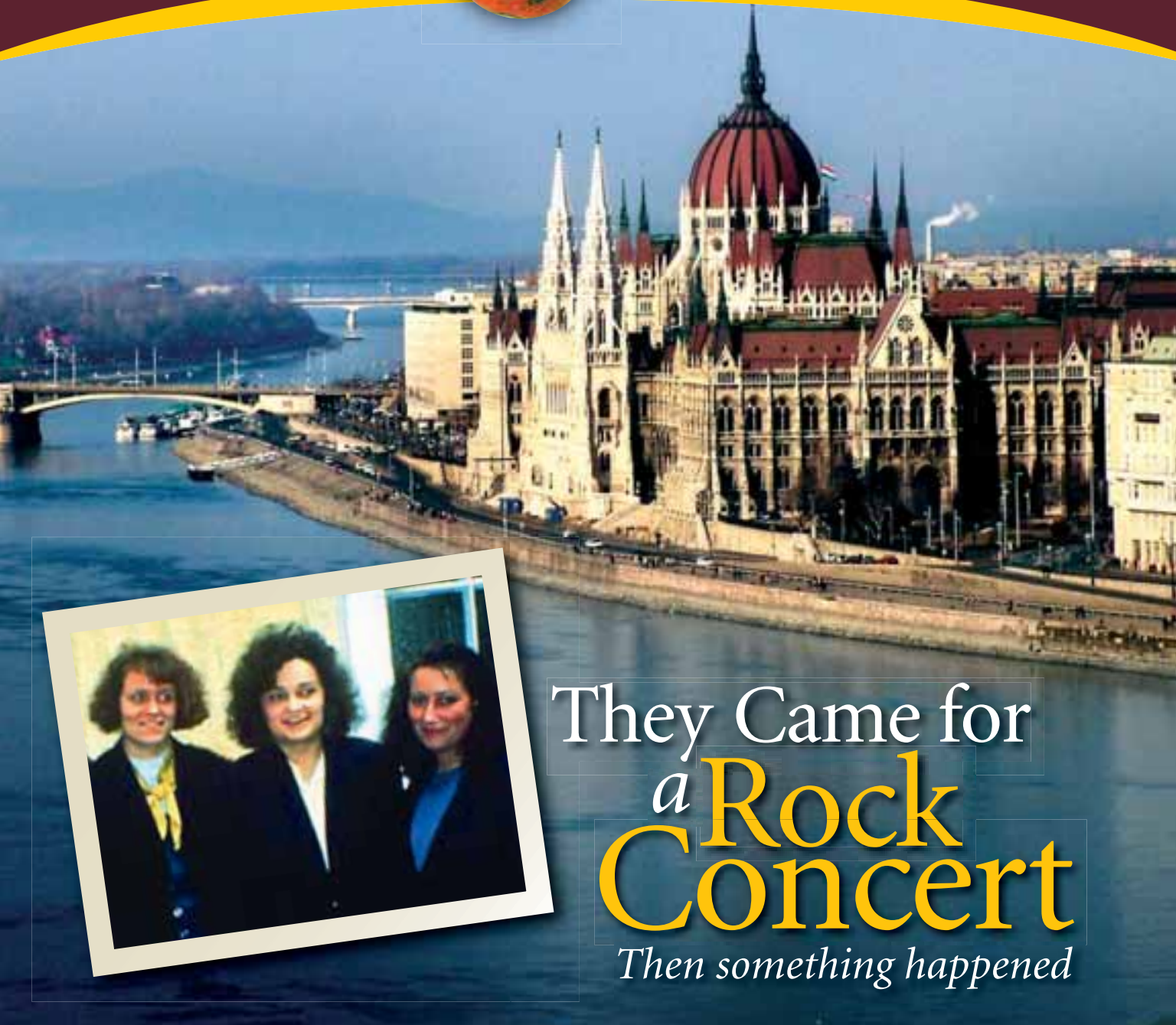


September 2007

# ADVENTIST WORLD



They Came for  
a **Rock**  
**Concert**  
*Then something happened*

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Coming



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Light

# ADVENTIST WORLD

September 2007

ERNESTINE FINLEY



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**Cover:** AS THEY WERE: In October 1989, a rock concert came to town. Three young communist women, Eniko (from left), Anikó, and Helga, attended. Quite by accident, they stayed for Mark Finley's evangelistic meetings, were baptized, and they've never been the same since.



## From the EDITOR'S PEN

### No Chairs Needed

In a long-ago high school physics class, we wondered aloud about how the world might be changed if, say, 1 billion people averaging 70 kg (150 pounds) each in a concentrated region of the world all jumped down off two-foot chairs at precisely the same moment.

Would a seismic wave be set in motion that rattled nearby buildings or disturbed far-off rice paddies? Or would the great shock absorber of the Earth simply receive and dissipate this blow as it has so many others?

It was a delightful academic distraction, especially at a dreary 7:00 a.m. class, but I fear it taught many of us the wrong lesson. We came away believing that only mass, concentrated action by millions of people at one moment had a chance of changing the world.

In fact, just the opposite is true.

The biblical counterpoint to all such notions is clear: “Nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few” (1 Sam. 14:6). God is not beholden to the mass or

even to the majority. Heaven doesn't stand and wait until 51 percent of any group, including the church, is ready to move. God touches individual lives—your life and my life—and He says, “Go, carry the good news. Be My man, be My woman, in your home, in your community, at your school. Share My truth; heal the hurting; prepare people for My coming, even if it seems you are alone. For in truth, you are never alone. ‘I am with you always, even to the end of the age’ [Matt. 28:20].”

By God's grace, more than 15 million Adventists around this globe are changing the world today—not by waiting for some well-timed moment when they can make a concentrated impact—but by doing the work of Jesus that lies closest to them. The lessons they teach, the food they share, the wells they dig, the Living Water they give to the thirsty are having an incalculable effect for the Lord's kingdom. The seismic waves that grow from individual acts of courage and compassion are rattling the structures of the world, and rippling more than rice paddies.

This day, fellow world-changer, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Eccl. 9:10).

—BILL KNOTT

## WORLD REPORT

### AZORES: Paulsen Assured on Religious Freedom During Portugal Visit

Assuring a commitment to religious freedom, Carlos César, the president of the Provincial Government of Azores, affirmed his support for equality of all faiths in a meeting with Seventh-day Adventist Church president Jan Paulsen June 28.

Though the Adventist Church is not large in these mostly Catholic, Portuguese islands, César said the church is “highly respected” by the community, Paulsen said.

Despite the small church membership of 142 people in the islands off the coast of Portugal, Paulsen thanked

members in the Azores for their commitment to their church.

“There aren't many people living in the Azores—this is where you are and where God wants you to be His witness,” Paulsen said to a gathering of 55 people. Two days later he addressed a crowd of 3,500 in a rural area of Portugal near the capital, Lisbon, joined by Ulrich Frikart, president of the church's Euro-Africa region.

“It doesn't matter whether you are 50 people or 5,000, because each of us is only one,” Paulsen said. “We are single individuals who are under



WELCOME TO THE AZORES: Adventist world church president Jan Paulsen, left, is greeted by Carlos César, president of the Provincial Government of Azores, on June 27, 2007.

EURO-AFRICA DIVISION/ANN



## WORLD REPORT

obligation to be alive for God and for our community.”

He added, “It is wonderful when you can recognize that even if it’s just you and one or two other people standing next to you that you are loved by God, and that God says to you, ‘Do your best to share this with people you meet.’”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is growing in Portugal with 95 churches and about 8,900 members.—*Ansel Oliver, Adventist News Network/AW Staff*

### NEW ZEALAND: Philippines President Visits Adventist Health Food Company

■ New Zealand and the Philippines enhanced their trade relationship recently with a Memorandum of Understanding signed between leading New Zealand health food company Sanitarium and the Republic of the Philippines through the New Zealand Department of Agriculture. This coincided with a lunchtime visit to Sanitarium’s Auckland manufacturing site by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The memorandum paves the way for opportunities for the export of Sanitarium products to the Philippines and the reciprocal import of raw materials for the Philippines. This also allows for exploring ways Sanitarium can play a part in improving the health and well-being of the people of the Philippines through the provision of nutrition education.

“We are very honored and excited to discuss partnering with the Republic of the Philippines. This opportunity has come from an acknowledgment of Sanitarium’s genuine commitment to improve the health and well-being of our communities,” said Pierre van Heerden, general manager of Sanitarium.

Sanitarium, owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is one of New Zealand’s most trusted companies,

founded more than 100 years ago in Papanui. They manufacture and supply a range of breakfast cereals, spreads, and other health food products to many homes.—*Sanitarium/South Pacific Division/AW Staff*

### ST. HELENA: Regional Youth Leader Visits

■ Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders on the island of St. Helena—located midway between South America and Africa in the South Atlantic Ocean—say a recent visit by the Youth Ministries director for the church’s Southern Africa-Indian Ocean region is a first for the small, isolated island of some 7,500 people.

Youth leader Eugene Fransch boarded the only means of travel to St. Helena last month—the R.M.S. *St. Helena*—to make the four-day journey to the rugged, volcanic island made famous during Napoleon Bonaparte’s 1815 exile. Fransch, during his visit, inducted seven leaders into the local Pathfinder club.

John C. Moyce, Pathfinder director for the St. Helena Club, says the event marked another milestone: the club, established on the island in 1966, has never before inducted leaders, called Master Guides.

Moyce says it’s crucial for Adventist young people, especially those in



**PRESIDENTIAL VISIT:** President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, of the Republic of the Philippines, examines products from Adventist-owned Sanitarium health foods in Auckland, New Zealand, during a recent visit.

SANITARIUM

remote locations, to get a sense of the global church. Fransch’s visit, Moyce says, sent a message of “we hear you and value you” from church officials to the Pathfinders on the island.

Though small, the Adventist presence on St. Helena is growing, Moyce says. Of the nearly 100 Adventists in the island’s church membership records, about half live on the island year-round and attend its one Adventist church.

Church leaders on the island report St. Helenan Adventists are actively involved in their community, conducting quarterly prayer breakfasts, sponsoring gospel music concerts, and maintaining a radio presence.—*Elizabeth Lechleitner, ANN/AW Staff*

### TAIWAN: Adventist Youth Leaders Hope International Conference Grows Church

■ Seventh-day Adventist world church leaders plan a major youth conference for December in Taiwan, hoping the event will pave the way for



SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION VIA ANN

**NEW LEADERS:** Eugene Fransch, right, joins Pathfinder leadership on the island of St. Helena, including the club director, John C. Moyce, second from left.

future church growth there.

About 2,000 Adventist high school-aged youth will meet for a week of service projects before gathering in the capital, Taipei, said Baraka Muganda, Youth Ministries director for the Adventist world church.

“Our church is not well known in Taiwan, and we have a small membership there,” Muganda said of why organizers chose the location. There are about 5,200 Adventists in Taiwan worshipping in 50 churches. The Adventist Church in Taiwan became self-supporting in 2005.

“We’re excited and our church members are quite astonished that the world church is focusing on our little corner of the world,” said John W. Ash III, president of the

Adventist Church in Taiwan.

The country’s Adventist Youth director, Noah Lai, said the church there is small, but members will be strengthened with the coming support.

“I think this is a great chance for [people] in Taiwan to know we are a happy family, and people around us will get to know our beliefs,” Lai said.

“We’re not just going to preach to them; we want the youth to come and do something in Taiwan,” Muganda said. The deadline to register for the World Conference on Youth and Community Services is November 2. The conference runs from December 24, 2007, to January 5, 2008. Information about the event can be found online at [www.wcycs.org/main/main.asp](http://www.wcycs.org/main/main.asp).

—Adventist News Network



TAASHI ROWE/ANN

**HIGH HOPES:** Adventist world church youth leader Baraka Muganda hopes the World Conference on Youth and Community Services due for Taiwan at the end of 2007 will spur Adventist Church growth there.

## NEWS COMMENTARY

# The Great Disconnection

BY NATHAN BROWN, *editor of the South Pacific edition of Signs of the Times and the South Pacific Division Record*

By the end of 2007 there will be 3.25 billion active mobile phones in the world—enough to connect fully half of the world’s population. According to a survey by the UK-based *The Mobile World*, an average of 1,000 new customers around the world are signing up every minute.

We’ve never been so connected, and there are many benefits to be gained. But researchers in Australia—where an estimated 94 percent of people own a mobile phone—caution that “mobile phone addiction could be the new psychological disorder of the 21st century.”\*

Clinical psychologist and family therapist Andrew Fuller suggests that for some young people being without their mobile phones “would almost be an amputation.” And he sees various physical symptoms for regular phone users: altered sleep patterns, changing dream habits, and increased risk of depression. Ironically, he also observes changing social relationships, with reduced face-to-face contact resulting in less meaningful relationships.

Shari Walsh from the Queensland University of Technology explains that time spent on the phone was not necessarily an indicator of risk. Instead, the disorder can be noticed when phone users become distressed when they are unable to use their phones. “The difficulty is that if people are addicted to the phone or to being connected and they can’t turn it off, they’re not able to give themselves the quiet time we all need,” she says.

Perhaps it’s a very contemporary reason why Sabbath is such a good thing. While more and more of us own mobile phones, we need to be reminded that they—or any of the other gadgets we might collect—don’t own us and should not control our lives.

There may be reasons we need to communicate during Sabbath hours, but Sabbath seems like a great reason to turn off our phones.

\*Sam Wallis, “Mobiles Have Aussies Hooked,” Australian Broadcasting Corp. News, <http://tinyurl.com/3y325c>, July 14, 2007; accessed online July 19, 2007.

## WORLD REPORT

# Adventists Use YouTube Internet Videos to Share Message

By ALEXIS A. GORING,  
Adventist World

*Music, Sermons—Even Russell Crowe at Avondale—Show Up Online*

Standing on the edge of popular technology, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is using YouTube, the same online video-sharing Web site musicians and politicians use to promote their platforms, to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

YouTube, which describes itself in news releases as “deliver[ing] more than 100 million video views every day, with 65,000 new videos uploaded daily” and as “the leading destination on the Internet for video entertainment,” was started in February 2005 by three former PayPal employees and has taken the world by storm. Eighteen months after its founding, Internet giant Google acquired the service for US\$1.65 billion in stock, one of the largest deals of its kind.

Internet users can visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) to upload, view, and share videos made by both directors and amateurs. People of all ages and life experiences shoot homemade videos and, once registered with YouTube online, can post their work for all the world to see.

As of June 2007, when someone types the word “Adventist” into the YouTube’s search engine, results of 3,190 videos are listed. Among those videos, one would find: congratulations from U.S. President George W. Bush, and U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., for the Adventist Church’s stance on religious liberty; music videos from Christian artists and amateurs—ranging from

Brazilian church musicians in concert to Mark Schultz performing in America; a CNN feature about the longevity of Adventists in Loma Linda, California; even a decades-old promotional film for Avondale College’s theology program, starring a then-unknown actor named Russell Crowe. (It was, in fact, believed to be Crowe’s first paid film role.)

When asked what he thinks about YouTube, Adventist pastor and North American Division Church Resources Center associate director Dave Gemmell replied, “It’s basically the democratization of video.” According to Gemmell, video has been so expensive over the years that only very powerful organizations can produce and distribute video.

“YouTube cuts through all that so people with their own video cameras can upload videos on the Internet and make their videos accessible to the world,” he said. “It changes the entire culture of video.”

According to media research firm Nielsen-NetRankings, YouTube racked up 2.76 million page views in May 2007 in the United States alone, with users spending 2.1 million minutes, or 35,000 hours, that month viewing videos online there. Clearly, this is a new “medium” that is attracting a substantial audience: Ellacoya Networks, Inc., a company that helps telecommunications carriers optimize broadband Internet services, said in May 2007



A W STAFF

**Left: SOMETHING TO 'CROWE' ABOUT:** In this image captured from a computer display, a very young Russell Crowe—in what is believed to be his first paid role—is seen portraying a potential theology student at Adventist-owned Avondale College in Australia. The decades-old film, rarely seen outside the South Pacific, is now available on the YouTube Internet service. **Top: VIDEO EXPERT:** Adventist pastor Williams Costa, Jr., associate world church communication director, has posted many Adventist music videos on YouTube and supports the use of this technology.

that “YouTube alone comprises ... nearly 10 [percent] of all [North American] traffic on the Internet.”

Those unfamiliar with this new cultural phenomenon might wonder from where it emerged, who started it, and what users can gain from YouTube. The service began in 2005 as an “underground” venture, created after its founders experienced conflict and frustration while trying to share videos online. Fast forward two years later: YouTube is so well known that even the 2008 United States presidential candidates are using it to promote their platforms.

Politicians aren’t the only ones who see worth in this video-sharing Web site, as the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters also recognize its value.

Williams Costa, Jr., associate director of the world church’s communication department, who is seen on many of the Brazilian Adventist YouTube music videos, accredits a specific human trait to YouTube’s success. “People have [a] curiosity to search and find,” he said. “For this reason, it’s becoming very popular, especially with the young people.”

Costa notes that while there’s a lot of good information

on YouTube, there are also a number of less-suitable items; though the service is itself morally neutral, good and bad can come from it. He believes, however, that YouTube is an overall positive experience and that Adventists need to place good materials on it. “We need to be proactive in producing good material in all medias,” Costa said. “Radio, Internet, YouTube, and Google—those are the tools that reach the people and we are about reaching the people.”

Thomas Dooley knows how to reach people. He works as a production coordinator for SRB productions in Silver Spring, Maryland, and believes YouTube should be used to its fullest potential as a witnessing tool.

“The church needs to experiment with the different technologies out there to expand their ministries,” Dooley said. “[It would be ideal] if somebody who’s homebound or searching for a religious experience can go on YouTube and see church service.”

Currently, YouTube is used to further ministries, give public exposure of a family’s “Kodak moments” with home videos, promote political platforms, and give a global stage to professional and amateur musicians.

“There’s so many other ways to get church messages out than a pastor going up [to a podium] and hoping someone’s going to walk through that door for that day’s sermon,” said Dooley, who shared information about his home church, Community Praise Center (CPC), an Adventist congregation in Alexandria, Virginia, and their venture into making their sermons into podcasts available via Apple, Inc.’s, iTunes music service.

Gemmell shares Dooley’s outlook: “The future is now,” he said. “Technology is going to continue to permeate society, and for those of us in the field of media, we need to understand new media and utilize it to the fullest.”

Costa would also like to see the church using YouTube and other communication media to reach out to people outside its own walls.

“We need [to reach] big cities,” he said. “We need to do everything possible to reach people with this message, especially in hard-to-reach places such as the 10/40 window [and] in China.”

According to Costa, the Lord is giving the church tools to do that now with advances in technology. He believes we need to be more than simply active in broadcasting the good news.

“We need to go ahead by faith and trust that the Lord will open the gates,” Costa said, “so that we can go fulfill the mission.”



## WORLD VISTA

*What does a spiritually healthy local church look like? In last month's issue of Adventist World, Pastor Jan Paulsen identified three "tests" of a healthy congregation: our personal spiritual health; our relationships with other believers; and how our congregation relates to the world beyond its own doors. In this, the second of a three-part series, Pastor Paulsen takes a closer look at the dynamics of community.*



KURT FATTIC

# A Healthy Church

By JAN PAULSEN

## PART 2

A person close to me, a young man still finding his feet in the world, came to church one Sabbath morning wearing clothes that were somewhat out of the ordinary for that particular congregation. He was clean and quite presentable, but not as formally dressed as others. He was met at the door by one of the elders who looked him up and down and said, "Why don't you go home and change your clothes?" The young man did go home. And in the 20 years since he has not returned to church.

How is it that the body of Christ sometimes fails to demonstrate the most basic aspects of Christ's example? The apostle Paul describes in two well-known passages the by-

products of authentic Christianity. The fruit of the Spirit, he says, is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23). Writing to the church in Corinth, he describes true love as that which "does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Cor. 13:4, 5).

What is striking in these passages is that they find their meaning only within relationships—within

community. When do I exercise patience? When the limits of my tolerance are tested by those around me who express themselves differently, or who behave in ways I do not fully understand. When do I exercise self-control? When I swallow words of criticism; when I refuse to say "I told you so" in the face of someone else's mistake. When do I show kindness? When I speak a word of encouragement; when I look beyond differences of culture or background and embrace a brother or sister in Christ.



How do we nurture healthy relationships?

**1. *And the truth shall make you ... loving***

A former teacher of mine, a theologian, once engaged in a long debate with a colleague—an individual well known for his hard-line views. Back and forth they went for many hours, until finally my professor said in exasperation, “OK, you are right! But do you need to be so hostile about it?”

Truth and hostility need not go hand in hand. And truth coupled with a sense of superiority, a strident manner, or an attitude of exclusivity does not contribute much to the health of a faith community.

We should know what we believe; we should take joy in it, safeguard it, and know how to articulate it attractively. But if our spiritual walk does not make us more gracious, if it does not make us more anxious for the feelings of others, if it does not better fit us to be members of the body of Christ, then something is wrong. We can be exacting in our devotions, unerring in our religious observances, and yet fail in the “weightier” matters of our faith (Matt. 23:23, 24). Let us be careful that we don’t become so busy cultivating an inward-looking spirituality that we neglect to cultivate relationships. For spirituality without relationships has no life, no compassion, no warmth, and no attraction.

**2. *Separating the gnats and the camels***

Often young people will ask me, “Can I listen to this, go here, do this, or believe that, and still be a Seventh-day Adventist?” And I remind them, “The church is not a community designed to provide maximum accommodation to the point that it

loses its identity. We have values and beliefs that bond us together; that spell out our essential sameness, and tell us we belong to each other. And if we find ourselves in significant disagreement with a significant number of these values, then it is unlikely that we will find community within the Adventist Church.”

But the greatest threats to the health of a congregation are usually not theological disputes, or disagreements about basic values. The real challenges are more mundane. They are differences of taste, different ways of doing things, different expectations, even differences in the way we articulate the same values.

Accepting differences—differences that do not compromise our essential identity—is fundamental to building a strong, effective community of believers. Can I vote for you to become head elder, even though your background and approach are different from mine? even though you are young? I have to be able to say, “I will trust you. And in this assignment I will help you grow. I will not torpedo you when you make a mistake. I will forgive and support you.”

**3. *A builder or a destroyer?***

Ellen White knew that the underlying attitude with which we approach others can make all the difference to the health and effectiveness of a community of believers. In a letter to church members in Victoria, Australia, she wrote: “There is no hope for the success of any religious organization where criticism is cherished as a fine art, and called spiritual discernment. Men might far better be blind to others’ faults than to be inspired by that keen, detective spirit that will watch for defects in those

whom the Lord loves, and through whom He works.”\*

Do I look at others to find fault or to find common ground? Am I concerned primarily with my own comfort and needs, or for the comfort of others? Is my default attitude one of negativity or of understanding? Through my words and actions, do I build up and strengthen God’s family, or do I tear down and destroy?

It is more than a set of theoretical concepts that will draw people into the church and keep them there. These are important. We must know and understand truth. But it is the dynamics of community—the relationships that I form with others, which make me feel loved and wanted—that will keep me anchored within God’s family. If I feel rejected by people, or if I am made to feel that God has rejected me, then I am gone.

But when God’s spirit is at work in the lives and relationships of church members, there will be an irrepressible warmth and attractiveness. And it is congregations such as these, congregations that take seriously the call to Christian community, that will be most effectively equipped for mission. ●

*Next month: Pastor Paulsen explores how healthy churches relate to the communities they are called to serve.*

\**The Upward Look*, p. 28.



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

WINDOW

# Into Nigeria



## NIGERIA

Capital	Abuja
Languages	English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and Fulani
Religion	Muslim 50%; Christian 40%; indigenous beliefs 10%
Population	135 million
Adventist membership	234,000
Adventist to population ratio	1:562



Traveling from the modern overcrowded streets of Lagos on the Atlantic coast to the hot, humid jungle villages of eastern Nigeria may seem like traveling through time. Lagos is Nigeria's commercial center, the second largest city in Africa. Its towering high-rises are a sharp contrast to the eastern villages, where traditional beliefs and ways of life are still being practiced.

Located along Africa's west-central coast, Nigeria is Africa's most populated nation. It is home to more than 250 people groups, hundreds of languages, a variety of histories, and large groups from several major world religions. Nigeria is widely considered to have the largest Islamic population in Africa.

Nigeria officially gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960; and it is still a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Established as a federalist republic, much like the United States, Nigeria has struggled to maintain a democracy. In 1999, after 16 years of military rule, Nigeria once again regained civilian rule, and a new constitution was adopted. At the end of May, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua became the first civilian to succeed a democratically elected president, marking the longest period of civilian rule in the nation's history.

Even though Nigeria has the world's tenth-largest petroleum reserves, political instability and weak infrastructure have kept the nation from capitalizing on this natural resource. This is unfortunate because this industry plays a major role in Nigeria's ongoing financial stability, as petroleum alone accounts for more than 20 percent of Nigeria's economy and nearly 95 percent of its foreign export income.

Years of political instability, ethnic and religious tensions, and accusations of corruption and mismanagement within the government plague this nation. The regionalization of Nigeria's Muslim and Christian population underscores its diversity. The north and southwest are predominantly Sunni Muslim, the south and southeast are mostly Christian, and the eastern villages are mostly animist.

Animist roots run deep in Nigeria. Although only 10 percent of today's population is animist, the 14 million adherents represent a region that is considered the home of voodoo. The ancestors of the 30 million member Yoruba

ethnolinguistic group brought voodoo to the Caribbean when they were taken to the new world as slaves.

The Adventist Church is well established in Nigeria, with a number of educational and medical institutions. Babcock University, one of the oldest Adventist higher-educational institutions in Africa, makes a powerful impact on its community. More than half of its 3,500-member student body is not Adventist. But there are still great challenges to mission, especially in the east where there are currently no Adventist schools.

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build three evangelistic centers in Nigeria, a worship center for students at Babcock University, and a secondary school in eastern Nigeria.

*To learn more about Adventist mission work in Nigeria watch "The Road Well Traveled" on this quarter's Adventist Mission DVD, or visit: [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org) to download your copy of the mission quarterlies.*

*Compiled by Hans Olsen, Office of Adventist Mission*



# Baby Circumcision

**I had an ultrasound, and my not-yet-born baby is a boy. My husband and I are discussing circumcision. What do you advise?**

Circumcision of a boy is not the same operation as female circumcision or as what is often referred to as “female genital mutilation.” This is where unqualified persons (using unsterilized knives, glass, and the like) may actually remove the labia minora and clitoris in a horrendous procedure. Nevertheless, male circumcision is not without its own risks. These include bleeding and infection, and several studies have shown changes in pain tolerance among those circumcised, compared to those uncircumcised. Phimosis, which is a narrowed or tight foreskin, may cause problems in older boys, but is relatively rare and not sufficient reason to circumcise all males.

The American Pediatric Society does not recommend circumcision; but recently, studies in Kenya and Uganda have shown that, as in South Africa, there is about a 60 percent reduction in the transmission of HIV in those circumcised. Clearly, because it is a difficult matter to get people to alter “at-risk” behavior patterns, and in a place such as Africa where risk is so high, it might make sense to recommend circumcision.

As for you and your new baby, you will have to make your own decision as you carefully weigh the pros and cons.

**My daughter lives in Brazil, and she tells me it is fashionable to have cesarean section rather than natural childbirth. What do you say?**

We are men, so we could get into deep trouble on this one. Those

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES *and* PETER N. LANDLESS

“funny” letters behind our names are Canadian and South African qualifications, and the ones behind Handysides (FRCS(C) and FACOG) mean Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada and Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Nevertheless, we hereby give notice that we will not enter into a lengthy correspondence on this issue.

Childbirth is painful. How do we know? Well, my wife [Mrs. Handysides] has the pain tolerance of a horse, but she says it hurts and I believe her. So it’s natural that if a procedure could be done under anesthesia with lesser pain (albeit drawn out over a longer period), some may choose it.

There! Did we ever rile up some of our readers!

But to be more serious, some of the risks associated with cesarean section (C-section) are declining with the improvements in anesthesia and, consequently, older arguments against C-section are often less valid (though many are still true). Most complications are maternal and, consequently, better tolerated and less likely to lead to litigation than is damage to a baby. This means difficult forceps, breech deliveries, or any other threat to the baby whatsoever in labor is taken very seriously, and a C-section is often selected.

Though normal delivery is beautiful and a “fantastic” experience for most (many mothers have told me [Allan] this—I’ve delivered literally thousands of babies), it can have complications. The stretching and tears that on occasion occur may lead to problems.

An example was shown in a recent Oregon study of 8,700 women. Only 40 percent, unfortunately, completed the survey, but 27 percent of those responding reported fecal incontinence in the 3 to 6 months post-delivery. After adjusting for the number of children a woman had given birth to, the study found obesity, duration of pushing, lacerations, and smoking habits were all related to the particular problem. Many women do not talk about such difficulties, so the extent of the problem is probably underestimated. Fecal incontinence is not likely a long-standing problem for the majority, but such factors may influence choices about cesarean section.

When I (Allan) was in Brazil, I discussed with some of the doctors there the high C-section rates in that country, which are at least double those in the United States. They felt the outcomes justified the rates.

What more do we say? We have said enough to get us into deep trouble already from folk on both sides of this debate. ●



**Allan R. Handysides, M.B., Ch.B., FRCPC, FRCS(C), 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.

# New Wine in Old Wineskins

*The need for innovation in the church*

By ALEJANDRO MEDINA



Recently a Mexican marketing organization gave a prize to the Chipotle Pizza company for an impressive innovation in its products. What the company did was to add chipotle (a Mexican chili sauce) to the traditional Italian sauce. The result proved a big success among the Mexican people.

Today innovation is an important goal for all kinds of companies. Specialists in business say that entities that do not innovate have a high risk of fading away. The commercial sector places a high value on those companies that include some kind of innovation in their products, in their image, or in other aspects of their business.

A church too must learn the art of innovation in its work methods. The gospel must be preached in new and different ways to a changing society. People are waiting for the Christian message, but sometimes they do not respond if we keep presenting it in the same old way. Perhaps if we put the same message in a different dress, people will receive it with open arms.



**Alejandro Medina** is editor in chief of the Mexican Publishing House in Mexico City, Mexico.

## What Jesus Said

One day John's disciples came and asked Jesus: "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (Matt. 9:14, NIV).

John's disciples were not bad people, but their relationship with the Pharisees sowed doubts in their minds about Jesus. Thus they approached the Lord in a suspicious attitude, not particularly looking for truth, but trying to confound Him with their questions.

It's sad when religious duties, instead of leading us to confirm one another in love, lead rather to *debates* and *conflicts*. Here John's disciples, following the practices of their ancient predecessors, misinterpreted religion by coming to use the tradition of fasting as a way to repair the damage of sin and secure a favorable answer to their prayers. Fasting for them had become a process of justification by works. It had become a way of calming a severe God (as they conceived Him) by sacrifice.

## Proud Faith

"We fulfill the norm and you do not." This is the position of many Christians with a misconception of religious life. They have a tendency to conduct their external spiritual practices in an ostentatious way, glorifying themselves (as it were), not only before men, but in God's presence as well (see Rom. 10:3).

"But how is it, [Jesus,] that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"



The Lord had an answer: “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matt. 9:15-17).

His answer was concise. Legalistic attitudes are *incompatible* with divine grace, like unshrunk cloth in an old garment or new wine in old wineskins. The Lord says that salvation comes by faith, not through human rites or practices. Formalisms and legalisms have a tendency to create controversies between believers. The concept of salvation by works nullifies the gospel message. It’s like pouring new wine into old wineskins. There is no *compatibility!*

### **Adapting the Gospel to Modern Society**

The gospel needs to be adapted to meet the current needs of a changing world. The message (the new wine) is not the problem. Rather it’s the old “wineskins” we continue to use.

What are people looking for? Take the matter of the home as an example. Marriage problems are becoming more serious and more prevalent every day. Are we speaking to that issue? Then there’s the professional sector. Do we make such people feel excluded from the biblical message—when we give the impression that the gospel is only for the unsuccessful, only for those whose lives have failed? And what about the youth? How well are we addressing their needs?

In adapting the gospel to the needs of modern society, we must not reduce it to local customs or traditional practices. That kind of attitude actually closes the door of

*Formalisms and legalisms have a tendency to create controversies between believers.*



heaven to many. But we should not kill the creativity of church members, especially that of the youth. We need to provide space for people to express their faith in different ways. We should encourage new wineskins for new wine.

In preaching the gospel we need to incorporate elements that are part of the daily life of the people—science, for example, or technology, or the arts. The point is not to insist that the “old wineskins” are the only way to know God and preach His Word.

In practicing innovation we do not forget good order. I’m not advocating inventiveness for its own sake. We cannot sacrifice the sacred elements of Christianity for vulgar practices. What we want is simply to enrich the expression of our faith for a sophisticated, modern society.

When the first missionaries came to Mexico (specifically to Chiapas) about 50 years ago, they instructed the believers that preachers must wear white shirts in the pulpit; and until today there are some rural congregations that insist on following that “commandment.” They have a little closet in the pastor’s office with white shirts of all sizes. So when a preacher appears not wearing a white shirt, they open the closet and give them one.

### **Stagnation Means Death**

Last May I preached in a Hispanic Adventist church in Dallas, Texas. The congregation rents from a Methodist church. The Adventists use the building on Wednesdays and Sabbaths, and a group of Pentecostal Afro-Americans uses it on Sundays and Fridays.

So what happened to the Methodist people, the owners of the property? The answer is that only two of them (two elderly men) have survived. The rest are gone. And when you go to the church you can see that everything is old: the pulpit, the windows, the pastor’s office—everything. It’s like traveling back to the past.

What happened there? I don’t quite know. But I suspect that innovation was lacking. I suspect they did not explore different ways to retain their people, especially the youth. The incompatibility of the church with modern life finished them off. But now you can see there a growing, innovative Hispanic Adventist congregation, preaching the gospel with power.

We should not fear innovation. If we know the fundamentals of Christian beliefs, why stay anchored to old practices without any meaning for us? But we should remember that it’s not change in itself, but change to provide believers with opportunities for fresh spiritual expression.

In Jesus’ ministry I see innovation to meet the religious reality of His time. He was a friend of women—that was new. And He was a friend of the poor. The biblical message was the same, but His way of transmitting and teaching it was different. And He is our model. ●

Although Sangzela Tlau and the other 12 young men and women involved with Reachout Ministry share Jesus' message of love and hope through music in Mizoram and its bordering states, they don't stop there. They also take seriously the Lord's directive to care for the helpless, the hopeless, and the most vulnerable in their northeast India society.

"Thousands of young people in Mizoram are addicted to alcohol and drugs and must be liberated from Satan's captivity," says Tlau, director of the organization. "Reachout Ministry visits many rehabilitation facilities to minister to the people there, to pray with them and to let them know that Jesus still loves them in spite of their sins and shortcomings. It is impossible to just not do anything when we see people so much in need of help."

Mizoram is one of seven northeast India states and is flanked by Myanmar on the east and south, and Bangladesh on the west. Its approximately 21,000 square kilometers (more than 8,000 square miles) of territory is home to almost 900,000 people, most of whom earn their livelihood from agriculture. It boasts the second highest literacy rate of the India states.

### Helping the Destitute

Founded in 1991 by Tlau and seven other young adults, the Reachout Ministry ensemble performs concerts in churches, rented halls, and outdoor pavilions in this region of India. Often they conduct concerts to solicit funds for those in need.

"We organized two successful concerts to raise money for the TNT (Thutak Nunpuitu Team) Calvary Hospital here in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram," Tlau notes. "This is an establishment that Reachout Ministry is especially committed to helping and supporting. The hospital houses about 120 physically disabled and mentally handicapped people, approximately 300 drug addicts, and more than 300 orphans who rely entirely on donations and gifts from churches and individuals for food and clothing."

The orphans are brought to the hospital not only from Mizoram but also from several neighboring states such as Manipur, Assam, and Tripura. Some come from as far as Myanmar.

"There are many orphaned children in India," Tlau notes. "We entertain them, raise funds for them, and I've been



**Sangzela Tlau** is founder and director of Reachout Ministry.

# Reaching Out With Voice and Ha

As told by  
SANGZELA TLAU

appointed as one of the hospital's eight advisers. This means I'm involved with decisions about internal problems and financial and legal matters. I also help organize programs."

### A Saving Miracle

Traveling about the country to hold their musical performances would not be considered glamorous. Once, the group accompanied a pastor on an arduous 9-hour journey in an old, beat-up van that had not been used in years. It was the only transportation available to them. Tlau says, however, that the Lord provided them with safety while driving through the remote dusty hills and rough terrain of the outlying villages where vehicles rarely pass. He also believes the Lord worked a miracle for them during that trip.

"While traveling back home from the edge of the Myanmar border in the darkness of night," Tlau explains, "the vehicle's headlights gave out. We were driving through the mountains, and the moon was nowhere to be found."

Tlau says the group became fearful and prayed to the Lord to help them out of this difficult and potentially dangerous situation.

"Miraculously, the sky cleared up and the moon lighted up the road," he says. "We made our way back home without any further problems."

### A Faith-based Ministry

Despite their lack of reliable transportation and no regular income from their music ministry, Tlau credits God for unfailingly providing the resources needed to preach the gospel message. In January 2005, he says, they were called to minister in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

"Initially, there was some hesitation in granting the permit to use the town hall for our performance," Tlau explains, "but



HOSPITAL AND SERVICE  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF TNT  
CALVARY HOSPITAL



nd

*Young adults in India preach the gospel through music and a ministry of service.*



COURTESY OF REACHOUT MINISTRY

after the permit was granted, the district magistrate and many other high-ranking officers attended and appeared deeply moved by our songs and messages on health.” They were invited to return and perform again the following year.

Reachout Ministry visited the northeastern United States for several weeks in the spring of this year, performing in numerous Mizo and other Adventist churches in the Washington, D.C., area. They also sang for a morning worship service at the Adventist Church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

“We are delighted with the work of Reachout Ministry in Mizoram and other states of northeast India,” says Southern Asia Division president Ron Watts. “It is so good to see our young people on fire for God, sharing their faith through song and testimonies. They have been an inspiration to youth in other parts of India to use their talents to share the good news of Christ’s soon return.”

**The Advantage of Youth**

Tlau sees his youth as an advantage in the ministry, particularly because of the inconveniences involved with travel and service in more remote regions of the country. He says he’s grateful the Lord is using him and the other members of Reachout Ministry while they are still young.

“Sometimes it is difficult to go out, but when we dare to answer the call of God, we never regret it,” Tlau says. “We always come home filled with lots of joy and happiness.

“Sometimes some of our members must go by faith to performances because of challenges with conflicting work or school schedules,” he adds. “But they never say they regret it, or they’ve never suffered any loss because of it.

“We praise God for blessing this ministry.”

**Clockwise From Bottom:** REACHOUT MINISTRY: This group of young adults not only travels throughout northeastern India to share the gospel of Christ in music, they also raise money for and personally minister to orphans, the physically and mentally disabled, and those who are homeless in that region. Currently, 12 members are involved with Reachout Ministry, but that number varies as some leave and others join. Seventeen ensemble participants are shown here. HOSPITAL DORMITORY: The TNT Calvary Hospital in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, houses drug addicts, disabled people, and orphans. Reachout Ministry holds musical concerts to raise money for the hospital. Shown here is the men’s dormitory of that facility. WORSHIPPING GOD: Orphans attend church services at the TNT Calvary Hospital, a Christian facility.



**18 YEARS LATER:** When Finley returned with his wife, Ernestine, to Budapest for another evangelistic series in 2007, Mrs. Finley (left) got to meet these three women for the first time. Eniko (second from left) and Anikó (next to her) are now pastors' wives; and Helga is a church planting Bible worker.



*I went back to my temporary residence that night feeling discouraged. My wife was not with me, and I was completely alone. Sleep evaded me as tears and feelings of disappointment dominated my night.*

**A**t times in our lives, all of us ask ourselves the question: *Is what I'm doing really making a difference?* You may be a secretary in an office typing letters or answering phone calls for your boss. Or maybe you're sitting on a mundane committee, it's almost lunch, and you're burnt out as you continue to sift through seemingly meaningless details. It's times like these when we inevitably question whether our lives are having any positive impact.

Most of us as Adventist Christians ask these questions because deep within our hearts we want to know that what we are doing is having a positive effect on someone, somewhere. However, there is one major problem with that question: It is our human nature to focus on the immediate

# A Rock Conc

By MARK A. FINLEY

## Three Girls, and a Confused Preacher

*God works in unexpected ways*



**Mark A. Finley** is a vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



consequences of our actions, but God looks at things through the eyes of eternity. Only when we walk the golden streets of heaven will we truly know the real impact of the “meaningless” things we have done. We can’t possibly have any idea how important a cheerful voice on the phone or a smile to a random person on the street can be in God’s master plan.

### **I Saw Trouble**

I’d like to illustrate that concept with an experience I had a number of years ago that was at first very disappointing. Throughout the years though, I’ve seen how God has used this particular experience to glorify His name.

It was 1989 and I was serving as the ministerial secretary at the Trans-European region of the Adventist Church. During that year I had been asked to conduct an evangelistic meeting in Budapest, Hungary. Holding evangelistic meetings in Eastern Europe was extremely

difficult because of the opposition from Communist governments. And 1989 was particularly tumultuous because Communism was near its end. In fact, during our time in Budapest there were more than 100,000 people protesting in the streets.

I arrived with my translator, Lazlo Hangyás, about 3 p.m. at the auditorium where our meetings were to be held later in the day. The plan was to have two sessions with one starting at five o’clock, followed by another at seven. We were expecting to have about 800-1,000 people at each meeting. However, as soon as we walked in I knew that something was terribly wrong.

As I entered the main auditorium, I saw the chandeliers shaking and heard the loud, pulsating beat of rock music. I couldn’t hear myself think, much less talk with Lazlo, as we tried to dialogue about what to do. I discovered that a rock band named the Bikinis had double-booked the facility and had planned a concert that was to start

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Below: PROUD PAST: One can see monuments of victory and triumph of the old Hungarian-Austrian Empire throughout Budapest, one of the most beautiful capital cities in the world. Right: HUNGRY FOR THE WORD: Thousands attended the October 1989 evangelistic series, eager to hear the message preached.



at 9:30 that same evening—only half an hour after our evangelistic meeting was scheduled to end. Even worse, they were practicing at the very time we needed to set up for our meeting.

I was concerned because this was the first time in 40 years that the Adventist church was able to hold an evangelistic meeting in Budapest. The Adventist membership in Hungary is small and these meetings were desperately needed. And so I asked Lazlo to talk to the band leader to try and figure out what we might do.

I could see the anxiety in his face as he returned. “Mark,” he said, “we have a real problem.” The band leader had no intention of leaving before five o’clock, because that was the time stipulated for us to use the building in our contract.

I didn’t know what we were going to do. We needed to set up projectors, screens, and otherwise prepare the auditorium for hundreds of people.

I decided I was going to go over and talk to the band leader myself through the translator. Even as I began to introduce myself to him, he rudely stated that this was his auditorium until 5:00 and there was nothing I could do about it.

Lazlo and I negotiated with him intensely. We explained it was not possible for us to set up the auditorium in just a few minutes. We needed at least an hour. Finally the Holy Spirit impressed me with this

*Amid the confusion of the overflow crowd, I got confused while preaching on Daniel 2. I have preached on that topic hundreds of times, but this time I felt I just wasn’t connecting with my audience.*

thought. *Tell him if he is not out by 4:00, we could not guarantee his concert would begin on time.*

Firmly, but kindly, we explained to the band leader that unless he gave us one hour to set up our equipment, our meeting would most likely start late, and we would not cut it short for a rock concert. He got the point. Reluctantly, he agreed to leave the hall by 4:00.

### **My Worst Sermon—I Felt Terrible**

Hundreds of people showed up to the first meeting, and I felt God move mightily.

After the people left the first meeting, the auditorium was flooded with scores of young people from the street, who thought the rock concert was about to begin. As I looked out over the crowd, I saw people everywhere—behind the screen and five deep on the balcony. I thought I was the speaker at a youth rally.

I began to preach, but many of these young people were not receptive. They caused a loud ruckus. Amid the confusion of the overflow crowd, I got confused while preaching on Daniel 2.

I have preached on that topic hundreds and hundreds of times, but this time I felt I wasn't connecting at all with my audience. At times I stumbled over my explanations of the rise and fall of kingdoms and the dates. In my mind, it was one of the poorest sermons I had ever preached.

I went back to my temporary residence that night feeling discouraged. My wife was not with me, and I was completely alone. Sleep evaded me as tears and feelings of disappointment dominated my night. As I wept, I cried out to God, "Lord you gave me the opportunity to conduct an evangelistic meeting in a place that hadn't had one in 40 years, and many people came. And I did so poorly."

My mind was in a state of confusion. It was a very difficult night for me.

Still, the meetings had to go on. The next night the auditorium was packed once again. I don't know why all the people came back, but they did. In the front row I saw three young women and felt impressed to go down and talk to them. I introduced myself and found out their names were Anikó, Eniko, and Helga. Eniko was an economics student at Karl Marx University. Anikó and Helga were young professionals. I soon found out they had been brought up as atheists. They had questions about the Bible, Jesus, and the hereafter.

They seemed open, but with no background in Christianity, they had very little knowledge of spiritual things. I inquired how they came to the meeting. They explained they were friends with the leaders in the rock band, and that they came to the meeting the previous night

while waiting for the concert to start. They went on to say that they were standing five deep in the balcony and could not see the screen, but were deeply touched by something that I said. So they decided to come back that evening. *And they kept coming—every night.*

### **The Change**

During the meetings I began to study the Bible with them a few times a week. At the end of the meetings they expressed their desire to be baptized. Since they were so new, the Budapest church was a little hesitant. But in the end the church board agreed that the Holy Spirit was leading them to baptism.

Eighteen years later, early 2007, I returned to Budapest and was very interested to see what had become of these three young women. Their lives today are truly a living testimony. Anikó and Eniko are both wives to Seventh-day Adventist pastors, while Helga is a Bible instructor, currently conducting 24 different Bible studies, and is now in the process of planting a new church.

*Here are three young women who have gone from an atheistic background to being powerful vessels for God's work. And it can all be traced back to that night of the rock concert.*

### **When Our Work Seems Meaningless**

While my wife and I talked with them, I praised God as I rehearsed the story in my mind. My memory flashed back to that sleepless night as I lay on my bed crying before the Lord, complaining that my sermon had been worthless, that it was one of the poorest sermons I had ever preached.

Although I felt disappointed, the Holy Spirit had been working powerfully on these three young girls—now three women of extraordinary faith.

On the days when it seems as though our work is meaningless, remember that even when we deem our actions as failures, God never stops working. The Holy Spirit takes simple things that we do and uses them for the glory of His kingdom. Romans 8:37 puts it this way: "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

We serve a great, big God who works in ways that we cannot understand. Our God takes the phone calls we answer, the letters we write, and the decisions we make and turns these simple tasks into mediums to enhance His kingdom. He takes whatever we have—the five loaves and two fishes, the "bad sermons"—and multiplies them into much greater things than we could ever have imagined.

Let's wait patiently and see the eternal influence of our "failures" and "mundane tasks" when God sets them in the light of eternity. ●



NUMBER 25

# THE SECOND COMING of **Chris**

By ALEXIS A. GORING

“Lift up the trumpet!” “Rejoice and sing!” “Jesus is coming again!”

I grew up singing these lyrics with a congregation of believers belting out these classic melodies with passion. When I was younger, I didn’t think much about what I was singing. But recently, I’ve begun to ponder the significance of the words behind those tunes.

The soon return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a hope to not only sing about. *It’s a hope to live for!*

I find it amusing when, in an effort to console distraught souls, people say, “Relax! It’s not the end of the world!” Such advice makes me wonder what they’ll say when the end of the world actually does occur—because it will.

We live in a culture where movies encourage every fantasy humans have. Many of them focus on one universal fascination—the end of the world. Movies convey all sorts of end-of-the-world story lines with plots ranging from natural disasters wiping out humanity, to alien invaders taking over the world, to giant meteorites on a fatal collision course with earth.

It was rumored in 1999 that the end of the world as we know it was fast approaching with the turn of the century. People were concerned about computers

crashing and businesses malfunctioning; leaving people with no electricity, essential services, or social structures. I remember watching people on television talk shows proudly boasting about how they’d bought a year’s worth of survival supplies, including power generators, as insurance against the crisis they thought was coming.

Fortunately, we were spared from having to face such worldwide misfortune. Computers and technology in general continued to function after midnight on December 31, 1999—and into the new century.

However, there will, indeed, come a time when life as we know it will cease to be and those who stand strong in faith will witness the final events of earth’s history. Are we ready for the *true* end of the world? More to the point, are we ready for the end of the world as the movies fantasize about it, or are we ready for what Bible prophecy says will happen? There’s a difference.

## The Bible’s Story Line

The Bible tells us not to be afraid, to believe in God as we believe in Jesus. Said Jesus, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3). The end times will be filled with tribulation—tribulation more than we’ve ever seen. However, He gave us a hope to live for when He revealed that the second coming of Jesus Christ will terminate sin and give us an eternity to live with Him.

The issue before us is, Which story line will we accept?



**Alexis A. Goring** is a recent graduate of Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland (USA). She holds a degree in print journalism.



# O M I N G

## t *A hope to live for*

And what will we do about it? Will we bank on what Hollywood so vividly and artfully portrays, or will we trust in God's Holy Word? If we trust in God's promises, we'll not be led astray.

### **What's Your Response?**

How do we approach the final chapters of earth's history? The Revelation of Jesus Christ describes those who await Jesus' return with these words: "Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). The last generation doesn't wait with fear, apprehension, or uncertainty, but with hope, faith, love, and action.

To trust God's promises and stand firm in faith is to spread the good news of Christ's soon return. We can witness for God in hundreds of small, practical ways

right where we live. Witnessing doesn't mean being odd or extreme. It simply means standing on principle and doing what's right in God's sight; always being ready, by word or action, to share the good news of a God who loves us and will soon return to take us to be with Him.

Living lives of readiness means more than being ready, personally, for the Lord's return; it means being ready to share with anyone the hope we have. We never know whether someone is dying to hear the good news for the first time, or which person needs to return to Christ. People sometimes become disillusioned with their faith, and they have to be reminded that Jesus offers a quality of life now that is just a prelude to our life to come. Witnessing doesn't always have to be done with words. Sometimes it can be done with a smile, a quick note, sharing a magazine article or a book, or through music and the arts. All that matters is that it comes from our hearts, so others may see Jesus in us.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock," says Jesus. "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). He wants to live in us. Answering Jesus' knock has eternal benefits as we learn more about Him, grow as Christians, mature as witnesses, and rest assured that we'll be ready when He comes again.

Jesus knocks at our hearts' door to improve our quality of life now. Will we answer? Jesus said, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). ●

## Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with

the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

“Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.”

There is a work for each of us to do, an individual work, which one cannot do for another. A solemn responsibility rests upon us as Christians to let our light so shine before the world, that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father in Heaven. We cannot exert a right influence upon others, unless we walk in the light ourselves. If we have experienced the pardoning grace of God, we should feel it a duty, as opportunity shall present, to speak in counsel and affectionate entreaty to those who are in danger of losing eternal life.

A life spent in active work for God is a blessed one. Multitudes who are wasting their time in trifles, in idle regrets, and in unprofitable murmurings, might have altogether a different experience, if they would appreciate the light God has given them, and let it shine upon others; and many make life miserable by their own selfishness and love of ease. By a diligent activity, their lives might become as bright rays of sunshine to guide those who are in the dark road to death into the pathway to Heaven. If they take this course, their own hearts will be filled with peace and joy in Jesus Christ. It is for our profit in this life, and for our eternal interest, that we manifest earnestness and zeal in the work of God.

Many say, “If I knew Jesus would come in five years, I would make it my first business to win souls to Christ; for this would be the all-important consideration.” And these very persons may not live two years, or even one. We should first seek God, and His holiness. In His wise providence we are incapable of looking into the future, which often causes us disquietude and unhappiness. But one of the greatest evidences we have of the loving-kindness of God is His

concealment of the events of the morrow. Our ignorance of tomorrow makes us more vigilant and earnest today. We cannot see what is before us. Our best-laid plans sometimes seem to be unwise and faulty. We think, “If we only knew the future!” but God would have His children trust in him, and be ready to go where He shall lead them. We know not the precise time when our Lord shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven, but He has told us that our only safety is in a constant readiness,—a position of watching and waiting. Whether we have one year before us, or five, or ten, we are to be faithful to our trust today. We are to perform each day’s duties as faithfully as though that day were to be our last.

We are not doing the will of God if we wait in idleness. To every man He has given his work, and He expects

each one to do his part with fidelity. We are to sow beside all waters, and to work continuously for Jesus, hoping for the salvation to be given us, and quietly waiting for our reward. Sinners are to be warned; sinners are to be won to Christ.

There are many men of excellent ability—men ambitious in worldly pursuits—for whose salvation no one believing in present truth is making any efforts, because they fear a repulse. But the skill and energy which make them successful in worldly pursuits, will, if consecrated, make them useful in the service of Christ. We cannot tell the ambitious man that he must cease to be ambitious if he would become a Christian. God places before him the highest objects of ambition,—a spotless white robe, a crown studded with jewels, a scepter, a throne of glory,

# Walking in the Light

*A call for  
active holiness  
while we wait*

and honor that is as enduring as the throne of Jehovah. All the elements of character which help to make him successful and honored in the world,—the irrepressible desire for some greater good, the indomitable will, the strenuous exertion, the untiring perseverance,—are not to be crushed out. These are to remain, and through the grace of God received into the heart, to be turned into another channel. These valuable traits of character may be exercised on objects as much higher and noble than worldly pursuits as the heavens are higher than the earth. Jesus presents a white robe, a crown of glory richer than any that ever decked the brow of a monarch, and titles above those of honored princes. The recompense for a life devoted to the service of Christ exceeds anything that the human imagination can grasp. Christ does not call upon men to lay aside their zeal, their desires for excellence and elevation; but He would have them seek, not for perishable treasure or fleeting honor, but for that which is enduring.

God has no use for listless souls.

Ministers sometimes tell the people that they have nothing to do but believe; that Jesus has done it all, and their own works are nothing. But the word of God plainly states that in the Judgment the scales will be balanced accurately, and the decisions will be based on the evidence adduced. One man becomes ruler of ten cities, another of five, another of two, each man receiving exactly in proportion to the improvement he has made on the talents entrusted to his keeping. Our efforts in works of righteousness, in our own behalf and for the salvation of souls, will have a decided influence on our recompense.

God is well pleased if those striving for eternal life aim high. There will be strong temptations to indulge the natural traits of character by becoming worldly-wise, scheming, and selfishly ambitious, gathering wealth to the neglect of the salvation which is of so much higher value. But every temptation resisted is a priceless victory gained in subduing self; it bends the powers to the service of Jesus, and increases faith, hope,

patience, and forbearance. . . .

We have only a little while to urge the warfare; then Christ will come, and this scene of rebellion will close. Then our last efforts will have been made to work with Christ and advance His kingdom. Some who have stood in the forefront of the battle, zealously resisting incoming evil, fall at the post of duty; others gaze sorrowfully at the fallen heroes, but have no time to cease work. They must close up the ranks, seize the banner from the hand palsied by death, and with renewed energy vindicate the truth and the honor of Christ. As never before, resistance must be made against sin,—against the powers of darkness. The time demands energetic and determined activity on the part of those who believe present truth. They should teach the truth by both precept and example. If the time seems long to wait for our Deliverer to come, if, bowed by affliction and worn with toil, we feel impatient for our commission to close, and to receive an honorable release from the warfare, let us remember—and let the remembrance check every murmur—that God leaves us on earth to encounter storms and conflicts, to perfect Christian character, to become better acquainted with God our Father and Christ our elder Brother, and to do work for the Master in winning many souls to Christ, that with glad heart we may hear the words: “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

By ELLEN G. WHITE

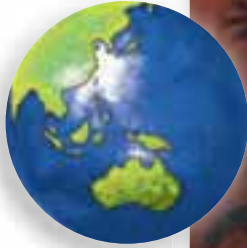
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This article first appeared in the October 24, 1881, edition of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*, [www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org)), one of the oldest continuously published religious journals in the world. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

ARYLSS DIXON

By  
ROBERT G.  
WEARNER



# Lasting Impressions

*A trip to China gave an Adventist tour group opportunities to share Christ.*

The group had just cleared customs, and a young woman greeted them with the words, "Welcome to China!" A tour group of 19 American Adventists had just arrived in Shanghai, China, the last day of May 1996. Liu Jun, the smiling young official guide, introduced herself and took them to their hotel. Informed of their desire to attend church the next day, she said that a bus would take them to the large Mu En church.

After seating the group in Sabbath school, she slipped away to do some shopping.

Fluent in English, the 28-year-old guide had led many tour groups during the four years she had worked for the China Rainbow Travel Service. But this was her first Adventist group, and little did she know how, through them, her life would be forever changed.

## Open to the Spirit

Asked if she had any concept of a supreme being at the time of her first contact with these people, Jun stated flatly, "No!" Then she added, "Well, yes, I believed that a god existed, but I didn't know who he was. I was taught that religion was not important."

For 16 days Jun guided the group to the scenic wonders of her country. They climbed the Great Wall, inspected the Forbidden City of Beijing, toured the Summer Palace, walked in Tiananmen Square, took a boat ride down the Li River, visited the famous silk factory in Suzhou, and many other sites.

The group spent its second Sabbath at the ancient walled city of Xi'an, meeting in a former Baptist church. The congregation filled the sanctuary while many others sat on

benches in the patio, even though it was raining. This time Jun stayed to listen to the robed choir, and heard her first Adventist sermon, delivered by a young lay member about her age.

The tour went by quickly, and before Jun left the Adventist group in Guangzhou (Canton), they almost seemed like family.

As they parted with tears, Jun confided to them her desire to earn a degree in business in the United States. The next year, Pastors Carl Currie and John Hanson were invited to join Mission Spotlight to film a program about China. Again, Jun met with them and expressed her desire to attend college in the United States.

In 1998 Pastors Currie and Hanson organized another China tour. Jun was again assigned to guide them through Beijing. As she showed the group the



**Left: TEN YEARS LATER:** Pastor John Hanson baptizes Liu Jun at the Pacific Union College Church in Angwin, California, more than 10 years after she led a tour for a group of Adventist tourists in China. **Below: TOUR LEADER:** Liu Jun, tour leader for an Adventist group filming a segment for Mission Spotlight, learned about God from those on the tour.



JOHN HANSON

sites of the city, Hanson agreed to visit the American Embassy with Jun to assist her as her sponsor as she applied for her student visa.

They met at the American Embassy at 5:00 on Friday morning. Already 350 people were lined up to apply for visas. By the time they arrived at the front gate of the compound, more than 1,500 people lined the streets.

After waiting eight hours in the hot sun, Jun appeared before her interviewer. The interview lasted less than two minutes, and her visa was denied. Jun was devastated. Pastor Hanson then began “going up the ladder” until he reached the highest authority at the American Embassy to appeal the interviewer’s decision. While the appeal was in progress, the entire Adventist tour group

prayed that God’s will be done.

God intervened on Jun’s behalf, the interviewer’s denial was overturned, and the coveted visa was granted. The group had left Beijing and was on the boat cruise down the Yangtze River when word reached them that Jun had her visa in hand.

On this tour, Jun introduced her Chinese family to the group. Jun’s husband, parents, and sister met the Adventists at a restaurant the Saturday night before they left Beijing. All well-educated, Jun’s family expressed their appreciation for what had been done for her.

### Leaving Home

In July 1998 Jun left Beijing and made her way to America. Tour leader Hanson met her at San Francisco and escorted her to his home in Hahira, Georgia. There she met his wife and attended her first American Adventist church service. She listened to Hanson preach a sermon entitled “Everlasting Love.” At the conclusion he baptized a young person, which provided Jun her first opportunity to observe a baptism by immersion. Even though she didn’t understand all its significance, Hanson told her, “One of these days I want the privilege of baptizing you, Jun.”

Southern Adventist University (SAU) in Collegedale, Tennessee, accepted Jun as a business major. Thelma Cushman Wearer, a retired teacher from SAU, offered her room and board. Their bonding made a great impact on Jun’s life.

“I have always been adventurous,” says Jun. “So when I lived with Mom Cushman, I tried to respect her beliefs, even though at the time they did not make sense to me. I attended religious classes and went to church, but I really did not understand the Bible principles. I observed that the Adventist people were always kind and loving. When I went to visit the Hansons and the Curries, they had such a loving way about them. I shared this with my parents in China,

and they were pleased. They could tell a change for good was taking place in my life, and they were grateful.”

After a successful year at SAU, Jun transferred to California’s Pacific Union College (PUC) in the Napa Valley. Eventually her husband was able to get a visa, and he joined her in California. In time the couple welcomed a daughter whom they named Yang Yang.

The former tour guide took their little daughter to her kindergarten Sabbath school week by week. Yang Yang began to learn about Jesus, Friend of children, and her mother and father also began to understand more about the love of the Savior. Life for Jun began to take on new meaning. Members of the pastoral staff of the college church answered the more difficult theological questions, while those with whom she worked at the college store demonstrated Christian love and made a great impact upon her life.

“Over the years, the many friends I made among students and faculty gave me constant support,” she says, “and I found myself more and more interested in religion.”

After earning a degree in business in 2003, Jun was employed as an accountant at the college store. After studying the doctrines of the church, she asked Pastor Hanson, former tour leader, to baptize her. She was baptized in May 2006.

It took almost a decade from her first contact with that Adventist tour group in Shanghai to become part of God’s family. Several hundred of Jun’s friends and church family of the PUC church stood as she was baptized and welcomed her into the family of God. ●



**Robert G. Wearer, a** retired pastor, writes from Collegedale, Tennessee (USA).

**QUESTION:** Please explain the phrases “early rain” and “latter rain,” and their relation to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Answering your question requires an understanding of the climate of the land of Israel and the significance of rain in the Bible. Rain played a major role in Israelite agrarian society. Cisterns found by archaeologists in Israel indicate the value of water and the need to preserve it for the dry season, which spanned close to half of the year.

**1. Rainy Season:** In Israel most of the rain usually fell from December to February. The first rain of the rainy season—the “early rain”—usually came mid-October through early November. This rain softened the ground and facilitated the germination of seeds and the growth of crops. The latter rain came before the harvest, from early March to April. This rain contributed to maturation of the crop. Therefore, rain was enormously important to Israelite life and was considered a gift from God (Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Matt. 5:45). The lack of rain was often seen as an expression of divine disfavor, a result of the sins and rebelliousness of the people (e.g., Jer. 3:3).

**2. Ideas Associated With Rain:** Rain was associated with the power of God over nature (1 Kings 17:1; Isa. 5:6), and with His blessings (Ps. 84:6; 147:8) and favors toward humanity (Hosea 6:3). Its connection with subsistence made it a concrete expression of God’s concern for the life of the people and for the fertility of the land (Deut. 11:10, 11; Lev. 26:4). That same connection between life and rain allowed for its use as a symbol of wisdom (Prov. 18:4) and godly teachings (Deut. 3:2). Since rain benefited all, it is metaphorically associated with the just king who is a blessing to all, and nurtures life instead of threatening it (2 Sam. 23:4). A negative side to rain, specifically torrential rain, is that it damages fields and houses, and it became a symbol of chaos and destruction (e.g., Gen. 7:11; Isa. 4:6).

**3. Outpouring of the Spirit and Rain:** In the Bible rain became a symbol for the divine outpouring of the Holy Spirit; both rain and the Holy Spirit were sent by God as a demonstration of His concern for life.

We find, first, an eschatological usage of the image of

rain. God described the future restoration of His people using the language of rain to illustrate the work of the Spirit: “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants” (Isa. 44:3, NIV; cf. Eze. 39:29; Isa. 32:15; 44:3). In Joel, after announcing the coming of the early and latter rains, God added, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions” (Joel 2:28, 29, NIV).

Second, the image of the early and latter rains could be applied to at least two different powerful works of the Spirit within the church: one related to the experience of

Pentecost, and the other to events shortly before the return of Christ. The eschatological work of the Spirit announced by Joel was partially fulfilled during the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:18). This could be called the “early rain.” But that same prophecy referred to “the great and glorious day of the Lord,” suggesting that a fuller manifestation of the Spirit was to be expected (cf. Acts 2:19, 20).

This future work of the Spirit would accompany and empower the proclamation of the last

message of judgment and salvation to the human race. It is to this event that Revelation 18:1 points. An angel, representing God (Eze. 43:2), descended from heaven with great authority, illuminating the earth with his glory, and adding power to the worldwide proclamation of the message of the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12. Such a manifestation of the Spirit could be called the “latter rain.” Before the return of Christ, evil powers will perform great wonders and miracles (Rev. 13:13, 14; 1 Tim. 4:1), but God will also express His superior power through the work of the Spirit among His people.

So the phrases “early rain” and “latter rain” are agricultural images figuratively applied to the work of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian church and shortly before God’s end-time harvest (Rev. 14:14-20). ●

## Images of the Holy Spirit



By  
ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

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



# Jesus:

## Our Compassionate High Priest

By  
MARK A.  
FINLEY

The purpose of the Old Testament sanctuary system was to reveal God's plan of saving the human race. The psalmist David declares, "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?" (Ps. 77:13). God's way of redeeming us from sin is found in the symbols and sacrifices of the tabernacle services recorded in Exodus and Leviticus. As we study the significance of the priests of Israel in the plan of salvation, we will enter into a deeper appreciation for Jesus' amazing love as our compassionate High Priest.

### 1. What two elements were absolutely necessary for God to make atonement for our sins? Read the passages below and write your answer on the lines provided.

a. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11).

Without the \_\_\_\_\_ there is no atonement.

b. "For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Lev. 16:30).

Without the \_\_\_\_\_ there is no atonement.

The English word *atonement* (at-one-ment) means being reconciled with God. Sin separates us from God. In the plan of salvation, God restores that which was lost by sin. To accomplish the atonement we need a dying sacrifice and a living priest.

### 2. How does the Book of Hebrews describe the shed blood of Christ in the new covenant? Circle that word in the text below.

"To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24).

When the sacrifice was slain in the sanctuary courtyard by the sinner, the priest took the blood and sprinkled it before the veil of the holy place of the sanctuary. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, KJV). The blood sprinkled in the sanctuary symbolizes Jesus' blood shed to atone for our disobedience of God's law.

### 3. What were the qualifications for a priest? Write your answer in the spaces below.

"For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). "And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was" (Heb. 5:4).

a. The High Priest must be taken \_\_\_\_\_.

b. The High Priest must have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to offer.

c. The High Priest must be \_\_\_\_\_ by God.



**4. Why were these qualifications necessary? Write your answer in the spaces below.**

*“He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness” (Heb. 5:2).*

Jesus can have \_\_\_\_\_ on us because \_\_\_\_\_.

**5. What does the word “compassion” mean? Write your answer on the line below.**

Jesus qualifies as our High Priest on all accounts. He became human and faced Satan’s temptations, as all human beings must. He understands our weaknesses. He knows what it is like to be tempted. He defeated Satan on every count and offered His life as a sacrifice for our sins.

**6. How closely does Jesus identify with us? Write the answer on the lines below.**

*“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).*

*“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).*

Jesus was made \_\_\_\_\_ us in order to be \_\_\_\_\_ as we are tempted.  
Our merciful and compassionate High Priest understands us. He has made full provision for our salvation.

**7. What gracious invitation does Jesus give us? Write the answer in your own words on the line below.**

*“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).*

Jesus invites us to \_\_\_\_\_ to His throne of grace.

**8. What assurance does Jesus offer when we come to Him? Circle the phrases in the text that tell you what God will do for you.**

*“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).*

Jesus offers each of us the assurance of salvation. He is our High Priest. We can come to God through faith in complete assurance that Jesus our Mediator pardons our sins and gives us the grace to live a new life.

Next month’s Bible study,  
**“Shadows of Christ’s Sacrifice,”**  
will explain what is meant by the  
“cleansing of the sanctuary.”





## LETTERS

### **The Return Visit**

I have always enjoyed reading our *Adventist World* magazine since its first arrival in our church, and I'm always excited for the coming issues. I am writing in response to Carina Goncalves article "The Return Visit" (June 2007). Being assigned mostly in the field I always encounter poor homeless people and beggars asking for a penny or food. And I share the same reaction as Goncalves in her first encounter with a beggar in her story. Most of, if not all, the time I ignore them and turn my back away from them as if I did not notice them, thinking they are being trafficked or are members of an organized network of a begging syndicate. Normally the question that lingers in my mind is: "Do they really deserve to receive something from me?"

As I finished reading her article, I've gotten a new understanding of how to treat these individuals. Our thinking in regard to them must not be limited only by what they are going to do with what we give, but by how they will be blessed if we give. God knows smokers will still smoke, drunkards will still drink, and sinners will still sin, yet He still blesses their lives unsparingly, knowing they may only waste them. He even knows that only a handful will accept His Son, yet He gave Him anyway. We don't deserve salvation and eternal life, yet God gave it to us abundantly.

We received special favor from God that we don't deserve, but the poor and the needy deserve simple things that we can give. However, not all people begging are beggars and not all people asking something from us are poor. "As

sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). On the contrary, beggars may come to us once in a while—should we miss sharing? Some even say that the way we're treating those unfortunate and needy ones is the practical measure of true Christianity. When we give, it's not only the recipient that is blessed. We are also blessed with a special joy that comes to us when we give unconditionally.

The point is that love is still the basis of all our thoughts and actions!

WAYNE F. FOFUE  
*Manila, Philippines*

### **Great Issue, Articles**

I just had my ninetieth birthday but I'm not too old to enjoy *Adventist World*. I want to compliment the staff on the latest issue, June 2007. I was thrilled with its content. It seems you "knocked yourselves out." Every article was great! Thank you, and keep it up.

EMILY MINICK  
*California, United States*

### **The Setting Sun**

I was the only Adventist in our family when I was still single. I am now an active member of the Iglesia Cristo Church, and my husband is also a devoted Seventh-day Adventist. I was baptized April 9, 2005. I believe this is the right path for me to reach everlasting life.

I was touched after reading the message, "The Setting Sun," by Bill Knott, from the Editor's Pen, in the February 2007 *Adventist World*.

GEMMA O. ENARIO  
*General Santos City, Philippines*

### **Welfare and Witnessing**

I very much enjoyed one of the articles of *Adventist World*, August 2006, titled "Women and Witnessing." I am of the position that women should be encouraged to be actively involved in outreach activities.

Women's welfare work is very essential in our churches in order to retain and preserve the souls of members through in-reach activities, accomplished with God's blessings. If we preoccupy our minds with this inside and outside the church, we as "women" wouldn't need to go to the altar for any sacrifice on the Sabbath day, or any other day for that matter.

Witnessing should be our major task to hasten the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us change the direction of our focus on mission. "Women for Christ" activities should be for welfare and witnessing all around the world.

[In addition to the comments on the above-mentioned article] I also want to share how I appreciate God in the way He has been using the *Adventist World* publications to reach souls in and outside the church. Many of my non-Adventist neighbors want the publication whenever it comes around.

The February 2006 *Adventist World* article "Behold the Lamb," by Martin Mato, gave me some insight. Tears came into my eyes as I imagined how Martin Luther, standing alone before the rulers of Germany, boldly declared, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God."

I also imagine how it would be if many of us who stand in our church meetings today, declaring the true words of God, would be voiceless in the presence of rulers.

Adam was unable to stand in the

## LETTERS

presence of God because He allowed the woman to lure him into sin (disobedient to the Word of God).

God called Adam: “Where are you?” The curses followed: to the serpent, the woman, and Adam. Each of them transferred the curse of sin [onto future generations] until today.

Now here we are. Are we to sing the popular Adventist chorus “I will wear a crown in my Father’s house; there is joy, joy, joy”?

We have the cross in our hands today—let us not please humankind but strive to please God (Gal.1:9, 10).

The crown of blessings awaits us as we strive to win the race. Maranatha! Let Him come!

MRS. B. OGUNJIMI  
*Ogun, Nigeria*

### For Accuracy’s Sake

I’m writing in regard to the January 2007 article, “Divine Grace Out of Human Disgrace,” by Ferdinand O. Regalado. I have had the magazine out for several months with the plan to write to you—I needed to gather my thoughts first.

My frustration is the twist/connotation Regalado, an Adventist professor, decided to add to the Bible story of Judah and Tamar. It actually illustrates my concern for those teaching Bible scholars at *all* our schools. Why do our teachers make the Bible say what *they interpret* and then teach it as truth?

The story of Judah and Tamar is portrayed in Genesis 38 with an entirely different connotation than how Regalado portrays it in the article.

For example, in Genesis 38:11, Judah had no intention of giving Shelah as Tamar’s third husband, even when he sent her home to her parents. The article states that Judah’s decision was to give Shelah in marriage when he did come of age, and also states, “refused to give him to Tamar.” The Bible lists no interaction between Tamar and Judah for which he could have refused.

There are several other areas in the article in which Regalado adjusts the Bible account for convenience (especially see what is written in regard to verses 15 and 16); it is frustrating that *Adventist World* would print something not completely accurate in its biblical account.

CASANDRA SURPRISE  
*Washington, United States*

## THE PLACE OF PRAYER

Please pray for my family, which is in a state of collapse spiritually and materially. I am undergoing difficult moments within the family, including financial problems.

JASON, *Kenya*

I am 35 years old and a school administrator in General Santos City, Philippines. Please pray for my interview at the United States embassy—that the Lord will touch the heart of the consul and I will receive approval of my nonimmigrant visa so that I can attend an education convention in Michigan.

LITO, *Philippines*

I have several requests for prayer. First, pray for my family and me for financial blessings. Right now I am unemployed and have had a hard time finding a job since I graduated with my master’s degree. I am looking for a job within my major; and I would

also like to pursue a Ph.D. In addition, please pray that God will bless me with a godly husband for life who is within the church. Last, pray for the people around the world, especially those who don’t know Jesus.

ANDREA, *United States*

Would you please help pray for the church in Malawi? Keep up the good job as we await the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ELLIOT, *Malawi*

I was not an Adventist, having been brought up in a Pentecostal church. I came across the *Adventist World* magazine, and from the time I started reading it my life has changed. I need your prayers so that my faith will grow strong and I will gain knowledge and wisdom—and so that God will guide my family and me. I have joined the Adventist Church despite opposition from my parents. I know I will

overpower their opposition through your prayers.

ERTON, *Kenya*

I am married with two children. I really need a job for sustaining my family in regard to their daily needs and financial assistance for school that comes from me. Please pray for me.

JASON, *PHILIPPINES*

I am writing about some job interviews I will be attending. They are highly competitive, but with God nothing is impossible. Please join me in prayer.

CHALI, *Zambia*

**The Place of Prayer; send to [prayer@adventistworld.org](mailto: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.

*“Behold, I come quickly...”*

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**To Writers:** We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, U.S.A. Editorial office fax number: (301) 680-6638

Email: Internet: [worldeditor@gc.adventist.org](mailto:worldeditor@gc.adventist.org)

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## EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

*A group of Adventist women make a difference.*



# Peanut Butter Ministry Helps Community

Five years ago, the women’s ministries organization of Mangagoy Central Seventh-day Adventist church in Bislig City, Philippines, wanted to financially help the church, especially in evangelism. The organization’s leadership came up with an idea: the production of peanut butter.

Despite a poor economy and numerous competitors in the local area, the business boomed and continues to do so. God’s blessings flowed unendingly. Later on, the government recognized it as an official business bearing the name “Women’s Delicious Peanut Butter.”

Personal commitment and unity among the members grew right along with the peanut butter production. Initially, the organization desired to increase attendance at seminars and training; financial costs had prevented many church members from attending. But now—and beginning from the day the business ministry started—the women’s ministries organization not only helped raise attendance but also achieved the following:

- Supported one cancer patient for one year
- Financially aided the ongoing renovation of the church
- Assisted in the jail ministry program
- Supported public evangelism
- Conducted Bible studies
- Gave mortuary aid of P2,000 (US\$43) for every woman member and dependents
- Increased attendance at seminars, conventions, and congresses at Northeast Mindanao Mission and Mountain View College

It is the hope of these women that this initiative will encourage and inspire women from other churches to step forward to make

a difference through their Women’s Ministries organizations.

—HELEN R. SANTILLAN, *Mangagoy Women’s Ministries director, Bislig City, Philippines; article from the July 2007 Mosaic newsletter of the General Conference Department of Women’s Ministries*



**Top Right:** A small machine processes peanuts finely into butter. **Above:** Women pack peanut butters in containers.

# The PEOPLE'S PLACE

## ADVENTIST LIFE

When I was an elementary student, my brother and I had to travel to school every day by school bus. During the ride I loved to socialize, so I spent most of that time talking and laughing with my friends. One day the noise levels bothered the bus driver, and he told us that there would be no more talking on the bus. The penalty for disobeying the law was being sent off the bus.

My parents supported the bus driver and added that if we got sent off the bus at any time, we would have to walk to school. My brother didn't mind because he was quiet and said very little. However, I didn't know how I could last an hour and a half without talking. One day, my brother accidentally talked and was sent off the bus. So, true to my parents' word, my brother had to get up early in the morning before daylight and walk all the way to school while I rode the bus.

The most amazing part to this story is that my brother didn't walk alone. My dad drove his car beside my brother. It was a long, dark road to school, and our dad wanted to make sure my brother arrived safely, even if that meant being late for work. My dad's actions toward my brother remind me of God's great love for us. "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him" (Ps. 103:13, NIV).

—Debbie Maniscalco, Via e-mail

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



VICTOR HULBERT

## JUST THE FACTS

London, England, is alive with Adventist churches and church plants. Greater London has a population of just a little more than 7.1 million (2001 census). There are 75 Adventist churches or groups with a total Adventist membership of 12,600 in the London area.

—Victor Hulbert, Stanborough Park, Watford, England

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The kiss of forgiveness is greater than the faltering confession of repentance. The footsteps of confession and repentance are slow and faltering, but the footsteps of forgiveness and mercy are swift and certain."

—Pastor Rex Frost, Dalton (Georgia, USA) Seventh-day Adventist Church, quoting Charles H. Spurgeon (adapted from *The Treasury of the New Testament*) in a sermon on March 3, 2007. Frost is commenting on the interaction of father and returning son in the story of the prodigal son.

**ANSWER:** Communication director for the British Union Conference, Victor Hulbert, captures a moment of praise and celebration from the London-wide Day of Fellowship in the Wembley Arena (London, England) on September 2, 2006.