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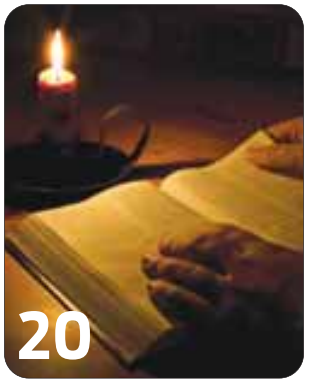
A 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE CHURCH

Adventist Review

"Behold, I come quickly . . ."

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ by presenting 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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At a 1919 Bible conference church leaders grappled with issues of biblical and prophetic interpretation.

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New research is uncovering issues Adventists grappled with in the early twentieth century. Photo: Dave Sherwin

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NEXT WEEK IN *ADVENTIST WORLD*

Connecting With Jesus

A worldwide initiative moves to turn believers into disciples.

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Letters From Our Readers

A Great Awakening

Before I even finished reading the rest of the December 24, 2009, *Adventist Review,* I felt strongly that the interview conducted by Bill Knott, "A Great Awakening," might be the answer to the problem the church has of our youth slipping "out the back door."

Certainly, if youth can be invigorated with a passion for Christ and evangelism, and if the numbers for Generation of Youth for Christ keep doubling every year, it speaks to the need for this ministry in the *hearts* of young people.

They want to be needed—and who slips out the back door when you're needed?

God bless this new ministry, and may the rest of us not sit in the seat of the scornful but give our encouragement to something new that may *move* young people as nothing else seems to be doing lately!

JUDY BOLYARD
Jonesborough, Tennessee

An Open Letter to an Adventist Leader

Carlos Medley's editorial "An Open Letter to an Adventist Leader" (Dec. 17, 2009) was excellent.

In Florida we have "government in the sunshine," which is intended to make public governmental meetings and dealings more open to public access and scrutiny. More openness in our church meetings at every level would engender more understanding and better decisions. Medley hit the nail on the head by addressing a real need. Thank you.

JONNIE SHIPBAUGH
Panama City, Florida

I loved Carlos Medley's editorial. One thing (suggestion) is missing, though. Why aren't brief résumés of the candidates for the various offices handed out at constituency meetings? Some nominees aren't known by everyone. Why should I vote for someone about whom I know nothing? When I ask this question publicly, I'm told it's to avoid electioneering.

This is another example of our need for transparency. As for the lack of responses, I feel that this is a reflection of our North American Division constituency membership in that the more educated, active, and political members have left the church, some for the very reasons mentioned in Medley's editorial and what I have mentioned in this letter. The "Anglo" membership in North America is rapidly disappearing, if not already gone.

ALEX BELISLE
Bronx, New York

New Year's Day Reading

On New Year's Day I finally found time to read the December 17 issue. I was especially blessed by Ginger Brockman's article, "Just a God Thing," and was reminded again of God's faithfulness when we're faithful. "Life Lessons From My Granddaughter," by Enid Myers, shared eight important ideas that would enrich—even for those of us without grandchildren.

The cover feature, "A Light From Artichoke Lake," also was very interesting—God's Spirit reaching into prisons. And kudos to Carlos Medley for his "Open Letter to an Adventist Leader." Surely accountability and transparency need to be seen in every entity of God's church.

RUTH WRIGHT
Berkeley Springs, West Virginia

> "Surely accountability and transparency need to be seen in every entity of God's church."
>
> —RUTH WRIGHT, *Berkeley Springs, West Virginia*

Good Stuff Inside!

To stand on "The Rock of Gratitude" (Bill Knott) "Without Gloating" (Roy Adams) "In Response to Dawkins" (Norman L. Mitchell) because we are confident that we are "In His Hands" (Stephen Chavez)—that's our goal and our awesome privilege! All of this and more good stuff is in the November 26, 2009, *Adventist Review.*

Knott and Adams complement each other in their editorials, with Knott concluding that thankfulness and gratitude expressed will grow us a solid "dwelling place for God," and Adams compelling us to evaluate how we give thanks in this chronically "hurting world." Dawkins, of course, can know nothing of genuine thankfulness because, with only his "complex improbable appearances of design" instead of a Designer, Builder, and Sustainer, he has no one ultimately to receive his thanks.

Chavez identifies to whom we should give thanks by reminding us that "our lives are not our own; they're gifts we enjoy day by day. And length of life is no indication of God's favor." We conclude that as we enjoy the gift of life we should express genuine thanks as long as we have breath without gloating over the number of days God gives us. As for Dawkins, even he is not outside the pale of God's grace. The dead have been brought to life before. So let's give thanks for that and ask our Father to keep interfering with Dawkins' equilibrium.

WENDI DOMENI

By the way, if we really believe our hearts to be "Where *[Our]* Treasure Is" (Jimmy Phillips), maybe a genuine thanks to Dawkins for disturbing *our* equilibrium is in order. Is it not ironic that the man who acknowledges no God may impel us to identify the gods we hold? Thanks, Dawkins.

Merlin Nichols
Chetwynd, British Columbia, Canada

Seeing the Sparrow Fall

"Seeing the Sparrow Fall," by Dixil Rodríguez (Nov. 19, 2009), was one of the most touching stories I have read in the *Review*.

Having watched sparrows at my bird feeder, I am amused at how feisty they are for such little birds. If too many land on the perches, the first ones there are sure to chase the offending birds away. They will fly and peck at each other, and I've even seen them kick. So it was with curiosity that I looked more closely at the cover photograph. Sure enough, one little sparrow was standing on one leg as he braced his other foot against his neighbor on the fence post, ready to push him and the bird below off the post.

Yes, God watches over us and little sparrows, and He also sees us when we fall—when we push our way to the top, when we trample over others, when we kick and peck and fight to have our own way. May 2010 be a year of new beginnings as we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in refining us.

Sharon Klahn
Wilmington, Delaware



Adventist Education: Off-Course?

The cover illustration for the November 12, 2009, *Adventist Review* truly speaks a thousand words! Christ has been replaced at the helm by humanity with all its academics. And the heaven-sent chart (Spirit of Prophecy) has been replaced with worldly, man-made plans. Is it any wonder that the ship of Adventist education finds itself off-course and in troubled waters?

Lyn Brigham
Keene, Texas

Where's the Humility?

I appreciate Roy Adams' perspective in "Foot Washing: Removing the Embarrassment" (Oct. 22, 2009). Last Communion Sabbath in my church there were four of us together for foot washing: a single woman, two teenage sisters, and me.

I have been bothered about the separation of married couples for the service for another reason that I feel *is* theological. This is the ordinance of *humility.* How humbling is it for a man or woman to wash their spouse's feet? (I can't deny that perhaps there are a few times when a marriage needs the foot-washing service.)

It is indeed humbling to seek someone with whom to share this service. It takes less of self and motivates a person to reach out to the lonely, the visitor, the unlovely, the elite, the person with whom there may be hard feelings. It is humbling to physically lower oneself to the ground to care for another's feet.

It is not humbling to do this time after time with a spouse with whom we have the most intimate relationships.

Participating during the foot-washing service with one's spouse is the easy way out. It is self-centered rather than other-centered as Christ was other-centered the evening He knelt before His disciples.

Ruth Campbell
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

Correction

An error inadvertently made its way into our December 24, 2009, article "The Strong Galilean," by William G. Johnsson: Jesus was born in Bethlehem, not Nazareth. —Editors.



We welcome *your letters, noting, as always, that inclusion of a letter in this section does not imply that the ideas expressed are endorsed by either the editors of the* Adventist Review *or the General Conference. Short, specific, timely letters have the best chance at being published (please include your complete address and phone number—even with e-mail messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor,* Adventist Review, *12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; e-mail: letters@adventistreview.org.*

Open Doors



Gerald A. Klingbeil

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, FOLLOWING MY GRADUATION FROM HIGH school (or *Gymnasium* in Germany), I spent more than three months traveling through Scandinavia. My friends and I saw wonderful landscapes, tranquil lakes, and breathtaking fjords as we drove our homemade mobile home through Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway. We hiked for days through Lapland, very close to the Arctic Circle, and enjoyed (at least to a certain degree) weeks of nightless summer. Sitting at the most northern point of Europe, the North Cape, we saw the sun go down, barely touch the horizon, and then come up again.

I took thousands of photos during this trip—these were the "BD" (before digital) days—and even with all the breathtaking beauty of the surrounding nature, I was fascinated by the remarkable variety of doors that we saw. Colors are important in a region that has long, dark winters, and many of the doors had wonderful colors. I saw blue, red, green, and orange doors. I enjoyed carved wooden doors surrounded by flower boxes. Often, when we visited small towns or major cities, I found myself wandering in the town center, looking for doors and taking photos of the most interesting ones.

Doors have been significant in my life. Right from the beginning of my personal walk with Jesus I discovered an important principle of the Christian life. The "your will be done" principle of Matthew 6:10 is best explained by the open-door metaphor. Committing myself to my Creator and Savior, I ask Him to open or close doors. I remember many times when I looked at a closed door in my life, wishing fervently that it would open, only to realize much later that it had been a blessing that it had been closed. I also remember other doors that I really did not want to enter—but that opened. Going through them required faith and courage but resulted in so many blessings.



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In the ancient Near East, city gates were more than the door to the city. They not only were crucial for the defense of a city, but also marked one of its central spaces. Usually, gate constructions involved additional rooms adjacent to the entranceway that were used for the elders and judges of that city to mete out judgment (cf. Ruth 4:1, 2). Later on, these gate spaces were used to read the Torah (or Scripture) and were the predecessors of synagogues.

Jesus recognized the centrality of the door/gate concept. "I am the door" (John 10:9, NASB;* other versions use "gate"), He claimed, and then He added a significant qualifier: "If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved." Now that is quite a startling (and exclusive) statement—on a par with the other "I am" statements of Jesus that we can find in the Gospels.

As we look around us we see many doors beckoning us to step in. Some indeed look attractive but may not live up to their promise. Others look forbidding but may introduce new vistas and perspectives that may help us to grow and stretch our hearts and minds to look beyond the familiar.

I wish I could know what awaits me in 2010. I wish I could recognize some of the doors that I will encounter this year. I know that the One who said that He is the door through which I need to enter into His presence is ready to walk with me through open doors and will make sure that other doors are shut tight. As I look at some of the old pictures of doors from my long-past Scandinavian journey and remember God's leading over the past decades, I again marvel at His wisdom and guidance in my life. Take some time today to remember your open and closed doors, and as you face new doors take the hand of the One who is the Door—as well as the Life. That is *Life* with a capital "L." ■

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Bella and Tara: BFF*



Wilona Karimabadi

THEY ARE AN UNLIKELY PAIR. ONE OF THEM SMALL, THE OTHER VERY big. But their bond of friendship has nothing to do with their differences. Bella and Tara are best friends who love each other, yet their relationship puzzles most people.

You see, Bella is a dog, and Tara is an elephant.†

On a Tennessee elephant sanctuary where both animals live—a home for "retired" elephants and some stray dogs—it is not uncommon for creatures to pair off with each other. But the pairings usually involve animals from the same species.

Somehow, a bond was formed between canine and pachyderm that proved strong when tragedy struck. Bella suffered a spinal injury that rendered her paralyzed. She couldn't walk or even wag her tail. So for three weeks sanctuary staff members carried Bella around and let her rest in their office. But instead of Tara spending her days roaming the 2,700-acre property, she parked herself outside the office and kept vigil for her friend. Every single day.

Bella was finally carried outside so Tara could visit with her. Tara even scratched Bella's tummy with her giant foot. And Bella responded. Soon the little dog's tail wagged again, and the extraordinary visits continued until Bella made a full recovery.

Today, the pair romps freely about their sanctuary home, where Bella is very protective of her much larger friend.

Is their story that hard to believe?

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them" (Isa. 11:6). ■

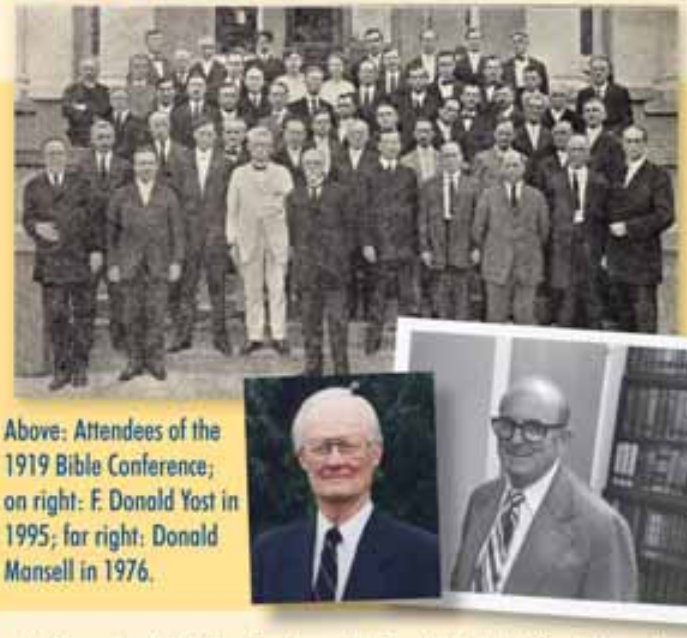
*Best friends forever.
†www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4696315n.

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It Pays to Organize

On May 4, 1919, the General Conference Committee voted to hold a Bible conference followed by a Bible and history teachers' council. The Bible conference ran from July 1 to 19, with a teachers' council that continued into August. Stenographers, present at both meetings, faithfully recorded the proceedings, and the General Conference Secretariat, then responsible for all written records, filed them away.

In 1968 Donald Mansell, then a book editor at the Review and Herald, came across mention of a Bible conference in Takoma Park, Maryland. New information to him, he made some inquiries but was unable to find any record. In 1973, after the General Conference had voted to establish an official General Conference Archives, archivist F. Donald Yost bent to the task of organizing all the records of a 110-year-old denomination. Mansell, then working on the revised *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, inquired of Yost in early fall of 1974 if he knew of any records of a 1919 Bible conference. He did not, but said he would keep his eyes open.



Above: Attendees of the 1919 Bible Conference; on right: F. Donald Yost in 1995; far right: Donald Mansell in 1976.

As he organized the many records, Yost came across two wrapped packets in early December 1974. Opening them, he found what he believed Mansell had been looking for. A quick call brought him to the Archives office, where closer inspection revealed the valuable documents that had lain dormant for more than 50 years. Read their significance in our cover story on pages 16-19.

WORLD CHURCH

New Year, New Budget

GC treasurer discusses big-ticket items and increasing support from the developing world

By **Ansel Oliver,** *assistant director for news, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*

IN APPROVING a US$151.3-million budget for 2010, Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders are continuing a worldwide emphasis on mission. This year the church will spend about $124 million on appropriations for world outreach and supporting missionaries.

For every dollar of tithe a member returns, about 2 percent goes to the church's world headquarters; that's a budgeted $36 million. But Adventist Church finance officers say the world headquarters, in recent years, has operated as much as $6 million below its cap, allowing the additional funds to be used in the field.

Other big expenditures include items such as $5.5 million for *Adventist World* magazine and $3.7 million for funding Hope Channel operations. Smaller budgeted items include $200,000 for the *Mission* quarterly and $20,000 in annual maintenance to preserve the northern California home of church cofounder Ellen White.

General Conference treasurer Robert Lemon recently discussed major budget items and the increasing support from the developing world. Excerpts from the interview follow:

Adventist News Network (ANN): Every five years the church holds a world session. How much will the church spend on this summer's General Conference session in Atlanta?

Robert Lemon: The world headquarters' cost directly for the session is a little over $6 million. The total church cost is approximately twice that when you count all the travel and hotel expenses and expenses for delegates coming from all around the world, which I would estimate is about $12 million total.

ANN: Is it still worth having General Conference session during a recession?

Lemon: If we were able to decide yes or no on something on short notice it might be possible to look at a different scenario. But session location, hotels, and arrangements are reserved 10 years in advance and confirmed five years ahead. You can't just pull the plug on something like that so close without huge financial penalties. If you count the cost of a session and divide it by the number of church members and by the five years in between, it comes to about 20 cents a year per member. That's less than half of a soft drink a year per member. Session is really a combination of a worldwide camp meeting and a business session and has a tremendous effect on the unity of the church. Church members around the world, no matter where they're coming from—wealthy places, poor places, places with high membership, or places with small membership—they all have a part in the decision-making of the church. I don't think you could buy that unity any other way cheaper.

ANN: How does the church's financial picture look compared to 10 years ago? Was there a dramatic shift in the last decade?



ANN FILE PHOTO

FINANCIAL FOCUS: Robert Lemon is treasurer of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Lemon: Certainly the last decade has seen dramatic membership growth in our church around the world, and probably from a financial standpoint the change has been a huge increase in funds from areas of the world outside of North America. Last year 60 percent of the funds coming to the world headquarters were from North America and 40 percent outside North America. The previous year it was 70 percent from North America and 30 percent from outside of North America. It was a major shift.

ANN: Each region contributes at least 2 percent of tithe to the world headquarters, while others contribute more for appropriations to other parts of the world. Some have said they wished their region would choose to keep more of the money locally. How do you respond?

Lemon: The gospel commission is to the whole world. One of the greatest blessings of our church is that no matter where we are, no matter how much we return in tithe, it goes toward spreading the gospel to the whole world. My experience has been that areas that focus on keeping money locally don't grow as fast as those that are generous in sharing with the world field.

ANN: Historically, North America has chosen to give a larger percentage of tithe to the world headquarters, about 8 percent. Is that different than previous years?

Lemon: Well, 2 percent of that 8 percent goes for the world headquarters operation. So percentage-wise, North America doesn't fund the world headquarters any more than other divisions. The extra 6 percent is used for appropriations and mission work. North America used to give 10.7 percent, and the rest of the divisions gave 1 percent. It was always North America's way of helping to spread the gospel throughout the world. But as other parts of the world have become financially stronger we have adjusted the percentages. Also, there are appropriations for world church institutions that happen to be located in North America.

ANN: What is the process for determining appropriations?

Lemon: A certain amount of it is history, but we just completed a major commission on appropriations where we had a team of six individuals from the church headquarters visit each of the 13 world divisions and spend a day or two reviewing all the use of tithe and funds within the divisions and made recommendations to the Financial Planning and Budget Committee for adjustments in appropriations. There are some divisions that will get an increase in appropriations, some that will remain rather constant, and there are others, it is felt, that can carry more of the burden locally and we'll be releasing some of the appropriations for use in other areas.

ANN: What accountability process is in place for appropriations?

Lemon: When we give appropriations to the divisions and the institutions, in most cases they're not restricted, and the board and executive committees of those organizations set their budgets and make decisions on how to use them. Then, of course, we have our auditing service that reviews whether items were treated appropriately. Of course, if appropriations are restricted for a specific item, then auditors audit to those restrictions. ■

■ WORLD CHURCH

Jan Paulsen Marks 11 Years at Adventist Church Helm

From Norway to world church, people are "most important asset"

By **Elizabeth Lechleitner,** *Adventist News Network*

AS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS worldwide geared up for a new decade, their church's president, Jan Paulsen, celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday, affording the veteran leader an opportunity to reflect on a different decade—the more than 10 years he's spent at the helm of the 16-million-member global Protestant denomination.

During those years, Paulsen said he has seen Adventists unite to focus perhaps more deliberately than ever on their mission to spread the church's message of hope.

"It's against that backdrop that the significant growth we've seen in the past five, six years should be viewed," he told Adventist News Network the day before his January 5 birthday. "Our mission is reflected in our agenda and continues to drive our budget."

The success of that mission, Paulsen said he's observed, depends in part on a commitment to greater openness—from administrative and financial transparency to a willingness to "acknowledge, validate, and work with diversity within the church."

Paulsen's long-running *Let's Talk* television series, consisting of



GC FILE PHOTO

ADVENTIST LEADER: Pastor Jan Paulsen, elected in January 1999 as president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, marked his seventy-fifth birthday on January 5, 2010, at the world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

unedited, unscripted conversations with teenagers and young adults worldwide, helped the church embrace its younger generations, and, more recently, "Adventists About Life," a YouTube channel offering an Adventist perspective on current issues, is opening the church to yet another audience.

Openness also involves engagement beyond the church pews, said Paulsen, who has long stressed that churches should serve as community centers, where the church's message of hope finds its practical expression as members offer friendship, spiritual support, and humanitarian aid to their neighbors.

As the Adventist Church entered 2010, Paulsen said he's particularly troubled by the continued pervasiveness of poverty. "The church has such a huge responsibility to not only address poverty and alleviate suffering, but also to engage politically to affect change in the interest of those who are disadvantaged. We must carry the interests of those who cannot do it themselves," he said.

Paulsen, who was born in Narvik, Norway, completed an early ministerial internship and pastoral work in his native land. Later, a missionary stint in Ghana and posts as professor and principal of Babcock University in Nigeria and afterward at Newbold College laid the foundation for what is now more than 50 years of denominational service.

Paulsen served as general secretary and education director of the church's Trans-European region, and later its president, bringing to each post broad experience and an educational background in theology—Paulsen earned his master's degree from Washington Theological Seminary, a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and a doctorate in theology from the University of Tübingen.

A post as a general vice president of the world church began in 1995, ending with his election in 1999 as world church president.

Empowering people, Paulsen said, is one of the greatest lessons he has learned during his years at the world church headquarters.

"People may be your most complicated—and, at times, troubling—assets to handle, but they are your most important," he said, adding that it's members, not administrators, who are ultimately the church's "owners." Paulsen added that he hopes they continue to invest in their church and, as a unified force, shape its future. ■

■ LIBERIA

Adventist Youth Tells Story on Radio

UNICEF boosts Sabbathkeeping teen's religious freedom

By **UNICEF Radio Staff,** *reporting from Monrovia, Liberia*

WHEN EMMANUEL MULBAH, 18, moved in with his uncle several years ago, they became very close. Emmanuel worked in his uncle's shop and would run it whenever his uncle was away.

Recently, however, their relationship has been strained by Emmanuel's decision to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Liberia. Emmanuel's uncle says his nephew should stay a Lutheran—the religion in which he was raised—and ordered him not to attend Adventist services.

"My uncle says 'our forefathers, our parents have been in that church; they grew up in that church; they died in that church,' and he says we should also imitate them," Emmanuel says. "I want my uncle to understand that everyone has the right to freedom of religion."

In August 2009 Emmanuel was one of the participants in a weeklong radio production workshop for seven young people from Liberia. UNICEF Radio—in partnership with UNICEF's Back on Track program on education in emergencies and postcrisis transition, the UNICEF Liberia program, and Talking Drum Studios—conducted the workshop with three boys and four



COURTESY OF UNICEF LIBERIA

HAPPY TEEN: Emmanuel Mulbah, an 18-year-old Seventh-day Adventist from Liberia, recorded his story of faith for radio broadcast with the help of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, which advocates for children's rights.

girls chosen from around the country.

The young people learned how to record, edit, write, and produce a radio story of their own.

Emmanuel's story took him to a Lutheran church and a Seventh-day Adventist church in Monrovia to discuss the two Christian churches' different beliefs about the Sabbath day.

After meeting with the Lutheran pastor, Emmanuel said he felt liberated by the pastor's words: "Hold strong to your faith, and it's not so much the day that matters, but what you do on that day."

Now, despite his uncle's hesitations, Emmanuel is thinking about becoming an Adventist Church pastor.

UNICEF's Liberia program will broadcast all of the youths' stories to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC grants children the right to freedom of thought and religion, among other rights.

This was the second in a series of workshops conducted by UNICEF Radio and the Back on Track program. The aim is to bring young people's perspectives into the debate around education in emergencies and postcrisis situations—and to commemorate the CRC. ■

■ WORLD CHURCH

Merklin Takes Reins of Adventist-Muslim Study Center

Pastor, seminary professor has served internationally

FORMER MISSION institute director Lester Merklin assumed his new post December 1, 2009, as head of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations, located in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

The center is one of five Global Mission religious study operations by the church's Office of Adventist Mission established to build bridges of understanding between the Adventist Church and major world religions.

The center consists of Merklin, who will also continue as a faculty member at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Merklin, 61, has served as a pastor and seminary professor in the United States, Belize, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Most recently he was director of the church's Institute of World Mission, which offers training for the church's cross-cultural workers. He holds a Master of Divinity

degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and a doctorate in ministry from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Merklin replaces Jerald Whitehouse, who stepped down as director in June.

"The center has an important role to play in helping Adventists understand Islam," Merklin said. "We are in a unique position to converse with our Muslim friends because of our mutual emphasis on doing God's will, looking for the coming of Christ, expecting a day of judgment, and following scriptural health laws."

Islam is the world's second-largest religion with some 1.5 billion believers. As the dominant religion in many countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, Islam is also experiencing growth in Europe and North America, Merklin said.

"His experience in cross-cultural communication will be an asset in helping church members develop skills to reach the unreached," said Ganoune Diop, director of the study centers for the Office of Adventist Mission.

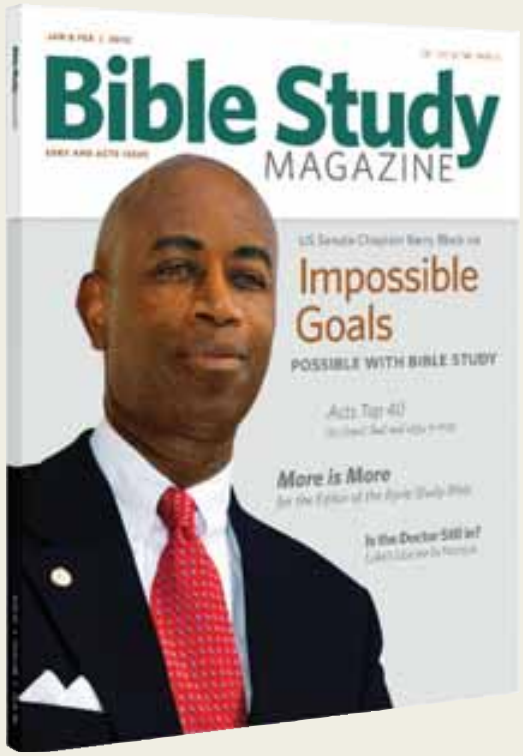
The other four Global Mission religious study centers operated by the Office of Adventist Mission are the World Jewish-Adventist Friendship Center in Israel, the Buddhist Religious Study Center in Thailand, the Hindu Religious Study Center in India, and the Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies in England. ■

Reported by Rick Kajiura, Office of Adventist Mission, via Adventist News Network.



COURTESY OF ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

MUSLIM CENTER DIRECTOR: Lester Merklin is the new director of the Adventist Church's Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations.



COURTESY OF *BIBLE STUDY MAGAZINE*

■ NORTH AMERICA

Bible Study Magazine Features Adventist Chaplain

Senate chaplain Barry C. Black is cover story subject

COVER SUBJECT: U.S. Senate chaplain Barry C. Black, the first African-American, first retired Naval chaplain, and first Seventh-day Adventist to serve as clergy for the upper house of the U.S. Congress, is featured on the cover of the January/February 2010 issue of *Bible Study Magazine*, a bimonthly published by Logos Bible Software of Bellingham, Washington. The article traces Black's journey "from the 'hood' to the Hill," as in Capitol Hill, where the Congress meets.


TERRY CREWS

During our ministerial internship in Utah, in 1943, my wife, Rose, and I were earning about $100 a month—things were tight during the war years. Many things were rationed, such as gasoline and tires, and the national speed limit was 35 mph!

With regularity Rose and I noticed Mother's check in the mail every month, so I wrote her one day and said, "Mother, what is the money you're sending for? Thank you, but what is it for?"

Then she replied, "Why, son? That's *my tithe,* and I figured no one deserves it more than you do!"

Was she right or wrong?

We quickly wrote Mother and told her it is God's plan that the tithe should go into the church—"the storehouse"—receipted, and channeled appropriately. Then I added, "Otherwise, someone with a lot of rich relatives sending their tithe to a particular worker would give them an unfair advantage. God's way, Mom, allows the church to give each worker the fair wage."

The problem was quickly resolved. Mother was faithful until the day of her death. Her treasures were stored forever *in heaven!*

—Pastor Dick Rentfro, *Thorp, Washington*

POEM

Redemption's Song

Precious today in the sight of the Lord
Is the death of those of His saints,
As they take their rest till the Lord returns,
Relieved from earthly taint.

And their works completed do follow them
As they sleep in the dust unaware,
Having died in the steadfast faith and trust
That they rest in heavenly care.

For on the resurrection morn
When He comes to claim His own,
They will rise to meet Him in the air
To be gathered around His throne.

They will join the gladdened multitude
In the rapturous, joyous throng


GETTY IMAGES

Who will raise their voices in gratitude
As they sing redemption's song.

As the glories of heaven are then revealed,
And they see the plight of the lost,
They rejoice in the knowledge that heaven remains
Cheap enough at any cost.

—Sandra A. Haynes, *Roseburg, Oregon*



PHOTO



This is a photo of the Fletcher Seventh-day Adventist Church sign the day Brent Sedgwick, associate pastor, was preaching on Gideon. —*Submitted by* Ralph C. Workman, *Hendersonville, North Carolina*

I Gave God My Broken Heart

WHERE ELSE COULD I TURN?



BY PAULINE BEAULIEU

"Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you" (Ps. 55:22).

We had just enjoyed a wonderful Christmas with our children and grandchildren, and now at the end of January my husband and I were preparing to be at the home of our daughter Debra to watch the Super Bowl, as we had done in years past.

All this changed when Debra called us on Friday, the week before, crying in pain and asking us to take her to the emergency room. My husband stayed with her preschooler. The other three children—Benjamin, Natalie, and Raleigh—were at school. Debra's husband, Kris, was working out of town and wouldn't be home until evening.

Debra had been treated that week for what the doctor thought was a bladder infection, but she was getting worse instead of better. When we got to the emergency room, tests showed that Debra had a cyst on her ovary that needed surgery that evening. Doctors also saw a mass they couldn't identify. Her gynecologist told me of her plans to talk to Debra after her surgery, and I took that to mean that she would possibly have to have further surgery, maybe a hysterectomy.

Debra came home the next morning but couldn't seem to rest comfortably. A few days later Kris found her on the floor writhing in agony. We rushed to their home just minutes after Kris's frantic call. He took her to the hospital while we stayed with the children.

More tests and scans showed that there was indeed a large mass on the back of Debra's uterus, which was also connected to her colon and the base of her lungs. As the doctor explained what he saw we couldn't believe what we were hearing. I kept looking at Debra's face. What was going to happen to my beautiful daughter, only 35 years old?

Debra was a vegetarian, she worked out, she did all the right things to stay healthy. She was the one who told her dad and me to be more careful about our diets. She didn't want anything to happen to us. I'd had a double bypass surgery four years before, and her dad experienced a mild heart attack a few years back.

Buying Time

Debra had more surgery, this time much more serious. The doctor did a complete hysterectomy and removed any

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signs of the dreaded cancer. As bad as this all was, we hoped that with the latest medications and chemotherapy we would all be able to go back to normal life.

After recuperating for three weeks in the hospital Debra was home for two days. When she went to the doctor's office to have the staples in her incision removed, she was again in great pain. A scan revealed two more large tumors in her abdomen. The doctor admitted her back into the hospital.

Debra was in terrible pain; she needed oxygen almost constantly and couldn't eat. I tried not to cry in front of her; her sisters kept reminding me to stay positive. But one day Deb caught me crying quietly in the corner of her room and called me over.

I held her and told her that this awful thing should have happened to me. But she quickly said, "No, Mom, it happened to me, and we'll beat this thing together."

Our three other daughters and two sons rallied around their sister. Friends, church members, pastors sat with the kids, provided food for the family, and spent countless hours in prayer and visitation.

Debra had one round of chemotherapy. The medications made her sick or groggy, so she had an epidural to control the pain. We thought we would lose her that week, but we knew there were prayers being said for her all over the country and we hoped for a miracle.

Within two weeks Debra mysteriously rallied. We thought our prayers had been answered. If she wasn't completely healed, we thought more treatments might help.

God gave us one good week with her. But then her back started hurting and got worse every day. She needed oxygen again. We could read the signs in the nurses' eyes as we realized it was not going to be long.

Living the Unthinkable

Early one Wednesday morning at the end of March we were called to the hospital. They had put Debra on a respirator because her lungs were no longer functioning. Kris had promised Deb he would do everything to keep her alive, but the doctor explained that the respirator was the only thing keeping her alive.

When we agreed the respirator should be removed, Debra was gone.

I looked around. I felt like I was in a drama of some kind; and none of what I saw or felt was real.

Our family had a hard time accepting the fact that Deb wasn't with us anymore. We were with her in the hospital day and night; we were there when she died; at her service in her home church; at the cemetery; at a memorial for her in New England, where she was raised.

For months I cried every time I thought of her and her four children, who now had to grow up without their wonderful mother. It hurt so much.

My husband is loving and supportive. We still had five wonderful children and 14 beautiful grandchildren to live for. I asked myself again and again, *Why can't I stop crying and wishing I had died instead of my Debra?*

Going to church was hard. Hearing the beautiful hymns with all their promises hurt; sermons about heaven hurt; the promises of Christ's coming hurt. None of this was going to happen soon enough to relieve the anguish I felt.

I Give Up

I prayed that God would reach out to me and hold me while I tried to sort out the confusion and sorrow I felt. Self-pity and sentimentality, along with my grief, had set in and made my condition worse.

He must have been holding me with all His might. One night, when I felt as if I could no longer hang on, I finally gave it all up to Him as I agonized and prayed to live no longer as I had been living.

I woke up the next morning feeling rested with a wonderful peace in my heart. He is definitely my Savior, my Comforter, my Refuge, and my wonderful Father who told me a long time ago, "Give it to Me, My child; I can handle it."

There were sad times, tough times when I saw Debra's children going on without her; but somehow we got through it.

I go to church, I sing the hymns and believe them, I listen to the sermons and relish the thought that God speaks to me in His "still small voice." The sanctuary music makes me homesick for heaven. I knew all this before, but I feel it now.

Yes, my Lord Jesus is coming soon. He will welcome our Debra, my family, and me into the place He has prepared for us.

Come, Lord Jesus, and thank You for being my dearest friend and giving me the peace that passes all understanding. ■



PAULINE BEAULIEU, NOW RETIRED, LIVES IN CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE.

What Do You Think?

1. When have you experienced a personal tragedy so wrenching you feared you might lose your hold on God? Relate it briefly.

2. What feelings kept you from being aware of God's love and care?

3. What were some of the spiritual realities upon which you anchored your soul?

4. How would you counsel those who find themselves being crushed by some tragedy? What actions might accompany such counsel?



DAVE SHERWIN

Sifting Through the Past

BY MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

Amid the "sizzling" heat of Takoma Park young teacher Clifton L. Taylor arrived at Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University) for meetings.[1] Although he arrived late, he quickly caught up to speed about what was going on from other conference participants. Church president A. G. Daniells had cast a broad vision for the gathering of denominational thought leaders. This vision included bringing the most talented educators, individuals such as Taylor, from across North America to talk about issues in a clear yet discreet manner.[2]

Although the meetings had started on Tuesday evening, by the time Taylor arrived on Thursday, conferees were getting ready for their first break—time to celebrate the Fourth of July American independence holiday. One group, a group that Taylor joined, went downtown to the United States capital, where they followed megaphone announcements as Jack Dempsey won the world heavyweight boxing championship in just three rounds![3]

The stifling heat and boxing match would mirror the theological turmoil that occurred over the next month at the 1919 Bible Conference.[4] Although the concept of Bible conferences was certainly not new to Adventism, this conference was different from previous meetings. It was the first time that such a highly educated group of educators, editors, administrators, and other thought leaders had gathered to discuss such a plethora of controversial topics. The planning committee had done this deliberately. The meetings were closed to anyone except those invited by the General Conference Executive Committee specifically so that they would feel free to express their viewpoint without fear of recrimination.

THE 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE, AND HOW

BACKGROUND: CENTER FOR ADVENTIST RESEARCH/ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

The 1919 Bible Conference would be the first gathering of Adventist scholars, 65 altogether (including three women), where enough people present who were trained in biblical languages were able to debate the etymology of words in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. Some conferees had attended seminars on the "historical method" and not only were conversant in the latest methods for doing historical research, but were well-versed in scholarly journals and even in French and German publications. Some present had graduate training in theology, history, and, of course, biblical languages. With so much invested, it is no wonder that by the Monday following his arrival Taylor would describe that the "big guns" were "firing broadsides" as they debated issues.[5]

The Prophetic Conferences

At the outset of the meeting Daniells noted that the 1919 Bible Conference was modeled after similar conferences, organized by conservative Christians across the United States. These meetings, held by individuals later dubbed as the historical "Fundamentalists," were highly successful in capturing the attention of Americans regarding the second coming of Christ. Several Adventist Church leaders attended these meetings, and Daniells himself cited these other conservative Christians as doing the very work that Adventists should be doing.[6]

Americans were going through a period of intense cultural change. The United States was now a melting pot of religions in a culture that was no longer predominantly Protestant. The recent World War I (1914-1918) and the influenza pandemic of 1918 made people realize their mortality and shook their confidence in humanity. Fundamentalists harnessed this *angst* by calling the attention of people in large cities on an unprecedented scale to the fact that Jesus was coming.

F. M. Wilcox, the editor of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, noted that these prophecy conferences were some of the most significant events in Christian history—parallel to Luther's ninety-five theses and other great events—and that these conservative Christians just needed to follow their convictions about the authority of Scripture and the danger of Modernism. With some help on the part of thoughtful Adventists they would become Seventh-day Adventists too. While Wilcox felt rather at home at these meetings, he was very much aware of some of the theological misconceptions espoused there.[7]

Daniells shared a conviction with other church leaders that if Seventh-day Adventists could unite theologically, this conference would be the first of many conferences that would draw the attention of the world to the fact that Jesus was coming again. The 1919 Bible Conference was therefore a meeting that would unite the denomination and ultimately call the attention of the world to what Adventists believed about the end-time.[8]

Adventist Hermeneutics

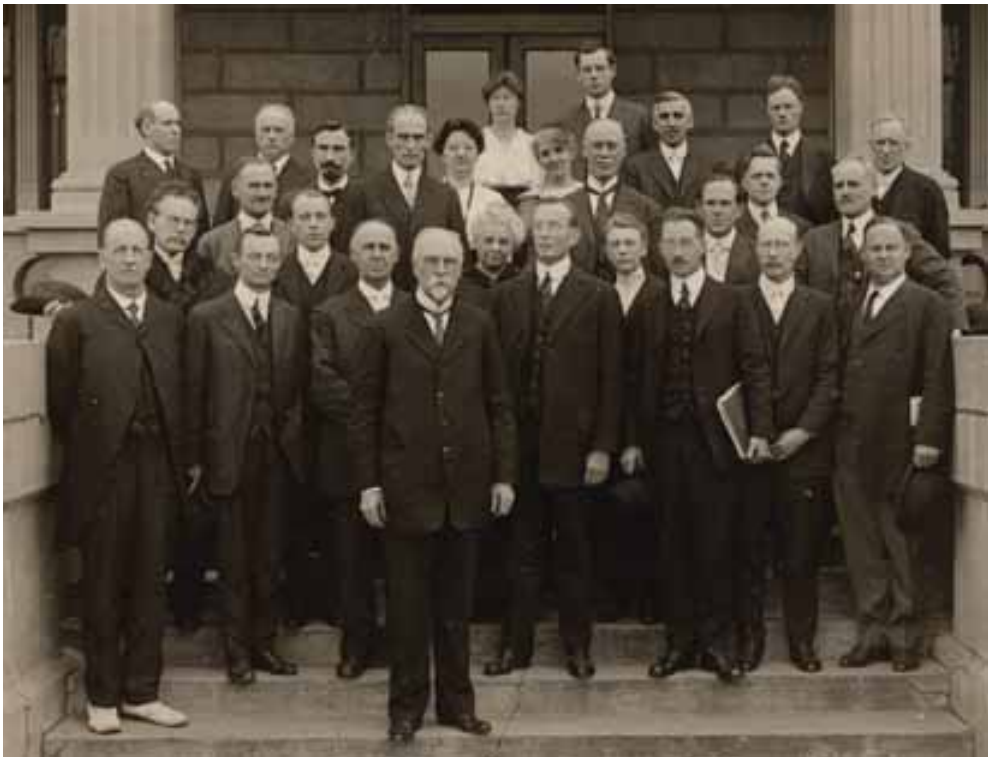
Most of the differences among the participants of the conference revolved around issues in Adventist eschatology, issues such as the identity of the "king of the north" in Daniel and problematic dates in the sequence of prophetic chronology. Most Adventists today would quickly yawn and lose interest if they were somehow transported back in time to the 1919 Bible Conference. Yet the issues held a lot of significance to those present because they represented two different ways of interpreting inspired writings and thus concerned hermeneutics. Although the issues were modest, it became clear at the very beginning of the conference that two Adventist hermeneutical schools existed in 1919.[9]

One of the groups, the self-styled "progressives," emphasized the historical context of both the Bible and Ellen White's statements. The meaning of an event was more important than the validation of a historical date. Thus persons such as W. W. Prescott were willing to revise traditional Adventist prophetic dates depending on historical accuracy (Prescott spent a great deal of time debating whether A.D. 538 was the most accurate date for the beginning of the 1260-day prophecy). Progressives believed that the Word of God was "verbally inspired" but not tied to inerrancy (that there are no mistakes when it comes to inspired writings). Thus the progressives developed a more flexible hermeneutic that utilized the latest historical research.

A second hermeneutical approach was represented by Adventist "traditionalists." This group emphasized that the Bible and Ellen White's writings had equal authority, and thus both were "verbally inspired." Some traditionalists, such as B. G. Wilkinson, grew very uncomfortable with persons such as Prescott who questioned well-established dates such as A.D. 538, noting the rich heritage of prophetic interpretation dating back to Uriah Smith, William Miller, and others who had laid a solid foundation. It appears that this group took a more literalist approach to interpreting Scripture and history, and argued that anyone who questioned well-established prophetic dates risked undermining the validity of Adventist eschatology altogether.

What divided these two groups were the presuppositions through which they approached Scripture. Both groups recognized that there had to be principles to interpret Scripture, and the first week of the conference was devoted to discussions about what rules they could mutu-

IT STILL SHAPES OUR CHURCH TODAY



THOUGHT LEADERS: This photograph, from the archives of the Ellen G. White Estate, now published for the first time, states simply on the back "Editors and Bible Teachers Meeting, 1919," and is the only known photograph of the small group of conferees who participated in "roundtable" discussions with GC president A. G. Daniells (pictured front, center) about Ellen G. White and her role in prophetic interpretation. Other key participants included W. W. Prescott (first row, left), then a GC field secretary; Milton C. Wilcox (over Prescott's left shoulder), former editor of *Signs of the Times*; H. C. Lacey (to Prescott's left), a Bible teacher at Washington Missionary College; and F. M. Wilcox (to Daniells' left), editor of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald.*

ally agree upon. Despite the agreed-upon lists and the meticulous training in biblical studies of most participants, there were still disagreements.

In actuality both groups had much more in common than they realized. Both groups believed in genuine predictive prophecy, the historicity of the Bible, and in their polemic against Modernist Christians; both groups maintained that Scripture was "verbally inspired." However, although progressives maintained the infallibility of Scripture as a whole, they would not hold that Scripture was inerrant in every chronological, numerical, historical, or linguistic detail. This made them less dogmatic about those details and more open to question established dates in Adventist eschatology. The traditionalists presupposed that Scripture was inerrant in every detail. They maintained a very literal reading of Scripture—taken at face value and not questioned—and therefore vigorously defended these established historical dates.

The planning committee allowed representatives from both camps to present their viewpoints during the 1919 Bible Conference. There was a common conviction espoused by church leaders that Adventist theology would not lose anything by a careful investigation of the reasons why Adventists held the beliefs they did. After all, Adventists were a people of the Book, the Bible, and a careful investigation would lead them only into a deeper understanding of truth. Despite this, disagreements occurred. Strong personalities such as Prescott could be formidable to contend with.

In the end it was clear that "a large number of difficult questions" were discussed. Even church president A. G. Daniells felt overwhelmed by the number of disputed points. At one point he surmised that he wished he could "send the king of the north and the two-horned beast together up in a balloon" and thus be rid of these controversial issues. They made his head "whirl" as he grew tired of interpretative disagreements.[10]

The Pivotal Discussion About Ellen White

In the midst of such heated disagreements over Adventist hermeneutics it is not surprising that both the progressives and the traditionalists would appeal to Ellen White's writings to settle conflict. Although her writings were frequently referenced throughout the 1919 Bible Conference, they did come up specifically at four pivotal times during the overall meeting.

In the first discussion on July 16, 1919, Daniells realized that the issue of Ellen White's writings needed to be addressed. The need had arisen because of historical difficulties and a major discussion about her writings that had occurred a few days earlier on July 10. From what little is extant of this discussion it seems that Daniells felt defensive because some had portrayed or perceived him as somehow undermining the gift of prophecy. He felt that those present needed to understand from his personal experience with Ellen White that this could not be true. As the Bible conference closed and as the educators continued to meet, Daniells was called back to share with those still gathered—about 28 by this time—his understanding of the nature and authority of Ellen White's writings.

It was obvious that Adventist educators were concerned

about the two contrasting hermeneutics expressed and the implications this had for the interpretation of Ellen White's writings. Although both the progressives and the traditionalists believed her writings were inspired, progressives such as Prescott knew from personal experience that Ellen White was not infallible when it came to every historical detail. Some of the younger traditionalists—many of whom had not worked closely with Ellen White and were influenced by the rising Fundamentalist movement—maintained that her writings were infallible and therefore equal to Scripture. In recognizing these two approaches to the inspiration of Ellen White's writings several teachers called upon Daniells and other church leaders to publish a pamphlet and clarify these issues. They were keenly aware that students in their classrooms would push them to clarify these issues. Daniells responded that the best way to resolve this was to set up a committee to look into the issue. There is no evidence that the General Conference Committee ever seriously considered the suggestion. The problem is that the issue of Adventist hermeneutics, particularly how it related to Ellen White, would not go away and would be at the basis of every debate within the denomination that persisted through the remainder of the twentieth century. In more nuanced forms the differences over hermeneutics continue to create theological tension within the denomination up to the present.

Significance of the Conference

The 1919 Bible Conference illustrates the danger of theological polarization. The real significance of the historic gathering is that it showcases an increasing polarization that had been growing within Adventism, and came out clearly in the debates that occurred. The self-styled progressives and traditionalists were both much closer to each other than either group realized, but as they debated, they pushed each other further apart.

One of my seminary teachers would sometimes tell his students that there should be an eleventh commandment in the Bible: "Thou shalt not do theology against thy neighbor."[11] Although church leaders saw the importance of having candid discussions as a key to attaining theological unity, unfortunately it appeared to have the opposite effect. There is no indication that the two camps continued to dialogue after the meeting. Instead, it would be 33 years (an entire generation) before church leaders would carefully try again to have another major Bible conference.

The 1919 Bible Conference furthermore provides insight into a critical period in Seventh-day Adventist history—a time when the denomination was wrestling with the nature and authority of Ellen White's writings soon after her death in 1915. Issues surrounding the nature and authority of her writings came up in reference to settling eschatological questions (church leaders had not intentionally planned before the meeting to formally discuss the nature and authority of her writings), yet the two hermeneutical camps would articulate two different ways to approach inspired writings, including Ellen White's writings, and the relationship of her writings to the Bible. These issues were not settled in 1919, but became a topic of debate through the rest of the twentieth century. What did catch most Adventists by surprise, after the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts were discovered in 1974 in the newly organized General Conference Archives, was the candor and extent of such discussions. Although the transcripts were never published, there is no evidence to suggest that they were "hidden" or kept "secret" by church leaders. Some excerpts were published in *Spectrum*, which startled many Adventist academics in the 1970s who realized that they were not the first ones who were wrestling with the never-ending debate over Adventist hermeneutics and inspiration.[12]

Finally, the 1919 Bible Conference reveals the pervasive influence of the historical Fundamentalist movement within Adventism. Both the progressives and the traditionalists hailed the rising prophecy conference movement as a wonderful work that Adventists should be doing. Although Adventists wanted to have the same kind of success that Fundamentalists were having, neither group realized that in their mutual antipathy to change and facing the threat of Modernism, few recognized that the Fundamentalist stance on inspiration would be especially problematic for Adventist hermeneutics. ■

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[1] Clifton L. Taylor diary, photocopies in the possession of the author, the original in the possession of the grandson of C. L. Taylor.

[2] *Report of Bible Conference, Held in Takoma Park, D.C., July 1-19, 1919* (hereafter referred to as RBC), July 1, 1919, pp. 9-16.

[3] Clifton L. Taylor diary.

[4] Pinpointing the exact dates of the 1919 Bible Conference is tricky when seeking to consolidate official agendas, votes, minutes, and final reports. It appears that the Bible conference ran from July 1 to 19, with a history and Bible teachers' council that met at times for evening sessions during the Bible conference period and continued into August.

[5] For an overview of the 1919 Bible Conference, see Michael W. Campbell, "The 1919 Bible Conference and Its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2008).

[6] Campbell, "1919 Bible Conference," pp. 22-59.

[7] F. M. Wilcox, "A Significant Religious Gathering: A Bible Conference on the Return of Our Lord," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald,* June 13, 1918, pp. 2, 4, 5.

[8] RBC, July 1, 1919, pp. 9-16.

[9] For a more detailed analysis of these two hermeneutical camps, see Campbell, "1919 Bible Conference," pp. 102-172.

[10] RBC, July 17, 1919, pp. 996-998.

[11] George R. Knight, GSEM534 Development of SDA Theology, 2001.

[12] "The Bible Conference of 1919," *Spectrum* 10, No. 1 (May 1979): 23-57. The original report of the 1919 Bible Conference may be found on the Web site of the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics: www.adventistarchives.org/documents.asp?CatID=19&SortBy=1&ShowDateOrder=True.

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL IS PASTOR OF THE MONTROSE AND GUNNISON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES IN WESTERN COLORADO. THE 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE WAS THE SUBJECT OF HIS DOCTORAL DISSERTATION.





Inspired by the Great "I AM"

REVISITING THE WONDERS AND POWER OF INSPIRATION

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8, KJV).

Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days.

Neglect and Criticism

This Holy Book has withstood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven.

But the oracles of God have been so manifestly neglected that there are but few in our world, even of those who profess to explain it to others, who have the divine knowledge of the Scriptures. There are learned men who have a college education, but these shepherds do not feed the flock of God. They do not consider that the excellencies of the Scriptures will be continually unfolding their hidden treasures as precious jewels are discovered by digging for them.

There are men who strive to be original, who are wise above what is written; therefore, their wisdom is foolishness. They discover wonderful things in advance, ideas which reveal that they are far behind in the comprehension of the divine will and purposes of God. In seeking to make plain or to unravel mysteries hid from ages from mortal man, they are like a man floundering about in the mud, unable to extricate himself and yet telling others how to get out of the muddy sea they themselves are in. This is a fit representation of the men who set themselves to correct the errors of the Bible. No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said.

Scripture: The Divine in Human Garb

Some look to us gravely and say, "Don't you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?" This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. Yes, they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept, and discern the Divine, and to which God's utterance is plain and beautiful, full of marrow and fatness. All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.

God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by

studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven.

No Degrees of Inspiration

Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scripture plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better cover their faces, as Elijah when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels, who for ages have communicated to men light and knowledge, telling them what to do and what not to do, unfolding before them scenes of thrilling interest, waymark by waymark in symbols and signs and illustrations.

And He [God] has not, while presenting the perils clustering about the last days, qualified any finite man to unravel hidden mysteries or inspired one man or any class of men to pronounce judgment as to that which is inspired or is not. When men, in their finite judgment, find it necessary to go into an examination of scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us.

I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible. Men arise who think they find something to criticize in God's Word. They lay it bare before others as evidence of superior wisdom. These men are, many of them, smart men, learned men, they have eloquence and talent, the whole lifework [of whom] is to unsettle minds in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures. They influence many to see as they do. And the same work is passed on from one to another, just as Satan designed it should be, until we may see the full meaning of the words of Christ, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8, KJV). . . .

Everybody Can Understand It

Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension. If the Lord, the Author of the living oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5, KJV).

Simplicity and plain utterance are comprehended by the illiterate, by the peasant, and the child as well as by the full-grown man or the giant in intellect. If the individual is possessed of large talents of mental powers, he will find in the oracles of God treasures of truth, beautiful and valuable, which he can appropriate. He will also find difficulties, and secrets and wonders which will give him the highest satisfaction to study during a long lifetime, and yet there is an infinity beyond.

Men of humble acquirements, possessing but limited capabilities and opportunities to become conversant in the Scriptures, find in the living oracles comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam. No one need be lost for want of knowledge, unless he is willfully blind.

We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes. ■



THIS SELECTION IS TAKEN FROM MATERIAL THAT APPEARED IN THE FIRST VOLUME OF *SELECTED MESSAGES*, PAGES 15-18. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS BELIEVE THAT **ELLEN G. WHITE** EXERCISED THE BIBLICAL GIFT OF PROPHECY DURING MORE THAN 70 YEARS OF PUBLIC MINISTRY.

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GOING 80

BY BEATRICE NEALL

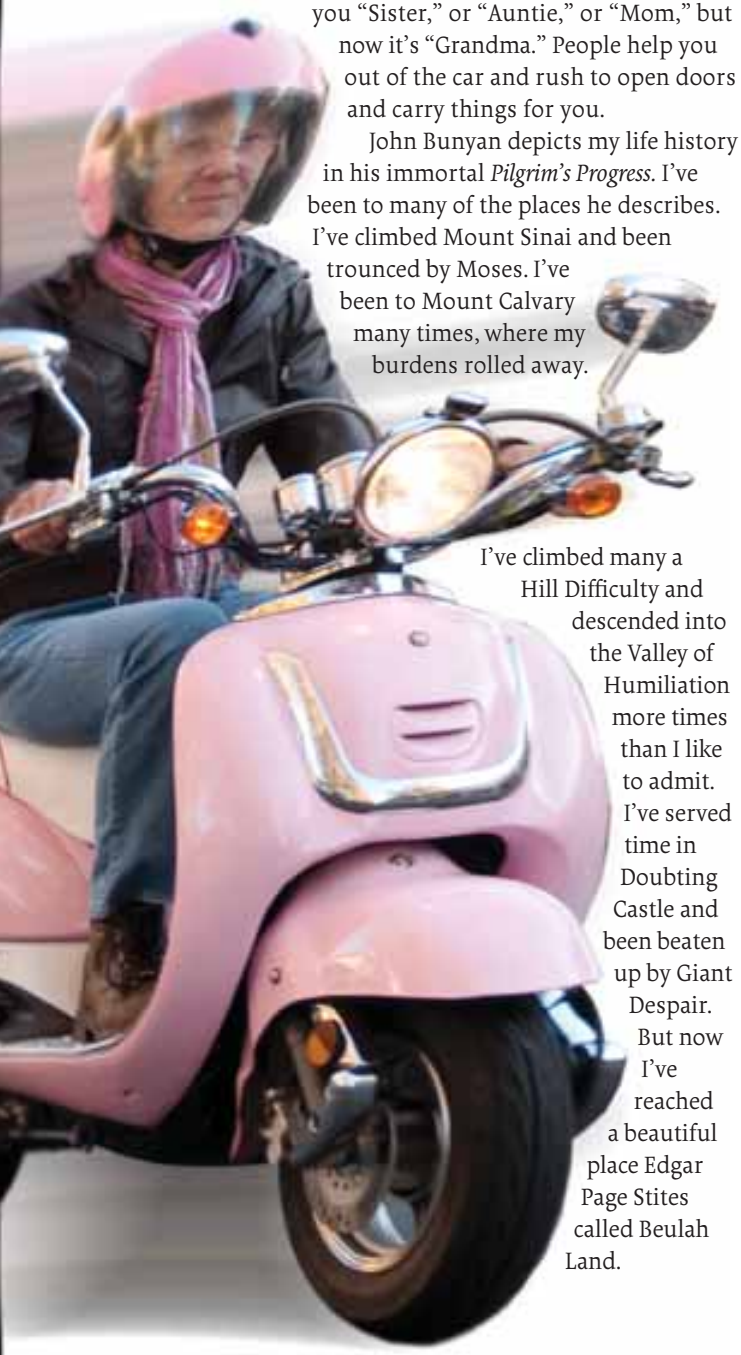


IT'S BEEN A GOOD RIDE! AND

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Turning 80 is a real accomplishment.

It's a lot better than being 70. At 70, people begin to notice things about you—you forget where you laid your glasses; you keep asking, "What did you say your name was?"; you miss appointments, or even get there on the wrong day. But when you are 80, people just say, "Oh, well, she's 80," and make allowances. Your Asian friends no longer call you "Sister," or "Auntie," or "Mom," but now it's "Grandma." People help you out of the car and rush to open doors and carry things for you.



John Bunyan depicts my life history in his immortal *Pilgrim's Progress.* I've been to many of the places he describes. I've climbed Mount Sinai and been trounced by Moses. I've been to Mount Calvary many times, where my burdens rolled away. I've climbed many a Hill Difficulty and descended into the Valley of Humiliation more times than I like to admit. I've served time in Doubting Castle and been beaten up by Giant Despair. But now I've reached a beautiful place Edgar Page Stites called Beulah Land.

"I've reached the land of corn and wine,
And all its riches freely mine;
Here shines undimmed one blissful day,
For all my night has passed away.

"O Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land,
As on thy highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory shore,
My heav'n, my home forevermore!"

Beulah Land is not heaven. It's a tranquil land where pilgrims can look across the river and see the Promised Land over on the other side. That's where I am now.

I can almost see Jesus, whom I have followed in imagination as He taught the multitudes, healed the sick with a touch, and restored the dead to grieving families. How I marvel that here was the Creator of a million galaxies inhabiting a human body so mortals could touch Him, listen to His voice, and gaze into the depths of the heart of God. The thought of seeing Him in person, with no dark veil between, stirs me to the depths.

What a Savior He is! He consents to leave the glory of heaven to enter a hostile world. He enters through the womb of a mother, along with every other child of humanity. He embraces a life of poverty and hard work. He comes to His own people, but they do not recognize Him. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3).* And there on the cross, enshrouded in the darkness of satanic hatred, He shines like a brilliant star.

When we finally reach the other side, we will never forget that "the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore—humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross."[1]

Then I recall the tumultuous welcome Jesus received when He ascended to heaven and appeared before the Father, announcing that He had fulfilled His pledge to become surety for the fallen race. "The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' . . . Heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise."[2]

As earthly choirs and orchestras unite in praise to God, it seems to me like the music of heaven is invading earth.

"The kingdoms of this world are become
the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;
and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Someday I will join the angels

THE BEST IS STILL TO COME.

O DAY OF GLORY, LONG ANTICIPATED FOR CENTURIES AND MILLENNIA, AT LAST IT HAS COME! I WILL PINCH MYSELF TO MAKE SURE IT'S REAL.

and the "great multitude" as they sing in rapturous tones of praise to the One who made our salvation possible. Someday it will really happen. O day of glory, long anticipated for centuries and millennia, at last it has come! I will pinch myself to make sure it's real.

I know what it's like to pinch myself. Five years ago we had the dream of moving to Collegedale, Tennessee, a warmer climate near family and old friends from the mission field, and where there was still the stimulation of living in a college town. But we experienced delays. Months went by before we could sell our home. I kept saying to myself, "Someday we'll get there." Then Union College asked us to do some substitute teaching and we understood the delay. As soon as the semester was finished and we turned in our grades, the house sold.

We wanted to make one more trip south to finalize on a house. On the way I got desperately sick. We stopped at a hospital in St. Louis, and by 2:00 a.m. the next morning I was on the operating table with major abdominal surgery. We had just a few weeks to get out of our house and move into a new one, and here I was unable to do any heavy work. But the Lord was with us all the way. Family and church members came to our aid with the packing and garage sale, and the job of loading the truck. Finally, we were on our way to the "Promised Land." As I crawled into bed that first night in our new home, I pinched myself to make sure I was really there.

So I'll be pinching myself in that great day when we actually reach heaven, when the long struggle with sin and disease and bereavement is over. I'll be saying, "I can't believe I'm really here!"

What warms my heart is that for me it is not far away. My life here will not last more than 10 years at the most, unless Jesus intervenes by coming first and taking us home. How long is 10 years? I can look back to what I was doing 10 years ago and it seems like yesterday. True, I may "take a little nap," as H.M.S. Richards used to put it, but I will soon awake to the scenes of the climax of the ages.

"One sweetly solemn thought comes
to me o'er and o'er;
Near'r to my home today am I than
e'er I've been before.
Nearer my Father's house, where
many mansions be;
Nearer today, the great white throne,
nearer the crystal sea.
Nearer the bound of life where
burdens are laid down;
Nearer to leave the heavy cross,
nearer to gain the crown.

"But lying dark between, winding
down through the night,
Is the deep and unknown stream
to be crossed ere we reach the
light. . . .
[Father,] be Thee near when my feet
are slipping o'er the brink;
For it may be I'm nearer home,
nearer now than I think."

—Phoebe Cary

Yes, there's that river to be crossed. Who knows what it will be like? A long, lingering illness? Years of dependency on others? Bereavement from my precious husband? But I have the promise: "Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you!" (Isa. 46:4, NKJV).†

And then comes that great day when the Lord will come in the clouds of heaven, and the graves will open, and I'll come forth all young and new. I can imagine the tumultuous reunion as I embrace Mother and Dad and all the dear ones I've laid to rest in cemeteries across the country.

We will see our Redeemer face to face. And we'll join in the anthem, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). As I see the vast multitudes surrounding the throne I will notice many going to their friends and saying, "It was you who invited me here." Maybe someone will say that to me. And then I will think of many more whom I might have invited. I will feel deep pangs as I wish I could have persuaded many more to join me.

And strangely enough, I'll wish I could be transported back in time to when we were still on earth. I'd surely tell everybody, "Hey, you don't want to miss out on the greatest event in history! It's more wonderful than you can imagine! You must be sure to be there!"

So that's why I'm glad I'm still here in time instead of eternity. That's what gives meaning to my life in the remaining years that are left to me. ■

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*Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the King James Version.

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[1]Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 651.

[2]Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 834, 835.

BEATRICE S. NEALL, A RETIRED COLLEGE BIBLE TEACHER, A FORMER MISSIONARY TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND AUTHOR OF SEVERAL BOOKS, NOW LIVES IN OOLTEWAH, TENNESSEE, U.S.A.



Help Is on the Way

LAST OCTOBER I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ATTENDING THE 180 SYMPOSIUM ON behalf of the *Adventist Review.* Hosted by the Center for Youth Evangelism at Andrews University, the 180 Symposium is a think tank of sorts that unites youth and young adult ministry leaders from around the globe for the purpose of dissecting a topic pertaining to—you guessed it—young adult ministry.

In 2009 the symposium centered on reaching Adventist students who attend schools—whether elementary, high school, or college—on campuses that are unaffiliated with the Adventist Church.

On October 19, at 9:00 a.m. sharp, I arrived at the university's Whirlpool Room: pencil sharpened and camera battery charged—a regular Jimmy Olsen. The room contained 10 or so espresso-colored wooden tables around which were arranged four chairs each. I took a seat in the corner and prepared for class, uh, symposium (it felt more like class, considering that a former professor of mine at Union College, Chris Blake, moderated the event).

The day began with opening remarks before the group of 40-or-so condensed into four break-out teams, each squad focused on creating an action plan for their assigned topics. A few of the groups focused on tangible ways to better reach students; others concentrated on increasing networking opportunities and fund-raising. By lunch, each group was to have a written plan—complete with practical methods of implementation.

For the first few hours I mostly listened, periodically jotting notable thoughts and comments; after all, I was there primarily to gather information and report on what was taking place. But as the symposium rolled on I found myself more involved and invested than I had originally planned to be. And with good reason; after all, I'm only 23. This group had convened for the sake of Adventist young adults—for my friends, for me.



Jimmy **Phillips**

Never Alone

The utter exhaustion he felt at this moment was unlike anything Elijah had experienced before. Quite a statement considering he'd slept in the wilderness and survived off of food delivered by ravens, all while fearing for his life at every turn.

But this was not mere physical fatigue; this was the kind of tiredness one feels when one is absolutely alone. The solitude of the cave Elijah had escaped to was symbolic of his entire world—isolated, cold, alone.

"God," he cried, "the entire nation of Israel has turned its back on You! They've murdered Your prophets and abandoned You for idols made of wood and stone. Yet through all that I've remained devoted to You. Now they're trying to kill me! I'm the only faithful one left" (see 1 Kings 19:10).

Of course, Elijah wasn't alone. God reminded him as much, after wind, earthquake, and fire, in the calmness of a "still small voice."

Right now, many Adventist young adults feel like Elijah did. On secular university campuses with tens of thousands of students—where binge drinking and sexual promiscuity are cultural norms—they feel isolated, alone. I know because I've met them. I've heard their stories and seen the pleading in their eyes. And though I'm no longer in an academic setting, I've experienced the aloneness myself.

If you're not a young adult, share this with one in your life. Friends, if you know personally the solitude and hopelessness I'm talking about, take solace in this: From October 19 to 22, Adventist leaders from throughout the world took time off from family and community responsibilities. They traveled by plane, train, and automobile to Andrews University for the 180 Symposium. They came to figure out how the church can better support you financially, academically, and spiritually.

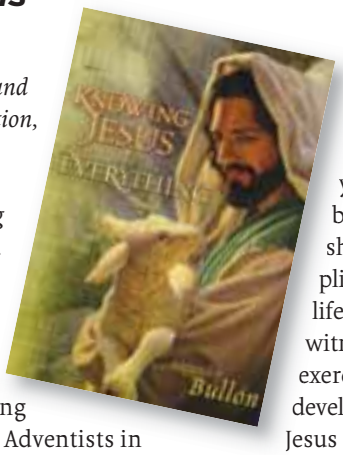
As you read this, a proposal is being finalized that will further empower our church to be proactive about campus ministry. In the future I'll share the specifics. But right now, remember this: You are not alone. ■

A PROUD NEBRASKAN, **JIMMY PHILLIPS** WRITES FROM BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA, WHERE HE IS MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR FOR SAN JOAQUIN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL.

etc.

Bookmark

Knowing Jesus Is Everything



Alejandro Bullón, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2009, 88 pages, US$12.99, softcover. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez, managing editor, Adventist Review.

Alejandro Bullón is a household name among Adventists in Inter- and South America, as well as among most Spanish-speaking Adventists in North America. After decades of public, satellite, and Internet evangelism his is a trusted voice.

In his latest book, *Knowing Jesus Is Everything,* Bullón goes from public figure to friend and counselor. "I have written this little book for you, the youth of the church," he writes in the preface. The rest of the book is his attempt to demonstrate that after we know all the rules, after we've adopted all the behaviors expected of Adventist Church members, unless we have a relationship with Christ, we will still go away sad, as did the rich young ruler after his encounter with Jesus (Mark 10).

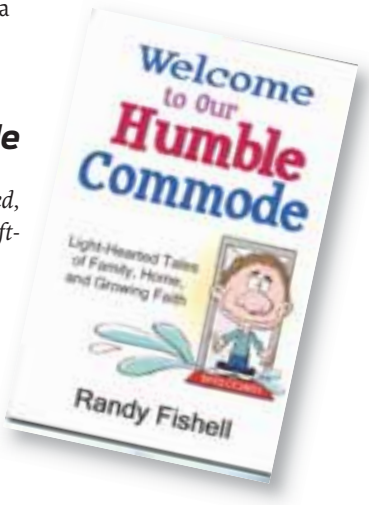
Bullón acknowledges that often the church's expectations of outward conformity lead to inner conflict. Youth and young adults realize that often they not only fail to live up to the standards of the church, but also feel unworthy of God's love.

Bullón's solution is to develop a love relationship with Jesus—first, to realize the incredible price paid for our salvation, and then to enjoy the experience of growing closer and closer to the One who loves us "no matter what."

The 12 chapters of this small book are sprinkled with life situations with which most people—especially young adults—would be able to identify. Bullón shows how the daily disciplines of living the spiritual life—Bible study, prayer, witness—are not just empty exercises, but steps toward developing a relationship with Jesus that brings lasting joy and fulfillment. In the process he also answers questions about temptation, miracles, perfection, and the "unpardonable" sin—terms that most people have heard, but few have answered satisfactorily.

Knowing Jesus Is Everything is a useful primer for those who have mastered the do's and don'ts of church membership but still have questions about the hows and whys. It's also a valuable resource for older members who sometimes (unwittingly) put too much emphasis on outward behavior and not enough on having a relationship with Jesus.

Welcome to Our Humble Commode



Randy Fishell, self-published, 2009, 124 pages, US$12.99, softcover. Reviewed by Stephen Chavez.

You don't have to know Randy Fishell to enjoy the book *Welcome to Our Humble Commode,* but it helps.

Most people know Fishell as editor for the past 10 years of *Guide,* the church's 32-page, weekly magazine to preteens and earliteens. What may not be so apparent are Fishell's love of words (especially puns) and his wacky sense of humor. He is a wonderfully talented writer.

Welcome to Our Humble Commode is a collection of essays that with wit and charm take ordinary—OK, sometimes odd—experiences from daily life and use them as a platform to make observations about life, relationships, the universe, even the character of God.

Fishell's writing style makes it easy to read. But the broad spectrum of topics makes it hard to categorize. Since many of the stories deal with children, pets, parents, spouses, and friends, it's hard to imagine anyone who wouldn't be entertained by this book.

But don't expect anything deeply profound or emotionally wrenching. *Welcome to Our Humble Commode* is just a fun, breezy book to carry with you on a plane or on a visit to the Department of Motor Vehicles. It's available online from AdventistBookCenter.com and Amazon.com. ■

At Rest

LAWRENCE, Dixie June Litten—b. June 17, 1919, Paducah, Ky.; d. Dec. 20, 2008, Zephyrhills, Fla. She worked as a secretary for the Ellen G. White Estate. She was predeceased by her first husband, Lowell Litten. She is survived by her husband, Rex; sons Rusty, Chris, and Dennis Litten; daughter, Dee Reed; sister, Marion Detamore; nine grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

MARSHALL, John Lewis—b. July 8, 1938, West Palm Beach, Fla.; d. Mar. 9, 2009, Leesburg, Fla. He was a pastor in the Florida Conference as well as a hospital chaplain. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann; son, Michael; daughter, Janet Marie Coustant; brothers Kenneth and Charles; and three grandchildren.

MARTIN, Pearl—b. Aug. 18, 1924, Dallas, Tex.; d. June 13, 2009, Punta Gorda, Fla. She worked at Loma Linda Medical Center and at Washington Adventist Hospital. She served as a secretary in the Far Eastern Division and as staff nurse and secretary in the Health Department of the General Conference. She is survived by her husband, Charles; son, Lawrence; daughters Lynette Spangenberg and Cindy Hanson; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

MAXEY, Lyda M.—b. May 1, 1912, Covington, Ky.; d. Feb. 28, 2009, Apopka, Fla. She worked at Florida Sanitarium and Hospital as assistant director of Nursing Services. She is survived by her daughter, Lynda Trawick; and two grandchildren.

PETERSON, Ivadel J. (Michalenko)—b. Aug. 8, 1927, Makoti, N.Dak.; d. Nov. 19, 2008, Lacey, Wash. She served as a teacher in the four California conferences, as well as a principal in Hollister and Fremont, California. She is survived by her sons John and Brian; daughter, Vernadel Peterson; 12 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

WAGAR, Jean L.—b. June 22, 1918, Youngstown, Ohio; d. Mar. 30, 2009, Springdale, Ark. She worked at the Review and Herald, Pacific Press, and Signs of the Times mailing and billing department. She is survived by a daughter, Jeannine Wagar; and brother, Glenn H. Hill.

WHEELER, Erald J.—b. July 18, 1924, Dayton, Ohio; d. May 14, 2009, Apopka, Fla. He served as a literature evangelist in Ohio and Virginia. He was also employed by Kettering Memorial Hospital and Hinsdale Hospital. He is survived by his son, David; daughter, Alane Drexler; sisters Mary Apple and Muriel Spitzig; and one grandchild.



A Lament

A TRANSLATION OF JOB 31

Millennia of translating Scripture have not diminished the impact and freshness that a new translation can communicate. Unfamiliar words can cause us to pause and take note. The powerful images and sheer emotion found in the lament of Job 31 can surely stop us in our tracks and cause us to listen and talk (again) to our Creator and Savior.—Editors.

I cut a covenant with my eyes: why, then,
should I gaze upon a young girl?
(What is the portion of God from above,
and the inheritance of the Almighty
from on high?
Is it not calamity for the iniquitous, and disaster
for the workers of iniquity?)

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Doesn't He see all my ways, and count all my steps?
If I have walked with vanity, and my foot has hastened toward deceit,
Let Him weigh me in the balances of righteousness and God will know my integrity.
If my step has deviated from the way, if my heart walked after my eye,
Or if any spot has cleaved to my hands,
Then let me sow and another eat, and let my descendants be uprooted.

If my heart had been deceived by a woman, or I had lain in wait at the door of my neighbor,
Let my wife grind for another, and let others kneel down on her.
For that would be wickedness, iniquity for the judges;
For that would be a fire that consumes unto destruction,
And all my goods would be uprooted.

If I had despised the judgment of my manservant or maidservant
When they brought a complaint against me,
Then what would I do when God arises?
And when He calls me to account, what would I answer Him?
(Did not the One who made me in the belly make him,
And the same One establish us in the womb?)

If I held the poor back from delight,
Or made the eyes of the widow fade;
Or ate from a morsel alone,
And an orphan didn't eat of it
(Because from my youth he grew up with me
As with a father, and from the womb of my mother,
I have guided her);
If I have seen one perishing without clothes
Or there be no covering to the poor,
And if his loins have not blessed me
When he was warmed from the fleece of my sheep;
Or if I have lifted my hand against the orphan
When I saw my help in the gate—
Then let my shoulder fall from the blade
And my arm be broken at the bone!
(For I feared God's destruction;
His majesty I couldn't endure.)

If I have made gold my trust,
Or I called fine gold my security;
If I rejoiced because my wealth was great,
Or because my hand has found much;
If I looked at the sun that shone
Or the moon moving in splendor
And my heart was secretly enticed
And my mouth kissed my hand—
This also would have been iniquity for the judges,
Because I would have denied the Lord above.

Have I rejoiced at the ruin of the one who hated me
Or exulted when evil found him?
(And I have not sinned with my mouth
By asking a curse against his soul.)
Did not the men of my tent say,
"Who from his meat has not been satisfied?"
The stranger has not slept outside;
I have opened my door to the wayfarer.

Have I covered my transgression like Adam
And hid in my heart my iniquity;
Because I feared the great multitude,
And the dread of families terrified me
And so I kept silent and would not go out the door?
Oh, that someone would hear me!
Behold, my mark; let the Almighty answer me,
And my accuser write a book;
For would I not carry it upon my shoulder
And bind it as a wreath on me?
I would declare the number of my steps to him;
I would approach him like a prince.

If my land cried out against me,
And its furrows wept together,
If I have eaten its yield without payment,
And have made the life of its masters to expire,
Let thorns come forth instead of wheat,
And weeds instead of barley.

The words of Job have ended. ■

TRANSLATED FROM HEBREW BY **CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN,** EDITOR OF THE *ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE.*



What Lies Ahead

THE RUDDY-FACED GERMAN DIPLOMAT LOOKED AT ME WITH SURPRISE. "YOU did what?" he asked.

"I prayed," I replied, leaning forward at the table in the conference room of the Russian newspaper where I work.

Not long ago I wouldn't have been so up-front about my faith at work. But big things have been happening since I started claiming the promise in Proverbs 3:6: "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (NKJV).*

For me that means openly bowing my head for prayer at business lunches. It means speaking "only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs" (Eph. 4:29). And it meant directing credit to God when the founder of my newspaper recently praised our coverage despite steep cutbacks linked to the global economic crisis. After all, I have been offering an extra prayer for guidance every day since the crisis hit Russia in late 2008.



Andrew **McChesney**

The crisis and its effect on the newspaper interested the German diplomat, who dropped by the newspaper's office after requesting a "get-to-know-you" meeting. We were joined at the meeting by a second German diplomat and the newspaper's senior political reporter.

I told the visitors that the crisis had prompted cutbacks as advertising plummeted. Pressed regarding the outlook for the advertising market, I said no one really knew what might happen next, but the newspaper had posted surprisingly good results for the past month.

"Why is that?" asked the main diplomat, who had worked at the United Nations before being posted to Moscow.

"There is no logical answer," I said. "The only thing I can say is that I prayed."

The German paused. "You did what?"

"I prayed," I said.

The silence in the room was palpable. After a long moment the political reporter offered a rambling account about why advertising might be picking up in Russia. When he finished, I looked at the diplomats. They looked at me. I prayed.

"I was just speaking to our publisher about this," I said finally. "She told me that there was no logical explanation for the increase in ad revenue last month."

The visitors moved on to their next question.

Just a few days before the German diplomats' visit, the newspaper's publisher had broken the news to me about the unexpected surge in ads. Revenue for the previous month had been so large that the newspaper, which had been slated to record an annual loss, looked likely to break even and even post a profit.

The publisher—a Russian who had been appointed to the post just before the crisis hit—voiced surprise when I told her that I had an explanation for the jump in ads. I shared that I had been worried about the ads at the start of the previous month—a time of year when ad sales traditionally sink—so I had added them to my daily prayer for extra guidance.

The publisher asked if I really believed that my prayers had made the difference. When I assured her I did, she said she could never pray for ads. "I could pray for my children and my husband. But advertising is my responsibility at work. I couldn't pray for that," she said.

But she asked me to keep praying.

I am. I can't wait to see where God will direct my path next. A Japanese diplomat just called to schedule a "get-to-know-you" meeting for next week. ■

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ANDREW MCCHESNEY IS A JOURNALIST IN RUSSIA.

In the Land of Not Yet

CARTOONIST MICHAEL LEUNIG TELLS HOW AS A BOY HE WATCHED HIS FATHER build an extension onto their henhouse. His father was hammering a nail when he accidentally hit his thumb a violent blow. His dad closed his eyes, and it was as if his breath froze in pain. After a moment he said: "Jesus wept." Then . . . silence.

The words and silence caught the imagination of the younger Leunig. He began to wonder about this mysterious person, Jesus, and His tears.

"Jesus wept: what a powerful and mysterious effect these little words seemed to have on me," Leunig wrote, "for in his primal utterance, I think my father may have provided or created in me a Jesus that was able to withstand all the other versions of Jesus to be offered or inflicted on me by Christians and anti-Christians in the years to come."[1]



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Jesus was being taken to Lazarus's grave when He broke down in weeping (John 11).

"See how he loved him!" someone said (verse 36).

"Could not he . . . have kept this man from dying?" some asked (verse 37).

Martha, Lazarus's sister, had said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died" (verse 21).

Jesus wept. He felt their pain. "He weeps with those that weep," Ellen White says when writing of this scene.[2]

I write this article a few days after a popular Avondale College student died in a road accident. Tyson was full of fun and life and energy—a positive influence on campus. He had a passion for Jesus and shared his faith. "Not," he wrote on his MySpace page, "for credit points or frequent flyers to heaven. Nah, it's just about the love and the passion we have for God."

There's pain in the loss of life. Jesus also weeps. He, too, feels the pain. But this same Jesus stood in front of Lazarus's tomb and said, "Lazarus, come out!" (verse 43). Bound in grave clothes, Lazarus staggered forth from the grave. Four days dead and brought back to life! Now that's a miracle.

But why only Lazarus? Why not the father who died the week before? Or the single mother who left her children orphaned the previous month? The same question fits other miracles, such as why some people were healed and not others.

Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand, and He showed this in what we could call "sample form." There's no sickness in God's kingdom, so Jesus healed the sick—a sampling of them. There's no blindness in God's kingdom, so Jesus healed some of the blind. There's no death in the kingdom of God, so Jesus raised a few people from the dead.

When John the Baptist's disciples went to Jesus and asked whether He was the Messiah (Matt. 11), Jesus told them, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (verses 4, 5).

The kingdom of God is having an impact, but it hasn't completely taken over—not yet. These are just glimpses of the reality to come.

We live in the Land of Not Yet. It's a land where we suffer and mourn; where we ask for the miracle that may never come; where we experience rejection. But Jesus is with us. We still see glimpses of the reality that is the kingdom of God; but in the Land of Not Yet we wait. We wait for the fullness of the kingdom to come. In the Land of Not Yet we wait for the time when Jesus—and His children—will weep no more. ■

[1] Michael Leunig, "Away in a Chook Shed," *The Age,* March 22, 2008.
[2] Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 533.



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