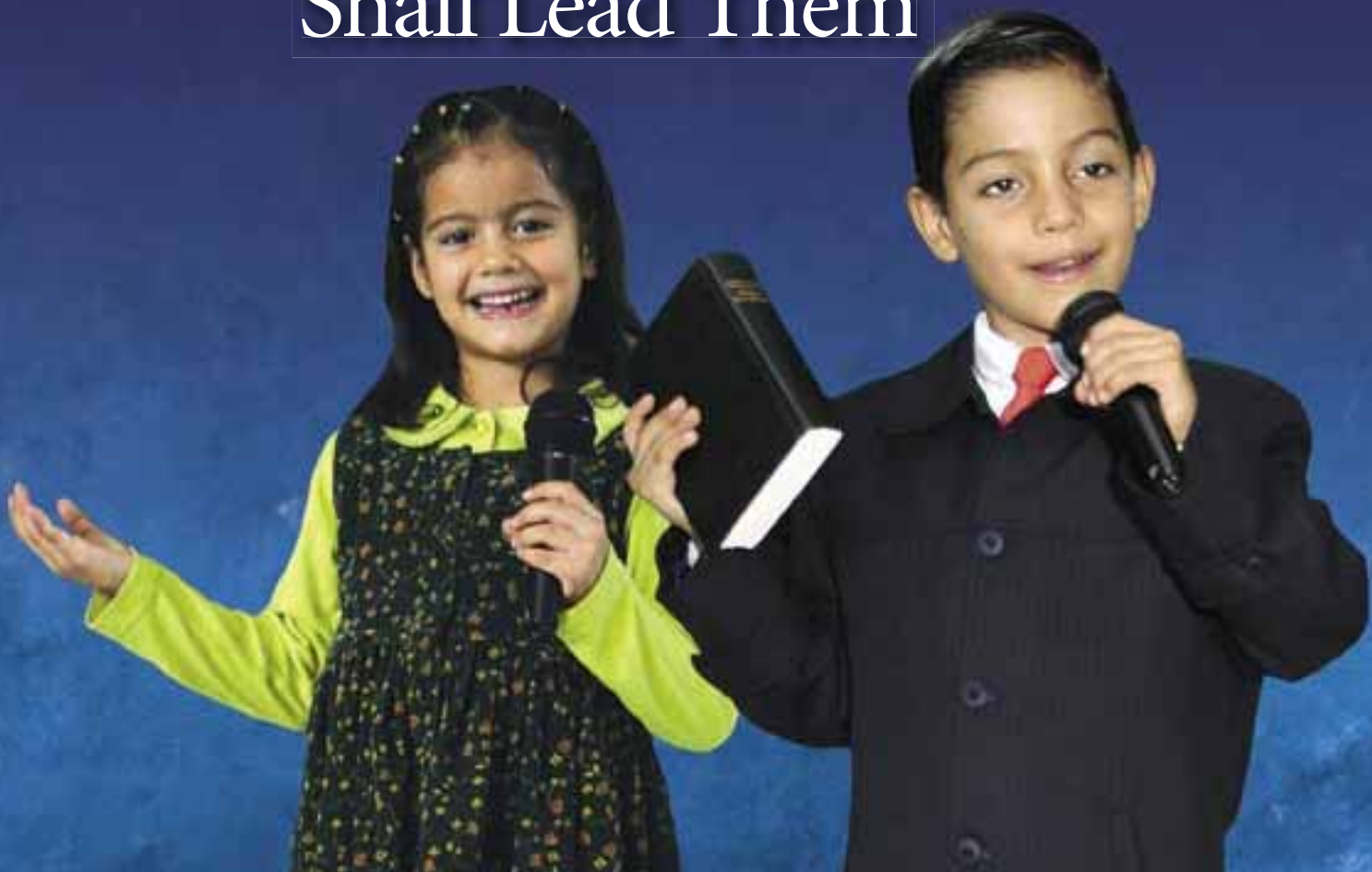


January 2008

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From the EDITOR'S PEN

The One at the Center

Nearly 90 years ago, the Irish poet William Butler Yeats lamented the certainty of chaos in a sin-stained world. In a mystic poem he titled “The Second Coming,” Yeats announced “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.”

Yeats’s declaration was one of the most-quoted lines of his era. It was both an assertion of fact and a prophecy of the most violent and anarchic century the world has ever known. In a world that lacks a central and organizing belief in a good God, the natural centrifugal force of bodies in motion spins persons, groups, cultures, and societies off into random and violent collisions. “The blood-dimmed tide is loosed,” Yeats despaired, “and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned.”

But Christians generally and Adventists specifically view life through a vastly different lens. Though we cannot help but agree that the world is going mad with pride, lust, envy,

violence—all the so-called “deadly” sins—we affirm that there is a cohesive force at the center of all things that preserves what elements of rationality and goodness are still available in this world. “He (Christ) is before all things,” the apostle Paul wrote in a hymn that only Christ could have inspired, “and in Him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17, NASB).

The simple fact of gathering to worship the risen Lord is a testimony to His cohesive power—in His church and in the wider world. The godly desire we find in our souls to meet with other Christians, to learn from them and pray with them, is a witness to His authority over the otherwise chaotic forces that threaten our peace. The presence of this remnant people in the world—all 15 million of us—as a people of hope and a community of faith reminds a despairing world that we are not destined for a meaningless end. Through the power of the One who holds all things together, including His precious church, we may live with joy and confidence as we wait for the true Second Coming.

We raise this hymn in the night and lostness of a groaning world: In Christ, things hold together. Christ the center holds His people with a great and tender tenacity.

—BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

Oliver Tapped as South Pacific Adventist Leader First Pacific Islander to serve as general secretary

Leaders of the South Pacific Division (SPD) Executive Committee have elected Barry Oliver, the current general secretary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific, as the new president for the region.

Laurie Evans, president of the SPD since 1998, announced his retirement at the November 13, 2007, meeting.

During his term as president, Evans oversaw a major reorganization of resources (reducing the number of administrative positions to free up money) during his term. He also directed a legal restructure that has seen the incorporation of the Sanitarium Health Food Company and Sydney Adventist Hospital,

known as “the San.” Evans was known as a strong advocate for using modern technology, notably satellite television and video conferencing, to carry out the mission of the church.

Oliver has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific as a minister, evangelist, lecturer, and administrator. He is married to Julie, a teacher, and has three sons.

Oliver grew up as an Adventist in Goulburn, New South Wales. He attended Avondale College, the church’s Cooranbong, New South Wales-based, tertiary institution, completing a bachelor’s degree in theology. In 1973, the Olivers accepted a call to minister in southern Queensland. They cared



PRAYING TOGETHER: From left, Barry Oliver, Lawrence Tanabose, retiring SPD president Laurie Evans, and world church president Jan Paulsen unite in prayer during divisional meetings in which Oliver was elected SPD president and Tanabose general secretary of the division.

NATHAN BROWN/RECORD

WORLD REPORT

for churches in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, in southern Brisbane, and on the Darling Downs during the next five years. Oliver was ordained as a minister in 1976.

The church called Oliver to serve as district supervisor, evangelist, and university chaplain for the Port Moresby district of Papua New Guinea at the end of 1978. He transferred to Rabaul as president of the church's New Britain/New Ireland Mission after one year. Oliver joined the theology faculty at Avondale five years later and completed his master's in religion.

Oliver and his family moved to Andrews University in Michigan, U.S.A., at the end of 1985. He completed a doctorate in Christian ministry and mission with a focus on Adventist organizational structure. He returned to Avondale for nine years, and developed a field-based ministerial training program integrating theory with practice. He also pioneered evangelistic training that helped students prepare hundreds of people for baptism.

Oliver was elected general secretary of the South Pacific Division in 1997. He served for 10 years as the second officer of that church region.

A much-published author, Oliver has written more than 100 articles for church periodicals, including cover features for both *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines.

Replacing Oliver as general secretary, Lawrence Tanabose has become the first Pacific Islander to be appointed as an officer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific.

Currently president of the Trans-Pacific Union Mission (TPUM), Tanabose and his wife, Rosina, have served the Adventist Church since 1974. He was elected TPUM president in 2005. Nearly 90,000 church members reside in the Trans-Pacific region, which includes countries such as Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Vanuatu, and

the Solomon Islands.

In his first year as president, Tanabose oversaw the formation of a single administrative structure for the church in the Solomon Islands. Previously, three missions—Eastern Solomon Islands Mission, Malaita Mission, and Western Solomon Islands Mission—cared for the 34,387 church members in 417 organized churches and companies in the Solomons.

Tanabose, 54, was born in Papua New Guinea to Solomon Islander missionary parents. He has served the church as a Bible lecturer, pastor, field evangelist, departmental director, and general secretary in the TPUM. As a representative for the Adventist Church, he has also worked closely with governments in Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Fiji.

He holds a diploma in administration and a masters degree in theology. He and his wife have a daughter and three sons. Known for his passion for evangelism and a desire to bring people to Christ, Tanabose still preaches evangelistic campaigns regularly.

World church president Jan Paulsen oversaw the nomination of division officers. A division president is also a vice president of the GC, and, as such, the recommendation of the SPD Executive Committee is submitted to the GC Executive Committee for ratification.

Paulsen expressed appreciation to Evans for his leadership. "We have worked closely together, and I have always appreciated Laurie's experience and creative participation in the work of the global church," he reflected. "And I think the work in this division has been looked after well.

"I am also extremely delighted with the recommendation that is now being brought," said Paulsen in congratulating Oliver on his nomination.

Oliver said, "I have always been

amazed at how I have been content working in a role and God has—seemingly out of the blue—moved me to a different place of service."

He shared Julie's reaction to the news of his appointment with committee members. "She said to me, 'We've always believed that where the Lord calls and what He asks us to do, He will help us to do it. And this is no different.' I will covet your prayers and I will pray for you."

Oliver said he is excited about the possibilities and particularly the people of the church in the South Pacific. "We need to keep doing the things we've done well and find better ways to do the things we have not done as well as we could have," he comments. "I want the church to be open to where God is leading us and to be ready and willing to go there. I would like to see the church utilizing its full potential, using the diversity in the church and our various gifts to further our mission together."

—by *Melody Tan*, communication director, South Pacific Division, and *Nathan Brown*, editor, Record.

NETHERLANDS: Membership Up, New Leaders Elected in Year-end Meetings

■ Wim Altink, a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in The Hague, Netherlands, is the new president of the church in that country, one of Europe's most secular, "postmodern" nations. A longtime local church pastor, Altink succeeds Reinder Bruinsma, veteran church leader, who announced his retirement.

Two other leadership changes were announced: Gerard Frenk, who has served for 15 years as Sabbath school director and secretary of the Ministerial Association, is the new general secretary, while J. Andre Amsen was elected treasurer.

During the past five years, membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Netherlands



NORTH SEA BAPTISM: Wim Altink, at left in photo, baptizes a 17-year-old in the chilly waters of the North Sea in March 2004. A

longtime local church pastor, Altink is now president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Netherlands.

AW FILE PHOTO

has increased nearly 5 percent, and from baptisms, not immigration, local church leaders announced during recent leadership meetings. Total Adventist Church membership stands at approximately 5,000 in a nation of 16.6 million people.

A key item was the adoption of a statement about “Unity in Diversity in the Dutch Adventist Church.” The document went through an intense preparatory process and is intended to offer guidelines as to how a constructive dialogue can be fostered in the midst of considerable diversity in theological viewpoints and ethical standpoints. In recent years the Dutch church has become increasingly multicultural and multiethnic. Church leadership has stimulated a proactive approach to facing these challenges, recognizing the possibilities for enhanced growth and mutual enrichment.

Sixteen recommendations were processed by the Plans Committee and were approved on the floor by the 170 delegates. The recommendations

covered a wide range of issues from evangelism and youth work to an innovative approach for using the Internet for both internal communication and also for training.

In remarks at the closing ceremony, Bruinsma briefly referred to the words Moses spoke to his successor about expecting total support from God. Altink urged delegates to focus on the importance of the church community as a force of healing in the world.

—AW Staff, with reporting from the *Netherlands Union*

POLAND: Adventists Join Other Protestants in Denouncing Attacks on Martin Luther

■ Protestant leaders in one of Poland’s largest cities have condemned a poster campaign denouncing Martin Luther, the 16th-century German Protestant leader, as a blasphemer and heretic, a news release by Ecumenical News International reported.

“What would happen if someone hung placards outside a Catholic church attacking the ‘blasphemy and heresy of John Paul II,’ or the ‘blasphemy of Muhammad’ at a mosque?” asked Mariusz Maikowski, a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lublin in eastern Poland. “These actions are clearly illegal [in Poland], yet the local council has said and done nothing,” Maikowski told ENI.

According to the release, the

posters were captioned: “The blasphemy and heresy of Martin Luther,” and pictured a devil whispering in the Protestant reformer’s ear.

They were displayed throughout Lublin to advertise lectures by Ryszard Mozgol, an official with Poland’s National Remembrance Institute, the body charged with handling the records of the country’s communist-era secret police.

The lectures were held on October 15 and 31, the four hundred and ninetieth anniversary of Luther’s Protestant Reformation, and were planned by the Organization of Polish Monarchists. Founded in 1989, the group claims to have several thousand members and seeks to establish a “Catholic State” within Poland.

Of Poland’s 38 million people, 95 percent are Catholic.

“It’s shocking and unbelievable that depictions of Luther as anti-Christ could still be appearing in the 21st century,” Maikowski told ENI.

Maikowski said the campaign had “caused deep offense” to Lublin’s Protestant and Orthodox communities. He also said local prosecutors should mount an investigation.

The Rev. Dariusz Chwastek, a Lutheran pastor from Lublin, described the posters as “highly damaging.” Chwastek, who oversees Lublin’s Holy Trinity parish, said, “I think too much blood has flowed, and too many stakes been burned, to reignite these disputes again centuries later.”

The monarchist organization’s president, Lukasz Kluska, refused to apologize and was quoted by Poland’s *Dziennik Wschodni* newspaper as saying that minority church representatives could have presented their opinions during the lecture.

—by Jonathan Luxmoore, *Ecumenical News International*, with Adventist News Network Staff



SUPPORTING THE REFORMATION: Mariusz Maikowski, a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lublin in eastern Poland, voiced the concerns of many Protestants in the country when he said a recent ad campaign linking Protestant reformer Martin Luther with a devil was “shocking” and “deeply offending.”

ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK PHOTO

WORLD REPORT

CUBA: Standing Room Only for “House of Light” Church Dedication

World church president visits island, division holds meetings

By RAJMUND DABROWSKI, director of communication, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, writing from Buey Arriba, Cuba

When church officials and guests joined a 500-strong crowd for the opening of a new house of worship in Buey Arriba, it was Raul Alvarez who received the loudest applause.

A recently retired pastor, Alvarez was given a hero's welcome for his contribution to a Seventh-day Adventist congregation, which on Sunday, November 4, officially dedicated a new sanctuary.

Once a political advisor to the leaders of the Cuban revolution, in the early 1960s Alvarez embraced Adventism and answered a different calling. Until recently, he served as president of the church in the region.

Joining hundreds of others for a standing-room-only ribbon-cutting ceremony, Alvarez couldn't hide his emotions. Years of trying to build a sanctuary with limited resources culminated on that Sunday evening with joyful tears and embraces.

Referred to as the “Buey Arriba House of Light,” the church—a pastor's home in which the living room can seat a 200-member congregation—celebrated in style.

Heavy rains on the day of the celebration delayed the arrival of leaders from U.S.-based Maranatha Volunteers International (MVI)—an organization responsible for building the sanctuary—along with officials of the Adventist Church. When they arrived at 6:00 p.m., they were already two hours late for the ceremony. But a crowd of more than 500 people packed into the sanctuary built to seat just 250.

Laura Noble of MVI remembers visiting the Buey Arriba house of worship a few years ago. In her many travels, this was one of the few places that really scared her, she recalled. The roof was made of very heavy red tile held up with a framework of sticks nailed at the apex with a single nail at each joint. Worse yet, she remembers, every stick was absolutely riddled with termite holes.

The need for a new house of worship became acute as the congregation grew to 200, according to Adalberto



Left: PACKED OUT: A crowd of more than 500 at the Buey Arriba House of Light filled every available seat and

even a few windowsills during the sanctuary's dedication November 4. The house of worship is one of many in Cuba that serve as both pastors' residences and sanctuaries. **Right:** CUBA DISCUSSIONS: During a four-day visit to Cuba, Adventist Church world president Jan Paulsen discussed the church's position in the country with Daniel Fontaine, president of the Adventist Church on the island nation, which this November hosted regional church meetings for the first time in 62 years.

RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

Gonzalez, church pastor. Instead of approving the plans for a church building, however, the Cuban government extended permission to build a “House of Light.”

A Maranatha House of Light acts as both a home to the pastor and his family and as a house of worship. “But it looks suspiciously like a church!” Noble said. Following the dedication ceremony, 10 new candidates were baptized.

Daniel Fontaine, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cuba, expressed gratitude for the House of Light in Buey Arriba. “It is very meaningful for us. We at least can have one place, one light, where people can go in search of the peace and hope that only Jesus Christ can give.

“And for our country to let us have a place like that,” he said, “we are very thankful.”

Across the island, in Havana, the Adventist Church in Cuba welcomed Jan Paulsen, president of the Adventist world church. On Friday, November 2, Paulsen joined 80 delegates of the church's Inter-American (IAD) region attending an annual meeting of its executive committee. Caridad Diego, the head of the country's Religious Affairs Office, welcomed Paulsen at the Havana airport.

Speaking at a Sabbath worship service in Havana's Vibora Adventist Church, Paulsen told church members, “I feel the strength of your commitment and spirituality. There is so much fire in your soul.”

Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, said, “This visit to Cuba is very significant, especially for the church and the government in Cuba.”

Although Cuba is one of the 15 major territories in the region, it has not hosted the IAD Executive Committee meetings in 62 years, according to church sources. For two years, in the mid-1940s, the Inter-American Division was headquartered in Cuba. With more than 3 million members in 36 countries, Inter-America represents the largest region in the Adventist world church. ●

WINDOW

Into Thailand

Thailand is a nation with natural beauty, a rich culture, and a distinct religious heritage. Inhabiting “the Land of Smiles,” the people of Thailand are known for their warm hospitality and polite manner.

Thailand is the only nation in southeast Asia that was never colonized by a European power. It has been ruled by the Chakri dynasty since 1782, although in 1932 the nation became a constitutional monarchy. The year 2007 marked the sixtieth year of King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s reign. Although the king does not preside over the day-to-day affairs of government, the people look to him with affection and respect.

While the majority of Thai are Buddhists, other people groups live throughout the nation. The southern part of Thailand is predominately Muslim. This region has experienced violence during the past few years as tension between various groups has erupted. The current government is negotiating with leaders of various groups in the south to bring peace to the region.

The largest ethnic minority group in Thailand is Thai-Chinese, and many Thai-Chinese play a large role in the businesses of the nation. An estimated 49 percent of the residents of Bangkok are of partial Chinese heritage.

Other groups include Hmong, Shan, Khmer, Karen, Mien, Akka, Lahu and other tribal groups that inhabit the northern reaches of the country. Missionary outreach has been most effective among these groups, while the ethnic Thai majority remain difficult to reach with the gospel, remaining loyal to their Buddhist heritage.



THAILAND

Capital	Bangkok
Languages	Thai, English, ethnic and regional dialects
Religion	Buddhist 94.6 percent, Muslim 4.6 percent, Christian 0.7 percent
Population	65 million
Adventist membership	11,555
Adventist-to-population ratio	1:5,625
Ministers	35 ordained, 34 licensed
Churches and companies	40 organized churches, 81 companies



IMAGES BY RICK McEDWARD

Adventists in Thailand

The first Adventist pioneer, R. A. Caldwell, arrived in Thailand in 1906 to distribute Adventist literature. More than 10 years later other colporteurs arrived and discovered Sabbathkeeping groups in Bangkok. A Chinese businessman, Tan Thiam Tsua, settled in Bangkok and helped establish the first Adventist church in the country. The early work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church grew among Chinese living in Bangkok. The Thailand Adventist Mission was established in 1919 by missionary families, those of E. L. Longway and Forrest A. Pratt.

The development of Adventist institutions has played a key role in the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Thailand. Mission College offers four-year degrees in both Thai and English, and has added a master’s program. Several secondary and elementary schools operate in various parts of the country, with an active English language school in Bangkok. There are two hospitals: Bangkok Adventist Hospital and Mission Hospital Phuket. Mission Health Foods operates a factory that produces and distributes various health food products. Following the December 2004 tsunami, both ADRA/Thailand and Mission Hospital Phuket played key roles in the recovery efforts.

One of the biggest challenges to mission is in the Bangkok region, where only seven organized churches reach out to more than 10 million people. In 2006 several community outreach centers were opened to teach English to nearby residents. Each outreach center has a team made up of one foreign English language teacher and one Thai church planter.

Today more than 11,000 church members serve God in Thailand. The Thailand Mission, in partnership with Global Mission and other supporting ministries, has started 81 new congregations or companies throughout the nation. The new congregations, along with the outreach done by members, institutions, and churches, indicate that the future for the church in Thailand is bright with the hope of eternity.

Prepared by Rick McEdward, Adventist Mission director, Southern Asia-Pacific Division

WORLD VISTA

S H A R E D Responsibility, T S H A R E D Trust

This article is adapted from a sermon given by Pastor Jan Paulsen, General Conference president, on Sabbath, October 13, at Annual Council—a gathering of church leaders from every division of the world church.

The apostle Paul is confronted with a dilemma that he describes in 1 Corinthians 8 to 10. It's a dilemma faced by every church leader, whether their assignment is within the local congregation or church administration. It's a dilemma that goes to the heart of church unity.

The question before Paul is this: how do you counsel people about eating meat that has been offered to idols? His conclusion is this: "As for me I don't believe in idols—they are nothing to me—so, I can eat meat offered to idols without doing damage to myself."

But, he says—and this is the critical point—if the exercise of my freedom causes damage to you, then it is wrong and not in harmony with the will of Christ. My exercise of freedom and the choices I make must be disciplined by love and concern for those who may be affected by it. This biblical principle must define the actions of all who exercise church leadership. "Everything is permissible," Paul says, "but not everything is beneficial." And he adds: "Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (1 Cor. 10:23, 24, NIV). And then he concludes by saying: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (11:1, NIV).

Clearly, for Paul the issue is not food. Food is just the illustration. The real issue is: What values should govern our decisions and actions? His answer is clear: consideration and deference. It is about being willing to forgo rights rather than assert them. It is about asking: if I do this—which I think I have every right to do—how will others be impacted? It is a recognition that our duty to others is greater than our

duty to ourselves. This passage is about discovering what it means to be part of something larger than any of us and our immediate communities. And it's a principle that is critically important to us as a global church.

I would like to draw out, perhaps using some license, a few thoughts that we can take from this passage.

1. Learning to trust. It is good to be able to share resources while at the same time letting go of the controls. Without trust, we cannot function as a church. You and I have our designated areas of responsibility. Let's do our best there, and trust others to look after the life and mission of the church where they are. All of us will eventually be held accountable—perhaps in this life, but certainly in the one to come—for how we have performed.

2. Accepting differences. Paul's words also offer counsel about accepting that which is different from me and my way of thinking. "Acceptance" does not necessarily mean that I take it on as mine, but that I refrain from judging its value to others who live in different circumstances and cultures. We are not all children of the same culture, but we all share the same family ties. We are bonded in unity, and we have to trust each other to do right.

3. Understanding the essentials. There is a hint in this passage that tells us to be sensitive to what is at the heart of the Adventist faith, and what is not; that we must not unduly elevate a particular perspective that occupies me and impose it on others; that I must not overrate the value of my particular culture as I relate to others.

4. Nurturing family ties. Very fundamentally, this passage has to do with nurturing the bonds that hold us together as a "family," for that is what the global Seventh-day Adventist Church is. You support this family because of your love and loyalty to the Lord and His people. You will give no support to those who seem bent on offering—or



SANDRA BLACKMER

Commitment to unity

The church is unique. It is not only God's idea, but it is a community of the highest value to God. Ellen White wrote: "Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard."* The church is deeply loved by God. It is the "theater of His grace," and He has an unwavering commitment to it. The message from Scripture, from the pen of Ellen White, and from our own history tells us that God wants this church to stay united.

From time to time issues come up that test our commitment to unity. And this is when shared trust and shared responsibility provide guideposts for moving forward.

perhaps even more dangerously, feel "called" to give—judgmental statements and messages of negative criticism, which become an offense to the Lord and harassment of the church and its leaders. That habit is harmful and destructive to the church as a family.

5. Representing Christ and His values. In everything I do, says Paul, I want Christ to look good. Although I am free, I make myself a slave—I discipline myself—for the sake of Christ, the gospel, and His people. Whatever I do, says Paul, I do it "so that I might win as many as possible," and so that the voice of Christ and His love for the church may be clear and compelling.

This mind-set of shared responsibility and shared trust, for the sake of Christ and the unity of the church, defines Adventist leadership. The church is far from a perfect community. But the church is God's people, the body of Christ, and looking after the church is an act of worship.

Whatever our sphere of responsibility, there is always a temptation to become distracted by tasks given to someone else, or by interesting challenges out there that we wouldn't mind taking on. You may receive unsolicited requests for intervention in something that is happening elsewhere in the world church. You may feel drawn into it because you feel you have the solution. My counsel is: "Don't." You probably haven't got the full picture. I frequently get what I call "10 percent stories"—it is in the 90 percent that I am not told that the true substance of the issue is found. Focus instead on the tasks you have been chosen to handle. Allow others to deal with the responsibilities they have been entrusted with. To the extent they succeed or fail, they will have to answer to the Lord, as will each one of us.

What you do as a leader in the church, do it with love for the Lord and His people, do it with integrity, and keep your heart clean. And, somehow, I think that is all the Lord expects of any of us.

Shared belief

I know of nothing that has the potential of dividing the church more than theology itself. It has always been like that. Some of you who are students of church history may remember from your reading that many centuries ago a controversy arose that split the church of the East from the West, Constantinople from Rome, and the Orthodox Church and Western Christianity parted ways. The heart of the issue became known as the "filioque" controversy. It had to do with the procession of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension. Eastern Christianity said that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father; the Western Church added "and from the Son." And that divided the church.

As Seventh-day Adventists we have strong convictions regarding doctrines and theology. That should not surprise any of us. It has to do with our roots and our self-understanding. It has to do with eschatology, and it has very much to do with preparing a people to be ready for Christ's return.

I say to all church leaders: we have the statement of 28 Fundamental Beliefs. They hold together our core identity in terms of faith and doctrine. Resist any tendency to pluck out strains from any of these and make them into a separate and new doctrine that will divide the Seventh-day Adventist global community! We are in such rapid global growth today as a church, and to me it is important that we have the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, as stated, understood and held to by all the new members who are joining us. That in itself is a monumental task. The wonderful fact that we are growing rapidly around the globe is also our great challenge, and we cannot afford to become distracted.

WORLD VISTA

Finding consensus

There are also such challenges as the oft-discussed matter of the role of women in ministry. It is a concern that keeps surfacing from time to time, whether in my conversations with young adults or during a recent televised conversation with a group of pastors from North America. And some ask: “Do we have to keep talking about this?” Well, it seems so. We may well be of the opinion that we should have handled it differently from the beginning. But we consulted together as a global family and we came to a decision. We shared in the process and we share the outcome, and we cannot step out of our shared past and say: “I don’t like it! Whatever others may think, I will

How do we do mission in an imperfect world, surrounded by legal and social values we cannot accept?

correct in my little corner of the vineyard what I think was a mistake.” It does not work like that in the church. Before we embark on a new course, particularly in a difficult and potentially divisive matter, a broad-based consensus of leadership must, listening to each other, conclude that the time has come to think differently.

The greater concern of many women who feel called to the ministry, and who have pursued professional training, is not the ordination issue, but just being employed in ministry. Local churches are reluctant, and conferences find them difficult to place. This I think is a most unfortunate failure. Young people, both men and women, must follow the calling God has placed within them. We are going to need everyone to finish our mission and for God to usher in eternity.

Mission in an imperfect world

Secular society and the church share the same world, but are divided by some important values. And society will test our conduct in some of these areas. Marriage, cohabitation, and same-sex partnerships are already issues

within both the larger society and the church. Laws will increasingly impact our conduct as a church, perhaps particularly in employment matters and in the way we run our institutions. I see tension ahead between our being fair to all and not attracting litigation on the one hand while, on the other, holding fast to important biblical values. We are a law-abiding people, obedient citizens of any country; but obedience to God takes first priority. It is important that we do not lose sight of that when the values of two different worlds collide.

But even when that happens and things get difficult, we have to ask ourselves: how do we do mission in an imperfect world, surrounded by legal and social values we cannot accept? In such a scenario I believe we have to remember that we are called to do mission in a world where sin abounds. In some instances, the laws of the land may restrict us in our public response to that which we do not condone or share. This is difficult, but this is the world in which we live, and we cannot step out of it. This is where we have been placed to do mission.

Obedience

So, what is it that really matters, when all is said and done, to us individually and personally, as well as to us as leaders of the church we believe is God’s community in these last days of earth’s history? If I were to express it with just one word I would probably use the word “obedience”—obedience to God. For obedience expresses the practical side of faith; its reference point is always someone or something outside my own person. Faith has no other way of expressing itself.

How should those who lead the church respond to difficult issues; how should we approach decisions where the consequences are uncertain or unpredictable? If, after we have talked the matter through and prayed about it, and our mind finds rest with what we believe is right, it is important that the prospect of uncertain consequences does not hinder us from moving forward. If you are clear about what is right, just do it. Don’t be political. Keep your heart clean. Be self-critical with reference to potential conflicts of interest and then just do what you know is right. You will sleep better for it, for you did your best to be loyal and obedient to God. In an uncertain world with an uncertain future, that is, I believe, the only safe stand church leaders can take. ●

*The Acts of the Apostles, p. 12



My doctor diagnosed me with interstitial cystitis, but I am having considerable difficulties. Do you have any advice?

Interstitial cystitis (IC) is a chronic inflammation of the bladder that is poorly understood. Study of its epidemiology, or patterns, has given some insight, but the essential question about cause has not been identified. For example, people who have a family history of IC are at greater risk for developing the disorder, and even people who were bed wetters past the age of 5 years have a greater possibility of having it. IC occurs much more commonly in women. It is characterized by bladder problems of urinary urgency, frequency, and pain in the lower abdomen. Many people are diagnosed initially as having a recurrent urinary tract infection, but such a diagnosis requires a urine culture, not just a positive dipstick. So if cultures are not done, the true diagnosis can be missed.

Newer understanding of the condition is leading doctors to believe it is a more common problem than was earlier thought to be the case. As many as 200 of a 1,000-patient group may have a degree of the disorder. It is often associated with other symptoms such as irritable bowel syndrome, or a condition in women called vulvodynia (or pain). It is believed that the longer a person has pain, urgency, frequency, and bladder dysfunction, the harder it is to get cured.

A mechanism exists by which chronic pain sensitizes the nerves in the spinal cord to increase in number and activity, and there may

Interstitial Cystitis

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

be a spillover of sensitivity into other organs in the area, causing irritability and pain. About 80 percent of patients with interstitial cystitis develop an irritability of the pelvic muscles, called the pelvic sling, or levator ani muscles. These may become spastic, resulting in chronic pelvic tenderness, and can interfere with sexual function. The muscles may be palpably tense and felt by a doctor as tight bands. The longer a patient goes untreated, the more difficult it is to get a good response.

Many persons benefit from dietary and fluid changes. Spicy, acidic, and heavy citrus intakes may irritate the bladder. Caffeine and coffee irritate the bladder of many with this syndrome. Some people reduce their fluid intake in a desire to cut down on the number of times they void, but this may result in an increased concentration of irritating substances in the urine.

A urinary diary will permit documentation of how many times a person actually voids in 24 hours (which is normally about eight times on average).

Management of IC is not always easy because it takes patience and discipline. The first step is to modify the diet and regulate water intake. A diet that is more alkaline, such as a vegetarian diet, may well be helpful.

It is also important to have your doctor be certain of the diagnosis. He or she may wish to perform some tests, which may involve a questionnaire, the instillation of potassium chloride

into the bladder, or even an anesthetic solution. Cystoscopy used to be the gold standard test; but while it can confirm classic cases, it may miss the early ones—which respond best to treatment.

Treatment aims at preventing the up-regulation of the pain pathways, and so avoids a widening of the discomfort zone. This often uses a medication called amitriptyline in low doses. Another medication helps make the bladder wall less permeable to irritants, but this medication, Elmiron (pentosan polysulfate), may take weeks to work. Muscle-relaxing medications may be used to relax the pelvic sling muscles, and in this area massage or even electrical stimulation at high frequency has often reduced the pelvic pain and discomfort dramatically. A team approach of gynecologists, urologists, physical therapists, dieticians, and nurse practitioners is often required to give the best results.



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PREPARING TO Grow Apples

By D. REID
McCRARY

*The experience
taught me a thing or
two about people.*

Several of the terms and expressions in this article may be peculiar to the United States. But we believe readers will have little difficulty relating them to experiences wherever they happen to live in the world.—EDITORS

My wife and I wanted to put in a little orchard in our backyard. So we got out the catalogs and mulled over the virtues not only of the different types of fruit but also the different varieties of the same fruit. Because of the limited space of our property, however, we settled on



D. Reid McCrary and his wife, Marilyn, have retired after a career of team teaching in small schools in the North

Pacific Union Conference. They live in the hills of Orofino, Idaho.

just two apple trees and one plum tree.

Then the fun began.

From those garden books and catalogs we quickly became inundated with a multitude of mind-boggling choices. What at first had seemed an easy five-minute decision now turned into a maze of possibilities.

An Apple Is an Apple? Not Really.

We suddenly found ourselves with more than two dozen varieties of apples vying for our attention, with only a handful that we recognized—such as Red Delicious, Jonathan, and Winesap. But most of them we'd never heard of before—with names like Holland, North Spy, and Buckley Giant.

The choice was still simple enough, I thought. Just pick one we grew up with and enjoyed. But not so. We grew up quite ignorantly, I might add, in a (so-called) zone 17 area. But we were now living in a zone 1 area (or was it

zone 2?). On top of that, we had to decide whether we wanted to eat our apples in June, July, August, or even later. In addition, whether we wanted red ones, dark red ones, green ones, green ones with red stripes, or red ones with green stripes. Should it be lunch-box size or big enough for two?

Then we had to decide whether we liked tart or sweet, crisp or “tender-fleshed.” Did we want to use them in pies for Sabbath dinner? For applesauce? Did we want dried apples for Christmas gifts? Or did we just want to eat our apples off the tree? What kind would keep over long winters in the basement?

In making our final selection, we had to consider almost a dozen different apple characteristics. They were all apples, of course, but they each took sunlight, water, and nutrients and rearranged them in a singular fashion, making each one unique in color, taste, use, etc. We've

since learned that there are *thousands* of different varieties of apples!

And after we'd made our momentous (and enlightened) decision, we realized we hadn't even gotten to the pears and plums.

For novice "orchardists," this was not an easy decision. Even though it would have made the choices much easier to have had only one kind of apple, I'm thankful for the wide variety God offers us.

I Can See Better Now.

After that mind-boggling adventure through the gardening catalogs, I could understand more clearly than ever before the diversity of the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22, 23 (KJV). Says the apostle: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...."

If we were to go to the heavenly Gardener's catalog and peruse the varieties of love He has listed (not to mention joy, peace, patience, etc.), I believe we would find as many varieties as there are human beings who have ever lived.

In choosing apples, we had to consider climate zones, shape, size, taste, maturation dates, color, texture, resistance to disease, need of pollinators, and use. When I

consider the "climate zones," "flavor," "resistance to disease," "use," etc., that make us who we are, the possible combinations seem limitless.

All of the following factors, plus many, many more, help shape our own personal uniqueness:

1. Climate Zones. What was the country in which you grew up? Was it democratic? Communist? Fascist? Did you live in a time of depression or affluence? Did you live in a big family or a small one? With a single parent or with both parents? Were they fighting parents or gentle parents? What kind of brothers and sisters did you have? Which child were you—the first? the middle? the last? Did you live in an abusive or in an accepting climate?

2. Flavor. Was your culture reserved or expressive? Did you grow up in a Christian home? Of what nationality are you? Did you grow up in a "racist" home or in a home that was the victim of racism or prejudice? What about your cultural ties? Your personality type? Your likes and dislikes, your temperament?

3. Resistance to Disease. What inherited or cultivated tendencies to evil do you have? With what defects were you born? What health problems did you inherit?

4. Use. What abilities, talents, and education did you receive?

Truly it takes heavenly computers to keep track of it all. This experience has helped me to realize that if I'm a transparent apple, who am I to tell a Granny Smith that she is too slow in maturing? Or if I'm a Gravenstein (whose flavor gets richer and fuller through heat and pressure, and is poured out into applesauce jars), how can I criticize a Red June, which, by nature, is good for fresh eating. How can I criticize it for being too "tender-fleshed" to take the heat? Or perhaps I'm a Jonathan that doesn't need a pollinator. Does that give me the right to chastise a McIntosh just because it needs extra help?

Respecting Our Differences

It all reminds me of the chapter in *Ministry of Healing*, entitled "In Contact With Others." It begins with these words (p. 483): "Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth or our ideas in regard to the conduct of life are not in all respects the same. There are no two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light are to another most difficult and perplexing."

It also helps to give new meaning to the text from Psalm 87:6 (KJV): "The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there."

As we live in the "orchards" of society, we all take the same sunlight, the same water, the same nutrients. But we rearrange them in a unique fashion to make us special expressions of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. ●

Did you live in a big family or a small one? With a single parent or with both parents? Were they fighting parents or gentle parents?



No one is beyond the reach of God, even those serving time in prison—people who have robbed, murdered, and abused others. They too are of inestimable value to our heavenly Father, and we are instructed in Matthew 25 not to neglect them (see verses 31-46). The Adventist Church in Romania is taking that commission seriously.

Its Beginnings

After the fall of Communism in 1989, the Romanian Union of Seventh-day Adventists founded an institution for prison ministries—The Humanitarian Service for Prisons (HSP). Pastors as well as volunteer laypeople are dedicated to this mission service and are sharing the gospel message with prisoners serving sentences in Romanian prisons. Adventist pastor Lucian Cristescu, initiator of the HSP program, as well as coordinators in the union’s six conferences, hundreds of volunteers, and mission-minded individuals in the United States, assist with and support the flourishing program.

The coordinators and volunteers first deliver Bibles to the prisoners, followed by the distribution of *The Desire of Ages* and other books printed specially for the HSP program. Thousands of these books have already been given to prisoners.

As financial support increases, the program continues to grow. Since an HSP coordinating director was installed at the Romanian Union level in 2005, the number of program volunteers has increased from 450 to 1,200.

The Humanitarian Service for Prisons is recognized as one of the strongest humanitarian organizations in Romania. It is currently operating in 42 prisons and two prison hospital wards, out of a total of 44 prisons and five prison hospital wards that exist in Romania today. Coordinators



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ROMANIAN UNION

BEHIND
Prison
Bars

By
 GEORGE UBA

Romanian Adventists spotlight prison ministries.

Top to bottom: PROUD MOMS: Adventist prison ministries in Romania organize opportunities for mothers behind bars to visit with their children—for some the first visit in years. **GIFT GIVING:** Mothers in prison give small gifts to their children during the visits.

of the six branches of HSP—the six conferences in the union—convene regularly with leaders of the union’s Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department to make plans and develop projects to meet the prisoners’ needs.

Current Projects

One venture, now in the final stages of development, challenges local churches to “adopt” a prison and meet the various needs of the prisoners and prison administrators. Adopting a prison includes holding health exhibitions, job-skill training courses, stop-smoking seminars, and Bible studies.

HSP has also developed a Bible correspondence course, which has a current enrollment of more than 1,500 students. Organizers are expecting enrollment to double in 2008.

These intensive efforts are resulting in changed lives and prisoners accepting Jesus as their Friend and Savior. In the last few months 13 prisoners have been baptized, nine of them serving life sentences. More than 200 others have expressed a desire to be baptized.

Hundreds of church members correspond by mail with prisoners in all 42 prisons, and their numerous visits to them often lead to the development of strong relationships for spiritual and emotional support.

Uniting Families

HSP coordinators also understand the importance of maintaining relationships between prisoners and their children.

“During the meetings with the women from Moldova prisons, while studying about family,” says Mihai Enea, assistant HSP director in the Moldavia Conference, “we were frequently asked this question: ‘Am I still a mother?’”

“We would ask them in return, ‘What makes you believe that you are no longer a mother?’ Their answer, usually given with tears, was, ‘What kind of a mother am I if my children are growing up in orphanages or in different families? I deserve my sentence, but where is the fault of my children? I haven’t seen them for years.... Do they even still know me? What are their feelings about me?’”

Enea says he often asks himself what Jesus would do if He were in his place. “Many times I have asked the Lord this question in my personal prayers,” he says. “But one thing I am sure of—these mothers deserve a second chance.” So he and other coordinators organize opportunities for children to visit their mothers in prison.

Enea describes a partnership with the Botosani Penitentiary and the Department of Child Protection on a project that emphasizes the needs of prisoners’ families. After identifying numerous women prisoners who had not seen their children for a long time, HSP coordinators set up a visit. Enea clearly remembers the experience.

“We cannot forget the moment when the children...who were placed in different foster families, living in different counties, were all meeting together [with their mothers] for the first time in three or four years,” he says. “When the mothers entered the hall and saw their own children, it was a dramatic moment. They were crying, not knowing [which of their children] to embrace first.”

But although most of the families were overjoyed to see one another again, not all the reunions were happy ones. A 14-year-old boy named Ionut said he did not want to talk to his

mother, Enea explained. His mother tried to offer him a gift, but he refused it and asked, “Why did you abandon me? Why do I have to be raised by a stranger?”

These are the types of challenges HSP tries to help families work through together.

Expanding Its Vision

HSP is now establishing a center for social reintegration at Buciumeni in Dambovita County. The facility will be equipped to accommodate 16 people at a time, for a period of up to six months. The center’s staff will aid the emotional and spiritual recovery of prisoners released into society and assist with the social and professional reintegration of former prisoners who have neither families nor shelter. Along with this project, HSP has plans to develop another center on donated property in Targisor, Dambovita County, for social reintegration of former women prisoners.

Encouraging Results

It is encouraging to see former prisoners who are now sharing their love of Jesus with others and serving as HSP volunteers, business owners, church officers, social workers, and in various other fields.

We are all “prisoners” on this earth, but soon—when Jesus comes to take us home with Him to heaven—we will meet our loved ones again. The mothers will look for their children. The children will run to their mothers and their fathers. But until then, we in the Romanian Union do what we can to offer hope and joy to those behind prison bars. ●



George Uba is director of the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department of the Romanian Union.

Stepping up to the podium, the speaker prays silently as he readies himself to deliver the message the congregation is eagerly awaiting. The singer before him, his sister, has prepared the audience through song, and he is ready.

He greets the audience with enthusiasm and vigor, smiling brightly as he surveys the crowd. With Bible in hand, message committed to memory, and zeal for preaching the Word of God in his heart, he begins. He preaches with fire, power, and conviction. Tapping the Bible for emphasis, pacing back and forth with boundless energy, he proclaims the gospel with a passion that knows no bounds. The crowd is clearly moved, and his appeal at the end of the sermon is well accepted. This preacher has mightily touched hearts and souls for Christ. This preacher is on fire for the Lord. This preacher is 7 years old.

The above scenario is far from fiction, but rather a glimpse into the life of a real child preacher—Kevin Patiño. Kevin is just 7 years old, but has been preaching for a few years already. He is the son of Edgar Patiño, a minister from the Inter-American Division now living and working in Mexico. Kevin and his 6-year-old sister, Dailyn, are extremely active in their own ministry for Lord—preaching and singing in venues large and small across their division home territory.

Getting Started

How did these two children barely in elementary school become involved in preaching? It is a career path and ministry that traditionally requires years of education and life experience to undertake. Have these children come into this path on a whim? Or is this truly a calling from God?

As very small children, both Kevin and Dailyn were active participants in their cradle roll Sabbath school class, learning their memory verses and songs perfectly. Their teacher noticed this and recognized that these two children possessed something very special. As a result, Kevin was asked to preach his first message for a Children's Day program. Pastor Edgar Patiño says: "We both [my wife and I] started preparing Kevin and Dailyn, but what we didn't know was that the Lord was actually preparing a special ministry for them. When we started working with them for this occasion, we noticed that they were both fast learners. Dailyn was just 2 years old, and Kevin was 3. We did not encounter any limitations to what they could do because of their age or the fact that they couldn't read yet. For them, there was nothing more fun than to participate in church."



Wilona Karimabadi is marketing and editorial director for *KidsView*, *Adventist Review's* magazine for children.

A Little Shall



*The Word of God
delivered in an
unusual package*

e hild

Lead Them

By WILONA KARIMABADI



Left: THE PATIÑO FAMILY: Jogly, Edgar, Dailyn, and Kevin. **Right:** PUBLIC EXPERIENCE: Kevin and Dailyn Patiño have been singing and preaching the word since they were pre-schoolers.

The Children's Day program was to feature an audience of more than 250 people. The Patiños decided that it would be best if Kevin got the opportunity to preach in another setting before this particular event. The district pastor was approached and happily arranged for Kevin to speak at a meeting of 150. Kevin had turned 4, and his sister, Dailyn, was just 3.

"We as parents were very stressed out because of the expectations the audience had," says Pastor Patiño. "People would ask, how come these little children are preaching? People expected the children to say some Bible verses and other things by memory. But it wasn't like that. The Holy Spirit was in charge, and when Kevin's 25-minute sermon was over and it was time for the altar call, the entire church stood up and came forward—some crying and some just praising the Lord for what they had just heard."

Clearly, the Patiño children had moved into a very special work for the Lord. "As parents we never thought that this presentation was going to cause such an impact," Pastor Patiño adds. But the word soon spread to other Adventist congregations throughout Panama [where the Patiños lived at the time]. When the Children's Day program rolled around and news of Kevin and Dailyn's preaching spread, members of the congregation were eagerly awaiting these young preachers.

Just Like Samuel

Obvious gifts aside, how did Kevin Patiño come to believe that the Lord was truly calling him to be a preacher? Why now as opposed to waiting till he was grown and equipped with a seminary degree? Pastor Patiño and his wife, Jogly, prayed and fasted to know the Lord's will about what ministry, if any, was appropriate for their children.

"I always wanted to do what my father did, to imitate him since I always watched him preach or hold meetings. It was my great desire to do the same," says Kevin. "One day something very special happened. It was 11:30 p.m., I was sleeping, but my parents were praying [about this], as they had been doing for six months. They never asked to have children that would preach, though they often saw my sister and me 'playing' pastor and singer. My father said that suddenly he heard a voice saying, 'Kevin will preach.' He turned to look at my mother to ask if she had said anything, and continued praying. Again, the voice said, 'Kevin will preach.' He came to my room and woke me up and said, 'Kevin, do you want to preach?' I replied, 'Of, course!' So he took me to the balcony and explained everything that was going on.

"My father said, 'Kevin, the Lord has called you to preach,'" he adds. "To tell you the truth, I didn't understand, and I asked God if He had called me just like Samuel. At that very same hour, we lifted our arms up and committed everything we had to the Lord. Then it became my mission to preach, to show that my father was not making this up, that God had called me. When I preached that first sermon,

Does Your Child Have the Gift to Preach?

BY BARAKA MUGANDA

General Conference Youth Department director Baraka Muganda has had the privilege of meeting and working with child preachers around the world. He shares simple tips for recognizing this particular gift in a child and how to recognize and nurture a budding ministry.—EDITORS

- It is essential that parents create an environment in the home that assists children in identifying and developing the unique gift of preaching.
- Parents play a very important role in developing child preachers through their love for the Word of God and by taking time during family worship to read the Bible and other Bible story books. They should ask children to recite some of the key stories/concepts. During this time one can notice how well the child is doing and can offer help in developing public speaking skills as well as helping a child to make the Bible real in their life. Start with simple stories from the Gospels and then move on to harder ones.
- Tell Bible stories from memory. The more your child listens to you the more he or she will imitate you.
- Prayer is the foundation of all success in cultivating the gifts God has given children. Pray with and for the child so that they will realize this gift and cherish it as they grow up.
- As children participate in this noble experience, they are in turn nurtured and matured in their spiritual lives. Parents have a huge role to play in this.
- Parents are the homiletic teachers of their own children by the way they treat worship time in their homes. Worship time is the best ground for recognizing and cultivating this gift in our children. The Bible says that by beholding one becomes changed (see 2 Cor. 3:18); the more that the children watch their parents give stories and talk about Jesus, the more they may wish to do the same. My parents played a very important part in my life, and that had a positive impact in helping me answer God's call to ministry.

the church was packed, and the Holy Spirit descended and confirmed that my father did not make anything up.”

Little sister, Dailyn, using different gifts at the time, was not excluded from the call to minister. She says, “At the beginning of our ministry, I used to only sing. My mom was my biggest example. She sings beautifully, and like me, has been doing it since she was little. So I also sang and did presentations. When I was 3 and my brother was 4, we did our first musical/speaking presentation called ‘Jesus, Our True Friend.’

“When I turned 5, I decided that I would also like to preach. I felt it inside and I felt I could do it, and praise God, I am doing it!” Dailyn adds. “I know that the Lord called me even though He didn’t do it exactly like He did it in Kevin’s life. He allowed me to fall in love with this, and today I feel extremely happy to serve our Lord.”

Spreading the Good News

From that first Children’s Day program in Panama, the preaching ministry of the little Patiños has been steadily growing. It was definitely not easy in the beginning as the sight of child preachers delivering a serious message was hard for people to believe. But slowly, through the grace of God, doors continued to open for the family. What started as a special appointment at a children’s program has now grown into an international ministry, and the Patiños travel throughout the Inter-American Division preaching and singing about salvation.

Preparing a sermon and delivering it to an audience is not an easy task—even for adults. So how do the Patiño children prepare their messages? The family refers to themselves as a team of five, counting the Holy Spirit as the main force behind the sermons, as He is the one who helps them prepare the messages, and trains and converts hearts. Second is Pastor Patiño, who writes Kevin’s sermons after much prayer and time spent with the Lord. Then a unique component of their preparations comes into play. The children’s mother, Jogly, turns the text of the sermons into drawings. Kevin and Dailyn do not memorize the sermons, but use these sketches to bring the points to life in their minds. Their sermons typically run 25-30 minutes with one message sometimes containing 200 to 300 different drawings, all from Jogly’s own hand.

According to Pastor Patiño, “I contribute to the sermons, but Kevin and Dailyn do not always preach everything that I write. In the beginning that was a real challenge for me since Kevin especially didn’t always like what I had prepared for him. As a theology major I have taken homiletics, hermeneutics, and Bible exegesis, but one day I came to realize that I needed the Holy Spirit’s training instead of just this academic preparation. So Kevin and I prayed together asking God to help blend our thoughts and therefore be able to organize sermons that would be comfortable for Kevin, and He answered us immediately. From that moment, every time I prepare for a sermon I call Kevin and ask him things. We pray together and that’s it. I

prepare a sermon that is comfortable for him.”

But what is it really like for a child to get up in front of a large crowd of people much older than themselves and preach? What goes through Kevin and Dailyn’s minds?

Kevin says: “There is a Bible text that has become one of our favorite ones. It is found in 1 Corinthians 9:16, ‘Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!’”*

This is clearly their charge in ministry. “Sometimes when we are up front, with a small or large audience, I feel something special that makes me say things that are not always on the sermon sketch, and I may say things and not know why I said them. But they touch the lives of the audience and people make a decision to be baptized.”

Still Children

Though Kevin and Dailyn are involved in a very grown-up work, no one forgets that they are still children. “In 2005 we were doing an evangelistic series in Colombia. A pastor organized an event in which there were over 5,000 people. It was a Sabbath afternoon and we had sung and preached. The next day we did an interview at the local station. The pastor who did the interview asked: ‘Kevin, what did you like most from yesterday’s event?’ And I told him... ‘That there were so many children to play with!’ I say this because many forget that we are still children. When we are up in front on the platform we look like adults because the Lord works miracles for us. But our hearts are still young,” add both Kevin and Dailyn.

Kevin and Dailyn are also nurtured and encouraged in their daily lives as many children are. Their mother, Jogly, stays at home and takes the business of caring for her children very seriously, making sure their morning and evening worship times are consistent; that she is available to answer their questions, feed them nutritious and nourishing food, and get them to go to bed on time—while still helping

them to remember that they are first and foremost beloved children of the living God. Jogly says, “Every Friday night, no matter what’s going on or where we are, we have family night with the children called ‘Mota.’ This special night we sleep together in the same bed, all squeezed, but we don’t care. We enjoy it! We believe that doing things like this keeps the children happy and encouraged.”

Tiny Vessels, Mighty Voices

Children who have the gift to preach are proving an asset to the awesome work of spreading the gospel. As Kevin and Dailyn Patiño’s ministry illustrates, the Lord can do mighty things with individuals—young and not so young—when they place their lives completely in His hands.

Kevin and Dailyn state that they have three goals for their ministry: “(1) We dream of filling up big stadiums and baptizing many souls; (2) We want to be modern apostle Pauls—faithful preachers of the Word of God; and (3) We want to continue traveling the entire world carrying the message of Jesus’ second coming.”†

Baraka Muganda, General Conference Youth Director, who has seen the young Patiños in action says, “I compare child preachers to sleeping giants in our churches. These children are ready to participate in the mission of the church if they are given opportunities. Their minds are so sharp and they master the training so fast. They believe in the teachings of the Bible and are ready and willing to share with others without any fear. They are bold to defend what they believe. I have been so amazed by their Bible knowledge. You hear adults asking themselves, ‘If these children are so inspired by the Word of God, there must be something special in this Book!’” Something special indeed. ●

*Text taken from the New International Version.

†The Patiños welcome questions about their ministry and can be contacted by e-mailing creciendoenvalores@yahoo.es or edgarpatino20@hotmail.com.

KIDS IN DISCIPLESHIP:

Mentoring and Empowering Little Disciples for Jesus

BY WILONA KARIMABADI

In 2002, veteran children’s and teen ministries leader and pastor Don MacLafferty embarked on a unique program just for children. Often taught a certain amount of Bible doctrine to prepare for baptism, kids are then often left alone as they attempt to map out a Christian walk for themselves.

Opportunities for ministry utilizing their individual gifts and talents are not always readily available, and sometimes mentors for those endeavors are not easily found.

But at the Kids in Discipleship Center based at the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church, Collegedale, Tennessee, U.S.A, those patterns are changing.

According to their Web site, “The center’s purpose is to lead children to be faithful, fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.” This mission is accomplished in several ways, one of which is to help each child discover their unique gifts and passion for ministry and be equipped to share them now—in their homes, schools and churches. This includes preaching, singing, and so much more.

Congregations, communities, and families are encouraged to discover how this ministry program can work wonders with developing discipleship for Jesus in their own children. For more information, go to www.thekidscenter.org.

NUMBER 10 What Is It Really Like to Be a Christian?

By ROBERT K. MCIVER

The answer has everything to do with our sense of assurance in Jesus.

What is it like to be a Christian?

The question is important, and many people give up on Christianity because they have not understood what it's supposed to feel like. I care a great deal about this, because some of these people have been my friends.

First of all, we need to go back to the process of how we became Christians, and examine what that is like.

Becoming a Christian

Usually a combination of experience and knowledge brings us to Christianity. Our experience as a non-Christian is a gloomy one. As we examine our life apart from God, we find that there's much about it that we dislike. We could probably accept a certain amount of laziness and carelessness as part of our human condition, but the problem is worse than that. At times we act in a way that can be described only as evil. We do things that we know are wrong and injurious to ourselves and other people.

But even worse, when we try to improve, we find that we cannot even change our actions, let alone our motives. We want to be different, but no matter how hard we try, we always fall short. And to our horror we discover that the biblical description of our condition is right. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:9-18).

This is our experience. The truth we learn from the Bible (our knowledge) both makes things worse and gives us hope at the same time. It makes things worse because the Bible tells us that God is righteous and that it is death for any sin to appear before Him. Not only that, we learn that God will come back to give everyone the kind of reward

their deeds deserve—both those who are alive at the time and those who have previously died (Rev. 19:11, 12). So the consequences of our evil will meet us beyond the grave!

Yet the Bible gives us hope. That hope is found in Jesus who, though He was God, became human (Phil. 2:5-11); who, though He was sinless, accepted our punishment when He died on the cross for our sins (Gal. 1:3, 4; Col. 2:14; 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:21). The Bible also tells us that we can be saved from our sins if we believe in Jesus and accept Him as our Savior and Lord (Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 16:31). In other words, I become a Christian when I recognize my need and accept the salvation Jesus offers. I pray the prayer God always hears: "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13, NIV).

What is it like to become a Christian? Once a person accepts the forgiveness offered by Jesus, there is a sense of release, joy, and peace (Rom. 5:1; 14:17). We are no longer condemned to live under the slavery of sin (Rom. 6:17, 19), but can live lives of freedom in Christ.

All this is true, yet we find that there are some things we didn't expect. We find that while new impulses come into our lives, old ones remain—which creates an apparent contradiction. For after all, we became Christians precisely to escape the power of sin!

So does becoming a Christian really give us overcoming power—power over sin? Or is Christianity based on a lie? No, it's not based on a lie; but such questions are important because the discouragement that comes from recognizing the depth of our sin problem can cause many beginning Christians to give up.

So how does a mature Christian relate to sin in their life? I want to approach this question from two angles: one theological, the other practical.

Sin in My Life?—a Theological Answer

The theological answer to this question is tied up with the way Christians understand the end of time. They look forward to a time when Jesus will return to this earth to make a final end of sin. The dead will be raised, the wicked



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destroyed, and all things will be remade so that God's will will be perfectly reflected in the world. At that time death and sin will be no more (Rev. 21:4).

Yet with the (first) coming of Jesus the blessings of this new age have arrived. If we believe in Him, we have passed from death to life (John 5:24); we, in fact, can have eternal life now (John 3:16-18). Resurrection and eternal life belong to the blessings of heaven, yet the Christian can enjoy them now.

This enjoyment, however, is but an anticipation of the future blessings. When Paul explains why a Christian

Christians are children of hope; they are in Christ.

would no longer wish to sin, he does so by pointing to baptism. When we were baptized we joined Jesus in His death (Rom. 6:4, 5). Then he says that we are to consider ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to Jesus (Rom. 6:11).

For Paul this is the secret of being a Christian. We are still in this age, and our sinful natures are still with us. But we are to live according to the new realities that Jesus has made available to us. In other words, we still live in this age and becoming a Christian does not change that. We remain children of Adam. But as Christians we now have a new reality that dominates our lives. *We can live in the blessings of the age to come right now, as we consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to Jesus.* Christians are children of hope; they are in Christ.

Sin in My Life?—a Practical Answer

If Christianity did not bring a change to the life of believers, then it would be based on a falsehood that few could accept. Indeed, for every Christian that is a hypocrite, we can think of two or three who grow more and more like their Lord every year—loving, kind, considerate, and free from guile.

Yet the issue of sin in the life of a Christian remains, even in the lives of the best Christians. I think the answer lies in the viewpoint of the observer. Observed from outside, it can be seen that Jesus has brought dramatic changes to the lives of people; and that while they're still human, the general tenor of their lives is to become more and more like Jesus. But if you were to ask those very people what their experience of coming closer to their Lord is like, they likely would reply that they're seeing more and more clearly how sinful they really are, and how much more they

need to depend on Jesus. In other words, their growth as Christians is in their increasing dependence on Jesus.

I don't know what your experience as a Christian has been like, but mine has been a continuous process of relearning that apart from Jesus I cannot help sinning. Indeed, as I have understood more about myself, I realize how much more I need Jesus.

So what is it really like to be a Christian? It's built on the insights that first brought us to Christianity: that without Jesus we are lost. As we grow as Christians, we grow in our dependence on Christ. As we make real in our own lives the reality of the new life that Jesus has brought, we will experience the blessings of the age to come right here and now: we will have peace, acceptance, and joy. ●

Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute

and Example. This faith, which receives salvation, comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the

Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

Our Sacred Trust

Do people see Christ when they look

By
ELLEN G. WHITE

To be a Christian means to be Christlike, to follow the Saviour. Following implies obedience. No soldier can follow his leader unless he obeys orders. Following means imitation. “Learn of Me,” the great Teacher says to those who have taken the name of Christian. Keep your eyes fixed on the Model. Do all things for His glory and in and thru the love He has for you.

The Christian is the world’s light, and the only Bible that many read. Through Christians men see God. How careful, then, should those be who have taken the name of Christian. But many professing Christians crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to open shame. He who fails to correct the mistakes

shown him in the divine mirror, presents before the world a miserable representation of Christ. Angels veil their faces in sorrow. The world sees that he is not what he professes to be, and they turn from him as a counterfeit. Christians are either under Christ’s rule or under the control of the enemy. Their influence is either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. They are either doing positive good or incalculable harm.

Living as Overcomers

Christ’s children have been redeemed from Satan’s bondage, and they are to stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, working with unselfishness and

fidelity for the One who owns them. Ever they are to remember the words, “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” When they took the name of Christian, they pledged themselves to be true to God. They are bound up with Him and the angels in family relation, because Jesus has delivered them from a tyrant’s oppression. In every respect their actions are to be such as become saints. Discarding all that is unbecoming, they are to live a new and holy life. By doing this they show that they are worthy of the sacred trust conferred upon them, that they have been born again, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, that they no

*The gospel is
the voice of duty
and the voice
of God.*



THOMAS KARUVELIL

angels it may be revealed that Christ has not died in vain.

A Higher Calling

Christians, when you took this name, you promised to prepare in this life for the higher life in the kingdom of God. Take the Christlife as your pattern. Keep eternity ever in view. Follow righteous principles of action, which with their refining, ennobling influence will restore in man the moral image of God. As by faith we adopt the principles which are an expression of the life of Christ, they are in the soul as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The soul overflows with the riches of the grace of Christ, and the overflow refreshes other souls. Thus may the human agent show that he is keeping the pledge he has made. Thus he may work in partnership with Christ, showing to the world what it means to be a Christian.

The gospel is the voice of duty and the voice of God. What is meant by a failure to obey its principles is shown in the history of Satan, who for his disobedience was cast out of heaven. The highest gifts that could be bestowed in a created being were given to Lucifer, the covering cherub. Before his fall he was a glorious being, occupying a position next to Christ in the heavenly courts. But in seeking to be equal with God he brought upon himself irretrievable ruin.

With this lesson before us let us hide ourselves in Christ. He is the source of all wisdom and power. Behold in the cross of Calvary the guarantee for our salvation. Behold the Saviour giving His life for us that we might be Christians.

Living as He Lived

Those who live the life of a Christian are battling against the devil's lie—that man cannot keep

God's law. Can we doubt the result of this conflict? God lives, God reigns; and daily He is working His miracles. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Before the universe they show that they are trying to live out the words: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, . . . think on these things."

"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"—these are the fruit of the Christian tree. The tree that bears only leaves, the life that has only profession, must be withered by the curse of God, even as the fruitless tree which flaunted its abundant foliage before the Saviour.

God help us to be true Christians, consistent today, consistent tomorrow, upright in action, kindly in word, pure in thought. The true Christian lives the Christ-life. In all his transactions he lifts the banner of the cross. If he is misunderstood, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind, thoughtful, and forbearing. He closely examines himself, lest in word or deed he shall deny his Lord. He chooses God's way. Each day of his life he unselfishly ministers to others. The light that is in him shines forth, and he stills the strife of tongues. Day by day, though unconsciously to himself, he is working out before men and angels a vast, sublime experiment. He is showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings. ●

This article first appeared in the *Signs of the Times*, July 10, 1901. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

at His followers?

more live to self, but to God, whose they are and whom they serve.

Paul says, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Like brave, true soldiers, Christians are to obey the orders of their Captain; for they have made a sacred pledge to rule themselves well. They are to strive earnestly to overcome everything that hinders them from fulfilling their high and holy resolve. Mind and body are to be treated with the greatest respect; for they are Christ's. Day by day they are to be improved, that to the earnest gaze of the watching

“Why should not the members of a church, or of several small churches, unite to sustain a missionary in foreign fields?” asked Adventist pioneer Ellen White (*Gospel Workers*, p. 466).

The Radoi family needed a helping hand. The husband and wife and their eight young children lived in a small Romanian village in one room of an old house, says Cristian Modan, Romania’s youth director and volunteer program assistant. Even worse, the house was unlivable. “There were no windows and the roof was leaking,” says Modan. “Because of this, two of the small children were already sick. The father, sick with tuberculosis, could not work, so the mother was left to find work every day wherever she could.”

Life continued like this for the Radoi family until a group of young Romanian volunteers banded together to help. Through fund-raising, says Modan, “the volunteers raised 6,000 euros and bought a house for the family.”

Just who are these volunteers who were able to make such a big difference in the lives of one Romanian family? They are a small sample of people from all over the world who are currently taking part in HisHands, an Adventist Volunteer Service initiative that seeks to help volunteers serve as God’s hands in a world of need.

Born of Necessity

First implemented in late 2006, the HisHands program was inspired by the Holy Spirit and the acute need for Adventist volunteers throughout the world, but especially in places such as Cameroon and Côte d’Ivoire in West Africa, says Vernon Parmenter, General Conference director of the Adventist Volunteer Center. With the help of a special committee, Parmenter was able to develop it into a significant outreach tool.

The initial idea of HisHands was

S E R V I N G A S

H GOD’S
Hand

By JILL WALKER GONZALEZ

Adventists around the world are serving others in God’s name.

that churches or organizations in developed countries could sponsor volunteers to help with specific, long-term missionary projects overseas. All expenses would be paid by the sponsoring church or institution so that calling organizations could receive the volunteer missionaries at no cost. This would be ideal for all those organizations that needed the help of volunteers, but couldn’t afford the costs of hosting them.

When HisHands was presented in Nigeria, it caught on quickly, but with a twist. Gideon C. Nwaogwugwu, president of the Eastern Nigeria Union Mission (ENUM), says that because missionaries rarely came to Nigeria, “we decided that we didn’t necessarily need missionaries from overseas. We had missionaries right here already in our own churches.” With this in mind, ENUM started the program with Nigerian churches sponsoring Nigerian HisHands volunteers to help with projects in their own country.

As a result, Nigerian HisHands volunteers have made a substantial

and ongoing contribution. N. John Enang, volunteer coordinator for the West-Central Africa Division (WAD), reports that a total of 177 people have been baptized there as a result of projects undertaken by HisHands volunteers.

One such project was an evangelistic series late last year in Okoita, Nigeria. The story starts, in actuality, long before the campaign. Bassey Udoh, executive secretary of ENUM, relates that months in advance of the series, eight HisHands volunteers had been sponsored to go to Okoita. “They went round the town giving Bible studies and interacting with people,” he says. By the time the meetings started, the town, which, according to Udoh had been “very resistant to the Adventist message,” seemed ready to hear what the speakers had to say. “Daily attendance was over 300 people,” exclaims Udoh. “This type of turnout has never been experienced before in this territory, even where we have [a] strong Adventist presence. Many are already indicating an interest in baptism.”

Below: THE EXPANDING ADVENTIST WORLD: These new believers in Okoita, Nigeria, display their baptismal certificates and copies of *Adventist World*. They were baptized as part of the evangelistic meetings conducted by HisHands volunteers.



Above: A BETTER BUILDING: In a room of the old house where the Radoi family had been living, volunteers get ready to move them to a better, more hospitable home.

CORINA RUSZA AND MADALIN VOINEA

The Next Step

As Parmenter observed what was happening in Nigeria, he again felt impressed to rethink the strategy of the program. He realized that HisHands volunteers need not only go from developed countries to undeveloped countries; they could be sponsored by their home churches to help out with mission projects in their own countries or divisions. This is how it happens already—not only in Nigeria and Romania but in other countries as well.

HisHands is off to a good start in the Euro-Asia Division (ESD). According to Michael Kaminsky, volunteer coordinator and executive secretary of ESD, exciting reports from the HisHands program have come in from all over the division. HisHands volunteers in Belarus have introduced Seventh-day Adventism in 25 different locations, says Kaminsky, and as a result, 33 individuals have been baptized.

Kaminsky tells a story of a HisHands volunteer from Moldova: “In the village of Kishkaren in Moldova, Yeshanu Konstantin was invited by a Pentecostal family to

come to their church. Konstantin soon became friends with the elder of the church and was asked to preach a sermon there. In his sermon, Konstantin used Revelation Seminar materials. The church members listened carefully and tried to write down every word he said. One woman was so interested in the message she asked Konstantin to conduct a Revelation Seminar for her family. Konstantin, of course, conducted the seminar, and, as a result, the entire family joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

Yeshanu Konstantin is only one. Yet through the HisHands program he is doing a mighty work—the work of God’s hands.

More Opportunities

Around the world, others are also offering themselves and their talents to do the work of HisHands. Though the program is still relatively new, program leaders have already started HisHands-related activities in five divisions, and a rich harvest of believers is already being reaped as

a result. After only a few months, at least 224 people have been baptized. And this is only the beginning. Other divisions, such as the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD), are still planning and gearing up for HisHands programs of their own.

Whether HisHands volunteers come from our own backyards, or from other divisions, the Holy Spirit will lead more of them to serve. Their work speaks for itself; one can only imagine what could happen when thousands more commit themselves to spreading the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To learn more about the HisHands program, visit hishands.adventist.org. Here, divisions can learn how to advertise their needs, and churches/organizations can adopt a project.



Jill Walker Gonzalez

is assistant volunteer coordinator at Adventist Volunteer Services at the General Conference.

QUESTION: *What biblical symbolism is associated with the four cardinal directions?*

Cardinal compass points in the Bible are rich in meaning. Knowing their symbolism can help interpret some biblical passages. We often orient ourselves by facing north. In the ancient world the point of orientation was east. The east was before them, the west behind, the south to the right, and the north to the left. The future wasn't in front, but behind, that is to say invisible.

1. The East: The importance of the east as the main point of orientation may be related to the rising of the sun and its importance in the religions of the ancient Near East. In the Bible its symbolism emerges for the first time in Genesis. The Garden of Eden was placed in the East (chap. 2:8), and its entrance faced the east (chap. 3:24). After sinning, Adam and Eve left the garden and went toward the east (chap. 3:24). This eastward movement continued with Cain (chap. 4:16) and culminated in the movement of the human race toward the east (chap. 11:2-4).

Within this context the east is symbolically ambivalent. The garden placed there symbolized safety and security. After sin, when it was the direction of the exile, it represented a condition of alienation from God. It was also the place of the wilderness, from which destructive winds came, threatening life (Ps. 48:7; Eze. 27:26). To the prophets the east was a symbol of Babylonian exile and the saving presence of God. He traveled to Babylon and ultimately redeemed His people (Eze. 10:18, 19; 11:22, 23). The east became a place where God intervened on behalf of His people, bringing them salvation (cf. Rev. 16:12).

2. The West: The west symbolizes both negative and positive elements. To the west of the land was the sea, representing evil and death (Dan. 7:2, 3). In fact, the term "sea" often referred to the west (Num. 3:23). It is also the place of darkness because that's where the sun sets (Ps. 104:19, 20).

The positive meaning is its association with the Israelite tabernacle/Temple. Although it faced east, access to it required movement toward the west. In that sense the west pointed toward restored unity with God; a

return to the Garden of Eden. When the Israelites traveled to and worshipped in the Temple they faced the west and had the rising sun behind them. This movement to the west began with Abram, who left the east and went to Canaan in the west in obedience to God (Gen. 11:31). It is a symbol of divine blessing. Once the exiles were liberated from their enemies in the east, they traveled west, to the land of Israel. In that journey, the Lord Himself traveled with them (Eze. 43:2-5).

3. The North: Bible students have suggested that the north is a symbol of the permanent or the eternal, perhaps because the polar stars were permanently visible in the sky. It is the place of God's celestial dwelling (Isa. 14:13) and from which His glory descends (Job 37:22) with blessings or judgments (Eze. 1:4). He is the true King of the North.

But the north—represented by the left hand—is also a symbol of disaster. The enemy of God's people came from the north (Jer. 1:14, 15; Eze. 38:6), bringing destruction. In a sense, the enemy was the false king of the north who tried to usurp God's role and is finally destroyed by the Lord (Zeph. 2:12; Dan. 11:21-45).

4. The South: The south is primarily a negative symbol. But the fact that it is represented by the right hand makes it also a positive one. It is negative because to the south of Israel was the wilderness, a region where life does not prosper (Isa. 30:6). To the south was Egypt, which opposed God's power and oppressed His people. But the south was also the place where the Lord appeared to Moses, went with Him to Egypt, liberated His people, and appeared to them on Mount Sinai (e.g., Deut. 33:2).

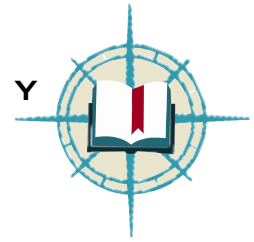
The ambivalent nature of the symbols of the four cardinal directions seems based on the fact that evil was perceived to be present everywhere and that God's saving presence was always accessible to His people from any corner of the world (Ps. 139:7-12). In a sense they pointed beyond the points of the compass to the cosmic conflict between good and evil. ●

Love in Any Direction

By ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ



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



Jesus:

T H E

Mighty Conqueror

By MARK A. FINLEY

Our planet has become a war zone. All around us there is a struggle between good and evil, a cosmic battle between Christ and Satan.

Throughout the centuries Jesus has always been victorious over Satan. At times it appears that the powers of hell have triumphed, but Jesus is constantly working to accomplish His purposes.

1. How does the apostle Paul describe the reality of this spiritual warfare? Read the text and write your answer on the line below.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

Our spiritual warfare is against:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Where did this conflict begin? Read the text below and fill in the blank.

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought” (Rev. 12:7).

The first war began in _____.

Lucifer, a perfect being of dazzling brightness, rebelled against God. He sowed seeds of rebellion in the universe. The reason there are wars on earth is because there was first war in heaven.

3. What words from the book of Revelation warn the people of this earth about the cosmic struggle in which we are now involved? Read the text below and fill in the blanks.

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Rev. 12:12).

“_____ to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea!

For the devil has come down to you, having _____.”



4. Why did Jesus come to this world? Read the text below and circle the answer.

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

5. How did Jesus destroy the works of the devil? Read the text below and answer the questions.

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

a. Did Jesus ever sin? **YES** **NO**

b. Did Jesus become sin for us? **YES** **NO**

c. Since Jesus became sin for us, what can we receive from Him? _____

Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. He faced the temptations of Satan head-on and defeated the devil on our behalf. Our wonderful Savior bore the guilt and shame of our sin to the cross. Through His death we receive life.

6. What did our Lord promise each of those who accept Him? Read the text and fill in the blank below.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

To receive Jesus is to become _____.

Jesus is a mighty conqueror. His death rescues us from the authority of Satan and gives us authority to become God’s children.

7. What is God’s promise to His children? Read the text and fill in the blanks.

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Through Jesus we too can be _____.

Victory over the power of Satan comes through _____.

The Bible’s last book, Revelation, describes God’s end-time people as overcomers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). In earth’s final conflict, the Lamb (Jesus) overcomes the dragon (Satan) (Rev. 17:14). Throughout Revelation God’s people are victorious. Satan is powerless against them. Here is the wonderful, incredible good news through Jesus: all the devil’s chains are broken. Through Jesus we are victorious.



**Next month we will explore more of
God’s promises for living the Christian life.**

LETTERS

Celebrity Culture Revisited

I am writing about the article “Celebrity Culture,” by David N. Marshall, in the October 2007 *Adventist World*.

Thank you for this timely article. The allure of “stardom” is rampant in our society today. Unfortunately, it has found its way into the church. In fact, Ellen White stated in forceful tone: “I lift my voice of warning against praising or flattering the ministers. I have seen the evil, the dreadful evil, of this. Never, never speak a word in praise of ministers to their faces. Exalt God. Ever respect a faithful minister, realize his burdens and lighten them if you can; but do not flatter him, for Satan stands ready at his watchtower to do that kind of work himself” (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 474). That is not to say that we shouldn’t let the pastor know that his comments have helped us in our journey from time to time, if indeed they have.

In addition, concerning Marshall’s statement that the “inappropriate ‘lifting up’ is not the fault of the preacher.... The fault is in the attitudes of the listeners toward the preacher,” let me say that at times the preacher does share some culpability here. As a pastor myself I am aware of the importance of guarding against this mentality while standing in the sacred desk. I need to always be careful not to speak or lead the congregation in such a way that would foster such a response as to call attention to myself rather than to Christ.

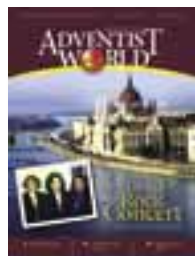
Please do not allow my taking issue on this one point to cloud in any way my appreciation for the unique and powerful perspective that Marshall made in his article.

DAVE MOENCH
Washington, United States

I had just read the chapter in *The Desire of Ages* entitled “He Must Increase,” and David N. Marshall’s article helped me to apply the principles to myself. I evaluated my recent elation in the presence of two of our “Adventist Greats,” and remember how I felt and acted. I find myself guilty as charged.

John the Baptist had to remind his followers that it was Jesus who was to be lifted up, not John the Baptist. It wasn’t John’s fault that the people idolized him, but he gently redirected their adoration to Jesus. Thank you for redirecting me to Him as well.

KATHY LOEWEN
Oregon, United States



A Concert, Three Girls, and a Preacher

I would like to commend Mark Finley for his article “A Rock Concert, Three Girls, and a

Confused Preacher” (September 2007 *Adventist World*). I too believe, as Finley concludes the article, that “we serve a great, big God who works in ways that we cannot understand.”

The Bible is replete with true-to-life stories of God’s people who trusted Him and made it to a rewarding ending. The story of Joseph proves one thing: trust in God is rewarded. Who would ever believe that Joseph would become a great governor and prime minister of all Egypt after his brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites, then the Ishmaelites to Potiphar? From there, as a slave, Joseph was thrown into prison. But God was with Joseph; and in all he did he was guided by the all-powerful God, whom we also serve in these last days.

Joseph’s passion and mission are not different from ours. If we analyze his tumultuous life we can conclude that he passed all the tests and trials he bravely faced. In the end he was rewarded because of his trustworthiness as a man of God.

LARRY R. VALOROZO
New York, United States

The Right Message and the Right Time

Thank you for the ministry you provide through *Adventist World*. It’s great work done! It enlightens me much more of the ministry in various parts of the world, although I am much more interested in the experiences of the ministry in unentered areas.

For that reason, allow me to pass my special thanks for the September 2006 issue to Gary Swanson (associate director of the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department) for the article “The Road to Clarity”;

LETTERS

Bettina Krause (special assistant to the president of the world church of Seventh-day Adventists) for the church-planting movement in unentered areas and Abraham Henry's experience, mentioned in "Tell the World"; and Miriam Taylor, who got me thinking with her article "Keep My Feet."

All these articles were a special blessing, especially since the magazine is rarely received here (or it arrives late). Pray for us as we pray for you.

GEOFFREY LWOKYAZA
Jinja, Uganda

All Are Gifted

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to you

about the February 2006 *Adventist World* article "All Are Gifted," by Ellen White. If only a lot of Christians were willing to grow in the Word of God as Mrs. White describes! It would help in winning souls. It would also benefit these Christians in carrying out their different gifts as they help build the kingdom of God.

I'm happy to come across such a magazine, and I believe that many who take their time to read it will know what it takes to be in Christ and live for Him, because there is no gain in the things of this world when you don't have Christ. God bless you for giving us this message. Keep it up!

O. O. OBAFEMI
Via E-mail

Messages of Thanks

I would like to thank you for giving me enough knowledge [in the pages of *Adventist World*] in order for me to strengthen my spiritual beliefs.

SHERWIN SOLLANO
Philippines

I think it is such a blessing to have the *Adventist World* magazine online (www.adventistworld.org). Thank you so much for a job well done.

MARLENE BACCHUS
Maryland, United States

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

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

Our local church is going through internal misunderstandings. Please include us in your prayers. Also, pray for me as I am struggling to meet my life's strategic goals.

PHALULA, *via e-mail*

Pray for me to get a job and be strong in faith.

ZACHARY, *Kenya*

For a long time now there has been conflict between Christians and idol worshippers where I live. This past June an "Ibono" festival was held in which men and women are not supposed to see each other. We decided to change our worship time so we as a church could meet together but, unfortunately, these idol worshippers got information about our new

timetable and stormed our small hall, destroying our doors, windows, and roofs. Some of us were injured. We were too small to fight them, so we left everything in the hands of God. Please pray that we will be able to find a way to repair our hall. Thank you.

JOHN, *Nigeria*

I feel hopeless. Please pray that I find help to attend any Adventist college. I want to study theology.

ASA, *Kenya*

Please pray that God heals my mother.

DAN, *Uganda*

Please pray for my friend who has blurry vision and breast cancer, which has metastasized to bone cancer.

MARJORIE, *Philippines*

My husband's business is not doing well. I experienced a stillbirth early this year. Please pray that our financial standing improves and that my current pregnancy be without any complications.

NANCY, *Zambia*

Please join me in praying for my children. We need to find the right school for them next year. Thank you.

SARA, *United States*

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

“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

How to Be Part of the Exchange



JESSE THERRIAN

The World Exchange of this magazine is for you—and all about you, dear reader. As this new year begins we welcome your submissions to this vibrant section of *Adventist World* in the following categories:

The Place of Prayer; send to prayer@adventistworld.org

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 published. Please include your name and your country's name with your entry.

Letters to the Editor; send to letters@adventistworld.org

Letters must reference something that appeared in the *Adventist World* magazine; they must be clearly written and to the point, 250 words 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. Timely letters have a better chance at getting in print; not all letters submitted will be published.

The People's Place (back page); send to marank@gc.adventist.org

A cornucopia of items from across the world; these are short slices of life that will make readers think, laugh, and enjoy their Adventist family more. We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

- **Quotes** (profound or spontaneous)
- **Adventist Life** (short anecdotes, humorous and/or profound)
- **Where in the World?** (high quality photos of members from around the globe)
- **Meet Your Neighbor** (high quality photos *with* short biographical profiles of newly baptized members, Adventists engaged in active community service, or small groups undertaking new efforts in sharing the gospel; maximum words: 100).

Other ways to send us your materials: fax to 301-680-6638; or send to World Exchange, *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 USA.

Send in your stuff and enjoy **the Exchange!**

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

ADVENTIST LIFE

While working at the Titanic Museum in Branson, Missouri, I was able to talk to many of the touring guests. I generally started the conversation by asking the guest where their home was. The most frequent answer was either a city or state, or some combination of the two.

Recently an elderly man passed by my station, and I inquired, "Where is your home?"

His response caught me quite by surprise. He said, "Heaven, I'm just passing through." I couldn't help myself in responding with a hearty "Amen, brother!"

What an easy way to witness the "good news" of eternal life with my Father! I encourage every member of our worldwide church to adopt this response when asked where they are from—I guarantee it will cause many who hear this response to pause and consider where their "home" truly is.

—Winfield Scott, Branson, Missouri

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The seed sowing of many years is bearing fruit. But this should not lead us into an attitude of self-complacency and contentment. This is the time to be more alert and active than ever."

—Elder Matthew A. Bediako, Annual Council 2007

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



WELCOME TO "THE PEOPLE'S PLACE" IN THE NEW YEAR!

We invite our readers from around the world to make this page their special place. We hope you will send photos of interesting places in your part of the world for "Where in the World Is This?" We also invite you to introduce yourself, or a leader or lay member of your church, or a newly baptized member in your church to your worldwide family by sending a photo and profile for our "Meet Your Neighbor" section. If you can't share a photo or a profile, please consider sharing a quote or a humorous and/or inspiring short anecdote about Adventist life in your church.

Your contribution here on The People's Place page can encourage and inspire your brothers and sisters around the world to grow in Christ and to share their faith and joy in Jesus in ways they may not have considered before.

Share with your worldwide family by introducing yourself right here on The People's Place! E-mail us at peoplesplace@adventistworld.org; or fax to 1-301-680-6637. You may write to us at *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 USA.

ANSWER: From Brazil, young adults engage Pastor Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in dialogue at the Let's Talk event on April 23, 2006, in Sao Paulo.