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IN THE BUSH: Birgit Philipsen gets ready to visit a site in Karamoja in the Northern Uganda in an aging sport utility vehicle. **On the cover:** THANKS, ADRA: In Rwanda, happy and excited children pause a moment in front of their new primary school constructed by ADRA/Rwanda with funding from the Danish Government through ADRA/Denmark.



From the EDITOR'S PEN

The Stilling of Our Souls

Storm clouds pile up over a gray expanse of ocean, threatening a deluge of what the secular love to call “biblical proportions.” Jagged lightning links the short distance between the black cloud bottoms and the roiling waves. Gulls and petrels, pushed by unseen air currents, struggle to fly southward down the beach.

Most watchers would be glad to be on land just now, feeling the wet sand underfoot, taking comfort in the shrubs and stunted trees that hug this strip of earth. Yet half a mile out to sea, a fishing boat toils in the wind-lashed sea toward the safety of the harbor.

It is God’s church, caught in yet another storm—a fragile ship, by some accounts. Low in the water, laden with the hundreds it has rescued from other sinking vessels, it finds itself in all-too-familiar adversity. Waves of circumstances—

economic, political, logistical—threaten to send it to the bottom. Critics predict its quick demise. In their minds, if not on paper, they lay odds on when it must surely sink.

They cannot know what every buffeted passenger on board must know: this is the safest place in the universe just now, for Jesus is on board. In the center of God’s church He stands, resolute and calm, reminding us by His Word and His presence that though many reject His rule, “the waves and winds still know His Voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.”

This toiling ship will soon reach harbor; the danger and the storm will soon be past. We ride the waves with the “Master of earth and sea and sky,” and in that certainty our fear melts and quiet joy returns. Fifteen million restless souls are stilled, not by calm sailing, but because we have on board the Captain of God’s church.

Those who choose to stay on board have grasped the all-important truth that grows from growing confidence in Jesus: God’s church *will* safely arrive in harbor. “All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.”

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

FRANCE: Salève Adventist University Honors “Righteous” Alumni

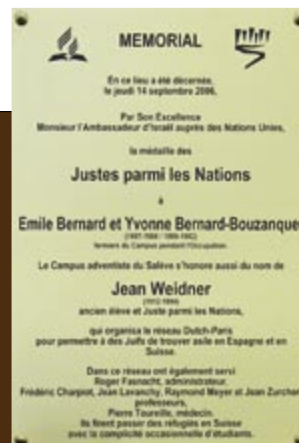
Weidner, others who assisted Nazi victims are remembered.

More than six decades after many Seventh-day Adventists risked, and even lost, their lives to preserve Jews and others targeted by the Nazis for death, a ceremony took place at Salève Adventist University in Collonges-sous-Salève, France, about five miles from the Swiss border and the city of Geneva. Approximately 500 students participated in the event.

The school wanted to recognize its alumni who played a decisive part in the rescue of several hundred persecuted people during World War II. These Adventists helped smuggle Jews and others who resisted the Nazis across the border.

Sylvain Ballais, president of the

school, officially welcomed the many guests and others present. Richard Lehmann, academic vice president, remembered Jean Weidner, who was awarded honors by several countries—the Croix de Guerre, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, Righteous Among the Nations, and a tree planted with his name in the Alley of the Righteous in Jerusalem. Weidner rescued more than 800 Jews and 300 members of the resistance (among them approximately 100 Allied aviators) through his underground network called Dutch-Paris. This network smuggled Jews and opponents of the Nazi regime from the Netherlands and France to Switzerland and Spain via Brussels and Paris.



MEMORIAL PLAQUE: Featuring emblems of both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, this plaque commemorating Adventists who helped hundreds of Jews and others escape Nazi persecution now stands at the entrance to the main school building at Salève Adventist University in Collonges-sous-Salève, France.

WORLD REPORT



PASS IT ON: Roger Fasnacht and Anna Zurcher, two surviving witnesses of the Adventist rescue effort, symbolically transmit the flame of courage and service to two university students at Salève Adventist University during the commemoration ceremony.

ROLAND MEYER/FEUD

Weidner, a former student of the school and a committed Adventist, used his friendship with the personnel and students of the school as a key element of his network.

Participants also listened to the testimony of Anna Zurcher, widow of the late Jean Zurcher, about the risks her husband took to smuggle Jews under the barbed wire at the border of Switzerland and deliver confidential mail.

Roger Fasnacht, administrator of the school during World War II, highlighted the actions of other personnel and students, such as Jean Lavanchy, Raymond Meyer, Frederic Charpiot, and Dr. Pierre Toureille. More than 150 refugees passed through the school or homes of the personnel. Some rooms in the building, termed Sources, were reserved for these heroes. Last year, Emile Bernard, the former manager of the school farm (part of the campus at that time), and his wife, Yvonne, received the Righteous Among the Nations award for their contribution in saving the lives of those persecuted during the Nazi occupation of France.

More than 30 members of this underground network paid the ultimate price for their courage. Among those caught and executed were Gabrielle Weidner, sister of Jean; Paul Meyer, a pastor; as well as the consul from the Netherlands in Paris.

Weidner himself was captured, tortured, and sentenced to death; but he succeeded in escaping from prison the night before his planned execution. In 1958 he immigrated to the United States. In California Weidner met author Herbert Ford, who portrayed Weidner's life story in the book *Flee the Captor*.

Roberto Badenas, representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Euro-Africa region, encouraged the young people present at the ceremony to carry on the values of courage and devotion embodied by former employees and students of the Salève Adventist University.

Ulrich Frikart, president of the church in the Euro-Africa region, stressed the importance of preserving memories by quoting from Milan Kundera's work *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*: "You begin to liquidate a people by taking away their memory." As Frikart pointed out, we need to remember the past, study it, and draw lessons for both the present and the future.

Concluding his letter to the organizers of the ceremony, Itzhak Levanon, ambassador of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva, wrote: "May the courage and deeds of Emile Bernard, Yvonne Bernard, Jean Weidner, Frederic Charpiot, Jean Lavanchy, Raymond Meyer, Jean Zurcher, Doctor Pierre Toureille—as well as those of all the students of the campus and all the 'Righteous Among the Nations'—remain forever engraved in our memories and serve as an inspiration and model of goodness and solidarity for the future of humankind."

In a moving portion of the ceremony, two surviving witnesses, Anna Zurcher and Roger Fasnacht, symbolically transmitted the flame of courage and service to two university students, who then transmitted the flame to two secondary schoolboys, who then passed the flame to two primary school students. The whole assembly then sang the refrain from "Love One Another" by Enrico Macias.

The highlight of the day's events was the unveiling of a commemorative plaque, mounted on a stone at the entrance of the main school building on the Salève campus. —Reported by the Euro-Africa Division/AW Staff

UGANDA: Adventist Elected Judge of International Criminal Court

■ Daniel D. Ntanda Nsereko of Uganda was elected one of the 18 judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC), in The Hague, Netherlands. He was sworn in as a judge January 17.

The ICC was established by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which was adopted in Rome, Italy, in 1998 by the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The Rome Statute is an international treaty binding only those states that formally express their consent to be bound as "parties" to the statute. The statute came into force July 1, 2002, once 60 states had become parties. Parties today number 105.

The ICC is an independent, permanent court that tries



JUDICIAL MEETING:
Daniel D. Nsereko, right, a Ugandan Seventh-day Adventist and a

widely respected law professor in Africa, is now a judge of the International Criminal Court. During a recent visit to the world church headquarters, Nsereko met with Robert Kyte, general counsel for the Seventh-day Adventist world church.

ROBERT W. NIXON

persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

At the time of his election to the ICC, Nsereko was a professor of law at the University of Botswana, where he had also served as head of the Department of Law. He was nominated to the ICC by the government of Uganda and endorsed by the African Union.

Nsereko holds Doctor of Judicial Science (1975) and Master of Laws (1971) degrees from New York University School of Law, a Master of Comparative Jurisprudence (1970) from the Howard University School of Law, and a Bachelor of Laws (1968) from the University of East Africa (Dar Es Salaam).

As a young lawyer, Nsereko practiced in Uganda and as a trial lawyer represented clients in both criminal and civil cases. Prior to his election as judge, he was admitted to the ICC bar as counsel entitled to represent both the accused and victims before the court. He also researched and published several books and many peer-refereed journal articles on international and criminal law, human rights, and related subjects in Africa, India, Europe, and North America. For more than a quarter of a century he taught these subjects at the university level.

Nsereko has been a visiting scholar at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law (Freiburg, Germany), visiting scholar at the Institute of Criminal Law and Procedure at the University of Cologne in Germany, and Walter S. Owen visiting professor of Law at the University of British Columbia, Canada. In 1996 the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law awarded him a medal in recognition of his contribution to international human rights and criminal law reform.

In Botswana Nsereko and his wife, Helen, are members of the Broadhurst Seventh-day Adventist Church, where he has served as an elder, Sabbath school teacher, and director of Christian education. They have five children—four sons and a daughter.

—by Robert W. Nixon, retired general counsel of the Seventh-day Adventist world church

WORLD REPORT

WORLD CHURCH:

Adventist Youth Storm Taiwan for Service, Spiritual Growth

Fifteen Hundred delegates gain insights at world youth forum.

By
BILLY WRIGHT,
*reporting from
Taipei, Taiwan*

Fifteen hundred Seventh-day Adventist youth—one third of whom had participated in community service projects—descended on the island of Taiwan for a four-day youth conference in which the themes of service and evangelism were stressed.

The Second World Conference on Youth and Community Service (WCYCS) officially opened Tuesday afternoon, January 1, in Taipei, and brought together Seventh-day Adventists from a number of countries, according to the world church's Youth Department.

"I didn't want to sleep," said Dean Tichborne, a youth delegate from the church's South Pacific region. "Taiwan was awesome! I had a blast and loved it fully."

The event's theme—"Love, Care, Serve"—was the main emphasis of the conference, as well as the community service projects that impacted communities through the volunteer efforts of youth and young adults. According to the world church's Youth Department, a total of 30 community service projects were conducted in Taiwan between December 24 and 28, 2007, prior to the conference's start.

At the conference delegates were challenged, motivated, and reenergized through morning and evening worship, plenary sessions, and seminars. Every morning attendees received encouragement and additional skills to help reach communities globally from the session's three

continued next page



VOLUNTEERING YOUTH:
Seventh-day Adventist young people participate in community service projects in the run-up to the World Youth Congress held in Taipei, Taiwan.

BILLY WRIGHT

WORLD REPORT

plenary speakers: Paul Tompkins of the Trans-European Division, world church general vice president Ella Simmons, and Leslie Pollard of Loma Linda University. Devotional speakers Mark Finley, also a general vice president of the world church, and Furman Fordham, pastor of the Riverside Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, challenged delegates “with their powerful, Bible-based messages,” as one participant said.

Tompkins said the event “was a significant event for Seventh-day Adventist youth ministry. It met the three most important needs of Christian young adults today—warm fellowship, spiritual refreshing, and an opportunity for service. It also celebrated 100 years of Adventist youth ministry in a timely and relevant manner while reaffirming our ongoing commitment to the twin goals of salvation and service.”

After observing the community service projects and the quality of the program presented by the World Conference on Youth and Community Service delegates, the Taipei County government extended an invitation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to establish international schools in Taipei, where subjects will be taught in English. Government officials also thanked the delegates for coming to Taiwan and helping their communities in such positive ways.

Loma Linda University’s Pollard said he was impressed with the dedication of the youth who participated in



YOUTH DELEGATES: Part of the congregation of young Seventh-day Adventists at the World Youth Congress in Taipei, Taiwan

BILLY WRIGHT

the community service projects. “For the first time in my 30-year leadership career, I witnessed the awesome power of our twentysomethings and thirtysomethings unleash their enthusiasm, vision, and spirituality on a specific community,” he said. “Everywhere we turned, we saw them working on community and village projects. Hundreds of [Adventist] young people swarmed the city and the countryside in an effort to serve the needs of Taiwan. I fully believe that because of their work, the city of Taipei will never be exactly the same again. Loma

Linda partnered with the Taiwan Adventist Hospital mission team to provide medical care to persons with severe mental disabilities. It was a blessing.”

According to Simmons, the event also reflected positively on the church’s youth ministries. “This success of the Youth Department is an indicator that the Adventist Church of the twenty-first century is in good hands with the youth, who, as the leaders of tomorrow, could usher the church through to Christ’s coming,” she said.

A third World Conference on Youth and Community Service is planned for Cape Town, South Africa, July 15 through 27, 2013, a spokesperson said.

—With additional reporting by *Adventist World* staff



PRAYER TIME: Adventist Church leaders including general vice president Armando Miranda, youth ministries director Baraka Muganda, and John W. Ash III, president of the Adventist Church in Taiwan, pray during annual drum ceremony held by Taiwanese government.

BILLY WRIGHT

WINDOW Into Sri Lanka

By HANS OLSON



Sri Lanka is a picturesque island nation some 20 miles off India's southeastern coast. Settled in the sixth century B.C. by Sinhalese from Northern India, and later by Tamils from Southern India, Sri Lanka was colonized by several European nations before it gained its independence in 1948.

Popularly known as "the Pearl of the Indian Ocean," Sri Lanka's 1,340-km. (832-mile) coastline is rimmed with white sandy beaches and coastal tourist resorts. The December 2004 tsunami caused some \$1.5 billion of damage to the island.

Sri Lanka's lush mountainous inland boasts some of the world's most arable land. This region is best known for the seemingly endless tea estates, which produce the world-renowned Ceylon tea. However, Sri Lanka's economy also depends on a variety of agricultural exports including rice, sugarcane, rubber, coconut, and fruit.

Today Sri Lanka has strong ethnic and religious divides. Various skirmishes between the majority Sinhalese (mostly Buddhist) and

minority Tamils (mostly Hindu) have caused years of social and political unrest. The island also has a growing Muslim population and an established Christian community.

Adventists in Sri Lanka

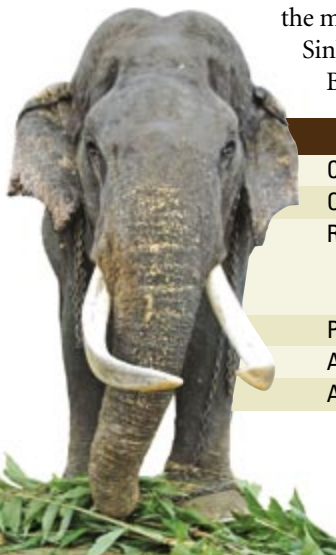
In 1893 Abram La Rue, an Adventist lay missionary, visited and distributed literature in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. In 1904 Harry Anderson and another missionary arrived in Sri Lanka to establish an Adventist church. The first two Sinhalese converts were baptized in 1922. They became pioneer missionaries and established four more churches.

It's been more than 100 years since the first Adventist missionary landed in Sri Lanka; yet only slightly more than 3,500 Adventists live in this nation of some 20 million. Public and personal witness continue to be difficult. Many people live in the countryside, often on tea estates, far from any Adventist church. People are often skeptical about Christianity. The memory of European colonialists who often "forced" people to become Christians is still etched in people's minds.

Because of this, frontline mission work in Sri Lanka means reaching out one-on-one to people in their homes. There are no large halls to host evangelistic crusades. Most people don't own a car; they travel by bus, public minivan, or three-wheeled taxi. It can take hours to get places. The Adventist Church has made a concerted effort throughout the past 10 years to send Global Mission pioneers into communities to engage people where they live. Since 1997 the number of congregations has grown from 28 to nearly 50, a growth rate of nearly two-thirds.

In 1964 Lakeside Adventist Hospital opened its doors in Kandy. More than 4,000 students are enrolled at five different Adventist schools. The schools have students from all of the island's major language and religious groups.

To learn more about frontline mission work in Sri Lanka and other parts of the world, visit www.Global-Mission.org. Global Mission is one of the frontline mission arms of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More than 3,000 Global Mission pioneers serve around the world each day reaching the unreached with the gospel of hope.



SRI LANKA

Capital	Colombo
Official languages	Sinhalese and Tamil
Religion	Buddhist 70%, Muslim 7%, Hindu 7%, Christian 6%, unspecified 10%
Population	20 million
Adventist membership	3,577
Adventist to population ratio	1:5,500

WORLD VISTA

In many ways, I am a child of the Second World War. As a young boy, I saw the terrible devastation of those years—ruined lives, diminished families, and large-scale upheaval of society. My family had evacuated to the country, and for the five years of the war we lived in the caretaker’s flat of an old school building. The classrooms had been turned into dormitories that housed more than 300 young German soldiers.

I remember one day toward the end of the war asking my mother, “Why are the German soldiers crying?” I could hear them sobbing in their rooms. My mother replied:

Guiding principles

We each feel strong kinship—a sense of solidarity—with our own people and our own country. Our citizenship in a nation commands a sense of loyalty, a sharing in both the struggles and the joys of the people among whom we live. There is no virtue in isolating ourselves from our communities. It is natural to feel civic pride, and it is healthy to participate in the life of the nation to which we belong. Yet how should this sense of solidarity express itself when it comes to the military of our country, when our paramount duty to God raises tensions that are not always easy to reconcile?

Clear Thinking About Military

By JAN PAULSEN

“They are just young boys. They miss their home; they miss their mommies and daddies. They don’t understand why they have to be here in the cold of northern Norway. They don’t understand why they have to be a part of all this.” They were young men, deprived of the chance to grow up and experience a youth of a different kind.

Today, more than 60 years removed from that time, the world has undergone profound changes—political, economic, and technological. Yet the role of the military in the life of many nations, as well as in transnational disputes around the globe, continues to place firmly before us an important moral and spiritual question: How should a Christian—a Seventh-day Adventist Christian—relate to the military? And when faced with a choice to serve in the armed forces—either as a combatant or in some other capacity—what principles should guide us?

I believe any discussion of this topic must rest on two essential foundations.

First, the church is called to be an unambiguous voice of principle.

War, peace, and participation in military service are not morally neutral issues. Scripture is not silent on these things, and the church, as it interprets and expresses the principles of Scripture, must be a voice of moral authority and influence. This is not an “optional” responsibility—one that we can put aside should it become uncomfortable or go against majority feeling. If we are silent, we fail in our duty to God and to humanity.

Second, the church is God’s agent of grace.

This, also, is a fundamental responsibility. Every human being, no matter what their choices or conduct, is of infinite value to God. As the church expresses itself on this issue and offers counsel to both its own members and broader society, it must never allow itself to forget this one unchangeable fact: the God we serve is a healer and a Savior. Healing and saving are also the first business of the church. As individuals struggle with these questions—and perhaps make choices that, in hindsight, they wish they had not—the church must constantly reflect God’s infinite, healing love.



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



LEANDRO CAVINATTO

Service

So, keeping these things in mind, I'd like to reflect on two questions regarding the church's attitude toward military service, both historically and today. These questions—broad areas of concerns—have come to me time and again over recent years as I have visited with both laypeople and church leaders in many parts of the world.

1. A loss of clarity?

The historic position of our church regarding service in the armed forces was clearly expressed some 150 years ago—very early on in our history, against the background of the American Civil War. The consensus, expressed in articles and documents of the time, as well as an 1867 General Conference resolution, was unequivocal. "...[T]he bearing of arms, or engaging in war, is a direct violation of the teachings of our Savior and the spirit and letter of the law of God" (1867, Fifth Annual General Conference Session). This has, in broad terms, been our guiding principle: When you carry arms you imply that you are prepared to use them to take another's life, and taking the life of one of God's children, even that of our "enemy," is inconsistent with what we hold to be sacred and right.

Through the years, this principle has shaped the conduct of Seventh-day Adventists both in times of peace and conflict. Many have chosen to engage in medical

work within the armed forces. They participate as healers. They say to their nation: "I cannot operate as a taker of life; it would destroy me as an individual. But I can help people who are hurt by this conflict. I can function as a Christian if I can function as a healer."

Today in some countries young people are subject to a draft—a period of compulsory military service. Fortunately, in most instances an alternate service is offered, one that does not require an individual to train with or use arms. This option could simply be spending a year and a half doing hard labor building roads

or helping with some other civic project.

There are, however, some countries where the draft deprives you of the ability to conduct yourself as an Adventist believer. You cannot keep the Sabbath. You are given no option but to carry arms. In such circumstances, you have before you a very serious choice. Accepting the penalty of dissent—perhaps even imprisonment—may be the decision you make simply to be faithful to your fundamental convictions and your Lord.

Is there today any confusion about the church's position? Have we done a good job of articulating these principles? Clearly, this question will not be answered in the same way in every part of the world church. Yet, in talking with church members in many different countries I have sensed, at times, a certain ambivalence toward our historic position—a sense, perhaps, that "that was then, and this is now." And yet I know of no reason why this should be so.

2. A lack of moral guidance?

This leads me to my second question. Do we provide adequate guidance in our churches and schools for our young people as they face difficult choices regarding service in the military? Have we at times neglected our role as a moral compass on this issue? In the absence of guidance from their church, do some of our young people view joining the military as "just another career option," rather than a complex moral decision with potentially far-reaching, maybe unforeseen, consequences for their own spiritual life?

It is not difficult to understand the forces that may lead someone to consider a military career. Their choice

WORLD VISTA

may be driven by a desire to serve their country, or the military may open up educational and professional opportunities that may seem unavailable anywhere else. Young people may see it as a short-term option, a much-needed stepping-stone to something else. They may view it as a “necessary evil”—a road to the future that, for lack of financial resources or other opportunities, they must take in order to fulfill their potential.

Yet in some instances, to voluntarily enlist in the armed forces is to sacrifice one’s choice not to bear arms, or to request provision for Sabbathkeeping. You freely choose to give up your rights in these things. And so I would ask: “Have you *really* thought about this? Have you considered the consequences to your relationship with Christ and to your own deepest convictions?”

Some may calculate the risk and say: “Although I technically don’t have a choice about whether or not I will carry arms, the chances are, nine out of ten, that I will not find myself in a combat situation where I will need to use them.”

But regardless of whether you go into combat or not, you have made a decision about certain basic values and declared this publicly. You are accepting the possibility that you may have to go down that road, and this will inevitably do something to you as a person. It will change and shape you. In proactively choosing to accept circumstances where you may be required to carry arms or forfeit your ability to keep the Sabbath, I suggest that you have placed the spiritual and moral foundations of your life in serious jeopardy.

So, when military recruiters come to our universities and colleges, or even our secondary schools, laying out before young students the opportunities that the armed forces present, is the church providing a clear,

alternate message? Is there someone also asking: “Have you considered this? Have you thought about what this may do to you? Have you thought about the price you may pay in terms of the basic values you really treasure?” The Department of Chaplaincy Ministries at the General Conference is developing some specific initiatives to help provide much-needed advice and counsel within our schools and churches, and I welcome this.

I feel especially for those individuals who have taken the “calculated risk” and find themselves drawn into a combat situation, the very position they had hoped and prayed to avoid. They see no way out. What should their church say to them? “I told you so?” “Shame on you?” No! The church is a ministering, healing, saving community. This is the moment when a young person, regardless of poor choices or wrong turns, needs to feel the embrace of their church.

Conclusion

This is not a simple topic, nor is it “complete”; it is just one aspect of the broader issue of war, peace, and Christian responsibility. And the questions I have posed do not lend themselves to sound-bite answers or pat responses. They are questions that generate strong—sometimes visceral—feelings. They

reach deep into our self-understanding and identity, as both citizens of our country and members of God’s family. Our responses are shaped in large part by our own experiences and culture, as well as our love for our country and our desire to share in its history and future.

Although these are difficult issues, they cannot be put aside simply for this reason. So let us consider these things together—in our homes, our churches, and our schools—and let us do so with open hearts and a spirit of humility. ●

*When you
carry arms you
imply that
you are prepared
to use them to take
another’s life.*



DAVID PLAYFORD

How Does Poverty Impact Health?

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

It seems when people talk about health issues, from HIV to heart disease, they mention poverty. Could you discuss how poverty impacts health?

Poverty is a global health issue, affecting the poor in every part of the world. Health statistics for some nations, such as “poor” nations, depict a gloomier picture than do those of more wealthy nations. But even in the United States—probably one of the wealthiest nations—poverty takes a significant toll.

One major consideration is diet and the availability of food. The typical North American diet has shifted heavily to high-fat intakes, and poorer people tend to satisfy their caloric needs with high-fat fast foods. This results in obesity and a propensity to heart disease and cancer. In underdeveloped countries the foods may be less processed but in short supply and with seasonal deficiencies. In developing countries superstition or poorly advised dietary restrictions sometimes eliminate what could be a lifesaving item in the diet.

Infection runs rampant among undernourished or poorly nourished people. Exposure to inclement weather, inadequate housing, crowding in shelters, lack of immunization, and ignorance all play a role. Water for many of the world’s poor is unsafe and a potential source of infection.

A Canadian census in 2001 found 14,145 people homeless throughout the country, but the study counted only those in shelters on one day in March. But what of the homeless

staying with friends, at the YMCA, on the street, or transiently in a “motel”? The Australians reported 10 percent of their homeless were children. Raising children on the street predicts lifelong problems and risks for violence, sexual exploitation, and addiction.

International efforts at improving conditions surrounding childbirth have not been very successful. In the November 2007 issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, follow-up on the twentieth anniversary of the SAFE Motherhood initiative shows, for a variety of reasons, almost no improvement. An absence of truly *strategic* intervention is apparent. Such failure is also ours as a church, because we have lacked cohesiveness of purpose and shown a tendency to pursue individual and self-satisfying projects.

HIV and AIDS sometimes reflect the sex trade, which is—in many parts of the world—a survival activity. Food and shelter are obtained by many women only in exchange for sex. Prostitution is despised by Christians, but not only does the disgust cover the activity but often the prostitute. We Christians perhaps should ask ourselves whether disgust is a Christian emotion.

Immunization programs for the poor are often inadequate. Sitting in privileged isolation, benefiting from “herd immunity” (whereby the majority—being immunized—protects those who are not), some refuse immunization for their children. It is a far different story where large populations are unprotected. We are living in a time of fundamental change in the order of international balance. The rising Chinese and Indian

economies are also facing increasing health issues. Their populations are aging, and they are seeing a rise in chronic disease such as coronary artery disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, and cancer. Health gaps between urban and rural populations are increasing. Population mobility in association with poverty always promotes increases in sexually-transmitted disease and infections such as tuberculosis. The economic Group of Seven countries has reduced their population growth rate to the point of dependency on immigration to sustain their population levels. New diseases are introduced, along with the immigration. We hope everyone realizes that social and economic factors are a great cause for concern and church involvement as a part of health ministry.

We need to work strategically and cohesively. Problems of such major proportions as poverty are not attacked by local feeding programs. Our church must join hands with other communities of faith and address the needs of the poor, especially their health needs. ●



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From time to time, we have reported to us through various church publications, local conference newsletters, and other first-, second-, or third-hand accounts, the apparent growth and flourishing of one or another of our churches somewhere in the world, in some division or conference. As topics for reporting and discussion, these “miracle churches” come and go; but they seem to be an ever-present phenomenon.

We seem to like having a miracle church or district happening within a reasonable distance of our own church. It seems somehow to alleviate our frustrations in relation

seemed to have more internal problems than most, and the focus on outreach appeared to border on the statistically obsessed—outreach at the expense of real caring. Frankly, the reality did not match the reporting.

This disappointment leads to further questions: “If even our apparent bright spots are dull (though I am sure not all are), what hope is there for any of our other churches?”

Another Picture

As I continued to consider this, I remembered the many Sabbath mornings I’ve spent in a variety

“MIRACLE

By NATHAN BROWN

*Toward a more
balanced view of what
God is doing*

Churches”

to the apparent stagnation of our own congregation, giving us a little hope for ourselves.

However, this is probably not the only effect. It’s very likely that such reports might also raise some questions. Questions like: “Why does so very little seem to happen where *I* am—where *I* go to church?” “And what can we do about it?”

A Letdown

Not so long ago, I found myself in a “miracle church”—a church widely reported as a place where “things are happening.” Depending on which reports one read, the church attendance had risen between 50 percent and 150 percent the previous year. Coupled with a new building and an ongoing outreach program, this was the place to get involved.

But it turned out to be a disappointment. Put simply, the numbers did not add up. Moreover, it was a church that

of churches. In each case, one can look around with amazement at the others in attendance and what is happening.

C. S. Lewis experienced a similar feeling in his early days as a Christian and wrote, as follows:

“When I first became a Christian ... I thought that I could do it on my own by retiring to my room and reading theology, and I wouldn’t go to the churches.... I disliked very much their hymns, which I considered to be fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music. But as I went on I saw the great merit of it. I came up against different people of quite different outlooks and different education, and then gradually my conceit just began peeling off. I realized that the hymns (which were just sixth-rate music) were, nevertheless, being sung with both devotion and benefit by an old saint in elastic-sided boots in the opposite pew, and then you realize that you aren’t fit to clean those boots. It gets you out of your solitary conceit.”¹

The truth is that every church is a miracle church. One has only to look around at the strange assortment of worshippers to appreciate the miracle that brings together all these different personalities and histories. As a younger person, I am often amazed and humbled in observing older members who have spent lifetimes in their commitment to their faith and their church.



Nathan Brown is editor of the South Pacific Division’s *Record* and *Signs of the Times* magazines, and writes from Warburton, Victoria, Australia.



GLOBAL MISSION

The Miracle Continues

The story of the New Testament after Jesus' ascension is the story of the development of the Christian church. And the many letters that constitute the remainder of the New Testament are addressed to individual churches. By way of example, the letters to the seven churches in the first three chapters of Revelation present these distinct church groups at the time of writing, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. All of these first-century churches and Christians have a special place as a part of the burgeoning kingdom of God. They were all vital parts of the vast miracle unfolding in the first-century world.

The miracle continues. And by the grace of God, we are a part of it. Our individual experiences in a church—any church—will involve the amazing and the disappointing. However, our involvement in the church—as a part of the body of Christ—will always be a miracle. If we were to focus more on the miracle of our own belonging, our respective church experience would have to seem more of a miracle than a disappointment.

In relation to worship in church, Lewis once wrote: "The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God."²

An invisible church would not necessarily be a good thing, but if we were able to pay less attention to trying

to create another "miracle church," we might direct more attention to the real purpose of the church as part of the kingdom of God in our respective corners of the world.

All churches are miracle churches. Let's work in our own churches, and with God's love and power the miracle will continue to grow. ●

1 C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 61, 62.
2 Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (Harcourt, 2003), p. 2.

For Sharing or Reflection

1. How do you approach worship in your local church? Do you go seeking a blessing or to become a blessing to someone else? What do you say to those who argue that the first approach is selfish?
2. What should be our attitude when we find ourselves having to worship with those we think are less educated (or sophisticated) than ourselves? And how should we relate to inviting our friends to such services?
3. What attitude(s) should we bring to the worship service? And how does our concept of God relate to the way we experience this event?

The poolside of the Riviera Seventh-day Adventist Church in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, is the setting. The event is the baptism of 11 new converts.

Excitement builds as the choir and other church members take their places. The event could have passed as any other. It is not the first baptism held at the church, which began years ago as a small group meeting in the chapel of the West-Central Africa Division (WAD), then known as the Africa-Indian Ocean Division. But these people are unique. They are the fruits from the first-ever Adventist-held evangelistic campaign on the campus of the University of Cocody in Abidjan, once a hotbed of social unrest during the country's five-year civil conflict that displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

The decision of the Riviera church's Women's and Personal Ministries departments to target the campus as their mission field for the year 2007 has finally materialized. The campaign begins with a week of prayer. WAD Ministerial director R. Danforth Francis is the speaker. For three weeks, June 1 to 23, he speaks passionately of his message titled, "Steps to Better Life." Yet the ground remains tough and unyielding. Other social and sporting events on campus compete for attention. Some nights, music from outside the gymnasium in which the meetings are being held resonates and bounces off the walls. Other nights, it is the chill and rain that dampen spirits.

"Ideally, the gymnasium [in which we held the meetings] can seat 1,000 persons," Francis says, "but we had an average of only 35 guests each time."

He adds, "If I were in a position to do it all over again, we would have a longer time for contact with the people before launching the campaign. The community didn't know us well enough, so we did not

HOPE *Amid* Pain

By
JOSEPHINE
AKARUE

As a Côte d'Ivoire Adventist church baptizes new members, freelance journalist Josephine Akarue explores a candidate's testimony of overcoming his tragedy through song.



attract more people to come to the meetings. Because my responsibilities at the office have been increased to include Adventist Mission, I will be promoting more sowing so we can reap more from where we have sown."

But the church members persist—and that persistence pays off. Finally, 11 people indicate their desire to be baptized. Among these is one man whose story stands out. Though bound to a wheelchair, he radiates the joy and confidence that come from an intimate relationship with Christ.

"When I am depressed I sing and my spirit is lifted up," says Ivorian-born Jacquelin Brou Kouaku, the tenth

among 12 siblings, who jokingly refers to himself as a living tithe for God. His search for the truth has taken him through several challenging experiences.

Today, Kouaku is a composer of numerous songs awaiting production. During the 2006 Radio/Television Ivoirienne (RTI) musical contest, he emerged among the finalists, touching a chord in the hearts of his listeners. This singular event became a turning point in his life, an acceptance of what God could use him to accomplish. In spite of this new turn, Kouaku describes his journey for truth and success as long and tortuous, but he remains stoic: "I know music does not

DWIGHT FRANCIS



VERNA FRANCIS

Clockwise from left: BAPTISM CANDIDATES: Ten of the 11 people who committed their lives to Christ during the evangelistic campaign in Côte d'Ivoire anticipate their baptism in a pool next to the Riviera Seventh-day Adventist Church in Abidjan. **EVANGELIST:** R. Danforth Francis, Ministerial director of the West-Central Africa Division and speaker for the evangelistic series in Côte d'Ivoire, stands with his wife, Verna. **A SONG OF TRIUMPH:** Wheelchair-bound songwriter Jacquelin Brou Kouaku (center) says he struggled to make the decision to fully commit his life to Christ, but finally determined that he would rather risk losing his financial support than lose his faith in Christ.

immediately translate into wealth in Africa," Kouaku says, "but if it's God's will for me, He will provide the means."

Indeed, Kouaku's life has not been easy. Inadequate funds and his father's initial reluctance to let him out of his presence delayed his early education. But during a visit to one of the mission hospitals in Divo, a town in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, a missionary doctor encouraged his father to send him to school, and he relented. On Kouaku's first day of school, he recalled that his father had to carry him on his back because Kouaku could not use his legs. The missionaries later provided him with a wheelchair, easing the problem of transportation.

Kouaku's high intelligence earned him a promotion in elementary school. He skipped second grade and advanced to third grade. But then a lingering ailment forced him to remain out of school for five years. By the time he reached the final year of high school, a bout of typhoid fever robbed him of the joy of successfully completing his final exams. That was in 2002. The next year his mother died. His father had predeceased her in 2000. The combined tragedy of the loss of his parents and his inability to take his school exams drove him to the edge of despair, and he contemplated suicide.

Still, God's grace kept him going. He spent 2004 trying to survive by cultivating and selling tomatoes. Then his older sister died in 2005, leaving him broken with grief.

Kouaku's determination to overcome his pain and discouragement compelled him to continue composing songs and maintaining a small shop his sister had left behind. Then he learned about the musical contest, and this experience opened other doors. Not only did Kouaku receive invitations to sing for special occasions, he also had the privilege of signing up for musical training at RTI.

The church where he previously worshipped provided for his upkeep. Although he shared a room with another student on the university campus, the church met his other basic needs. Thus it was a struggle to make the decision for baptism following the evangelistic meeting on the campus where he lived. He faced a dilemma.

Kouaku did not want to let his previous church down; the issue of his financial support was also at stake. Still, he felt he had encountered the truth and needed to take a stand for what he believed. He felt conflicted until the last day of the meetings, but then he made up his mind to totally commit his life to Christ.

"I realized that my former church might cut off my stipend [because of] my new decision, and I realized I might face tough times," Kouaku said. "But I would rather lose my stipend and privileges than lose my faith in Christ. After all, He is the real Provider."

"This is a testimony of the power of the gospel," Francis says. "Kouaku's stand was very encouraging indeed."

So on that bright, sunny day, Kouaku, like 10 others, sealed that faith in baptism.

The challenges and struggles are just as real today for Kouaku as they were in the past, but the assurance of God's promises strengthens his faith. He acknowledges that beyond the glitz and frills the world offers lives a God who loves and cares for him. Indeed, He who has given the gift of music and the promise of eternal life had also given Kouaku hope amid pain. ●



Josephine Akarue is a freelance journalist based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

If there is any one person who can give a comprehensive description of what the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) does and how it works, as well as sharing the passion and purpose behind the Adventist calling to serve humanity, that person would be Denmark native Birgit Philipsen. Philipsen is the director for the ADRA/Africa Regional Office in Nairobi, Kenya—the first woman to occupy this position. She and her husband have been serving the church there since 2006.

But Philipsen is not new to the relief organization. After attending college in Collonges, France, with her husband, she taught high school in Norway for a short time. The call of ADRA was too loud to ignore, and in 1991 Philipsen joined the staff of ADRA/Denmark as a

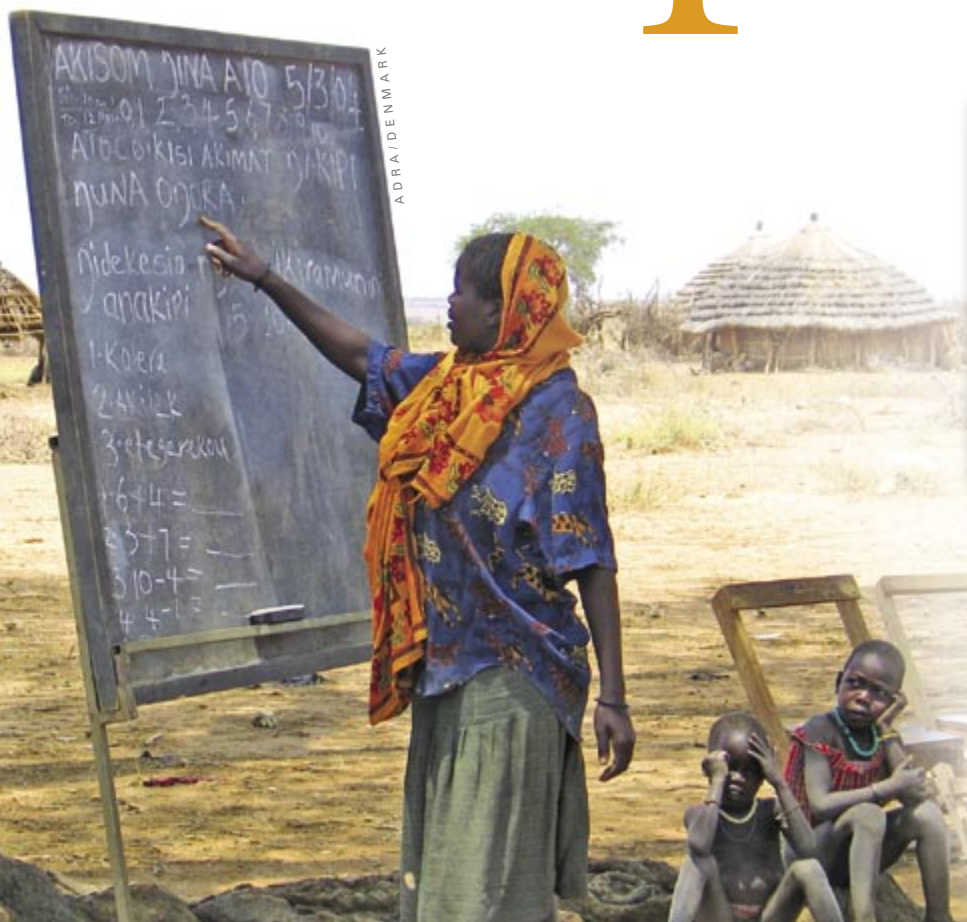
secretary. During this time she and her husband raised their three daughters, and Philipsen learned everything from finances to logistics to program development. In 2000 she became ADRA/Denmark's country director.

Although more than 70 percent of her time in the past two years has been spent in grueling travel around Africa, Philipsen is enjoying her new role in ADRA. She is uniquely equipped for the position. In addition to her passion and experience, Philipsen's graduate work in development, through a program from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States has paid dividends. Philipsen wrote her master's thesis on post-traumatic stress disorder in development workers. Her research showed that similar to soldiers,

Passionate *About* People

*A conversation with
Birgit Philipsen, the first female
regional director of ADRA.*

By KIMBERLY
LUSTE MARAN



ADRA/DENMARK



SANDRA BLACKMER

INFORMED AND ACTIVE: In Uganda, mostly women and children learn new skills. Education used to have low priority among the Karimojongs, however, many have become aware that education might be a way to learn new skills that can improve daily life and empower them to participate in the developing processes at community level, as well as at district and national levels.

How Does ADRA Work?

Philipsen sheds light on how ADRA gets relief to those who need it.

Partnerships are very important at all levels: partnerships with communities, between ADRA offices, and with governments and other organizations. In all of ADRA's programs it's important to go out into the field, assess the needs and their causes, and talk with as many representatives of that community as possible—the women, the children, the leaders, whomever—to establish what the real needs and solutions are, because sometimes perceived needs are very different from reality.

The ADRA office will then develop a concept paper that reflects the problems and factors in good solutions that are proposed by the local communities.

Then the ADRA office seeks funding from international or private donors inside the country, or it partners with an ADRA office in the north to seek funding from governments, from the European Union, or from other international donors. Certain types of donors will fund certain kinds of programs, so ADRA tries to match the

needs with the possibilities for funding and with the technical qualifications of the ADRA office in the country. When a concept paper or a project idea is approved by a donor, then the process of developing a good proposal starts. Once the proposal is funded, ADRA shares the plan with the community, recruits people, and works with the community to carry out the project according to the goals and objectives of the proposal. It all concludes with a final evaluation of the project, which often will be a guiding document with the needed information to plan for new development programs with the community. So, in this way the “project cycle” continues.

development/relief workers are exposed to high levels of stress and trauma through working in regions inundated with war and poverty. They have also been, in many cases, subjected to personal risk of rape, assault, and theft in areas where people are desperate. Some—mainly spouses and volunteers—suffered stress because they had no clear purpose or job description. She discovered that training that prepares the relief worker (and their spouse) for what may lie ahead in the field, as well as follow-up in the coming months and years after a worker has returned to “normal life,” is crucial and can promote a successful outcome for all involved.

Speaking Faroese as a child, Philipsen also knows English, Danish, Norwegian, French, German, and “quite a bit of Creole.” She is currently learning Kiswahili. What follows is a conversation I had with Philipsen in 2007.

KM: When did you become interested in relief work?

BP: In high school in Norway when I was 18. I saw a film about missionaries and all of a sudden I felt like God was calling me to go to Africa. I got some very clear answers to prayer that I was supposed to go to Africa, so at 19 I went as a student missionary. I had actually planned to become a teacher in Norway, but I went to Africa instead. I spent one year in Sierra Leone. After getting married, teaching in France, Norway, and Denmark, and working for ADRA in Denmark for 15 years, my husband and I moved to Africa in 2006.

Have you had the opportunity to share your faith through your work?

I have that opportunity every day. Working in a donor setting provides contact with government and embassy

people—people who are very highly educated and highly placed. I have found so many opportunities to talk about what ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church are doing. And I have always made it a point to explain to them that ADRA is the agency of the Adventist Church. Often they say they don't know a lot about the Adventist Church; and that leads to many good conversations.

When we bring evaluators and journalists who know nothing about us out to our projects they become some of our greatest spokespersons. They've seen our programs and how we work, and they go away impressed.

There are a lot of relief and development agencies out there; explain why ADRA is special.

Our connection with the church. I have worked very much in the donor world, with most of my experience in Denmark. We had quite a few evaluations and visits of consultants from the government and outside companies, and one thing I heard many times is that they were amazed at the commitment they saw. We are a faith-based organization. ADRA work is not just a job—it is a calling and a commitment, and you can sense it even among people of other faiths who work with us. They're influenced by this Christian culture.



Kimberly Luste Maran is an assistant editor of *Adventist World* magazine.



Above: NEEDED ASSISTANCE: ADRA workers help build one of 3,500 latrines in a refugee camp in Darfur, Sudan. **Left:** BACK TO SCHOOL: Children in Kosovo arrive for a day of classes at their newly reconstructed school. ADRA assisted in the building project, which was funded by the Danish government.

What are some ways you see ADRA supporting the mission of the Adventist Church?

The most important way we support the church is by encouraging and helping Adventists reach out to people in need around them. Often, church members, especially young people, have difficulty identifying with the church. Young people don't always enjoy a lot of theology, but in ADRA they see a challenge, an identity—they see a serving church.

As a church we may have a tendency to want people to come to us. We invite them for meetings we think that they should attend. ADRA works differently. We go where people are—we help anybody in need, and this outreach is an extremely important part of the church and its mission.

I am glad we have Adventist institutions that provide ADRA with highly qualified people to ensure quality in ADRA's work. That might be one of the reasons why ADRA succeeds in some places where other organizations don't—we have a lot of committed people who have been trained at our church institutions. They often have a strong sense of mission, and they become committed and effective workers in ADRA.

Tell me about things ADRA is doing that many may not be aware of.

The church runs a large number of schools and institutions worldwide, and ADRA can assist with training of staff and improvement of facilities. But ADRA also has a mission to assist people who aren't able to attend these institutions. Talking specifically about education, not everybody can go to Adventist schools, so ADRA complements our education outreach. We conduct literacy programs for adults who have never been able to attend school. We also

engage in education for women, health education, HIV/AIDS education, and so on. ADRA can assist some of the health institutions within the church with equipment and training. But we can also reach out beyond the walls of the institutions to do community health work and train people on how to prevent the diseases that would require treatment at our clinics or hospitals.

In ADRA/Denmark we had three main focus areas in our programs: education, health, and emergency response. Toward the end of my work with ADRA/Denmark we realized that in Africa it's important to try to assist communities with developing the capacity to solve their own problems. We worked toward doing integrated programs in the community by combining education, health, and food security—focusing on *community development* as the overall goal. In Rwanda, for example, we had thousands of people join functional adult learning programs, teaching people not only to read and write, but also important life skills such as gardening, nutrition, health education and languages. When you combine literacy training with the teaching of skills that immediately improve the quality of life of the students, they learn both more efficiently and effectively.

ADRA/Denmark also engaged in some large and very successful primary school education programs. In the 1990s we received support from the Danish government to construct and equip 110 schools, train 5,500 teachers, and establish 80 parent/teacher associations. The communities provided local building materials and volunteered their services for the construction. An essential part of the program was the in-service training for teachers because a high percentage of them were not qualified. In order to retain teachers in the rural areas, we also had to

construct houses for them. To secure good management and maintenance of the schools, headmasters received management training and, together with community members, they were instructed on how to maintain the buildings and equipment. Finally, we established and instructed the parent/teacher associations.

Kosovo is an example of how ADRA/Denmark works in a post-conflict situation to reestablish social services. When refugees who had fled to Albania returned after the crisis in 1992, we were planning on helping with housing. But our assessments showed that many organizations were already engaged in construction of houses, so ADRA/Denmark decided to assist with reestablishing the education system in Kosovo.

ADRA assisted with training teachers among the Kosovo Albanian people, but the first step, of course, was to reestablish the schools that had been destroyed by the war. UNICEF coordinated the education programs and assigned a number of schools for ADRA to rehabilitate or rebuild. The new school year started a few weeks after our project commenced, and it was crucial to get children back to school in order to create some normalcy in their lives. In the beginning we provided facilities in tents and empty buildings. Gradually we were able to reconstruct and rebuild the schools, and within two to three years all of the students were back in proper classrooms. When most of the 110 schools were in place, we started training teachers and assisting in history curriculum development. We organized meetings where people from high levels of the [government] ministries, experienced teachers, and historians from different ethnic groups would meet and discuss how to go forward on developing the curriculum. This actually became a peace-building activity where people who previously were enemies learned to work together in establishing the curriculum and even establish true friendships in spite of ethnic and political differences.

What gives you the most satisfaction in your work?

To be able to work with people and to see how your work is something that is really changing people's lives for the better. I am passionate about this work; people are the priority for me.

Disappointments and frustrations come along. How do you handle these challenges?

First, I know that I am never alone. God is always there. I've often faced challenging situations in which I just had to say, "God, you have to help me now." He has never let me down. I think that is one of the secrets of being able to keep going because the work is very demanding and you are constantly thrown into situations in which you really don't know what to do.

Second, keep things in balance. For example, even when things are hectic, I make it a point not to compromise on

Sabbath. There must be a balance between work, and also between work and family life. To be honest, it was very difficult when my children were young—it was a constant struggle between priorities to keep things steady. On the other hand, having a demanding job also enriched our family life through the sharing of interesting experiences in pictures and stories.

Third, learn from others how to have fun and enjoy the blessings in life. In ADRA, you always meet and work with people who know how to laugh and have fun even when things are very tough. A good laugh keeps me going—and finally (but not least important), I know I'm doing the job that God wants me to do.

If readers are interested in serving ADRA, what are the steps that they should take?

ADRA can use people with a variety of educational backgrounds. Don't think that by doing one type of education you will end up in ADRA. Very often the best people we have are people who have a college degree in the field that was of interest to them at that time but take a graduate program in development later. That gives them a specific area of technical expertise combined with skills in development, and they become very useful ADRA workers.

How do you get in to work with ADRA? Try to volunteer for a few months or a year, and then you will know what it is to work with ADRA at the field level. You will also get to know people in ADRA, and you can see what it is you are really interested in doing within the agency. ●

A Church Member's Role

As the development and relief organization of the Adventist Church, ADRA needs strong support from the members.

It is very important for ADRA to receive the disaster relief funds that are collected in the churches. These funds and other donations from members enable ADRA to be on the scene immediately when disasters occur. This in turn gives ADRA access to larger funding from governments and other funding agencies for emergency response. Donations from church members also enable ADRA to apply for external development funding that requires matching funds.

ADRA also has an important role to play in helping church members understand the importance of reaching out to people around them—not just by preaching but also by helping people with their needs and responding to their needs. Some of the needs are spiritual, but many are social or physical. ADRA and the church should work together on this. Skilled church members can serve as volunteers, and ADRA can train them on how they can serve people in their communities.

By
ROY ADAMS

NUMBER 5

The Third Person

The most neglected Gift in the

The doctrine of the Trinity is the most difficult concept my little mind has ever had to grapple with. It's hard enough to try to conceive of a God who has *no* beginning and no end—especially no beginning! But it's three hundredfold more challenging to try to envision three separate Beings—each one very God of very God, God in every sense, coequal, existing side by side throughout eternity—there being no time in the past when they did not exist as such.

We let our minds stretch and stretch until they're ready to snap, but succeed only in discovering our intellectual impotence in the face of this inscrutable mystery.

And at the very heart of it is the mystery of "the Third Person" (to use a common expression for the Holy Spirit in Christian theology). Professor Stanley Hopper of Drew University years ago said somewhere that "the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is at once the most central and the most neglected doctrine of the Christian faith." In this article, however, I focus on the Spirit not so much as a *doctrine*, but, rather, as a "Person."

As He neared the end of His life on earth, Jesus said: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper" (John 14:16).

The original language of this text contains a subtle nuance not evident in the English translation, centered around the word "another." At least two distinct words were available to the Greek writer/speaker, depending on the point they sought

to make. If they wanted, for example, to distinguish an elephant from a cheetah, they'd use the word *heteros* in referring to "another animal." But if the other creature was also an elephant, they'd use the word *allos*, meaning *another animal of the same kind*.

Jesus probably spoke Aramaic, but in interpreting His meaning, John used the Greek word *allos*. Which means that what Jesus was promising here was to send us Someone essentially just like Himself. Not a force, but a Person—a Person who hears our woes, feels our pain, sympathizes with our griefs, supports us in our struggles, and empowers us for daily living and the task before us.

And this mighty Third Person has been promised to us as a gift for the asking.

Take, for example, the interesting parallel passages of Matthew 7:7-11 and Luke 11:9-13. In the Matthew passage Jesus says that God is more willing than our earthly parents to give us the "good things" we ask for. But in the parallel version in Luke, we learn that Jesus had in mind something infinitely more important than mere "things." In Luke's rendering Jesus says: "How much more will your heavenly

Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (verse 13).

Trying to resolve the apparent discrepancy one day (with one passage saying "things," the other "the Holy Spirit"), I came upon a statement by Ellen G. White that seemed to bring it all together for me. Referring to the Holy Spirit, she says: "The power of God awaits [our] demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672).

This means to me that though it's right and proper to do so, I need not present a checklist to the Lord. I need not ask for victory over this, victory over that, and victory over a hundred other problems. I need not bemoan my lack of faith, my lack of wisdom, my impatience, and a thousand other deficiencies I know I have. Nor do I need to present Him a catalog of a hundred and one "things" I want. Instead, all I need to do is to ask for the mighty Third Person to come and take possession of me. Then that "promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train."

It's what I call God's "Package Deal."



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associate editor of
Adventist World.

So Why Are We Afraid?

Sometimes I think we don't seriously agonize for this Presence in our lives because, frankly, we're afraid of the Spirit. And we're *afraid* because of what we've seen from some of those who loudly claim to "have the Spirit." We think that the Spirit will lead us to do stupid things, to make fools of ourselves. But the Spirit never leads us to do things that are repugnant or stupid in the particular culture or setting in which we function. Quite the contrary, it's

Christian church

the Spirit who often holds us back from doing many dumb things of which we are so prone.

Indeed, this Gift is much more practical than we sometimes realize; and in this connection one might point to Exodus 35:30-33—to what I call "the secular activity" of the Holy Spirit. For here we find the Spirit providing abilities for design and construction, of all things! It suggests that whatever our calling or occupation, we can lean on the Spirit for the enablement we need.

This is fantastic stuff, when you

stop to think about it! Whether you're a builder, a teacher, a nurse, a mechanic, a physician, a homemaker, a janitor, a student, or whatever, the presence of the Spirit increases your ability and competence.

The Spirit does not make us better just for the sake of it, however. Rather, God would have us use the Spirit's gifts to build up His kingdom.

Have We Become Self-sufficient?

With all the technological gadgets and wonders we have today, it's quite possible for many of us to feel no need of any help beyond ourselves. But God's word through the ancient prophet is as true today as then: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit" (Zech. 4:6).

The early disciples, recognizing their inability to accomplish anything lasting on their own, prayed "with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet [the people around them]" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37). And what followed was Pentecost!

It's not by accident that the great English preacher Charles H. Spurgeon was able to draw standing-room crowds in London in the middle of a weekday. In one of his prayers we

find these sentiments: "Oh, God, send us the Holy Ghost; give us both breath of spiritual life and the fire of unconquerable zeal, till nations shall yield to the sway of Jesus."

This is our greatest need as a church. And we have prophetic intimations that that need will be fulfilled before the end. "The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. . . . By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612).

Up Close and Personal

The Spirit is, as well, the ultimate solution for all our maladies and problems. In the words of our Fundamental Beliefs, No. 5, "those who respond [to the Spirit] He renews and transforms into the image of God." Guilt, anxiety, hostility, and a host of other problems melt in the presence of the mighty Third Person. He comes with overwhelming, quickening, recuperative, transforming power, falling like an electric shock on our palsy-stricken souls, causing every nerve, every fiber of our bodies to reverberate with new vitality and power.

And all this quietly, imperceptibly. "No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173).

What a message we have—for our own benighted souls and for a confused and blighted world! The Third Person—our most desperate need. ●

Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by

the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)

My Mission,

By ELLEN G. WHITE

The lives of those who are connected with God are fragrant with deeds of love and goodness. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them; their influence is to elevate and bless. These are fruitful trees. Men and women of this stamp of character will render practical service in thoughtful deeds of kindness, and earnest, systematic labor.

Self-importance, vanity, and pride should in no case be mingled with the sacred work. Those who become lifted up because they can do something in the cause of God will be in danger of marring the work by their self-conceit, and they will ruin their own souls.

All who are connected with the work of God should make their mission as attractive as possible, that they may create no distaste for the truth in consequence of their demeanor. Self must be hid in Jesus, and those who labor for God must have characters with a pleasant flavor. Now is the time to put forth earnest efforts. Men and women are needed to work in the great missionary field with determined effort, praying and weeping, [to] sow the precious seed of truth in imitation of the Redeemer, who was the Prince of missionaries.

Christ left the royal courts of heaven; He left His high command, and for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He labored in His vineyard among the hills of Galilee, and at last bedewed with His own blood the seed which He had sown. When the harvest of the earth shall be gathered into heaven's garner, and Christ shall then look upon the saints redeemed, He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

He who gives increased talents to those who have made a wise improvement of the talents intrusted to them is pleased to acknowledge the services of His believing people in the Beloved, through whose strength and grace they have wrought. Those who have sought the development and perfection of Christian character by exercising their faculties in good works, in sowing the

My Work

Doing the work of

seeds of truth beside all waters, will, in the world to come, reap that which they have sown. The work begun upon earth will reach its consummation in the higher and holier life, to endure through all eternity. The self-denial and self-sacrifice required in the cultivation of the heart in doing the works of Christ will be infinitely overbalanced by the rich reward of the eternal weight of glory, the joys of the life which measure with the life of God.

Living for Jesus

None of us should feel content to save merely our own souls. Those who appreciate the plan of salvation, the infinite price paid for man's redemption, will not live for themselves alone. They will have the deepest interest to save their fellow men, that Christ may not have died for them in vain.

All heaven is interested in the salvation of souls, and all who are partakers of the heavenly benefits will feel an intense anxiety that this interest manifested in heaven may not be in vain. They will on earth cooperate with the angels in heaven, by manifesting their appreciation of the value of souls for whom Christ has died. They will, through their earnest, judicious labor, bring many to the fold of Christ. Not one who is a partaker of the divine nature will be indifferent in this matter.



World

Him who sends us.

The world is our field; with a firm hold on God for His strength and His grace we may move forward in the pathway of duty, as colaborers with the Redeemer of the world. Our work is to spread the light of truth and advance the work of moral reform, to elevate, ennoble, and bless humanity. We should apply the principles of Christ's sermon on the mount to every move that we make, and then trust the consequences with God.

The Joy of Service

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

If God and Christ and angels rejoice when even one sinner repents and becomes obedient to Christ, should not man be imbued with the same spirit, and work for time and for eternity with persevering effort to save, not only his own soul, but the souls of others?

If you work in this direction with wholehearted interest as the followers of Christ, discharging every duty, improving every opportunity, your own souls will be gradually settling into the mold of a perfect Christian. The heart will not be sere and unfeeling. The spiritual life

will not be dwarfed. The heart will glow with the impress of the divine image; for it will be in close sympathy with God. The whole life will flow out with cheerful readiness in channels of love and sympathy for humanity. Self will be forgotten, and the ways of this class will be established in God. In watering others, their own souls will be watered.

The stream flowing through their souls is from a living spring, and is flowing out to others in good deeds, in earnest, unselfish effort for their salvation. In order to be a fruitful tree, the soul must derive its support and nourishment from the Fountain of Life, and must be in harmony with the Creator.

Consecration

All who are faithful workers for God will yield their spirit and all their powers a willing sacrifice to Him. The Spirit of God operating upon their spirit calls forth the sacred harmonies of the soul in the answer to the divine touch. This is true sanctification, as revealed in the Word of God. It is the work of a lifetime.

And that which the Spirit of God has begun upon the earth for the perfection of man, glory shall crown in the mansions of God.... The moments now granted us to work are few. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. We have no time to lose. Every moment is golden, and altogether too precious to be devoted merely to self-serving.

Who will seek God earnestly, and from Him draw strength and grace to be His faithful workers in the missionary field? Individual effort is essential for the success of this work. ●

Seventh-day Adventists believe Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This article is excerpted from one that first appeared in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, now the *Adventist Review*, January 2, 1879.

*Our
work is to
spread the
light of truth
to elevate,
ennoble,
and bless
humanity.*

A guitar is slowly strummed as a group of men sing a hymn, their voices echoing off the concrete walls that surround them. A single window at the end of the room sends a soft light that envelops those singing. Peace and joy show clearly on their faces.

might be taken for granted.

This former Soviet republic has undergone a drastic transformation during the past 20 years. Yet despite all the changes, Moldova is still considered one of the poorest countries in Europe. People work hard, most of them in agriculture or

lives of people whom society wants to forget.

Help for “the Least of These”—and Their Families

Girleanu arranges for groups of families to visit women’s prisons around Moldova. The smiles on

MINISTRY BEHIND Bars

Preaching freedom to captives

By DANIEL WEBER



This could be a typical scene from anywhere in the world: a group of Adventist believers singing and sharing their faith, celebrating new lives provided by a loving Savior. But this group is unlike most others in the church. These believers will never set foot outside the small compound they now worship in. They have been forgiven by God, but society requires them to spend the rest of their lives behind bars.

A Community in Transition

The country of Moldova is a picturesque landscape nestled between the mountains of southern Ukraine and northern Romania. The streets of Chisinau, its capital, are similar to many cities and towns around the world. Children play in the park while holding balloons, young people gather in small groups visiting and laughing, families enjoy a bright sunny day. These images are so common they

government. They enjoy spending time with their families. Most people belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, but for many religion is more about tradition than experience. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than 11,000 members, a population ratio of one Adventist for every 390 people—one of the best in the entire Euro-Asia Division. Despite this growth, however, there are still many challenges.

Seventh-day Adventists in Moldova have found ways not only to spread the gospel, but to make a difference in their communities. One of these is Pavel Girleanu. In addition to the three churches he pastors, Girleanu works in seven prisons in Moldova. He does everything from arranging and holding church services in small, cramped cells, to arranging “family days” at prisons and detention centers. Girleanu is making a difference in the

the faces of women at seeing their children for the first time in months show how much they appreciate all that Girleanu and his helpers are doing. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency provides volunteers, transportation for family members, and personal hygiene kits for the prisoners. Family members often break down in tears as the emotions of months of separation come to the surface. Although it’s a simple act of kindness, it’s a perfect example of how the church provides relief to those in need. Just as Christ helped people without judging them for their sins, Girleanu’s efforts are another way Christ is represented here on earth.

Girleanu has taken a special interest in a group most people would avoid. Inside a small cell that serves

as his chapel, Girleanu leads a small group of prisoners in prayer and Bible reading. Sabbath school consists of a lively discussion, as this is the first time the group has been able to meet in nearly six months.

Outside the window of the cell, a courtyard gives glimpses of the lonely

him into God's family. By accepting the man, considered a member of the lowest class of prison society, Valentin has been labeled an outcast by his fellow prisoners. He's not allowed to touch or even talk to his fellow believers for fear they will be ostracized as well. But the men in this

his family. The president visited Zakir's relatives and developed a relationship with them. Several have now joined the church and are making plans to travel to Moldova to visit Zakir in prison.

"God is ready to accept us despite all our sins," says Zakir. "With all we've done up to now, He's



Left to Right: A CONTAGIOUS FAITH: Sentenced to life in prison,

Valentin effectively shares his faith with a captive audience. **PRISON PREACHER:** Pavel Girleanu (center) preaches to a group of believers who worship in a cell in Chisinau. In addition to his prison ministry, Girleanu leads three Adventist congregations. **WITNESSING WITHOUT WALLS:** While in prison, Zakir, a former Muslim, asked an Adventist pastor to visit his family, many of whom have now become Adventists.

ALL PHOTOS BY OFFICE OF ADVENTIST MISSION

life these prisoners lead. All of them will spend the rest of their lives in desolation and despair; that is, unless they get the chance to talk to Valentin. He sits at the back of the group of prisoners as they start their church service. Valentin became a Christian, then an Adventist while serving a 14-year prison sentence. As he neared the end of his sentence, he felt compelled to confess all of his prior crimes, earning him a life sentence.

Valentin has not been afraid to share his faith with his fellow prisoners. He converted his first cell mate. Frustrated prison officials gave him a new cell mate, who soon became a Christian. Again they changed cell mates and the next person was converted. Valentin's faith is contagious.

Recently Valentin was present at the baptism of a fellow prisoner. When the man came out of the water, Valentin hugged him to welcome

cell owe Valentin a debt of gratitude, for he was the one who brought each of them to Christ.

"He has given me this responsibility for a reason," says Valentin. "The Word of God says we should be witnesses, His witnesses."

The prisoners are thankful for the new lives they have been given by Christ. Despite all they've done, these men now lead new lives.

Building Bridges

Another prisoner is Zakir, from Turkmenistan, a country in which the Adventist Church has a very small presence. Zakir was a Muslim; when he converted to Christianity his family in Turkmenistan abandoned him. He hasn't seen a family member in almost 15 years.

Still, Zakir contacted the president of the Adventist Church in Turkmenistan and asked him to visit

given us salvation and forgiven us."

The church service ends with Girleanu's closing prayer, and the prisoners prepare to return to their cells. For them the Sabbath service is over, but they wish to give one last message to their fellow Adventists around the world. "Please pray for our small group," says Zakir. "It is just beginning its way to Christ."

Thank you for your support of Adventist mission around the world. To learn more about mission and the role you can play in telling the world about Jesus, please visit www.AdventistMission.org.



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

QUESTION: *How could King Jehoram of Judah receive a letter from Elijah if Elijah was taken to heaven before the death of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram's father?*

This question is not about history, but about the reliability of the Bible, caused by what some see as an apparent contradiction between 2 Kings 1–3 and 2 Chronicles 21:12–15. The possibility of finding discrepancies and even tensions in the Bible is very real. But each case should be carefully analyzed before a conclusion can be reached. I will describe this specific situation and suggest some possible solutions.

1. Nature of the Problem:

To read 2 Kings 1–3, one could get the impression that the ascension of Elijah occurred before the death of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (848 B.C.). The last king of Israel mentioned before God took the prophet was Joram, dated to the second year of Jehoram (852 B.C.), son of Jehoshaphat, in Judah (2 Kings 1:17). He was appointed as coregent before his father died (cf. 2 Kings 3:1). Elijah's ascension to heaven is narrated in 2 Kings 2:11–18. Apparently, Elisha's first prophetic responsibility was to reveal God's will to Jehoshaphat and Joram before they went to war against Moab (2 Kings 3:11–19). But this is far from certain. The sole rule of Jehoram, after the death of his father Jehoshaphat in 848 B.C., is recorded in 2 Kings 8:16. So, the question is how Elijah, who supposedly was taken to heaven before the death of Jehoshaphat, could have written a letter to his son, King Jehoram, as recorded in 2 Chronicles 21:12–15? (Do the names confuse you? In the Hebrew text Joram and Jehoram are spelled the same way!)

2. Was Elijah Taken to Heaven? In order to eliminate possible solutions to the problem, we should establish whether or not Elijah was taken to heaven. If he was simply translated to some other place on earth, then we would not have a problem at all. But the biblical text is clear: Elijah was taken to heaven. The verb "to take" is used in the Bible only two times to refer to a person being removed from earth to the heavenly realm. The first was the experience of Enoch, whom "God took away"

(Gen. 5:24; cf. Heb. 11:5). The other is the experience of Elijah. The description of that event could hardly leave any doubts concerning the fact that the text is describing God's unique intervention in human history resulting in the rapture of the prophet: "Suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind" (2 Kings. 2:11, NIV). To emphasize the permanent departure of the prophet to the heavens, the narrative describes the insistence of some of the sons of the prophets to be allowed to go look for him: "Perhaps"—they argued—"the Spirit of the lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley" (verse 16). Knowing the truth, Elisha discouraged them, but finally let them go to search for Elijah. They didn't find him.

3. Chronology of Events: Since Elijah was indeed taken to heaven, the problem can be solved in several ways. The most unlikely one is that Elijah wrote the letter from heaven and it somehow reached the king. Another possibility is that he wrote the letter before he was taken by God and later someone else gave it to the king. This is possible, but the biblical text does not require that type of precision.

For a more likely answer, let me first point out the obvious fact that Elijah's rapture is not dated. Those who argue that it happened before the death of Jehoshaphat are simply filling in the gaps of knowledge based on the place of the story within the narrative. Second, students of the Bible know (and if they do not know they should) that biblical narratives are not always in chronological order. Consequently, we need to take into consideration all biblical data before dating a particular event. Third, if, according to the biblical text, Elijah was permanently taken to heaven, then the letter he wrote to King Jehoram after the death of the king's father was written before God took Elijah. This in no way distorts the biblical information, but it helps us to harmonize what appears to be a serious discrepancy. ●

Names, Dates, and Places



By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

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



A Sign of True Worship

By MARK A. FINLEY

One thing is certain: Human beings were designed to worship God. Deep within each of us is a hunger for the eternal. We long for purpose and meaning in life. Someone has called this “the God-shaped hole in our hearts.” In this lesson we will study God’s plan to fill this aching void and discover His wonderful plan to fill our lives with deep, lasting joy.

1. What invitation did David give to each one of us?

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Ps. 95:6).

The psalmist invites us to _____

Worship leads us out of ourselves and toward God. It directs our minds to the eternal. In worship we are reminded who we are, who He is, and our relationship to one another. Worship lifts our focus from earthly things to heavenly values.

2. Why is God worthy of our worship? Circle the phrase in the following text that indicates why God is worthy of our worship.

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:11, 12).

We did not create ourselves. We exist only because a loving God made us. Since He gave us life, He is worthy of our deepest praise and utmost worship.

3. What did God give as a lasting memorial of His creative power and authority?

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the Seventh-day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. . . . For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Ex. 20:8-11).

The _____ is God’s eternal memorial of His creative power.

4. When we worship God on the Bible Sabbath, what do we openly declare we believe about God? Read Exodus 20:8-11 again and write the answer in your own words on the lines below.



5. How did the prophet Ezekiel describe the Sabbath?

“Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them” (Eze. 20:12).

God’s Sabbath is a _____.

Why is God’s Sabbath a sign? What is it a sign of? Write your answers on the lines below.

At Creation, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God created the world. When we are re-created in His image, once again it is through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Sabbath is a memorial of both experiences—God’s creative power in making us and God’s redemptive power in re-creating us as His born-again children.

6. What did Moses call the Sabbath?

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation” (Lev. 23:3).

According to Moses the seventh day is a “Sabbath of _____
and a _____.”

On Sabbath we rest from our labors to find rest in Him. Our physical rest is a symbol of a deeper rest in His love and care. A holy convocation is a coming together of God’s people for worship. Sabbath is a celebration in worship of God’s greatness.

7. What promise did Isaiah give those who keep the Sabbath?

“Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil” (Isa. 56:2).

The one who keeps the Sabbath is truly _____.

In your own words define the word “blessed.” _____

8. When will the entire universe find true Sabbath rest?

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me,’ says the Lord, ‘so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord” (Isa. 66:22, 23).

We will find true Sabbath rest in the new _____.



In God’s eternal kingdom we will find true rest as we worship Him each Sabbath.

Throughout the ages the Sabbath will remain God’s eternal sign of His creative and redemptive power. It will always be a symbol of His everlasting love and desire to make His children happy. This Sabbath may your heart be filled with praise to the One who created you, redeemed you, and is coming again for you.

Next month we will look at the topic,
“Jesus and the Sabbath.”

LETTERS



Empowering Women in India

I was deeply impressed by the December 2007 cover story, “Empowering Women in India,” by Loren Seibold,

which focused on the literacy projects. Little did I dream of the enormous impact it would make on the women, their families, the community, and the church when this project was started in 2001 with 10 centers in the Garo Hills.

Seibold crowned me as “Ministering Angel.” I am absolutely unworthy of such praise. I am only a frail, insignificant tool in God’s hands willing to be used by Him the way He desires. I praise Him for using me to open the eyes of the women to see the *Word* and the *world*.

I could not have done the least bit without the generosity and sacrifice of the donors who make contributions (and give reading glasses) through Hope for Humanity, Shepherdess International, women’s ministries, and the General Conference.

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for making the difference in the lives of these women—and for printing their story.

HEPZIBAH KORE,
WOMEN’S MINISTRIES
DIRECTOR/SHEPHERDESS
COORDINATOR, SOUTHERN ASIA
DIVISION
Tamil Nadu, India

The Revelation of Salvation

I am responding to the December 2007 Bible Question regarding how we are saved and what the moral influence of the cross is, by Angel Manuel Rodríguez.

I always thought and believed that Christ died in my place—the Just for the unjust; the Sinless for the sinner—me. Lo and behold, I discover, after reading Rodríguez’s article, that there is a theory called the “moral influence theory,” which denies that vital biblical fact. I am so grateful for Rodríguez’s clarification of what the moral influence theory is, as well as the eloquent, lucid explanation of where it comes short of the truth.

Besides the Scripture verses he mentions supporting the biblical view, there is one that I love to repeat to myself found in Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (KJV).

This scripture tells me that Christ paid my debt. He died in my place so that I will not have to die for my sins, because I gratefully accept His sacrifice on my behalf. Praise God for His incredible love and grace.

LAURICE KAFROUNI-DURRANT
Texas, United States

Christianity’s Great Mystery

Angel Manuel Rodríguez really opened up a mystery, all right (see “Christianity’s Great Mystery,” Bible Questions, November 2007). This

has been discussed among Adventist circles for as long as I can remember. I have my own ideas, of course, from what I’ve seen in the Bible. But Rodríguez presents the human/divine nature of Christ in words that explain it clearly—as clearly as human words can describe divinity.

I appreciated Rodríguez’s candor and logic. But I enjoyed even more the sound biblical basis of his conclusion: God experienced things in the human nature that are unique to humanity, while the human became a vehicle through which divine nature could work. And, of course, all of this, to finite minds, is an unfathomable mystery that we may never completely understand—even in eternity.

THURMAN C. PETTY, JR.
Texas, United States

The Gospel on the Internet

I am extremely grateful to God for allowing the proclamation of the gospel by means of the Internet, and I congratulate the editors of *Adventist World* for granting us access to the Web page (www.adventistworld.org). I am Adventist, and today (December 24, 2007) I have accessed it for the first time. Congratulations!

JACOB ARIAS FRIAS
Tabasco, Mexico

LETTERS

Good Work

I would like to congratulate the *Adventist World* staff. You deserve the highest commendation for the excellent quality of publishing. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit you have crafted a superb Christian journal whose excellence is reflected in its format, content, and reader friendliness. Keep up the good work.

NICKY MOSETI OGENCHE
Kisii, Kenya

I commend the editor of the *Adventist World*. Technically, he and the staff have done a great job! The articles are great—photos, layout—everything

is almost perfect. I really love this magazine. It is one of my favorite Adventist publications ever done. Great job!

Let us spread the good news to our non-Adventist brothers and sisters. I hope that this magazine will last until the coming of the Lord!

JAYDEN LAMPARERO
Cavite, Philippines

United Through *Adventist World*

I would like to congratulate you for the wonderful work you are doing. This paper, *Adventist World*, reaches far and wide, more so here in Kenya (particularly Nairobi).

Apart from its role of informing Adventists what God has wrought, it unites us and gives us a sense of belonging and, somehow, the belief that the church is bigger than us. I am really inspired by the escapades of Adventist volunteers and amused by the Meet Your Neighbor section (of The People's Place).

DAN OUKO
Nairobi, Kenya

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

My family and I are passing through decisive moments in our lives. We want you to pray that the will of God is evident and that we are able to follow it, regardless of the cost to us. Then we will know that what He has for us is the best thing that can happen to us.

CHRISTIAN, *Bolivia*

Please pray for my father to stop drinking alcohol and for my mother to be healed from diabetes and to see success in her new business. Also pray for our family to have a better relationship with God and to learn how to keep God's Sabbath holy.

JOSH, *Via e-mail*

I am a 21-year-old woman. My year was filled with challenges here and there, but I thank God for sailing with me. God has been blessing me for the past 21 years and I really thank Him.

I want God to continue blessing me in the year 2008. I need a life partner from God—I want Him to be involved all the way because I have seen some failings in life due to

choosing the wrong partner. Also pray that I will get a good job after college.

CHIGODO, *Zimbabwe*

Please pray that my family and I will sell our house for a profit as soon as possible. Pray also that our business is a success so I can quit my job and not have to work so much. In addition, we pray that we will have good health and that the Lord will lead us in the right directions.

JANELLE, *United States*

Please please pray for me, because catastrophe has struck. I am an Adventist and recently learned that I no longer have a job—after almost 25 years. At my age it is not easy to find work, but I know our Lord works wonders! Pray that I won't get discouraged and that someone will employ me.

JACOB, *Malawi*

I am very grateful for God's faithfulness and the steady love that I have always received. I am assured of this despite the problems and temptations that come our way, so I

am requesting prayer for my family. I come from a polygamous family. My stepmother is a witch with evil powers. We kindly need your prayers, especially for my stepmother to stop her evil ways and come back to Christ (she was an Adventist). The devil has taken us into captivity, but we believe that with God, all this will soon end.

JOYCE, *Kenya*

I am originally from the Philippines. We need prayers for my father's continuous good health and complete recovery from cancer. Pray also that I may regain my normal voice from a speech disorder. I will be undergoing medical tests. Pray too that there will be no serious and alarming findings. Finally, pray for my sister and mother as they work toward gaining their U.S. citizenship.

JOSEPHINE, *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

Adventist Summits Everest, Completes Other Climbs

In a stunning demonstration of the benefits of the Adventist lifestyle, Dr. Cedric Ross Hayden summited Mount Everest in a fast seven-hour climb from advanced base camp at 7,315 meters (24,000 feet), reaching the 8,839-meter (29,000-foot) summit at 5:00 a.m. on May 20, 2007. In achieving this, he completes his six-year program to climb the highest point on each of the seven continents, in addition to skiing to both the North and South poles.

While some 2,000 individuals have summited Everest, only a few hundred have climbed to the highest point on all seven continents, and fewer than a dozen athletes in the world have completed the Seven Summits and Two Poles Marathon. Hayden is a member of this unofficial but elite group and the only Seventh-day Adventist ever to have accomplished this feat.

In addition to reaching the summit, Hayden went the extra mile during the climb when he extracted an abscessed tooth for a fellow climber with a Swiss Army knife and borrowed forceps at 5,334 meters (17,500 feet) on Everest.

Hayden, a member of the Fall Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fall Creek, Oregon, U.S.A., was recently invited to discuss his accomplishment before a county medical society with several hundred attentive physicians in attendance. At the conclusion of the presentation, the physicians peppered Hayden with questions as to his training, exercise, diet, and philosophy.

Truly, as referenced in the *Adventist World* November 2007 cover story, this Christian athlete is “dreaming new ways to do mission.”

—Submitted by the Fall Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church communication correspondent, Fall Creek, Oregon, United States



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT:
Cedric Ross Hayden returns from the Everest Summit.

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

THE IN-BOX

(short thoughts by readers about the Bible and our faith)

Fisher or teacher? Jesus called His disciples. He said, "I will make you fishers of men." Not *teachers of men*. It is very clear that if people are not fished out from their corners, they cannot be taught. Many of us today like to teach in our various churches rather than go fish.

Even though teaching is one of the prophetic gifts, I don't think we can teach without first fishing. In evangelism, many of us appreciate when some have already prepared the way for us; we are hoping for a John the Baptist to lead. If the ground or the way is not prepared, the work does not progress.

We delay the second coming of Christ with sentiments and excuses such as this. The Lord is calling you and me, asking, "Who will go for me today?"

—Opeyemi Ogunjimi, Africa

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



ARVIN MAGBUHAT

ADVENTIST LIFE

When my niece, Heather, was about 3 years old, she loved to learn her memory verse for the coming Sabbath and then say it all week long. One day when her father accidentally left his six-foot ladder leaning up against a large oil barrel, Heather quickly took advantage of it and climbed to the top. When her father returned, he was horrified to see his little girl walking along the top of the barrel. "How did you get up there?" he demanded.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," was Heather's memorized response.

—Mildred White, Idaho, United States

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"You can never rise so high you cannot sin, but you can never sink so low you cannot rise."

—Gary Rustad, associate secretary of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, during an annual South Asia Union Mission meeting in Singapore, on November 21, 2007

ANSWER: In Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Seventh-day Adventists who are part of an exchange program visit other churches in Dubai. Adventists in this country are very active in glorifying and serving God. Many churches in Dubai come from different parts of the world, meeting together in service to God.