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INTERNET EVANGELISM: Two of the three women pictured heard the gospel message and were baptized partly as a result of viewing Adventist evangelistic meetings on the Internet. From left: Tatiana, Cristina, and Marcia. Marcia, a long-time Adventist, invited her sister Cristina to watch the meetings online.



WORLD VIEW

Amazing Grace, Amazing Pace

In the half-light of a rainy dawn I bend over my glowing laptop screen, eyes welling with grateful tears as I scan the messages that crowd my e-mail in-box.

“Praying for you today... Lifting you up before the Father... Asking God to give you His joy and peace this Sabbath.”

The messages of grace and love were sent sometime in the night by friends in South Africa, the Philippines, New Zealand, the Netherlands. Half a world away as we used to measure distance, they interceded for a friend as their kindness raced along the World Wide Web. The hope that once took weeks or months to share now travels at speeds approaching that of prayer.

And I am blessed, in real ways, in real time. The solidarity we share in Christ is deepened, strengthened, undergirded by their digital expressions of faith. I know that my Redeemer lives, in part because He has such caring followers on earth.

Were it not for new technologies that leap the chasms between nations, races, faiths, and languages, we might

despair of ever going “into all the world” with the gospel. Uncounted millions will never learn of Jesus’ love if telling it depends only on boats and planes, radio, and even mass distribution journals such as *Adventist World*. Unless we move assertively toward new media that God has made available, a swelling world population will outgrow our ability to tell “the old, old story” that we have loved so well.

As you read this month’s cover feature, pray for an open heart and a keen imagination. Let the unrestricted, unbound Spirit of the living God point you to the media, the communication technologies by which you can share your faith with those nearby and those you may never physically see until the kingdom.

Your words of hope, once digitized, can penetrate the gated communities, the high-rise apartments where you will never be allowed to go. Your witness via the Web and its amazing variety of audio and video platforms can cross deserts, climb mountains, swim rivers, and touch hearts in ways no other generation of missionaries has ever been able to do.

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

WORLD CHURCH: Adventist Leaders Close Spring Meeting With Mission Focus

■ Despite the challenges awaiting the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventists should not take a “defeatist attitude,” world church president Jan Paulsen told nearly 150 church officials at the close of Spring Meeting, the world church’s semiannual business session. Instead, he challenged Adventists to be “positive” and “move forward, focused on our mission.”

Paulsen also called for “inclusive discussions” and cooperation among church leaders heading into 2009, which delegates designated on April 6 as the church’s “Year of Evangelism.”

While meeting at church-owned Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, delegates also voted on other business items, including nominations for church offices.

Delegates appointed Gary R. Councill, former United States Army chaplain and current associate director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, to head up the department following Martin W. Feldbush’s retirement. Mario Ceballos, currently a vice president for Kettering Medical Center in Ohio, will fill the vacancy left as Councill assumes Feldbush’s role.



PRAYER: “Help us to be ever sensitive to Your guidance,” was the closing prayer of Jan Paulsen, world president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, during the 2008 Spring Meetings.

ANN FILE PHOTO/RAJMUND DABROWSKI

WORLD REPORT

Delegates also elected Paul Brantley, director of the church's newly formed Office of Assessment and Program Effectiveness, as a general field secretary. Paulsen thanked Brantley for his "skillful and effective" service at the world church headquarters.

Brantley, a former consultant at Florida Hospital, also served as director of the Education Department at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, and launched a refereed research journal on Christian education while a professor at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In his new job, Brantley is tasked with helping the church achieve excellence in its operations: "My role is to promote a Spirit-filled, evidence-based culture of excellence within the world church that inspires each employee to see the excitement and the potential and the joy of being part of the world's best-run organization," he said in a separate interview.

In his closing prayer at the spring meeting, Paulsen urged church leaders to be attuned to God's direction for the church. "If, in spite of what we have decided here, You have a better way, help us to be ever sensitive to Your guidance," he said. —*Adventist News Network, with AR Staff*

WORLD CHURCH: Regional Outreach Plans to Tackle Church's Unfinished Mission

■ To address the Seventh-day Adventist Church's unfinished mission, church officials voted at Spring Meeting April 7 to develop creative and financially accountable plans to reach the unreached people groups in their respective territories.

Spring Meeting delegates learned in an April 6 report the "staggering" scope of the work awaiting the church.



MEETING OF MINDS: Michael L. Ryan, right, a world church vice president, and Gary Krause, director for the church's Office of Adventist Mission, discuss the church's need to accelerate its work among unreached people groups. Ryan, Krause, and other church officials were challenged during the 2008 Spring Meeting to develop creative plans to finish the church's mission.

RAJLUND DABROWSKI/ANN

Since the church in 1990 established what is now known as the Office of Adventist Mission, Adventists are working in 19 more countries. Yet the church has no organized work in 26 countries, including Afghanistan and Somalia. In 2006, while the world's population—now at 6.5 billion—grew by 95 million, just 1 million people joined the Adventist Church. And there are 2.1 billion more unreached people in the world today than in 1990 when Global Mission was organized.

"Our God specializes in accomplishing the impossible," said Homer Trecartin, Adventist Mission director of planning. Trecartin cited dozens of "encouraging" statistics—in the past two decades, for instance, the Adventist population in Cambodia has sprung from zero to 8,000, and roughly one out of 12 Jamaicans is an Adventist.

Yet the ratio in Saudi Arabia is far less encouraging, Trecartin said, suggesting that while people with Christian worldviews have historically found Adventism relevant, the church

must do a far better job of connecting with Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and other faith groups with different points of reference.

Perhaps befriending neighbors and coworkers of different faiths is as crucial as sending missionaries to largely unreached countries, Trecartin said, referencing statistics that say almost 80 percent of Hindus in North America "don't know one Christian they can call a friend." Such a local initiative might be as effective, Trecartin said, pointing out "more Muslims live in the United Kingdom than in Kuwait."

Trends, he said, are comparable in other "free" societies among other faith groups.

"If we can't get to know them where we live, how will we ever take [the church's message] to the countries they came from?" he asked. "We desperately need to do more in the difficult regions, the thickets, but how can we hope to be effective there if we're still stumbling around in the safe places?"

Communication media, such as Adventist World Radio, which the church often relies on in the "thickets," cannot afford to slacken efforts any more than church members can cloister themselves in largely Christian circles, Trecartin said.

AWR programming is available in only 70 of the world's 13,540 languages. Other church radio outreach brings the total to 108, but "for 95 percent of the world's languages, we have to hope that those who speak them also speak other languages. If they don't, we aren't reaching them," he said.

Statistics are also bleak for many of the world's potential Bible readers. Not so much as a "scrap of Scripture" is translated into 50 percent of the world's largest languages, Trecartin said.

"If we are people of the Book, what are we doing?" he asked. "We aren't

talking about illiterate people here; we're talking about people who read and write but have not so much as a piece of the Bible in their language. If they don't read another language, we can't share God's Word with them."

Mark Finley, a world church vice president, said despite some disheartening statistics, Adventists shouldn't conclude that finishing the work of the church is impossible or think that redoubling efforts alone will overcome the challenge: "The first [reaction] leads us to despair; the second leads to physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion."

Rather, the morning's report should spur "more careful, sharp, and strategic thinking" among church leaders. Finley also suggested a refocusing on God and mission would lead church leaders to "readjust finances and renew the church's priority on mission."

The bottom line, said Michael L. Ryan, a world church vice president, "is that tomorrow when we walk out of this meeting, we will have the world

to tell." —by Elizabeth Lechleitner, editorial assistant, *Adventist News Network*, with AR Staff

WORLD CHURCH: "One-Day" Church Project to Help Adventists Keep Pace With Housing Members

■ A congregation of Seventh-day Adventists in Ecuador accustomed to moving from rental to rental for church services is expected to worship in a permanent church building by the end of April.

Their church arrived as ready-to-assemble steel beams in the back of a pick-up truck. Set up will take as little as six hours.

The building is part of a project meant to help handle some 80,000 similar church requests pending at Maranatha Volunteers International, a Christian lay organization that builds churches and schools for the Adventist Church around the world.

A joint venture of Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries and Maranatha, the "one-day" church project is expected to help church infrastructure catch up with membership in regions with soaring church growth, Adventist leaders said during the world church's 2008 Spring Meetings.

"This is the answer we have been waiting for," said Geoffrey Mbwana, leader of the Adventist Church in East-Central Africa. "Our resource base is so scarce that we have not kept pace in housing our members," he added, explaining the challenges of rapid church growth in countries such as Congo.

Permanent churches encourage membership retention and act as "endowments for the future" of the church, said Garwin McNeilus, an ASI member and Adventist businessman who helped develop the one-day church concept.

"Every time a congregation moves, you lose about 30 percent of the original membership," said Maranatha president Don Noble. "So moving three times in a year would mean you've effectively lost all your original membership."

Not only do these one-day churches provide a sense of stability for members, but they also require members to "invest" in the structure itself, McNeilus said. Members must finish their church's walls with bricks, bamboo, or any other readily available, durable building material.

Designed by structural engineers, the rust-resistant galvanized steel structures can withstand termites, earthquakes, Class 3 hurricanes, and cover the most expensive part of church building—the roof, McNeilus said. Many churches partially constructed during short-term mission trips are left unfinished because local members don't have the money or the resources to finish the roof, he explained.

"In some of these places, you drive down a road and see building after building up to the roof level, and they just sit there and deteriorate," said Robert E. Lemon, world church treasurer, speaking of his years living in Africa.

Each standard-size church seats approximately 150 people, but can be expanded and even tweaked into a school or pastor's house, McNeilus said. While ASI and Maranatha leaders can't yet project the exact expense of a one-day church—currency fluctuations, import duties, and shifting steel prices vary estimates—



RAJAMUND DABROWSKI/ANN

ONE-DAY CHURCH: Maranatha president Don Noble, right, explains the one-day church's features to Barry Oliver, Adventist Church president in the South Pacific region. The church model was on display April 6 at Spring Meeting in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, where church delegates dedicated the project.

Noble said planners are targeting a cost of \$3,000-\$4,000 per church.

While ASI will handle the manufacture of one-day churches, Maranatha will ensure the churches get delivered and built, Noble said. “We won’t just ship the church and say, ‘Good luck.’ There’ll be supervision at first. But our members are creative and can figure it out.”

—By Elizabeth Lechleitner, *Adventist News Network*



TAD PHOTO

HAPPY CAMPERS: “I want to tell you that I have never participated in an act where I could perceive so much happiness in the faces of all gathered,” said Dominican Republic president Leonel Fernández to the hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists who gathered on the Najayo campgrounds some 30 kilometers from the capital city of Santo Domingo, on March 28 during the historic event.

Dominican Adventists Gain State Land

■ The Dominican Republic’s president donated 31 acres of public land—already used by Seventh-day Adventist young people for annual retreats—to the church in March. During a donation ceremony, President Leonel Fernández applauded the church’s work and image in the country.

“There is a natural kindness in each one of you that I know is a result of having God as a guide in your attitudes and your behavior,” Fernández told hundreds of church leaders and members gathered for the ceremony. “I would like that same spirit to be extended to the entire Dominican nation.”

The donated land—part of a university-owned campground earlier decreed public by the Dominican national government—is located in the island nation’s San Cristóbal province outside its capital, Santo Domingo.

In 2006 the church in the Dominican Republic established a public relations campaign to bring its ministries and activities to the attention of government leaders. Late last year, Fernández took note of the 250,000-member church’s mission in the nation of 9.4 million, its positive impact in the community, and the involvement of its young people, church officials said.

The church will build new facilities to house thousands of Adventist young people who already use the land during annual retreats, said Silvestre Gonzalez, Adventist Church spokesman in the Dominican Republic.

Gonzalez also said for a national leader to recognize a non-Catholic denomination was unusual, and the church was grateful.

The Adventist Church in the Dominican Republic operates six regional offices, more than 1,000 congregations, nearly 100 elementary and secondary schools, one university, one hospital, and eight radio stations. The nation occupies one half of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola; the Republic of Haiti occupies the other half. —*Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division/ANN, with AR Staff*

WORLD REPORT

Mission Extraordinary Adventist

By ELIZABETH LECHLEITNER, editorial assistant, *Adventist News Network*, reporting from Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States

Despite the turbulent world economy, the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to grow financially, world church treasurer Robert E. Lemon reported to church leaders recently.

“Not only have tithes and offerings increased,” Lemon said, “but the church was blessed to receive a multimillion dollar ‘extraordinary tithe.’” Lemon’s April 6 financial report at the church’s spring business meeting reflected about half of that extraordinary tithe, which was first announced at the church’s fall 2007 business meeting. This tithe, which came from a single family on the proceeds from the sale of its business, was given to the world church because it was determined that processing through a local conference would grossly distort the gift’s best potential use.

World church president Jan Paulsen described the extraordinary tithe as a “privilege” to handle and said it would allow the church to work in ways not otherwise possible.

Some of the extraordinary tithe is currently allocated to specific areas of ministry, world church undertreasurer Juan Prestol reported. To help them

Giving, Tithe Grows Church's Budget

US\$1.78 billion in tithe received last fiscal year; church taking "cautious, conservative" approach amid economic jitters.

allocate the additional tithe, delegates agreed on a list of guidelines for evaluating potential initiatives. Paulsen said the church would await revised proposals from each church region, and then move "briskly" to distribute funds.

"The church is making careful and expeditious plans to use these funds for mission, particularly in unentered areas," Paulsen said.

For the global church, tithe received climbed 9 percent during 2007 to reach US\$1.78 billion, compared to US\$1.6 billion in 2006, Lemon reported. For the first time, tithe returned in the church's world regions nearly matched sums received in its North American region.

While currency exchange rates coupled with the weakened U.S. dollar account for part of the upswing, Lemon said the church did post unequivocal increases in local currency tithe returns.

Even though the weakened U.S. dollar seemingly bolsters the church's financial statements, it stymies what can actually be accomplished with funds in mission territories, Lemon said.

Lemon also mentioned the "very

encouraging" 12 percent growth of mission offerings in the church's North American region for the past four years. For the fiscal year, amounts totaled US\$24 million in North America and US\$38 million in the church's other regions. Total mission offerings have increased 199 percent in regions outside North America in the past 20 years.

Paulsen called the increases a "testament" to the church's emphasis on outreach. "If our members see that we stay focused on mission, they will want to support us," he said.

Lemon said the growth of mission offerings and tithe along with frugality at church headquarters near Washington, D.C., United States, mean the church ends the fiscal year with a US\$23 million increase in total net assets—not counting the extraordinary tithe. Some of these funds are restricted or allocated funds designated for special purposes, but the balance will not be kept at world church headquarters.

Finance officers also addressed the church's investments in light of the fluctuating market. Commenting specifically on the church's retirement

funds, General Conference associate treasurer Roy Ryan said because the church's holdings are long-term, diversified, and conservative, risks are "manageable."

Given the volatile markets, "no one is expecting a robust financial year in 2008," Ryan added, "but the strength of international and emerging markets is encouraging to United States-based investors."

Wrapping up the financial reports, church external auditor Jim Nyquist, a partner from the firm Maner, Costerisan & Ellis, gave a "clean and unqualified" opinion on the church's financial records. He did recommend some minor adjustments needed to keep the church's statements in line with recently tightened auditing standards in the United States.

The church's Spring Meeting this year was held for the first time at church-owned Andrews University. Business meetings are periodically held at sites other than the church's world headquarters. In October it is anticipated that world church leaders will meet for the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee in Manila, Philippines. ●



FINANCIAL UPDATE: Adventist world church treasurer Robert E. Lemon delivers the church's financial report to church leaders April 6 at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States. Lemon said tithing and other giving amounts are up this year despite fluctuating global economies.

RAJ MUND DABROWSKI/ANN

Living Big

This article is adapted for print from a sermon preached by Michael Ryan. —EDITORS

Earl Weiss was a Chicago gangster with a reputation for brutality and a passion for fine living. During the 1920s he bribed, beat, and murdered his way to the top ranks of Chicago's criminal underworld of gambling, racketeering, and violence. Weiss repeatedly tried to assassinate rival gang leader Al Capone. He notoriously coined the phrase "a one-way ride" after murdering an adversary in cold blood. But what completed the Earl Weiss legend was his appetite for what he called "big living"—for all the "finer" things in life: women, food, fast cars, and entertainment.

At 28 years of age Earl Weiss was dead, his body riddled with machine gun fire administered by one of Al Capone's hit men. He'd taken his own one-way ride.

What Motivates Us?

There comes a point where each of us must define for ourselves what it means to "live big." What are our dreams, our values? What drives us? What consumes our time, our thoughts, our energy? Whom do we hope to become? And at the end of our lives, what accounting will we give for the ways we used the opportunities we had?

Not long ago, Seventh-day Adventists identified three key values that help define who we are as a worldwide movement: unity, growth, and quality of life. These values describe our collective identity, and they help shape our plans and our use of resources—both at the local church level and internationally.

Unity: we are one family, bound closely by our faith in God, our love for His truth, and our hope in His soon coming.

Growth: we are committed to sharing with others the joy and security we have found.

But what do we mean by "quality of life"? Of these three concepts, this is the one that perhaps requires the most

definition. It's certainly not meant in the usual "consumer" sense—of accumulating the newest and best, of being "comfortable" in a material sense. Nor is it exclusively concerned with how we feel—our health, education, or personal sense of well-being.

For a Seventh-day Adventist pursuing quality of life—"living big"—means something unique. It has its roots in the fundamental principles that shape our lives—those inbuilt, often unconscious guides for how we live, which drive both the large and small decisions we make every waking moment. For an Adventist, quality of life means living with an eye toward the big picture, that cosmic drama between good and evil in which we are all players.

The prophet Micah describes God's definition of "living big." "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you

but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:6-8).

Living big—pursuing quality of life—at its most basic level means a life of service. It means thinking of others first and putting their needs above our own. It means looking around us with compassion, becoming a participant in the most basic concerns of our communities. Most important, living big means placing our hearts and lives in God’s hands.

A Practical Example

Jesus told many stories about living big. One of my favorites is found in Luke 10—the story of the good Samaritan. It’s a story with which we’re familiar: a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho is attacked by thieves and left for dead at the side of the road. Both a priest and a Levite pass by without offering help. Then a Samaritan—a supposed “enemy”—stops and binds up the man’s wounds. He takes the man to an inn and pays for him to receive medicine and care. Through this story Jesus gives us a vivid and practical example of “living big.”

I often wonder, though, about the priest and Levite who passed by. What took them to Jericho? Why did they feel their agenda was so important that it could not be interrupted? These were not “bad” men: they were pillars of the community, important spiritual leaders. Perhaps the priest had been called on an urgent mission to minister to someone’s spiritual needs. Perhaps the Levite was on his way to fulfill some important task associated with his Temple service. But whatever it was that took them on the Jericho road, they each had priorities that kept them hurrying forward, past the bleeding, dying man. They walked past, rationalizing their actions, reminding themselves why their mission was so important.

It’s possible to be a Christian, to be a scrupulously observant Seventh-day Adventist Church member, and yet fail to fully understand Christ’s plan for “living big.” The last few verses of Matthew 5 from Eugene Peterson’s Bible paraphrase, *The Message*, read: “If all you do is love the loveable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. In a word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created

identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

What a prescription for living big!

The pioneers of our church understood this approach to life; their stories are marked by sacrifice and service. I think of people such as Jorge Riffel, pioneer lay missionary to Argentina, and Abram LaRue, another lay member who was our first missionary to Asia. And today, throughout the world, Global Mission pioneers, missionaries, and volunteers continue to illustrate lives that are focused outward rather than inward.

When we meet someone “living big” for Christ it makes an impact. On Christmas Eve 1944 my father was a prisoner of war in a Japanese internment camp. As he and his friends sat together, longing for home, the door opened and one of the guards entered. The prisoners’ first instinct was fear: a visit to the barracks during the evening was unprecedented. The guard stood for a moment and began singing, in English, “Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright....” At the end of the song he said, “I am a Christian. Merry Christmas.” He laid a small bag of hard candy on the step and walked out the door. My father never forgot the kindness of this man who, at terrible personal risk, had tried to bring comfort to those who were his enemies.

Today, it’s not Earl Weiss’s definition of big living that counts. It’s not even about how our church defines quality of life. It’s not about the person who sits in the same pew as I each Sabbath. Each of us, individually, must define “quality of life” for ourselves. We must decide how we will use our time and resources, and how we’ll respond to the needs of people around us. Will we choose to live big only for ourselves, until we finally take that inevitable “one-way ride”? Or will we choose to live big for Christ, for eternity? ●



Michael Ryan is a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

WINDOW Into Uruguay



MILTON SAURINA ROMERO



URUGUAY	
Capital	Montevideo
Official language	Spanish
Religions	Roman Catholic, 47%; Protestant, 11%; atheist or agnostic, 17%, other, 25%
Population	3,460,607
Adventist membership	6,750
Adventist to population ratio	1:513



Sandwiched between Brazil to the north and Argentina to the south, Uruguay is the second smallest independent country in South America (larger only than Suriname). Of its population of more than 3.46 million people, 1.7 million live in and around the capital city of Montevideo. Ninety percent of Uruguay's population is of European descent, chiefly Spanish and Italian.

Spanish explorer Juan Díaz de Solís was the first European to set foot on what is now Uruguay in 1516. Later that same year Solís and his landing party were killed by the indigenous Charrúas. No serious attempt was made to colonize the region until 1624, when Spanish Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries established missions in the area. For the next 100 years the region was the subject of a series of disputes between Spain and Portugal, with the result finally being resolved in favor of Spain in 1726.

Montevideo was founded by the Spanish as a military stronghold in the early eighteenth century. Uruguay's struggle for independence began in 1810, under José Gervasio Artigas. But it was 14 more years before Uruguayans, under the leadership of Juan Antonio

Lavalleja, led an insurrection that liberated the country and declared independence on August 25, 1825.

Uruguay is widely considered the most secular nation in South America. Although almost half its population identifies itself as Roman Catholic (47%), almost one fourth (23%) describes itself as "believing in God but without religion." And nearly one fifth (17%) of the population identifies itself as atheist or agnostic. The majority of Uruguayans do not actively practice religion.

Adventists in Uruguay

According to some accounts, the first Seventh-day Adventist in Uruguay was Mrs. Juan Rivoir, who, four years before immigrating to the country in 1890, heard Ellen White preach in Piedmont, Italy. In 1891 the first Adventist colporteurs, A. B. Stauffer, E. W. Snyder, and C. A. Nowlen, came to Montevideo briefly before going on to Buenos Aires. In 1893 Stauffer and Snyder returned with a young Englishman named

Lionel Brooking. Stauffer began working among the German-speaking population, Snyder with English-speaking immigrants, and Brooking with French-speaking colonists.

One of the first individuals in Uruguay to respond to the Adventist message was John McCarthy, superintendent of the "Seamen's Mission" in Montevideo.

Other early Adventist missionaries to the area included Lucy Post, Jean Vuilleumier, and F. H. Westphal. In 1906 the South American Mission recommended that Uruguay be organized as a mission. At the time the church in Uruguay had 48 members. John McCarthy was appointed superintendent of the new mission.

The first Adventist school was organized in 1908 in the home of Julio Ernst, with Otto Heydeker as teacher. Uruguay Adventist Academy was founded in 1944.

In 1909 two nurses, Meda Kerr and Francisca Brockman, came to Uruguay from the United States. They were joined by two nurses from Argentina, Armando Hammerly and his wife. Together the four worked to break down prejudice among the population by providing medical service to the community.

The first Adventist radio programs were broadcast by A. R. Sherman in 1925. Today *La Voz de la Esperanza Uruguay* (*Voice of Hope Uruguay*) is broadcast from Montevideo. Today the nearly 7,000 Adventists in Uruguay worship in 49 churches around the country.

To learn more about frontline mission work around the world, visit www.AdventistMission.org.



Cardiovascular Disease

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

How much of a problem is cardiovascular disease to those not living in Western countries?

Your question is very relevant, because cardiovascular disease has often been described as a disease found in developed or Western societies.

Unfortunately, bad habits seem to be learned much more quickly than good ones, and consequently, we are now seeing an increasing number of cardiovascular deaths in developing countries. This increase is taking place while the mortality rate for cardiovascular disease has actually declined slightly in the United States.

Lifestyle factors are clearly and overwhelmingly important. Many studies show that the 2 to 3 percent of individuals who eat a vegetarian diet that includes nuts, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, and who exercise regularly, have very few cardiovascular deaths. But there is increasing evidence that the cholesterol story we have both taught and learned is not as straightforward as was thought.

Predictors other than cholesterol, such as vitamin D levels and inflammation indicators such as C-reactive protein, may have as much significance for prognosis as cholesterol levels. Of concern is the increasing rate of cardiovascular disease in women. Cardiovascular

disease, on a global basis, is actually much more of a serious problem than is HIV infection. China has one of the highest stroke rates, and much of this can be related to smoking. We often think the United States must have the highest cardiovascular disease rates (i.e., strokes and heart attacks). This is not true, however. Many other countries have higher mortality rates from cardiovascular disease. India, China, Argentina, and Scotland have high rates.

Diet is clearly a factor, but by no means the only factor. By 2020, tobacco will be the single greatest health hazard worldwide.

While there has been a decline in smoking in the Western world, it is skyrocketing in the world at large.

Exercise is a wonder-worker even in obese persons. Obese individuals who exercise experience half the cardiovascular disease of those who are inactive. It makes little sense to be a dietary fanatic as a couch potato. This does not mean exercise compensates for obesity, because both an unhealthful diet and lack of exercise are independent risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

Fruits and vegetables markedly increase one's chance of avoiding cardiovascular disease, as does the consumption of an ounce of nuts at least a few times a week.

While some people promote fish

consumption, it has the same profile as red meat in causing colon cancer.

No matter where one lives, the classic five elements of a healthful lifestyle—regular exercise, a plant-based diet, whole grains, nuts, and water as the principal fluid result in reduced cardiovascular risk.

The largest lifestyle problem facing the world's population is the reduction of tobacco consumption. Elimination should be our goal, but for those not motivated as Adventists are by spiritual concerns the expectation of the total elimination of global tobacco usage is not realistic.

The second most rewarding lifestyle intervention, on a global basis, would be to exercise more. We need 150 minutes of moderately hard exercise a week. This means exercise should induce a light sweat to be of sufficient intensity. ●



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The volcanic eruption, the tsunami, the accidental death of a loved one, the storm, the whirlwind, the hurricane, the earthquake—all unforeseen, in many instances—cause many to wonder whether a caring God sits on the throne of the universe, or whether the universe has gotten out of hand. Large numbers of people, confronted with paralyzing sorrow, family bereavement, and other personal calamity, lift up their hands in anguish, crying, “Is God omnipotent?” “Is God in control?”

The chief priests, scribes, and elders were caught up in this same situation during Jesus’ crucifixion. We hear their words in Matthew 27:42, 43: “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him...” They were amazed that God, a Being with all power in His hands, should be slow to lay bare His arm and save His Son, with the force of lightning, if need be.

And why was that so?



NURETTIN KAYA

Why Is LIFE So Messed

Reflections on the omnipotence

By
ISRAEL
BANINI

Lesson From a Game

I was watching a football (soccer) match between two old African foes, Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Ashanti Kotoko, at the Accra Sports Stadium in Ghana. Just five minutes after the referee whistled the two teams into action, Hearts of Oak went down by a goal. The coach of Hearts, voted the best coach in Africa that year, stood on the touchline watching his players commit penalty offences on the field—out of ignorance or folly or carelessness.

What I noticed was that the coach didn’t rush onto the field to help his players. Instead, he suffered the disappointment of seeing his team go down, while offering, with tremendous patience, all the counsel and tips he could to them. In so doing, he helped his players to come up again.

God is like that coach standing on the touchline, His heart grieving at our stumbling, our ignorance, our folly,

our sin, our suffering. It would be easy for Him to rush onto the field and play the game for us, but that would be weakness. It would contravene the rules of the game.

So He watches as red and yellow “penalty cards” are thrown at us, His players. My son dies; my wife is in agony; my brother’s house burns down; other calamities arise. Some out of our own folly, others not of our doing. But through it all God comes to us—helping, counseling, guiding.

To rush onto the field would be a confession of failure on the part of the coach—an admission that his plan for the match, as conceived in the beginning, was inadequate. Our God is not a careless, capricious interferer. He helps us play according to the rules with His infinite wisdom. But as an expression of His omnipotence, He has imposed a limitation on Himself by giving us free will, something He’d never take back; and there are some things *He simply will not do without our cooperation.*

Human Agents

When God wants something important done in the world, He does not mobilize His angels. Instead, He brings together two people, not by force, but by the winsomeness of love. They have a baby who becomes a David or a Samson, an Abraham or a Noah. He wants to build a temple, He gives the direction to a Solomon. And when He desires to build a free world, He cries out in His self-imposed limitation: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And until we say “Here am I, send me,” this omnipotent God is, so to speak, helpless to reveal His nature fully or to accomplish His purpose, so deeply has He condescended to cooperate with us.

He can express His terrific power in the rushing waterfall, the tearing wind, the angry wave, the furious storm, the flashing lightning. He can provide enough water to meet the needs of humanity. But He will stop short of using His tremendous power to block us from polluting the water. Human free will (and folly) thus becomes a self-imposed

good of society and the uplifting of humanity? Are we not ourselves shutting out a perfect world? Can we in the silence of the soul, even if we’re suffering, reflect on where we went wrong instead of where God went wrong?”

Let us then ask Christ to put His finger on that place in our lives where our own hearts are resisting His power, our sin polluting the river, our ignorance building a stone structure in an earthquake-prone area.

If only we stop resisting Him, He will let go His power as mighty as on the day of Pentecost when “suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind” (Acts 2:2). If we can do that, then not only will the final result be a complete victory for God and a display of His omnipotence, but the steps up to it, which now seem like defeat, will themselves be transformed into victory. Indeed, the biggest humiliation of Christ—the cross—is now the biggest sign of victory for Christianity.

The happenings we now label “disasters” will, with our

-up? of God

Human free will (and folly) has become a self-imposed obstacle to an omnipotent God.

obstacle to an omnipotent God. There’s a sense in which God is helpless to make a college student become a medical doctor, if by misuse of their free will the student continually refuses to learn. Every decision is our decision; every choice is our choice.

God’s refusal to interfere in human freedom cost Him Calvary. His power, expressed as *we* would have it, would bring to an end our human resourcefulness, which in turn would defeat God’s plan to educate us, to have us develop character.

What then is the purpose of God? Can we have a world without poverty, without sickness, without ugliness, without death? Can we have a total outward condition of happiness and prosperity?

From God’s Perspective

We must always ask ourselves the frank question: “Are we keeping our part of the contract to learn our way around in the world and to engage in useful work for the

cooperation, end up to the glory of God, far beyond every human thought or imaginations. To cooperate with God is to help fulfill His mighty purposes—purposes vast and glorious, beyond all present guessing, beyond our present sufferings, sorrows, agonies, and disasters that overwhelm us and nearly break our faith in Him. In the end, His omnipotence made clear, His power on full display, we shall sing, “Glory, glory to God in the highest.” ●



Israel Banini has worked as a frontline reporter during many United Nations operations, the latest being the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

From Here to There

By
LEE DUNSTAN

From its gestation to church pew, the *Adult Bible Study Guide*—formerly called the *Adult Sabbath School Quarterly*—takes about three years to produce.

First, there is the commissioning of an author, or what the Adult Bible Study Guide Department headquartered at the Adventist Church's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, calls the principal contributor. Then come the writing, the reviewing, and the editing; finally, it is printed. It takes time.

Approximately 2.7 million adult study guides—which includes all five editions (standard, teachers, easy-reading, abridged easy-reading, and large-print) in 85 languages and dialects—are printed and distributed worldwide each quarter through Adventist Book Centers and local churches, according to Gary Swanson, associate director of the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department. Most church members who use the *Adult Bible Study Guide*, however, are probably not aware of the long production process and give it little thought when they open the study guide to Lesson 1 at the beginning of a quarter. But while most of us may take our study guide for granted, that mindset isn't universal.

Precious Material

For many people in remote parts of the globe, such as in the South Pacific Division from where I write, the *Adult Bible Study Guide* is precious and appreciated. For English-speaking people in the South Pacific, and that's

most of them (although French is also spoken), they know its true worth, which is somewhat greater than what it costs. For some, it's one of the only pieces of Adventist literature they will ever own besides a copy of *Adventist World*. To them, it's "gold."

In developing economies of the Pacific there's often little infrastructure outside of the capital city and a few regional towns. In order to reach the many remote communities in a timely fashion, the study guide must begin its journey to them months before the quarter begins. It's to the credit of the church that on any given Sabbath throughout the world, its members are all studying the same topic and bringing an amazing diversity of thought to focus on it.

The Journey Begins

Once a study guide is given its final confirmation by the approving committee of the General Conference, it is physically prepared for production. While still in electronic form, it is distributed to church-authorized translators and to many of the church's publishing houses in various divisions around the world. In the South Pacific Division, for instance, it is printed by the Signs Publishing Company in Melbourne, Australia.

Once printed, the study guides are bound and boxed, ready for dispatch. There always seems to be a squeeze on production in order to make the next "sailing," and tradespeople will often work into the night or during a weekend in order to meet the deadline, sometimes pushing back

The incredible journey of the Adult Bible Study Guide



COURTESY OF SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION



Top: A LABOR OF LOVE: Some local missionaries, pastors,

and church elders living in remote regions of the South Pacific Division walk two or three days to pick up copies of the Adult Bible Study Guide.

Left: HAND-COPIED STUDY GUIDE: This adult quarterly was hand-copied by a church member in Romania during a time when owning such literature was illegal in that country.

other urgently needed production. The study guides are shipped out of Melbourne for a voyage of up to three weeks to the island nations of Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia. Boats to these countries are relatively frequent and regular, but that isn't the case for many others.

To Remote Regions

Most Pacific nations consist of vast tracts of ocean, dotted with tiny islands. So when the study guides arrive at the national union or mission headquarters, the shipments must be broken down into island lots to be forwarded to their next destination—the local mission stations—by interisland barge or trading vessel. By the time they arrive, as many as two or three months may have passed since the *Adult Bible Study Guide* was printed.

But that's only the beginning of the disbursement process. Now word goes out by UHF radio and radiotelephone to district directors and pastors of the scores of hilltop churches and atoll outposts in their care: their supply of precious lesson guides has arrived.

Local missionaries, pastors, and church elders then make the journey to the mission or district headquarters to pick up their study guides. For those in the PNG highlands, where roads don't connect with most villages, that might mean a two- or three-day trek—one way. Of course, if they're lucky, a mission plane may deliver the study guides to an airstrip just across the valley. That's only a one- or two-day hike in precipitous Papua New Guinea, and although you could almost shoot an arrow across the valley, the descent and ascent in each direction is a real "killer." For the island churches on the atolls of the huge Marovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands, for example, it could mean paddling a canoe from island to island for a number of days. Although powered canoes are available, petrol (gasoline) is largely unaffordable, even if obtainable.

While the Adventist church most

remote from its headquarters in the South Pacific is Pitcairn Island, the Republic of Kiribati, which consists of 33 islands dispersed over 3.5 million square kilometers (1.4 million square miles), is probably the best example of remoteness, both in distance and access. Its nearest island to union mission headquarters in Fiji is still 930 miles (1,500 kilometers) distant, while its most distant is about 2,000 miles (3,300 kilometers) away. Adding to distance is access, as very few boats ply its outer islands on a regular timetable, so getting those study guides out requires ingenuity and patience. But it's worth it.

The Bread and Butter of Bible Study

Piuki Tasa, Adventist Book Center (ABC) director of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission, says the *Adult Bible Study Guide* is the bread and butter of Bible study and daily family worship in that field. He's lived and worked in both PNG and the Solomon Islands as a pastor and an ABC manager, so he knows this is true. He says that when the study guides don't reach the outlying communities until the fourth or fifth week of the quarter, they're greatly missed. He describes the *Adult Bible Study Guide* as a "great blessing" to the church members in his region, and says the members just love to study it.

"The study of the Sabbath school quarterly brings spiritual strength and insight to the Sabbath school members," Tasa says.

He adds that the study guide has a way of finding its way into all manner of surprising places. Members of many denominations regularly purchase the study guides on sale in the ABCs, as they, like their Adventist friends, have little else in the way of spiritual publications they can both afford and read with understanding.

Study Guides Come to the Rescue

Brian Brunton, Publishing Department area manager in PNG

until 2005, tells how on one occasion two literature evangelists visited Daru, on the country's remote southwest coast, for a training seminar followed by a selling outreach. They had walked for three days through the jungle, crossing flooded, crocodile-infested rivers from their home village to attend the seminar, and needed money to get home. But they soon ran out of trade books to sell. Then someone remembered seeing stacks of out-of-date study guides in the storeroom of the local ABC. The study guides had arrived too late for the quarter's lesson studies and had been abandoned. Armed with these, the men again went door-to-door selling the pamphlets to eager purchasers who ignored their dated and somewhat shabby appearance. The two men left for home, selling more study guides in villages along the way.

I've heard other such mission stories too—of people who've used the *Adult Bible Study Guide* to roll cigarettes, tearing out the pages one smoke at a time, until they began reading the remnants, and eventually found their way into the church as a result.

The End of the Journey—or Not?

We value most those things that cost us the most. So for the Pacific island fishermen and PNG highlands gardeners who know what the *Adult Bible Study Guide* costs in terms of time and effort to reach them, it is often their most prized possession. Their study guide isn't discarded at the end of the quarter. Rather, they become the library of their owner, and continue to be thumbed through and shared until they become so grubby, worn, and torn that reading them is almost impossible.

There is no end to this journey. ●



Lee Dunstan is managing editor of the Signs Publishing Company in Victoria, Australia.

A Wireless Connection *to* Salvation

By WILLIAMS COSTA, JR.

Digital technology brings campaigns home, and viewers to a church's altar call.

For many people in today's world, technology delivers almost as much bad as it does good. With as many as 196 billion e-mail messages flying across computer networks *daily*, getting rid of unwanted e-mails consumes many precious minutes at work and at home.

At the same time, technology is increasing the ability of Seventh-day Adventists to reach out and bring the good news of Jesus to people all over the planet. Sometimes technology comes to the aid of evangelists seeking to reach not masses, but just one seeking heart.

A Cell Phone Appeal

Here's an example: In August of 2007, in the teeming suburb of Bras, near São Paulo, Brazil, Luís Gonçalves, an evangelist, was preaching on the message of Revelation, chapter 12, at the local Adventist church. The messages were captured by television cameras and "streamed," or shown live, via the Internet. This was done to attract residents of Bras, which has the largest Muslim community in Brazil, who might be interested in the evangelistic series but were too busy or too tired at the end of a day to come out to an event.

At the end of his sermon, Gonçalves made an appeal to the audience, looking directly into the television camera and especially asking those watching to respond. An audience member in the church, Cristina, rose from her seat and came forward. When he saw her, Gonçalves brought the microphone to her and asked: "Where is your husband?" Edmilson, Cristina's spouse, wasn't at her side.

Cristina's on-camera response: "I came alone."

BAPTISM: Cristina (right), her sister Tatiane (left), and Cristina's husband, Edmilson (not shown), were baptized following an evangelistic series held by the Adventist church in Bras, Brazil. The meetings were shown live via the Internet to capture the attention of busy residents unable to attend.



"Oh no: we missed him," Gonçalves said. Then Christina's mobile phone rang. She looked at the phone display screen and exclaimed, "It's my husband." "Go ahead and answer," said Gonçalves. "Hello, darling," Cristina said to Edmilson. "When you left our home to go to the church, I turned on the computer and watched the service over the Internet," Edmilson replied.

Then Gonçalves asked Cristina to let him speak with Edmilson. The preacher made a special appeal directly to this one individual. This was truly "interactive"—Edmilson was viewing the message live over the Web, and the pastor was appealing to him through the mobile phone!

Gonçalves asked Edmilson if he would place the phone on "speaker," and the man consented. With that, the whole congregation could listen in.



FRUITS OF TECHNOLOGY: Evangelist Luís Gonçalves interviews Cristina (third from left) following an altar call. During that conversation, Cristina's husband, Edmilson, called his wife on her cell phone. Gonçalves put him on speaker phone, made a personal appeal, and Edmilson made the decision to accept Jesus as his Savior.

After a moment, Edmilson, deeply moved by the Holy Spirit, decided to give his heart to Jesus. Tears came to Cristina's eyes. The congregation rejoiced and clapped with happiness and enthusiasm.

Cristina had been praying for that decision for a long time. Now her husband was geographically removed from the church building but close to God's family. Edmilson was deeply affected by seeing everything at home on his computer screen. It was a blessed combination of personal ministry and technology to reach one man through the Internet and a mobile phone.

The Personal Touch

The whole process began, though, in a "low-tech" fashion. Marcia, a faithful Seventh-day Adventist in Bahia, nearly 1,500 miles away from the São Paulo area, telephoned her sister, Cristina. Marcia invited her non-Adventist sister to attend a 30-night evangelistic series that Gonçalves had titled: "Revelation, the Answer."

Bras, where Cristina lives, might have seemed to some an unusual place for an Adventist outreach. Local church leaders decided to build a church building in an area without a Seventh-day Adventist presence. Bras has a strong business climate, as well as many immigrants: along with the large Muslim community, Koreans, Italians, Bolivians, and many others make Bras their home. The evangelistic series was planned to "kick off" the opening of the church.

São Paulo, with more than 21 million inhabitants, has all the elements necessary to motivate people to stay at home in the evening: traffic, pollution, and security concerns. After a day working and commuting in a large metropolis, many people are simply exhausted. That is why Gonçalves was determined to make the series available on the Internet. *If people can't, or won't, come to church, we'll*



make the message available to them at home, he reasoned.

Cristina and Edmilson live far from the church, but they accepted Marcia's invitation and began watching online. The couple knew of Gonçalves from watching a DVD Bible study series.

Tatiane, another of Cristina's sisters, decided to view the programs online—and there was a definite effect on her life. On August 22, one week before the end of the series, Tatiane decided to be baptized. She invited Cristina to go to the church with her. Edmilson also was invited but he refused. After Tatiane signed her baptismal form, she and Cristina decided to stay for the program in the evening. On that day, Gonçalves preached about God's grace. And, on that day, Edmilson made what may have been the most important telephone call of his life.

Three days later, Edmilson, his wife, Christina, and sister-in-law Tatiane were baptized at the Bras church.

A Collaborative Effort

As a result of this remarkable combination of preaching at this one location and live transmission on the Web, 457 people received Bible studies at the end of the outreach series. Of that number, 120 decided to be baptized; 62 have been already baptized. The Bras church has 300 seats, but many evenings more than 600 people crowded in. Approximately 900 people attended the baptismal ceremony at the end of the series.

While many evangelistic series have been transmitted live over the Internet, the difference in this one was that Gonçalves "included" the people viewing online. When he mentioned a Bible text, Gonçalves turned to the camera and asked: "Have you found it?" or he'd say, "I will wait for you. Are you ready?" This created a bond between the preacher and the viewers. At the end, online data indicated that the series had touched 32,619 people through the Internet.

Noêmia Mendes, a lawyer, also made a decision to be baptized while watching the series in Bras church via the



Williams Costa, Jr., is director of Media Services for the General Conference Communication Department.



Left: COMMITTING TO JESUS: Sixty-two people were baptized at the Bras Adventist church. From left are Edmilson, his wife, Cristina, and Cristina's sister Tatiane. **Right: INTERNET CONVERSION:** Pastor Luis Gonçalves interviews another baptismal candidate, Noêmia Mendes, a lawyer, who gave her heart to Jesus while watching the Bras church evangelistic series via the Internet.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILLIAMS COSTA, JR.

Internet. On August 15 she went to the church and said, "I have known the Adventist message since I was 15 years old. Regularly I watch the Hope Channel and have been watching this evangelistic series through the Internet. I am certain about my commitment to Jesus." She also was among those baptized.

Someone has pointed out that there are at least three ways to travel to Paris. One is through the underground sewer lines, which might lead a person to say, "Paris is dark, narrow, and smells very bad." Another is by automobile, generating this reaction: "Oh, Paris is beautiful, has beautiful gardens, but there is a problem: the traffic is so intense we can't move." But you can also arrive in Paris by plane, and the impression will be entirely different: "Paris is bright, spacious, and gorgeous. It is truly the city of lights!"

Depending on the way you approach the Internet, it too can be bright or dark, narrow or spacious, ugly or beautiful. The Internet offers a unique opportunity to share the good news of salvation through a medium where many troubled people are searching for answers. In some lands, local authorities try to control the Internet, but the nature of the Internet pushes back the borders.

It's time to think beyond the old routines, create an accessible online "space," and give people the opportunity to know about Jesus and His love online.

The Technological Advantage

Everyone who can access the Internet knows that much bad content is available on the Web; the torrent of spam e-mail is a tsunami of sin in many instances. At the same time, however, the Internet is an opportunity to communicate hope and salvation; for this reason alone, Adventists should use it. If we don't respond to the opportunity, the devil will. Many times we've been afraid to use film, TV, and radio to share the gospel; as a result Satan

is using these media in many ways. I sincerely believe the Lord inspired the invention of these media and other high-tech tools to help expand our outreach.

We also need to be intentional—and even aggressive—in getting space in secular media. We've often been too shy, too timid, and too passive in dealing with the general media. Worldly entities often struggle to get media exposure. Celebrities pay lots of money to get publicized, photographed—even to have their scandals reported! We don't pursue scandalous displays because we are sober, balanced, and Christ-centered: "the love of Christ compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14). We need to be motivated to secure media exposure, not for self-promotion, but for God's business.

The life of Paul, that onetime rabbi from Tarsus, is a good example. He was bent on destroying the young Christian church. After a personal encounter with Jesus, he turned much of the world upside down. He was a self-confessed "fool for Christ" whose evangelism changed history.

Paul traversed the globe; you and I may need only a computer and Internet access at home. Imagine that someone from Afghanistan, now living in Brazil, starts sending e-mails to his family in Kabul saying something like this: "I discovered Jesus. You need to know Him. I know that if you accept Him as your personal Savior you will be risking your life, but please try. My life has changed; now I am happy, I am free from guilt. Do you want to do a Bible course online?"

Then, a Japanese woman who accepted Jesus in Mexico sends a message to her aunt in Osaka. She shares the new life she has discovered after accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord. She invites her relative to watch the Hope Channel on cable or on the Web.

Finally, a Muslim from the Middle East who accepted Jesus in an evangelistic campaign by satellite with Mark Finley decides to share his experience with his son, who still resides in that region. He encourages the son to listen to AWR.

Television, radio, print, Internet—these all need to be converged to fit the purpose for which, I believe, they were invented. They are tools to bring hope to people.

God doesn't *need* us to finish His work. He can use the angels flying through the skies announcing the message of salvation to this dying world.

Wise, assertive use of technology will be more powerful than the greatest advertising campaign in history. Trillions in dollars or euros or yen spent on marketing won't make as great an impact on the lives of people. The power of the Adventist Christian presence in current media will be calculated someday only on the happy faces of the redeemed who will enjoy eternity with us because we dared to reach out with the story of Jesus.

Reaching the World

Jesus gives us the privilege of sharing our personal testimony with all our "neighbors"—all 6.6 billion residents of Planet Earth. We will know no higher joy in this life than "bringing" those we may never physically meet to the feet of Jesus through the means He has given us.

Ellen White understood the imperative of sharing the good news: "Take hold wherever you see that there is work to be done. Whether you are rich or poor, great or humble, God calls you into active service for Him."¹

Note this wonderful promise: "In working for perishing souls, you have the companionship of angels. Thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are waiting to cooperate with members of our churches in communicating the light that God has generously given."²

More than a century ago, God's messenger wrote these inspiring words: "There is missionary work to be done in many unpromising places. The missionary spirit needs to take hold of our souls, inspiring us to reach classes for whom we had not planned to labor and in ways and places that we had no idea of working. The Lord has His plan for the sowing of the gospel seed. In sowing according to His will, we shall so multiply the seed that His word may reach thousands who have never heard the truth."³

The Internet is giving us the opportunity to access "ways and places that we had no idea of working." I am sure "the Lord has His plan for the sowing of the gospel seed." We need to sow "according to His will," and His Word will reach not only "thousands" but billions of people on the way of salvation.

Powerful as it is, the Internet will never replace the importance of personal contact. The plan of salvation is best communicated through personal testimony. Let's use the Internet correctly, as a medium—as a tool—not as an ultimate solution. There is enormous potential for "doing evangelism" through wise use of YouTube, Google, e-mail, MSN, blogs, Web sites, Web pages. Let's combine these tools with the unique power of personal testimony.

For all these reasons, let's welcome the future of new media: let's welcome the opportunity to use the Internet for evangelism. God can bless and inspire you; the Holy Spirit can use your life to connect people to salvation, even via a mobile phone! ●

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 129.

² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.



Internet Forum Draws Adventists for Online Outreach

How can those actively involved in the church's mission gain the insights and techniques to effectively use the Internet for evangelism? The answer can be spelled out in four letters: GIEN.

GIEN stands for the "Global Internet Evangelism Network," a community of evangelists and technologists committed to using the Internet to share the good news. Along with proclamation, GIEN members are also committed to discipling believers, preparing people for Christ's return.

The first GIEN conference took place

in 2004 at the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. Other annual events since then have been held in Thailand; San Diego, California, United States; and England.

Cape Town, South Africa, hosted the first regional GIEN for the African continent in March 2008. In April 2009 another regional GIEN meeting is planned to take place in Germany for European Adventists. Plans call for more regional GIEN conferences, bringing technology instruction closer to the front lines of mission and service.

This year, the fifth international GIEN is scheduled to be held in Denver, Colorado, United States, July 9-13. If online ministry is your goal, make plans to attend. This year's theme is "In the Spirit of Internet." Four areas will be covered:

1. The Spirit of Collaboration (building unity and convergence)
2. The Spirit of Outreach (developing content for witness)
3. The Spirit of the Age (understanding of the medium and new developments)
4. The Spirit of the Adventist Content Creator

Get more information about the conference online at www.gien.adventist.org.

My wife's Uncle Ed was a ranger in World War II. One time he stumbled into an enemy camp and found his buddy's boots by the embers of the fire. Not seeing him anywhere around, he feared the worst. As the story goes, it was one time Ed's weapons were definitely used.

When my wife recently returned home from visiting her parents, she had one of Uncle Ed's weapons, a Ranger Arm to Arm Knuckle Knife. I examined it carefully. Fourteen and a quarter inches long, the blade was nine and a half inches by two inches at its widest. The handle was wound tightly with cord for a better grip, and—get this: it featured seven brass knuckles, designed to kill with one blow. Carved into the leather scabbard were these words: Denzil Don 1942. What a story that knife could tell!

But Uncle Ed himself, a congenial sort, never had much to say about the war. He didn't want to talk about it. And I don't like to talk about war either. I don't even like to think about young men and women going off to war.

So how did I get into doing this piece? A man from *Adventist World* asked me to be a war correspondent of sorts. Not Afghanistan or Iraq, but the mother of all wars: THE GREAT CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN.

Here's how John the revelator describes it: *"And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him"* (Rev. 12:7-9).*

I remember my mother getting involved when I was a little kid watching Chicago Cubs baseball games on channel 9. When she heard the Hamm's beer jingle starting up between innings, "From the land of sky blue wa-ah-ters, wa-ah-ters, from the land of pines, lofty balsams . . ." she would

race into the room, turn down the sound, and stand in front of the TV holding her dress out so that I could not see the Hamm's bears cavorting on the screen. You may laugh, but it worked. To this day I have never tasted a drop of beer!

Playing a Role

But what *is* our part in the great controversy? I avoided playground scuffles as a kid until one boy followed me around wanting to wrestle. I managed to put him off for a few days, but he persisted. Finally, I said, "OK," and down we went. I just lay there on my back and let him sit on my chest. Less than a minute later he got tired of that, jumped up, and ran away. It was the last time he came around wanting to wrestle.

NUMBER 8
A Cosmic Struggle
We're all involved and we all must decide.
 By DOUGLAS MATAICIO

On a grander scale Lucifer picked a fight with God because he was jealous of the Son's power and authority. He slandered God's character of love by claiming that God's laws were unfair. Christ proved by His death on the cross and sinless life that God's law was unchangeable and could be kept. When Christ's death and resurrection made eternal life possible, demonstrating that God really did love everyone, God kicked Satan out of heaven for good. But He still did not destroy the rebel because it would have resulted in people serving Him from fear rather than from love nourished in freedom. And so we wait for Satan's charges "to be seen in their true light." And we wait for God's character of love to be appreciated and His government of justice to be vindicated. (See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 492-504.)

But is waiting and watching all we can do? I once became so disenchanted with a church employee that I opposed him at every opportunity. A management disagreement had turned into a flame that was destroying



Douglas Mataicio is chair and associate professor of religious studies at Canadian University College in LaCombe, Alberta, Canada.

We go forth in God's armor, accompanied by the Spirit, on our knees, praying and watching on behalf of one another.

not only my relationship with my brother but my own Christian experience. Desperate, I searched the Bible for a solution. I found it in Psalm 37.

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.... Wait for the Lord and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it” (Ps. 37:7, 8, 34).

Knowing the Enemy

Is it possible that the great controversy really is between Christ and Satan and not between Brother Jones and Brother Smith? Neither is it between genuine Christians and atheists, world religionists, and apostates. Are we participants or spectators? In effect Psalm 37 says, “Wait and see what God will do.” But the apostle Paul says, “If ... possible ... , live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:18, 19).

So, we may participate by living at peace with friend and foe, “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15), demonstrating God's character of love through kindness and forgiveness and, when possible, turning foes into brothers and sisters in the family of God.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12, KJV). We are not to fight with human beings, but with Satan and his demons, Paul says. We are to love our fellows, treating all with kindness and respect. We go forth in God's armor, accompanied by the Spirit, on our knees, praying and watching on behalf of one another (Eph. 6:13-19). Jesus has proven He is stronger than His spiritual adversaries, and He will fight them for us.

Practicing Kindness

But when we encounter evil within human beings, how can we avoid fighting them? We can learn from the SULADS brotherhood from Mountain View College, in the Philippines. These student missionaries reach out to the Monobo and Talaandig peoples and help them with health, agriculture, and literacy needs.

But tribal warriors and others threaten their welfare, and by extension the SULADS who are working with them. On one occasion some SULADS met one of these “pirates” floundering in the sea after his boat had sunk. He couldn't believe it when they rescued him instead of letting him die. This incident opened the door to establishing a school in his area. During the summer of 2007 one of the SULADS was tragically shot and killed; but now, according to the SULADS' Web site, word has gotten out that the killer has been forgiven.

Unbelievable but true! The SULADS do not fight with Ranger Arm to Arm Knuckle Knives, but practice kindness and love. In their own way they are wrestling with the powers of evil through their daily dependence upon God for strength—and by demonstrating through acts of mercy and forgiveness *that the essence of God's character is love.* ●

* Unless otherwise indicated all scriptures quoted in this article are from the *New International Version*.

The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation, became Satan,

God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation

at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19, 22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

CHRIST'S **Second** **Great** **Com**

By ELLEN G. WHITE

“Let us help each other to love others and to do good.”

—HEBREWS 10:24*

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you.... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples....” These words are not the words of man, but the words of our Redeemer; and how important it is that we fulfill the instruction that He has given! There is nothing that can so weaken the influence of the church, as the lack of love. Christ says, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” If we are to meet opposition from our enemies, who are represented as wolves, let us be careful that we do not manifest the same spirit among ourselves. The enemy well knows that if we do not have love one for another, he can gain his object, and wound and weaken the church, by causing differences among brethren....

Living For or Against

How careful we should be, that our words and actions are all in harmony with the sacred truth that God has committed to us! The people of the world are looking to us, to see what our faith is doing for our characters and lives. They are watching to see if it is having a sanctifying effect on our hearts, if we are becoming changed into the likeness of Christ. They are ready to discover every defect in our lives, every inconsistency in our actions. Let us give them no occasion to reproach our faith.

It is not the opposition of the world that will most endanger us; it is the evil cherished right in our midst that works our most grievous disaster. It is the unconsecrated lives of half-hearted professors that retard the work of the truth, and bring darkness upon the church of God....

Living the Fruits of the Spirit

God would have us individually come into that position where He can bestow His love upon us. He has placed a high value upon man, and has redeemed us by the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, and we are to see in our fellow-man the purchase of the blood of Christ. If we have this love one for another, we shall be growing in love for God and the truth.... Love is a plant of heavenly origin, and if we would have it flourish in our hearts, we must cultivate it daily. Mildness, gentleness, long suffering, not being easily provoked, bearing all things, enduring all things,—these are the fruits upon the precious tree of love.

When you are associated together, be guarded in your words. Let your conversation be of such a nature that you will have no need of repentance.... If the love of the truth is in your heart, you will talk of the



KEVIN ROHR

sorrow. Christ identifies Himself with His suffering children; for He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." If all would carry out the instruction given by Christ, what love and unity would exist among His followers! Every heart has its own sorrows and disappointments, and we should seek to lighten one another's burdens by manifesting the love of Jesus to those around us....

Instead of finding fault with others, let us be critical with ourselves. The question with each one of us should be, Is my heart right before God? Will this course of action glorify my Father which is in heaven? ...

Living to Love

Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions, and we are commanded to follow in His steps. Let us remember that God sent His only begotten Son to this world of sorrow, to "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Let us seek to comply with the requirement of God, and fulfill His law. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and He who died that we might live has given us this commandment, that we should love one another as He has loved us; and the world will know that we are His disciples....

*New Life Version, © Christian Literature International.

This article is excerpted from one that appeared in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, now the *Adventist Review* (www.adventistreview.org), June 5, 1888. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

mand

truth. You will talk of the blessed hope that you have in Jesus. If you have love in your heart, you will seek to establish and build up your brother in the most holy faith. If a word is dropped that is detrimental to the character of your friend or brother, do not encourage this evil-speaking. It is the work of the enemy. Kindly remind the speaker that the Word of God forbids that kind of conversation. We are to empty the heart of everything that defiles the soul temple, that Christ may dwell within.... It is the unity in the church that enables it to exert a conscious influence upon unbelievers and worldlings.

Living for Christ, the Chief Cornerstone

The church of Christ is spoken of as a holy temple. Says the apostle, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone...." All the followers of Christ are represented as stones in the temple of God. Every stone, large or small, must be a living stone, emitting light and fitting into the place assigned it in the building of God. How thankful we should be that a way has been opened whereby we may each have a place in the spiritual temple! Will you, my brethren and sisters, think of these things, study them, talk of them? It is just in proportion as we appreciate these things that we will become strong in the service of God, ... and ... doers of the words of Christ....

The work of building one another up in the most holy faith is a blessed work; but the work of tearing down is a work full of bitterness and

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”¹

The World Is Ripe for Revival

A great many people look down upon revivals, but the entire history of the Bible is a history of revivals. I have heard preachers say, “Well, they are temporary.” Surely they are. So is a bath, and so is a meal, but very necessary. The whole story of this blessed Book, my friends, is one of apostasy and revival. And if there was ever a deeper apostasy than today, and a greater need of revival, I do not know where it was or where it will ever be.... Nobody knows what tomorrow will bring forth. The world of crying need tells of the necessity of a revival in our own lives....

Some people are like Luther, who had a flaming, dramatic conversion. We are not all the same. But, my friends, we must all be converted, born again, regenerated, or we ought not to be cumbering the ground with our ministry.... This is a hungry world today. I happen to be

where I can read thousands of letters, if I want to. Our mail runs from a thousand to three thousand letters a day. And what a witness they give. The people want to know somebody who knows God, someone who can say, “I know, for He did it for me.” That is what the world is hungry for....

Let It Begin With Me

I have a statement here that simply thrills me as I read it. It is the last message that Mrs. White ever sent to a General Conference assembly, in 1913, the first General Conference I ever attended. There is a passage in which she says that she saw something—the people of God coming into line.... “I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me.... There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God’s call.”²

That is what she saw—a great movement, a great work of revival going forward in many places—your place and mine. “Our people were moving into line.” Oh, thank God, she saw it! ...

By H. M. S.
RICHARDS, SR.

The World Is Waiting

“Won’t you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you?”

—PSALM 85:6*

This world is ripe for revival, ripe for tremendous events, ripe for great and wonderful conquests. I say, Be of good courage, brother, friend; let us get revived.

The happiest life on earth is the life of a consecrated worker for men. The most glorious reward of this world is the reward of the soul winner. Forget the future reward, which is beyond our imagination. There is reward here. Do not go around with a double life, an unconsecrated heart, cold, critical....



“Oh, what I want today, friends, is a revival in my heart.” —H.M.S. RICHARDS

[Let us] open up our hearts, and get our arms around each other, and our hearts open to each other and to God....

Prayer for Restoration and Renewal

Dear heavenly Father, as we are here together this afternoon, we bring our hearts to Thee. O Lord, we are ashamed of them. We bring them here, ... and we just lay them at the foot of the cross. Father, see how hard they are, how impure. And when we look at Jesus we are ashamed to look up and to look at each other....

Give us a new heart, a heart of flesh that reaches out for the salvation of the whole world. O Lord, how can we see nations going down in blood and terror, and millions concerned and wondering and perplexed? How can we ... let this go on without more heart yearnings and tears? ... We read that Jesus looked down at that beautiful city of Jerusalem, and that tears ran down His face.... How can we look at San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Paris, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and all these great cities and not weep over them.... Give us tender hearts; take away our sins....

Give us, we pray, an old-time revival—a real old time, a time of the prophets, a time of the apostles. Help us to tell the truth. Help us to love one another. Help us, O God, to be converted. We ask it in Jesus' name. ●

* Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

¹ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 515.

H.M.S. Richards (1894-1985), a Seventh-day Adventist biblical scholar and evangelist, pioneered the use of radio to present the gospel more than 75 years ago—when many of his colleagues thought the new device was the devil's playground. His Family Worship programs were first aired in 1929. Radio headquarters was a renovated chicken coop at the back of his garage. The broadcast's name was changed to the Voice of Prophecy in 1937. Richards often said that perhaps the greatest thrill of his entire ministry was his first coast-to-coast broadcast over 89 stations on Sunday, January 4, 1942. The next month the first Seventh-day Adventist Bible Correspondence School was begun, a ministry that has blessed millions. Lessons are currently available in more than 75 languages. And today dozens of affiliated Voice of Prophecy and Voice of Hope studios worldwide produce radio broadcasts that are aired by more than 1,000 stations. (www.vop.com)

This sermon is excerpted from *Aflame for God*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951. It was preached by H.M.S. Richards at the Pre-session to the General Conference session in 1950 in San Francisco, California, United States.

To answer your question I will deal with the larger issue of the casting out of demons, which is part of the ministerial work of some of our pastors in different parts of the world. In general, one of the challenges Adventists face is to address it biblically, without allowing the practices of other Christians to determine how demons are to be cast out.

1. Some Terminology: The term “exorcism” comes from the Greek noun *exorkistēs*, and designates a person who drives out evil spirits. The verbal form, *exorkizō*, means “to put someone under oath,” “to adjure” (Matt. 26:63). It came to express the idea of compelling someone to do something by invoking a supernatural power (“to exorcise”). In the New Testament the verb is not used to refer to exorcism, and the noun is applied only once to Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13). The New Testament uses the verb “to cast out” (*ekballō*) demons rather than “to exorcise.” This may have something to do with the fact that exorcism was associated with magic, the performance of certain rituals, and the use of specific religious formulas. This is not what we find in the New Testament.

2. Demonic Possession: In the Scriptures demonic possession is a reality taken very seriously. Possessed individuals are characterized variously by aggressive behavior (Matt. 8:28); attempts at self-destruction (Matt. 17:15); the inability to speak (Matt. 9:32), to hear (Mark 9:25), or to see (Matt. 12:22). In general, demonic possession is distinguished from diseases (e.g., Matt. 4:24; Mark 1:32). One of the most controversial aspects of demon possession is that in almost all cases it is difficult to distinguish it from epilepsy, other physical diseases, or a mental illness. This implies that demonic possession has an impact on the mind and body similar to those conditions. But it is usually accompanied by elements of clairvoyance, supernatural phenomena, even levitation of objects. Since in many cases it would be difficult to distinguish it from a natural disease, whenever possible we should seek advice from physicians and other qualified people.

3. Biblical Approach: The casting out of demons was

common in Jesus’ ministry, but He did not provide the disciples with a particular procedure. He simply cast out evil spirits by the power of His word, without the performance of any rituals or the use of traditional formulas (Matt. 8:16). He ordered them to leave and they obeyed (Luke 9:49, 50; 10:17). There were no long, time-consuming exercises, no shouting that we know about, no physical involvement of Jesus with the possessed person. In fact, He never touched a demoniac, and only once did He enter into a dialogue with one (Mark 5:7-10). Jesus simply had authority over evil powers, and they could not resist Him.

Jesus shared with His disciples that same authority (Matt. 10:8; Mark 3:15; Luke 9:1). The way they probably cast out demons is illustrated in the book of Acts. The apostles called upon Jesus’ name to free people from demons. The formula is a simple one: “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out...” (Acts 16:18, NIV). It was Christ who freed the person; the apostle called upon Him to intervene. There was no protracted struggle with the demon or dialogue with it. Christ’s power was effective through the word of the disciples.

4. Exorcism and Spiritual Gifts: Now to your question: In the New Testament exorcism is not listed among the spiritual gifts. No one was called by Jesus to establish a ministry of exorcism. He gave His disciples power and authority over demons, but not once did He suggest that would be their primary role. Their responsibility was the proclamation of the kingdom of God, the good news of salvation. He explicitly said: “As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, . . . drive out demons” (Matt. 10:7, 8, NIV; cf. Mark 6:12; Luke 9:2). The proclamation of the kingdom of God is the mission of each believer. When in the fulfillment of that mission we confront demoniacs, we have been empowered by Christ to face them. But our primary call is to proclaim the gospel of redemption through Christ.

Battling Demons



QUESTION:

Is there a ministry, or gift, of exorcism in the Bible?

By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

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



The Sabbath at the End Time

By MARK A. FINLEY

The Sabbath is an eternal sign that God is our loving Creator. It reveals an all-powerful, compassionate, heavenly Father who is interested in the details of our lives. As we rest each Sabbath, we rest in His love and care for us.

In the book of Revelation, the seventh-day Sabbath is a sign of allegiance to God, the visible sign of our commitment to Christ.

1. Who did the apostle John describe as the author of Revelation? Circle the name of the author of Revelation in the text below, then fill in the blanks.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John” (Rev. 1:1).

a. Who gave Revelation’s message to Jesus? _____

b. To whom did Jesus give the message? _____

c. To whom did the angel give it? _____

Revelation is a message about Jesus sent to John by an angel directly from God. Revelation’s prophecies reveal Jesus and the everlasting gospel.

2. How did John identify God’s last-day message carried to the earth by three angels?

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6).

a. The angels bear the _____

b. To whom do they carry this message? _____

God’s last-day message of the everlasting gospel—the good news of salvation from sin’s penalty and power—goes to the ends of the earth before Jesus comes.

3. What four aspects of the everlasting gospel are outlined in Revelation? Read the text below and fill in the blanks.

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (Rev. 14:7).

a. _____ God _____

b. _____ glory to _____

c. the _____ of His _____ has _____

d. _____ Him who made _____ and _____

To fear God means to respect and obey Him. To give Him glory means to honor Him in all we do. Judgment implies we are moral creatures responsible for our actions.



4. How do we worship our Savior and Lord as Creator? What is a sign of His creative authority? Fill in the blanks below.

“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 ... and hallowed it” (Ex. 20:8-11).

The commandment says, “Remember the _____ day to _____ it _____.”

For in _____ days the _____ made the _____ and the _____.”

We worship God each Sabbath because He created us. We did not evolve; life is a precious gift from our loving heavenly Father.

5. While the first angel of Revelation 14 calls humanity to “worship the Creator,” what does third angel warn against? Fill in the blanks below.

“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God’ (Rev. 14:9, 10).

The third angel warns against worshipping the _____ and his _____.

Revelation brings to view two systems of worship: worshipping the Creator or worshipping the beast. The sign of the true worship is the seventh-day Sabbath, a symbol of supreme allegiance to Jesus as Creator.

The sign of false worship is the mark of the beast, and refers to ignoring God’s way in favor of exalting the human rather than the divine.

6. How are God’s end-time people pictured in Revelation? Write your answers on the lines below.

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

God’s end-time people have two undeniable characteristics:

a. Those who _____ the _____ of _____

b. and the _____ of _____

7. One of the signs of God’s last-day people is a love for Jesus that leads to obedience. The Sabbath is a symbol of obedience to the One who created us. The Sabbath command is a call to worship whom? Read the text below and fill in the blanks.

“And to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9).

God created all things through _____.

Since God created all things through Jesus, the seventh-day Sabbath is an end-time sign of worshipping Jesus. He is the “Lord ... of the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:8). When we worship on the Sabbath, we are giving Jesus the highest praise and honor. Why not praise Him with all of your heart and worship Him as Creator on the seventh-day Sabbath?



What counsel does the Bible offer about keeping the Sabbath? That’s our topic for next month.

LETTERS

“Clear Thinking About Military Service”

In the March 2008 edition of Adventist World, General Conference president Jan Paulsen shared his concerns about Seventh-day Adventists and military service. Adventist World has received dozens of letters from readers, including this selection.

Do we deny or limit God’s ability to deliver by arming ourselves? Since we live in a world where there is evil, what are our moral obligations in situations like this? What is the difference between shooting a rabid dog that is about to bite you or your son and shooting a robber possibly intent on killing you? Is there a moral difference between owning a machete and owning a gun? For several others and myself, this issue is not academic.

ERMEKA UKEGBU

Via the Nigerian Adventist Forum

I hope Jan Paulsen’s article “Clear Thinking About Military Service,” on page 8 of the March 2008 issue, does stimulate renewed discussion of the church’s attitude toward our members who choose that career. I was persuaded by our church’s teachings to declare myself a “conscientious cooperators” in the 1970s when I was a new Adventist. I remember writing essays in college sometime later defending our traditional, noncombatant position. I don’t think I would necessarily write the same way today...

Times and circumstances do change. We have justified other revisions of our beliefs and practices since the American Civil War. Too often, especially in conservative churches, our military members are made to appear as if their choice makes them second-class Christians.

That needs to change too.

DENNIS MURPHY

West Virginia, United States

Thank you for the very thoughtful article on the issue of noncombatancy. This is an issue that I have been particularly concerned about since 9/11. Being a father of two young boys (twins) who will soon be required to register upon their 18th birthday really causes one to put the whole concept into sharp focus. It is something that very few of our young people have taken seriously. The fact is our society is becoming more and more militarized with each passing day. Hollywood is glorifying war as if it were of a great human endeavor. With the dramatic rise in military spending and religio-ethnic violence there can be no doubt that conscription is not too far from us. We have to let our young people know about the teaching of Christ—to put away the sword. Ours is not of this world.

BARRY BUSSEY

Oshawa, Canada

I am concerned when I read that military Adventists have made “... poor choices or wrong turns ...” I am glad that Jan Paulsen advocates that we offer understanding acceptance to military Adventists “regardless of poor choices or wrong turns,” but the use of “regardless” marks military Adventists as second-class church members. This is an assertion that I have found inaccurate. My experience (nearly 24 years of active duty as an Army Chaplain, and 13 years as the military endorser and director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the GC) has been that where there is a local Adventist church near a military installation, many of the military

members and their families are very actively involved in various levels of leadership, essentially becoming the “backbone” of that congregation “regardless ...”

Military service for any believer is a complex issue. There is no doubt about it. Christians have struggled with the issue since the first century. But we all need to remember that there was only *one* voice on Calvary that recognized Jesus as the Son of God. It was not a religious leader, not a religious follower who gave bold testimony to Jesus. It was the voice of a military man. The voice of a soldier, who cried out that this dying figure on the cross was the Son of God. We need to also remember that the first recorded church of non-Jewish origin was formed in the house of Cornelius—another soldier.

While we as a church, and as individual members, should always study, consider, pray about, and work on cogent applications of faith in daily life, I believe we should also honor those who put their life on the line to guarantee us the right and the freedom to do all of that.

R. O. STENBAKKEN

Colorado, United States

I was pleased to read Jan Paulsen’s World Vista column “Clear Thinking About Military Service.” It is clear, compassionate, and it strongly connects us with our own tradition, that of noncombatancy. As the child of a 34-year U.S. Army veteran of three wars, I am deeply patriotic and appreciative of the service our military offers us. Yet I am also now a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. It is important for us to know that the historical and authentic position of our church toward

LETTERS

military involvement has been one of noncombatancy. Ekkehardt Mueller, at our Biblical Research Institute, has also written a very helpful position paper on noncombatancy: www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/noncombatancy.htm.

The General Conference Web site has three statements on peace and how we do well to support and encourage peacemaking: www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/index.html.

With national pride being as strong and widespread as it is around the world, Paulsen's words are particularly timely. His leadership on this topic is so very important and timely. Thanks to him for writing and you for publishing this article.

MARK F. CARR
California, United States

This article [by Pastor Paulsen] is long overdue!

I suggest that we reemphasize not only our noncombatant position in our church worldwide but also our understanding in regard to

nationality, ethnic issues, etc.... If we don't take a clear position in regard to noncombatancy and the priority of Christian confession over national belonging, someday we might find ourselves in a situation where Adventists fight and kill each other.

HERBERT BODENMANN
Winterthur, Switzerland

I wish to affirm Jan Paulsen for a clear, thoughtful statement on Adventist tradition and on wider Christian principles. I am pleased to see the historic position of Adventism regarding peace reaffirmed with simplicity and clarity. It was a right and proper move the church took in the 1960s when we affirmed that counseling and support were to be available to all Adventist young people doing military or alternative service, whether they were conscientious objectors, "conscientious cooperators" (as we called the military medics of the time), or arms-bearing soldiers. That should not have been confused, however, with a position that

approved of arms-bearing military service. Our GC president does well to remind us of our root principles.

A. GREGORY SCHNEIDER
California, United States

At last! Thanks to the Holy Spirit, who inspired Jan Paulsen for the article on military service in the March release of *Adventist World!* This is so much more of the long-awaited Holy Spirit fresh waters! The ambiguous, locally politically correct language used on this subject matter for years had left the door open to the great deceiver, causing a tragic confusion in so many congregations. This gap in the official stance of the church had been harmful to the church identity and to the power of the Adventist message. Welcome back to the gospel truth!

STÉPHANE AUGSBURGER
France

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

I started a school for orphans and street kids in 2006 using my own resources. I am undertaking a degree program and I am finding the going hard. I am praying for God to open doors of opportunities and resources to fulfill my dream of serving the community.

CORNELIUS, *Kenya*

Will you please pray for me? I need a blessed breakthrough from God in my academics, health, finance, and my life as a whole.

PHILLIP, *Zimbabwe*

I want to commend you for the wonderful work you are doing. May our Almighty bless and keep you. I

want you to pray for me concerning my marriage. I have prayed, yet I have not been able to see the answer. Please pray for God to provide a life partner for me, an Adventist who is responsible and God-fearing.

NGOZI, *Nigeria*

Please pray for a friend who has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. He was anointed, but healing did not occur. Many doctors have been consulted. Pray that he can be healed to be a witness for God.

MARK, *via e-mail*

Please, can you pray for my family and me? My son would like to go to

university. The young brother did not pass some of his subjects and would like to go for A-Level. My husband and I are civil servants. Pray that I can get the money to send the children to school.

EMMA, *Zimbabwe*

Please pray that my friends will find suitable accommodation beginning in September and also that they are able to balance work, studies, and parenthood.

ED, *via e-mail*

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

This month, AWR shares a listener's first encounter with Jesus.

Somalia is a Muslim country that has no official Adventist outreach, but radio broadcasts can reach places on earth that missionaries and others cannot. Here is a testimony from a young Adventist World Radio listener who heard of Jesus for the first time on the radio:

“Before becoming a Christian, life was meaningless. I was tired of religion and all the ‘holy’ people. I didn’t believe that God cared for me. I desperately needed comfort but never found it in our religion. I came across Adventist World Radio and heard the living words of Jesus Christ. The more I listened, the more I wanted to learn.

“With the help of God, truth was slowly revealed to me through the teachings. I gave my heart to Him, and He changed my life. He gave me comfort and hope. I began to tell my friends and some of my family about Christ and Christianity. They told me I was wrong. They laughed at me and punished me with their words. I was initially able to handle these difficulties, but after a while they bothered me very much. Since I didn’t have anybody to support me, I decided to keep my faith a secret. All I had in the world was God and Jesus.

“In my first year of high school, I got to know two girls who were in the same situation I had been before I became a Christian. They were confused and worried. After one year, when I realized we were sincere friends and I could trust them, I shared my faith in Christ with them. They opened the door of their hearts and invited Jesus in.

“Now I have at least two friends who are Christians. They now have the same purpose in life as I have. Together we listen to Adventist World Radio. We have never been in a church, but with this program I believe we are a church for Christ. He is with us, even in difficult society. Every day we are growing in our faith.”

For more information, write to Adventist World Radio, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600 USA; visit www.awr.org; or phone 800-337-4297.



The PEOPLE'S PLACE

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Our church is situated next to the Oliver Tambo International Airport, in Kempton Park. Some Sabbaths we have to compete with the planes flying over, but that does not trouble us.

Our church is very small, mainly pensioners, but we have a young couple that is very active in the church. Our young are really in the minority, but praise God, we also have four beautiful young girls (three of them baptized in March 2007) who are also very dedicated.

During 2007 they decided to start a project with their teacher, Liezl Fotiadis, to make “Love Boxes” for underprivileged children (of which we have a lot in our area). They started to collect soap and facecloths, toys, crayons, scarves, warm slippers, biscuits, toothpaste and toothbrushes, tissues, and small things that these children don’t have. They decided to do 30 boxes, but they ended with 40 through the generosity of the “old folk” in the church.

On December 4 the group (called “Teens for Jesus”) went to a childcare center, Penguin Crechè, with

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



CHRISSE SARVARI

22 boxed gifts. After decorating a tree and setting out tables and chairs—and all the goodies to eat—they got the little ones together for games and crafts.

These kids enjoyed every moment. Among other things, they had hot dogs, cookies, juice, and dessert. Their faces lit up, though, when they opened their Love Boxes.

After this the group went to another shelter where they distributed 12 more boxes. They took the rest of the remaining gifts to nearby Tembisa Hospital to give them to terminally-ill children. They are already planning their next project at the nearby old-age home.

—Chrissie Sarvari, communication secretary, Kempton Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, Glen Marais, Kempton Park, South Africa

ADVENTIST LIFE

During one of her trips across our planet, Charlotte Ishkanian, the editor of the Seventh-day Adventist *Mission* magazine and “Inside Story,” came across this reading rack. She was in Mongolia and thought we’d like to know one of the ways *Adventist World* is available there. We appreciate her snapping this photo and decided to share it with you. If you’ve seen *Adventist World* in an unusual place, send us the photo!



CHARLOTTE ISHKANIAN

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“We cannot find the God of the Bible without following the Bible of the God.”

—Pastor Erickson Fabien, during the sermon at the Seventh-day Adventist Community Church, Singapore, on January 19, 2008

ANSWER: In South Africa, children at the Penguin Crechè childcare center open up “Love Boxes” of donated items from church members in Kempton Park. The gifts were given this past December.