toward us from beneath the steel roof of their new church home, singing a song of thanksgiving.

The One-Day Church program is a collaborative effort between the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI), and Maranatha Volunteers International. These stories come to you each month from Maranatha's "Storyteller," Dick Duerksen.



Urinary Tract Infections

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

The doctor tells me that I had an antibiotic-resistant urinary tract infection. I had to take an expensive antibiotic by intravenous infusion. I was very ill. Can you tell me more? I'm nervous now, and I want to do all I can to prevent a recurrence. I'm a 45-year-old woman, married, and the mother of two children, ages 14 and 16.

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are quite common in women. In fact, every year 12 out of 100 women ages 20 to 24 come down with an infection. More than 40 percent of women experience one UTI in their lifetime, and some 25 to 33 percent experience more than a single infection.

The most common germ causing this infection is called *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*); during the past few years an increasing number of these germs have become resistant to multiple antibiotics. These organisms are resistant to antibiotics because they produce an enzyme that destroys the “beta-lactam” antibiotics. They have been called extended-spectrum beta-lactamase-producing organisms, or ESBL for short.

E. coli that have a special ability to cause UTIs do so by attaching themselves to glycoproteins in the wall of the bladder. These *E. coli* are specifically dangerous to the urinary tract because they possess small fimbriae (fingers) that stick them onto the cells of the bladder, which keeps them from being easily washed off. Some of these *E. coli* also secrete toxins that damage the bladder lining and promote infection.

The bladder, in its defense, pro-

duces substances that give some resistance to the infection, and the kidneys also produce proteins that coat the fimbriae on the *E. coli*. UTIs represent a failure of these defense mechanisms.

As women grow older and become postmenopausal they are at an increased risk of UTIs, because the vaginal bacteria that keep the vagina acidic and slow the growth of *E. coli* there, called friendly lactobacilli, decrease in number. Similarly, antibiotic use also may decrease the number of these lactobacilli. The female anatomy makes it easier for colonic bacteria (*E. coli*) to get into the bladder. A variety of recommended methods—such as the direction of wiping and the use of douches—have not been shown to reduce the risk of urinary tract infections.

Prevention, which is our emphasis in this column, would suggest that drinking copious amounts of water—enough to ensure clear-colored urine—might be helpful to women with a urinary infection. This makes for natural and frequent flushing of the bladder. Naturally, any anatomical abnormality that can be corrected should be treated. Cranberry juice, if available in the region of the world in which you live, makes the urine acidic and possibly blocks the adherence of the bacteria to the bladder wall. Lactobacilli to populate the vagina have been administered as a probiotic in capsule form, but evidence of the efficacy of such measures in reducing the incidence of UTIs is lacking.

In the postmenopausal woman, topical vaginal estrogen cream may help reestablish the vaginal cells and lactobacilli, in turn creating a more acidic environment that inhibits *E. coli*.

Studies are not uniformly supportive of such treatment, however. Despite the increase in highly resistant forms of *E. coli*, there still are a few strategies to combat urinary tract infections. A form of antibiotics called carbapenems have to be given by intravenous route, but are capable of eradicating ESBLs.

Urine cultures will often show sensitivity to cheaper, more common antimicrobials, and these should be used for symptomatic UTIs. An antibacterial medication called fosfomycin has been used in Europe and Japan, and so far seems to be a satisfactory medication when given as a single three-gram dose. It cannot cure kidney infections and sepsis, however, and is not indicated for these serious infections. In the laboratory clavulanic acid seems to be effective against ESBL-producing *E. coli*, but in practice it has not been as successful.

Research continues with various combinations of antibiotics. In the meantime, drinking lots of water and other fluids, impeccable personal hygiene, and possibly the use of local estrogens if postmenopausal, are a woman's best hope of staying clear of UTIs. ■



Allan R. Handysides, a board-certified gynecologist, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is associate director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

We love the book of Daniel! Many of us enjoy a familiarity with this prophetic gem dating back to our childhood: the furnace, the lions, the stunning accuracy of its prophecies. But hidden beneath all this lies an amazing story about prayer and the supernatural. Perhaps more than any other place in Scripture, God briefly parts the curtain between the seen and the unseen and gives us a tantalizing peek at what happens when we pray.

Prayer Power

Daniel, by now a senior citizen, knows that God's people and city are not faring well. The restoration of Jerusalem faces serious opposition. In response to this crisis, Daniel fasts (Dan. 10:3) and prays. At the end of 21

days he receives a vision. Awestruck, Daniel can hardly breathe; he lies flat on the ground and can't stop shaking. An angel touches and strengthens him—he cowers on the ground on his hands and knees (verse 10).

The angel then says, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you" (verse 11). How encouraging! In response to earnest prayer God acted by sending an angel to Daniel—as He had done already in the previous chapter (Dan. 9:23).

The angel continues: "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, ... *your words were heard*; and *I have come because of your words*" (Dan. 10:12). Incredible—God acts in answer to our prayers!

Digging Deeper

But wait, you say—Daniel was praying twenty-one days ago. What was the holdup?

The next verse is, in our minds, surprising, perhaps even baffling, and definitely one of the most intriguing passages of Scripture. Listen as the angel explains what happened "on the way":

"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia" (verse 13).

What? He got "held up" on the way? got "stuck" with this "prince" for the 21 days Daniel had been fasting and praying? What prince, and why (and how?) did the prince hold him up? What kind of resistance did the prince offer? And

“Because of Your Words”

*A glimpse
behind
the curtain*

By
BILL and HEATHER KRICK

why did the angel need “help”—as if he couldn’t accomplish what he was attempting to do without that help?

Evidently God sent the angel “from the first day,” but no answer appeared for 21 days because of supernatural background action.

To make matters more intriguing, the Hebrew word translated “prince” occurs 420 times in the Old Testament but not once does it refer to a king.¹ This has led some translators to render the Hebrew of verse 13 as “spirit prince” (NLT),² “angel prince” (TEV; Message),³ or even “guardian angel” (CEV).⁴ Many commentators⁵ then conclude that this “prince” against which the angel struggles (again in verse 20) is actually an evil supernatural being whose assignment is the people of the Persian Empire.⁶ Whether the angel wrestled with a supernatural or human prince, it is clear that Cyrus was hindering the path of success for God’s people.

unknowingly reiterated the unspoken cry of our world as she was about to fall asleep. She asked: “Does God really hear me when I pray? There are millions of people in the world.” Psalm 33:13-15 says: “The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. . . . He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.”

Second, *a delay doesn’t mean God isn’t working in the background*. Perhaps there is a difficult, seemingly impossible situation with a spouse or a child, and when you prayed, things seemed to get worse. When God seems to be deaf, passive, uninterested, and far removed—remember the angel’s words to Daniel. God heard Daniel’s humble, submissive prayers *immediately*, but supernatural background action caused a delay. “Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly. . . . Each angel has his particular post of

if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless, and fail to realize our dependence upon Him.”⁹

So what happened with the angel of Daniel 10? “For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus. . . . The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus.”¹⁰ For some reason, still unclear to us, it “is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.”¹¹ If you are interceding for others, be one who decides to “pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1). Your words are heard! And in the grand scheme of the great controversy between good and evil, God has somehow decided that He will *act* when we *pray*, and answer when we ask. ■

¹ F. D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1955), vol. 4, p. 859.

² Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

³ Bible texts credited to TEV are from the *Good News Bible—Old Testament*: Copyright © American Bible Society 1976; *New Testament*: Copyright © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976. Texts credited to Message are from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

⁴ Scripture quotations identified CEV are from the *Contemporary English Version*. Copyright © American Bible Society 1991, 1995. Used by permission.

⁵ Ellen White allows for this possible interpretation: “For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 572). *The SDA Bible Commentary* also allows for this. However, commentators such as William Shea believe the word refers simply to one of Cyrus’ senior officials. See William Shea, *Daniel: A Reader’s Guide* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2005), pp. 236-238.

⁶ If the “spirit prince” interpretation is adopted, it need not be confused with the “territorial spirits” concept used often by Pentecostal/Charismatic interpreters; note that Daniel nowhere attempts to command the demon of Persia to be cast out.

⁷ Ellen G. White, in *Bible Echo*, Dec. 1, 1892.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up*, p. 370.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Our Father Cares*, p. 100.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 572.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 525.

When God seems to be deaf, passive, uninterested, and far removed—remember the angel’s words to Daniel.

What About Our Prayers?

There are a number of important lessons involving *our* prayers:

First, *from the moment we begin to pray, God hears us*. How eagerly, almost impatiently, parents wait to hear their child’s first words. They listen carefully for those memorable one or two syllables. As our children grow older we still eagerly wish to know their needs, and hear ourselves saying: “Don’t cry. Just *tell* me what you need.” How much more will our Lord strain His ears to hear our every prayer. “A divine hand is reached toward you. The hand of the Infinite is stretched over the battlements of heaven to grasp your hand in its embrace.”⁷ What a thrilling picture of God—eagerly leaning over the banisters of heaven and reaching down to us.

Recently our 8-year-old daughter

duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage.”⁸

Sometimes God allows delay simply for our good. Up to age 27, I (Heather) was praying for the right husband, if indeed I was to be married. Did God hear my prayer immediately? Certainly. Did He answer it immediately? Seven years I waited for “Mr. Right,” who also was waiting on God for the answer to his prayers. Looking back, I’m so glad for the seven-year delay! “God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see



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As a young boy I particularly cherished the 15-minute mission story presented at church each Sabbath. It was a time to hear about extraordinary people who were living incredible experiences in countries I'd never heard of before. They were missionaries, leaving their country for many years to talk about Jesus with people who had never heard His name. Looking back, I realize that those missionary stories likely were a catalyst for my spending 11 years in Africa later in my life.

Today as I ponder the mission offering statistics of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I remember listening with rapt attention to the latest mission stories, while my parents donated to mission service 65 cents for every dollar they returned for tithe. Such financial commitment to mission is rare now; it's down to four cents for each tithe dollar.¹ Could the reason be that the sharing of mission stories such as those I treasured in my youth has become almost nonexistent in most local churches?

It's true that local church needs have exploded—and it's easy to understand why, especially in large towns and cities. Taxes and city regulation expenses such as security, parking facilities, and so forth have skyrocketed. But the issue is more complex than that. My fear is that we have lost sight of the bigger picture, such as why the Adventist Church exists, its *raison d'être*. Is it to ensure that we have top-of-the-line technological equipment? that our air-conditioning is working properly? that the color of the carpet matches the church pews? I don't think our pioneers had the same concerns. Mission was their primary focus.

When the church first sent missionaries to various regions of North America and beyond, leaders realized

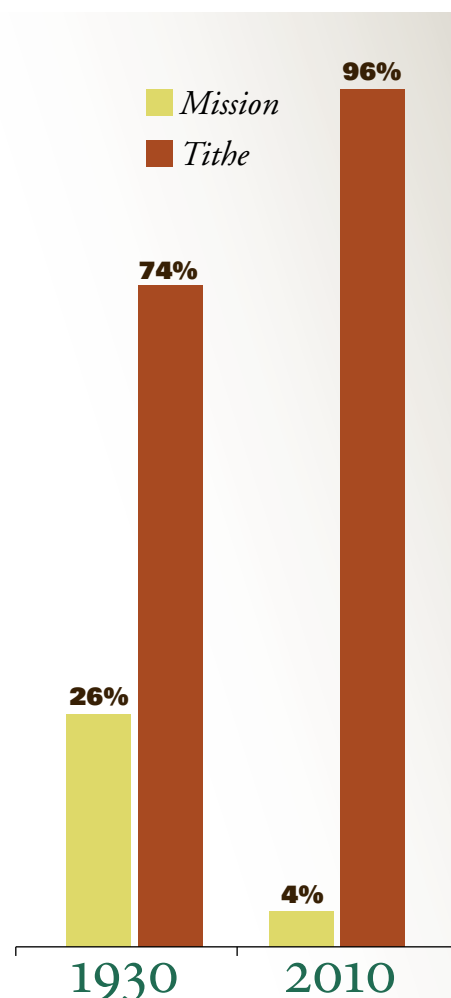
The Ever-Pre Sense

By JEAN-LUC LÉZEAU

they didn't have a regular inflow of funds to sustain the missionaries in their work. None of the pastors at that time received a regular salary. Instead, church members would provide them with monetary gifts when they felt impressed to do so. Most of those members, however, worked hard just to sustain their families. Missionaries, therefore, didn't venture out to parts unknown with a contract in their pocket indicating how much they would earn. So, because of the church's deep-rooted sense of mission, church leaders turned to God's Word in quest of a solution. They studied the biblical principles of tithing, and then introduced them to the church body.

Ellen White encouraged her husband, James, to call the ministers together and to ask J. N. Andrews to conduct a Bible class on what the Scriptures presented as a plan for sustaining the ministry. This study took place in Battle Creek in 1859. At the end of the meeting the conclusion was that "the tithing system is just as binding as it ever was.... Let us call it Systematic Benevolence on the tithing principle."²

As the church grew and expanded





sent. of Mission

Are we losing focus?

its outreach, members played an increasingly vital role in sustaining mission through regular freewill offerings in addition to tithing. They were eager to complete the Great Commission and share the gospel message with the world. Church members rather than leaders initiated the practice of collecting money during church services, and it was only years later that this practice was introduced as an official church offering. Over time, an entire system of offerings developed. Mission was always the focus of these offerings.

The Sabbath School Offering originated in 1878, with the goal of helping to support the *mission* in Australia.

The Investment Fund started in New York in the 1880s, and again this offering was designated as part of the World Budget Offering for *mission*.

The Birthday/Thank Offering began in 1905 and is part of the World Budget Offering for *mission*.

The annual world **Ingathering** solicitation was initiated in 1908, and, again, *mission* was to benefit from these moneys.

The Week of Sacrifice Offering started in 1911 and was designated for

the World Budget Offering for *mission*.

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering project began in 1912. Part of this offering is designated for special *mission* projects.

For years mission offerings have been the greatest single source of funding for Adventist missions. As Seventh-day Adventists we are part of a church that is unique in the way it manages money. Church members who faithfully return their tithe and give offerings can say that they are participating in the world mission of our church. As far as I know, no other church has such a system. It's a blessed one; it's based on biblical principles; and it has enabled the church to send thousands of missionaries throughout the world, including unentered territories. But there are so many territories yet to reach.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have lost focus somewhat on why we're here, our *raison d'être*. Are you not weary of the state of the world in which we live? Is not your soul longing for Jesus' soon return? If so, then consider the following:

1. Be sure your church uses the Adventist Mission DVD short stories, and/or

the mission bulletin frequently to keep members apprised of mission offerings.³

2. When an offering is called for, ask the person scheduled to make the appeal not to neglect mentioning the mission connection.

3. Be liberal in your giving to mission.

The last time I checked, God's mission for His end-time church had not changed. It's still: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19, NIV). Let's show our commitment to sharing the gospel worldwide through both prayer and mission offerings. ■

 To learn more, go to www.adventistmission.org

¹ "General Conference Treasurer's Report," presented by Robert Lemon, General Conference treasurer, April 6, 2010, at the General Conference Spring Meeting, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

² J. N. Loughborough, in *Pacific Union Recorder*, Oct. 6, 1910. Cited in Arthur White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years*, vol. 1, p. 388.

³ Materials available at www.adventistmission.org



Jean-Luc Lézeau wrote this article as associate director of the General Conference Stewardship Department. Lézeau is currently project manager for *Adventist World*.



Faithful

Under *Fire* *The story of Russia's Oksana Sergiyenko*

By
ANDREW
MCCHESNEY

“Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isa. 58:1).

Tension filled the conference room in Moscow. Around the long table sat the Russian prime minister and other top government officials. It was summer 2008, and the cabinet of ministers had gathered to consider spending cuts amid the global recession.

The ministers concurred that plans to increase pension payments must be canceled. But one ministry official disagreed.

“I’m a believer,” said the official, Oksana Sergiyenko. “I don’t know how we will be able to do this. But if we decide today not to freeze pensions and to at the very least adjust them for inflation, God will bless our country.”

Then an amazing thing happened. The ministers unanimously agreed to adjust pensions for inflation annually.

After that, God came through, said Oksana’s brother, Alexei Sergiyenko, who related the story about the cabinet session.

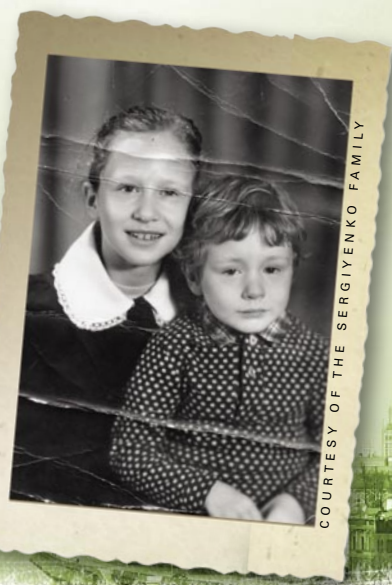
“God blessed us in such a way that the price of oil nearly tripled in value between late 2008 and 2011,” said Alexei, a stock market analyst with Sberbank, Russia’s largest bank. “The budget line for pension payments has always been met.”

And that’s not all. Just weeks after Oksana spoke up, the prime minister promoted her to the post of deputy finance minister.

Oksana Sergiyenko, who ascended to the highest government post of any Seventh-day Adventist in Russia’s history, fearlessly expressed her love for God while cherishing her country, setting an example for all Adventists that they can faithfully serve God and country at the same time.

Oksana’s whirlwind career started when she moved to Moscow, broke and homeless, and landed a Finance Ministry job, rising to the upper echelons of government in a decade despite deep hostility over her faith. She died on August 30, 2011, after a struggle with cancer. She was 37.

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that



Left to right: SAYING GOODBYE: Oksana Sergiyenko's brother, Alexei (left), holds the hand of his mother, Larisa (right), at Oksana's funeral service in a Moscow cemetery. **CLOSE SIBLINGS:** Oksana (left) and her brother, Alexei, in gradeschool.

COURTESY OF THE SERGIYENKO FAMILY

you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry ... ?” (Isa. 58:6, 7).

Oksana loved Isaiah 58, and she clung to its promises of blessings when she stood up for the retirees at the cabinet session, her brother said.

But that wasn't the first time that a biblical principle had allowed Russia to prosper. In 2003 and 2004, as billions of dollars from high oil prices flowed into government coffers, Oksana and her boss, then-finance minister Alexei Kudrin, called for a special government fund to collect the windfall. Oksana spent days and nights drafting plans for the stabilization fund, which she saw as Russia's answer to the counsel God gave to Joseph to store grain during the seven years of plenty for an upcoming famine.

Sure enough, lean times arrived with the 2008 recession. The finance minister received praise from around the world for his farsightedness in stashing away more than \$200 billion. Scarcely a word was uttered about Oksana's role—and she liked it that way.

“She never wanted praise. She only wanted to make things easier for Kudrin and the other leaders,” said her mother, Larisa Sergiyenko, a former economist.

But Oksana wasn't always like that.

Born on March 19, 1974, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Oksana grew up a proud and ambitious child, her mother said. An avowed atheist, she had one goal: to be first.

After graduating with an economics degree from a college in Uzbekistan, she set her sights on a career in Moscow. She and Alexei, four years her junior, arrived with no money or a place of their own. They stayed in a friend's apartment and later moved into a dormitory while Oksana completed graduate work in economics.

Times were tough. Sometimes Oksana and Alexei lived for a week on a single loaf of bread. Some days they ate nothing. It was during that period—the most difficult and

miserable in her life, her brother said—that Oksana prayed to God for the first time.

Oksana said in a January 2010 interview that she also started reading the Bible—and found the secret to happiness.

“We are born selfish. When a baby comes into this world, he says, ‘Give me!’ He doesn't say, ‘Here you are.’ He says, ‘Give, give, give,’” Sergiyenko said in the interview with 3ABN Russia television. “For many years I was like this. But when I met God, He showed me a completely different way of life. He said it is better to give than to receive. . . . When I began . . . to give rather than to receive, I began to receive incomparable blessings.”

One blessing involved work. Oksana didn't want a routine job, so she boldly telephoned the Central Bank, the Economic Development and Trade Ministry, and the Finance Ministry. None had placed a job vacancy advertisement. But the Finance Ministry invited Oksana in for a job interview, and subsequently offered her an entry-level position with a salary of \$100 a month in 1999.

Oksana didn't care about the money, her family said—an attitude that set her apart as a true patriot.

“If you ... call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, ... then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth” (Isa. 58:13, 14).

In 2000 Oksana made what she called the most important decision of her life. She was baptized. “I entered into a covenant with the Lord,” she said in the television interview. “My life radically changed.”

Oksana embraced Adventism with reluctance. Her mother had been baptized years earlier, but Oksana and her brother had shunned her pleas to befriend God. Indeed, the two siblings grew so furious with their mother that at one point they threw her out of the home they shared in Uzbekistan. “I'm very ashamed now about how we treated her,” said Alexei, who was baptized a year after his sister.

Once Oksana took her stand for God, she determined never to attend a government meeting or conference on Sabbath. Many times the gatherings were rescheduled so she could participate.

“I've never had a problem with this issue because I have put it in God's hands,” Oksana said. “God blesses me, and people at work see that.”

She also credited the blessings in her life to the amount of time that she spent with God—an hour every morning. “Even if I get only two to three hours of sleep, I set my alarm an hour early so I can spend time with God reading His Word,” she said.

The awards began to flow in. Her mother now has Oksana's collection of framed letters from the president, finance minister, and other senior officials recognizing Oksana's patriotism and contribution to national security. In 2007 then-president Putin decorated Oksana with the Medal of the Order for Service to the Fatherland, second rank.

But Oksana's activities went beyond drafting macroeconomic models for Russia's prosperity. She made God a part of her workday in ways seldom seen in corporate offices, much less in government ministries. Oksana hosted a weekly prayer group for ministry officials in her office. She organized Easter and Christmas concerts at two different ministries and invited Adventist musicians to perform. The ministries' concert halls were packed to their 200-person capacity, her family said, and Oksana made sure that every audience member left with a gift—a brand-new Bible.

Oksana explained in the TV interview that faith is often little more than a formality if a believer doesn't actively share God with others.

"If we buy a new washing machine, television, or some other kind of technology that eases our workload, makes our lives more comfortable, or helps us save money, we tell our neighbors and friends about it right away," she said. "How much more important it is for us to tell others who haven't seen God's light about the love of God that we as believers have found."

Oksana also prepared what she called a "spiritual gift"—a gift bag containing a Bible, mail-in Bible studies, and a DVD of her and her brother preaching at an Adventist church. She presented the gift bags to senior Russian officials on birthdays and religious holidays and to foreign ministers and even flight attendants on business trips.

Satan took notice. One of Oksana's biggest trials erupted days after the broadcast of the 3ABN television interview when a newspaper accused her of spending more time promoting Adventism than engaging in government work.

"According to sources in the Finance Ministry, prayers, religious seminars, and Bible studies are held weekly in Sergiyenko's office," said the report in the *Vek* newspaper.

"In the breaks between these activities, if there is time, the ministry officials work on budget planning," it said.

The newspaper also darkly hinted that Oksana was on the payroll of American spies who wanted to damage Russia's national interests.

The article was picked up by other media outlets and caused a storm in a country where the Russian Orthodox Church is the dominant religion and Protestants, including Adventists, are denounced as members of a sect. Lawmakers in the Russian parliament asked the prosecutor general's office to investigate.

The resulting inquiry delved into every facet of Oksana's life. Government agents scrutinized not only her work but also her childhood, studies, family, friends, and faith.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SERGIYENKO FAMILY



Left to right: COLLEGE DAYS: Oksana (center) with two classmates at the college in Uzbekistan where she earned her first degree in economics in 1996. PRECIOUS MEMORIES: Oksana, already a deputy finance minister, and her mother, Larisa.



But they failed to find one mistake or hint of wrongdoing. The investigation's results echoed the biblical account of the government officials seeking to find some charge against Daniel: "They could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him" (Dan. 6:4).

Prosecutors realized that Oksana was faithful to God, and that made her more faithful to her country. They were forced to admit that Russia needed her as a top economist.

The investigation was closed. Oksana kept her job.

Oksana, meanwhile, pressed ahead with her outreach efforts. The literature she most liked to pass out was *Hidden Treasure*, an Adventist sharing newspaper that she distributed in apartment blocks nearly every Sunday for eight years, Alexei said.

The newspaper's circulation soared from 300,000 copies per month in early 2010 to 1.7 million copies a year later, an astounding growth credited in large part to Oksana's example.

"Your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard."



Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am' ” (Isa. 58:8, 9).

Oksana took her passion for sharing God to the hospital where she, weakened with cancer, was admitted in June 2011. She immediately ordered Bibles for all the other patients.

As the pain grew more intense, she seemed to sense that she wasn't going to get well. On August 29, as her mother left her bedside for the last time, Oksana told her, “Mama, I love you very much.”

The last passage Oksana turned to in her Bible was Psalm 31:15-17: “My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me. Make Your face shine upon Your servant; save me for Your mercies' sake. Do not let me be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon You; let the wicked be ashamed; let them be silent in the grave.”

Alexei's wife, Svetlana, stopped by the hospital that night. The two women prayed together, and Oksana ended her prayer, saying, “Dear Jesus, take me to You.” She then fell asleep.

Her mother, who warmly welcomed me into her home several weeks later to talk about her daughter's life, acknowledged that she could not understand why Oksana had died. “This was her first illness, and it proved terminal,” she said.

But perhaps Oksana's biggest opportunity to share God was yet to come.

As a stateswoman, Oksana qualified for a state funeral, and one of her final wishes was for her pastor to officiate.

Alexei, however, came under tremendous pressure when he organized the funeral in two parts: 30 minutes for an Adventist service and 30 minutes for a government service. Government officials who did not identify themselves called his cell phone, warning him right up to the night before the funeral that he should not try to use his sister's death to promote Adventism and that no statesmen would attend alongside Adventists.

Alexei refused to yield.

Most statesmen did stay away. But several government leaders joined Finance Ministry officials at the funeral and, after listening to the half-hour Adventist service, used their own 30 minutes to wholeheartedly praise Oksana—and her love for God.

“Love has left our home,” one official said.

Another said: “Her faith in God helped her work and energized our work.”

“It's sad that she passed away so early, after only 37 years,” said a third official. “But her Jesus died even younger at 33.”

One official compared Oksana to a shooting star: “She shone brightly, and then she was gone.”

The Adventists in attendance were deeply moved by the tributes. “When I heard those beautiful words at the funeral, I wished that the day would come when people could say the same about me,” said Vasilii Stolyar, vice president of the Euro-Asia Division.

God's name was glorified even at her funeral. God's name can be glorified again in the life of every Adventist who works hard and faithfully serves God and country. That's how Oksana would have wanted it. ■

“If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday” (Isa. 58:10).



Andrew McChesney is a journalist living in Russia.

NUMBER 23

Born *to* Connect

By
CINTIA
PASEGGI

God's perfect design for families is based on close relationships

I will never forget that moment. Three hours earlier I had given birth to my firstborn, and now the nurse was walking into the room for the first time with my baby. He was crying, but on hearing my voice, he immediately stopped even though I had not touched him yet.

I had just experienced one of the most sublime moments of my life—the beginning of a new relationship with a human being whose safety, security, and protection depended entirely on another human being, his mother. Without realizing it, I was stepping into a new dimension of marriage and the family.

A Belief Like No Other

Families are not typically remembered as a fundamental belief because it is something we live out daily, we are *in* it—we do not usually pause to ponder it as an essential doctrine. However, Seventh-day Adventists acknowledge that “marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus.” We also affirm that “God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity.” Furthermore, we believe that “*increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message.*”¹ As we approach the final stages of the great controversy, it is this closeness we should strive for, foster, and emphasize. The obvious question, of course, is *how* to do it.

A Resource Like No Other

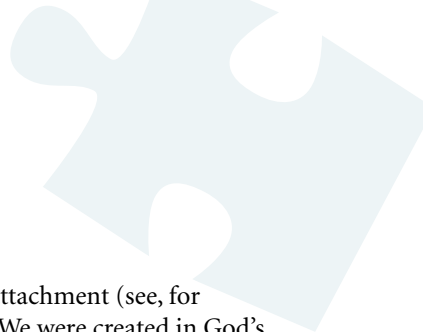
In 1950 the World Health Organization asked English psychiatrist John Bowlby to study the mental health of homeless children in postwar Europe. In his report he noted that in order to be mentally healthy, it is essential for an “infant or young child [to] experience a warm, inti-

mate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment.”² Over time Bowlby named this bond “parent-child attachment.”³ Every single human being in the world was designed by God to seek a secure base in their caregiver, especially when feeling distressed, and it is thanks to this secure base that a person can develop the confidence to go out and explore the world. The parent-child bond is affectional and social; it takes time to build, and lasts a lifetime.⁴

When a baby is born, he or she has certain needs, mostly physical. However, these needs are interpreted by the baby as also psychological. When mom and dad feed, warm, and protect their child, he or she will feel safe and secure. If those needs are met consistently, babies learn over time—usually the first few years of their life—to trust others. Likewise, they learn to trust themselves, realizing that the cues they are giving to make their needs known are the appropriate ones.

As mom and dad care for and love their baby adequately, their child begins to understand his or her worth. *Somebody takes the time to care for me, so I must be worth it*, the child begins to comprehend, and thus self-esteem starts to develop. At the same time, babies begin to esteem or value the person who is taking care of them. When children experience these significant situations of intimacy in which care is given, they learn how to connect appropriately with their caregiver, as well as future intimate relationships.

Another important dimension of attachment is that of control and how to exert it adequately. When babies' complaints are met adequately, they learn to exert control in their immediate surroundings in a healthy way, controlling both themselves and others.⁵



A Design Like No Other

This is God’s perfect design for young children to develop secure attachment with their caregiver, originally designed by Him to be mom or dad. As a child grows older, he starts to expand his attachment, or deep affectional bonds, toward others, be it relatives, peers, or teachers. As adolescence or young adulthood is reached, this attachment bond is increasingly directed toward the opposite sex. When as parents we follow God’s plan to care and love our children, we prepare them to be responsible, self-reliant adults who can choose with sound criteria. They will be secure individuals who trust and value themselves and others, who know how to interact with appropriate intimacy and how to adequately control themselves and their surroundings.

It is very likely that young people with a secure attachment will choose their life partners wisely because they have the tools to do so. When you have a good, sound marriage, chances are that you will have a healthy family, raising securely attached children. And so the circle comes to a close.

Following His design

God’s perfect design for families to thrive is based on relating and connecting to each other, because He is a relational God who seeks connection with His children. He says: “As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you” (Isa. 66:13); “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). Time after time, biblical authors remind us that the secret for a successful relationship with

God is based on closeness and attachment (see, for instance, James 4:8; Heb. 4:16). We were created in God’s own image (Gen. 1:26), which includes the essential need to bond, to connect, first with our caregivers and then with our peers, relatives, and friends.

These bonds cannot always be explained: “The link is a mysterious one which binds human hearts together,” wrote Ellen White.⁶ But even as we struggle to single out and name every component of God’s model, we are asked to follow His ideal. And within that context a secure attachment bond is the best legacy that parents can leave their children: a legacy threaded throughout a person’s life, knowing no boundaries or cultures.

The design is perfect. It depends on you and me to ask God’s help to carry it out as He first intended it (Ps. 25:4). ■

¹ See wording of fundamental belief in sidebar. (Italics supplied.)
² John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1951), p. 11.
³ See John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (London: Routledge, 1988).
⁴ See Graham Music, *Nurturing Natures: Attachment and Children’s Emotional, Sociocultural and Brain Development* (Hove, Eng.: Psychology Press, 2011).
⁵ See Laurie Anne Pearlman, *Trauma and Attachment Belief Scale Manual* (Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services, 2003).
⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 587.



Cintia Paseggi worked as a counselor for college students and as a psychologist in Argentina before she moved to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, where she is the proud mom of two young boys.

Marriage and the Family

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the

love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance

of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6.)

Where Is GOD When You Need

By JOHN
SKRZYPASZEK

Him?

Ellen White's struggle with pain

of adverse physical circumstances. “During the past four months of pain and infirmity, I have constantly implored God for help.”² The intensity of her struggle was horrendous. “I felt as if my body were being crushed. . . . I could hardly move any of my limbs. I did not know where I was.”³ “The past night was an almost sleepless one.”⁴ “The night has been long and trying. I lay awake from half past ten till half past two, so full of nervous pain that I

Of the many inspiring chapters in Ellen White's classic on the life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, the one entitled “Lazarus, Come Forth.” The spiritual insights seem to emerge from the depths of an author who keenly understands extreme emotional turmoil, a time during which nothing matters or makes sense. Such moments inflame the soul with a thirst for God's presence and for the touch of His guiding and healing hand. Here the yearning of the human heart stretches over the barriers of unexplainable circumstances, hoping to hear the voice of someone who says, “All is well: I am in control.”

could not rest.”⁵ “Last night I was perplexed to know what to do for my aching nerves and muscles.”⁶

Moments such as these inevitably create perplexity and raise questions, and Ellen White was not exempt from such experiences. “I do not understand why I am lying here, unable to labor for the Lord.”⁷ “I hoped that my captivity might be turned immediately, and to my finite judgment it seemed that thus God would be glorified.”⁸ “I am anxious to present to our people the message that the Lord has given me, that Christ has made us His own, that He has bought us with a price beyond computation.”⁹ “When I pray earnestly for restoration, and it seems that that the Lord does not answer, my spirit almost faints within me.”¹⁰ “When the affliction under which I have been suffering for several months came upon me, I was surprised that it was not removed at once in answer to prayer.”¹¹

Confronting Adversity

In 1892, shortly after her arrival in Australia, Ellen White continued working on her major study on the life of Christ. On July 14 she wrote in her diary. “I am now writing on the life of Christ. I know that the enemy will make every possible effort to hinder me, but I shall cling to Jesus, for He is my dependence.”¹

In the early stages of her life “down under,” she confronted a long season

Beneath Are the Everlasting Arms

Examining her diary notes, letters, and manuscripts, I have found myself wondering, *So where is God when one needs Him? How does one cope with the trauma of personal adversity?* During



HISTORICAL IMAGES:

The only known portrait of Ellen White while she was in Australia (taken in 1899), and the diary entry from July 14, 1892.

her personal struggles Ellen White focused on God's promises found in the Bible. She especially reflected on the story of Lazarus. "Of late I have been thinking much of Martha and Mary, and their experience at the time of the death and resurrection of Lazarus."¹² It is evident that even though the Bible was her source of strength, her thoughts and reflections unfold a tension between *trust* and *hopeful expectations*. She wrote: "When Lazarus became sick, they sent Jesus the word, 'Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick' [John 11:3, KJV]. There was no further word, no urgent message for Him to come. They fully expected that their beloved Friend would at once come and heal their brother."¹³ Jesus did not come immediately, either for Mary and Martha's sake, or for Ellen White's. She wrote, "With heavy hearts the sisters prepared Lazarus for burial, all the while looking anxiously for Christ. They longed to see Him, and to hear His words of comfort."¹⁴

Ellen White's personal struggles with pain and her longing for healing are visible in the way she described Martha and Mary's thirst for Christ's presence. "Christ knew that as they looked on the dead face of their brother their faith in their Redeemer would be severely tried. But He knew that because of the struggle through which they were now passing their faith would shine forth with far greater power."¹⁵ No wonder that her thoughts appear so authentic and convincing: "To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest."¹⁶

In the midst of her own struggles, Ellen White expressed her hope with passion and conviction: "I am not cast down, neither am I disquieted. I am cheerful and hopeful in God. I have faith that I shall receive strength. I am

not free from trials and temptations; yet I feel that God is able to keep me."¹⁷ Her faith and patience were rewarded with God's sustaining grace. "Then I may be comforted in the long, painful hours of the night."¹⁸

His Promises Assure His Presence

Space doesn't permit a comprehensive examination of all the passages that detail the trauma of Ellen White's early experience in Australia, but note these: "I do not understand why I am lying here, unable to labor for the Lord; *but God understands, and that is enough for me.*"¹⁹ "I am comforted with the assurance that although constantly suffering pain, I am never forsaken. I put trust in One who is too wise to err and too good to do me harm. He will restore my health. I shall yet speak forth His praise in the congregation of the saints. I am determined not to encourage feeling of despondency and gloom."²⁰

For Ellen White truth moved beyond descriptive assertion about God. Her understanding of truth about God developed progressively. It was bound to the experiential knowledge of God, namely, trust in His unfailing promises. Her trust in Jesus as "the Restorer, the One who alone could bring life and immortality to light"²¹ had an experientially practical component. "Sickness and pain may test and try our patience and our faith, but the brightness of the Presence of the universe is with us and we must hide self behind Jesus."²² "Talk courage to the church."²³

At the end of her challenging experience in Australia, Ellen White wrote a letter to the leaders at the General Conference. "Since the first few weeks of my affliction, I have had no doubts in regard to my duty in coming to this distant field; and more than this, my confidence in my heavenly Father's

plan in my affliction has been greatly increased. I cannot now see all the purposes of God, but I am confident it was a part of His plan that I should be thus afflicted, and I am content and perfectly at ease in the matter."²⁴

How can one express so much courage at times of personal distress? The answer flows from the lips of one who knew God. "At times when it seemed that I could not endure the pain, when unable to sleep, I looked to Jesus by faith, and His presence was with me, every shade of darkness rolled away . . . the very room was filled with the light of His divine presence."²⁵

The depth of Ellen White's spiritual integrity encourages the church she loved to confront the realities of life with an implicit confidence and trust in God. ■

¹ Ellen G. White diary, July 14, 1892, in Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), vol. 21, p. 125.

² Diary, Apr. 22, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 109.

³ Diary, May 10, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 110.

⁴ Diary, May 22, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 111.

⁵ Diary, June 15, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 112.

⁶ Diary, June 19, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 114.

⁷ Diary, Apr. 22, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 109.

⁸ Diary, May 21, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 111.

⁹ Diary, June 20, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 115.

¹⁰ Diary, July 10, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 123.

¹¹ Diary, July 14, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 125.

¹² Diary, Apr. 22, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 109.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1898), p. 528.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Ellen White to S. N. Haskell, July 17, 1892.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Diary, Apr. 22, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 109.

(Italics supplied.)

²⁰ Diary, May 9, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, pp. 109, 110.

²¹ White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 529.

²² White to Haskell, July 17, 1892, in *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), vol. 2, p. 37.

²³ Ellen G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, Oct. 2, 1892.

²⁴ Ellen G. White letter 2d, Dec. 23, 1892, in *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, Feb. 27, 1893.

²⁵ *Ibid.*



John Skrzypaszek is director of the Ellen G. White Study Center at Avonadale College in Cooranboong, New South Wales, Australia.

They called him “Magaqa,” “the one who crawls,” because from birth to death he never walked upright, but went everywhere on his hands and knees. And yet there are few in the history of Seventh-day Adventism in Zimbabwe who command more regard and appreciation than Judas Singazi Bhebe. Never, through 45 years of service for God and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, did he allow his physical disability to deter him. Knowing Bhebe’s story should inspire all those who must live with debilitating physical challenges.

By
ZEBRON NCUBE

The One Who Crawls

A giant for God

*Youth’s Instructor,
1944*

Magaqa’s Early Years

Born on May 1, 1901, at Sikombingo, eight years after Adventism got into the southern African country then known as Rhodesia, Bhebe spent his early years in what was known as the Lower Gwelo Reserve¹ in the Midlands Province of the country that, from 1979, would bear the name Zimbabwe. With wheelchairs either unknown by or unaffordable to most Africans, Bhebe moved along the ground using pads for his knees and hands. He learned to read before he started school, from a book entitled *Cetshwayo*, about a brother of Zimbabwe’s famous Zulu king Tshaka. Impressed by his talents, someone advised him to go to the local Adventist mission station at Lower Gwelo in order to develop his potential. Instead of enrolling as a student, Bhebe requested baptism of the mission’s superintendent, Pastor John N. de Beer, who duly obliged on December 3, 1921.

Study and Service

Two years later, in November 1923, when Sikombingo school opened, Judas Bhebe attended, doing the first three years of his education under the tutelage of Paul M. Moyo and Sihlabo Ncube, two of Zimbabwe’s first native teachers. After those three years Sihlabo Ncube and F. Burton Jewell, a missionary in charge of the district, invited Bhebe to teach right where he had been trained. He would work there from 1927 to 1930. A six-month stint at the mission followed in 1931, before Bhebe was sent to Solusi Mission for teacher-evangelist training as a prerequisite for pastoral ministry. Many of his classmates would themselves contribute significantly to the developing educational and pastoral work in Zimbabwe. Their names may not be widely known, but their works do follow them.²

Historically, Adventism in Zimbabwe grew around teachers and schools. Early mission stations emphasized



education. Missionaries expanded the church and penetrated the communities through their work in the schools. Physical disability notwithstanding, Pastor Bhebe too was a part of this tradition.

At the end of his training in 1934, Bhebe conducted evangelistic meetings at Mayembe, a few miles west of Solusi. Elder R. Mote, in charge of the work in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), then called him to come and teach the Ndebele people settled in Monze, to the south, where Zambia Adventist University is today. There he taught for four years and learned to speak the Tongan. In 1939 he was transferred north to Ndola to teach at Musofu Mission. While there he married Esther Velaphi Moyo, whom he had met at the settlement.

In June 1945, at the end of World War II, he returned to Lower Gwelo (Somabula Mission) in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) as teacher and preceptor. In the ensuing years Bhebe served in different schools: Shagari (1946 -1949), Lower Gwelo (1950 -1951), and Jonkola (1952). From 1953 to 1955 he served as pastor of Mtapu church in the city of Gweru, and began the construction of a church building. His rapport and connections with public officials enabled him to request a church building donation from the Ministry of Education in Harare. He received \$100—a lot of money in those days.

“I did not make myself this way,” he wept as he prayed.

The years 1955 to 1959 saw him back at Lower Gwelo, replacing Simeon B. Dube as pastor. Officiating at his ordination, in 1957, were Elders Ralph S. Watts, president of the Southern African Division, and Edward Trumper, secretary-treasurer for the Southern Rhodesia Mission, along with Simeon B. Dube, later to become the first African president of the Adventist work in then Southern Rhodesia.

Bhebe continued to serve as church pastor when, in 1960, he moved to the office in Gweru as translator. Translation work gave him a wider audience in church circles. The promotion also meant he could own a tricycle operated with his hands. Thereafter he needed to crawl only when getting inside buildings. Bhebe retired in 1966 but continued working until retiring again in 1972.

Bhebe’s associates included Jackson Ncube, who served God for many years in spite of polio in both legs; Isaac Xhiba, the first African to attend a General Conference session as a delegate; and Moses Donga, one of his great mentors. It was during his contact with Donga in 1930 that Bhebe wept to God, “I did not make myself this way!” In his discouragement he asked Donga to send him to Ngigeni School in the Zhombe area. Instead the Lord redirected him to Solusi Mission to train there as a teacher-evangelist.

Invaluable Contributions

Early missionary work cannot overlook the contribution of local men and women who penetrated the most difficult places. They did not have the luxuries of cars, telephone, electricity, Internet, and all the modern paraphernalia that many of us today enjoy. In 1927 when Pastor Bhebe began his teaching ministry, the Adventist Church in Zimbabwe had a little more than 1,500 members. Today the membership stands at more than 600,000 in a population of 12 million. It is pioneers like Bhebe that set the stage for aggressive mission work and blazed the trail in spite of disabilities.

It was my privilege to see and hear him preach at a Solusi College Week of Prayer. His knees “sat” on a chair so he could be visible behind the pulpit. In fluent English, and without notes, he spoke directly to his audience, sometimes with his elbow resting on the pulpit and his hand over his chin, culturally a sign of confidence, sincerity, and compassion.

In an interview before he died, he told me about an incident that took place in Gweru. Walking on his knees and hands along the sidewalk on Main Street, he observed a man cursing and harassing the servant who was pushing him as he rode in a wheelchair. Pastor Bhebe sat upright on the sidewalk and taunted the wheelchair rider: “Why do

you harass the man who is helping you? You look at me! I walk on my knees with no one to push me!” Then he said to the servant, “Leave him alone; let’s see what he will do without you!” In those colonial days that kind of confrontation was unthinkable. But it shows how confident and forthright a man Bhebe was.

Self-pity could not conquer him, nor did physical disability hinder God’s purposes for his life. He traveled and worked extensively regardless of the physical challenges. His legacy of teaching and preaching inspires the school and the church to get humankind ready for the return of Jesus. We owe this to him and to all our pioneers. ■

¹ Gwelo is today’s Gweru.

² Among the contributors from that period who remain largely unsung are Kaiser Mlalazi, Bafanana Sithole, Lewis Nikane Sibanda, Naomi Mbuyisa (Mrs. Mackenzie Nkomo), Dickson Dumba, Isaac Gurure, and P. J. Ngono.



Born in Zimbabwe, **Zebron Ncube** is senior pastor of Highland Avenue Seventh-day Adventist church in Benton Harbor, Michigan, U.S.A. He and his wife, Peggie, have two daughters, Lindile and Nozipho, and a son, Nhlalo.

Healing Leaves

In what sense are the leaves of the tree of life, mentioned in Revelation 22:2, used for the healing of the nations?

Since the verse you refer to describes life in the New Jerusalem, I assume

that you are concerned about the need for healing in the new earth. Good. Now the truth: the biblical text does not directly answer your question. So in looking for an answer, if there is one, we'll have to examine other texts and draw some conclusions. But first let's look at "leaves" in the Bible.

1. Leaves and More Leaves: Leaves in the Bible have both negative and positive connotations. A tree with green leaves is an expression of beauty and fertility; a tree whose leaves are withering signals death or the absence of fertility. The withering of leaves represents the damage of sin on the flora, as well as on God's people (Isa. 1:30; Jer. 8:13). Green leaves are a symbol of prosperity and renewal of life (Prov. 11:28; Ps. 1:3); even of hope (Gen. 8:11). The beauty of a tree with abundant foliage was a symbol of fertility and played an important role in Canaanite religion (1 Kings 14:23; Eze. 6:14). Sin damaged trees, yet they were still useful. In some cases leaves could be medicinal—e.g., the leaves of a sycamore tree were used to dress wounds.

2. Other Biblical Passages: In Revelation the New Jerusalem is described as a garden with abundant water and beautiful flora (Rev. 22:1-3). The image of a garden has the purpose of alerting the reader concerning its connection with the narrative of the Garden of Eden. In both cases you have abundant water and the tree of life (Rev. 22:1, 2; Gen. 2:9-11). In the case of Eden, the tree of life is clearly associated with the perpetuity of human life (Gen. 3:22). After sin humans were barred from access to this tree. The tree of life was not a symbol of healing. The connection between trees, leaves, and healing is found in Ezekiel 47:1-12. The prophet saw a small stream of water flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, then to the south. The stream became a deep river whose waters

reached the Dead Sea, bringing life to it (verses 8, 9). On the banks of the river were many trees: "Their leaves will not dry up. . . . Every month they will bear fruit. . . . And their leaves will be used for healing" (verse 12, NIV).¹ In both Ezekiel and Revelation the river flows from God's temple and the leaves of the trees bring healing. In Ezekiel there are many trees—but no tree of life; in Revelation there appears to be only one tree located on both banks of the river. In both cases we are taken back to the original condition of the earth. Ezekiel does not explicitly state the nature of the healing produced by the leaves of the tree.

3. Healing and the New Jerusalem: The information we have gathered is helpful but does not clearly answer your question. We can affirm that in the New Jerusalem nature is restored to its original beauty and fruitfulness; leaves will never wither again. With respect to the tree of life, now God's people have access to it (Rev. 2:7; 22:14), and its leaves are for the "healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). This healing may be associated with what is mentioned in the next verse: "There will no longer be any curse" (verse 3, NIV). This is the ultimate healing more specifically described in Revelation 21:4: There will be no crying, death, mourning, or pain. The curse of sin will be gone! The true tree of life, Jesus Christ, will heal humans and nature.

If that is true, we could suggest that once "restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will 'grow up' (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 645).

Furthermore, eating of the leaves of the tree of life throughout eternity could also function—I am speculating here—as an act of worship memorializing that our healing was possible through Jesus. Could we call this preventive medicine? ■

¹ Bible texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version*. Copyright © 1985, 1996, 1998 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.



Now retired, **Angel Manuel Rodríguez** has served the church for several decades, most recently as director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

There Is Hope

By MARK A. FINLEY

Pushna, a couple hours from Moscow, was a closed city during the Soviet era. Even Russian citizens were forbidden to enter without proper authorization. It was a city in which scientists did research, including research on biological and chemical warfare. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of Communism, I received an invitation to make three biblical presentations to these scientists in the city's cultural center.

The last of my talks was about the second coming of Christ. After my presentation I opened the floor for questions. One general theme ran throughout: "Is there hope for our personal lives? Is there hope for our world?"

1 Where do people typically look for hope in this world?

The Bible specializes in hope; it is a book of hope. The apostle Paul wrote: "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

2 In what ways is the Bible a book of hope?

The word "hope" is mentioned more than 125 times in the Bible. The apostle Paul used the word 41 times; it was one of his favorite words. Do you have a favorite verse, Bible story, or Bible character that for you demonstrate the type of hope Christians need in today's world?

3 Read Romans 8:15-17. How does being adopted into God's family affect you personally?

4 Read Romans 5:1-5. List three things that contribute to the hope we have in Christ.

Being Christian doesn't mean an absence of heartache, or that the devil leaves us alone. It means simply that we have a hope in something outside ourselves. When we are in need of spiritual support, the Holy Spirit reminds us that our hope is not in ourselves.



5 Beyond the spiritual resources provided by the Holy Spirit, what is the church's great hope as we look toward an uncertain future? Read John 14:1-3.

Christ not only came once—He is coming again. His return is the only hope for this poverty-stricken, polluted, war-riddled, diseased, and death-plagued planet.

6 Read 1 John 5:13. Not only can we look forward to the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—what marvelous hope do we have through Jesus, by Jesus, and in Jesus now?

Eternal life is a present reality for all who put their hope in Christ. The bondage of sin is broken; we are no longer slaves to sin—we are sons and daughters of God.

7 Read Titus 2:11-14. In what ways is Christ's return "the blessed hope"? Where should we put our focus as we look for Christ's second coming?

8 The Bible mentions the return of our Lord 1,500 times. The prophets from Moses to John declare that Jesus is coming again. His return is a constant theme from Genesis to Revelation. What does Christ's return mean to you personally?

Jesus has a plan for us. He has a plan for this world. His plan and purposes will be victorious. Let your heart be filled with hope. He is our Savior, our Lord, and our coming King. That's something with which we can fill our hearts with hope today. ■



GILLES VAN LEEUWEN

“We (adults) tend to complicate things more than they really are, whereas **children** see things as they are, and that’s that.”

NICOLE BENOIT-ROY, Brooklyn, New York, United States

Letters

The Feet My Savior Washed

I was touched by Carissa McSherry’s honesty in the article “The Feet My Savior Washed” (October 2011). I had a somewhat similar experience during church in another country—only it was me washing someone’s not-so-clean feet. I clearly needed my heart touched that Sabbath, because while out of a sense of duty I started to wash a strangers feet, I felt the Holy Spirit touch my heart and remind me that my heart is much dirtier. That memory comes to me every Communion service I take part in, and is an ongoing blessing and reminder of true humility.

ALISON COVER
Valdese, North Carolina,
United States

The Kingdom Belongs to These

I enjoyed reading the devotional “The Kingdom Belongs to These,” by Addison Hudgins (September 2011). I never realized I didn’t understand the biblical account of this story until I read it in this magazine. I was especially enlightened when Hudgins defined such as these as “those who explore, seek, and listen boldly, intently, and open-mindedly.”

The words from Madeleine L’Engle on childlike intuition will probably stay with me forever. According to Hudgins, she said that “when she had something to say in a book that was too difficult for adults, she wrote it for children.” We (adults) tend to complicate things more than they really are, whereas children see things as they are, and that’s that.

NICOLE BENOIT-ROY
Brooklyn, New York,
United States

I hope Addison Hudgins is not asserting the infallibility of “childhood intuition” based merely on her own experience. Indeed, was it even true of every such person, without even a single exception, that she “felt uncomfortable with, and even in danger around,” that even years later they proved dishonest and deceitful?

The gift of intuition is a divine gift, but we must never forget the stark and undeniable fact of sin. We are all born sinners, and even the operation of divine gifts have to be examined in the light of the Scriptures. It is certainly not “logically” reasoning away the voice of the Holy Spirit” to examine whether there is any basis in fact or in logic for such fears as Hudgins mentions.

BARRY GOWLAND
Fishermead, Milton Keynes,
United Kingdom



The Adventist universities with the highest enrollments are:

- BRAZIL ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, São Paulo, Brazil
- PERUVIAN UNION UNIVERSITY, Lima, Peru
- SAHMYOOK UNIVERSITY, Seoul, South Korea
- NORTHERN CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY, Mandeville, Jamaica
- BABCOCK ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, Ogun State, Nigeria

Source: General Conference Education Department

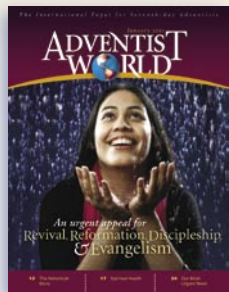
Prayer & PRAISE

Please pray for my father, who will soon be having surgery.

GIDEON, Ethiopia

One of our granddaughters is seriously considering marrying a young doctor who seems not to care about the Sabbath. Thank you for your prayers.

BETTY, United States

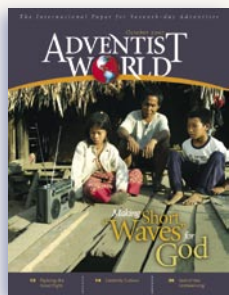


Revival and Reformation: In Africa

I read the articles of the January 2011 *Adventist World*, and I'm glad for the reform in our church. On this topic, do not forget Africa. I've

never seen one article talking about the Democratic Republic of Congo.

JAMES OMBENI NZABANDORA
Democratic Republic of Congo



Thank You

Thank you for publishing this magazine. I am especially thankful for Angel Manuel Rodriguez's article "God of the Undeserving" (October 2007).

This article has helped me to understand that I also have a place in the Lord's assembly.

TALAKI MEZEHANI TCHALLA
Lomé, Kégué, Togo

Letters Policy: Please send to: letters@adventistworld.org. Letters must be clearly written, 100-word maximum. Include the name of the article and the date of publication 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.

50

WORDS OR LESS

My Favorite... Hymn

■ I just love the words to the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." It helped me survive the death of my husband, who died of cancer last year.

—ANNE, *Grand Rapids, Michigan, United States*

■ "A Shelter in the Time of Storm" was the first hymn I learned when I started attending Adventist schools. Its words have encouraged me ever since. I often find myself humming the tune.

—SEAN, *London, England*

■ When I was growing up in Guam, I used to hear U.S. sailors singing "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" on the ships anchored in the harbor during their Sunday morning worship services. Its melodies and harmonies were (are) so beautiful.

—HIDEKO, *Osaka, Japan*

Next time, tell us in 50 words or less about your favorite Bible character. Send it to letters@AdventistWorld.org. Put "50 Words or Less" in the subject line.

Please join me in praying for the many people in the world who have no access to the Bible in their own languages. Pray also for the translators.

CURT, *United States*

Please pray for me. My girlfriend recently passed away, and I was hoping we would get married.

THABO, *South Africa*

Please pray that I will be able to go to the university and study theology.

HAIRAM, *Philippines*

Prayer & Praise: Send prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer) to prayer@adventistworld.org. Keep entries short and concise, 50-words or less. Items will be edited for space and clarity. Not all submissions will be printed. Please include your name and your country's name. 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.

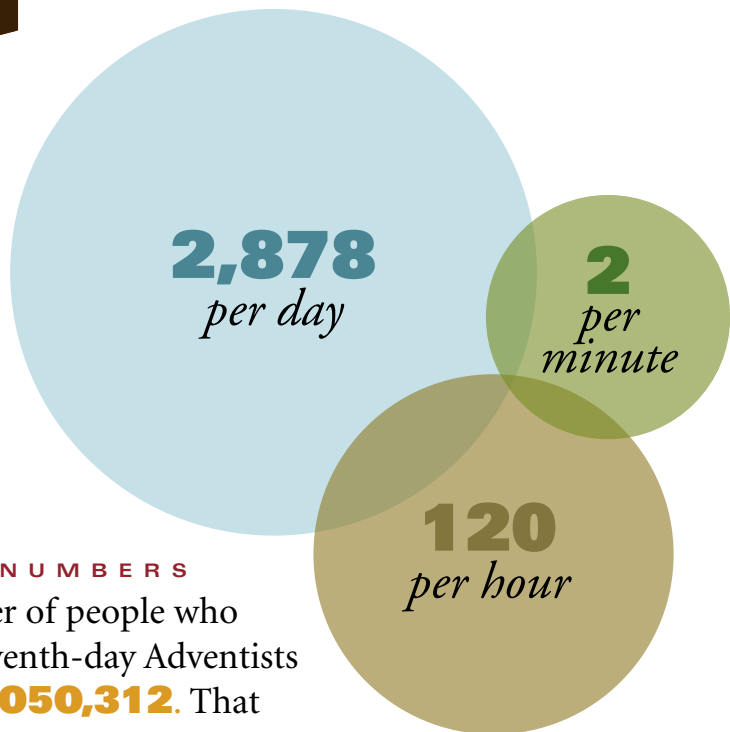


70 Years Ago

“Hello, America”

With these words, radio announcer Fordyce Detamore began the first coast-to-coast broadcast of the Voice of Prophecy radio ministry in the United States. H.M.S. Richards, Sr. (pictured), was the first speaker of one of the first Christian radio programs in the U.S. During that first year of national exposure, more than 2,000 people enrolled in the ministry’s Bible correspondence course.

Source: *Memorable Dates: From Our Adventist Past*, by James R. Nix



BY THE NUMBERS

The number of people who became Seventh-day Adventists in 2010: **1,050,312**. That averages out to:

Source: GC Office of Archives and Statistics

“**Eternal life** has been and always will be a **gift** of grace.”

—Zvikomborero Zihanzu at the Karumazondo camp meeting in Zimbabwe in August 2011

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Baptisms always mark a highlight in the life of the candidates and the church. On September 24, 2011, we celebrated a very special baptism at the Schloss Bogenhofen Seminary, including a significant historical assemblage: three generations of a pastoral family stood together in the baptismal waters. Kurt Hasel baptized his granddaughter Lea Sikora; and Frank Hasel baptized his son Daniel. The multi-generational event was cause for celebration and thankfulness.



MARTIN RYSZEWSKI

Where in the World is This?

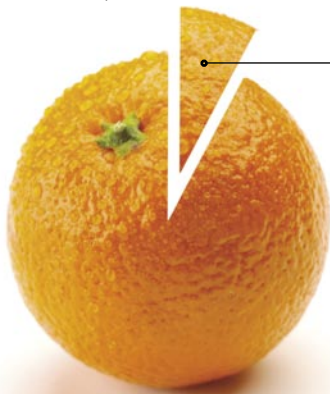


BECKY BLEICHER

ANSWER: In Vilcabamba, Ecuador, a children's choir performs for the first time at their new church facility. The church was built by local members and members from outside Ecuador, who also operated a health clinic and conducted a Vacation Bible School and evangelistic series.

PICTURE OF HEALTH

More than 96,000 Seventh-day Adventists in the United States and Canada are participating in Adventist Health Study 2, conducted by the Loma Linda University School of Public Health. Of the survey participants:



8%
of Adventists
are vegan
(no red meat, fish, poultry,
dairy, or eggs)

“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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Still hungry?



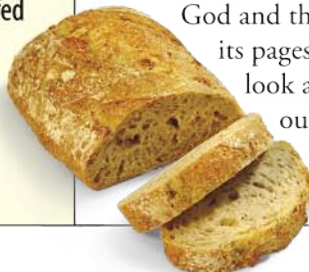
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