

Do We Still Need
Missionaries?

Letter From Sarajevo

The challenges of sharing the
gospel in a secular culture

Christianity in Turkey

REVIEW

A D V E N T I S T

World Edition

November 13, 1997

LETTERS

Inside the Muslim Mind

The September 11 World Edition hit the top: two especially good editorials by Bill Knott and Myrna Tetz, followed by James H. Zachary's "Inside the Muslim Mind." Zachary's many years as a neighbor to Muslims in the southern Philippines earned the article both winsomeness and credibility.

—**Arnold V. Wallenkampf**
GRAND TERRACE, CALIFORNIA

I am so pleased that we have people working with the Muslims. Stressing our similarities is an excellent start.

However, I was a little disturbed when Zachary equated Allah with God and did not clarify that he was just stating what Muslims believe, not another of our similarities. Allah and God are not the same. We need to know the difference. Allah was not the God of Abraham. Muhammad believed in one god, so he selected an important deity of the pre-Islamic pantheon.

Muslims see Allah as a distant god. He is an arbitrary deity, and no one has guarantee of his favor. To win Allah's "love," they have to do good works, but they can never be sure that they have done enough to merit salvation. Their best chance is to die in a holy war, or jihad, but even that is conditional, because Allah has predestined only some to be saved.

Muslims believe Jesus was only one

in a line of messengers of God, of whom Muhammad was the last and greatest. To them, Jesus was not the Son of God, and they feel that those who believe He is will be sent to hell. The Koran has Jesus repeatedly denying His deity and says He definitely did not die on the cross.

These differences in belief show what a difficult job it is to talk to Muslims. But praise the Lord, we do have similarities that allow us an entering wedge. We have to win their favor and trust before we can show them the real God.

—**Paula Nixon**
AUBURN, CALIFORNIA

Why, God?

Regarding W. A. Townend's "Why, God?" (Sept. 11). I am afraid the writer did not fully appreciate what Rabbi Kushner had to say about the attributes of God when he wrote his marvelous book a generation ago, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Having reviewed God's dealing with his own family in the tragic loss of a son to a strange and terrible disease, he then turned to another family man, Job, who went through even greater suffering. It was in his review of the book of Job that the rabbi concluded that God purposefully allowed Himself to be less than all-powerful.

When things are going along fine with the respective families (Job's and Kushner's) then it can easily be said that God is all-powerful, all-merciful, and just (see Ps. 89:13, 14). But when

the terrible times come, God cannot be all three at the same time. One of them has to give. God has chosen to set a limit to the use of His power. He is, so to speak, fighting our common enemy with His mighty arm tied behind Him.

But it will not always be so! Someday He will loose that mighty arm.

—**Charles H. Tidwell, Sr.**
MCDONALD, TENNESSEE

We know that God is sovereign, but could W. A. Townend write a follow-up article? This one seems too simplistic. Surely God is not responsible for sin in this world (Adam was) or temptation (Satan is) or suffering (we often are). God can place a "hedge of love" around us, but we can choose to not stay within it. God has a plan that He knows will succeed, but He does not force our free will just because He is sovereign.

—**John Erhard**
APOPKA, FLORIDA

I have a question: How come the *Review* knows how to spell my name better than I do? I asked the same question of F. D. Nichol some years ago.

—**W. A. Townend**
AVONDALE COLLEGE
COORANBONG, NEW SOUTH
WALES, AUSTRALIA

Our apologies.—Editors.

Keep Silence

Regarding "Local Issues, General Principles" (Sept. 11), it seems Calvin Rock is for the handshakes and hugs in church, but he says it can get too long and too loud.

But why even do it? God says, "Reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:30, NKJV). The clapping, dancing, etc.—was it done in the sanctuary? "The Lord is in His holy temple. . . . Keep silence before Him" (Hab. 2:20, NKJV).

—R. L. Savre

VICTORVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Easy on A. T.

Regarding Hugh Dunton's September 11 letter warning against the tendency to become overly anxious about the year 2000 and the leaning to time-setting for Christ's return, I am in complete agreement with the need to be aware of the dangers of such end-time fixations. However, I am concerned and saddened that the name of A. T. Jones was coupled with those responsible for "earlier scares" along the lines of date-setting and end-time fanaticism.

A. T. Jones was never involved with setting dates for Christ's return, nor did he ever resort to scare tactics in his messages. His was always a burden for an appreciation of Christ's righteousness and to preach a gospel that "is the power of God unto salvation," a message that would prepare a people for translation.

In our brief history we have had our share of apostates, such as L. R. Conradi, Moses Hull, A. F. Ballenger, and others, but we seldom hear of these anymore. Yet it seems that at every possible opportunity excuse is found to point the finger of criticism at A. T. Jones and the other 1888 messenger, E. J. Waggoner, men who, the pen of inspiration tells us at least 100 times, bore a message from God or were called messengers of God.

—Alexander Snyman

COOKEVILLE, TENNESSEE

Waiting, Waiting

On September 23 I was reading the September 11 *Review*, which arrived in our mailbox on September 20. On page 23 I read that the Adventist Communication Network "will present a satellite workshop for pastors and local ministry leaders, called 'Taking Care of Your Church Volunteers,'" on September 13. Included in the items was the phone number to call to secure the needed handouts.

I'm not sure whether September 11 is the publication date, the date of mailing, or the date it should be received. But printing such a late notice (which required response in advance) seems a bit inappropriate.

I have read enough letters to know that I am not the only one not receiving the *Review* promptly. Maybe the policy for choosing the issue date should be reevaluated.

—Irene Frase

IRONWOOD, MICHIGAN

In designating the issue date, we allow one week for mailing. For example, this issue, dated November 13, was printed last Tuesday, November 4, and mailed periodicals class on November 6. Our monthly North American Division Edition, usually bound inside a union paper and sent standard mail, tends to take its sweet time. But the weekly editions should arrive on or before the issue date. If the problem persists, contact Steve Hanson at Subscriber Services at 800-456-3991.—Editors.

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ADVENTIST Review

COVER STORY

8 Against Overwhelming Odds

In some parts of the world, missionaries have to let their actions do the talking.

BY CLAUDE RICHLI

ARTICLES

12 A Magazine Article, a Mystery Donor, and a Penniless Student

God had a plan all the time.

BY RICHARD CAMPBELL

16 Jump-starting Your Sabbath School

Does your Sabbath school need a boost?

BY TERESA BEEM

24 From Everywhere to Everywhere

The spiritual gift of missionary ministry.

BY GORDEN DOSS

28 Letter From Sarajevo

Desperation leads to a personal encounter with Christ.

BY IGOR ANDRIC

DEPARTMENTS

2 Letters

7 Give & Take

11 Bible Questions Answered

15 Children's Corner

19 Faith Alive!

20 World News & Perspectives

30 Reflections

EDITORIALS

5 Master of Mercy

6 When "Thanks" Is Not Enough

NEXT WEEK

Beating the "Hill Street" Blues

A New York City cop sees it all. And practically none of it is good.

ADVENTIST Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ through stories of His matchless love, news of His present workings, help for knowing Him better, and hope in His soon return.

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The Voice of Prophecy Weekly on 3ABN



From left: David Smith, Lonnie Melashenko,
H.M.S. Richards Jr., John McLarty

**Mondays at 5:30 p.m. (Pacific Time)
Repeats on Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)**

Nov. 3 & 8	Were You There, Herod? <i>Lonnie Melashenko</i>
Nov. 10 & 15	"We've Got a Problem Here" <i>H.M.S. Richards Jr.</i>
Nov. 17 & 22	Don't Hide the Dishes <i>John McLarty</i>
Nov. 24 & 29	He's Not "Jesus the Great" <i>David B. Smith</i>
Dec. 1 & 6	Were You There, Judas? <i>Lonnie Melashenko</i>
Dec. 8 & 13	A Big Beautiful Tomorrow <i>H.M.S. Richards Jr.</i>
Dec. 15 & 20	Hark! And Then What Message? <i>David B. Smith</i>
Dec. 22 & 27	The Christmas Visitor <i>David B. Smith</i>
Dec. 29 & Jan. 3	Were You There, Nicodemus? <i>Lonnie Melashenko</i>

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Master of Mercy

Paul declared himself the ultimate sinner. The foremost evildoer. He claimed that it was for that reason that he'd received mercy—so that Jesus might display His mercy and thereby make him (Paul, the most iniquitous) an example to every other sinner (see 1 Tim. 1:15, 16).

Was Paul grateful? Certainly. "To the King of the ages," Paul cried, "immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever" (verse 17, RSV). From a stone-throwing persecutor of the devotees of the risen Christ, Paul became one of the most grateful servants of the living God. Maybe the *most* grateful.

Let's imagine Luke and Paul trudging along the road with their walking sticks. Can't you just hear Luke saying "Let me tell you about just one day in the life of Christ as I have gleaned it from those who were there"?

"Crowds had gathered, and Jesus was teaching and healing," Luke begins. "Sitting nearby were the Pharisees and teachers of the law. They were watching carefully and muttering behind hands flattened against one side of their mouths but slightly off their lips so the person sitting next to them could hear each choice comment. 'Watch him,' one whispered. 'He'll see someone sick and speak to them, and immediately there will be jumping and shouting and hugging as you've never seen. It looks pretty authentic, but I doubt they're really healed—they'll probably be back again.'"

"But there's more to this day's story," Luke cautions as they stop to rest. "On the very same day He called Levi, the tax collector, as a disciple, Levi was so excited that he prepared a banquet for Jesus and some friends."

"Though uninvited, the criticizers were there looking on as usual, and they asked the disciples, 'Why does *he* eat with tax collectors and sinners?' Jesus heard this and answered before the disciples could bungle a reply. 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice. Please go and learn what this means' [see Matt. 9:13]. They didn't go away to learn anything; you can believe that." The doctor shakes his head in frustration and disbelief. "It's just plain hard to fathom how those church leaders think structure is more important than compassion."

This discussion may have reminded Luke and Paul of other Old Testament passages also referring to heaven's mission statement. Hosea had written that God desired stead-

fast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6, RSV). And Micah's version was "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8, RSV).



Personally, I like the word *mercy*. There have been occasions on which I was extremely grateful for a *covering*¹ given to me by someone in authority. Like a dean who decided not to mete out as much punishment as was actually deserved, or a policeman who just gave a warning ticket, or an employer who spoke kindly when a serious error was made.

Because *sacrifice* is involved with rituals, traditions, and structure, it isn't nearly as sweet a word, though it doubtless should be. "Ritual as a sign of a worshiping heart is acceptable to God, but ritual as a substitute for compassion is an offense."² Worship is a wonderfully exhilarating experience, and all that those Pharisees needed was to admit that the godliness they claimed to possess originated from the God they purported to worship. "None [were] greater zealots than they for the form of godliness, nor greater enemies to the power of it."³

God's refusal to turn away from my sinful heart assures me that He has not regretted His sacrifice on my behalf. That's mercy at its best. But my fear is, as I work for Him, worship Him, and contribute to works of mercy, I may think of myself as righteous. Then I would find myself in the category of those whom Christ did not call—His sacrifice would be in vain until I again recognized my unrighteousness. Unfortunately, by then I may be hard to reach.

Paul encourages me by saying that "because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2:4, NIV). Personally I like the "rich in mercy" part of that verse.

¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, p. 729.

² *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7, p. 353.

³ *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, p. 118.



ILLUSTRATION BY O. STEMLER

When "Thanks" Is Not Enough

Life is full of rituals, and one ritual I find extremely meaningful is morning and evening walks. Our two dogs, Flopsi and Yoder, probably appreciate the exercise more than I do, but the few minutes that it takes to walk from our house, down a little tree-lined path, to some basketball and tennis courts maintained by the county have become a source of recreation (in the truest sense of the word).

Our little walk (less than a half mile) gives us a panoramic view of the changing seasons. After a sterile, frigid winter, my heart races when I sniff the first earthy aromas of the coming spring. During early summer evenings the treetops shimmer with the light of thousands of fireflies. In the fall the tree leaves turn all different hues of gold, yellow, crimson, and amber. And often throughout the year we come across all manner of suburban wildlife: deer, fox, squirrels, bats, ducks, geese, etc.

These times also offer moments of quiet reflection when I think about the other things that make my life pleasurable: I share my bed with a woman who has loved me for nearly a quarter century; our teenage children—a daughter and a son—are a delightful source of pride for my wife and me; I have a comfortable home and reliable transportation; I work with godly, consecrated Christians; I have more friends than I can count. The Lord has been good to me. And often on my morning and evening walks these are the things that come to mind—along with the overwhelming conviction that I don't deserve any of it.

My life is far from ideal. I still get frustrated by stupid, rude drivers. We're often challenged by more bills than cash to cover them. I still flinch when I hear about the insane cruelty and inhumanity reported in the secular media. But I don't have to deal with a crumbling marriage, rebellious teenagers, a life-threatening illness, a lousy job, financial insecurity, and a host of other struggles with which many people have to wrestle.

I'm not like the nine lepers who walked away without so much as a thank-you (Luke 17:17). God knows I'm grateful—I praise Him often for all His mercies. But I'm filled with an undeniable urge to do something more.

The apostle Paul urged the believers in Philippi: "If you have any encouragement from being united in Christ, if any

comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. . . . Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:1-4, NIV).

Then follows the great passage that describes how Jesus emptied Himself and put aside the glory of heaven in order to serve His creatures. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice so that you and I can look forward to a life of eternal glory when He comes again and live lives of purpose and significance now.

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thing more.*

In industrialized countries the sole purpose of many is to live "the good life," which usually means to insulate oneself from all the poverty, the pain, and the signs of moral decay that infect modern society on such a large scale.

But those problems are not going to go away. And while we can't look forward to any permanent solutions before Jesus comes, one way to express our gratitude for all of God's blessings is to reflect His kindness to those who are less fortunate than we. Let's not be like the man in Jesus' story who said to himself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry" (Luke 12:19, NIV). Gratitude for God's blessings demands more.

Every so often we're treated to stories about people who live common, undistinguished lives. They seem to be individuals of limited means, content with simple pleasures. But then it becomes known that for decades they've been saving, perhaps with the help of some wise investments, to make large donations to some church, university, medical center, or other worthwhile charity.

Of course, money isn't the only way to demonstrate our appreciation for God's blessings (it's just the easiest to quantify); there are a thousand ways to reflect something of God's love to those whose burdens are much heavier than our own.

Whenever we get the feeling that words are not enough, there's always something we can do.



GIVE & TAKE

LET'S PRAY

Have a prayer need?
Have a few free minutes?
Each Wednesday morning
at 8:00 the *Adventist Review*
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WE NEED YOU

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ADVENTIST LIFE

My junior class recently presented to the whole church a Thirteenth Sabbath program called "Guess the Event." Each member had a biblical event in mind and gave the congregation a clue.

When it was her turn, Keiko Andress stepped up to the microphone and said, "You could not get in if you were single."

Not seeing the quick hands that she had expected, she clarified, "You had to be married!"

—Baki Wariri, Hongkong Adventist Hospital church



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY CREWS

As trailblazers for future evangelistic meetings held by the Quiet Hour, my husband, Alan, and I traveled into the Ural Mountains of Russia with our translator, Natasha.

During our stay with Pastor Igor Krasilnikov, president of the Ural Conference, two church leaders from a distant city came to consult with him. Alan, feeling bold and confident of his new Russian vocabulary, greeted the men warmly and attempted to introduce us. "Menya zavoot Alan y etta mya zhivoot Glenna," he said.

Everyone burst out laughing, and Alan pleaded with Natasha to explain. "You just introduced Glenna as your stomach!" she gasped.

—Glenna Eady, Norwalk, California

My grandson Michael and his mother, Jo-Ann, were watching a children's video about the miracles of Jesus. After seeing David down the giant and then cut off his head, Jo-Ann asked Michael, "Why did David cut off the giant's head?"

"So he could get his stone back," replied Michael.

—Madella Toop, Carleton Place, Ontario

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY



THEIR BIG DAY: The Hangzhou, China, Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing rapidly, reports member Zhao Jiayao. Pictured are 29 men and women recently baptized.

AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS

*A modern pioneer makes inroads in a country
torn between secularism and Islam.*

BY CLAUDE RICHLI

THE COUNTRY OF TURKEY holds special significance for Christians, with at least 30 percent of the New Testament finding its origin or destination in what is today modern Turkey.

Unfortunately, in spite of the deep footprints left by early Christians in that country, it still remains very much a dark area on the map of Adventist evangelism. Only a small church in Istanbul, a city of more than 10 million, stands as a witness for the three angels' messages in that part of the world.

However, for the past couple of years a missionary sent under the Global Mission program has started to make some inroads in this vast Muslim country. I had the privilege of visiting him and accompanying him on one of his trips across the country, and learned to appreciate the nature of the challenge that lies before him. Because he cannot work openly for fear of being expelled from the country, he will be mentioned in the following interview only by his initials.

Richli: How large is your territory, and how important is Turkey today?

S.R.: More than 1,000 miles in length, Turkey is a country of nearly 70 million people. Its significance has increased dramatically since the fall of the Soviet empire, since it serves as a bridge between the West and Central Asia. Approximately 200 million people speak Turkish-related languages, from Bulgaria all the way to Mongolia and western China. It is in Turkey that the elite of these countries are being trained, and I've had the privilege of meeting a number of these young people in my Turkish classes.

Richli: How would you describe the Turkish people?

S.R.: They are an extremely friendly people, open to everything Western. The young people love American



PHOTO © WORLD BANK

culture, cell phones, the Internet, movies. They are very far from the cliché of people in the Muslim world. Although there are, of course, still pockets of traditional Muslim culture, the attire de rigueur for young people is jeans and for businesspeople suit and tie. But they are disoriented. Marital problems, abortion, alcoholism, and suicide are just a few signs of that, and there are great tensions between Western secularism and Arabic influences. The people cope with these tensions through consumerism. Or they get into Eastern religions or the New Age.

Richli: But isn't Turkey an Islamic country?

S.R.: It's an Islamic country, but not an Islamic state. The state is secular. Islam is viewed more and more as a tradition that is losing its relevance as the country opens to the West. Books such as *The Satanic Verses* or *Not Without My Daughter* have been sold by the millions.

Richli: But yet, you are not allowed to evangelize, and this could get you into trouble!

S.R.: Yes. I can't proselytize. Neither can the Muslims, by the way. However, as Christians from the West, we are at a disadvantage compared to Muslims, since proselytizing can be misconstrued as political activism. This can get you into prison if you are not careful. However, our goal is only to find people who are seeking.

Richli: So, how do you do that?

S.R.: A couple examples: Through my studies of Islam (I'm officially a university student) I meet with intellectuals who are seriously seeking. They know the Koran and the Bible well, and study them side by side on

CD-ROM. There is even one fellow who did his doctoral dissertation on Seventh-day Adventism. And he now promotes it along the line of: "We now know where to find the real Christians, about which the Koran speaks so positively."

Also, God opens up all kinds of contacts, at the high end of society as well as at the low end. I meet the upper classes over lunch or dinner at the Hilton and the lower classes around a

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cup of chai, over a shoeshine stall, or discussing Anatolian rugs or pottery in the bazaar. I've met all kinds of people.

Richli: This may be too premature to ask, but are there any baptisms yet?

S.R.: Sure. After less than two years we already have eight persons baptized in a city 600 miles from where I live. Seven of them are former Muslims. There is another group study-

ing, with prospects for another three.

Richli: This group is 600 miles from your home. It certainly didn't come about as you were chatting with your neighbor across the yard.

S.R.: You're right! This is an interesting story. There was a Turkish soldier stationed in Korea in the fifties. This soldier fell in love with an American girl who, incidentally, was former U.S. president Ronald Reagan's cousin. Their relationship fizzled out, but not before she gave him a Bible and a hymnal. For 40 years, back in Turkey all by himself, he studied the Bible and read it to his 10 children. One of his daughters started to work for an American family during the Gulf War. When this family became Adventist, this girl said, "I know the Bible too! Tell me more about it; my family and I want to be baptized." They contacted me, and I found 23 people who were eager for Bible studies.

Richli: Amazing! Now what would you like to see happen?

S.R.: I would like to see 50 young volunteers willing to be "tentmakers" in this country come here, mix with the people, and make friends. There is enough work of harvest to be done. It's very easy for Westerners to make friends among the Turkish people. Life is inexpensive here. You have to be a bit adventuresome, but the potential to reach people and have a rich experience is enormous. That would really be walking in the footsteps of Paul. ■

Claude Richli is senior pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Basel, Switzerland.



Some Inspired Thoughts on Inspiration

ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

There's much discussion on my university campus about the inspiration of the Bible. Some say that the word "inspiration" isn't biblical. Is this true? Is the English translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 correct?

Don't allow theological discussions to upset or confuse you. The Lord can use such controversies to bring us back to the Bible in order to understand it better.

The passage you refer to is a very important one in any discussion of the nature and authority of the Scriptures, and it needs careful analysis. Let me make some comments on the passage.

1. The Extent of Inspiration. The phrase "all scripture" defines the sphere where "inspiration," whatever it may mean, is operative. The word "scripture" is consistently used in the New Testament to refer to all biblical literature. The singular "scripture" is often used in the New Testament to designate a specific portion of the Old Testament (Luke 4:21; John 19:37), but there are many cases in which it simply means the Scriptures as a whole (Gal. 3:22; James 4:5).

That this passage refers to the totality of Scripture is reinforced by the use of "all." The absence of the definite article has led some to conclude that it should be translated "every scripture"; that is, each portion of the Scriptures instead of "all/the totality of Scripture." Indeed, both translations are possible, and the meaning is basically the same. If each individual part of the Scriptures is inspired, then its totality is inspired also.

2. The Connection Between Inspiration and Scripture. The Greek term translated "is inspired" is *theopneustos*, and this is the only place in the New Testament where it is used. It's not a verb, but an adjective formed by the combination of two Greek words, *theos* ("God") and *pneo* ("breathe"), to which a verbal adjective ending was added (*tos*).

It can be translated in two ways, conveying the meanings (a) "breathing God" (that is, provoking thoughts about God, filled with God's breath) or (b) "God-breathed" (indicating that Scripture is the result of God's breath). Most commentators accept the second rendering as the proper one because the particular ending attached to the Greek term (*tos* indicates a passive meaning).

The relationship between this term and the previous phrase "all scripture" is debated by some scholars. Again, there are two

possible ways of describing the relationship in English: (a) "All scripture inspired by God" or (b) "All scripture is inspired by God." The first one may give the idea that some parts of the

Scriptures are not inspired by God, while the second states that all of Scripture is inspired by God. The argument is based on technicalities related to the Greek word order. Most scholars believe that the word order supports the second translation.

More important is the context. It suggests that the apostle has no interest at all in introducing a distinction between what is inspired by God in

the Bible and what is not. Such a distinction is foreign to the New Testament, and this verse denies its validity.

3. The Meaning of Inspiration. The phrase "all scripture is God-breathed" means that it was "inspired" by God. The English verb "to inspire" comes from the Latin *inspirare*, "to blow, to breathe into." The Scriptures are the result of God's breath! It was through God's breath that Adam came into existence (Gen. 2:7) and the universe was created (Ps. 33:6). That same divine power brought the Scriptures into existence.

Our passage says that the phenomenon of Scripture is the exclusive result of God's wonderful and unfathomable work. This makes the Bible unique in nature and authority. God used humans, but the apostle is telling us that the Scriptures cannot be credited to them, but to God. Since *all of it* found its origin in Him, it is endowed with reliability and trustworthiness.

4. The Function of Scripture. The passage ends with a definition of the Bible's purpose. We are not invited to argue about the details of inspiration, but rather to submit to its authority. It's from the Bible that our teachings or doctrines come; it's through the Bible that the power of the Spirit rebukes, corrects, and trains us in proper ethical conduct. Any definition of inspiration that undermines, modifies, or limits the nature, function, and authority of Scripture is to be shunned; for indeed, "all Scripture is inspired by God."

*The Bible is
unique in nature
and authority.*

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



A MAGAZINE
ARTICLE,
A MYSTERY
DONOR,
AND A
PENNYLESS
STUDENT

How God came through for me



THE DATE

was

August

1976, and

the Inter-

American edition of the *Adventist Review* carried a feature article under the title "A Manager for God," by S. L. Folkenberg.* More than one year later (sometime in early 1978) the piece fell into the hands of a dedicated young Adventist. She accepted its challenge, and today I'm still benefiting from the article's life-changing impact.

Here's what happened.

I'd been a teacher at the (Adventist) Harmon High School in Scarborough, Tobago, and had set the month of July (1978) as my termination point. By then, I thought, I would have saved enough to begin college in the fall.

But things did not go as planned. And I can still remember how utterly discouraged I was when at an April staff meeting I told the principal that I would have to continue teaching beyond July. During the past 14 months I'd been able to save the grand sum of \$18. With that kind of money I couldn't even dream of getting anywhere near the business office at Caribbean Union College.

The call to ministry had been a loud one for me—too loud for any denial. And I'd been so full of confi-

dence that the Lord wanted me to start my academic preparation the coming semester. Now, unexpectedly, money became my mountain, and my faith hovered in the valley. My spirits were at rock bottom.

I Asked for a Sign

We each sense our moment of difficulty in a way that is unique to our own life experience. For me this was crisis hour. One morning as I contemplated the future, I prayed, "Lord, if the rain falls only between 12:00 and 1:00 this afternoon, or if the sun shines through the clouds only during that hour, then I will know that I am to set my sights on starting college this coming semester."

The Lord had responded favorably to my requests for signs before—as in the case of my call to the ministry (hinted at above). And I thought I had good reason to believe that in the present situation—involving a cause so sublime, so otherworldly—Heaven would certainly step down one more time and show me a sign. But that afternoon it did not rain, and the sun grinned tauntingly all day. Suddenly I began to feel that mine had not been an attempt to induce information from God, but to extort it, a realization that left a bad taste in my mouth.

But as the evening progressed, the Gideon in me that had stood out brazenly all morning gave way to a scapegoating Jonah. *I meant well, I thought to myself. I asked for a sign because I desired to please Him. I don't need the ministry. I had other plans before He came knocking. It is in His interest to speak up.*

Notwithstanding such borderline insubordination, God came through for me. That very evening, just after 8:00, a visitor knocked at my door. It was Pastor Ruthven Prime, the conference education director. He'd flown to Tobago that day and had decided to stop by. Without any prompting, he recollected that ever since I'd accepted my teaching position two years before, I'd indicated my intention to start college in September

1978. And he went on to remind me that at my job interview he had promised to negotiate a scholarship on my behalf. Because of current financial constraints, he could not make any promises. But he suggested that I consider working for another year while he continued to pursue every scholarship avenue at his disposal. He prayed earnestly with me and left.

That night I slept the sleep of one generously beloved. For although God did not reveal Himself in the way that I had prescribed, He nevertheless honored my need in dramatic fashion, as I look back upon it now. He did come down after all.

I got up the next morning, still none the wiser about the *when* or the *how*, but certainly now very much aware that Heaven was preoccupied with my case. Turning down two calls to work with the state's high school system, I'd chosen to teach in our own Adventist school system for roughly \$400 a month in an area with the highest cost of living on the island. I would soon realize that the Lord was not about to let that decision go unrewarded.

God Came Through

For weeks I did not hear from Pastor Prime, and so resigned myself to continuing on the high school staff for another year. But the first week of June the principal handed me a sealed envelope stamped "Confidential."

For 18 years I have treasured the document that envelope contained. It stands out as a perpetual reminder of the Master's call and claim on my life and service. In the letter Pastor Prime wrote that a young church member had recently dropped in at his office to announce her commitment to assist a student through school, beginning September of that year. "I have used my discretion to apply this benefit directly to you," wrote Pastor Prime. "I have concluded that this is the way the Lord has answered your prayers and mine."

Through a happy coincidence I later discovered the identity of my

These are like ancient altars, reminding me of God's faithfulness.

benefactor—this generous Christian youth, whose only request was for anonymity. And having discovered her, I got the rest of the story firsthand.

Gracelyn Richardson, a primary school teacher, had read the *Review* article mentioned at the beginning. And the article, written in the style of a personal letter—from God, had included these words: "I will teach you My ways of channeling heaven's blessing where they will be used most effectively." The Spirit spoke, and she responded positively and unquestioningly. Her gift covered a good half of my tuition.

As I write this testimony I'm on study leave again. And yes, there is sometimes the temptation to run away, like Jonah. But that timely letter from Pastor Prime, that *Review* article, the sacrifice of that simple, obedient, sacrificing reader, and the ever-ready willingness of my aged parents to give what they could not afford—these are like ancient altars reminding me of God's faithfulness.

For me, pastoral ministry is not an option. God owns me. And I owe any success I have to Him. ■

* The late S. L. Folkenberg was the father of Robert S. Folkenberg, the current president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He wrote the article while he was director of stewardship and development for the Euro-Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Richard Campbell is an ordained minister from Trinidad and Tobago on graduate study leave in Maryland.



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Fish School



ROSY TETZ

Have you ever been to a lake? In some lakes if you stand very still in the water (about up to your knees) and look down into the water, you can see tiny fish swimming around. If you watch them for a while, you might notice that they swim together. It almost looks like they are one fish with one brain, swimming left and right and everywhere, all going the same way at the same time.

How do they do that? They pay attention. If they see the fish in front of them or beside them turn, they turn too.

Why do they swim around together like that? They don't want to become lunch for some other creature. Those little fish are weak and small. A fish that small doesn't have any weapon or protection from its enemies. However, if they all stay together in a group, most of them will be able to get away if they are attacked.

When fish swim around together like that, we say they are a school of fish. I don't know why it's called that. Maybe it's because they are all paying such good attention, just as children in school pay attention. Do you think that could be it?

People are not fish, but sometimes we act like them. Sometimes it is good to move together like a school of fish. When people work together and cooperate, amazing things can get done. When we stay together and help each other, we stay safer and happier.

But other times you have to be careful of the "school of fish" idea. You cannot turn your brain over to the group. You have to think about what they are doing and decide if you

want to be a part of it.

If the crowd is doing something wrong, you do not need to be a part of the crowd. If everyone else is being mean or naughty, you don't have to do what everyone else is doing. You don't need to swim left and right and everywhere else with the school of fish. You do not always need a crowd to be safe. You have better help than that.

The Bible says, "The Lord gives strength to those who are tired. He gives more power to those who are weak" (Isa. 40:29, ICB).

It doesn't matter if you are small. It doesn't matter if you are weak. Jesus is strong. Do you remember what the song says? "Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong."

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greetings to our neighbors. We'd listen to a carefully put together program by our conscientious Sabbath school superintendent.

As I would listen to the program, I'd often hear a subject that tempted me to think. I would keep my comments to myself, somewhat intimidated by the company of worshipers listening *without* comment. Sabbath school over, we were encouraged to go reverently and quickly to church, although there would often be a group standing outside the Sabbath school rooms having what seemed to be an interesting conversation.

My internal schedule would tell me to get a good seat in church where again we would sit and listen quietly to the church service carefully planned for our benefit. Then lunchtime would arrive, and although I had planned to reacquaint myself with the bodies sitting next to me on the pew, this desire would take second place to my stomach. Everyone would then quickly leave for Sabbath dinner, with the organ playing the recessional.

Sometimes we wonder if our church has made an art of one-way communication. The message seems to be "Sit still, be quiet; we've got an important message for you." Are we so married to our Sabbath school lessons and church traditions that the souls sitting with us get lost in the quest for the perfect program?

Fifteen years ago I began planning and running a children's Sabbath school class. The rooms were often elaborately, artistically decorated. The other teachers and I would spend hours at the church preparing for the entertainment . . . er . . . I mean, program. I was also in the church choir. We would spend months rehearsing, sewing costumes, and decorating for the Easter cantata. This preparation was for a one-hour evening program that we hoped would have a spiritual benefit. It usually did.

But there are victories and there are victories. We may have

Sabbath School?

to your Sabbath school class.

impressed our guests enough to try our church and come to our Sabbath school. Did we then shower them with a message and have them leave feeling isolated? Does God want us to put so much effort and money into this one-sided kind of communication? Does God only ask us to read the Bible without listening to our prayers? In our discipline of worship, do we create an environment in which the personal testimony is welcomed? Is a shoulder provided for the heartbroken victim? Is our goal to get to the point of the lesson or to nurture our classmates?

We may often preach of God's compassion and intense personal interest, but how often do we show it in the church? Jesus promoted relationships, not traditions. He taught that the greatest commandment of all is to love our sisters and brothers. Listening is one of the most important ways of showing love. Psychiatrists and counselors are getting rich from people's starvation for someone to really listen to them. My husband rejected the church for many years because it didn't meet his needs. One need was to be heard.

The good news is that we found the answer for what used to be our preprogrammed Sabbath morning ritual. Now we look forward to an uplifting, vital, Christian exchange. And my husband is not rejecting anymore!

A few years ago my husband and I had the privilege of visiting a class whose leaders were Vernelda and Robert Bischoff. Their Sabbath school class was a breath of fresh air—but also a shock. It was small, about 10 to 15 members, and informal. Even though we were late, we were welcomed as we walked in. They asked us how we were and how our week had been. The class was interested in us! Everyone was discussing whom they were going to pray for and why. Then they brainstormed on how they could help in the coming week those for whom we were praying. Everyone spoke freely and openly. At first I thought it might be disrespectful to spend so much time on trivialities. But soon I understood that nothing was trivial to God. By listening to others' daily anecdotes, I began to understand those people and to love them.

We've been members of this class ever since. If a person brings a spiritual question, that takes priority. No questions are scorned; no comments are out of line. We all listen, talk, and learn. We never fear straying from the lesson if we feel the Holy Spirit is guiding. Once we learned from a member about a divorced woman's tragedy, and we all took turns praying for her. It was

*It is possible to
be miles apart on
the peripheral
issues, but in
partnership on
our pilgrimage
of faith.*

spontaneous and spiritually awesome.

Our little group is quite diverse. We agree to disagree on some issues within the good news of Christ; we prove it is possible to be miles apart on the peripheral issues, but in partnership on our pilgrimage of faith. I wish every class could share our enthusiasm for Sabbath school. My husband and I miss it when we can't attend. There we know that the sermon comes after Sabbath school and not during it. We all bring our Bibles. Our class has grasped the insight that people are more important than Sabbath school rituals.

If you would like to add more verve and meaning to your class, if you want to have a two-way communication dynamic, here are some suggestions:

1. Simplify. Break up into small groups for the entire period. Make socialization a part of the program and not a block of time at the beginning or end. Have the program in a member's home occasionally. Don't plan entertainment, just a prayer and the lesson. You'll be surprised how people will open up and keep the conversation flowing after a few weeks of seeing the same people each week.

2. Choose a leader who has the gift of hospitality, a nurturing person. Do not choose someone who dominates the conversation. They will intimidate. The leader should never try to control, direct, or cut off the conversation. They should never be critical of comments or be defensive of the church. Choose someone who encourages people to express their spiritual views, whether positive or negative.

3. Be less regimented. The atmosphere should be accepting and loving. If people begin to migrate off the lesson, allow the Holy Spirit to control. Even though you are eager to get to a specific point, there may be more urgent issues. Don't consider talk a waste of time.

4. Prioritize. What are the most important and the most beneficial activities in the church? Spending time preparing for strict, time-slotted, one-way communication? Perhaps we

could get people out to our church social events if they bonded on Sabbaths. Perhaps more funds should be shifted to activities that promote two-way communication.

Of course, we cannot and should not do away with all one-way communication, or else I could not be writing this to you now. It just seems there is a void in our service for listening to our

members. If we are to love, how can we love people without knowing them? And how can we know them without listening to them? ■

Teresa Beem writes from Keene, Texas.




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Body Language

Given the exclusions in modern translations of significant verses found in the King James Version of the Bible, why isn't the Adventist Church guiding its members to the accuracy and integrity of the authorized King James Version?

It's true that we Seventh-day Adventists disagree in some instances with the emphases of the translators of the so-called modern versions of the Bible.

But we also disagree with some of the emphases given by the translators of the venerated King James Version. The grammar and its meaning in Luke 23:43 is a good example. Placing the comma after the word "thee" instead of after the word "today" reflects the personal position (bias) of the translators and gives this statement of Christ a meaning quite different from His intent.

And there are inclusions in the King James Version not found in the earliest manuscripts, such as 1 John 5:7, 8 and John 5:4.

While our ability to read the early manuscripts allows us to note that the translating from Greek to English by well-meaning scholars was not done perfectly, it also tells us that, miraculously, the editing of these men threatens none of the great truths God placed in the minds of the "holy men" who wrote as they were moved by the "Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). That's one major reason we do not offer an official guide to accuracy with respect to details of the King James Version. The same is true for the more recent versions.

Should our scholars raise warnings if they see that a version fails in substantial ways to honor the original manuscripts? Yes, I believe that they should and would.

One way that our scholars have been helpful rather recently is their reminder that some Bible editions are not translations, but paraphrases. Among the latter are *The Living Bible*, *The Message*, and *The Clear Word*. Paraphrases such as these may be helpful *devotional* reading, but should not be relied upon for *doctrinal* study.

Short of becoming personally knowledgeable in the original languages of the Bible, the best way to approach the issue you raise is prayerful comparison of scripture with scripture in any Bible version on any subject. That way one attains a broader

view of the issue and gains the balance that is key to both understanding and implementing scriptural instruction. That's far better than consulting "biblical accuracy guides" issued by the General Conference.

*Membership places
upon us
spiritual and
social obligations.*

I'm counseled by some friends that I should talk to my pastor about my recent divorce. I disagree. I feel that my marital status is not the business of the church. I refuse to be subjected to gossip about my private life. I know I'm right, but are there texts that confirm my position?

Acceptance of church membership places upon us spiritual and social obligations requiring that we identify

each other very clearly in such critical areas as marital status. This sometimes means the revelation of incidents or facts that are painful but necessary for the proper conduct of church life.

It is true that some ministers have betrayed confidences and that in many churches there are those who are more interested in the seamy aspects of others' problems than in the resolution and/or healing of the parties concerned. But is that the rule? I think not. In the vast majority of congregations I've known, most members are genuinely caring, and most ministers with whom I have dealt are quite professional in this regard. It is unfortunate that any are not trustworthy. But the bad example of a few should not destroy one's respect for them all.

As for scriptures that support the proper view, I recommend Galatians 6:10, which calls the church the household of faith; James 2:15, which reminds us that we are to relate as a family (brothers and sisters); Galatians 6:2, which states that we are to bear one another's burdens; and 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, which encourages us to mutuality and interdependence. And if and when one's situation demands the approval or disapproval of the body of believers, consider Matthew 18:18-20, the portion that reads: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Calvin B. Rock is a general vice president of the General Conference. He holds doctoral degrees in ministry and Christian ethics.



ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORT

GC President: Bible Central to Adventist Message

BY CARLOS MEDLEY, ADVENTIST REVIEW NEWS EDITOR

Seventh-day Adventists *still* believe in the power of God's Word." That's the message the Adventist Church's spiritual leader delivered to 300 administrators, pastors, institutional workers, and lay members from around the world to open the church's Annual Council September 29-October 6.

Building on the council theme, "Experience the Power of God's Word," General Conference president Robert S. Folkenberg told the world leaders that the Adventist message remains relevant only if we commit ourselves to proclaiming and living the present truth that's revealed in God's living Word.

"We must draw near to God and resist the temptation to mix the water of human doctrinal compromise with the precious blood of Christ," he said. "The Bible, not human opinion, is the

foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist message. The Bible, not pop psychology, provides power for character change and Christlike living. The Bible, not culture, is the essence of Adventist standards and always lifts us above our cultures."

Folkenberg admonished his audience that "Adventist ministers must give heart-penetrating, soul-searching messages from the living Word of the living God." He also warned that Christians must be alerted to the deceptions of Satan, who often gets us to believe that the end justifies the means, and that fellowship is just as important as discipleship.

"Perhaps the Bible is under attack today because we haven't lived it," Folkenberg said. "We've studied it, debated it, interpreted it, argued over it, preached from it, bludgeoned each



FOLKENBERG: "Despite what some individuals have been teaching, we still believe in a literal creation and a literal seven-day creation week."

other with it, quoted it, read it, memorized it—but we just haven't lived it."

He urged the leaders to ask the Holy Spirit to put the Word of God in their minds and hearts and make Holy Scripture real in their everyday life.

Annual Business Session

Held at the Adventist Church's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, the Annual Council is the session during which the world church's governing body, the General Conference Executive Committee, hears reports, votes policy changes and resolutions, and approves the next year's world budget. For the second time the first two days of the Annual Council were designated as a Message and Mission Conference, being devoted to spiritual reflection and discussion (see p. 22).

In his secretary's report G. Ralph Thompson praised God for the rapid



STUDYING THE ISSUES: Administrators, pastors, and lay members gathered at the world headquarters to vote new policy items.



TOUGH QUESTIONS: Professor Marcel Millaud (left) of Tahiti and Nam Daegeuk of Korea question proposed policy changes.

growth in the Adventist Church's world membership. Thompson reported world membership of 9,479,718 as of June 30, an increase of 4.7 percent from the same period last year. Baptisms totaled 734,978 for the 12 months ending on June 30, up 52,754, or 7.7 percent, from the same period last year.

However, Thompson urged his fellow leaders to impress upon church members the importance of reaching out in love to new converts. "Why can't the Adventist Church be known as the church with the friendliest welcome?" he asked.

The GC secretary also voiced concern for the 187,833 apostasies and missing members recorded last year.

"Many members do not leave the church because of doctrine," he said. "They feel like outsiders. Research shows that those who leave us have been in the church for at least five years. They encounter indifference, a judgmental spirit. They get discouraged and do not return."

In the area of mission service Thompson declared that the Adventist Church still

maintains a strong commitment. He noted that 1,804 persons left their homelands last year to serve the church, including 401 new and returning expatriate employees, 277 Adventist Youth Service workers, and 1,126 Adventist Volunteer Service workers. As of December 31, 1996, there were nearly 1,200 expatriate workers serving the church.

Global Vision

Recognizing the urgent need to spread the gospel quickly throughout the world, Folkenberg introduced his

dreams for the church's future on the council's final day. "It's time for a paradigm shift," he said. "We have no option but to marry our church's mission to the technology the Lord has given us."

In Folkenberg's dream the church should exploit a broad range of cutting-edge technology to proclaim the gospel worldwide. This initiative will call for the development of a 24-hour-a-day satellite delivery system that covers every corner of the globe, delivering its programming in 40 languages.

Folkenberg says a global system



COME TO ORDER: GC vice president Philip Follett (left) chairs the council as committee secretary Lowell Cooper (center) makes last-minute notes.

Annual Council Briefs

In other business the General Conference Executive Committee:

■ Voted conference status for the Zambesi Union Mission. With headquarters in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, the union will change its name to the Zimbabwe Union Conference. It is the first union on the African continent outside of South Africa to gain conference status.

Conference status indicates that the field is financially self-supporting and contributes to the worldwide work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church members will elect their own conference officers. There are more than 230,000 members in the union.

■ Recognized expatriate missionaries Gordon and Betty June Jenson (see photo on p. 23) for more than 48 years of service to the church in India. General Conference secretary G. Ralph Thompson presented the Jensons with the first General Conference Mission Career Service Award in

honor of their longstanding interdivision service.

■ Heard a report on the distribution of the Hands Across the World Offering, which was raised in 1995 to establish new Adventist congregations and construct new church buildings. Michael Ryan, director of the General Conference Office of Global Mission, said that as a result of the offering 853 outreach and building projects have been either completed or set in motion.

■ Elected **Ardis Stenbakken**, associate director of the General Conference Women's Ministries Department, as department director. Stenbakken replaces Dorothy Eaton Watts, who became associate secretary of the Southern Asia Division.

■ Elected **Thomas J. Zirkle**, a senior vice president of Loma Linda University Medical Center in California, as an associate director of the General Conference Health and Temperance Department. In this additional responsibility Zirkle will periodically consult with the world division leaders on health-care institution issues.

Message and Mission Conference Focuses on the Heart of Renewal

BY JONATHAN GALLAGHER, GENERAL CONFERENCE NEWS DIRECTOR

"What do you say to 300 leaders of a nearly 10 million-member Adventist Church? How do you share something new and relevant and meaningful that they haven't heard before? How do you make it a truly personal and spiritual experience when they are all spiritual leaders anyway?"

Those are the questions one speaker shared before the conference began. Surely the challenge of being a speaker at Annual Council is great. The call to "preach to preachers" may seem difficult and perhaps explains why the Message and Mission emphasis, begun at Annual Council in Costa Rica last year, is a new initiative.

A Spiritual Matter

To take the first two days of the most important meeting in the Adventist Church year and turn them into a time of renewal for division, union, and other church leaders surely demonstrates what we believe: that our spiritual relationship to God is the most important part of our message and mission.

"We need to tell the world and remind ourselves that this is 'the heart of the matter,'" said Jan Paulsen, a General Conference vice president and chair of the Message and Mission Committee. "If we do not have a living relationship with the God we claim to know and love, then everything else is meaningless."

Some may feel that such time should be spent in debating the various difficulties facing the church worldwide. Important leaders really should not need to sit down and listen as others minister to them! But Annual Council participants felt differently.

"The addition of Message and Mission to the program of Annual Council has been a welcome introduction," com-

mented British Union Conference president Cecil Perry. "It brings the General Conference down to the local church level and provides a much-needed spiritual emphasis."

Freedom, Joy, Forgiveness

Speaking on salvation and the Word, Andrea Luxton, Newbold College principal, expressed her conviction that "God's actions cannot be circumscribed by human reasoning. Salvation is the Lord's—His actions, not our own."

She also expressed her concerns. "How many church

members I have met still struggle with these simple truths. Salvation is a gift from God, but some members do not feel 'good enough.' Others believe they are already righteous. But you do not see the freedom, the joy, the ability to forgive, that such a salvation experience should demonstrate."

Other speakers included Raoul Dederen, Angel Rodriguez, Barry Black, and Allan Lindsay.

In a moment of personal testimony, Jozsef Szilvasi, president of the Hungarian Union, spoke of the effective witness of a pastor who considered himself uneducated.

Knowing Szilvasi was soon to be conscripted into the army, the pastor told him, "Jesus Christ needs soldiers too!" Szilvasi concluded, "What is important is the personal touch of the Word of God."

"Making Me a Believer"

In the final presentation, Jan Paulsen summed up his deeply held convictions, as well as his own moments of crisis and uncertainty, in a vivid and very real appeal.

"If it pleases the Lord of the Word, then of course He has power to heal my illness, find me a job, sell my house, balance my budget, have a word with the brethren, ensure my reelection. There is no end to what He can do, if it pleases Him," he said.

"I in my little world must remember that the creative power of the Word is primarily and pre-eminently seen in making me a believer, and in giving me a future to look forward to with hope and joy and longing. You and I and our church members need to spend time with the Word and discover its power."



A TIME FOR REFLECTION: During the Message and Mission Conference, committee members gathered in small groups to discuss Bible passages and pray.

would offer enormous benefits for the church's ministry. The programming may include evangelism, nurture, training, and long-distance learning capabilities. In addition to use in satellite outreach meetings such as NET '96, the same system could beam train-

ing videos to help small churches become more effective in evangelism.

Adventist schools in the remote corners of the world would have access to lectures and seminars presented by the church's most noted theologians at an affordable cost. "The opportunities

are boundless," Folkenberg said. "They are limited only by our imagination."

To illustrate the possibilities, Brad Thorpe, director of the Adventist Global Communication Network at the General Conference, updated the committee members on the NET '98

series, to be conducted by Pastor Dwight Nelson. Church leaders believe the meetings, starting in October 1998, will be available for downlink all over the world.

"This will be the first worldwide evangelistic series in the history of the Adventist Church," Thorpe says. "It's possible that we can have between 5,000 and 6,000 sites. When you apply the same attendance ratios from NET '96, we could see a minimum of 400,000 to 500,000 people attending. It's quite possible that we could have more than 1 million people attending. I think this is the most exciting thing we can talk about in Annual Council."

Once the global coverage is online, Folkenberg says, it will provide an ongoing stream of evangelistic events for the world fields. In addition to live broadcasts, the churches will be able to videotape programs and feature a satellite meeting any time they want.

Folkenberg also says the satellite ministry will aid the church in reaching unentered territories. "We have normally thought of the congregation as being a destination for the downlinks. However, we should train volunteers to go out to areas where there's no Adventist congregation and set up downlink sites to receive the gospel."

The global satellite signal will also aid the ministry of Adventist World

Radio, which could serve as a vehicle to distribute programming to AWR stations around the world. In addition to the video and audio capabilities, the programming and resources delivered via satellite will also be replicated on the Internet so that individuals around the world will be able to access the data through their personal computers.

For the satellite time Folkenberg estimates an annual cost of between \$4 million and \$5 million. He requested that a small group of GC officers develop a plan to finance the lease time out of the world church's operating budget and said that such an endeavor would entail a change of financial priorities. Some GC services and personnel would undoubtedly be discontinued to provide the needed funds.

Folkenberg said the GC would have to work with the church's 12 world divisions to develop production centers to add translation and develop new programming.

In addition to the satellite project, Folkenberg also disclosed his vision for a data system on the Internet that provides immediate financial information on the use of tithe and offerings. The interactive program would not only include General Conference finances; it would also trace the church's money flow in the local and union conferences and the world divisions.

By putting this information online, Folkenberg believes the church will build trust with church members.

Financial Issues

Treasury officials at the General Conference announced that the church's 1998 world budget amounts to \$125,710,000, an increase of \$915,000, or .7 percent, from this year's budget. Funding the GC headquarters operations will take \$24,750,496 next year, an increase of 3.1 percent from 1997.

For the first nine months of 1997, the GC shows an adjusted surplus of \$950,334. Treasury officials anticipate that 1997 in-house operating costs will be below the GC expense cap of \$24,008,552, which is calcu-



WELCOME, YOUR EXCELLENCY: Ugandan ambassador Edith Grace Ssemplala (with handbag), pictured with her daughter, Priscilla, meets Uganda Union president Christian Aliddeki (left) and Pastor Yafesi Walugembe (right) at a prayer breakfast and service held at the Capital Memorial (Adventist) Church in Washington, D.C. About 30 diplomats, including four ambassadors, from 16 embassies attended the program, meeting Adventist leaders from their homelands.

lated at 4.85 percent of tithe.

While acknowledging the church's increasing tithe support, GC treasurer Robert L. Rawson voiced concern at the trend in support for world mission giving, which stood at \$43,558,723 in 1996, a decrease of 11.1 percent from 1995. "Most of the decrease is from areas of the world where the currency is blocked and the church does not have ready access to the funds," Rawson explained.

Harold G. Harker, president of the Trans-Tasman Union in Australia, noted the budget appropriations to the world divisions from world mission offerings are decreasing. "I view this trend [of decreasing mission giving] with concern," Harker said. "This should be a major item for discussion and planning for the future. Otherwise the church could be in serious and dire straits."

GC stewardship director Benjamin Maxson also noted that despite the church's growth, per capita giving was decreasing. Maxson said the problem was not a financial problem, but a deeply spiritual problem.



MISSION HONOREES: General Conference leaders honored missionaries Gordon and Betty June Jenson for more than 48 years of service to the church in India.



From Everywhere

The Spiritual Gift of

BY GORDEN DOSS

IN THE 123 YEARS SINCE J. N. ANDREWS FIRST journeyed to Switzerland, Adventist missionaries have circled the globe proclaiming the three angels' messages. Mission is what Seventh-day Adventism is all about. We are, in an essential way, a missionary church.

But the very success of that mission effort has propelled the Adventist Church into a period of dramatic change. While North American membership accounts for a shrinking percentage of the total, North American financial contribution remains critically important. Other world divisions now comprise more than 85 percent of the membership, but often work in difficult economic situations. In both the church and society, power equations are shifting and cultural patterns are changing, making the church very different than it was just 20 years ago.

What kind of unity should we expect of a much larger and more diverse church? Will the church of the twenty-first century be split into loosely related nationalistic units? General Conference president Robert Folkenberg has warned against "ethnic balkanization and tribalism, in which the desire for control and 'upward mobility'" undermines unity and mission. He sees this potent threat to true unity as a major contemporary challenge.¹

I believe that an effective missionary movement is one of the keys to maintaining the true unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Missionary ministry continues to be a valid form of ministry, drawing diverse cultures and ministry areas into cooperative service. Just as the ordained clergy retains an appropriate role within an adequate doctrine of the laity, so missionary ministry retains an appropriate role in the work of an international church. Time and circumstance will change the nature of missionary service, but as a type of min-

istry it will remain valid until the Second Coming.

How will Adventist missionary ministry meet the new millennium? The answer isn't at all clear. But I want to approach the issue from my own perspective as an American "missionary kid" and missionary in Africa.² Our platitudes are dear to us, yet some of our attitudes and assumptions make the picture fuzzy. As budgets become ever harder to balance, the official Adventist missionary is looking more and more like an endangered species. If this trend continues, the church in North America, birthplace of Adventism, may forfeit its official involvement in missionary ministry.

The Ambivalence Factor

Some Adventists are ambivalent about missionary service owing to factors both inside and outside the church. The historic association of modern colonialism and missionaries fuels the perception that the missionary is an anachronism who must go home for colonialism to be finally issued a death certificate. This unfortunate association causes the missionary to be viewed as a "temporary," a "pinch hitter," a "relief worker," who will be sent home at the earliest possible moment. A missionary, in the popular view, is an "ugly American" carrying three cameras around the neck, who speaks nothing but English, has no respect for other cultures, and is frequently foolish.

Contemporary American political trends toward isolationism can also diminish enthusiasm for world missions. Conventional wisdom considers the missionary to be politically incorrect.³

Adventist ambivalence toward missionary ministry is sensed in all sectors of the church. To begin with, the senders⁴ are frequently ambivalent. The need for missionaries becomes less clear to Americans as the church outside America grows ever



o Everywhere

Missionary Ministry

ILLUSTRATION © DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

larger. The daunting task of evangelizing North America makes "home missions" look more important than "foreign missions." American Adventists also feel ambivalent when they receive the implied or explicit message from church leaders in developing countries, "We no longer need or want your people, but you have a spiritual obligation to keep the funds coming." Ambivalence among the senders has found concrete expression in declining regular mission offerings.

Receivers are also ambivalent. To some church members in developing countries the presence of expatriates implies a failure in national development and education. For some, the era of colonialism will not truly end until every church position is occupied by a national. The high cost of supporting missionaries seems like a poor allocation of scarce resources. Some missionaries display attitudes that create or magnify the ambivalence felt by nationals.

Missionaries themselves may also question their own roles. The ambivalence of both senders and receivers causes the missionary to feel caught in the middle. The candidate who responds to the General Conference invitation as the "call of God" often makes significant family, material, and career sacrifices, and

while most North American Adventists are supportive, the new appointee may encounter a vocal minority who cast doubt on his or her sanity for accepting the call. Another group of Adventists in the new field may express regret that the position wasn't filled by a national. Throughout the time of service the missionary may even feel that his or her own departure is eagerly anticipated.⁵

When the missionary returns to the home country, major reentry stress may await. Adventist clergy find they are off their career paths; their overseas service record is often considered irrelevant by North American conferences. Health professionals are put to the stretch reentering their careers.

Finally, the denomination itself is ambivalent about missionary tenure. New missionaries are challenged to make a lifetime commitment, and the short average tenure of missionaries is regularly bemoaned, even though the receiving field often assumes or promotes short tenure.

Current policies governing missionary service discourage lifetime service in several ways. Missionaries who make a lifetime commitment and demonstrate both calling and aptitude may

not find the church eager to make a reciprocal commitment. The missionary sometimes feels like a disposable commodity, urged to accept the call when it comes, but then sent home as soon as possible. The personal calling and commitment that seems all-important to the missionary sometimes seems unimportant to the denomination.

The Basic Assumptions Factor

What are our basic assumptions about missionary ministry? Is it here to stay or not? Does it remain a valid role in a truly international church? Should all ministry roles around the globe eventually be performed by nationals? Is missionary service only for "unentered areas"?

To focus our thinking, I might ask, "When will Andrews University be nationalized?" The question may sound strange to North Americans, but it is asked frequently about church institutions in other parts of the world.

Andrews University and many other North American entities employ expatriates not because qualified North Americans are in short supply, but as a matter of principle. The multicultural perspective contributed by those from other ministry fields is a great blessing.

What If . . . ?

By Gorden Doss

The last place our family worked in North America was in the Florida Conference, where we served the New Smyrna Beach and Titusville congregations. Begging the indulgence of our former associates in Florida, allow me to sketch a picture.

What if we were still formally linked with the Florida Conference? How might it work?

What if the conference and the two churches identified our family as their missionaries to Malawi? What if our family picture appeared in the respective foyers with an identifying inscription? What if we made regular written and video reports to the conference and the churches?

Suppose that on each furlough we visited Florida to report to the conference leaders, share our experiences with the office staff during morning worship, speak in the home churches, give a report at camp meeting, and promote world missions in other ways? What if the Florida Conference were the formal home base for a number of missionary families serving in many different places? What if every church and conference in North America had formal ties with the world field through their missionaries?

I'm confident that the work of the church would be greatly blessed if this scenario became a reality. Unity would be enhanced and Global Mission advanced in a significant way.

Cultural integration lifts us above the myopia of our own society, for as cultures mingle, they supplement and lift each other. Serving in the multicultural context, we move toward the ideal of being "world Christians." Encouraging persons of various cultures to work together promotes Christian fellowship and allows prejudice and misunderstanding to be identified and overcome.

A monocultural workforce, conversely, in whatever locale, could actually hinder Global Mission. The church could be broken into isolated nationalistic blocs where it's "Mobia for Mobians" and "Zameria for Zamerians." The intentionally rich mixture of cultures that blesses the North American church offers no less a potential blessing to other countries.⁶

The Administrative Factor

Another factor in the situation is that the North American Division doesn't participate in the administration of the missionary program. There's no formal linkage between any entity in North America—from local church to division—and the missionary supported by NAD offerings.

For many in North America, missionary service is a "faceless" ministry. Missionaries

function "somewhere out there" in an entirely separate orbit. The missionary too may sense no roots in the church of the home country. The General Conference offers missionaries kind and efficient support by fax, phone, and mail when they are on furlough, and they may see various church leaders informally as they travel. But there is no sense of being rooted, connected, or accountable to any office or leader in the NAD.

What Scripture Teaches Us

As always, Scripture both anchors and informs our understanding of missionary ministry through a variety of illustrations. Abraham accepted God's call to cross-cultural service away from his own people. God's covenant with Israel certainly intended they be a nation of missionaries as well. Daniel performed superbly as one of the greatest missionaries of all time, in a land and a culture he never chose. In the New Testament the exploits of Peter, Paul, Philip, and Barnabas set the missionary pattern for the Christian church.

Many more examples could be cited to show that cross-cultural ministry is a permanent part of God's plan of redemption. God never intended to establish isolated, inwardly focused groups of believers. When the post-Flood popula-

tion tried to set up a provincial cultural enclave at Babel, He confused their language and scattered them. When Israel turned inward and lost its missionary vision, He replaced it with an international church. The church launched at Pentecost was a multicultural missionary movement, a fact clearly apparent in the profusion of languages in which the gospel was preached that first day.

One of the apostle Paul's most compelling metaphors for the church is that it is "the body of Christ."⁷ That body is composed of all kinds of people, living all over the world, working together harmoniously. The authentic Adventist is a world Christian who works happily and productively with all other members.

Ellen White wrote: "There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn from another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified."⁸

As a people who prize Scripture, Adventists see themselves as members of a single world fellowship. While other denominations plant churches with the aim of establishing autonomous Christian bodies and then departing, Adventist members and workers understand themselves as linked in permanent, worldwide fellowship.

But the role of the missionary in the modern church is perhaps best understood through the paradigm of spiritual gifts.⁹ The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus bestows spiritual gifts upon members of His body, as He sees fit, for the upbuilding of the church. Paul's own life and work amply demonstrated that he had been given the gift of missionary ministry. While it is true that every Christian is a missionary, just as every Christian is a minister, a spiritually gifted missionary has a specific role in the body of Christ. "The gift of missionary [service] is the special gift that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture."¹⁰

Evidence abounds that the missionary gift is still being given today. The

church's privilege and obligation is to facilitate the ministry of all its gifted members, both for its own spiritual well-being and for its outreach.

Resurrecting Missionary Ministry

Adventist missionary ministry needs a resurrection, not as a dusty mummy coming back to haunt the living, but as a valid form of ministry obscured by recent trends.

From a biblical perspective, we should reaffirm missionary ministry as a positive and permanent feature of the total church effort. The missionary gift, bestowed upon the church at Pentecost, will continue alongside the other spiritual gifts until Jesus returns.

From a practical perspective we should reaffirm missionary ministry as positive and helpful for both the senders and receivers. Direct involvement in world missions, through the missionaries it sends, invigorates the sending church. The missionary—educated, trained, culturally sensitive—remains a powerful tool for promoting the world mission of the church, often contributing knowledge of new paradigms and new ministry methods that elevates standards, expectations, and performance. Missionary ministry often proves to be a very cost-effective investment.

From a humanitarian perspective we should reaffirm that missionaries can still be very useful in addressing major world problems. In many world regions the pace of economic development is painfully slow, trapping millions in grinding poverty. The AIDS epidemic afflicts large populations in some nations, often wiping out many of the most productive members of society. In an era of great wealth and comfort in developed nations, hunger and disease nonetheless afflict the globe as never before. Missionaries are vitally important to the church's efforts to feed, clothe, and house a hurting world.

What We Could Do

I believe the Adventist Church should consider restructuring the administration of the missionary program to enhance its effectiveness, especially in light of the vastly changed political and cultural arena in which we ask the missionary to work. Structure must always

be the servant of mission, not the master. Here are just two suggestions for restructuring missionary service.

First, the North American church should participate in the administration of the missionaries it provides and supports through a North American Division mission board. Missionaries should be formally linked with both specific local churches and a sending conference to foster ownership, relationship, and participation. The missionary who goes forth with the blessing and support of people he or she knows in a given church or conference has a clear morale and material advantage.

Second, just as members are now able to target offerings to official projects around the world, they should also be allowed to target offerings to support the proposed North American mission board.¹¹ While careful not to promote "checkbook evangelism," such a policy would allow thousands of North American believers to feel a vital financial connection to the persons who minister in their place in other world regions.

To fulfill its mission the church must earnestly seek true unity. Effective missionary ministry, adapted to the contemporary situation, is one of the tools that will promote both unity and growth. Jesus promises to bless His people as they

do all they can to streamline and enhance the work of His church. ■

¹ Robert Folkenberg, "Leaders for These Times," *Adventist Review*, Sept. 22, 1994.

² However, although America and Africa are my own points of reference, I feel that the views presented are relevant to other areas. I hold the "from-everywhere-to-everywhere" composition of the missionary force to be the ideal.

³ Adventists avoid using the term *missionary* by coining new terms like *interdivision worker*.

⁴ For the sake of brevity, the terms *sender* and *receiver* are used to refer to the historic roles played by the American and developing country churches, respectively. Today the sending and receiving roles are increasingly shared around the globe.

⁵ This is not to suggest that they are personally disliked or resented by all of their local associates.

⁶ Multiculturalism needs to be more than a tool to be used or discarded in pursuit of upward mobility.

⁷ Eph. 4:12.

⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look*, p. 281.

⁹ See Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4.

¹⁰ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, 1974), p. 205.

¹¹ Offerings should support the mission board program, not individual missionaries.

Gorden Doss, a missionary for 29 years, is principal of Lake View Seminary in Malawi.



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Dear Christian family:

I'm writing this letter to tell you how I came to know Jesus, your friend—and now mine also.

I grew up in a Socialist-Communist country and in a family committed to that same ideology. Everyone around me was atheist, and going to church was very unpopular, especially for a young person like me. It was an act of courage to do so.

The very first time I can remember God's name being seriously mentioned in my family was in 1981, as we were camping by a river in my hometown. As we sat together by a campfire drinking tea one evening, my father, a strong Communist, turned to his brother and asked, "How come you never became a Communist?"

My uncle smiled and replied: "How could I, when I believe in Jesus Christ, who is my great friend?"

"Since when do you go to church?" asked my father.

"No," my uncle answered, "I do not go to church, but the church is right here in my heart. You Communists will never understand that."

Just as the conversation began to get interesting, my mother showed up with a pile of pancakes, and the talk stopped. But one thing out of it impressed my mind: the mention of the name *Jesus Christ*. As I feasted on hot pancakes that evening, I wondered who Jesus was and how my uncle could be a friend of a Person who died so long ago. The following night I asked my uncle about this Jesus, but all he would say was that later I would learn more about Him.

As our campout came to an end, I firmly decided to learn more about this Person my uncle had spoken about, and one day I gathered enough courage to begin the search. Secretly slipping into a nearby church to attend a mass, I listened to the priest, studied the interior of the building, and watched the people pray. But I didn't find Jesus—even after two more visits. Unsatisfied, I tried another church in hopes of meeting Jesus, only to experience disappointment again. My only comfort was my uncle's words: "Later you too will learn about Him." But as time went on, the hope of finding this Person grew dimmer and dimmer in my mind.

Then war broke out in Sarajevo.

The outbreak of hostilities found me in a student dormitory close to the front line. Later I moved to my uncle's place farther away, where, feeling more secure, I rode out with his family the long months of that bloody conflict.

One night as the battle raged outside, my uncle invited me to come to his bedroom. He did that only when he had something very important to share with me. It was a bitterly cold night and, having nothing else, we had to cut up one of the beds to use as firewood.

My uncle wanted to talk about God, about Jesus, about the prophets. The wood from the bed was hard stuff and burned for many hours. And as it burned, my uncle and I talked—for a long time.

F E A T U R E

Letter From Sarajevo

As we finished, he suggested I go to the Adventist church the following day. Only there would I find Jesus, his great friend.

"Are you really serious?" I said, smiling.

"You promised you'd listen to me as long as you stayed in my house," he replied. "This is no ordinary church, you will see. Go," he continued, "and if you don't like it, never go there again. I would like you to learn the truth about Jesus."

Thus began my journey with Jesus.

Shaved and neatly dressed (for the first time in a long time), I went to the Adventist church that Sabbath. There I was met by Darius, a young man who introduced me to "the brothers and sisters," as they called themselves. Right away I felt at home. But the large number of people there surprised me, and my heart was beating fast as I entered the main room of the building. It was a solemn moment for me. There was no crucifix, no icon—not even a picture of Jesus. But I felt His presence there. And I remembered my uncle's words as we camped by the river that evening years before. I was so happy.

As the meeting got under way, I felt as if in a movie. *Was this real?* I thought. The sermon of the morning touched on science, history, archaeology, poetry, medicine, love—and all in relation to the Bible. It was a blend of the secular and the spiritual, and I felt as though the preacher was moved by an unusual power. At times it was so powerful, in fact, that I could not control my feelings—my whole body was shaking. At the end I was ready to clap my hands, but no one else did, and I did not dare.

When I left that day, my decision was firm. This would be my church, and here I would learn about Jesus. Darius and I

became best friends, and he gave me a Bible as a gift. Reading it together with other spiritual books (such as *Steps to Christ*, *Jesus the Messiah*, and *The Great Controversy*) made me strong in my faith in God, and Jesus grew bigger in my heart. I decided to be baptized, and thus became a part of God's remnant family.

But it all went back to that campfire down by the river—and the well-placed words of my Christian uncle. I now know that God had a plan for my life even before I knew Him.

PS: As I write, I'm finishing my studies in engineering, a profession in which I expect to learn more about my Creator and His creation. My goal is to walk with Him and lead others to Him. Because of war, I've lost my nationality. But because of God's grace, I now have a new family—with God as my Father, and with brothers and sisters all around the world. ■

Igor Andrić wrote this piece as a student in Sarajevo. He hails from the former Yugoslavia (now Bosnia-Herzegovina). His letter was translated by

Zdravko Stefanovic, professor of theology at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.



The Old Man Was an Angel

BY ALVIN REYES

It was a small group discussion about the joy of salvation and the God who comes looking. A young minister had just opened the discussion when Hebrews 13:2 was mentioned.

"Let me tell the group my story," said Pastor Nilo, a middle-aged minister, interrupting the discussion.

"I was a young boy growing up in the old country," he began. "We had no electricity then. The mode of transportation was the *calesa* (a horse-drawn carriage). We had a small *nipa* (palm-leaf thatch roof) hut, and I lived with my elder sister and mother. Life was quiet, simple, and primitive.

"My mother made sure we were raised as Seventh-day Adventists," explained Pastor Nilo. "But one particular quality that I could never really appreciate was my mother's commitment to hospitality. She would always welcome any stranger who passed by our house or came to church to share a simple meal at our house.

"One particularly hot Sabbath an old man entered the church during worship. He smelled, walked with a limp, and wore the attire of a beggar. And," added the pastor, "he obviously had a hernia of some sort, as it was bulging from the pants he was trying to hold up with his hands. Despite my being a teenager and poor, appearances were important to me.

"I was afraid Mother would invite the old man to our house. And at the end of the service Mother dutifully approached the old beggar. I was furious. How could she? What would my friends say?"

Pastor Nilo paused and, as if trying to choose his words, took a deep breath and continued. "We rode home on a *calesa*. I sat in front with my sister and verbally expressed my displeasure to her, knowing that the old man heard everything.

"We arrived home, and mother served Sabbath lunch. I decided to wait in my room and not share the table with the old man. He slurped and spilled, making disgusting sounds as he chewed his food. Looking back, I don't know if it was intentional. Maybe it was." Pastor Nilo smiled weakly.

"I managed to control my tongue, but my actions and

expressions spoke for the anger inside." Pastor Nilo sighed again.

"The old man finished his meal and stood up to leave. 'I

apologize to the boy, as I know he is not pleased with me. This has been my only full meal in days. Thank you.' With a bow to Mother, he held his pants and limped quietly toward the front door.

"'Nilo!' my mother shouted. 'The dogs!'

"Reluctantly I came out of my room, even though I had been waiting for the moment when he would leave. Our garden had a small iron gate that you could never open without making a cranking sound.

And we had three dogs. I went outside and saw the three dogs sitting on the other side of the iron gate, waiting for leftovers from lunch. And there was no old man.

"I ran all around the house looking," continued the pastor. "With a heavy heart I realized what I had done. And to whom I had done it. My mother, who was looking from the house, also realized the implication.

"I rushed back to the house weeping and flew into the arms of my mother. 'I kept telling you,' Mother repeated to me between sobs. I entered my room, knelt beside my bed, and pleaded and agonized for the Lord's forgiveness, promising that I would give the old man my best pants and shoes if only he would come back."

Pastor Nilo paused again, sighed, and then smiled. "Until now I can still recall that day as if it were just yesterday . . . yet I know I have been forgiven."

The rest of the discussion was a blur. I kept my mind on that story and tried to recall the many instances I have failed to be kind to strangers.

I also need forgiveness. ■

*I know
I have been
forgiven.*

Alvin Reyes is president of the Calbayog Sanitarium and Hospital in the Philippines.



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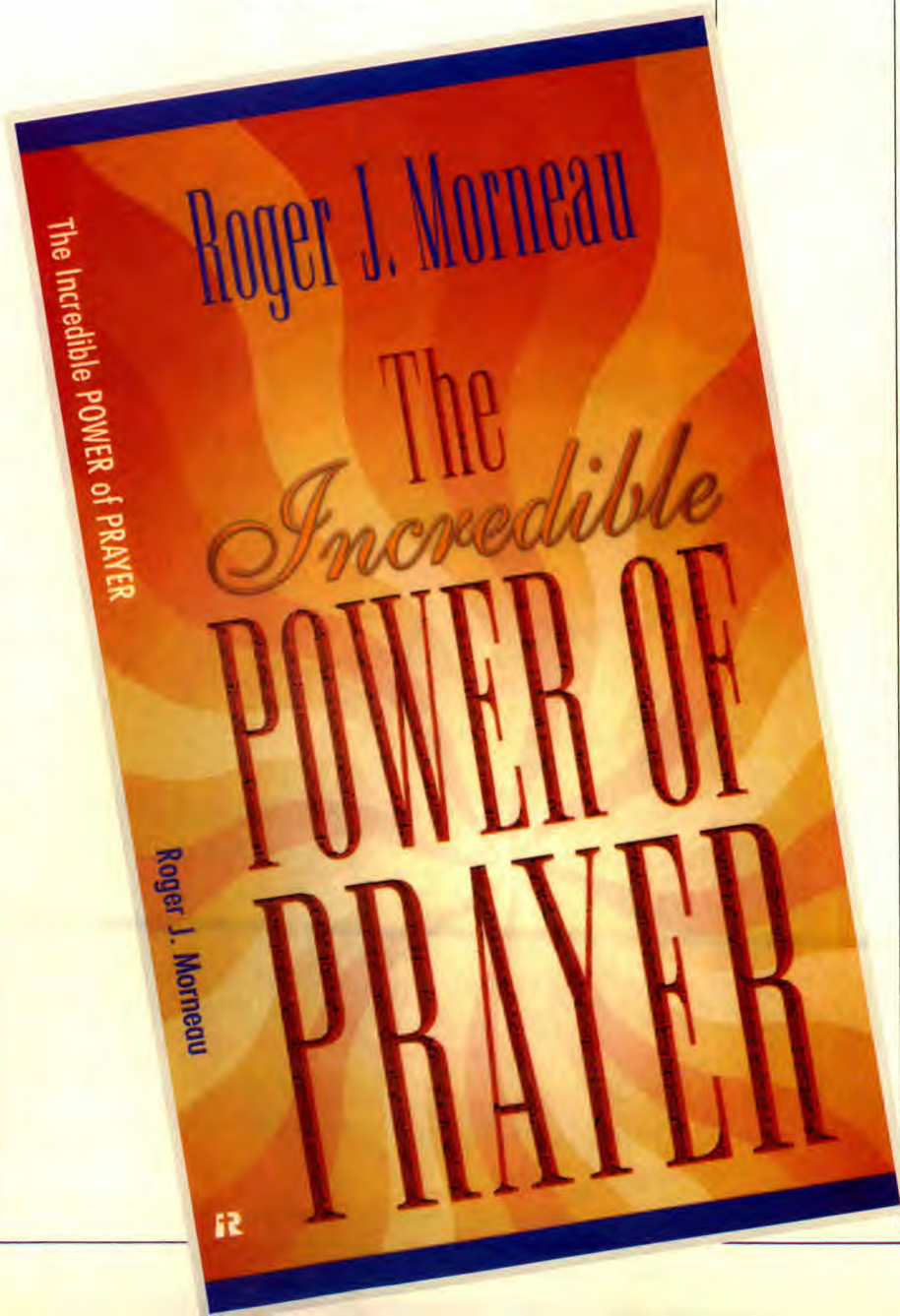
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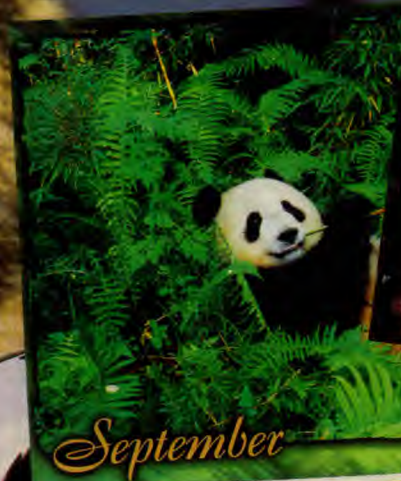
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13 Lazarus 26-27	14 Lazarus 27-28	15 Lazarus 28-29	16 Lazarus 29-30	17 Lazarus 30-31	18 Lazarus 31-1	19 Lazarus 1-2
20 Lazarus 2-3	21 Lazarus 3-4	22 Lazarus 4-5	23 Lazarus 5-6	24 Lazarus 6-7	25 Lazarus 7-8	26 Lazarus 8-9
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