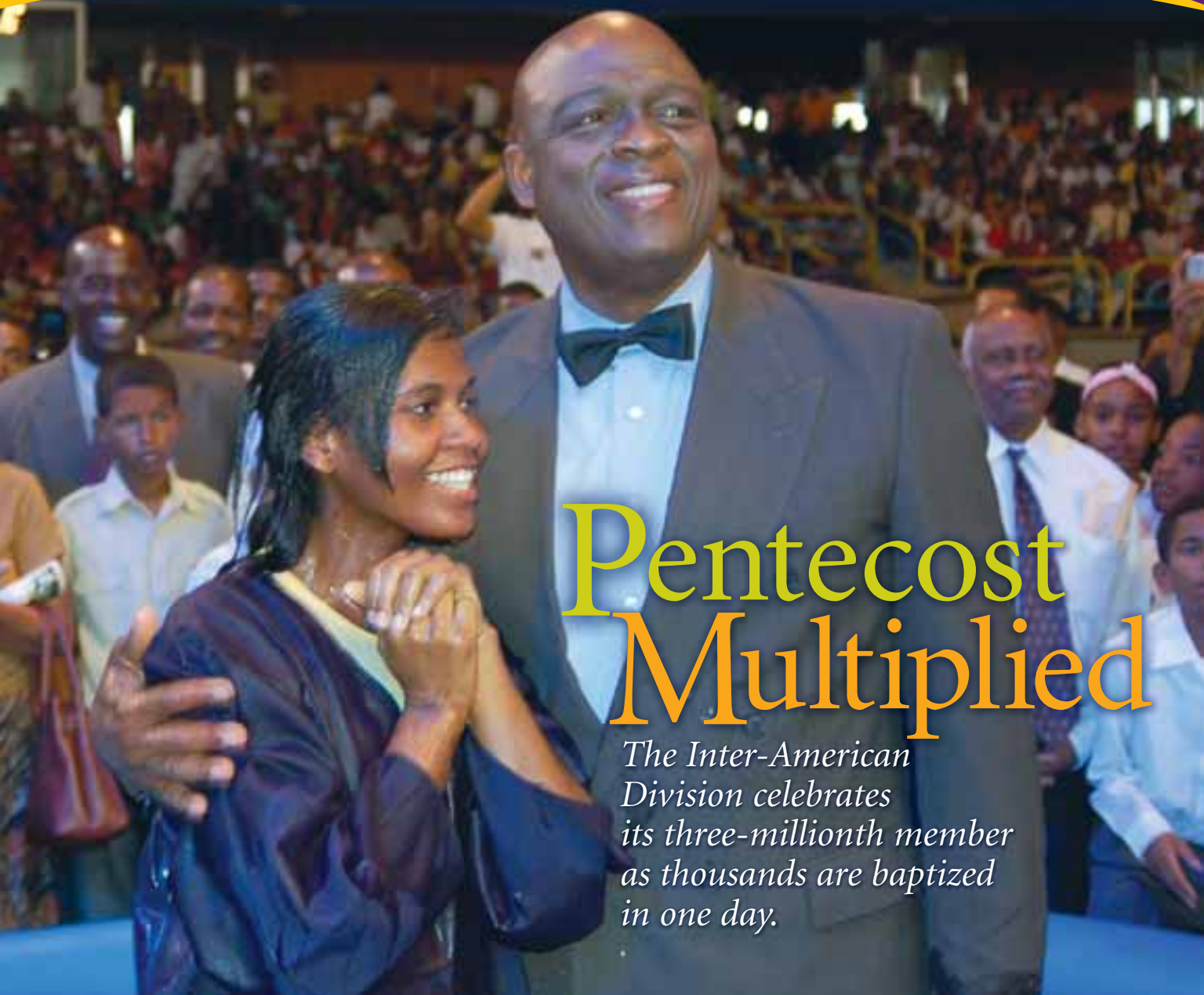


May 2007

ADVENTIST WORLD



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ON THE COVER: Israel Leito, president of the Inter-American Division (IAD), stands with Clarissa Pozo de los Santos, who represents the three-millionth baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the IAD.



From the EDITOR'S PEN

A Godly Efficiency

After two hours of letters and phone calls, his was my first face-to-face appointment of the day—a scheduled 30 minutes to discuss an important initiative on which we are jointly working.

We greeted each other and settled into our chairs, trading brief anecdotes about difficult travel itineraries and disturbed sleep patterns. Sensing how limited our time was, I moved briskly into a 10-minute survey of our topic, identifying progress to that moment, tasks yet to be completed, and challenges on the near horizon.

He listened patiently to my monologue, a slight smile pursing his lips. Finally, when I came up for air, he thanked me for my briefing, but then held up his hand.

“Bill,” he said with gentle steadiness, “we haven’t prayed yet. Last time we met, we asked God for specific outcomes, and in His goodness, He has given them to us. Should we not pray to thank Him first?”

He was right, entirely right, and I felt the slow blush of embarrassment creep up my face as I absorbed his gentle

reproof. In my haste to “use our time efficiently,” I had brushed right past the most important tasks that lay in front of us—prayer and thanksgiving. Intent on accomplishing the work of the Lord, I had hurried right past the Lord of the work.

We paused and prayed, abandoning our apparently urgent agenda until we had expressed our gratitude for the good things God had done for us since last we met, asking for His guidance in our new initiative. When we returned some minutes later to our topic, the agreements came quickly and the plans rapidly developed.

Contrary to the logic of our world, prayer and thanksgiving are the most efficient things we do—the true highway, not the detour. The impulse to express gratitude for God’s leading in the past and to seek His wisdom for our present needs is the finest thought we ever come to in the business of our day, whether in a committee meeting or a cassava field.

The psalmist’s prayer is rightly ours this day: “*O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise*” (Ps. 51:15, KJV).

—BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

BARBADOS: Adventists Join Government Project to Rebuild Homes

■ The Adventist Church in Barbados is collaborating with the country’s government to eradicate poverty. The joint project engages the Office of the Advisor to the Government on Poverty Eradication (OAGPE), the Rural Development Commission, and the Northern District of Seventh-day Adventist Churches in the Parish of St. Lucy.

The Honorable Hamilton Lashley, advisor to OAGPE, said the project is a part of the government program called Carrying Out the Promise.

The poverty eradication project involves rebuilding five houses in a state of disrepair with materials supplied by the government and labor provided through the regional Adventist Community Services.

Two homes have already been rebuilt and their keys handed to occupants Urcille Babb, 81, of River Bay in the Parish of St. Lucy, and Beryl Broome, 79, of Checker Hall in the same parish. They both recounted how their old homes were termite-infested and say they are now rejoicing over their new homes since moving back in on February 8.

Petra Tannis of OAGPE presented the Adventist church in Barbados



A HAPPY HOMEOWNER: Parliamentary representative Denis Kellman hands the keys for the newly rebuilt home to homeowner Urcille Babb. Also pictured are district pastor Dayle Haynes (left/front), and representatives of the regional Adventist Community Services and OAGPE.

EAST CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE/AD

with the Prime Minister’s Award in recognition of its outstanding work in the program.

WORLD REPORT

Also present for the occasion were Denis Kellman, parliamentary representative for the constituency of St. Lucy; representatives from OAGPE; Colin Thorne, Personal Ministries director of the East Caribbean Conference; and members of the region's Adventist Community Services.—*Inter-American Division Communication Department/AR.*



CYCLISTS: Eight New Zealand cyclists rode almost 1,400 miles to raise awareness of at-risk behaviors among youth: (from left) Steve Kennelly, Doug Mcleod, Paul Rankin, Rebekah Rankin, Jonathan Duffy, Neone Okesene, Norah West, and Jake Ormsby.

NEW ZEALAND: Cycling to Build a Circle of Courage

■ Eight cyclists embarked on a 2,229-kilometer (1,385 miles) “Circle of Courage” New Zealand cycle tour on February 11 to address issues of at-risk behaviors among youth in rural communities.

Setting out from Bluff on South Island, the cyclists visited 23 towns across New Zealand during the four-week tour. Organized by Adventist Health in the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference (NZPUC), the tour concluded at the lighthouse of Cape Reinga on North Island on March 8.

“Studies have revealed worrying results of at-risk behavior among

young people in New Zealand,” says Jonathan Duffy, director of Adventist Health for the South Pacific Division. “About half of the students in New Zealand have tried marijuana by age 16, and 80 percent of them currently drink alcohol. . . . About 20 in every 1,000 females of that age also get pregnant and have a child.

“Research shows the most important protector against risk taking for young people is for them to feel valued by significant adults in their community,” Duffy adds. “I want to challenge the adults in rural communities to take the leading role in developing positive relationships. This will build resilience and self-esteem among young people.”

The eight cyclists covered approximately 100 kilometers (62 miles) a day and presented talks about at-risk behaviors in towns along the way. They distributed reading materials and information packs, as well as provided local media with radio spots and newspaper articles about available resources.

For more information, go to www.circleofcourage.org.nz.—*South Pacific Division Communication Department/AR.*

IRAQ: Explosion Kills Two, Damages Baghdad Church Building

■ A rocket exploded in front of the Baghdad Adventist Church on February 27, killing two passersby, injuring several others, and damaging an extension building being constructed next to the church.

“We are not sure whether our church was specifically targeted or if the rocket missed its intended objective,” said Basim Fargo, president of the Adventist Church in Iraq. “Whichever the case, the damage and harm to human life are the same.

Fortunately there was no meeting in the church when the rocket fell . . . but some previous explosions have taken place during office hours while all the staff were at work.”

Fargo said the Adventist church in Baghdad has been targeted eight times with car bombs, rockets, and other explosive devices since the beginning of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

“One car bomb in September 2004, packed with 150 kilograms (330 pounds) of explosives, damaged the church building severely and blew out most of the stained glass windows,” Fargo said. “The ensuing fire left us with a repair bill of \$150,000.”

Church members in Baghdad no longer worship in the church each Sabbath but rather in members’ homes.

“We used to have hundreds of church members,” Fargo said. “Now few families are left, due to regular explosions, kidnappings, and violence, which are taking place across the country.”

He added, “We thank the Lord for



NEW CHURCH HEADQUARTERS: A building being constructed next to the Adventist church in Baghdad will be the new home of the Adventist Church headquarters in Iraq.

WORLD REPORT

His protection and guidance to His people and His church.”

The multipurpose extension under construction will house the new church headquarters for Iraq. Plans also include rooms for a medical clinic and church staff and guest apartments.

“This project was supposed to be finished some time ago,” Fargo noted, “but due to the current situation, the work was delayed. We hope by the end of this year we will finish it.”—*Middle East Union Communication Department/AR.*

BAHRAIN: Northern Gulf Hosts First Camp Meeting in Region

■ “The Island of Golden Smiles,” Bahrain, was the venue for the first Adventist camp meeting in the northern Gulf region.

Adventist expatriates working in Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia joined the members in Bahrain for the event, held February 22-24.

“It was such a refreshing experience,” Kuwait church elder Kelly Pedrin said. “I am blessed to be one in fellowship and prayer with our brethren from other parts of the world.”

Kjell Aune, president of the Adventist Church in the Middle East; his wife, Marianne, who serves as the Family Ministries director; and Daniel Duda, Ministerial director for the Trans-European Division, were camp meeting speakers. Programs for children were also part of the event.

“It is a good thing to share perspectives with different cultures,” said Judith Claros, a church member from Qatar who attended the camp meeting. “It makes us grow more mature not only spiritually but also in developing understanding of different cultures around us.”

—*Middle East Union Communication Department/AR.*



COURTESY OF MIDDLE EAST UNION

HISTORIC ATTENDEES: Adventist expatriates working in Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia joined members in Bahrain for the region’s first camp meeting.

GERMANY: Voice of Hope Broadcasts From New Media Center

■ Stimme der Hoffnung (Voice of Hope), the Adventist Church’s media center in central Germany, celebrated the opening of its new headquarters in Alsbach-Haehnlein, Hesse, Germany, on March 3.

Located about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Frankfurt, the new complex replaces Stimme der Hoffnung’s former location in nearby Darmstadt, Hesse, where limited space and resources cramped its ministry.

Some 300 national and international guests and representatives, including Adventist world church president Jan Paulsen, attended the inaugural ceremonies.

“The future of our church is not thinkable without media,” Paulsen said during remarks at the inauguration. “We are living in an information society where the media establish priorities and convey values. Our church must not stray [from our values], but must use modern media to reach people, inviting them to meet Jesus.”

The newly inaugurated media center provides office space for 30 employees, houses five studios, and offers a variety of programs available via radio, cable, satellite, and Internet in Europe and beyond. It also offers an audio library service for sight-impaired listeners.

For more information, go to www.stimme-der-hoffnung.de.—*Adventist News Network/AR.*

SOUTH AFRICA: Adventists Host Inter-faith Women’s World Day of Prayer

■ For the first time the Adventist Church hosted the interdenominational Women’s World Day of Prayer (WWDP) in South Africa on March 2. The event was held on the Helderberg (Adventist) College campus in Somerset West, near Cape Town.

The WWDP is a worldwide movement of Christian women from various cultures, races, and churches who meet to observe a common day of prayer on the first Friday of March each year. It is open to all faith groups.

Using the theme “United Under God’s Tent,” Adventist women of Paraguay designed this year’s WWDP program, which focused on a variety of social issues such as unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, violence, drugs, and prostitution.

“Something like this brings hearts together, brings us into common identification with each other, in our common needs,” said Aleta Blow, event coordinator.

More than 200 women attended the event and represented such countries as France, Germany, Switzerland, Brazil, Italy, Bolivia, Holland, Australia, Paraguay, Thailand, Tanzania, Swaziland, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, and Lesotho.—*Adventist News Network/AR.*

WORLD REPORT

Adventists in England Respond to Gun Crime

By VICTOR J. HULBERT,
communication director of the British Union Conference*



Left: GARNERING SUPPORT: Youth take to the streets of Brixton in England to talk with residents about making their area safer.

Above: FINDING SOLUTIONS: Youth and local community leaders discuss ways of dealing with gun crime.

LONDON ADVENTIST YOUTH FOUNDATION

London Adventist Youth Federation representatives and other local Adventists were among more than 2,000 Londoners who united in a prayer walk on February 22 through two city districts blighted by a recent spate of fatal shootings.

The torch-lit walk followed five murders that occurred in the area in the past month, and was held on the same day Prime Minister Tony Blair convened a government summit on gun crime. Pastors, police officers, and experts on gun crime attended the summit.

A coalition of local Christian leaders organized the walk, which was supported by London's mayor and the Metropolitan Police Service.

"Parents have spoken to us about

young people going to school wearing bullet-proof vests," said Les Isaac, a local pastor and director of Ascension Trust's Street Pastors initiative. "I'm walking because there is an expectation that the church should do something—should stand with those who are mourning. They should also find a solution, a way forward to get our young people out of this quagmire."

The Street Pastors initiative organizes hundreds of volunteer pastors across the country to stroll the streets at night to talk to youth.

Adventists are also active in this process. Local news organizations have interviewed Samantha Robinson, vice president of the London Adventist Youth Federation, regarding the Federation's initiatives against gun

crime. On December 16 and again on January 6, the Federation led out in an Anti-Gun Crime Rally in Brixton.


"From Sabbath to Sabbath we attend Days of Fellowship, socials, campaigns, tent meetings, camp meetings, Go-UKs, AYS programs, and Youth Days," said Sam Gungaloo, youth leader at Balham Adventist Church. "The list goes on. But we also have a responsibility to embark on a mission reeling in the lost souls on the outside [of the church]. When Jesus walked this earth He spent due time in the synagogue, but His mission was [also] with the people outside."

The Federation is now producing an anti-gun crime DVD for use in schools, and is planning an outdoor rally to be held this summer.

An Adventist church in Manchester works with youth who are vulnerable to the gang culture. Michael Simpson, church pastor, is working with The Way, a church and drop-in center focused on the needs of teens and their families.

"To some extent the old gang structure has broken down," Simpson told a local television news reporter. "As the gunmen get younger, there's a lack of control and purpose, more of an expression of adolescent frustrations. But instead of using fists, they are using guns. These youngsters are disconnected from mainstream society."

Simpson says the Adventist presence can make a difference. The London Adventist Youth Federation has the same message.

"We all have friends that are clearly going in the opposite direction to God," Gungaloo says. "What will you do about it? God wants those [who are] ready to speak for Him." 

*Information for this article was also provided by Evangelical Alliance.

WINDOW

Into the Netherlands

SURESH GOPALSAMY



G & A SCHOLIERS

Known for its picturesque villages, windmills, tulips, and cheese, the Netherlands is a densely populated country in northwestern Europe on the North Sea. Almost half the country is less than three feet above sea level. An extensive series of dykes and innovative engineering have allowed the Dutch to reclaim land from the sea, while preventing their country from flooding. The Dutch love to say God created the world, but the Dutch made the Netherlands.

During the seventeenth century, considered by many its Golden Age, people from the Netherlands dominated the seas as explorers and merchants. In 1602 the Dutch Parliament granted a 21-year charter to the Dutch East India Company to carry out colonial activities in its name throughout Asia. This became the first multinational corporation and the first company to issue stock. The Dutch invention of the sawmill gave the Netherlands the ability to build fleets of ships to carry goods around the world and defend itself from foreign attack. During this period the Dutch also excelled in cultural advances, science, and politics.

The Netherlands is widely known for its artistic contributions during its Golden Age. Artists such as Rembrandt, Frans Hals, and Johannes Vermeer all made their homes there.

As Dutch merchants established what was considered the world's first capitalist society, traditional social classes were virtually eliminated. Religious leaders lost influence as the period ushered in widespread religious tolerance. Many religious minorities found safe haven within the Netherlands.

The country is still known for its tolerance and openness to new people and ideas. Things considered illegal in most societies are openly accepted as normal. Today the Netherlands is a secular, post-modern country, in which more than 40 percent of the population has no religious profession.

The Hague, the Netherlands' seat of government, is home to some of the foremost international legal entities, including the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and Europol, the European Union's criminal intelligence agency.

A group of Adventists in the western Netherlands is hoping to share God's love with residents of their area. Just a little more than a year ago they started X-preszo, a church plant just outside The Hague. This congregation is creating a place where people can bring their friends and coworkers and introduce them to God. Beyond attending church, the members meet together in private homes during the week. They also have a social gathering each month during which the members can get to know one another and grow in their faith. For them, ministry is a way of life.

The Adventist Church in the Netherlands has an aggressive church-planting program targeting specific age and interest groups. The church is growing, especially among the Netherlands' ever-burgeoning immigrant community.

Part of the second quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for 2007 will help build a Ghanaian church in Amsterdam. To learn more about church planting in the Netherlands, watch the segment "Planting His Seeds" on this quarter's Adventist Mission DVD and visit: www.AdventistMission.org.

Compiled by Hans Olson, Office of Adventist Mission.

THE NETHERLANDS	
Capital	Amsterdam
Official Languages	Dutch (official); Frisian (official)
Religion	Roman Catholic 31%; Dutch Reformed 13%; Calvinist 7%; Muslim 5.5%; other 2.5%; no religion 41%
Population	16.3 million
Adventist membership	4,500
Adventist to population ratio	1:3,605

WORLD VISTA

Should individual Seventh-day Adventists involve themselves in the processes of government? It's a question that often comes to me as I visit with church members in different places. And it's a question that is most often posed by the young people of our church—students or young professionals—as they consider different career options or look for ways to contribute to their communities. How do we advise those who want to be involved in the administration of their city, or province, or country? When is it proper for the church, corporately, to speak on public issues?

I often sense among our members a reluctance to enter the world of public policy; a fear, perhaps, of being tainted by what they will find there. Corruption—in some places raw, in others covered by a veneer of civil process—is rampant throughout government and public service everywhere. Should this keep us away? Or is this precisely why individuals with strong ethics and values are needed to step into the public realm to govern with integrity and transparency?

When I hear some of today's political leaders say: "We do not negotiate with our enemies," I'm reminded of the words of United States President John F. Kennedy. He took a different approach, saying: "Never negotiate without fear; but never fear to negotiate." We live in a world that is occupied by both good and bad, integrity and corruption, truth and deceit. And it is the role of the good to be a moderating influence on the bad. We sometimes look with apprehension at the secular world, with its preoccupation with self and with material things, and we forget that these are God's children, deeply loved by Him. They too have rights that must be protected, needs that must be met. This alone



Above: PRECIOUS RESPONSIBILITY Voters line up to cast their vote at a polling station at the Alexandra township north of Johannesburg in the country's second democratic elections after the end of Apartheid.

Right: ONE VOICE, ONE VOTE: An ethnic Albanian casts his ballot for general elections at a polling station in Presevo, some 350 kilometers (217 miles) south of Belgrade.

Serving Our Serving

By
JAN PAULSEN

19

World, Our rd

AP IMAGES/THEMBA HADEBE



AP IMAGES/KOSTADIN KAMENOV

provides a significant reason for us to become involved in the public sphere.

Here are some of the arguments I often hear in favor of isolating ourselves from the civic realm:

Adventists should not be “political.” As a church we should never air our ideas or agenda in the public sphere.

There is a vast difference between seeking a voice in the public discourse, and seeking to wield political power. As a church—and individuals—we have not only the right, but the obligation, to be a moral voice in society; to speak clearly and eloquently on that which touches our core values. Human rights, religious freedom, public health, poverty, and injustice—these are some of the areas in which we have a God-given responsibility to advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves.

The passion of early Adventist pioneers for causes such as the abolition of slavery, temperance, and religious liberty is well-documented. They, too, struggled to know how they should relate to the civic realm but, with the guidance of Ellen White and other church leaders, concluded that inaction was not an option. “Many deplore the wrongs which they know exist, but consider themselves free from all responsibility in the matter,” wrote Mrs. White in 1914. “This cannot be. Every individual exerts an influence in society.”¹

Let us be careful, though, to never confuse speaking out on a particular

issue with attempting, as a church, to elect particular candidates or political parties, or to become powerbrokers in the political sphere. This is where the division between church and state must always remain strong.

Compromise is the “oil that lubricates the machinery of government,” making it an unsuitable environment for Christians.

We are first and foremost children of God, and He has implanted in our hearts values and beliefs that we will live by and, if necessary, die for. There is a difference, though, between compromising one’s core principles—violating one’s sense of right and wrong—and much of the practical give-and-take that moves civic leaders toward a consensus on a particular issue. The ability to make this distinction, and the moral courage to honor the dictates of conscience no matter what the political cost, are essential characteristics of any Adventist who seeks public office.

To anyone considering such a career I would ask: “Why do you want to do this? Are you driven by a desire to improve your society; a sense of responsibility to your community, and a feeling that, ‘Yes, I have something to contribute?’” Vanity, personal ambition, or a desire for attention are dangerous motivations for anyone entering public life.

The political process itself is so deeply flawed that we should keep our distance.

Yes, some systems of governance



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

WORLD VISTA

are so broken down, so shot through with dishonesty or violence, that our participation could be seen as support for a fundamentally destructive process. Yet in the majority of countries where Seventh-day Adventists live, this is not the case. And in these places there is much that a dedicated church member, with a well-calibrated moral compass and a commitment to making society better, can offer through public office. Elected office


There is no shortage of tragic examples, both current and past, of what happens when political or military power is used to impose religious values and beliefs on society at large.

Sometimes there is an expectation that Adventists in public office will “look out for their own”; that they will take special care of matters that touch on the interests of the church in that region. This is something we should never expect or pursue. Every

It speaks strongly to me that Christ repeated these words as He stood in the synagogue at Nazareth at the very outset of His ministry on earth. Before His neighbors and friends, those who had known Him since childhood, Christ said: “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

Through His words and actions, Christ continually reached out His hand to improve the quality of life—both spiritually and physically—of the people around Him.

Yes, our “citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). Introducing others to Christ and telling them of His soon return is our most important task as individuals and a church. But let us not set up a false dichotomy between our first allegiance to God’s kingdom and our responsibility for compassionate service to humanity, whether through health care, education, or public policy. It is not a matter of “one or the other.” In serving our neighbors with love and integrity, we also serve our Lord.

There are inevitable challenges for Seventh-day Adventists who embark on a life of public service. It is not easy. But have we at times made an absence from the civic realm a virtue for its own sake? Rather than grapple with uncertainties or difficult choices, have we sometimes simply “opted out” of public concerns altogether? I pray that in the decisions we make we will listen for God’s voice through His Word, through prayer, and through the counsel of fellow believers. And let us support those among us who, like the prophet Daniel, are called to be ambassadors for God in the challenging arena of public office. 

¹ *Review and Herald*, Oct. 15, 1914.

² *Review and Herald*, August 19, 1884.

Elected office often provides the best platform to watch out for and protect the rights of freedom

often provides the best platform to watch out for and protect the rights of freedom, which is God’s gift to every person, not just our church.

Addressing Adventist teachers and students in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1883, Mrs. White said: “Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day . . . sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations.”²

If Adventists do enter the public arena it should be for the purpose of introducing Christian values to the ungodly.

When you enter the world of politics, you should do so as a private individual, not as someone who carries the agenda of the church. The wall of separation between church and state protects the church from interference by government, and protects individuals from coercion in matters of religion and conscience.

political leader will bring his or her own background—education, experiences, and morality—to the task of legislating. And religion will be an important factor in who they are and how they approach issues before them. But those in elected positions are entrusted with the protection of all, not just those who share their values or faith.

Christ’s kingdom is not of this earth; our eyes should be fixed on the heavenly kingdom.

There are few more powerful expressions of God’s deep concern for society and His compassion for its most vulnerable members than the words of the prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor...” (Isaiah 61:1, 2).



Contraception

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

My daughter is getting married next month, and her doctor has given her a plastic ring she is supposed to wear to prevent pregnancy. I don't see how such a thing can work. Can you explain it to me?

The ring given by the doctor to your daughter is probably called a NuvaRing. This is a ring soaked with a hormone mixture that is released very slowly over about three weeks. The ring rests in the vagina, and the hormone (a chemical produced in the body) is absorbed across the vaginal skin. When the ring is removed after three weeks, the menstrual flow begins two or three days later. The hormones from the ring are very similar to those in a birth control pill. The modern birth control pills have much less hormone than in the days you may have taken them. They are better balanced, and just as effective. If taken as directed, a birth control pill works for 99.5 percent of women.

The ring, birth control pills, and even injected contraception such as DepoProvera can all increase the ability of blood to clot, and some persons who have a tendency to clots may find they have complications with the birth control hormones. People with migraine, diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure are probably not good candidates for birth control pills or hormonal birth control.

How does an intrauterine contraceptive device work?

You ask us deceptively difficult questions! We don't exactly know. Additionally, some of the newer intrauterine contraceptive devices

(IUCDs) are loaded with progesterone-like substances (hormones) and probably have more than one way of acting.

Bedouins first used stones placed inside their female camels' uteruses to prevent pregnancy. Later, a German doctor used a silver ring inside a human uterus. Today, most IUCDs look like a little plastic T, about one inch long. Copper wire, wound tightly around the stem of the T, makes them more efficient, and some have progestin loaded into the stem. Placement is usually done at the end of a menstrual flow, through the cervix (the neck of the womb).

The hormone-loaded IUCD is said to interfere with ovulation, making a pregnancy less likely. Many doctors do not like to use an IUCD on a young woman who has not had children, because of the increased problems in placing the device. Many women have no problems with an IUCD, but problems do occur on occasion when placing an IUCD, the most common being infection.

Why does the church not allow condoms?

Where did this idea get started?


The church does not make statements about what people can or cannot do when it comes to birth control.

A condom is often a piece of latex rubber and, as such, has no morality. Couples who choose to regulate the size and spacing of their family with a condom are perfectly within their rights to do so, and it is really nobody else's business.

You have probably heard debate concerning the HIV and AIDS issue, in which condoms are recommended

by some as a prevention of HIV transmission. The condom can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV by some 85 percent. Thus, a married couple in which one is infected and the other is not can protect the uninfected partner by using a condom. That seems, to us, to be a Christian duty.

Of course, the real prevention is in adopting the biblical standards of sexual behavior. These call for chastity and no extramarital sexual intercourse. If we would all follow this guide, we would come to marriage free of any sexually transmitted disease. Of course, HIV can be transmitted other ways than sexual intercourse, so in that case we could still see some cases of HIV, but fewer than we do today.

Non-Christians, or even Christians, who reject the biblical instruction of abstinence outside of marriage are probably going to commit fornication or adultery anyway, and the condom is a side issue in a problem of morality. It is time we focused on the real problems confronting us and our integrity. 



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



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

The Silent Th

The same danger that faced the early Christians lurks in

Have you ever wondered why some former members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, after years of loyalty to God, have given up the faith and walked out the back door? Is it only certain individuals who are susceptible to that danger?

I would suggest that it doesn't really matter who we are or how long we have been faithful members in the church. The danger is real for every follower of Jesus.

In Hebrews 2:1 the author refers to the threat of "drifting away," concerned that his fellow Jews who had become Christians would drift back into Judaism. And through a series of exhortations, he cautions them to remain steadfast.

Hebrews 2:1-4 introduces us to the first of these exhortations, using the figure of a drifting boat to make the point. By a subtle, almost imperceptible current, the boat drifts along in the wrong direction until its occupants are lost at sea.

What are some of the "currents" that today can cause us to "drift away" from the church and from God? And how can we avoid this danger?

We're All Exposed

Adventists do not believe in "once saved always saved." We believe it's possible for us to drift away from the salvation once received. No one is immune to this threat. Just as the gentle breeze and currents may carry a ship apparently safe at anchor into deep waters, just so Christians can drift from the safe harbor of salvation.¹ The words of the apostle are emphatic: As Christians, we can "neglect" our salvation (Heb. 2:3). The concern here is not the outright rejection of Christianity, but rather that of taking it for granted, leading to an attitude of carelessness and disregard.



Limoni Manu wrote this piece while he was a student in historical theology at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

This message is just as relevant for us today as it was for the first readers of the book of Hebrews.

In the context of the nautical metaphor of drifting, what are some of the "currents" that might cause such drift? People (like myself) from small islands surrounded by the ocean know about currents and their danger. On the surface the water can look quite still, but the undercurrents could be rapid and dangerous. Some currents can be huge, pulling water in every direction.

The same is true in our spiritual life with God. Even for the most experienced of "swimmers," the currents of life can be fatal if we ignore the necessary safety precautions.

Currents to Watch

1. The current of unbelief. Someone has said that "unbelief is the danger of a slow, gradual, and insidious decline of our spiritual connection with God beyond mere neglect." Every Christian is in danger of taking the Holy Spirit for granted as He speaks to us from day to day (see Heb. 3:7, 8,15; 4:7). It is the Spirit who *gives life*, who *teaches*, who *convicts of sin*, and who *guides us into all truth* (see John 6:63; 14:26; 16:8). "Our danger is 'a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God,' self-produced by persistently ignoring the promptings of the Spirit's voice." The heart inevitably "hardens by the relentless inroads of the . . . (deceitfulness, or pleasures) of sin."² This process may be slow, but the Christian is reminded of the subtle power of sin that may pervert the heart until it overtly defies God.³ For "if we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left" (Heb. 10:26, NIV).

2. The current of familiarity. This is a common, self-imposed risk of many sea lovers. They become so familiar with the ocean that they come to underestimate its treacherous traits and dangers.

A similar danger faces Christians. As we become familiar with the truth of salvation, it may get to be commonplace to us, and we begin to lose the sense of its quality and importance. Thus, instead of growing into maturity,

By LIMONI MANU

reat

our paths today.



*By a subtle current,
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we remain spiritual infants, satisfied with our elementary understanding of God’s Word (Heb. 5:11-14). God forbid that as Christians we might become so familiar with our knowledge of truth that we grow lazy and sluggish without persevering to “inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:11, 12).

On the other hand, there’s the familiarity with sin. This, too, leads to spiritual death. Could the grim reality of apostasy happen to us who have experienced the joy of salvation? Yes, says the writer of Hebrews—if we fail to keep constant guard of the great salvation we enjoy (Heb. 3:12).

3. The current of independence. Hebrews lays stress on the community of believers as a powerful force for corporate responsibility (Heb. 10:25). In the Old Testament the word “*mishpahah*” or “family” refers to a whole social unit or group concept, implying togetherness, in contrast to fragmentation or isolation.⁴ It implies that “the strength and encouragement provided by the *mishpahah* and larger community is an important concept for the Church to consider today.”⁵ The same point was stressed by the apostle: “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Heb. 10:24).

As we draw closer to the end of time, we must be wary of the increasing voices crying for independence. Those among us who advance such thoughts are working contrary to the divine plan of God.⁶ Anyone who thinks “their individual judgment” is a sufficient means for self-reliance “is liable to be deceived by the enemy and overthrown.”⁷

Weathering the Currents


The apostle gives a twofold secret plan for weathering the currents of life.

First, he reminds us about the necessity to “pay more careful attention” (Heb. 2:1, NIV). If we’re on a slow-moving current, failure to pay constant attention can lead to drifting and disaster. Before you realize it, it could be too late.

Our earnest attention should be more focused than those to whom God spoke through angels and other means (Heb. 2:1, 2). Why? Because “in these last days” God’s climactic speech has been revealed to us in the per-

son of His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2). All heaven came down in Jesus; and that makes this final revelation of salvation much greater than anything in the past. In the words of the apostle: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Heb. 2:3).

Second, we must pay closer attention “to the things we have heard” (Heb. 2:1). The living and written Word of God must become a priority in our lives. There’s no substitute for the study of God’s Word. The Scriptures are our sure anchor against the dangerous currents of life.

As members of the remnant church, we have been blessed to be recipients of “such a great salvation,” salvation through heaven’s greatest gift of God’s own Son—salvation confirmed by those who first heard it, by God Himself, by Jesus and His ministry in heaven, and by the continual presence of the Holy Spirit. What excuse will we have if we simply “drift” away out of sheer neglect? What alternative can God offer us if we neglect heaven’s only means of saving us? 

⁴William G. Johnsson, *In Absolute Confidence: The Book of Hebrews Speaks to Our Day* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), p. 17.

⁵Johnsson, p. 18.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), pp. 210.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 258.

¹⁰Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 161, 164.

Ho Tong attended a Christian primary school when he was young. He did not accept Jesus; however, the seeds were planted in his heart. A few years ago he came to our elderly center and attended our evangelistic meeting. We studied the Bible with him, and he was baptized at the age of 78.

Ho Tong's spouse, now 70, has worshipped idols for more than six decades. She said, "When I was small, I blindly followed my parents in worshipping the idols." But for all these decades she found neither peace and joy nor help from these gods. When she accepted Jesus as her Savior, she found the peace and joy in her heart that she was seeking. Now she finds Jesus' help in big or small matters. She turned to Jesus as she saw the changes in Ho Tong after his baptism, as well as God's blessings to him. She began coming to church and was later baptized.

A Time for Everything

Elderly evangelism in some people's minds is a waste of time and resources. They think the elderly are too old and can't make much of a contribution to the church. Even some of the elderly are negative about themselves. I once visited a single elderly man who told me that the elderly "are third-class citizens." In Chinese, "class" and "wait" are pronounced the same. What he meant was that the elderly are waiting for three things: to eat, to sleep, and to die. It may be the picture of those who do not know Christ and the hope of salvation and heaven. But to us it is a joyful moment to see the elderly baptized in the last stage of their life.

Elderly evangelism is a challenging ministry. The elderly are often neglected, and they don't have much time

left to live. Also, the number of senior citizens is growing in Hong Kong and in many other parts of the world. According to statistics, the elderly in Hong Kong will increase from 900,000 to 1,600,000 in the next 15 years, which constitutes 20 percent of the population. It is further suggested that there will be a 30 percent increase by 2030.

traditions, beliefs, and practices.

Accepting Christ is not an easy task for them. Reasons include their worship of ancestors; opposition from children; changing their mind about baptism; they're too old, too sick, etc. So when we share the gospel with them, we must make the gospel simple and easy to understand. But we must also treat them with respect, love, and care.

By TERRY & LINDA TSUI

Elderly Evangelism

A challenging and rewarding ministry

The Church's Response

Thirteen years ago Hong Kong-Macao Conference started a new elderly center at Siu Sai Wan, Hong Kong. Since then the membership of the center has increased to more than 800. The center offers various classes and activities throughout the week. I served as the first pastor. After I was transferred to another church, my wife, Linda, succeeded me as pastor. With the Lord's blessings, we have witnessed 66 elderly baptized.

It is both easy and hard to conduct elderly evangelism here. It is easy because when the hearts of the elderly are open, it will not be long before they are baptized. It is hard because it is difficult to change their mind-set in regard to their

Below are strategies we use in elderly evangelism:

1. From Traditional Worldview to Biblical Worldview

Many Chinese are ancestor worshippers and are superstitious. Accepting a foreign religion is not easy for them. We start by describing God as "heaven," and we emphasize that "heaven" is the Creator God in the Bible. We also emphasize that we are to honor our parents—which is the first commandment with blessing. The Israelites offering sacrifices to God is also in harmony with their beliefs. These are in harmony with the teaching of Confucius.

2. From Literacy Class to Bible Class

Most elderly in Hong Kong are illiterate. We, therefore, offer

Terry Tsui is the secretary of Chinese Union Mission. **Linda Tsui** is the pastor of Siu Sai Wan church, Hong Kong.

literacy classes in the center. We then slowly teach them memory texts of the Bible. We use a pictorial Bible to share the Bible stories with them. Because the elderly often forget easily, we emphasize that what matters most is that they believe and accept Christ.

3. From Opera Songs to Gospel Opera Songs

Elderly love music, especially the traditional Chinese opera songs. We replaced the lyrics with gospel content. The elderly like the new songs very much, and the message gets into their minds easier and in a more natural way.



TERRY PANG

4. From Chinese Festivals to Celebration and Feast

There are many traditional Chinese festivals, and they are times of joy, gathering, celebration, and feast. We make use of these festivals as golden opportunities to share the gospel with the elderly, just as Jesus used them to share the gospel with those He came in contact with. Usually after the Sabbath sermon, we have a feast together. Many elderly attend and celebrate.

5. From Confrontational Evangelism to Friendship Evangelism

After gathering their names through celebrations that they have attended, we begin friendship evangelism and visitation, then Bible study. We divide the young people, mothers, kids, and elderly into teams

of two and three to visit the elderly each week. Some are poor, so we take food to them. It is the love and care that win their hearts.


Twelve years ago I gave a Bible study to Ho Lit Wai. She was a Methodist, so I studied the 2300-day prophecy with her briefly. Afterward, I made the appeal for baptism. She declined. Some years later, at the end of an evangelistic meeting, we asked her again. This time she nodded her head. During these years she joined our worship service and experienced our love and care.

Once I visited an old man. He came to my evangelistic meeting. He was a new immigrant, and he attended the church and Bible study class for some time. But he did not make a decision to be baptized. As Linda and I were visiting him, he said to me, "Pastor Tsui, I cannot be baptized because I am too old, too weak, I forget too easily." I prayed to God for an answer, and immediately I said to him, "You are right that you are too old, too weak, forget too easily. That is why you must be baptized soon before it is too late." Not long afterward, he was baptized. An excuse for not being baptized became the very reason for baptism!

They Shall Run and Not Grow Weary

Elderly evangelism is challenging, but in the years that we have been involved in elderly evangelism we have learned to be wise, kind, and loving toward the elderly. Through love and care we will win them to the kingdom of God.

One day in heaven we shall see many elderly there. But they will no longer be old and weak. As the prophet Isaiah says: "He who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth" (Isa. 65:20, NIV).

Being involved in this ministry is, indeed, a blessing to us as it builds our character to be more Christlike. It could also be a blessing to you! 



TERRY PANG

Top to Bottom: JOYFUL MOMENT: Tong Kuk, 93, said when being baptized by Pastor Terry Tsui, "I want to be baptized. I am not afraid of the water." **A NEW LIFE:** (From left) Terry Tsui, Ho Tong, Ho's spouse, and Linda Tsui, taken in front of Siu Sai Wan Elderly Center, Hong Kong. **ANTICIPATION:** Ho Lit Wai (second from left) waiting to be baptized.

History was made in the Inter-American Division (IAD) on March 24, as 44,775 people were baptized into the Adventist faith on one day. It is the largest number of baptisms in a single day in the IAD since the division was established in 1921.

Inspired by the biblical Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the territory-wide event, called Pentecost and More, featured satellite feeds from all 15 union conferences, which were broadcast throughout the world and the IAD, including the hub of the program in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Celebrating Diversity

The program began with a demonstration of the remarkable human diversity of the Inter-American Division: More than 100 people, dressed in the unique costumes of the areas they represented, strode across the stage to the applause of their fellow believers.

“This is an extraordinary day,” said Jan Paulsen, president of the Adventist world church, addressing thousands of church members as he spoke from el Palacio de los Deportes in Santo Domingo. “I have never

done anything like this. I’ve preached most Sabbaths and traveled all around the world, but I have never done anything like this.”

More than 10,000 people crowded the stadium to witness the event, which was the culmination of months of evangelistic campaigns in the IAD and took the coordinated efforts of hundreds of pastors, church staff, and lay members throughout the 15 main regions of the division.

Outside the stadium, a crowd of 5,000 watched as waves of baptismal candidates, dressed in blue robes, stepped forward. Some baptisms were conducted inside the stadium, but most were performed outside by 60 pastors in an Olympic-size swimming pool.

A Cast of Thousands

Spearheaded by IAD’s Ministerial Association, the evangelistic initiative sought to involve pastors and church

Libna E. Stevens is news coordinator for the Inter-America Division. Williams Costa, Jr., news director for the General Conference Office of Communications, also contributed to this story.



Pentecost Multipl

Nearly 45,000 baptisms highlight historic event in Inter-America



DAVID REGUS

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Right: ANOTHER PENTECOST: Jan Paulsen, world church president (right), addresses the morning worshippers with the help of translator Jaime Castrejon. **Left:** ON RECORD: Thousands of new believers indicate their commitment to Christ by raising their hands, just prior to being baptized.

members in every local church in the territory to share the gospel with nonbelievers. Reaching the 3-million-member mark anytime soon seemed a daunting challenge: Just two years ago, the milestone was not expected until 2010.

The climax of the amazing day was the baptism of Clarissa Pozo de los Santos, a young woman chosen to represent the three-millionth member in Inter-America. Clarissa spoke movingly of how Jesus transformed her life.

“I was walking in the world and I saw how there is so much evil, pain, and sadness, and God has something else for me,” she said. “It’s like I have a new life now; I know I will be different with God’s help.”

As Clarissa was lowered into the baptismal pool by IAD president Israel Leito, crowds of people gathered around to witness the significant moment.

But Clarissa was just one of thousands who came to seal their decision for Christ that day, each with their own unique story. Francois de la Ville discovered the peace and hope found in Jesus when he was handed a gospel tract from someone named Jean Paul in the streets of Martinique. Peter Baldwin heard the message of salvation while he was in the jungles of Jamaica, listening to broadcasts from Adventist World Radio.

Challenge From the World President

As the baptismal service began, Pastor Paulsen, who also preached the central message of the Sabbath worship service, spoke to the 1,400 baptismal candidates seated on the ground floor of the stadium. Paulsen’s image and words were carried via satellite to tens of thousands more candidates who had been prepared for baptism and



HISTORIC MILESTONE: From thousands of members baptized at dozens of sites, Clarissa Pozo de los Santos (top) was chosen to represent the three-millionth member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America. Israel Leito, president of the Inter-American Division, baptized her. **REPEAT PERFORMANCE:** Baptisms such as this took place simultaneously at dozens of sites throughout Inter-America.

had gathered across the IAD in local churches and convention centers.

“Jesus Christ is the only way,” Paulsen reminded those about to be baptized. “He is the only door into God’s future.” The world church president emphasized what he called the four pillars of the gospel that each candidate should embrace as they make a public commitment to follow Jesus through baptism: first, sharing the certainty that Jesus Christ is the Savior of humankind; second, the conviction Jesus did not stay in the grave; third, the assurance

Paulsen challenged the entire gathering to recommit their lives to Christ and tell others the good news of the gospel.

The Impact of an Amazing Day

Shortly after the event, church leaders and organizers marveled at the impact that rippled across the territory in the wake of this historic occasion. “It [the program] has brought the churches together,” said Pastor Balvin Braham, who organized Pentecost and More. “A sense of spiritual revival has taken place, not just

efforts in sharing the gospel with nonbelievers.

Kandus Thorp, representing the world church’s Hope Channel, shared with the audience that Esperanza TV is the official television voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the Spanish-speaking world. “It is to be a window for the world to view the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Esperanza TV is to show the rest of the world the life of the church here in Inter-America,” she said. The celebration was also carried live through Adventist Television networks, Hope

*Clarissa was just one of thousands who came to seal their decision for **Christ** that day.*

that Jesus is alive, ascended to heaven, and ministering for everyone; and finally, the knowledge that He will come again.

Each of Inter-America’s 15 major church regions was featured in succession via live satellite transmission at specific time intervals throughout the baptismal program. The start of each region’s presentation in the program was heralded with a musical video highlight and a special baptismal prayer.

When the baptismal formula (“I now baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”) was heard in English, believers were baptized in English-speaking countries, including such places as Jamaica, West Indies, and Belize. When the announcement was made in French, believers in Haiti and the French Antilles were baptized. And when it was repeated in Spanish, believers in more than 10 Spanish-speaking countries demonstrated their faith in Christ by being baptized.

an event. It has mobilized individuals to continue evangelizing.”

“In our case it is not an issue of numbers,” Leito said. “We are happy that we have symbolically reached our three-millionth member, but we will be far more happy when, with all the saints of the Lord, we can meet at the feet of Jesus. This will be our greatest joy.”


“This is part of history, a good history,” said Leon Wellington, vice president and communication director for the church in Inter-America. “We are happy to be part of this program using the technology available today to contribute in fulfilling the mission of the church.” According to Wellington, the program was instrumental in helping to launch the Adventist Church’s Spanish television channel, Esperanza TV.

Although there were some technical difficulties at the start of the broadcast, the event achieved a major objective by uniting evangelism

Channel, 3ABN, Nuevo Tiempo, and Red ADVENIR.

Church leaders in the IAD view Pentecost and More as only a glimpse into a bright future for the division. “Pentecost and More has been the awakening of a new direction for the church in Inter-America,” said Leito, noting that he is interested in broadening the program and making it an annual event.

“It really speaks to what can happen when we get our membership to work,” said Braham. “If we can get all our members . . . actively involved in evangelism, there is no telling the significant impact we can have.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America covers Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and the northern tip of South America, and has some 3 million members worshipping in three main languages in 9,218 churches. Despite its diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages, focus on mission and God’s love unite His family in Inter-America. 

It's All About Him

If we really understood, our churches would be filled on Communion Sabbath.

By GERTRUDE BATTLE

Most Adventist churches hold their Communion services once a quarter. And the Sabbath of that quarterly service is often considered by some a good day to skip church.

Various reasons might be given for this phenomenon, among them the following: Some feel unready or unworthy to participate. Others feel uneasy or embarrassed—embarrassed about what we call “the ordinance of humility.” Not that they’re too proud to wash someone else’s feet, but rather that they experience the lack of a deep, inner rationale for doing something so personal to someone who’s perhaps just an acquaintance. Some have difficulty finding a friend with whom they can feel comfortable—which is perhaps one reason for the increasingly popular “family foot-washing provisions” now available in some churches.

But perhaps the most important reason of all for the decline in participation in this service is a lack of understanding of its real significance.

Why the foot-washing ceremony?

As I see it, this service lies at the very heart of the teaching of Jesus and brings us close to the Savior in a very personal way. To know Jesus in a personal experience as the One who humbled Himself for us is to know Him in the only way that really counts.

It's About Him

Although it may take a certain amount of courage to overcome the initial shyness and embarrassment some may feel at washing the feet of another, the emphasis in this ordinance is not on what we do, but rather on what Christ has done. In John 13:4 we read: “[Jesus] rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.”

The towel is a symbol of servanthood, and the ordinance of humility is our recognition that Jesus laid aside His robes

of royalty and His kingly crown—that He left the courts of heaven—and humbled Himself to the level of humanity.¹ And all this that He might become acquainted with our needs and help us rise above the degradation of the Fall.

We cannot grasp the glory and the exalted position from which He was separated when He emptied Himself and came to be a servant of humanity. It’s only when we know the cost of something that we begin to appreciate it. There is not an illustration in all the vast reaches of time or space that could properly portray what Jesus did.

One of His last acts on earth was to gird Himself as a servant and perform a servant’s part.

“The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. . . . At this last Passover supper, Jesus repeated His teaching by an illustration that impressed it forever on their minds and hearts.”²

“Though unrecognized as a church sacrament,” said one historian, “surely there never was a more impressive one than Jesus’ use of the towel at the last meal with His disciples, an act so in keeping with the whole of His life.”³

“Never in the history of the human race has there been a more arresting scene than that of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples. In this incident was revealed the great truth that salvation involves more than what [we do] for God—it also includes God . . . humbling Himself to serve [us]. It symbolizes the humiliation of Jesus in behalf of [humanity]. It pictures God’s work for [us] as an act of cleansing—washing away pride, selfishness, and arrogance . . . sins that we pick up like dust along the paths of life.”⁴

“What could Jesus [do] that would have reflected His godlikeness more perfectly than the simple act of washing [the] disciples’ feet? No sermon could have said so eloquently what Jesus said by [that] act of love. With sublime artistry and dramatic forcefulness the Master left in [our minds] the picture of Himself, kneeling, towel in hand, before ordinary men.”⁵

“This service is infinitely more than an evidence of humility [in us]. It is a memorial of the humiliation of the Savior of mankind. Thus, the service has a profound meaning. It

Gertrude Battle, who passed away in 1998, was a writer in the area of spiritual growth and Bible study. She wrote this article while living in Collegedale, Tennessee.

reminds the worshiper of the grace of God as effectively as do the bread and the wine... This service teaches the perfect way to level barriers between races and classes of [people]. . . . *It is a graphic reminder of the greatest event that ever happened in the universe—the act of Jesus in giving Himself to save the world.*⁶

Leonard Griffith, former pastor of the City Temple in London, tells the following story:

“Years ago I knew a Christlike man who was the director of a large camp for underprivileged boys. His campers and colleagues affectionately called him ‘The Chief.’ Everybody loved and respected the Chief, and everybody felt the strength of his Christian influence. . . . Legends grew up about this man after his death, but one of them, that had solid basis in fact, never failed to impress the boys. It seems that in the days before the camp enjoyed the comforts of modern plumbing, the Chief used to rise each morning at dawn before anyone else was awake and by himself perform the odious duty of cleaning all the sanitary conveniences. Many times people remonstrated with him and said, ‘Why don’t you make this a fatigue duty for the boys or at least for some of the maintenance staff? Surely it is not the Chief’s work!’ He always gave the same reply, ‘I do it because I am the Chief and because I choose to do it. No one should be *compelled* to perform a task so dirty and disagreeable.’”⁷

Applying this to the event in the upper room 2,000 years ago, Pastor Griffith continues: “Observing the neglect of the disciples, how simple it would have been for Jesus to say, ‘Peter, Andrew, John, is it not your turn to wash the feet tonight?’ Even a gentle reminder would have produced immediate results. But Jesus did not believe in coercing men to play the role of a slave. That role has to be chosen, and He, the Chief, chose to fulfill it.”⁸

How unfortunate that so many in the Christian church have found it necessary to abandon this practice! However, the symbol [of the Lord’s Supper] is incomplete without the foot-washing service being included. “It is only as we are washed by His blood, cleansed anew, that we are fitted to partake of the bread and the wine that are the symbols of communion with Him.”⁹


Instead of calling it “the ordinance of humility,” we might better call this memorial the *ordinance of Christ’s humiliation*.

Following the foot-washing event, Jesus put the following important question to His followers that evening: “Do you know what I have done to you?” (John 13:12).

Though Hebrews 8:1, 2 does not directly answer the question, it relates to it by telling us the identity of the One who served that evening: “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.”

It was the High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary and the King of heaven Himself who humbled Himself that evening to wash the feet of these ordinary men.

We have not emphasized this enough. The whole heart of the lesson has been eclipsed by the bread and wine. The cross was the culmination of the decision made by the Father and the Son when they clasped hands in agreement that He take off those regal robes and glittering crown to save us at any cost. What mind can grasp a scene like that? One struggles to explain in human language the humiliation of our precious Lord. We get glimpses that boggle our mind, but still we’re only scratching the surface of a subject that will continue unfolding throughout eternity.

To miss out on the ordinance of Christ’s humiliation is to fail to understand the tremendous implications in Christ’s question: “Know ye what I have done to you?” 

¹E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 268.

²E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 642.

³Cited in Samuel Angus, *Religious Quests of the Greco-Roman World*, p. 248.

⁴See Norval F. Pease, *Think on These Things* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1969), p. 94.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁷Leonard Griffith, *The Eternal Legacy From the Upper Room*, pp. 41, 42.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Morris Venden, *Faith That Works* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), p. 286.

The LORD’S Supper

The Lord’s Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Savior. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-29; Matt. 26:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

If every soldier of Christ had done his duty, if every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might, ere this, have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. While men have slept, Satan has stolen a march upon us.

Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations—trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes. As never before, we need to press together, serving Him who has prepared His throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all. God has not forsaken His people, and our strength lies in not forsaking Him.

The judgments of God are in the land. The wars and rumors of wars, the destruction by fire and flood, say clearly that the time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand. We have no time to lose. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecies of the eleventh of Daniel have almost reached their final fulfillment.

From all the countries of the world the Macedonian cry is sounding, “Come over and help us.” God has opened fields before us, and if human agencies would but cooperate with divine agencies, many souls would be won to the truth. But the Lord’s professed people have been sleeping over their allotted work, and in many places it remains comparatively untouched. God has sent message after message to arouse our people to do something, and to do it now. But to the call, “Whom shall I send?” there have been few to respond, “Here am I; send me.”

When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested. Divine power will be revealed. The church will see the providential working of the Lord of hosts. The light of truth will shine forth in clear, strong rays, and, as in the time of the apostles, many souls will turn from error to truth. The earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord.

Heavenly angels have long been waiting for human agents—the members of the church—to cooperate with them in the great work to be done. They are waiting for you. So vast is the field, so comprehensive the design, that every sanctified heart will be pressed into service as an instrument of divine power.

At the same time there will be a power working from beneath. While God’s agents of mercy work through consecrated human beings, Satan sets his agencies in operation, laying under tribute all who will submit to his control. There will be lords many and gods many. The cry will be heard, “Lo, here is Christ,” and, “Lo, there is Christ.” The deep plotting of Satan will reveal itself everywhere, for the purpose of diverting the attention of men and women from present duty. There will be signs and wonders. But

the eye of faith will discern in all these manifestations, harbingers of the grand and awful future, and of the triumphs that will surely come to the people of God.

Work, O work! keeping eternity in view. Bear in mind that every power must be sanctified. A great work is to be done. Let the prayer go forth from unfeigned lips, “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.”

Those who realize, even in a limited degree, what redemption means to them and to their fellow men will walk by faith, and will comprehend in some measure the vast needs of humanity. Their hearts are moved to compassion as they see the widespread destitution in our world—the destitution of the multitudes who are suffering for food and clothing, and the moral destitution of thousands who are under the shadow of a terrible doom, in comparison to

By ELLEN G. WHITE

Angels Hoverin

which physical suffering fades into nothingness.

Let church members bear in mind that the fact that their names are registered on the church books will not save them. They must show themselves approved of God, workmen that need not to be ashamed. Day by day they are to build their characters in accordance with Christ’s directions. They are to abide in Him, constantly exercising faith in Him. Thus they will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ—wholesome, cheerful, grateful Christians, led by God, step by step, into clearer and still clearer light.

Those who do not gain this experience will be among the ones whose voices will one day be raised in the bitter lamentation, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved. Why did I not flee to the stronghold for refuge? Why have I trifled with my soul’s salvation, and done despite to the Spirit of grace?”

Among those to whom fearful disappointment will



CLARA NATOLI


from heaven by their own unfitnes for its companionship.

Those who have bowed to the idols of the world will gain no comfort from them in that great day when every one will be rewarded or punished according to his works. But Omnipotence will deal justly. Those who have made Christ their refuge will find that He lives, and that He is conqueror. He will be their defense.

“The great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and hasteth greatly.” Every hour, every minute, is precious. We have no time to spend in faultfinding and contention. All around us there are souls perishing in sin. Every day there is something to do for the Master. Every day we are to point souls to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Be always ready; “in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Go to your rest at night with every sin confessed. Thus we did in 1844, when we expected to meet our Lord. And now this great event is nearer than when we first believed. Be always ready, in the evening, in the morning, and at noon, that when the cry is heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!” you may, even though awakened out of sleep, go forth to meet Him with your lamps trimmed and burning.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.” Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future that awaits the overcomer. Heed the encouragement in the words, “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

Let us be found “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer.” The Lord has made every provision that we shall have strong hope. If we are true to our covenant with God, the blessing is certain—as certain as God’s promise can make it. And so great is the blessing that it will be a full and sufficient reward for all the self-denial and self-sacrifice that for Christ’s sake we have shown here below. 

This article is drawn from one that first appeared in the November 24, 1904, edition of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*). Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

g'Round

come at the day of final reckoning will be those who have been outwardly religious, who have apparently lived Christian lives, but who have woven self into all that they do. They have prided themselves on their morality, their influence, their ability to stand in a higher position than others, their knowledge of the truth. They think that these will win for them the commendation of Christ. “Lord,” they say, “we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.” “Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”

But the Saviour says, “I never knew you: depart from me.” “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

There is no discussion; the time for that is past. The irrevocable sentence has been pronounced. They are shut out

By DANIEL WEBER

Pyramids *and* Windmills

Taking the gospel to unique cultures requires unique methods.

The Trans-European Division (TED) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a territory that encompasses one of the largest geographic areas of any of the church's 13 divisions. From the northern tip of Norway to the mountains of south Sudan, the Trans-European Division is made up of 41 countries that represent almost every people and religious group in the world today.

More than 604 million people live in the countries of the TED, making it the fourth most populous division in the church. When you consider it is the smallest of the world divisions in terms of membership, it is easy to imagine the immense challenges facing the church here. Secularism has established itself in the developed areas of the division, while other religions have started to grow outside their traditional areas.

Despite these challenges, the church in the TED is striving to tell everyone the good news of Jesus.

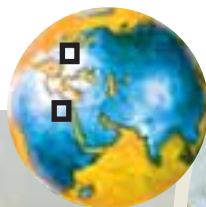
Welcome to Egypt

The land of ancient pyramids, camels, and vast deserts is also home to a multitude of people. One of them is a Seventh-day Adventist reaching out to the people of Egypt.

"God has many precious souls in Egypt, and the message has to be told," says Samir Berbawy, president of the Adventist Church in Egypt. Berbawy was an educator living in the United States when he decided he had to return to his native Egypt to help the church. Here the church has fewer than a thousand members in a country that boasts a population of more than 75 million; that's one Adventist for every 90,000 people.

One of the most effective ways of reaching out to the community is through education. "I've not met [so many] young people who are eager to study the Bible, to serve, to understand more, as I've seen in Egypt," Berbawy says.

Not far from Cairo is Nile Union Academy (NUA), a small boarding school that is accomplishing big things. More than 90 students live, work, and learn in an environment that can easily be described as an oasis. The school teaches classes up to the twelfth grade and offers a subject not often



Clockwise from top:

HE SEES POSSIBILITIES:

Samir Berbawy, president of the Adventist Church in Egypt, has a background in education, which explains why he sees potential in each youth. **ON PURPOSE:**

Maresol Hule, introduced to Christ by members of X-preszo, tells of the difference Christian faith has made in her life: "Now I can feel Christ in my heart," she says. **A HIGHER EDUCATION:**

John was enrolled in Nile Union Academy over the protests of some on the Admissions Committee. Now he's decided to serve God by being a pastor. **SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE:** Renate Hazel, worship leader for the X-preszo church plant near The Hague, leads out in community socials, so that Adventists can meet and mingle with those who might be searching for meaning in their lives.



Renate Hazel

taught in Egypt—English. English classes at NUA draw students from all over the country as they try to improve their language skills. While learning English, students also learn about Christianity and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some students find their lives turned around.

Dwight Rose, principal of NUA, remembers one student in particular: “One of the teachers in the Admissions Committee said, ‘Let’s not accept this kid; he’s nothing but trouble.’ But we accepted John, and now he has chosen to become a minister. He’s excited about Jesus, and he’s one of our main leaders. It’s just amazing the transformation that has taken place.”

Speaking about his experience at NUA, John says, “I discovered everything about God—how He loves me, how He came to save me; all these things impressed me about God, about serving Him. If He gave me this much love, why shouldn’t I share it with others?”

For the students at NUA, school means a chance to create a new life for themselves. Whether it is trying to escape poverty, attain a new religious understanding, or just learn a new language, the lives of the students of NUA are being changed.



Maresol Hule



John

Welcome to Holland

For most people the Netherlands brings to mind images of windmills, flowers, canals, and bicycles. This country in northern Europe is known for its tolerance and acceptance. Its people are friendly and open to new ideas and ways of living. This atmosphere of openness has created a culture in which some 50 percent

of the population has no use for religion. The Seventh-day Adventist Church here is implementing a program of church planting to introduce Dutch people to Jesus.

Dwight Van Ommeren, pastor of the Crosswalk church in Rotterdam, describes the strategy practiced in several cities: “A church plant is actually a small group of people coming together, sharing the gospel in a different way; either praising God, reading, or giving simple kinds of exercises to those who have not found Christ yet.”

One of these groups is the X-preszo church plant in Rijswijk, on the outskirts of The Hague. Here a group of 60 young Adventists meet each Sabbath. They worship and have an open dialogue with friends and coworkers they have introduced to Jesus. Formed more than a year ago, this group is fueled by a desire to share their love of Jesus with those they come into contact with every day. Several group mem-

bers travel more than one and a half hours each Sabbath morning to help lead out. Besides meeting each Sabbath, the group also holds Bible studies in members’ homes each week.

Renate Hazel is a worship leader at X-preszo. “We come together in small groups during the week—one on Tuesday, two on Wednesday, one on Friday,” she says. “Every month we have a party, and when I say ‘party,’ it’s really a party. We have a barbecue and lots of crafts for the children, and we invite the whole neighborhood. When they come they ask, ‘Why do you do this? Who’s paying for it? Who are you guys?’”

“We say, ‘We are X-preszo; we are a new church in the area.’ I give them my card and say, ‘If you’re interested, please come.’”

One person attracted to X-preszo was Maresol Hule. She was introduced to the group by Renate and says that her life is now different from before. “Now I can feel Christ in my heart. Before that it was not so; my heart was not as warm as it is now.”

Renate says that sharing her love of Jesus is easy to do, and she hopes every church member around the world would catch the vision of telling the world about Jesus. “This is my way of life,” she says. “Everything I do has to do with ‘Can I tell this person about Jesus, can I invite them to a party, can I invite them to a small group? Maybe they are ready for the Sabbath.’”

Church members in the Netherlands are reaching out to their communities by directly touching the lives of those around them. By being living examples of Christ here on earth they are sharing the story of His love and the new life found in Him.

Get Involved

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the second quarter of 2007 will help build a vocational training center at Nile Union Academy and a new church in the Netherlands to house a large Ghanaian congregation established outside Amsterdam. Your faithful support of the mission offerings each week helps support the work of the church around the world. Thank you.

The members of the Trans-European Division face many challenges, yet they continue to share the message of hope in Jesus. Please pray for the members, pastors, and leaders. And when you pray, ask God to show you how you can touch the lives of those you meet every day.

For more information about missions, visit www.AdventistMission.org.



Daniel Weber is a video producer for the Office of Adventist Mission.

QUESTION: *In Ezekiel 20:25 God said to the Israelites, “I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live” (KJV). Could you identify those statues and laws?*

This may be one of the most difficult passages in the book of Ezekiel, if not the Old Testament. Bible commentaries contain different attempts to explain it, but unfortunately none of those interpretations has been widely accepted. That diversity of views indicates the complexity of the passage. In interpreting a biblical text, it is good to be aware of the problems faced as we try to provide a biblically based understanding of it.

1. The Problem of the Text: Ezekiel is saying God gave the Israelites statutes that “were not good and laws they could not live by.” He would be contradicting Himself. That is the basic problem we face. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is any divine statute or law described as “not good.” Elsewhere the Lord said to the Israelites: “Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them” (Lev. 18:5); “Follow them so that you may live” (Deut. 4:1). It is even more surprising to find the same ideas expressed in Ezekiel 20 itself: “I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them” (verse 11). The same idea is found in verses 13 and 21: “The man who obeys them will live by them.” Can such contradictory statements be harmonized?

2. Contextual Considerations: Ezekiel 20:25 belongs to a passage in which the Lord recounts His mighty acts of redemption on behalf of Israel during their departure from Egypt and their sojourns in the wilderness. But the main interest of the text is to reveal the constant spirit of rebellion manifested by God’s people in acts of idolatry. Only because of His love and His concern for His honor did He not destroy them. Within that review of what He did for Israel the Lord says, “I gave to them statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by.” Therefore, He is referring to something He Himself did at a particular


moment. However, the context also indicates that the laws God gave to His people were good and they were expected to live by them. Whatever Ezekiel 20:25 may mean, it is clear that Ezekiel himself, as well as the rest of the Old Testament, considered God’s laws to be good.

3. Toward a Solution: Perhaps a solution is found in the next verse (Eze. 20:26), where a specific law is mentioned. The passage refers to the law of the firstborn. Every firstborn child belonged to the Lord, but since the Lord rejected child sacrifice, the Israelites were to redeem their children. Unfortunately, they sometimes chose to sacrifice their children to the pagan deity,

Moloch, a practice explicitly mentioned in verse 31. This was certainly a bad law, not from the Lord. So the context informs us what was meant by a law that was “not good.” If that is the case, we have to ask why the Lord would say He gave them statutes that were not good. We should look at the text a little closer.

Most Bible versions render the first verb in Ezekiel 20:25, “I gave them...” That is a good translation, but there are other possibilities. For instance, we also find, “I even imposed on them ...” (NEB), and “I also gave them over to statutes ...” (NIV). Those translations are based on the fact that when the Hebrew verb *nathan* (“to give”) is followed by the preposition *le* (“to”) it could mean “to deliver someone to.” In that case the text would be saying that since the Israelites deter-

mined to follow bad laws from their neighbors, the Lord confirmed their willing rebellion against Him by handing them over to obey laws that were not good.

The idea that God confirms disobedience by handing people over to it is attested in other places in the Bible (e.g., Isa. 6:9, 10; 63:17; 2 Thess. 2:11, 12). According to Ezekiel 20:26, even then the Lord seeks to impress us with the magnitude of our sin, hoping to lead us to repentance. 

A Law That Isn't Good?

By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ



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

Growing as a Christian

BIBLE STUDY



By MARK A. FINLEY

Life requires growth. When living things stop growing or reproducing, they begin dying. The cells in our bodies constantly produce new cells. Our blood supply is regularly being renewed. Our spiritual lives are similar. If we ever come to the place where we are no longer growing spiritually, we will begin to die spiritually. In this month's lesson we will explore practical steps for growing daily in a closer fellowship with Jesus.

1. What counsel did the apostle Peter give to early Christians? Write your answer on the line below.

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Growing in grace is vital for dynamic Christian living. Every Christian is urged to keep growing spiritually. One of the ways we keep growing spiritually is through prayer.

2. List three characteristics of Jesus' prayer life.

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35).

"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Luke 5:16).

- Jesus prayed in the _____ . He had a time to pray. (Mark 1:35)
- Jesus found a _____ to pray. He had a place to pray. (Mark 1:35)
- Jesus prayed _____ . He had regularity in His prayer life. (Luke 5:16)

3. On what did Jesus' prayers focus? What was the heart of His prayer life?

Circle the phrase that best describes the focus of Jesus' prayers.

"He went a little farther and fell on His face . . . , saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will'" (Matt. 26:39).

The essence of prayer is to seek God's will, to come heart-to-heart with God. Prayer is a God-ordained means of growing spiritually.

4. In addition to the gift of prayer, what else has God given us to grow spiritually?

Write your answer in the space provided.

"By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

God has given us His _____ .

What words did Peter use to describe these promises?

His promises are _____ .



5. How does this daily new birth occur? In your own words, write the answer on the lines provided.

“. . . having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23).

6. Is it possible to read God’s Word and not be benefited by it? Why?

“But the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it” (Heb. 4:2).

If you do not read God’s Word with _____, it will not benefit you. As you read the promises of God’s Word, accept them by faith. Here are some promises to read from your own Bible.

- **Philippians 4:19**
- **2 Corinthians 10:13**
- **Isaiah 40:31**
- **Isaiah 41:10**

Each promise of God is for you. Accept it. Believe it. Claim it as your own.

7. When the devil attacks us and tries to destroy our spiritual experience, how can we be overcomers?

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11).

We overcome because Jesus overcame. Christ’s blood, shed on Calvary’s cross, sealed Satan’s doom. On the cross Jesus revealed His immense love for us. The text above also gives us another way we can overcome. What is it?

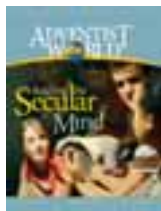
They overcame by the _____.

As we share Christ’s love with others, we grow stronger in Christian faith ourselves. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:32). If you want to be a growing Christian with a dynamic faith, seek Jesus in prayer. Read His Word, accept His promises by faith, and share His love with others.



Next month’s study,
“The Power of the Word,”
will highlight the benefits of Bible study.

LETTERS



Reaching the Secular Mind

What a joy it was to read the January 2007 *Adventist World*, especially “Reaching the Secular Mind,”

by Sarah K. Asaftei. I have long waited for its message to reach into our approach to evangelism. Nowhere in the Scriptures does our Lord, or his disciples, speak of making “church members.”

Jesus gave his disciples a six-step plan—notice the order—1) Go; 2) Make disciples; 3) Of all nations; 4) Baptizing them; 5) Teaching them; 6) All that I have commanded” (Matt. 28:19, 20). A disciple is one who has come to know Jesus, His love and sacrifice for them, has fallen in love with Him, and is determined to follow Him wherever that path leads. He is eager to see others also follow Him—as disciples.

My heart skipped a few beats when I read this article, especially these words: “LDi is made up of seven levels of life development, from building initial friendships to equipping disciples for service.” And then I read: “LIFEdevelopment.info is truly an old spark rekindled into a new fire. . .” Jesus Himself lighted the old spark and LDi is rekindling it. May the Lord bless and prosper their efforts.

H. H. HILL

Oregon, United States

I Saw God on the Job

I am writing in response to Kristen Falch Jackobsen’s article “Where Can We See God?” (March 2007, *Adventist World*, pp. 20, 21). I totally agree with his view that “anybody who wishes can see God every day.” I personally never have to look very far. In fact, on

one occasion in February I saw Him in the children I teach, my friends at work, and in a stranger on the train.

I work at an International preschool in Tokyo, and one day (when I was playing with my class of 1- and 2-year-olds) I twisted my ankle. Immediately, pain shot through my body, and my face gave away how much it hurt. One 2-year-old boy said, “Don’t worry,” while a little girl said, “I can kiss you better.” My work colleagues administered first aid—applying ice and bandages to my foot. As I made my way onto the train on my way back home, I was so touched when a lady in her 70s literally threw her jacket onto an empty seat and gestured for me to sit there.

To experience such beautiful acts of love seemed to be well worth twisting my ankle, and I thanked God for sending help to me in so many forms.

I can also see God in the welcoming and loving people I know at Tokyo International Church. If you are visiting Japan, please spend your Sabbath with us!

SALLY

Tokyo, Japan

Christ’s “Imminent” Return

Elder Pardon Mwansa made a very good point about having faith while waiting for the Lord’s return.

But, even though he quoted several verses from Matthew 24, he did not choose to use Matthew 24:14, which tells us the Lord will come when the gospel has gone to all the world.

RICHARD S. NORMAN

Georgia, United States

Proper Credit

I thoroughly enjoy the *Adventist World* magazine. I always find new and refreshing rays of lighting beaming from its pages, glimpse of the heavenly

kingdom of love soon to come.

However, when I read the quote on The People’s Place, I recognized it immediately as belonging to Miss Corrie Ten Boom. Proper sourcing of these quotes will ensure future errors are avoided.

ANGELA MOLGAARD WILSON

Michigan, United States

Life in Chiapas, Serious Mission

Alejandro Medina’s article “Life in Chiapas” (*Adventist World*, January 2007) was absolutely exhilarating! I love how he describes the work of ministry and the true role of the pastor. Medina has 18 congregations under his care. These are lay-led churches. He meets with the leaders of the church and trains them to operate the local church, equipping them to do the work of ministry. Imagine what this biblical ministry model would do for our mission here!

With lay-led churches in which elders and deacons pastor the church and the conference pastor trains and equips them, a pastor could have 5-8 churches, and funds would be free to send other ministers to raise up a work in the unentered towns and cities in North America. This was the practice of the early New Testament church and the early Adventist Church.

In another issue, Barry Oliver’s article “Time to Get Serious About Mission” (February 2007) made my heart beat with a passion. He articulates so very well what I believe God has called the Adventist Church to do. God has commissioned every member of this church to be a missionary who mingles with lost people. We are called to build relationships with them and extend the hand of friendship to them. This is being “in the world” as Jesus instructed. This is Jesus’ example of true ministry. He

LETTERS

spent time with people in their homes (Zacchaeus), in the offices (Levi Matthew), in the marketplace, even in small groups by the seashore.

The person who goes out and mingles with people is as much an “evangelist” as the one who preaches from the pulpit. The gospel mission is about what happens outside the church walls. That’s what mission really is. Jesus had a heart for lost people. We need that same heart.

DAVID KLINEDINST
Nebraska, United States

Thank God for Adventist World

I thank God for the mighty work through this magazine. I was encouraged by the August 2006 edition, especially the article under the heading “Serving Like Jesus.” I felt a challenge in life to see my fellow youth volunteer to serve like Him. From here I developed a mission to serve like Jesus before I die.

I wish my fellow youth all over the

world could get access to this magazine. God bless the *Adventist World* magazine and organization.

NAMANYA DAN
Kampala, Uganda

Surviving the Monotony of Monogamy

This letter is regarding the news commentary “Surviving the Monotony of Monogamy,” by Fylvia Fowler Kline, on page 5 of the February 2007 *Adventist World*. I happen to believe that many of the crimes repeated today are in no small part due to media and news commentaries. This article has a great potential for following this pattern. The article itself bears this out: “The media has given Ashley Madison airtime, albeit unfavorable press. Yet the more negative attention, the faster the agency grows.”

Frankly, I don’t consider “Surviving the Monotony of Monogamy” as negative press for the agency. With posi-

tive advertisement and a testimonial from a happy customer, it’s far from negative. It is a law of nature that when we look at something we will gravitate toward it and become like it. “It is by beholding that we become changed” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 478). “But we all, . . . beholding . . . the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image . . .” (2 Cor. 3:18).

In a time when Christian families are being torn apart by Satanic agencies, why do we give those agencies airtime? Let us print in our publications material that will have a positive effect in our lives.

JENNIFER HOYT
West Virginia, United States

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

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

For a year, I was in love with an Adventist boy who goes to the same church as I do. He let me down a week before he married another girl from that very same church. I feel so rejected, pained, worthless, and humiliated. Please pray for me so that the right man will come my way soon and I will keep on loving myself.

GRACE, *Zimbabwe*

Please pray for our association. We embarked on a community service project, but Satan struck. So pray for us. We want to continue to work for God.

UNIBEN, *Nigeria*

Pray for me to find the right life partner.

MARTHA, *Uganda*

I am a 28-year-old woman, deaf since 1998 from meningitis. I have completed my grade 12 in school, but due to my deafness it is hard to find a job. Many do not want to employ deaf people. I speak very good English and am of at least average intelligence, am quick to notice things, and have an interest in people and places. I hope these abilities will help me find a job, but I need your help as I am unable to pay for a cochlea implant that will aid my hearing. Please pray that I will find a way to get the hearing device.

BARBARA, *Zambia*

Help me in thanking the Lord for setting my dad free from prison, especially since he was innocent in the case.

BENJAMIN, *Nigeria*

We ask our heavenly Father to blot out our sins and include our family, especially our son who is only 2 years old and still in the Philippines, in the Book of Life. We ask God to clearly show what He wants us to do and help us. To give us wisdom and bless us financially and with job security since husband Bong still has no job, and is looking for one with Saturday off.

BONG AND LENG, *Dubai*

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

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

Tapestry of Adventism

Get your cameras out and shoot your life! The *Adventist World* is looking for high-quality photography from around the world. Variety is the key! We need professional-style images of Adventists doing a wide variety of things. Topics include:

Church life

(Communion, taking up the offering, Sabbath school, fellowship dinner, singing, etc.)

Evangelism

(rallies, preaching, prayer, baptisms, etc.)

Community service

(food distribution, construction, health clinics and seminars, Bible studies, etc.)

COLLECTING OFFERING IN COSTA RICA.
PHOTO BY JENNIFER MAE BARIZO.



Send your entries to Tapestry of Adventism, *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 USA; or e-mail JPEG photo files (at least 1 MB each, but no larger than 4 MB) to marank@gc.adventist.org with the subject line "Tapestry of Adventism." Selected photos can earn up to \$100.00 U.S., depending on quality.

Send in your stuff and enjoy
the Exchange!

"Behold, I come quickly..."

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

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Vol. 3, No. 5

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



CARL KOESTER, MISSIONARY, SOUTH SUDAN FIELD

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Lindsey Sands is a Seventh-day Adventist student missionary in New Zealand. Taking a year off from her studies at Southern Adventist University (USA), Lindsey is working with the Adventure Plus Team, running the Pinnacle Challenge. It's a program from ADRA/New Zealand that reaches out to the young people of the nation.

The Adventure Plus Team uses high ropes along with a classroom curriculum that helps kids in six areas: communication, trust and support, fear and risk, decision making, problem solving, and goal setting.

"New Zealand is a highly secular culture," says Lindsey. "There are more than 4,000,000 people in New Zealand, and only 15,000 Adventists."

Though it's a highly secular culture, there is a growing need and desire by many

New Zealanders to know the love of Christ. One example Lindsey relates to illustrate this point is to share what happened when a group of young people did some community outreach recently. "They distributed food and helped clean yards," she says. "A week later, the youth came back with 47 Bible study contacts. These contacts wanted more than a Bible study to be sent to them; they asked for one-on-one Bible studies."

Pray for Lindsey and her teammates as they volunteer in New Zealand. If you would like to keep up with Lindsey's adventures, you can go to the Adventist Mission Web site (www.AdventistMission.org) and read Lindsey's blog.

—Office of Adventist Mission/AR.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Education without salvation only makes an intelligent sinner."

—Doug Batchelor (submitted by Helen R. Meyers, Cedar City, Utah)



COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF ADVENTIST MISSION

Lindsey Sands, student missionary in New Zealand.

ANSWER: This photo of the delegates from the South Sudan Field was taken in Egypt during the June 2006 Middle East Union (MEU) session. The church in the South Sudan Field represents the largest membership in the MEU.