

December 2007

# ADVENTIST WORLD



## Empowering Women in India

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Higher



**22** Active in Word  
and Deed



**27** The Day the  
Angels Sang



KURT FATTIC/HOPE FOR HUMANITY

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## From the EDITOR'S PEN

### A Moral Responsibility

It was wedged between the electric bill and a Christmas card when I first spied it—a bright orange Bible Society brochure emblazoned with a memorable slogan: “If they can’t read the words, they can’t read the Word.” For a moment, and then longer, I forgot about the high cost of operating a refrigerator and the friends to whom I owed a holiday greeting. For a moment, I glimpsed a world I found hard to imagine—a world where written language has little meaning, where the progress of the gospel depends on tongues and ears far more than eyes.

It was a good lesson for a future editor to absorb, for I’m accustomed to visually devouring whatever print lies nearest. The orderly progression of letters on a page, by which most of my world is made accessible to me, mystifies and confuses the one who has not had my privileges. And

while we justly celebrate the advancing literacy rate in nations all around the globe, we dare not miss the fact that fully one in five adults in our world is still unable to read.\* In some regions, only one in five *can* read.

Access to the Word of God is problematic even in many areas where literacy rates are climbing. Bible translations currently reach only a modest fraction of the world’s language groups. Adventists everywhere ought to remember that the Bible study we rightly urge as the duty of every believer is conditioned by the ability to read the Word in a familiar language. There is a skill even more basic than comparing text with text, and we morally obligate ourselves to support literacy efforts each time we urge men and women to turn to God’s Word.

Two articles in this issue of *Adventist World* bring home this point—“Empowering Women in India” (cover story) and “Meeting the Needs of Children.” As you enjoy these pieces and are inspired by them, commit yourself this month to sharing your reading skills with someone else.

—BILL KNOTT

\* UNESCO

## WORLD REPORT

### JAMAICA: Adventist world church president stresses personal empowerment in youth dialogue

■ Seventh-day Adventist world church president Pastor Jan Paulsen gave a resounding endorsement of Adventist young people October 27—even offering a “yeah, mon!” in Jamaican dialect—during *Let’s Talk* Caribbean, the seventeenth such program in a series of unscripted, unedited conversations between the church president and its under-30 constituency.

“You don’t have to be elected to an office to own the church. You don’t have to be a local elder to own the church. The church is a place of mutual ownership—we’re in this together,” Paulsen told nearly 40 eager young people during the conversation, based at Adventist-owned Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica, and broadcast on the church’s Hope Channel satellite and cable television network.

Paulsen centered his remarks during the hour-long



LET’S TALK: Paulsen emphasized empowerment and church ownership during the dialogue with young people at Adventist-owned North-

ern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica. He also appealed to Adventists of older generations watching the broadcast to include young people in the life of their church.

RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN



## WORLD REPORT

broadcast—as he often does during *Let's Talk* programs—on empowerment and church ownership. While it's a key message worldwide, he said, it's particularly important in the church's West Indies region where young people make up some two thirds of the Adventist Church's membership.

Early on in the broadcast, Paulsen turned briefly to the camera for remarks meant largely to amend some of the church's older generations' opinions of young people. "I'm more preaching—and I am preaching—to those who are watching. You need to make sure that you trust those who are young with responsibility. It is an indisputable fact that if you do not engage those who are young, they will walk away from the church."

Following a question on civil engagement, Paulsen said Christians should not only ask what they can contribute to the church but also what they can contribute to the communities in which they live. One way to impact society is to hold political office, Paulsen said. But, he cautioned, someone considering candidacy must ask, "Is this something I can do without compromising who I am and my loyalty to God?"

*Let's Talk* Caribbean again touched on protecting personal spirituality when one young delegate asked what the church was doing to shield young people from the "ill effects" of the media. Paulsen reminded the group of both the "colossal" good media can do, and its potential to propagate vice. "The church is not going to make the choice you will have to make," said Paulsen, who often advocates private rather than corporate responsibility while answering *Let's Talk* questions. Entertainment choices, he said, are inherently a matter of conscience. "When you switch on the set, it's not, 'What does the church say on this one?' It's 'Is this going to make [me] a better person?'"

During the second half of *Let's Talk* Caribbean, many of the young delegates addressed issues of sexuality in their questions.

One student asked a question regarding young women who are pregnant outside of marriage, specifically when a pastor or other church official is accused of molestation or rape and the victim is too afraid to come forward. Paulsen answered adamantly: "Look, if you've committed a crime, you go to jail. The church will not provide shelter to people who are abusing their role or engaged in criminal activities condemned by society." He added that the church should "provide a safe haven and healing for those who carry wounds and scars."

The conversation then turned to AIDS, and whether the church's message of abstinence was enough to combat



**'YEAH, MON':** *Let's Talk* Caribbean host Deneil Clarke, center, with Adventist world church president Jan Paulsen, right, in a broadcasted conversation with young people in Jamaica, October 27. "Hello," Paulsen told the group. "No, no," Clark said. "If you're doing OK, you'll respond by saying, 'yeah, mon.'" Paulsen tried again, this time greeting the group in the Jamaican dialect.

RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN

the disease's rampant growth. "Should we be preaching something else?" one delegate asked.

"Look, let's be perfectly frank," Paulsen said. "Sex belongs in marriage. Promiscuity is never condoned in the Bible as a lifestyle. Let's not look for ways to accommodate it or make it safer. Save the good things for the right time."

Following the broadcast, Paulsen said he was pleased by the young delegates' pointed questions.

Other questions addressed the church's methods of ministry. When one student asked whether Paulsen thought so-called "tent" evangelism was "outmoded," he said traditional evangelism still works "amazingly well" in most parts of the world. But church leaders, he said, should not depend on the initial effects of an outreach effort to produce "enduring, in-depth decisions" for Christ, something he said long-term small groups are better at. "For a person to stay in the church, you've got to have friends in the church." He said large-scale events might be better if they focused on celebration rather than conversion.

The church may spend too much time on outreach at the expense of "inreach," one delegate said. For a new Christian still struggling with drug addictions, the counsel to "trust Jesus" may not be enough, he said, suggesting that the church oversee more addiction and skills training programs. Paulsen agreed more inreach should be done, so long as funds aren't diverted from outreach.

*Let's Talk* tapered off with a lighter question: whether or not Adventist young people should play competitive sports. Paulsen said if sports consume players and fans to the point of ousting God and religion as their priorities, they were certainly not healthy. But generally, he said, sports encourage strong relationships. —By Elizabeth Lechleitner, Adventist News Network, with AW Staff

## WORLD REPORT

# Seventh-day Adventists Are Growing Churches, Gaining Members

*More than one million joined in past year; member retention is up*

By MARK A. KELLNER, Adventist World News Editor, with reporting from Taashi Rowe and Ansel Oliver, Adventist News Network

**M**ore than 1 million people joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 12 months ending June 30, world church executive secretary Matthew A. Bediako told leaders of the movement during the ninety-fifth Annual Council of the world church.

World church membership stood at 15,433,470 as of June 30, Bediako said, with the church having added 2,859 people daily during the reporting period.

Bediako reported there is now one Seventh-day Adventist for every 429 people on Earth.

The Adventist Church, Bediako noted, has “never been in such a favorable position to witness for the truth.” But, he added, “This should not lead us into an attitude of complacency and contentment. This is the time to be more alert and active than ever.”

“For the past five consecutive years, over 1 million individuals have joined the [Seventh-day Adventist] Church every year,” Bediako told the gathering. “During the period under review, July 1, 2006, to June 30, 2007, 1,044,315 [people] were added to the church through baptism and profession of faith. Although this is [a] 48,774 decrease from last year, we praise God for these precious souls.”

The membership figures showed a net increase of 681,448 people, after accounting for 362,867 whose names were removed from church membership rolls. In 2006, church leaders said some of these adjustments resulted from audits of local church membership, as well as from reports of members who have died. In the five-year period ending in 2006, according to a review of statistics provided by the church and reported by Adventist News Network last year, deaths have accounted for approximately 10 percent to 12 percent of annual membership losses.

At the same time, the attrition rate seems to be turning around, Bediako said.

“While we were reporting a ratio of accessions to losses [of] around 45.03 percent,” he said, “our records this year



**MEMBERSHIP GAINS:** During his annual report, Adventist world church secretary Matthew A. Bediako said positive church growth statistics should not lull church members into complacency. “This is the time to be more alert and active than ever,” he told Annual Council delegates.

RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN

show a healthy figure of 24.21 percent. This is a remarkable change, and we praise God for that.”

Bediako said that while “we are happy to see a new trend, ... we cannot sing the doxology until we eliminate from our chart the los[t] and missing column. To achieve this goal, we need to exhibit in every church, institution, and on all levels of church administration, an unconditional love for one another. Let every individual who enters our church and institution feel welcome. We need to respect and accept one another.”

And Bert Haloviak, director of the church’s Office of Archives and Statistics, said this year’s membership growth rate—4.62 percent—is the highest since the 2002-2003 year, when the results of membership audits first showed up in the church’s books.

On the missionary front, Bediako reported that 96 new missionaries were sent out on full-term appointments in 2007, and 624 others returned to their assignments after furloughs and annual leaves. A total of 979 missionaries, “coming from everywhere and going to everywhere,” are in the field today, augmented by more than 1,600 Adventist volunteers on 12- and 24-month commitments.

Reports from Bediako and Vernon Parmenter, director of Adventist Volunteer Center, also emphasized the impact of lay member and pastoral outreach in many areas. Evangelistic campaigns in Africa, the Ukraine, Tartarstan, Indonesia, the Inter-America church region,

## WORLD REPORT

and South America are all credited with adding to church membership rolls.

“I fully believe that the greatest days of accomplishment are still before us,” Bediako said. “Soon we shall see an increasing acceleration of the work on all fronts in the days to come. As a people, we have never been in such a favorable position to witness for the truth.”

He added, “Our church has gained a larger measure of respect than ever before. The publicity that has been given to the church’s worldwide activities has led many to ask what Adventists stand for. Many organizations, other religious denominations, and people in both high and low places of responsibility are ready to listen to our teachings and to follow the truth. It is, for all of us, a day of opportunity.”

Seventh-day Adventists are active in 203 of the world’s 207 nations and territories. Between 25 and 30 million people attend Adventist worship services weekly, a number larger than baptized membership because, as in many Protestant churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not baptize infants.

### **Church income, mission offerings up**

An increase in ordinary tithes and offerings lifted the Adventist Church’s financial bottom line by \$10 million as of September 2007, compared to the same time last year.

Juan R. Prestol, undertreasurer for the world church, told delegates that as of September 30, 2007, the church’s financial statement reflects “a significant inflow of tithe received during the course of the year, and an increase in net assets.” Tithe for the 2006 calendar year totaled more than US\$1.6 billion.

“Annually God’s faithful servants, in small and large amounts, return \$1.6 to \$1.7 billion a year, and every dollar of that is as important as the millions that come in,” said Robert E. Lemon, world church treasurer.

Conservative estimates of revenue through the end of 2007 will give the church enough resources to recommend additional funding for projects and programs around the world through a supplemental budget, normally voted at the executive committee’s Spring Meeting.

Returning tithe is a “sermon,” Lemon said. “You don’t give unless you believe God is the Creator.”

Tithe is not the only place in which the church is seeing increases. Lemon reported that local offerings increased from 23 percent of tithe in 1950 to 36 percent of tithe in 2005.

One of the church’s biggest success stories is the turnaround in mission offerings, which, until recently, had declined by 36 percent since 1950. But for the past two years, mission offerings in North America have increased at a rate equal to or greater than an increase in tithe. Total

mission offerings have increased from \$51.2 million in 2005 to \$55.4 million in 2006.

Lemon also presented a special report on an extraordinary amount of tithe the church’s world headquarters received earlier this year. Council delegates voted to receive it and have it used for the church’s worldwide work.

Lemon referred to the contribution as an “extraordinary” blessing and also as a “unique opportunity for advancement of His work.”

“The reality is, the way we intend to use these funds we will have a greater need than we’ve ever had,” Lemon said. “I think to miss this opportunity to move a half a generation ahead of what we would have been able to do is something the Lord will hold us accountable for if we don’t do it.

“Tithe is for support of the ministry and evangelism; it’s not for endowing and then just using the interest,” Lemon said in answer to a question from the floor. “The Lord, when He rewarded the widow for having fed the prophet, He didn’t fill up her flour barrel and oil every time she used it, but only replaced what she had used.

“We have consulted with many on this issue, and we want it clearly understood that there is no change in our position that tithe ... should be turned into the local conference through the local church,” Lemon said.

“It would have to be an extraordinary amount for us to consider this again.”

The council decided that proposals on how to administer the tithe would be submitted by regional world leaders and administrators at the church’s headquarters before being reviewed by the president’s council in January 2008.

Church leaders envision proposals will include funding for Internet and other mass media communication outreach, initiatives in large cities, and the church’s work in the 10/40 Window—a section of the globe in the eastern hemisphere between the 10 and 40 northern lines of latitude that is largely unreached by the gospel.

Church President Jan Paulsen urged leaders to use the funds for long-term projects. “These are not projects that should have a short-term life,” Paulsen said. “They may, in your planning and thinking, have no end except the second coming of Christ.”

Lemon praised church members for their faithfulness in returning tithe and urged continued commitment.

Delegates also unanimously approved the world church’s 2008 budget of more than \$142 million, including a 3 percent increase in across-the-board appropriations for its 13 world divisions and General Conference institutions.

The budget includes the more than \$35 million cost of



**Left:** More than 300 Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders heard President Jan Paulsen's Sabbath sermon, October 13, at the church's world headquarters near Washington, D.C., U.S.A. Paulsen addressed leaders as part of Annual Council, the world church's business meeting.

**Below:** TRUST: During his Sabbath sermon, Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, encouraged leaders to trust each other's abilities.

RAJ MUND DABROWSKI/ANN

operating the Adventist Church's world headquarters, fixed at 2 percent of world tithe.

### **Paulsen Sounds Unity Theme**

"What you do as a leader in the church, do it with love for the Lord and with love for His people, do it with integrity, and keep your heart clean," Pastor Jan Paulsen, world president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, said in his October 13 Sabbath morning message to church leaders.

Paulsen, serving his second full term, issued a call for denominational unity: a united movement is a "shared trust for the sake of Christ and the unity of the church," he declared.

"If the exercise of my freedom causes damage to you, then it was wrong and not in harmony with the will of Christ," Paulsen said in explaining the words of the apostle Paul, as found in 1 Corinthians. Although Paul's comments initially concerned food, Paulsen said this was "just the illustration. The real issue is: What should govern the decisions and actions we take? His answer clearly takes us to showing consideration and deferring to others."

He added, "We are bonded in unity, and we have to trust each other to do right."

In order to preserve unity, Paulsen said church leaders must resist the temptation to jump into matters beyond their jurisdiction: "The task elsewhere is not the responsibility you were chosen to handle—at least not just now. It is not for me to resolve. Others have been chosen for that role, and the extent to which they succeed or not they will have to answer to the Lord for, just as you and I will for ours."

He added, "We cannot be fixers of things out there beyond our mandate. I have to trust others who are nearer to the matter and whose responsibility it is to take care of it."

Although "people write to me about a great variety of things they want me to fix," Paulsen said, "if there are issues really in need of fixing, it is not going to work for me to try

to do it; I have to trust others to do it, as must you. I trust you," he said to church leaders.

"Mavericks who act independently and by their own wisdom do not make good administrators in this church," Paulsen declared.

Paulsen said the consistent message of Scripture, the writings of Ellen G. White, and from Adventist history is "that God wants this church to stay united. Let us make no mistake about this." He admitted, "from time to time issues come up which test our commitment to unity."

The world church leader also addressed several continuing issues that have sometimes seemed to challenge the global church's unity.

On the continuing question of the role of women in ministry, Paulsen counseled what may be seen as a middle path: "I encourage young people, men and women, to follow the calling God has placed within them. To deny the calling God may have given them is often at the risk of their own spiritual life. If this is an employment issue which you need to fix in your part of the world, then let's do that. We are going to need everyone—everyone—to finish our mission, and for God to usher in eternity," he said.

In his comments, Paulsen also said that continuing controversy over the church's definition of the nature of Christ will not, "on my watch," cause a reevaluation by the church.

"I think there is a reason for why we have chosen generous language in describing our position as a church on the nature of Christ. The uniqueness of Jesus Christ (wholly God and wholly man—no one else matches the "only-begottenness" of that One) leads us to say that," Paulsen said.

He added, "I have to tell you I just cannot imagine a post-modern person in Europe, a businessman in Asia or Latin America, any more than a farmer in Africa will care one iota whether Christ had the nature of man before the fall or after the fall. The realities of the world in which we live have other concerns which occupy us."

Paulsen said such discussions often focus on the possibility of living a victorious Christian life. However, he added, such victory will not be attained by "settling the precise human nature of Christ; it will be by experiencing the 'power of His resurrection.' 🍇



## WORLD VISTA

**N**ine pastors from across North America met with world church president Pastor Jan Paulsen on September 13 for an unscripted, unedited conversation, broadcast live on the Hope Channel. In a wide-ranging discussion these seven men and two women talked with Pastor Paulsen about the challenges of caring for a local congregation. In this interview with *Adventist World*, Pastor Paulsen reflects on his experience with “Pastors: In Conversation.”

strengthening, comforting, ministering to the whole Adventist community. And yet they feel perhaps that their voice is not heard directly by senior leadership in the church. And this is a very fair point. I understand this feeling.

I would like pastors to sense also that those of us in leadership wish we had a stronger linkage to them. We wish we understood better their challenges and joys, their frustrations and hopes—for the roles of elected leadership and congregational ministry flow into each other. Fifty

# IN CONVERSATION

# With Past

**Adventist World:** Many people have seen your televised conversations with the church’s young people during the past four years—the *Let’s Talk* broadcasts. Why did you decide to open a dialogue with pastors? Why is this conversation important?

**Jan Paulsen:** I feel that local church pastors are key—absolutely central—to everything we are and do as a church. They are the caretakers of the congregation. No matter who we are, where we’re employed, where we live around the globe, we all have one thing in common: we are cared for by the local church pastor. We come to church each week, and this is where we look for much of our spiritual nurture.

The pastors I met with represent a group of some 22,000 globally who have this very, very important assignment. It’s an assignment of trust, given to them by the Lord. So I wanted to honor these pastors for the sacredness of their task—for the weight and strength of the calling they have. And I wanted to acknowledge that this group, more than any other within the church, shapes and influences our spiritual community around the world.

**The very fact that you convened this conversation implies that there is a communication gap between those in church administration and those in local church ministry. Is this the case?**

Yes, I think it is. I think that pastors have felt they bear such a heavy responsibility in caring for the church—in nurturing,

years ago I began in church work as a local church pastor. But that’s a long time ago. If there’s a disconnect in my understanding, I would like to heal that.

I hope this recent broadcast is just the beginning of many such conversations in different parts of the world. And I would like to see this dialogue climax at the General Conference Session in 2010 in Atlanta, where we plan to profile the Adventist pastor during five prime-time slots—just as we profiled Adventist leadership at the 2005 session in St. Louis. We will look at the joys, the fulfillment, the challenges, the frustrations, the hopes, and the sacredness of the calling of those in local church ministry. I want the whole richness of that experience to be placed before the church. I want us to acknowledge, publicly, how critical their work is to the well-being of the church.

**Many of the questions the pastors asked during this broadcast were very practical in nature, rather than theoretical or theological. Did that surprise you?**

I had thought that more theological issues might have emerged, but they did not. Yes, the questions they asked related mainly to the day-to-day demands of pastoring



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





# Ors

a local church. I sensed, for instance, a concern among many for the health of their own family life—that while they dedicate themselves to shepherding a flock, they do not lose their family. And this is so important. They need to make up-front decisions about their schedules, about getting the right balance.

They also raised concerns about ministering to culturally diverse congregations. A few decades ago a congregation was likely to be of one culture, one ethnicity. But today, people are on the move all the time. Pastors are called on to minister to people of many different backgrounds. And how are they to do this effectively? I tried to convey my strong conviction that finding a solution to so many of these issues must take place within local congregations. Take it to your church board, take it to your elders. Don't ask your conference or union or division: they probably don't know. And don't ask me. I am too far removed from many of these things. So the responsibility for fixing many of these things at the local level is huge.

But on the other hand, there are times when it's important to acknowledge and draw on the broader perspective—that strong connection to the worldwide

church family. I feel that, within some cultures, access to the pulpit by church leaders may sometimes be more restricted than is healthy for the local congregation. It's good for our members to hear from someone whose ministerial mandate extends beyond that of the local congregation. This strengthens the local church's bond to the wider Adventist community. I feel that pastors need to filter this into their planning and thinking. Some of them don't; they are too protective of their own local pulpit.

## **Were there any other concerns that came through strongly?**

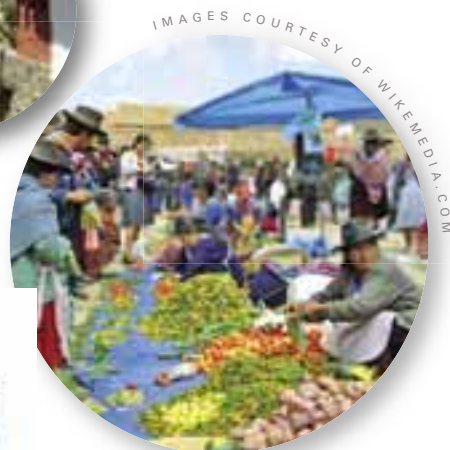
Something I had heard before but which really struck me during this conversation was in regard to women in ministry. It came through clearly that the issue for many women is not ordination; it's simply being able to function in ministry. Many women train for ministry but are not picked up for service in a local congregation. And it's not necessarily a problem at the conference office but at the local church, which says: Put a woman somewhere else. This is so regrettable. My response during the broadcast was to encourage a woman who feels that God has placed a calling to the ministry within her heart to go with it; to train and prepare professionally. I have a strong conviction that if you are disobedient to this inner call from God, you place your own spirituality in danger. So the challenges that some women face in ministry—this struck me more strongly than it has before. ●

“Pastors: In Conversation” can be seen online on the Seventh-day Adventist Church Web site: [www.adventist.org/pastorsinconversation](http://www.adventist.org/pastorsinconversation). Future conversations with pastors will be broadcast on the Hope Channel: [www.hopetv.org](http://www.hopetv.org).

WINDOW

# Into Bolivia

By  
ROBERT G.  
WEARNER



BOLIVIA	
Capital	La Paz (administrative), Sucre (legal)
Official languages	Spanish, Quechua, Aymara
Religion	Roman Catholic (90%); other (10%)
Population	9,069,000
Adventist membership	172,638 (at the end of 2006)
Adventist to Population ratio	1:53

**B**olivia is a landlocked country located near the center of South America. It is bounded to the west by the majestic, snowcapped Andes Mountains that surround a high, dry, plain. A vast lowland plain spreads toward the north and east.

The nation is rich in natural resources, and is a leading producer of tin. But frequent wars and unstable political conditions have hampered economic growth.

During the 1500s Spain conquered the native inhabitants and ruled the region until 1825, when Bolivia won its independence. The new country was named after Simón Bolívar, the Venezuelan general who helped Bolivia and several other South American countries win their independence from Spain.

As with most other South

American republics, the first Adventist missionaries in Bolivia were colporteurs. Juan S. Pereyra, a former Presbyterian colporteur from Chile, sold the books *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Steps to Christ* in Bolivia as early as 1897. Imprisoned and condemned to death through the influence of Roman Catholic clergy, he escaped death through the help of a friendly judge who had become a Sabbathkeeper after reading the books sold by Pereyra.

Edward W. Thomann and his wife, Flora, were sent to Bolivia to direct the work in 1907. Two years later Ferdinand Stahl and his wife, Ana, started medical work among the indigenous population. In 1911 they moved to Peru where they spent most of their career. On August 7, 1912, Rosa N. Doering became the first Bolivian to be baptized. Mission work

has made steady progress ever since.

Doctors H. E. Butka, Harry T. Pitman, Elmer Bottsford, and others have been involved in medical work in Bolivia throughout the years.

A solid educational system has developed, which includes many elementary schools, and, since 1991, the founding of Bolivia Adventist University (Universidad Adventista de Bolivia). It is located at Vinto, Cochabamba.

Located in the same city is the New Time Communication Center (Centro de Comunicaciones Nuevo Tiempo), which operates radio and TV stations and a Bible correspondence school.

The most recent evangelistic event was “The Hope Is Jesus” series, sponsored by the Bolivian Union with Shawn Boonstra from the It Is Written television ministry as guest speaker. All across the nation lay members linked arms with pastors to bring the gospel of Christ to their neighborhoods. More than 2,240 evangelistic campaigns were held as a result. In April, It Is Written participated in a series of reaping meetings. For eight nights Evangelist Boonstra preached to thousands of people who had gathered in hundreds of auditoriums to watch “The Hope Is Jesus” programs broadcast live from the Adventist University at Cochabamba. The result: 12,276 people baptized.

# Pernicious Anemia

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

**My aunt has recently been diagnosed as having pernicious anemia. What is this problem, and what is the cause?**

**P**ernicious anemia is a condition in which there are inadequate red blood cells. This is because of a deficiency of an essential substance called vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, or cobalamin. This vitamin compound is very important in the formation of red blood cells. It also plays a vital role in the building of DNA, which is present in all cells. Red blood cells and nerve cells are especially dependent on vitamin B<sub>12</sub> in order for them to function normally. As discussed in the November issue of *Adventist World*, anemia is the condition in which insufficient red blood cells (hemoglobin) exist to carry oxygen to the body for all its needs (energy production, metabolism, and simply staying alive optimally). This places a strain on the heart and many other organs.

In the case of pernicious anemia, associated symptoms and signs of nerve dysfunction are often exhibited. These can include the loss of ability to feel vibration in the limbs and the position of the toes in relation to the feet. This dysfunction usually starts in the legs but then later affects the arms. This is because of spinal cord damage. There may be progression to psychiatric disorders and dementia (loss of ability to think and reason). The tongue is also affected in the advanced stage of the disease and becomes inflamed with a red “beefy” appearance. Ulcers on the tongue may also appear.

Pernicious anemia may be associated with autoimmune diseases

such as those that affect the thyroid, adrenal glands, skin, ovaries, or pancreas. Other causes of poor absorption of B<sub>12</sub> include stomach and/or bowel surgery, certain cancers, and bacterial infections.

Pernicious anemia is one of a group of anemias called megaloblastic (or large cell) anemias. These anemias may have a variety of causes, including nutritional vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency, folic acid deficiency, parasitic infestations, chemotherapy, certain medications, and alcohol.

**What is the treatment for this kind of anemia?**

**P**ernicious anemia results from the inability of the body to absorb vitamin B<sub>12</sub> taken in food or any oral form. It is therefore necessary to give vitamin B<sub>12</sub> injections on a regular basis for life. These injections are given into the muscle.

If the anemia is caused by a nutritional lack of B<sub>12</sub> in the diet (and there is no absorption problem from the bowel), adding the appropriate foods and/or vitamin B<sub>12</sub> supplements by mouth is usually sufficient. The treatment needs to be monitored to ensure an adequate response. This is shown by a return of the red cells to their normal size and function.

Pernicious anemia is a disease condition that needs to be diagnosed and treated in good time. When treated appropriately and in time, not only does the anemia reverse but the damage to the nervous and other systems resolves. If the condition is neglected, permanent damage and even death can occur.

**What are the sources of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>?**

**V**itamin B<sub>12</sub> is produced only by microorganisms, and humans receive vitamin B<sub>12</sub> only from the diet. It is present only in foods of animal origin (including milk and eggs). Some claim that vitamin B<sub>12</sub> can be obtained from vegetables; this is from bacterial contamination and manure in which the plants are grown and is both unhygienic and insufficient. Well-planned ovo-lacto-vegetarian diets (plant-based with eggs and dairy products) usually supply adequate amounts of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. If one chooses to eat a total vegetarian diet, it is essential to supplement the intake of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> in tablet or syrup form. Failure to do so sets one on a sure course for health problems.

The body has stores of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> that last up to four years; it may take 5 to 10 years for the deficiency to show in a clinical form. The message is that the diet must be well planned and, if necessary, supplemental B<sub>12</sub> should be taken.



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NUMBER 16

# Saturated With Meaning

By GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

*The Lord's Supper gets to the heart of our Christian walk.*

What do you associate with the Lord's Supper? Stained glass windows, little cups, hushed solemn sounds?

I see a beach on the Atlantic coast in France where we celebrated this important Christian rite sitting on the ground, with surf boards as tables, during a youth mission camp. I also see the little old man somewhere in the Andes in Peru, in a tiny church, who knelt before me, and whose calloused hands took my feet and carefully washed them. We did not speak the same language, but we understood each other.

The Lord's Supper also reminds me of the thousands who throughout the centuries were killed, because neither Catholics nor Protestants (or even Protestants among themselves) could agree on its meaning and precise theological ramifications.

Together with baptism, the

celebration of the Lord's Supper is an extremely important ritual in the Christian church, explicitly instituted by our Lord Jesus Himself (Matt. 26:26-28; John 13:13-17). Like any ritual, it speaks to those participating in it, reinforcing some of the most fundamental concepts of our Christian walk, namely: (a) that salvation does not come from within, but, rather, is a gift made possible only through the sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ; (b) that service and humility are not just theological concepts, but are, rather, elements to be put into practice; and (c) united we stand, divided we fall.

### Powerful Symbol

The Lord's Supper actually has its roots in the Old Testament, and is another good example of the unbreakable unity between God's revelation in both Testaments in regard to the plan of salvation.

Let's go back to the first Lord's Supper. It's Passover time in Jerusalem, and Jesus and His disciples are getting ready to celebrate this important yearly ritual that reminded them of God's saving grace in the face of the overpowering might of

the enemy (see Matt. 26:17-30 and parallel texts). A room is secured, and the traditional Pascal lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and different cups are prepared. Jesus kneels before His bickering disciples and washes their dirty feet (John 13:1-6), a job normally done by slaves. The roasted Passover lamb is passed around; then the unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Suddenly Jesus speaks up: "Take, eat; this is My body" (Matt. 26:26). He also takes the cup<sup>1</sup> and tells them to "drink, ... for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:27, 28). Both the bread and the cup represent the common daily fare of the ordinary peasant living in Palestine. But Jesus uses these common elements and gives them new meaning.

Paul writes about this in his first epistle to the Corinthian church, a church with a mixed ethnic makeup, reminding us that eating and drinking together does not only create community but helps us remember the incredible sacrifice of the Son of God (1 Cor. 11:26). By looking back, by "remembering" Christ's death on



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the cross, we look away from ourselves and focus on the most incredible, audacious, and transforming news imaginable. The news of a God who does not sit isolated in His corporate headquarters, so to speak, far removed from the reality of sin and pain, but

who is prepared to humble Himself and die for an ungrateful creation.

The Lord's Supper not only reminds us of Jesus' death but gives a loud and public proclamation of Jesus' victory over sin, and looks forward to that glorious day of His second

coming (1 Cor. 11:26).

This *looking forward* is an important part of Christian theology and lifestyle. It reminds us that life is not just 50 or 60 or 80 years, with the grave awaiting us at the end, but that there is hope beyond the grave. We will be united with loved ones and with our risen Savior on that great day, when He will "wipe away every tear" (Rev. 7:17; 21:4; cf. Isa. 25:8).

### **A Factor Often Misunderstood**

The book of Revelation describes this reunion in terms of a great wedding feast (Rev. 19:7-9), which, again, is a reminder of the Lord's Supper (and the earlier Passover meal). In fact, eating and drinking imagery is used often in the book of Revelation, and is connected to final victory and celebrations (Rev. 2:7; 3:20; 7:16; 12:6, 14; 19:9; 21:6; and 22:17). The imagery also introduces the idea of final judgment (Rev. 6:8; 14:10; 16:6; 17:16; 19:17, 18, 24; and 20:9).<sup>2</sup>

This particular aspect of judgment and eating and drinking is also present in the Lord's Supper. Paul reminds the church at Corinth that an individual who participates in the Lord's Supper in an "unworthy manner" "eats and drinks judgment

to himself" (1 Cor. 11:29) and is "guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27). In other words, when you and I participate in the Lord's Supper without having repented of hurtful thoughts, wrong deeds, and selfish motives, we turn down an incredible opportunity. We keep on carrying these sins with us, instead of "uploading" them to our heavenly Sin-bearer and having them wiped away from our record.

These sentiments from Paul may be the reason that some of us do not participate in the Lord's Supper. Perhaps we feel unworthy—feel that our messed-up lives cannot be put into balance again. Perhaps we cannot forgive what has been done to us.

Actually, these are not the things that make us unworthy. The only time we partake of the Supper in an unworthy manner is when we no longer hear the voice of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit who lovingly speaks to us, who unmistakably convicts us, and who wants to transform us. Those who participated in that first Supper were not flawless or perfect. Indeed, all the participants that night denounced their faith, betrayed their Master, or just simply ran away.


But through the Lord's Supper God has provided us with a wonderful

way of physically rejoining the fellowship of the believers. By washing one another's feet, by eating and drinking the emblems of the death of Jesus Christ, by joining in the joyful song of victory and salvation that follows each Communion service, we become part of the (invisible) body of Christ—the bride getting ready to meet her Bridegroom.

### **New Memories, New Songs**

I still remember all these wonderful Communion services—sometimes held in strange places, often bringing me together with people I did not know before, but always drawing me closer to my Savior. Every time I participate in the Supper, forgiveness becomes a reality, new memories of victories are added, new songs are written, and lives are changed.

I love to come to the table.

Don't you? 

<sup>1</sup>The three Gospels that recount the story of the Last Supper all include the term "cup" (Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17; also 1 Cor. 11:25-27), which does not actually specify what kind of drink was in the cup. The indication of the cup's contents comes only in Jesus' (later) statement that He would not partake "of this fruit of the vine" until the final eschatological banquet (Matt. 26:29). For a more in-depth discussion, see Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible* (Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 1; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007), pp. 178-181.

<sup>2</sup>For more details, see Gerald A. Klingbeil, "'Eating' and 'Drinking' in the Book of Revelation: A Study of New Testament Thought and Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 16.1-2 (2005): pp. 75-92.

# The Lord's Supper

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

ICELAND: An Adventist church is established in this Western Islands community in the south of Iceland.

**KIDS IN DISCIPLESHIP:** Children, parents, and grandparents have intergenerational fun during a “Kids in Discipleship” program.



COURTESY OF ICELAND CONFERENCE

# Re-Formation *in* Iceland

By GAVIN ANTHONY

Seventh-day Adventists in Iceland are making discipleship a priority.

In 2006 the Iceland Conference created a new and separate department for discipleship. “We live in a world of crumbling spirituality and collapsing morals, a development that unfortunately infiltrates the church more than we would like to admit,” says conference president Eric Gudmundsson. “A concerted effort in resisting this development by promoting spiritual revival and Christlikeness among members—young and old—is thus of utmost urgency. Thus, the creation of this department.”

## Our Model

The Iceland Conference is building its discipleship model around spiritual formation, a term that identifies the focus of discipleship—the practical and spiritual re-forming of broken human hearts back into the image of Jesus.

In Romans 8, Paul explains the significance of spiritual formation. First, he identifies spiritual formation as

fundamental to God’s plans, for we have been “predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son” (vs. 29).\*

Second, Paul identifies the magnificent consequences of spiritual formation; that we “are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Third, Paul identifies his own passion for this work, being “again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).

While spiritual formation explains the “what” of discipleship, the parable of the vine in John 15:1-17 shows us “how.” Jesus tells His disciples they will become fruitful only once they have learned how to “remain” in Him.

## Why Spiritual Formation Is Important to Adventists

Being spiritually re-formed by allowing the nature of the Vine to flow into us is not only foundational to Christian life but also is at the heart of the church’s prophetic calling. Let me explain.

**1.** *Spiritual formation calls for us to live an attractive Christian counterculture.*



**Gavin Anthony** is director of Youth and Discipleship for the Iceland Conference.



Throughout history people such as Noah, Elijah, and John the Baptist have called people to stop compromising with a culture antagonistic to God and to live the morals, values, and principles of the kingdom of Christ.

The final call to “come out” from a culture that is decadent and perverse under the power of the latter rain comes in Revelation 18:4. While focusing on important doctrinal issues, because this call is built on earlier calls, it assumes a call to “come into”—into a community in which God’s character is being reflected in real life. In Western Europe today we live inside a post-Christian culture in which people are hurting without God. So to foster a counterculture in which people are being authentically re-formed into the image of Christ is both evangelistically compelling and a fulfillment of our special commission.

**2. Spiritual formation provides the inspiration for intergenerational, community-based revival.**

Spiritual formation isn’t intended to be done alone. Because of the fracturing of our society, however, it often is. That’s why Paul emphasizes that it is in the community of the body we “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

Because our culture aches for wholeness, restoring the spiritual community of the family addresses a desperate need. Spiritual formation within the family enables it to become a beacon of spiritual integrity that prepares the final way for our Lord.

**3. Spiritual formation is of national significance.**

Our Adventist combination of theology, morality, and ethics has always been unique, but with the falling apart of our culture’s moral fabric, it increasingly appears to be so. So who will call the people in the remote villages and fjords of Iceland to live inside God’s kingdom as God has defined it?

Within a few years of arriving, Oestlund (see sidebar) was producing a church paper that for a time had the

widest circulation of any paper in Iceland. In the same spirit, we are developing new possibilities for every Icelander—wherever they live and no matter what age—to become part of spiritual formation communities.

Our mission demands that we be accountable, not just to our churches but to our nation.

### **The Evangelistic Result**

Building spiritual formation communities is ultimately about intentionally reaching out to our neighbors with an invitation to experience a quality of life that can be found nowhere else. We want to have an impact on the quality of life within our churches, but our ultimate goal is to be a light within our nation. We are working on plans to provide online teaching and create virtual discipleship communities for people in far-flung areas. We are also working to personally reach every home in Iceland with a discipleship magazine and DVD that will help us begin to build contact in areas where no Adventist members currently live. Indeed, with a curriculum written specifically for Iceland, we are already seeing indications of interest in our material from other Christian denominations as well.

### **Honoring God**

Ellen G. White summarizes our vision: “The greatest work that can be done in our world is to glorify God by living the character of Christ” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 439). As we continue the greatest journey human beings can take—of being “conformed to the likeness of his Son”—God is honored, as in no other way. ●

*To learn more about the spiritual formation work in the Iceland Conference, go to [www.reflectingJesus.org](http://www.reflectingJesus.org).*

\*All Scriptures quoted in this article are from the NIV.

# *The* Beginnings of Adventism *in* Iceland BY GAVIN ANTHONY

In 1897 the Denmark Conference sent David Oestlund as the first Adventist missionary to Iceland, an island located between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean with an area of about 103,000 square kilometers (39,758 square miles). On the voyage from Copenhagen, religious discussions began. As the debate intensified, an Icelander walked forward and began supporting Oestlund as he

argued for the seventh-day Sabbath and baptism. Oestlund asked the man afterward if he was a Seventh-day Adventist.

“Yes ... it so happens that we read *The Great Controversy* and began to keep the Lord’s Sabbath holy without having seen or talked to any Adventists.... [When] we saw ... that a missionary would be sent [to Iceland], and since we thought it would be hard for him to work alone, we

decided last spring to sell our small farm in America to travel across and help him.”\*

From this working of God’s providence, the work in Iceland moved forward. Today, out of Iceland’s population of just 300,000, approximately 575 Adventist members worship there and have established one church school.

\*Björgvin Snorrason, “Pastor David Oestlund and the Beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Iceland.”



*Thousands  
learn to read through  
literacy program.*

# Empower Women *in* India

By LOREN SEIBOLD





**Left to right:** MINISTERING ANGEL: Hepzibah Kore, Women's Ministries director of the Southern Asia Division and the literacy program organizer, asks the Lord to bless the literacy program. The classes have created opportunities for telling Indian people about Jesus, and as a result many have also been baptized. LEARNING CIRCLE: Literacy classes sponsored by the Adventist Church's Hope for Humanity greatly enhance the quality of life as well as raise community respect for women in India. More than 200 literacy classes are currently being taught in five south India provinces. **Below:** EMPOWERING LIVES: Learning to read empowers women to earn a living, help their children with their homework, take care of family finances, and gain respect from their families and others in the community.

ALL PHOTOS TAKEN BY KURT FATTIC/HOPE FOR HUMANITY

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**Below:** LONGING TO LEARN: Eager adults—mostly women—sit for many hours cross-legged on the floor of the Adventist church in Reddipalem so they can learn to read.



I am a passenger in a taxi, watching with some uneasiness the frenzy outside: buses, trucks, bullock carts, pedestrians, pedal rickshaws, scooters, three-wheel minicabs—all mixing and dodging, appearing at every instant on the verge of a collision barely avoided. Next to my window, traveling at our same pace, is a small *putt-putting* motorcycle. Sidesaddle behind the driver sits a young woman. Her shiny black hair is tied back with an interlacing of white tuberose blossoms. A purple sari with gold-thread trimming wraps about her in that flowing, ethereal way that only Indian women can manage. As the cycle swerves and bumps, as black exhaust billows around her, she sits calmly, unalarmed, her hands in her lap. I am astonished at such poise in that maelstrom of vehicles, noise, and pollution.

This snapshot of India helps to explain why, when people ask me what I found most impressive, most memorable about India, I always say, “The Indian women.” They are strong, purposeful, beautiful, and graceful in the midst of poverty, corruption, inequality, and a suffocating crush of humanity.

### First Lessons

A few days later I was cross-legged (or as close to it as my American legs could manage) on a concrete floor, knee-to-knee with about 30 women in an orange-trimmed room in a small, crowded (always, everywhere in India, crowded) village near the city



**Loren Seibold** is the senior pastor of the Worthington, Ohio, Adventist church in the United States.



of Thiruvananthapuram. I'd been invited to watch them learn to read.

Surprisingly, for a country for two centuries under Great Britain's educational system, 60 percent of India's women are illiterate. In the poorer classes, women are barely more than servants. In some parts of rural India a poor family's second or third female baby may quietly die its first night from an extract of poisonous oleander mixed into its milk. The parents simply say, "She didn't live," though neighbors know the truth: the family couldn't afford another dowry, that heavy payment to a groom's family that must accompany a girl if she would have any hope of marriage.

Indian people are accustomed to being packed closely together. In a country with a population density nearly a dozen times that of the United States, little choice exists. I, used to my Western comfort zone, found the classroom a bit close. Around me, though, was an exuberance to offset

my claustrophobia. With stubs of chalk and handheld slates the women practiced the swirly Tamil alphabet. The instructor wrote short sentences on a large blackboard, as the class repeated chorally after her, again and again. Then each practiced writing the words on her own slate. Though the students were mostly non-Christian, their Seventh-day Adventist teachers illustrated the lessons with Christian songs and Bible texts. Every face wore a smile.

**Top to bottom:** CONGESTED CITIES: Overcrowded roads and streets are common throughout India, as depicted in this New Delhi scene. MEETING THE MAYOR: Hope for Humanity director Maitland DiPinto (middle) and other members of the visiting group talk with a village mayor (left). GETTING TO KNOW THEM: Loren Seibold, pastor of the Worthington, Ohio, church in the United States, talks to the women about the difference learning to read makes in their lives.



*"People can't read the Bible until they can read," Kore says. "These classes give them confidence, and they begin to seek new meanings for their lives."*

I sat next to a young woman wearing a deep red sari. The crimson bindi between her eyebrows (a traditional symbol of insight) had been smudged by the squirming little one in her arms.

“This is the best thing that has ever happened to me,” she said with a broad, bright smile. “I am beginning to read newspapers and books. I can help my children with their homework. My husband is proud of me.”

For her graduation from the program, she received the first book she had ever been able to call her own: a copy of the Bible in Tamil.

### Hope

The human angel behind this ministry is Hepzibah Kore, Women’s Ministries director of the Southern Asia Division, who has dedicated her life to teaching India’s women to read. From the humblest farming villages to prostitutes in the Kolkata (formerly called Calcutta) slums, Kore believes that when women are able to read, their lives will be transformed. She travels thousands of kilometers every year to visit her more than 200 literacy classes at five sites: Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, and Garo Hills. At each site Kore first trains teachers, provides teaching materials, then helps the classes take shape.

“People can’t read the Bible until they can read,” Kore says. “These classes give them confidence, and they begin to seek new meanings for their lives.”

That’s why the reading classes aren’t the end of the story: the graduates are invited to practice their reading in follow-up Bible study classes.

Literacy for India’s women is one of the new faces of the program many of us used to know as Ingathering. Today the program is called Hope for Humanity (though the new name is not yet familiar, even to many Adventists).

The cornerstone of the old Ingathering was door-to-door solicitation. But going to people’s doors has become unwelcome in suburbs and unsafe in cities, and since the 1980s the contributions from door-to-door solicitation have shrunk dramatically. It is not a coincidence, insists Hope for Humanity director Maitland DiPinto, that Adventist name recognition in North America followed that same downward track. That’s why Hope for Humanity is trying to open some new doors.

“We’re creating new ways to get our communities involved in the humanitarian work we do,” DiPinto says. “We don’t want just to get contributions. We want to form partnerships.”

All over North America churches and schools, and in some cases entire conferences, have signed up to become partners in one of Hope for Humanity’s several projects. In the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho—in which half of all the AIDS cases in the world exist—major Hope for Humanity initiatives are tackling the problem of HIV and AIDS. (See cover article titled “A Place of Hope” in the November 2006 *Adventist World*.) And in both India and Central America, Hope for Humanity is helping Seventh-day Adventist teachers teach women to read.

### Changed Lives

As we stepped from our air-conditioned coach in the village of Reddipalem in Andhra Pradesh, India, I felt I’d stepped back in time. People here live in traditional palm-thatched huts. Next to the diminutive concrete church, a man wearing only a lungi tucked up for work, relaxed with his docile, still-dripping water buffalo. This tiny rural village is located only a few kilometers from the Indian Ocean.

“The water from the 2004 tsunami almost reached our village,”

the village president told us.

Inside the church I marveled again at Indians’ ability to get comfortable on hard floors in close quarters. Across from me a young woman in an orange sari wrote Telugu letters on her slate. She lined the words with a finger, suggesting I repeat them after her. I’d no idea what I was saying, though general laughter showed my attempts were entertaining.

One in my group was elderly—thin in hair, teeth, and body. Her brow furrowed and her hand trembled as she formed a few letters on the slate.

“What kept you from learning to read when you were young?” I asked her through a translator. “My family was poor,” she said. “I married at 13. No one thought a girl needed education.”


“How has this class helped you?” I continued. Her face brightened. “It has changed my life,” she said.

Indeed, I thought, learning to read would do that. But her awkwardness with the chalk made me wonder. “What have you learned?” I asked. “To read the sign on the front of the bus!” she said, pleased with herself. “I can go places alone and not get lost!”

Too old to become a fluent reader, she’d learned enough to read the public transport marquee, to sign her own name, and to count her money so she’s not shortchanged in the market. Those few accomplishments transformed her life. So late in her life has come this boost to her self-esteem.

“My husband and children respect me now,” she said. “I am a more valuable wife and mother.”

I noticed what looked like a Bible under her slate. “Do you read this book?” I asked. “It is hard,” she answered, “but I want to learn.”

With God’s help, and ours, I believe she will. 

*For more information about Hope for Humanity and its programs, go to [www.hope4.com](http://www.hope4.com).*

**M**ore, better, higher, faster—that's the motto of our times. More money, more vacation, more luxury. Have you seen how in some front yards the Christmas decorations grow more elaborate from year to year? We need more gifts, better gifts, faster tools.

"More, better, faster" may sometimes be necessary to keep us goal-oriented. On the other hand, however, it can amount to a rat race. And there's another danger: At one point or another—if we're successful—we may feel superior to others, becoming arrogant and proud. It reminds me of the clever salesman who would close his sales pitch with this line: "Let me show you something several of your neighbors said you couldn't afford."

### Just Like Us

I heard the story about two ducks and a frog living happily together in a farm pond. The best of friends, the three would amuse themselves and play together in their waterhole. When the hot summer days came, however, the pond began to dry up, and soon it was evident they would have to move. This was no problem for the ducks, but the frog was stuck. To help him, they came up with an ingenious scheme. They would grab hold of the two ends of a stick with their bills, and the frog could hang on in the middle by the mouth as they flew away to another pond. The plan worked; but as they flew along, a farmer looked up in admiration and mused, "Well, isn't that a clever idea! I wonder who thought of it?"

The frog opened his mouth and said, "I did...." And the tragic result followed.

We're all into ego trips and selfish exaltation, but there's only One who is superior. And that's the issue addressed by the book of Hebrews, the issue of superiority. Here we find that the good has been surpassed by the better. And the better has a name: Jesus our Lord.

### The Superiority of Jesus

In Hebrews 1 Jesus is portrayed as far superior to the angels. Hebrews 3 presents Jesus as superior to Moses, one of the greatest leaders and administrators of all times, and one of the most important prophets, who enjoyed privileges no other human has ever known—face-to-face



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# More, Better,

## *Reflections on the superiority of Jesus*

encounters with God. In Hebrews 4 Jesus surpasses Joshua. And in chapter 5 He stands above Aaron.

In Hebrews 7 Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High (and a symbol of Jesus), is shown to be greater than Abraham. Which puts the priesthood according to his order, Christ's priesthood, above the Levitical. Jesus is the true high priest—"holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (7:26, NASB).\*

Jesus—more exalted, better, higher.

According to Hebrews 9:23, the heavenly sanctuary requires for its purification "better sacrifices" than the blood of calves and goats. It called for the Son's unique, once-for-all sacrifice (9:25-28). His "sprinkled blood . . . speaks more eloquently than that of Abel" (12:24), His sacrifice, the only efficacious offering, surpasses all others. He is the Author of our salvation.

### Why He Is Superior

The author of Hebrews presents Jesus as superior for three basic reasons:

**1. Because of His status.** Jesus is better, higher, more exalted, because He is the Son, the Creator, the Sustainer, the only legitimate Priest-King.

**2. Because of His ministry in the past.** In other words, He is superior because He humbled Himself, became human, lived among us, suffered and died for us—and all without sin.

Hebrews spends almost an entire chapter on His incarnation, on His humiliation. It's a truth we need to keep in mind at all times, allowing our Lord to deepen our love for Him.

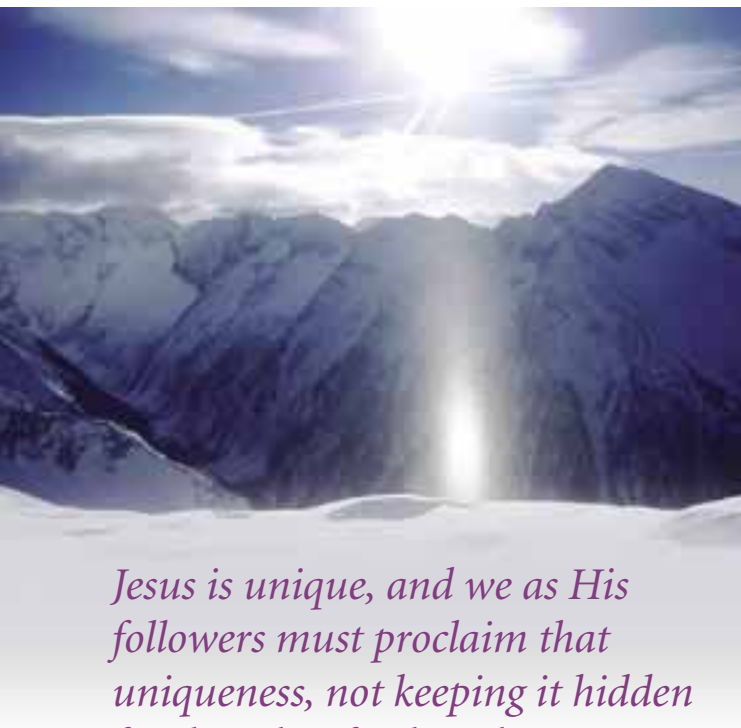
**3. Because of what He is doing for us today and will be doing in the future.** He redeemed us, and through Him we have access to God's throne with full confidence.

Nobody else and nothing else can save us. Only Jesus Christ can. He is unique, and we as His followers must proclaim that uniqueness, not keeping it hidden for the



By EKKEHARDT MUELLER

# Higher



NINA BRITSKI

*Jesus is unique, and we as His followers must proclaim that uniqueness, not keeping it hidden for the sake of political correctness.*

sake of political correctness. There is no question, of course, that we should be courteous, polite, and loving to adherents of other world religions. But with Paul, “we [must] preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23, NASB).

Jesus is greater and worthy of more glory because He became one with us, sympathizes with us, helps us, intervenes for us, and because of His promise to bring about the end of the age with His kingdom of glory.

## Results of Jesus’ Superior Ministry

In the words of Hebrews, the results of Jesus’ superior ministry for us include a better covenant (7:22; 8:6); a

better hope (7:19); better promises (8:6); a better cleansing (9:13, 14); a better possession (10:34); a better homeland (11:16); and finally a better resurrection (11:35). He has prepared “something better for us” (11:40, NASB).

It’s interesting to notice that most of the results of Jesus’ superiority seem to be oriented toward the future. Our life here is the prelude to the life to come. Yet, this prelude is important, for it provides the opportunity to gain eternal life through Jesus Christ. But His “better promises” and “better covenant” affect us already here and now. It’s in this life that we may have the assurance of salvation. It’s now that the Lord puts His law into our minds. It’s now that He gives us the desire to keep it, and to obey and love Him. Jesus gives meaning to our life today, and He provides a bright future for us.

## Christ’s Superiority and Us

How are we affected by Jesus’ superiority?

**1.** It calls upon us to honor Jesus as the One to whom supreme glory and honor belongs, not just during the Christmas season but throughout the entire year. Daily we meditate upon and read about Him, opening our hearts in prayer to Him, relying on Him. We obey His commandments and by His grace live by the principles that governed His life here on earth. We join the heavenly host, worshipping Him and bowing down before Him.

**2.** It calls us to give up all pride and self-reliance. In his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin correctly declared: “There is perhaps not one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride.... Beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive.... Even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.”

Pride was not found in Jesus. Neither should it be in His followers. After all, whatever we are and have is God’s gift and nothing to be proud of. If we want to boast, then let us boast in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**3.** It calls us to renew our decision for this wonderful Lord and expect everything from Him. The heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 all tell us to choose Christ, and to never give up on Him.

More, better, higher? Yes, as found in Jesus Christ. And yes, as found in those who, after having been saved, follow Him more closely, serve Him and others better and better, and who are drawn higher and higher, forgetting themselves and focusing on their most excellent Lord—during all times and seasons. ●

\*Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

By ELLEN G. WHITE

# Active *in*

**O**ur fidelity to Christian principles calls us to active service for God. Those who do not use their talents in the cause and work of God, will have no part with Jesus in His glory. Light is to shine forth from every soul that is a recipient of the grace of God. There are many souls in darkness, but what rest, and ease, and quietude many feel in this matter! ...

[I]t is enjoined upon all true followers of Christ to be a light to the world. God has done his part in the great work, and is waiting for the co-operation of his followers. The plan of salvation is fully developed. The blood of Jesus Christ is offered for the sins of the world, the word of God is speaking to man in counsels, in reproofs, in warnings, in promises, and in encouragement, and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit is extended to help him in all his efforts. But with all this light the world is still perishing in darkness, buried in error and sin.

Who will be laborers together with God, to win these souls to the truth? Who will bear to them the good tidings of salvation?

The people whom God has blessed with light and truth are to be the messengers of mercy. Their means are to flow into the divine channel. Their earnest efforts are to be put forth. They are to become laborers together with God, self denying, self-sacrificing, like Jesus, who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.

### Partners With Heaven

Divine and human agencies are combined in the work of saving souls.



KURT FATTIC/HOPE FOR HUMANITY

God has done his part, and Christian activity is needed now. God ... expects his people to bear a part in presenting the light of truth to all nations. Who will enter into this partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ? He will prescribe the terms, he will make all the conditions. Has God enlightened you with a knowledge of Himself? Have the treasures of His Word been opened to your understanding, so that you have become intelligent in regard to the truths therein? Then go to work with your ability.

If you are only humble, pure in heart, single in purpose, you will see the needs and wants of God's cause.... Where there is one laborer there ought to be hundreds receiving every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, and giving it to the people as they can bear it. A hundred-fold more might have been done than has been done.

A worldly spirit has prevailed among the professed servants of God, and the souls of men have not been counted of half as much value as their cattle, their farms, and their business.

# Word *and* Deed

*Diligence in spreading the gospel is our highest calling.*

God will hold them accountable for this terrible neglect in the past; but what are they going to do in the future? Will they come into co-operation with our great Benefactor? Will they as men who have had the light of truth, let that light shine forth to those in darkness?

God has honored them with the privilege of being co-laborers with Christ in the great harvest field. Will they thankfully, heartily receive all the advantages God has provided, and diligently improve them by exercise, using every ability and every sacred trust in the service of the Master? Their success in advancement in the divine life depends upon the improvement of the talents lent them. Their future reward will be proportioned to the integrity and earnestness with which they serve the Master.

All the enterprises in temporal, earthly things prosper in proportion to the wisdom, tact, and concentration of powers exercised in acquiring the desired object. Just so must it be in our Christian enterprises. We must work according to God's Word. There must be wise planning. There must be selection of men and gifts appropriate for the various branches of the work.

God's Word must be our guide as to the conditions that are specified by which we may become laborers together with Christ. The desire to accumulate wealth is an original affection of our nature, implanted there by our Heavenly Father for noble ends.

### **Where the Heart Is**

If you ask the capitalist who has directed all his energies to the one object of securing wealth, and who is persevering and industrious to add to his property, with what design he thus labors, he could not give you a reason for this, a definite purpose for which he is gaining earthly treasures and heaping up riches. He cannot define any great aim or purpose he has in view, or any new source of happiness he expects to attain. He goes on accumulating because he has turned all his abilities and all his powers in this direction.

There is within the worldly man a craving for something that he does not have. He has, from force of habit, bent every thought, every purpose in the direction of making provision for the future, and as he grows older, he becomes more eager than ever to acquire all that it is possible to gain....

All this energy, this perseverance, this determination, this industry after earthly power is the result of the perversion of his powers to a wrong object. Every faculty might have been cultivated to the highest possible elevation by exercise, for the heavenly, immortal life, and for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The customs and practices of the worldly man in his perseverance and his energies, and in availing himself of every opportunity to add to his store, should be a lesson to those who claim to be children of God, seeking for glory, honor, and immortality. The children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of the light, and herein is seen their wisdom. Their object is for earthly gain, and to this end they direct all their energies. Oh that this zeal would characterize the toiler for heavenly riches! ●

This excerpt is from an article written from Basel, Switzerland, that first appeared 100 years ago in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*; [www.adventistreview.org](http://www.adventistreview.org)). Seventh-day Adventists believe Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

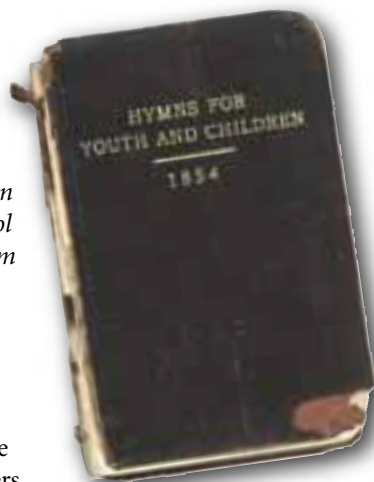
The global faith community of Seventh-day Adventists now embraces literally millions of children and youth in more than 200 countries, almost all of them served by the Sabbath school ministry and an array of age-appropriate journals. Here, from the pen of one of the church's best-known historians, is the story of how that ministry began.—EDITORS.

It was the summer of 1852, six years after the beginning of the third angel's message. The headquarters, if headquarters they could be called, were in a hired house in Rochester, New York [U.S.A.]; the number of field workers was three. Cholera was raging in the city, and through the night the rumbling of the death carriages ominously spoke the doom of the living. Fear sat upon the people.

James and Ellen White had appointments out from Rochester to Bangor, Maine, traveling by horse and buggy. But their younger child, Edson, three years old, was stricken with the cholera. How could they leave? With brethren and sisters, they took him to the Lord, and the disease was stayed; but he remained weak and unresponsive. They could not abandon him; yet thus must go. Placing him upon a pillow, one afternoon at four o'clock, his mother rode for twenty miles, his father driving, before they halted for the night.

"If you go on," said their hosts, "you'll bury that child by the roadside." Yet they went on, a hundred miles in two days, the mother exhausted and sleeping much of the way with her child tied to her waist by a cord, lest he fall. Little Edson revived, and continually improved as the parents filled their appointments, beginning in Vermont.

Was it the sight of his sick child that stirred James White's mind to a need in the infant cause? Was it the voice of the Master that called to him as he drove, silently praying while he looked upon his sleeping wife and babe, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"? There were other babes and other children of the believers, few hundreds though they were, who were languishing, not from disease, but from spiritual neglect. The child—what was he? Simply a little man, and as a little man he should take a little of what greater men took. He should listen to the sermon, dangling his feet from the high bench and wagging his weary body against his mother; if he did not know all the big words, he knew the little ones: *sin, fall,*



# Meeting of Ch

*angel, Jesus, end of the world.* Time was short, the Lord would come before the child would be grown; why bother to educate him? James White wrote, "Some have thought that because Christ was so soon coming they need not bestow much labor on their children. This is a grievous error, sufficient to call down the frown of Heaven."

This man who loved children, who had been a teacher of children, who early in his ministry had taken pleasure in confuting adults who opposed the conversion and baptism of children, was now, in the midst of his cares and burdens in starting this final gospel message, stirred to the depths of his soul by the needs of the children; and he was made the instrument in the hands of God to plant the seed of a mighty movement in the church for the education of children and youth.

This purpose was immediately announced in their only existing paper, the *Review and Herald* [now the *Adventist Review*]: "We design publishing a small monthly paper, containing matter for the benefit of the youth. And we are satisfied that our brethren and sisters will agree with us, that something of the kind is very much needed. The children should have a paper of their own, one that will interest and instruct them.

"God is at work among the children who have believing parents, or guardians, and many of them are being converted, and they need to be instructed in the present truth. And there is a portion of the children who have believing parents, or guardians, who are neglected, and do not have right instruction, consequently, they do not manifest much interest for their own salvation. We trust that such a paper as we design publishing will interest such children, and also be the means of waking up their parents or guardians to a sense of their important duty. On them rests the awful responsibility of training souls for the kingdom of God. But it is a lamentable fact that many of their children are left without suitable instruction. We feel more on this subject than we can express. May God wake up His people to a sense of their duty to those young minds, entrusted to their care, to guide in the channel of virtue and holiness.



drawn (vol. 2, pp. 61-65), was published in 1962.

**Arthur W. Spalding** (1877-1953) was a much-admired Adventist educator, author, and editor. His four-volume history of the church, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, from which this selection is



# the Needs of Children

By ARTHUR W. SPALDING

“We intend to give four or five lessons, in the form of questions and answers, in each number, one for each week for Sabbath school lessons. These schools can be held where there are but two or three children as well as where there are more.”

The first number of the *Youth's Instructor* was published at Rochester, New York, in August 1852, a monthly, with subscription price twenty-five cents a year, but free to children who themselves or whose sponsors could not pay. The editorship was not declared but it was under the care of James White, who was greatly assisted at this time by Annie Smith. A year later the editor was Anna White, the sister of James White, who with her brother Nathanael had come to live with them, in the autumn of 1852....

James White had prepared an initial series of nineteen Bible lessons on the main points of the faith. While they were designed for children and youth—an omnibus assignment—they served also, in the absence of other Sabbath school material, as the lesson studies for adults. These first lessons were followed by seventeen others selected from a non-Adventist paper. Eight lessons on the sanctuary followed, and then the momentum was exhausted. While the mother of the Sabbath school, the *Youth's Instructor*, continued to be published as a monthly, its child was left forlornly crying for attention. Bowed under many cares, and ill, James White could barely keep the Advent ship pointed on her true course, and the interests of the Sabbath school languished for eight months.

Then the soul of Roswell F. Cottrell was roused to action, and he prepared a year's course of weekly lessons, which in 1854 appeared in the *Youth's Instructor*, and the next year were published in book form, *The Bible Class*. This little book served as the Sabbath school guide for two or three years, until the edition of two thousand was exhausted. Like the first lessons, they were designed as food for children and youth; and, again like them, they became meat as well for the old. But if the science of feeding the child was not greatly developed in that day, at least the will to nourish was there, and the children's teeth were strong. ●



ADVENTIST ORIGINALS: An early hymnal for Adventist youth (upper left) was compiled by Anna White, James White's sister. She also edited the *Youth's Instructor*. After her death, Roswell F. Cottrell (upper right) became editor.

**QUESTION:** *How are we saved? What is the moral influence view of the cross?*

For centuries Christians have attempted to explain how Jesus' death on the cross saves us. We call these explanations "theories of the atonement." One of them is known as the "moral influence theory" of the atonement. I will summarize its content, its strengths, and, finally, offer an evaluation of it.

**1. Summary of Its Teaching:** There are slight variations of the moral influence theory, but among its central aspects we find the following ideas. First, the cross is understood to be the supreme revelation of God's love. There, God identified Himself with us to the point of going through what we all experience, namely, death. Second, the manifestation of God's love was so full that as a result we are transformed by it. That is called "the moral influence of the cross." The voluntary death of Christ on the cross awakens in us love toward God; it changes our attitude toward Him and moves us to exemplify His love in our lives.

Obviously, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this understanding of the saving efficacy of the cross. Scripture attests that the cross is the most glorious manifestation of the sacrificial love of Christ toward sinners (e.g., John 3:16), and His death should move us to manifest the same quality of love in our lives. But some significant weaknesses in this theory limit its usefulness.

**2. It Denies a Central Aspect of the Atonement:** One of the fundamental problems of the moral influence view is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. The idea that God had to kill the innocent instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice. Yet the witness of Scripture is that Christ died as our substitute (e.g., Isa. 53; Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21). In the atonement God Himself voluntarily assumed responsibility for our sin. This is a glorious manifestation of divine grace, not an injustice. Atonement is God's work for us; it is a matter between Him and us. No third party is involved.

**3. Narrow View of the Human Predicament:** The moral influence view presupposes that the human tragedy of

sin is located in misinformation about God. We do not need deliverance from the power of sin, but from our ignorance about His loving character. Humans, it is argued, view God as a tyrant who imposes on them arbitrary demands and disciplines them. The cross saves by changing their understanding of God. Such opinion does not square with the biblical view of sin and its impact on humans. Sin is intentional rebellion against God, which has separated us from Him. It is not simply solved by a change in us (a subjective atonement), but by a divine intervention that removes barriers and brings reconciliation (objective atonement).

**4. Separation of Judgment From Love:** When the atonement is circumscribed to God's work in us, His judgment against sin is considered incompatible with His love. This, as we have argued on other occasions, makes love a synonym for divine indifference. Judgment against sin means that God takes our actions seriously because He cares about us. But more than that, it means that He was willing and able to assume that judgment against us on the cross. God's wrath is an expression of divine love; it reveals a God who cares for

us to the point of showing us how painful sin is for Him.

**5. Love and the Cross:** Perhaps the fundamental question is how the cross reveals love. The moral influence theory argues that it shows love in that Christ, the Innocent, died there identifying Himself with us; but not dying in our place. But many other persons died on crosses. Why is the cross of Christ a revelation of the love of God, but not the others? Yes, the Sinless One died there, but there is more. He died for sinners to save them through His atoning sacrifice (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10).

Christ's death is indeed the greatest revelation of God's love because on it "God was reconciling the world to Himself ... not counting men's sins against them," but rather making "him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:19-21, NIV).

By  
ANGEL MANUEL  
RODRÍGUEZ



## The Revelation of Salvation

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



# The Day the Angels Sang

By  
MARK A. FINLEY

There are days when angels sing, when all of heaven rejoices. At Christ's birth the heavenly hosts praised God and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" (Luke 2:14). What thrilled the hearts of these angels so much? Why did angels sing at Jesus' birth? In today's lesson we shall discover answers to these questions, and learn how the birth of the Baby in Bethlehem's manger makes us rejoice as well.

## 1. What did the angel visitor tell Joseph about his wife, Mary's, child?

Read the text below and write your answer on the line provided.

*"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).*

The purpose of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was to \_\_\_\_\_

The angels sang because the Savior of the world was born. They sang because sin would finally be defeated.

## 2. Circle the specific name the angel instructed Mary and Joseph to name their child.

Read the text below and fill in the blank.

*"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated 'God with us'" (Matt. 1:23).*

"Immanuel" means \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Read the text below and list all the different names the prophet Isaiah used for Jesus.

*"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).*

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_





**4. Choose one of the above names and tell in your own words why this particular name for Jesus is so precious to you.**

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**5. After Jesus' conversation with the woman at Jacob's well, when the Samaritans listened to the words of Jesus, who did they declare He was? Read the text and fill in the blanks below.**

*"Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world'" (John 4:42).*

The Samaritans called Jesus the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

**6. How did Jesus identify Himself during His wilderness temptation with Satan? Read the text and fill in the blank below.**

*"Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (Matt. 4:7).*

Jesus used the title \_\_\_\_\_.

Christ, the child born of a virgin, is both Savior and Lord. He met the temptations of Satan head-on and overcame them on our behalf.

He revealed the loving character of His Father to the entire universe. His death on the cross provides heaven's ransom from the bondage of sin. Jesus is our Savior and also our Lord. The living Christ dwells in our hearts through His Spirit. He gives us power over the evil one.

**7. How did the apostle Paul describe Christ's mission? What two things will the Savior do for us? Read the text and fill in the blanks.**

*"Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ ... gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people" (Titus 2:13, 14).*

Jesus will:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

The grace of God, which appears to all, brings salvation to all who accept it (see Titus 2:11). Jesus, our Savior and Lord, delivers us from both the penalty of sin and the power of sin.

As the old hymn, "Rock of Ages," puts it so beautifully:

"Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

What a wonderful Savior is Jesus! He saves us from both sin's condemnation and its control. In Jesus we find deliverance, full and complete.



Look for next month's lesson for help about  
how to live the Christian life.

## LETTERS

### **Adventist Culture**

Thank you for printing David Marshall's article "Celebrity Culture" (October 2007). And thanks to Marshall for pointing to the elephant in the living room of conservative Adventism. I was rebuked.

We're great at denouncing the encroachments of popular culture in some areas, but we don't seem to mind culturing our very own little Hollywood, replete with our very own pantheon of "stars." But how worldly is that? The author of this long-overdue article skillfully extrapolated this celebrity culture to its final end, which is that "stars" often become fallen stars. Heaven help us if the onus for their apostasy hangs over our idolatrous little heads.

He identified a related problem of "camps." My prayer is that those of us who value standards, but who are inclined to make them an excuse for separatism, will remember that unity is also a standard (Rom. 15:5, 6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2, 3; 2 Cor. 13:11; and 1 Pet. 3:8).

JENNIFER SCHWIRZER  
*Pennsylvania, United States*

In regard to "Celebrity Culture," we cannot deny that this is taking place in our churches, not only in the United States, but also here in the Caribbean. And it is not only with preachers, but also with singers/musicians. It seems

that a lot of people cannot resist the acclamations they receive from large audiences.

Several of our young people, excellent singers, have drifted away from the church congregations to the worldly audiences.

It is not necessarily true that a "great" preacher is a great Christian. The same may be said of singers. The attention has to be drawn to Jesus, but too many times the "performances and shows" of preachers and singers alike draw all attention to themselves.

The human flesh is weak indeed and too much attention makes being a Christian even more difficult. We should lift up the Talent-giver in place of the talent-presenter.

But we shouldn't too harsh on these people, they are human just like us. We are probably no better should we stand in their shoes.

NORMAN R. BOEKHOUDT  
*Via E-mail*

### **With All Your Mind**

I consider the article "With All Your Mind," by Reinder Bruinsma (August 2007), very thought-provoking and challenging. I have always believed that there is no such thing as a stagnant Christian. I am eager to learn new things, but the more I learn, the more I realize how little I know. I fully agree that there must always be a close relationship with knowing and doing, believing, obeying, and sharing.

One of my greatest anticipations of heaven is to have a mind capable of learning, understanding, and enjoying

the many marvelous wonders God has in store for the redeemed. With the sin factor removed we will have minds capable of and eager to comprehend beyond what we now scarcely imagine. As we pursue our special interests in heaven, we will be capable of handling every challenge. God will be able to answer all of our troubling questions mentioned in the article, and we will realize that His wisdom will always be far beyond our understanding throughout eternity.

LONETA PAULY  
*Texas, United States*

### **Why Lucifer?**

I'm always interested in Angel Manuel Rodríguez's section on Bible questions. I was recently reading his article in the July 2007 *Adventist World* issue. I really like the way he presented the three points; they are very clear and interesting. However, questions will continue to emanate even after such a detailed presentation. Therefore, I suggest that in any of the situations that preachers and teachers face such questions, they should only read the Bible and emphasize the origin of sin in the perfect heaven as mysterious.

NOEL MHOSVA  
*Solusi University, Zimbabwe*

## LETTERS

### **Adventist World on the Internet**

Hello, I am so glad that we can now access *Adventist World* magazine online. I'm in Uganda, and it takes a long time to get copies of this very good magazine.

May God bless you all at *Adventist World!*

HENRY NAMAZIMA  
*Uganda*

Thank you for allowing us to view the magazine on the Internet. Whenever you feel discouraged, just think how many people are depending on your effort. We don't always write, but we will be here, reading and waiting for the next issue to come. (We don't always see a printed version: now we have access!)

ANDRE VAN DER SCHYFF  
*South Africa*

### **Jesus Is Still Coming**

I am very happy to have read one of your articles in the June 2006 *Adventist World*, "The Return of Jesus: Is It Still On?" by David Marshall.

This subject (opinion) really made me very happy because I am one of those who believe that Jesus is coming, and I concur with Mr. Rosario Albuero Choi of Ulsan, South Korea (his letter is published in that issue on p. 29).

Thank you also for your efforts to publish this wonderful magazine. Please do send me some of your articles, and if you offer Bible studies please enroll me as one of your Bible study students.

ALEX STANSLAUS MOSSECH  
*Lusaka, Zambia*

While we print a Bible study by Mark Finley in each monthly edition of *Adventist World*, these are solely for the use of readers—we are not equipped to run a program with students/teachers.

Our advice to this reader and others with similar concerns is to contact the Seventh-day Adventist Church union conference or division office in your region of the world. We are gratified that the magazine is filling this important need. In addition, those with access to the Internet may visit [www.adventistworld.org](http://www.adventistworld.org).—Editors.

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

## THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I was born in India and am looking for a job in the United Arab Emirates. Please pray I get a job before my visa ends. God bless you all.

SUNSON, *United Arab Emirates*

I have several prayer requests, among which are believers needing a church to worship in; my mother is sick and needs healing; I am having housing problems. God is able, and I believe He can answer these prayers.

GIRMA, *Nazareth, Ethiopia*

I am from Kerala, India. Here we are circled by different beliefs, and we have to address them in school, college, and work. Most people are happy to talk to me, and I tell them about our beliefs. Actually, some people I talk to want to join our congregation but they fear society and their

relatives, so I need prayer from our Adventist community all over the world in order to win more souls to Him.

TITUS, *India*

Please pray for a friend who is very sick. She is also depressed and has tried to take her life two times. My friend needs to be saved and healed. Please also pray for another person, a church member who has cancer and, while she survived her recent birthday, is still very sick.

EINAR, *Norway*

**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...”*

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

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## EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

# Contribute to *the* Work

*This month, a reader shares her thoughts on mission fields.*

In a few days I will turn 81. So what, you say. That is nothing remarkable; and in a sense, I agree. So many people in these days of better medical care are achieving considerably more years than that. But it is enough years to have observed amazing changes. Changes that as a child and young person I wouldn't even have known to dream of.

It's all in the history books—the developments that have occurred in the past century and that are happening on virtually a daily basis. They are too numerous to mention in a short article.

But the changes I am thinking of have to do with the evolution of our Adventist Church. I recall that as a child, when a person or family went to the “mission field,” the farewells given them were seriously regarded as possibly permanent. And, sadly, often they were. Our prayers usually included, “and bless the missionaries in the foreign fields.” We had not the vaguest notion of where that “foreign field” was, or any clue about the people who lived there. Until one magical Sabbath morning when a tiny edge of the curtain was lifted.

A man with beautiful black hair, and who was wearing a “dress,” came to our small church. I was very young, but I remember his name was Kata Ragaso. My young heart was thrilled, and a desire to support mission work was born within me. It is a desire that has stayed with me all these years. My husband and I even became some of those “missionaries in a foreign field” for a time.

Today, by the magic of modern technology, the beautiful message of Christ's saving grace can fly around the world in seconds. But all these technologies do not happen without a cost. We may not be able to go personally, but we can surely do our part to enable those who can go—we can have our dollars ride one of those beams of light that go flying around the world.

We sing “Joy to the World” at Christmastime, but think of the absolute, unbelievable joy that will be ours when we meet people in God's kingdom who are there because our dollars, even pennies, helped bring the message of Jesus' love to them.

—JEANE DE HAVEN,  
*Sequim, Washington, United States*



GRZEGORZ KWIATKOWSKI

# The PEOPLE'S PLACE

## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

A Romanian criminal, once labeled the country's fourth most dangerous, is choosing to forgo parole after becoming a Seventh-day Adventist. He would rather stay in prison to share his newfound faith.

Valeriu Curin, 33, was a household name in the southeastern European country 11 years ago for his involvement in organized crime.

Curin was one of eight life-term inmates to step into a portable baptismal tank July 21 in a prison in the city of Craiova and declare commitment to a Christian life.

George Uba, who oversees personal ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania, said Curin, an avid reader, finally picked up a Bible in his cell after years of neglecting it. Curin gradually immersed himself in the power of God's Word, Uba said.

And it changed his life.

His life sentence in prison allows him to request parole after 20 years, but good behavior has given him the option to apply after 11 years. Instead, Curin is choosing to waive his right, remain in prison, and lead others to Christ, Uba said.

—Rajmund Dabrowski/  
Adventist News

Network



## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



JENNIFER MAE BARIZO

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*“We are living on the threshold of God’s next great move; what an awesome time to be loving and serving the Lord!”*

—Bob Burgess, guest speaker at the Hong Kong, Stubbs Road Adventist Hospital Church, Hong Kong, China

## ADVENTIST LIFE

I’m just a little old 94-year-old widow and, with the help of the Lord, still able to take care of myself. I even drive my own car!

I remember when I first heard the wonderful Adventist message. I thought, *This is the way it is and this is the way you have to live*. I soon learned that it doesn’t work quite like that—it is not that easy.

When the roll is called up yonder, we may not (as sad as it will be) hear the names of some of our precious loved ones. I may not hear *my* name if I do not have enough oil in my lamp (the Holy Spirit) to guide me all the way.

What can I do? I earnestly pray that I not only make it myself, but that I get to shake the hand of everyone whose name is on the church books!

—Leona Macy, Pulaski, Virginia, United States

ANSWER: In Costa Rica, a little boy who attends one of our Adventist schools there, warmly hugs his friend, a little spotted dog.