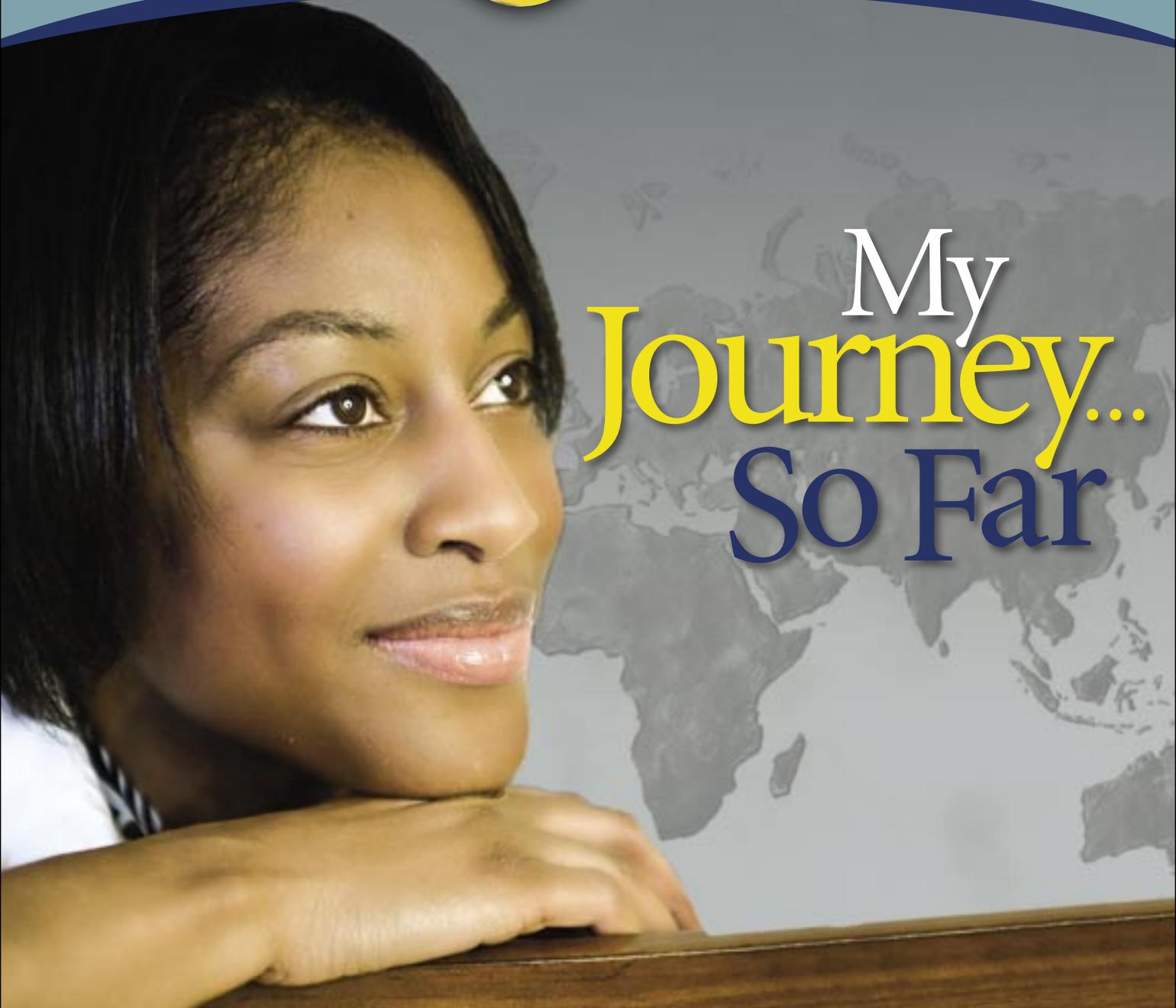


The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists

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ADVENTIST WORLD



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Thoughtfully

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Rite of Passage



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WORLD VIEW

Discerning the Body

The church is filling with believers—two, three at a time—as we wait the worship hour. A hum of

energy and joy fills the building as the pianist plays favorite hymns. Eyes closed, the past week mercifully forgotten, we murmur words of assurance and togetherness: “*What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms.*” We gladly accept the embrace of the body of Christ.

I watch as worshippers notice each other, smiles wide, eyes lit with gladness. I see hands reaching out for other hands, arms about shoulders, the occasional hug. I hear the whispered, reverent laughter of old friends rediscovered, of children cherished. Encouragement is in the air.

Mere obedience could never be the cause of all of this. Obligation alone could never bring about this edifying result. The apostle’s counsel was not, as some remember it, “Do not forget to come to church,” as though the benefit of public worship lay chiefly in maintaining a religious habit. What the author of Hebrews actually wrote was: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24, 25).

The writer knew from deep personal experience that

worshipping with fellow believers is one of the greatest tonics for body and spirit. He knew that in the embrace of Christ’s body many sorrows evaporate and a hundred pains seem easier to bear.

The reason we ought to worship regularly with others is simply that Christ reveals Himself more fully among the two or three than He ever can to the one, no matter how devout. We understand His Word more fully when we hear it in the mouth of a believer. We better grasp the healing He intends us to share with the world when we allow the handshake or the hug of another Christian to comfort us in wordless ways.

Seventy years ago, a German pastor living in a land then ruled by terror wrote these memorable words: “The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer.” As the clouds of violence and war descended, he found his solace in the Christ he found in fellow believers, in the miracle of openheartedness from those whose greater loyalty was to the gospel of peace.

As our world slides toward greater pain and brokenness, we, too, will find our higher joys to be the ones we share among other men and women of faith.

This Sabbath, as you worship, stir up some love and good works. Offer some encouragement. Build up the body of Christ.

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

Adventists Must Gain Visibility in South Pacific, Poll Says

About half in Australia, New Zealand, know little of church, despite long history there.

■ Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders in the South Pacific say that research should be integral in shaping the church’s message after a recent poll indicated about 50 percent of Australians and New Zealanders know nothing about the church beyond its name.

The numbers climb to a “distressing” 70 percent for poll



PHOTO BY STOCKXPRT

TELL THEIR WORLD: People in Sydney, Australia (above), and other parts of the South Pacific region need to know about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and what it believes, a survey has found.

WORLD REPORT

respondents aged 18 to 34, said Mirella Gordon, church marketing director for Wahroonga-based Adventist Media Network (AMN). She speculates the statistic likely represents a general lack of knowledge about religion among many young people.

Respondents did, however, consistently link the Adventist Church to healthful living.

Learning how the public perceives Adventism is key to tailoring the church's message, making the A\$16,000 that AMN invested in the poll money well spent, Gordon said.

The Adventist Church has traditionally "underused" outside surveys, she said. "We do some internal research, but when it comes to understanding the external community, we rarely ask ourselves the questions."

Newspoll, an Australian public opinion polling company, telephoned 1,720 respondents aged 18 and older from February to April for the Awareness Survey. Each was selected randomly to best reflect the region's various demographics, including age, gender, and education level.

Results indicated that most respondents knew the Adventist Church is a worldwide Christian denomination, which church leaders find heartening, Gordon said. Considerably fewer knew that Adventists worship on the seventh-day Sabbath or were familiar with the church's extensive network of schools and hospitals. Regardless of demographics, most respondents strongly associated the church with healthful lifestyle choices.

The findings are somewhat ironic given the long presence of Adventism in Australia and New Zealand. Ellen G. White, a pioneering cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, spent nearly nine years in Australia, helping believers launch several key

operations. And in both countries, Adventist-owned Sanitarium Health Food Company has been one of the dominant food producers for decades, leading the market with its renowned Weet-Bix cereal.

When asked a series of questions about their own perceptions toward the church, nearly one third said Adventists are "too private and inward looking." When asked if the church presents its beliefs positively, 70 percent said they weren't sure, reflecting their general lack of specific knowledge about the church, Gordon said.

Rajmund Dabrowski, communication director for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, called the poll "commendable" and urged church leaders in other regions to follow suit: "Church awareness could be drastically improved in many parts of the world as we build public relations around the results of such polls," he said.

Church leaders in the South Pacific anticipate conducting similar polls every two years as a reference point for a larger effort called The Interactive Church, which is meant to help local churches better connect with their communities. The region also plans to use additional polls to inform major church decisions. "We want to test key messages and have a better understanding of how ... what we do or plan to do resonates with people," Gordon said.

The South Pacific Division reports a baptized membership of 398,126 people, worshipping weekly in 5,018 congregations throughout the region. —Reported by Elizabeth Lechleitner, *Adventist News Network*, and *AR Staff*.

NORWAY: Literature Sales Rise, Spreading Adventist Message

■ Sales at the Seventh-day Adventist publishing house in Norway climbed 20 percent in a five-week period, a result

in large measure of the efforts of 55 student booksellers hired this summer as part of its program to support students from developing countries, literature evangelists there say.

Adventist publisher Norsk Bokforlag is hosting students from Adventist institutions and universities in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Haiti, India, and Ghana this year. The job gives students a chance to participate in the ministry of the church while helping to finance their studies and help their families.

Some earn enough to finance community outreach projects in their native countries. Church leaders say the work prepares young people for future leadership positions.

Norway is one of the few European countries that allow denominations to hire students from outside the country to participate in literature evangelism.

The student program at Norsk Bokforlag was founded in 1967. Norwegian Adventists are celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of literature evangelism in their country this year, a program begun nearly 30 years after the publishing house was



PHOTO COURTESY NORSK BOKFORLAG

INCREASING SALES IN NORWAY: Student workers at the Adventist publishing house in Norway are helping increase the church's book sales in the country, where outreach through literature evangelism is celebrating 100 years.



HIGH HONOR: Seth Abaya Abang Laryea (right) receives Ghana's highest award for private citizens, the Order of the Volta, at a ceremony held July 3, 2008. Ghana's president, John Agyekum Kufuor, presented the award, in recognition of Laryea's work in higher education.

PHOTO BY EMMANUEL QUAYE/ANN

first established in the country.

"All it takes is our willingness to let God use us," said sales and marketing director Carlos Tenold, "as we partner with others and break down every barrier, truly loving and caring for one another, motivating and holding up each other, allowing God to lead us."
—*Adventist News Network with AR Staff.*

GHANA: Adventist University President Gets High Civilian Honor

■ Valley View University (VVU) president Seth Abaya Abang Laryea recently received one of Ghana's highest national awards given to private citizens, the Order of the Volta, in recognition of his contributions to college-level education. Formally called Adventist Missionary College, VVU was established in 1979 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ghana's president, John Agyekum Kufuor, presented Laryea with the award at a ceremony held July 3, 2008, at the Accra International Conference Centre.

Laryea and 250 other Ghanaians were awarded for their exceptional contributions toward the development and well-being of the country, said President Kufuor.

WORLD REPORT

Guatemalan Adventists Celebrate Century of Growth

Paulsen challenges believers to "pass the torch" to next generation.

By LIBNA STEVENS and JUAN FRANCISCO LOPEZ, Inter-American Division, reporting from Guatemala City

Thousands of Seventh-day Adventists from across Guatemala gathered to celebrate the growth of the church in the country during its 100 years of existence and commit to making an impact in their communities while sharing the gospel. The celebration, which was held at the Polideportivo Dome in Guatemala City on Saturday, July 12, was the culmination of a series of activities held throughout the Central American nation since June.

Nearly 9,000 church leaders and members packed the stadium to participate in a daylong program. Guest speakers included Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Inter-American Division president Israel Leito.

"The spirit that we see here this morning is the spirit that more normally

Continued next page



FINISH THE WORK: "We must hand the torch, the assignment, on to younger people and we will finish the mission," said General Conference president Jan Paulsen (left) and Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, who joined the thousands of Seventh-day Adventists gathered for the church's centennial celebration in Guatemala.

MELVIN BATZ/ADVENRED.COM

WORLD REPORT

I associate with [a] GC session [meeting] when the large number of the church celebrates their faith,” said Paulsen. “They celebrate what Jesus Christ has wrought. They celebrate the commission that He has given us as a church as they declare publicly their commitment to finishing the task. I hear, I see your commitment clearly stated today.”

Paulsen encouraged the gathering to ensure that the youth are involved in the finishing of the work.

“We must hand the torch, the assignment, on to younger people, and we will finish the mission,” he said. “Let us go into tomorrow with a stronger intention, and we will finish the work.”

Highlights of the program included the honoring of church leaders, distinguished lay-people, and a group of the oldest Seventh-day Adventists still living; four generations of Adventist families; a pastoral ordination of 19 ministers; and a musical concert.

Among the oldest Adventists honored were Policarpa Lopez, age 105 and a church member for 78 years, and Javier Sosa, 96, who has been an Adventist for 71 years.

During the morning program, Leito delivered the spiritual message to the thousands gathered at the stadium, and encouraged the thousands more radio and Internet listeners following the live program.

“One hundred years is firstly to remember—to remember our brothers and sisters from the past, who suffered, cried, went through difficult times but ... didn’t give up, and that is why we are here today,” said Leito. “This is our time, our era; they pass the torch on to us until the coming of Jesus.”

Leito encouraged the church membership to continue proclaiming the message of Jesus’ second coming, just as the Adventist pioneers in the country had begun proclaiming.

“The church is inspired today with the Lord, because of receiving the torch of the past, receiving the call and the challenge of our pioneers ... we have grown because of the steps they took.

“Let us strengthen the steps today for the future generations so that when Jesus comes, He can find a vibrant church in Guatemala waiting for the Lord. Be faithful, strong with a purpose, moving forward passing the torch until the second coming of Jesus,” challenged Leito.

“The predominant dream of the church in Guatemala is to conquer the entire territory for the Lord’s honor,” said Mario Calderon, president of the church in Guatemala.

“We should not rest, for there is much land to still possess;



CROWD OF WITNESSES: Nearly 9,000 Seventh-day Adventists gathered at the Polideportivo Dome in Guatemala City on July 12, to celebrate the growth of the church during the past 100 years in the country.

MELVIN BATZ/ADVENRED.COM

there are victories to reach, so we must continue moving forward to conquer Guatemala.”

Earlier in July, Adventists in Guatemala literally took to the streets to mark the milestone.

More than 60,000 Seventh-day Adventists throughout Guatemala marched on July 5 and 6 to tell their fellow citizens that Jesus is coming soon. It was one of many centennial celebration activities the church has participated in this year.

There were some 30 marches organized during the two days throughout the country. Participants held signs and banners proclaiming the benefits of an Adventist lifestyle, the importance of studying the Bible, the active work of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency there, and the second coming of Jesus. One of the marches took place in Puerto Barrios, the site of the first Sabbath school established by missionaries in Guatemala.

The church also unveiled monuments featuring an inscription of the Ten Commandments in Puerto Barrios and Chiquimula. Local government officials were present to witness the unveilings.

Since June some 20 billboard ads had been placed throughout the country announcing the Guatemalan church’s centennial celebrations and promoting the July 12 event. In addition, the church published a special magazine about the church’s growth and development in the country throughout its history.

Boasting more than 200,000 church members today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Guatemala began in 1908 as a branch Sabbath school organized by E. L. Cardey and C. A. Nowlen in Puerto Barrios. The church now operates five church conferences, nearly 700 churches and groups, 25 institutions, and a publishing house. ●



WINDOW
Into
Germany
 By HANS OLSON



GERMANY

Capital:	Berlin
Official language:	German
Religion:	Protestant, 34%; Roman Catholic, 34%; Muslim, 4%; Other 28%
Population:	82.4 million*
Adventist membership:	36,000*
Adventist-to-population ratio:	1:2,287*

*General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, 144th Annual Statistical Report

Though it once was home to the Protestant Reformation, Germany now has fewer Adventists than many parts of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific. Like most of Europe, postmodernism and secularism make Germany a difficult place to share the gospel. More than a quarter of modern Germans see no need for God and don't practice any form of religion.

The region of Central Europe comprising modern Germany was known as Germania as far back as A.D. 100. Charlemagne united much of western and central Europe in 800 as part of the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until 1806. During the sixteenth century, monk and theologian Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation in northern Germany and changed the course of Western Christianity.

Following World War I Germany suffered from economic depression and a series of unstable governments. On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag—Germany's parliamentary building in Berlin—was set

on fire. This event is seen by some as the catalyst that led to the rise of the Nazi party and brought Adolf Hitler to power in Germany. Six years later Germany attacked Poland, effectively launching World War II. After the war the administration of Germany was divided between France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Eventually the French, British, and American territories were united as West Germany. The Soviet sector became East Germany.

For much of the twentieth century Germany was at the crux of the battle for supremacy between Western and Eastern Europe. Berlin itself, located in the eastern half of Germany, was divided between the two sides.

After the dismantling of the Soviet Union during the late 1980s and early 1990s, large amounts of money were spent upgrading the East German infrastructure and creating a comprehensive social security system. Today Germany has one of the strongest economies in the world, and the German people enjoy a high standard of living and relative peace. The country is the second most populous country in Europe (after Russia) and is home to the third largest immigrant population in the world.

The Adventist Church has frontline Global Mission projects to reach this burgeoning immigrant population of non-German speakers. These projects in northern Germany reach the Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian communities. In recent years four new congregations have been established and continue to grow. However, overall growth of the Adventist Church is slow. In the past 10 years the church has grown by only 2 percent.

The reunification of West and East Germany led to a number of changes in the Adventist Church. While the South German Union remained mostly unchanged, the West and East German unions merged to form the North German Union. After this merger the necessity for two seminaries diminished, and in 1994 Marienhöhe Seminary closed its doors, making Friedensau Theological Graduate School (Theologische Hochschule Friedensau) the only Adventist theological training center in Germany.

Germany's strong economy has enabled the Adventist Church to support humanitarian projects around the world. In 2006 ADRA/Germany sponsored nearly 100 projects through government grants and direct donations. These projects served some 2 million people, at a value of US\$7.7 million.

To learn more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in Germany, please visit www.AdventistMission.org.

KRISTA DAVIS



WORLD VISTA

I visited with my mother two months before she died. She was 97 years of age and very clear in her mind. We talked about many, many things—some things that went back years into my childhood; events I had forgotten but she remembered. We talked about someone who was very dear to us both; someone whose life had been difficult, and whose choices had taken him away from the Lord. And yet my mother believed that God loved him, that He would continue to work on him, and that she would see him again in the kingdom. She never wavered in her belief that God is first and foremost concerned with saving people; that He is doing His utmost to reach *everyone*.

And this I believe also. I've said it many times and in many different settings: "God is in the business of

and planning take place; it still provides the benchmarks by which we measure our faithfulness to God's will.

But as we carry our mission into the future, how do we ensure that our commitment remains strong? Are there attitudes, ways of thinking, that, if we allow them to take root, could sidetrack our efforts or compromise our usefulness to God? Here are several dangerous possibilities:

■ Mistaking our role

What is our role in God's work of salvation? I believe there is no end to the different ways God can, and will, use to turn hearts toward Him. But He has made a choice. Just as the Bible is God's special instrument for communicating truth, He has chosen human beings as His preferred

Going Forward Thought

Fulfilling the gospel commission means doing the right thing for the right reasons.

salvation, and He is working to save every person He can lay His hands on." The church to which you and I belong was founded on this conviction; we began as a mission movement, and this is what we still are today.

I'm sometimes asked to reflect on where we are with our mission as a church. Are we remaining true to Christ's mandate to go and make disciples? Have we kept faith with the vision of our pioneers? And if the Lord should not return in this generation, what will Adventist mission look like tomorrow?

All that I've seen and experienced in recent years confirms my belief that a passion for mission still runs deep within Adventism. It still defines us as a movement; it still provides the foundation upon which our thinking

instrument for proclaiming the message of salvation. Are we the only ones who can do it? No, I don't think so. In fact, Ellen White makes the point that there will be those who enter eternity who have not walked the beaten path.* They won't share our knowledge, our history. They will ask the Lord: "Where did these scars come from?" The all-wise, omnipotent God reads the heart and will; He knows who has responded to His Spirit, and whose lives have prepared them for His eternity.

And so what does God ask of us? To be faithful. To recognize that the work is the Lord's; the plan is His, not ours. We use every resource we have to go everywhere we can, because Christ has told us to go (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15). We use every tool at our disposal to communicate

IZHAR BUENDIA



we share our experience, and God’s Spirit works to convict that person of truth. And it is at that moment of personal conviction when an individual becomes obligated to respond to truth.

Recently, five European leaders of another Protestant denomination visited the General Conference headquarters. They had come to America to become acquainted with a number of different church entities. As we talked, one of them said: “You keep the Sabbath in celebration of creation. The rest of Christendom keeps Sunday in celebration of Christ’s resurrection. Is there any chance that in the future you will ‘soften’ your attitude? Not give up your Sabbath, but perhaps recognize an either/or?”

And I said: “No. That doesn’t mean that I sit in judgment of the spirituality of those who keep Sunday, if that is their conviction. But if you have been convicted that the Sabbath is God’s very special day to be kept holy, it can never be compromised. Compromising the command of God would be destructive to our own spirituality. And so, no, it’s not going to happen.”

We engage in mission with an unwavering conviction of God’s truth, but also with a spirit of humility. We recognize that growth and discipleship are always works in progress. Our witness is not an exercise in judgment or caricature, which condemns everyone before they have had the chance to know and experience something better. Instead, our mission work is a constant drive to lift people into a knowledge and relationship with God that is richer, deeper, more fulfilling, more true.

■ **Shortsightedness**

Mission must always first be defined as: “How can I function as a witness for God where I am?” It has to do with obedience to the call of God where you are—in your own town, on your own street, among your own friends, colleagues, and neighbors. But the church has also been given a global mandate. And these two aspects of mission—local and global—must be held in balance; not competing with each other, but complementing and strengthening each other.

htfully

By JAN PAULSEN

Christ’s salvation because He has said: “I want you to be my witnesses” (see Acts 1:8). This is the life of discipleship that we have chosen.

There is a wonderful sense of freedom in this! Mission is not a burden—no matter how daunting the challenges seem—but something to be approached joyfully, in the sure knowledge that God is in control, that His plan will prevail, and that He is asking us to be a part of that plan.

■ **Arrogance**

Understanding our role in mission also affects the way we approach others. It’s not our responsibility to measure the point at which an individual is ready to enter God’s kingdom. We share with another person what we know,



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

WORLD VISTA



PHOTOS BY CAITLIN POTTS

I see danger when a congregation becomes so focused on its internal life or its immediate community that it excludes the possibility of reaching out farther. I'm not suggesting that a congregation should weaken its local

ministry! But it will never be fully alive as a witnessing community, obedient to God's will, unless its mission also includes a vision for the broader world.

Shortsightedness can also come in the form of seeking exclusive control. For instance, a congregation that supports a foreign mission project only if it can "own" and direct it. This is a very unhealthy model. As a global church we have said: "Let's work together to facilitate the greatest possible engagement with mission around the world. And as the life of the church develops in distant places, let's allow it to take root and grow within local soil without insisting on controlling that." This is a response of faith. It has to do with trusting each other, and extending to each other ownership and responsibility for God's work where we are placed.

■ Excluding our youth

I have a strong sense that the young people of our church are saying, passionately: "Include us in mission, too!" I've heard it said that some young Adventists are skeptical about the legitimacy of the church's mission. But I believe their cynicism is more likely to be directed

toward those in the church whom they see as unwilling to listen to new ideas, slow to relinquish control, or grudging in doling out responsibilities.

Young people can and do play a tremendous part in mission. We need their enthusiasm, their ideas, their knowledge of new technologies, their ease with many different forms of media. And they are "closer to the ground" when it comes to understanding and relating to postmodern culture.

It is easier to talk about the need to include young people than it is to make concrete changes that open up more opportunities for involvement. This is something I continue to struggle with. I have to ask myself: "What can we do so young people see that the church is interested in more than simply making statements?" This is a challenge we have to resolve.

■ Complacency

In a remarkably short span of history our church has been transformed from a handful of believers scattered around North America to a global movement—some 25 million adults and children. The hand of the Holy Spirit is unmistakable. The church has found life in countries and regions of the world that, a few short years ago, were effectively closed. Just in the past decade there has been an extraordinary acceleration in growth rates. There is a sense of strength and energy about Adventism around the world—which is something to celebrate, but not a signal to dust off our hands and say: "The work is almost done."

In 2006, 1 million people joined the Adventist Church, but world population grew by 95 million; 60 percent of the world's population live in areas where there are few Christians, and where the majority have not even heard Christ's name. This picture shouldn't discourage us, but it should remind us that the mission Christ gave us is not static. It's a reminder that your actions and my actions matter; that witness is still at the core of our identity and at the heart of our faith. And it's a reminder that the driving urgency with which our pioneers began their task is the same spirit we need as we move into the future.

I believe God is in the business of salvation; and I believe this is also the first business of the church. May each of us make it ours as well. 

*"Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God." Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

Caffeine—

Has the Church Changed Its Stand?

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

We do not drink or serve caffeinated beverages in our home. My children question the stance of the Adventist Church on this issue because many of their church friends drink these beverages in their homes and even at church functions. Has the church changed its stand on caffeine?



No, the church has not changed its stand on the issue of tea, coffee, and other caffeinated beverages. In the 2007–2008 *General Conference Working Policy*, page 293, we read the following: “The use of coffee, tea, and other caffeinated beverages and all harmful substances are discouraged.” Also, at the Annual Council in the fall of 2007, the church administration confirmed that “Adventist health care and ministries are to promote only those practices based upon the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy, or evidence-based methods of disease prevention, treatment, and health maintenance” (*Ibid.*, p. 297).

We have firm counsel on caffeinated beverages from the Spirit of Prophecy advising avoidance. Ellen White never talked about caffeine per se, but because her description of the effects of tea and coffee reflect the actions of caffeine, we can presume she is speaking against caffeine.

Some mixed messages are coming from scientific literature regarding studies that show apparent benefits of caffeine on health. The pro-caffeine lobby ensures these reports find their way into our mailboxes with rapidity and purpose! However, the basic pharmacologic characteristics of caffeine have not changed. Caffeine is the world’s most popular psychoactive (mood-changing) drug and is used more widely than alcohol and tobacco. It can lead to physical dependence, which by definition results in a withdrawal syndrome

when habitual intake is stopped abruptly. When the intake of caffeine is stopped suddenly, many and varied symptoms may result, including headaches, tiredness, irritability, lack of concentration, and nausea.

Although death from caffeine overdose is not common, it does occur and may be intentional; this situation is more likely with the ingestion of caffeine tablets. With the increasing popularity of caffeinated soft drinks and energy drinks, however, emergency room physicians and toxicologists are noting an increase in caffeine-related problems and symptoms, especially among young adults.

In 2006 almost \$4 billion was spent on energy drinks in the United States alone, and this is indicative of a worldwide trend. In addition, 500 new brands of energy drinks were introduced around the world in the same year. So-called energy drinks have significantly higher levels of caffeine than the average caffeinated soft drink. Analysis of this scenario reveals the formula being used to hook children and youth: kids are exposed first to sugary soft drinks; caffeine is then added, and energy drinks are introduced. The next step is the addition of alcohol to energy drinks, which are presented and marketed in a very similar fashion. Brand confusion can easily result, aided by the strategy of pricing alcoholic energy drinks lower than nonalcoholic energy drinks. In addition, the marketing and product

design targets and promotes youth consumption, aiming for the “wide-awake drunk”! What a travesty! One in 3 teens is likely to use energy drinks compared to 1 in 10 adults. We have a duty to inform our youth, set the appropriate example in our own habits, and lobby against this evil attack on our society.

Caffeine is useful as a component of certain analgesics used in the treatment of migraine as well as some other pain conditions. It will be comforting to those who find it necessary to use such medications that Ellen White alludes to her own use of coffee (presumably referring to the caffeine) on occasion as a medication. (See *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 302.)

We do well to prayerfully and consistently apply the temperance principle: “True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562). ●



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Four Faces of Forgiveness

Reflections amid the heat of the 2008 Kenyan political crisis

By
PHILLIP
ORES



As I write this article, my country, Kenya, is doing a major national spiritual housecleaning. A prayer session was convened by the new president-elect to call for peace and calm nationwide, following post-election violence that left more than 800 people dead and more than a half million citizens displaced.

The main purpose of this national prayer is to bring all Kenyans together to forgive one another, embrace a spirit of brotherhood, forge forward, and uphold unity—regardless of political stance, religion, tribe, or social class.

As most of us know, forgiveness usually comes after the fragile fabric of peace is stretched beyond elastic limit. In this state of affairs, families, homes, nations, or individuals tend to become filled with rage and confusion, calling for revenge to the offenders in the greatest degree we can imagine. However, amid the chaos, pent-up anger, and confusion that characterize such heated situations, we should go back to sanity and see what we can do in the context of total forgiveness.

How do I forgive? Do I really have to forgive and forget?

As Christians, we have the challenge and responsibility of going by Christ's example, especially on the subject of

forgiveness. When we do this, we will stand out as pillars of hope and peace when such qualities are most needed—in our families, in our schools, in our communities, in our countries.

So I find it important to consider the following four faces of forgiveness in our struggle to achieve reconciliation.

1. Centered on Repentance

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”
(Matt. 6:12).

Turning from sin toward God in order to trust, love, and obey Him is called repentance. The effects of sin are quite plain, and wherever sin abounds, the fabric of peace is likely to be distorted, which calls for forgiveness. Repentance means a change of heart, a change of viewpoint, a change of attitude—when that happens, we stop brooding over our own feelings of hatred and desperation. Vengefulness disappears from our hearts, and in its place we experience a refreshing wave of joy and love.

Each time we contemplate forgiveness, we should ask ourselves this important question: “How can I have a

change of heart about something that's bothering me so much?" Our Father in heaven is willing to forgive us in equal proportions as we forgive "those who trespass against us."

2. Centered on Christ's Authority

"The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10).

The Bible is quite clear about the ability and power of Christ to forgive. By the sinful nature that we possess, we are always tainted with sin every day. In like manner, we are called upon to forgive our enemies for what they have done to us. Each time we forgive, Heaven is pleased, because we thereby implement and uphold an action started by Christ Himself.

Christ's ability to change our hearts sets us on the right

4. Anchored on God's Total Forgiveness

"He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

By virtue of being omniscient, God is also all-forgiving. For this reason, He has given the admonition that He will tread our sins underfoot and forget the weight of our iniquities forever. Thomas Brooks, the seventeenth-century nonconformist preacher, who also served as a chaplain in the English civil war, said that "saving grace makes a man as willing to leave his lusts as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a thief his bolts, or a beggar his rags."^{*}

In view of our current situation in the world, the saving grace that God has given us through Jesus Christ should keep our hopes burning bright in the hope of our

As no man remains an island, we have to coexist harmoniously with those around us—our families, communities, and schools—as well as with those outside the borders of our countries.

path to exercise forgiveness among ourselves here on earth. This is because all three Powers of heaven are available to help us do this. Christ has the authority to forgive the gravest of sins (Mark 2:10). We, following His example, can do the same for our brothers and sisters who need our forgiveness.

3. Built on the Willingness of the Offender

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. 6:14, 15).

In the general context, we are all sinners in this world, owing to the sinful nature we possess (Rom. 3:12). It is the reason we need to renew our commitment to God on a daily basis, so He can bestow upon us His Holy Spirit to help us overcome the temptations we live with. As no man remains an island, we have to coexist harmoniously with those around us—our families, communities, and schools—as well as with those outside the borders of our countries.

This peaceful living together comes about when calm is continuously restored by exercising forgiveness. As much as this is desirable, however, forgiveness remains a give-and-take affair. It cannot take place when the offender is not willing to take the offer. For forgiveness to work out effectively, we need to be receptive enough to allow for the healing oil of repentance to soften and smooth our hearts as we reflect on the willingness of our heavenly Father to forgive us even when we don't deserve it.

eternal liberation. Total forgiveness—which only our Father in heaven can give us—is possible with us in the horizontal dimension also. Even so, we might be willing to forgive, but not really know how to do it. That is why we need to keep open the lines of communication between God and ourselves. In our walk with God, we should allow His Spirit to transform our minds so we can adopt the culture of instant, unconditional forgiveness of others, just the same way we would want to be forgiven.

We should not, out of pride or arrogance, exercise our "authority as Christians" (so to speak) to stop God's saving grace from flowing to certain people because of their race or color or tribe. United in Christ as children of God, we should avoid becoming heartless and preventing others from receiving the gospel. "Unforgiveness" is a sin we should shun. Instead our prayer should be to emulate Christ's example of forgiveness, for many times the offenders "do not actually know what they are doing." ●

^{*}*The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, by Thomas Brooks, Alexander Balloch Grosart, chap. 11 ("A Cabinet of Jewels"), p. 307.



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For English and Friends

Arriving at the old elementary school in Amity, Arkansas, United States, the handful of volunteers weren't sure what to expect. They were warned against optimism: "If you get 10, you're lucky; 15, it's a miracle."

But 35 showed up, and the first semester of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program was underway, led by staff and students from nearby Ouachita Hills Academy and College.

It began with an appetite for outreach, strongly emphasized at Ouachita Hills. Students and staff looked for creative ways to witness in the community while meeting tangible needs.

Magda Rodriguez, an instructor at Ouachita Hills College, has led the ESL project from the beginning. "We discovered an ESL program was a great need," she said, noting the many Hispanics in the area working on large chicken farms, lumber mills, and construction sites.

Then, a woman visiting the Ouachita Hills church plant in Arkadelphia recommended that Magda talk with the local government's Adult Education Program coordinators. Naturally, there was some apprehension approaching the agency, because Ouachita Hills planned to make spiritual outreach a part of the ESL program.

"It is OK with us as long as you're teaching them English," was the reply.

The Adult Education Program coordinators agreed to fully sponsor

the classes and provide all supplies needed, including computers, books, photocopies, assessment tools, paper, and pencils. Even meals were provided, because many of the ESL students would arrive directly from work.

Ouachita Hills had only to lead and staff the classes. And although the Adult Education Program offered full financial support, the director noted that other local ESL programs had not met with great success; in some cases, no students at all had shown up.

Getting Started

After two months of preparation, including refurbishing two rooms at Amity's old elementary school, the Ouachita Hills team targeted January 15, 2008, as the first day of class. To generate interest, they promoted the ESL class in homes, in stores, and at work sites. But even with these efforts, Magda was not sure what to expect that first evening.

When 35 people came, the thoroughly surprised Ouachita Hills team scrambled to accommodate everyone. They called the local Adult Education Program office, which sent staff over to quickly photocopy more materials.

It didn't stop there. The second night 54 people came, and one night the number reached 72. Attendance for the semester-long course averaged between 45 and 50 per night. To streamline the program and better meet the students' needs, classes were divided into three groups, based on English proficiency. More Ouachita Hills students volunteered to teach as well.

A conscious effort was made to create practical, useful lessons for the ESL students. They were taught—in English—how to read maps, shop, visit the doctor, and interact in the workplace.

"[The students] were really

excited," said Alvin Cardona, a Ouachita Hills College freshman. "They would come to me with stories of how they used what they learned at work and other places."

Mrs. Lopez, one of the ESL students in Alvin's level-one class, was encouraged by the tangible progress she made in the class. "Now I can understand and talk to somebody [in English]," she said, noting that although she usually replies with only one or two words, she can now communicate independently. Nubia Ponce, another of Alvin's students, said her ability to read and understand English has grown; she can now communicate better at work and while grocery shopping.

The Outreach Ingredient

True to plan, Ouachita Hills used the ESL classes as a means for spiritual outreach. Esther Morris, a sophomore at Ouachita Hills College, taught the level-three ESL class. At the beginning of each class she wrote a Bible verse on the board, then asked the class to share their views on it. She picked thought-provoking texts such as "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt. 5:45, NIV). Esther was amazed by the insightful and inquisitive responses from the students. And the Bible verse discussions opened doors to deeper spiritual issues.

Prayer was a key element of outreach to the ESL students; every class included a time for prayer. Sabrina Mills, a Ouachita Hills College sophomore, remembered



Steve Hamstra is communication director for Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI).

Friendship

By
STEVE HAMSTRA

Sharing Jesus through community English classes



Top to bottom: A SURPRISING TURN-OUT: After being warned that they would be fortunate if 10 people from the community showed up for class, the volunteer instructors for the English as a Second Language (ESL) course were surprised when 35 adults arrived the first night. On another night attendance reached 72. **A TEACHING MINISTRY:** Alvin Cardona, a Ouachita Hills College freshman, is one of several volunteers helping adults in the community learn to speak and write English.

the trust that was forged as she took prayer requests at each of her level-two classes. As students grew more comfortable, they began to open up during prayer request time, describing the difficulties they were going through and the challenges they were facing, both at work and at home.

"I liked them to share what they're thankful for," Sabrina added.

Magda's husband, Dwight, took the lead in initiating Bible studies with the ESL students. He always came to the classes and talked with students, and he invited anyone interested to take Bible studies. Four families agreed, and Magda and Dwight began studying the Bible with them in the evening after work.

"Every week they are ready, waiting for us," Magda said.

She and Dwight earnestly pray over these Bible studies, because some of the material will challenge

the traditional spiritual beliefs held by these families. And for some, if they choose to believe in Adventist doctrine, it will mean alienation from friends and relatives.

From the beginning, the Ouachita Hills team's goal was not only to teach English but to demonstrate genuine Christlike care and friendship.

"It's so important to have the friendship, the personal touch," Magda said, then added, "I don't want to get to the point where we're just a good English program; we need to be meeting their personal needs."

The Results

On May 5 the Ouachita Hills team and the ESL students celebrated the end of their first semester of classes. Staff from the Adult Education Program attended as well. This event provided the ESL students with an avenue to showcase their new English skills.

"The Lord opened the way for this [program]," Magda said. "We really want to give all the glory to God."

Ouachita Hills students say they have been personally blessed by their experience teaching ESL classes.

"Just seeing how effective it was opened my eyes to how reaching out, heart to heart, is so effective," Alvin said.

"They don't come just for English; they come for friendship," said Magda, who added that every night before class the teachers would pray for God's blessing. "When I go to bed," she said, "I feel I have done God's work."

The Ouachita Hills team is continuing its ESL program. Second semester began in August. ●

Ouachita Hills Academy (OHA) and Ouachita Hills College (OHC) are self-supporting Seventh-day Adventist institutions located in Amity, Arkansas, United States. OHA was founded in 1988, and OHC in 2003. OHA and OHC are member organizations of Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI).

Years ago, a friend said to me, “When God shuts the door, don’t jump through the windows.” I’m sure he meant to impart profound wisdom; but his statement led only to more questions: *How do I know that it’s God who’s shut the door, and not the enemy? And if God indeed shut the door, how do I know that He isn’t testing me to see whether I really want what I am pursuing? How do I know that He isn’t testing my perseverance before He chooses to act on my behalf?*

These words about “doors” and “windows” have stayed with me through subsequent years. I’ve experienced uncertainties, disappointments, apparently wrong turns, and “what ifs.” My experiences sometimes mocked the implication that I could actually discern God’s activity in my life. There have been “doors” at various junctures in my life and, I confess, I have not always known which ones to open, let alone walk through.

Knowing God’s will and being able to discern His leading is seldom easy. Yet it must be possible, for didn’t Jesus teach us to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done” (Matt. 6:10, KJV)?

I don’t presume for a moment to suggest that I have “cracked the code,” or that I have finally realized all that my heavenly Father desires for me. But I do know there is a commonality in the human story that begs to be told, if only to assure us that we are not alone in this journey of spiritual growth—as well as to encourage and strengthen each other.

God Never Forgets

As a young child I believed God took a personal interest in me. I was probably around 6 or 7 when I went

to my mother with a tummy ache. She suggested that we pray and ask Jesus to take the pain away. Right there and then He did, and I made up my mind that God must be real; He had heard and answered my prayer, and I just *knew* He loved me.

Born in Sheffield, England, I moved with my mother to Jamaica at the age of 5 where I spent the rest of my childhood. After my baptism at 12 I had an inexplicable burden to tell others about Jesus. While other 13-year-old girls in my class aspired to be lawyers, dentists, pilots, or teachers, I wanted to be a missionary doctor. I thought one had to become a doctor in order to be a missionary, a dream quickly quelled by my chemistry teacher, who reminded me of my aptitude for the subject.

But God never forgot; and He never let me forget. Years later, at camp meetings in Scarborough, England, I sat and listened with rapt attention to sermons by Henry Wright, Dick Barron, Stafford Byers, and Melvyn Hadyn. In my mind’s eye I can still see Elder Wright preaching on the seven churches of Revelation and speaking to my heart when he said, “No matter how rough it gets, stay in the church!”

I didn’t realize it then, but God was building my faith and convicting me that serving Him was the best decision I could make. I listened enthralled to returning student missionaries as they shared their adventures. I pored over the Adventist Youth Society “call book,” dreaming of the work I would do in these places.

We often read Psalm 37:4 (KJV)—“Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart”—as God giving us whatever our hearts desire. But I believe He often gives us what we desire by placing in us a particular passion or burden. I vividly remember one hot, humid, August night while visiting my mother, who was then living in Florida, United States. I was about to start university

the following month and I was filled with a sense of excitement: I was on the threshold of life. Lying there on my mother’s bed, with my eyes wide open, I began to talk out loud to God in a way that stays with me still. I sensed I was not alone, and that God was taking note of everything I said.

I promised Him that if He would place His hand on me and guide me, I would do what He asked me to do, go where He sent me, and say what He told me to say. I told Him that sometimes in the future I would probably make mistakes but to keep the sentiments of this prayer on file and to save me in spite of myself.

My experience that night has stayed with me for many reasons. That night the Holy Spirit visited me and gave me what God needed most from me: a willing heart.

God kept that passion for mission burning in my heart. Finally, in August 1995 I left England for my mission adventure. The adventure was to start long before I arrived in Seoul for orientation: I missed my flight from England to Paris, then my connecting flight to Seoul, and had to spend the night in Paris. Returning to Charles de Gaulle Airport, I spent the next day with Yumi, a young Japanese woman living in France. After we were

JO
By
FIONA PEART

Fiona Peart lives in Manchester, England, where she works for the United Kingdom’s largest transportation company. In ministry she enjoys using her spiritual gifts of teaching, preaching, and singing.



Top to bottom: FAMILY: Fiona and her mom at Miami International; "Gramps," her childhood hero; and at her graduation she posed with Grandma. Fiona's earliest memories of prayer came while kneeling at the bedside of her grandmother—at about 3 years. FELLOW TRAVELERS: Student missionary Steve Connell (far left) and Japan Union Conference Adventist language school director Mark Duarte flank students Masahiro and Jiro at a summer Bible camp.



My urney... So Far

Looking back is the surest way to have confidence in God's leading.



Top to bottom: NOT ALL WORK: The coming of the Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival saw Fiona practicing her ceremonial moves with a Sakura teacher.

LITTLE ANCHOR: “Pint-sized dynamo” folk at the language school called Fukushima-san their “Japanese grandmother.” She was always there for them. **THESE ALSO:** A busy workweek often ended in Sabbath afternoon ministry at a local orphanage. And summer brought vacation Bible school activities, involving kids like this precious twosome posing with the author.

both bumped from our flight, she invited me to spend my second night with her in her friend’s apartment.

I learned by that experience that God has a sense of adventure, and if I didn’t get too hung up on having to be in control, I just might have fun. I recognized God in that situation and decided to go with the flow and see what happened. The next morning, as I ate freshly baked French bread on a balcony overlooking the cobbled streets of Paris, I understood that if we let Him, God likes to surprise us with more than we bargain for.

Yield to God’s Right of Way

Japan captured my imagination more than any other country, and I planned to give God one year of service before returning to England. The “five-year plan” I had devised for myself after my stay in Japan

I promised God that I would

involved returning home, getting a job, building a career in IT, getting married, buying a house and a car, and having children.

I enjoyed my year in Tokyo. There were challenges, mostly from people with whom I served, but I loved teaching my students. Still, I was determined to go home at the end of the year. I had a five-year plan!

But in the space of several weeks, Masaki Shoji, then pastor of the Amanuma Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Erisa, director of the Ogikubo School where I served, and countless students began suggesting I stay another year. I felt sure there was a conspiracy; even more so after Mark Duarte, Language Institute director in Japan, called to ask if I would consider staying another year.

I wrestled with the idea for weeks and had no peace. To tell the truth I was afraid to ask what God wanted, because I just knew I’d get an answer I didn’t want to hear. Then I wouldn’t have an excuse for not doing it! I had a plan and I wanted to stick with it. No more tiring long days and

sleepless nights for me. No more being misunderstood and misjudged by those I served with. I was going home.

I finally had a conversation with God in which I told Him what I wanted. I can still remember the still, small voice asking, “What about what I want?”

“I don’t want to ask You what You want,” I replied, “because You’ll ask me to do something I don’t want!”

I realized then that I still didn’t truly trust God. Deep in my heart, I believed God would make me do things that would make my life miserable and unbearable. But fighting against Him had already made life unbearable, so what did I have to lose? The moment I decided to stay in Japan another year I had peace. In my experience, when there is doubt, there is no peace, and that is usually a warning to me that I’m

know and have, even though that may be killing us spiritually, physically, or emotionally. The call to step outside ourselves, into the unknown, requires a leap of faith and is really a call to give up on ourselves.

What the apostle Paul called the carnal man (Rom. 7) is simply that petulant part of me that prefers to do things my way. Before, I figured that if I let God take the reins it was going to hurt. And I figured I could handle the pain if I was in control.

Another Door

After Japan, I traveled back to England via California, where I visited my friend, Heather, at Weimar Institute. While I was there Heather said, “You know, Weimar is always looking for people to serve; and there’s a vacancy.”

As in Japan, I immediately recognized God using Heather to get

I finally ask God to show me what lesson I am missing and learn it. Some people make changes only after they understand what God is doing in their lives, and why. These people take longer to learn and accept change than individuals who see what needs to change, make the change, and move on.

When I was recently in a “holding pattern,” it dawned on me that perhaps I am not meant to have things always figured out. The most important thing is not what, where, or how, but simply Who. If my driving ambition in life is, “Thy kingdom come. *Thy* will be done,” I can trust God to make it happen. My focus shifts from trying to read the signs to simply trusting and waiting on God.

This doesn’t always sit easily with my “type A” personality. But God often uses uncertainty to crucify our carnal need to be in control.

do what He asked me to do, go where He sent me, and say what He told me to say.

venturing out on my own.

That second year in Japan was one of the happiest years of my life. Some of my family warned, “You’re taking yourself out of circulation,” and “You’ll never find a husband.” But in that year my students opened up to me in ways I never thought possible, and my friendship with God really blossomed. As I developed friendships with my students they developed an interest in Jesus, and attendance at Bible classes and vespers grew. God blessed me in my ministry and I learned that surrender and willingness are not “one time” events, but that we consciously have to keep our hearts tender and submitted to God all the time in order to be susceptible to His leading.

Coaching experts say that fear—fear of pain, failure, or change—prevents us from making the steps necessary to go through the door. Satan often uses fear to cripple us and prevent us from taking the necessary steps to experience the abundant life Christ wants to give. Rather than step into the unknown, which requires faith, we prefer to stay with what we

my attention. I had no desire to work at Weimar Institute, but I knew by now it was pointless to kick back. I had an interview, and several weeks later when I was back in England a letter offering me a job dropped through the mail slot in my door. One problem: They wanted me to start the second week in February, and I wanted to tour Spain with my local church choir in April.

I was determined to go to Spain, so I delayed filing my visa application in a bid to buy time. I imagine that God looked upon this little charade with bemusement. When I returned to work after the Christmas holidays, my employer informed me that all contracts were ending sooner than expected. Mine was to end the second week in February. I realized that my arms are much too short to box with God, and was astute enough to recognize His voice saying, “Enough already!”

The Holding Pattern

There is something about going around the same mountain. When I get tired of the unchanging scenery

I have learned that God is on my side, and that He is more than able to work out all things together for my good. In fact, Paul wrote that Christ’s strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). In other words, my mess-ups or apparent wrong turns are just opportunities for Jesus to show Himself strong on my behalf. And when He demonstrates His power, all kinds of exciting things happen.

Looking Forward

As I have understood more about how God leads me, I have learned more about who my Father really is. His name is God for a reason—He really *is* God. As long as He keeps being God, I know that I am in good hands, whichever direction He leads. My job is to remain in a relationship with Him and trust Him; not whine, become petulant, or complain when He doesn’t reveal what I think He should when I think He should. I may not even read the signs correctly when He does. But He’s big enough to work it all out for my ultimate purpose—salvation.

I can trust Him to do that. 

The CHRISTIAN Rite Passa

It's much more than taking a bath.

By THURMAN C. PETTY, JR.

My son Joel decided to redecorate his room. He wanted to install shelves and cabinets along two adjoining walls—built around his furniture. I liked his ideas, including the corner cupboard/desk to hold his computer and other treasures.

I've watched Joel work on other projects, and have praised his efforts. But I was happy he came to me for help. I didn't want his room cluttered with misfit scraps of lumber seminiled together and smeared with whatever colorful coatings he could find in our garage. I thought this should be a learning experience, not just a way to save face for our house. I wanted to teach him all I could, so he would know the satisfaction of doing his very best.

We measured the room and talked about the possibilities. We drew it to scale on graph sheets, placed paper cutouts of furniture in various

locations, and scrounged the garage for usable lumber. Then we bought what we didn't have.

I showed Joel how to do each step, but had him do the lion's share of the work himself. As my apprentice, he learned to build by building, under the watchful eye of one who'd done work like this before.

The apprenticeship concept fascinates me. We can acquire knowledge of many subjects or trades by going through the motions—under the guidance of someone who's mastered the technique. God programmed us that way at Creation, and He makes us apprentices in order to teach us Bible truth. Jesus said that we "should do as [He] has done to [us]" (compare John 13:15),* and He often has us do things that might seem strange at first. But as we students follow the Master's instructions, we learn deep spiritual lessons.

Take baptism, for instance. The Bible uses strong words to highlight its importance. Jesus told Nicodemus that if he weren't "born of water [baptized] and the Spirit" (John 3:5) he couldn't be saved. He told His followers to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . ."

(Matt. 28:19). He even said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Clearly Jesus thought baptism was vital.

But what is baptism? Why is it so important? How does baptism affect our everyday lives?

Important Spiritual Lessons

Modern baptism means many things to many people. But the Bible word *baptizo* describes complete immersion under water. That's why, when describing our Master's baptism in the Jordan River, Matthew said Jesus came "up out of the water" (Matt. 3:16) after John baptized him. Philip the evangelist used a similar method, for when he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, the author of Acts said, "both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

Why be completely immersed in water? Here we apprentices learn some important spiritual lessons by following the Master through the physical motions of baptism. Look at just a few.

1. Our willingness to allow another person to lower us under the water reveals submission—outward evidence of our voluntary surrender to God.



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lives in Burleson, Texas.

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Surfacing again, we take in a lungful of life-giving air, and feel the joy of resurrection.

2. Total immersion gives us a graphic feeling of God's act of washing away our sins—like a spiritual bath (see Acts 22:16).

3. While under water, we hold our breath. This symbolic act of dying helps us, in a small way, to imagine the death of Jesus, which made it possible for us to escape eternal death.

4. The act of immersion resembles burial—the aftermath of death. It reminds us that Jesus lay in the tomb, but also shows our desire to bury the sinful past.

5. Surfacing again, we take in a lungful of life-giving air, and feel the joy of resurrection. We rise to “live a new life” (Rom. 6:4).

Paul wrote that “having been

buried with [Jesus] in baptism [we are] raised with him through [our] faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). Baptism endows us with a new slant on life. Never again will our guilty past mar our joy, for our sins have been flushed out into “the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). Our hopes, actions, and language will all improve, for now we're new creatures; “old things have passed away ... [and] all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17, NKJV).

The Newness, the Hope

Life takes on new meaning. As Christ rose from the dead, so when He comes, we too, at His command, will burst forth from the tomb. “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command . . . and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thess. 4:16; see also Matt. 24:30, 31; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:53-55). The dread of death dissolves when we're aware that life will bloom anew on resurrection day.

And God appears different as well.

We no longer see Him as a tyrant seeking an excuse to target us when we make mistakes. When we apprentices follow our Master into the waters of baptism, we imagine that we feel a tinge of terror, that death could be forever. But we don't die. We rise again, and begin to understand the meaning of the most often quoted verse: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever [including me] believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

We no longer have to fear the record of our sinful past;
We no longer need to worry if today will be our last;
We no longer feel the horror of what comes at judgment's door;
We've been washed, and cleansed, to rise and live in Christ forevermore.[†]

My son still has a lot to learn. He's bound to make mistakes, ruin a board or two, and slop some paint where it's not supposed to go. But his blunders will cause him to pay closer attention to my instruction.

And we may find the sailing rough after we've been baptized too. But the experience itself has taught us more about Christ than we knew before . . . and how to completely entrust our lives to Him.

So baptism is more than taking a bath. It's one of God's chosen methods of teaching us human apprentices how to “walk as Jesus did” (1 John 2:6). ●

Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)

* All Scripture references are taken from the New International Version, unless otherwise specified.

† “The New Birth,” by Thurman C. Petty, Jr.

Adventist World magazine has published a selection from the writings of Ellen G. White in each edition since its launch in September 2005. Through the next two years, special articles about the biblical gift of prophecy will also appear in this space every other month to help Seventh-day Adventists around the world appreciate and learn more about God's special gift to His remnant people. These "Discovering the Spirit of Prophecy" features will include explorations of Bible teaching about spiritual gifts, practical articles about applying insights to everyday life, and helpful methods to share the richness of this gift with friends and neighbors.

From the beginning the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church referred to themselves as the remnant. One of their earliest publications, issued in 1846, was a little pamphlet titled *To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*; and in 1849 Joseph Bates used Revelation 12:17 to identify the small group of Advent believers as the remnant.¹

One of the identifying marks of the remnant in Revelation 12:17 is "the testimony of Jesus." This phrase occurs six times in the book of Revelation (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10 [twice]; 20:4). In Revelation 1:2 we are told that John bore witness to "the word of God" and to "the testimony

of Jesus." "The word of God" is commonly understood to refer to what God says; and "the testimony of Jesus" in parallel to "the Word of God" must therefore mean the testimony which Jesus Himself gives. How did Jesus testify? While here on earth, He testified in person to the people in Palestine. After His ascension, He spoke through His prophets. In Revelation 19:10, therefore, John explains that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

What is the "Spirit of Prophecy"?

The term "spirit of prophecy" occurs only once in the Bible, only in Revelation 19:10; but the readers in John's day knew exactly what John meant by this phrase. They were familiar with this expression, which was frequently used in the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament. Thus, for example, Genesis 41:38 in the Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament text says, "Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find a man like this in whom there is the spirit of prophecy from the Lord?'"² And in Numbers 27:18 the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man who has within himself the spirit of prophecy, and lay your hand on him."³

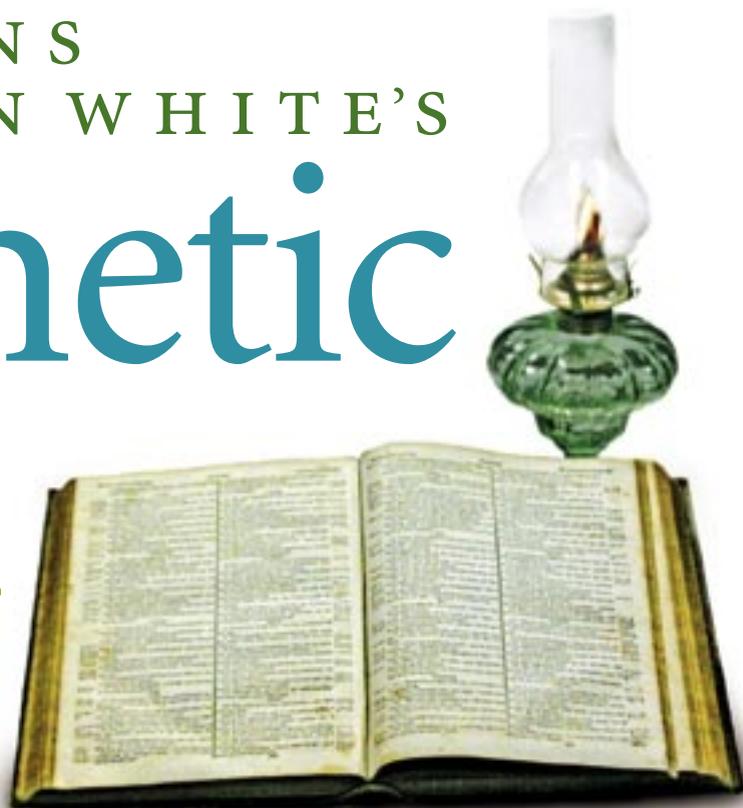
For the early Christians the "spirit of prophecy" was a reference to the Holy Spirit, who imparts the prophetic gift

FOUNDATIONS for ELLEN WHITE'S

Prophetic Call

By
GERHARD
PFANDL

*"When the word of the prophet comes to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent" (Jer. 28:9, NASB).**



to God's messengers. This also becomes evident when we compare Revelation 19:10 with 22:8, 9.

19:10

And I fell at his feet to worship him,
But he said to me, "See that you do not do that!
I am your fellow servant, and of **your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus.**
Worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

As compared to

22:8, 9

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.
Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that!
For I am your fellow servant, and of **your brethren the prophets,** and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

The situation in both passages is the same. John falls at the feet of the angel to worship him. The words of the angel's response are almost identical, yet the difference is significant. In Revelation 19:10 the brethren are identified by the phrase, "who have the testimony of Jesus." In Revelation 22:9 these brethren are simply called "prophets."

According to the principle of interpreting Scripture with Scripture, this leads to the conclusion that "the spirit of prophecy" in 19:10 is not the possession of church members in general, but only of those who have been called by God to be prophets. That this is not purely an Adventist interpretation can be seen from the writings of other scholars. The Lutheran scholar Hermann Strathmann, for example, says concerning the phrase "testimony of Jesus" in 19:10: "According to the parallel in 22:9 the brothers referred to are not believers in general, but the prophets. . . . This is the point of verse 10c. If they have the *marturia Iesou* [the testimony of Jesus], they have the spirit of prophecy, i.e., they are prophets, like the angel, who simply stand in the service of *marturia Iesou*."⁴

In summary, we can say that one of the identifying signs of the remnant church, which according to prophecy exists after the 1,260-day period, i.e., after 1798, is the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy, or the prophetic gift. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, from its very beginning, has believed that in fulfillment of Revelation 12:17 the spirit of prophecy was manifested in the life and work of Ellen G. White.

Testing a Prophet

How do we know that the prophetic gift in Ellen White's case was genuine and not a counterfeit? The Bible

provides several guidelines for testing the prophetic gift.

1. *Dreams and Visions*—Numbers 12:6. In Scripture, genuine prophets received prophetic dreams and visions. During her 70-year ministry from 1844 to 1915, Ellen G. White received approximately 2,000 visions and prophetic dreams.

2. *Agreement With the Bible*—Isaiah 8:20. What a prophet claims to have received from God must be in harmony with the rest of God's Word, because God does not contradict Himself (Ps. 15:4; Mal. 3:6). Although Ellen G. White was not a trained theologian, her messages are in harmony with Scripture.

3. *The Witness to Jesus*—1 John 4:1. 2. Anyone familiar with the writings of Ellen White, such as the books *The Desire of Ages* or *Steps to Christ*, will have to admit that she not only accepted all that the Bible teaches about Jesus, but that she continually pointed people to Him as their Lord and Savior.

4. *Fulfilled Prophecy*—Jeremiah 28:9. The proof of a true prophet lies, in part, in the fulfillment of their predictions. Although Ellen White's work did not primarily consist of predicting the future, she did make a number of predictions that have been fulfilled in a remarkable way.⁵

5. *The Orchard Test*—Matthew 7:20. The orchard test takes time. Ellen White lived and worked for 70 years under the critical eyes of millions of people, largely skeptical, doubtful, suspicious, and in some cases openly hostile. Any fault or inconsistency was and still is exposed with great satisfaction by her opponents. Nevertheless, the fruit of her life and labor attests to her sincerity, zeal, and Christian piety.

While counterfeit prophets may pass one or two of these tests, a true prophet will pass them all. Ellen White certainly did. God's gracious guidance through the prophetic gift of Ellen White should make us more aware of the responsibility we, as the remnant church, have; and it should spur us on to finish the work God has given us to do. ●

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

¹Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God* (New Bedford, Mass., 1849), pp. 45, 46.

²Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onkelos to Genesis*, The Aramaic Bible, ed. Martin McNamara (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1988), p. 138.

³*Ibid.*, *Targum Onkelos to Numbers*, p. 145.

⁴Hermann Strathmann, "martu" "ktl.," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, trans. G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 4:501.

⁵See Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger to the Lord* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1998), pp. 158-163.



Gerhard Pfandl is the associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

The Personal To

Taking the gospel to the world's largest cities often means reaching

Our church faces a great challenge. And it's not one that we haven't seen coming. In 1990 when the Office of Global Mission was established, church leaders identified five key Global Mission challenges. One challenge highlighted at the time was the huge urban areas of the world.

Today, more than half the world's population lives in cities of at least 1 million people. Cities are growing at an astounding rate, and they're growing fastest in developing countries—many in the 10/40 window. Today the five largest cities on earth are Tokyo, Mexico City, São Paulo, New York, and Mumbai. By 2015 they will probably be Tokyo, Dhaka, Mumbai, São Paulo, and Delhi.

God calls us all to tell everyone about His love and forgiveness. The big cities of the world can be overwhelming. Reaching out to their inhabitants seems a daunting task. But it can be done, and it must be done. Even if it takes reaching one person at a time, it's up to us to have a presence here; not only in churches and buildings but in people.

Every success story that comes out of the big cities has one common denominator: Whether it is a Global Mission Pioneer, a frontline missionary, a lay member, or pastor, the personal contact and interaction with the people who live and work in the cities is vital to reaching the masses. One by one, lives will be changed and hearts will be touched.

But by the grace of God we have seen success. People are being reached, but the work is challenging. Here are a few of their stories. To learn more about the challenges of Adventist Mission and how you can be involved, visit www.AdventistMission.org.



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



Rio de Janeiro:

Nearly one third of Rio's population in Brazil lives in the *favelas*, or slums, that cover many of Rio's hillsides.

Several years ago, Gilvane Ludgero, along with his wife, volunteered to hand out Bible tracts in one of these *favelas*. Their work was successful, and he was able to make friends in the community and start Bible studies.

Walking in the *favela* today, Ludgero still remembers the day armed drug dealers forced him into a car and took him to their leader, who had been wounded in a shoot-out with police. Ludgero prayed for the man, and the drug lord survived. This small act of Christian love opened the door for Ludgero to start a small church in the neighborhood.

"Today we are here, formed by the grace of God," says Ludgero. "We started with two, now we have more than 50 in the church."



By
DANIEL WEBER

uch

people individually.

Buenos Aires: One of the largest people groups in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is the Jewish community. More than 200,000 Jews live here, making it one of the largest Jewish communities outside Israel.

David Barzola, a pastor in downtown Buenos Aires, leads what has become known as the Adventist Hebrew Community. The group of believers meets several times a week, not only for church but for fellowship as well. These meetings have drawn a strong interest within the local Jewish community. The group meets to celebrate an anniversary or to begin the Sabbath on Friday evening. The Jewish community in Buenos Aires feels comfortable here.

“Every culture needs respect for their religious traditions and codes,” says Barzola. “The Jewish faith is one example, and I am happy to be able to help in the bringing up of a community that allows a Jewish person to not stop being Jewish if they decide to become an Adventist.”

Barzola and the Adventist Hebrew Community are part of a network of outreach programs supported by the five Global Mission Study Centers, which are looking at ways to build bridges of understanding between Christians and other world religions.



Dhaka: In 1971, 1 million people called Dhaka, Bangladesh, home. Today more than 15 million people live here. Only some 800 square kilometers in size, Dhaka is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Large slum areas are packed with people, impossible to count. These poor lack adequate education, health care, food, and water.

In the middle of this growing chaos one man is making a difference. Milan Moskala, not pictured, has been an Adventist medical missionary in Dhaka for more than nine years. An accomplished dentist, his services are sought the city over. From a small dental office near several foreign embassies, Moskala has been able to establish a small but thriving dental practice. Because of its success, Moskala has accomplished something that is changing lives in one of the poorest areas on earth.

Every morning Moskala takes time off from his dental practice to visit several small schools he has set up deep in the heart of the Dhaka slums. These schools provide a simple education to children who otherwise would have no chance to succeed in life. Many of the children receive the only meal they'll eat each day. Many excel at their studies.



Phnom Penh: The Adventist Church in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, has established only six congregations, but it has more than 5,000 members. This growth has been spurred by the establishment of small groups among its members.

One group the church is working hard to reach is immigrants who are HIV positive. Typically these people are shunned by society and have to live in extreme poverty. The average wage in Cambodia is equal to only US\$2 a day, and those afflicted by HIV make much less. They live in small rooms they rent for about US\$20 a month.

In the middle of this extreme poverty, several church members have established small groups to minister to their material, physical, and emotional needs, as well as share the message of hope in Jesus. One of these members is Set Sina. She herself is HIV positive, yet she holds Bible studies with a small group in her own small room. Sharing the gospel has given Set Sina new life.

“God has put the desire into my heart to go out and share the gospel,” explains Sina. “The doctors sent me home to die, but instead I found Jesus, and now I live and share my new life with others.”

QUESTION: *According to Exodus 34:7, God punishes children for the sins of their parents. Does not this bring into question God's justice?*

We find in the Old Testament what has been called collective, or transgenerational, retribution. This is a complex subject about which I can say only a few things that I hope will be helpful. Some of the biblical evidence may provide an interpretational grid with which you are welcome to disagree.

1. Limited Evidence for Collective Retribution: According to Exodus 34:7 (NIV), God “punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.” This principle is found in only two other passages (Num. 14:18 and Jer. 32:17-19). The emphasis in those verses is on the goodness and mercy of God, not on the punitive aspect. This suggests that the negative element functions as a deterrent by calling attention to the impact of one’s actions on the group. The context of those passages also indicates that there is such a thing as transgenerational benefit, or blessing. This was the case with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 12:1-3).

Surprisingly, transgenerational retribution is not the prevailing view of God’s distributive justice. The constant emphasis is on individual responsibility, that is to say, God punishes those who sin (e.g., Joel 2:12, 13; Ps. 86:15; 103:8, 9, 17; 145:8, 9). Moses wrote: “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him” (Deut. 7:9, 10, NIV). Collective and individual responsibility appears to have coexisted in the Israelites’ understanding of God’s justice.

2. Not Allowed in the Israelite Legal System: The Lord made it clear to the Israelites that “fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin” (Deut. 24:16; cf. Eze. 18:20). This legal restriction points to the limits of human knowledge and justice. Transgenerational retribution could and would be abused in any human legal system. The Lord is the only one who

can enforce it because He has perfect knowledge. This clearly suggests that when collective retribution is enforced by God, it is based on knowledge that justifies its enforcement and may not be apparent to the outside observer.

3. Collective Retribution Based on Individual Retribution: According to some passages, collective retribution is the result of children identifying themselves with the sins of their parents, thus participating in the punishment of their parents. This has been called by some “compound punishment.” The principle is well enunciated in a description of the results of the breaking of the covenant: “Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also

because of their fathers’ sins they will waste away” (Lev. 26:39, NIV; also Isa. 65:6, 7; Jer. 14:20). This is also addressed in the second commandment in Exodus 20:5, through the use of the phrase “punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me” (NIV; cf. Deut. 5:10).

It would appear that transgenerational retribution operates on the basis of the perpetuation of the sins of the parents in

the conduct of the children. This explains the opposition to collective retribution found in some places in the Old Testament. Before the exile some Israelites protested, “Our fathers sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment” (Lam. 5:7, NIV), or “The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Eze. 18:2, NIV). To which God answered that He will judge them according to their works, and that would be more than enough to condemn them (verses 29, 30, NIV).

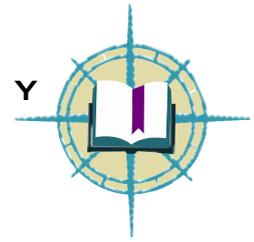
Transgenerational retribution is based on a strong sense of social solidarity, in which the actions of individuals have an impact on others, either positive or negative. This is part of the social order God established to be a constant blessing. It is good for us—parents, children, spouses, church members, etc.—to act in such a way that our transgenerational impact will not bring pain to others, but be a perpetual flow of blessings to many. ●

Our Influence Over Others

By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ



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



When the Spirits Speak

By MARK A. FINLEY

One of the devil's great strategies is to deceive millions of people through spiritualism. Why is spiritualism so attractive to so many people? Who are these spirits? Where do they come from? How can we keep from being deceived by the designs of the devil? This month's Bible study will provide solid, biblical answers to these questions.

1. How did the apostle Paul describe the spiritual struggle every Christian must face? Write your answer on the lines below.

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

The Christian's warfare is against

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. What counsel did God give Israel regarding astrology, witchcraft, omens, and sorcery? Read the text below and fill in the blanks.

"For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you" (Deut. 18:12).

Our Lord's condemnation of the agents of spiritualism is strong. According to the Bible they are an

_____ to the _____.

3. Is it possible for the dead to speak to those who are still living? Summarize your answer on the lines below.

"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing" (Eccl. 9:5).

"As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore" (Job 7:9, 10).



4. Who are the “spirits” of spiritualism? Read the texts below and fill in the blanks.

“For they are the spirits of demons, performing signs” (Rev. 16:14).

“And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).

The real force behind each spiritualistic manifestation is _____,

for they are really the spirits of _____.

The devil is a fallen angel. He has the ability to pretend to be the spirit of a dead loved one. The devil is a wise and cunning foe. He uses the power of spiritualism to deceive.

5. Will the devil use spiritualism in the last days to deceive multitudes? Read the text below and circle who will be deceived by the devil.

“And the light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived” (Rev. 18:23).

The “light of the lamp” represents God’s Word (Ps. 119:105). When we turn from the clear truths of God’s Word, our minds are vulnerable to spiritualistic delusions.

6. How can we be protected against the deceptions of the evil one? Where can we find safety? Read the text below and underline the two things that provide safety against the devil’s deceptions.

“And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:19, 20).

The law of God reveals His eternal principles of living. The testimony of the Bible reveals Jesus in all His fullness. Each truth of the Bible is about Jesus; the testimony of Scripture witnesses of Him (John 5:39). In Jesus, through His Word, we are secure against the wiles of the devil.

7. What is Jesus’ prayer regarding His children? Read the text below and fill in the blank.

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

Jesus’ prayer is that we be sanctified by God’s _____.

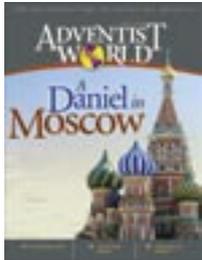
The devil may attempt to deceive us. He may confront us with powerful signs and omens. He may play on our sympathies by appearing as a dead loved one. But as we fill our minds with the Word of God, we will be secure. All the demons in hell cannot deceive us if we cling to Jesus and His Word.

Jesus is stronger than the evil one. He cast Satan out of heaven. He defeated the devil on the cross. He conquered death itself. In Jesus we are secure, now and forever.



Next month’s study, “**Last-day Deceptions**,” will examine the source of many of today’s counterfeit teachings.

LETTERS



A Daniel in Moscow

I cannot tell you how much I appreciated the article about David Kulakov's mission in Russia ("A Daniel in

Moscow," by Andrew McChesney, *Adventist World*, July 2008). Kulakov could be anywhere and still be a blessing! I have always heard that in the last days there would be a revival of primitive godliness that has not been seen since apostolic times. I believe it is here! I believe it will increase.

I was very encouraged and deeply moved to hear of the power of God at work. I know it can sometimes be risky to share personal lives, but it is a great blessing to someone like me who needs to hear it! I have shared this with others who have likewise been blessed. I thank God that He has sent me encouragement in this way and enlightenment on how simple the gospel really is! Thank you so much for these printed words of hope and encouragement.

I hope that somehow Kulakov in faraway Russia could know how much his story of God's working in his life has blessed me!

BARBARA MARSH
Michigan, United States

Freedom to Care

Amen to the July 2008 article "Freedom to Care" by Jan Paulsen! The denomination has been on record on this issue since the 1992 Annual



Council action "Caring for Creation," but there has been a widespread lack of leadership. The three angels' messages clearly state that part of our mission is to proclaim the worship of God as "him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7, NIV). How can we truly honor the Creator and at the same time not respect, even degrade, His creation? Our corporate body language can detract from, even block out, our message. Most of the world is not going to take our message about creation seriously until they see us take more visible and significant action on stewardship of the environment. It is time for our GC president to show leadership, and I am thankful that he has.

MONTE SAHLIN
Ohio, United States

Where Do I Give Tithe?

After reading the June 2008 *Adventist World* news article "Mission Giving, Extraordinary Tithe Grows Adventist Church's Budget," by Elizabeth Lechleitner, I have a question. Are you telling readers that it's all right to send tithe to the world church at times, and

not always to the local conference? What is the procedure to do this? Where should the proceeds be mailed and to whose attention?

ANN PARKER
Via e-mail

The church has not changed its position that our tithe is to be returned to the local conference through the local church. This was an extraordinary situation in which the sale of a multinational corporation generated tithe that was multiple times the local annual tithe of an entire conference and was derived from operations in multiple countries, in multiple divisions of the world. The leadership at all levels involved agreed that in this particular and unique situation it would be best for it to be handled through the General Conference for the benefit of the world field.

—GENERAL CONFERENCE
TREASURY DEPARTMENT

LETTERS

My Favorite Page

I received the February 2008 *Adventist World* magazine in June. May God richly bless the entire office management for the wonderful work of publishing this magazine!

With respect and humbleness I wish to send a word of appreciation for printing the photograph of the Kangu Seventh-day Adventist Church building, which is under construction, in *The People's Place*, on the back page ("Where in the World Is This?").

The People's Place is my favorite page because it sheds light on how

God's work is progressing through individual members as well as church departments.

EDWARD KIMOTHU NYAGA
Kangu, Kenya

The Numberless Throng

I want to thank Bill Knott for his editorial "The Numberless Throng," in the April 2008 *Adventist World*. Too often I hear lamenting of "only a few people," and many programs are stopped because of this low attendance. Then I hear boasting of large crowds—thousands—who

attend some [programs]. I grew up in the Lutheran Church. The programs they start go on, never mentioning attendance, even when it continues to be extremely low. The speaker goes on as if the church were full. We could learn from this.

SOFIA MARTTINEN
*Victoria, British Columbia,
Canada*

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

Please pray for our church plan. Our church is growing, but we have just a few members. We are eager to have a building so we can spread the gospel well.

S. DACHS, *Korea*

I found the *Adventist World* by coincidence through the Internet—I know it was God's direction guiding me to this uplifting page. I have been a Seventh-day Adventist since childhood but have faced ups and downs in my spiritual life. Now I am passing through a good spiritual season, and I see God's hand guiding me and my family. Please pray for me and for my local church.

JUAN, *Chile*

I have been released from prison. I plan to do whatever outreach I can get my hands on. I really hate to leave my brothers in prison behind. Keep them and the prison ministry in your prayers.

ALBERT, *United States*

Please pray that God may put His healing hand on me and heal my disease completely. Also pray He will give me strength to remain firm in faith and continually serve Him regardless of my health condition.

JURAYINA, *Malaysia*

I need your prayers. I lost my parents 10 years ago. Since then, getting on with life has become very difficult. Your prayers will make a difference.

DENNIS, *Zambia*

I am employed as a production worker. Please pray that my superiors will consider that Saturday is my day off and not give me a schedule for that day. I know only God can touch their hearts and only God can help me.

JACKIELOU, *Philippines*

I am requesting special prayer for my uncle, who applied for work in the United States four years ago. He is a nurse and is still waiting for the answer. May his faith grow stronger so worry does not weaken him. May

God not delay in giving work to my uncle—anywhere God will send him.

DANA, *Philippines*

My family needs a financial breakthrough. I also need wisdom and knowledge for school, as does my sisters, who are entering university.

JOEL, *Nigeria*

I need prayer for my wife, who has lumbar pain. I really love her and to lose her would be so hard for me. I trust that God can do something for her, but I pray that His will be done. Also, I need a new job, and need to be much nearer to the Lord.

JEAN-ERICK, *Haiti*

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

Little Giant

This month, a reader shares what a friend's death taught him about life.

At the close of 2007 a church family member, our dear brother Halil, passed away at the age of 80. We learned when we first met him in 2006 that he kept a Bible under his pillow, and had done so for the past 20 years. He was paralyzed, captive in bed for the last two years of his life.

In Turkey it is not unusual to describe some people as having “honey dripping from their mouth,” because of their sweet talk. Halil was such a person, and quickly he became part of our family. On August 12, 2006, I had the honor of baptizing both Halil and his wife in a bathtub. In September 2007 he developed circulation problems in his legs. Eventually he lost both of them. In his bed, both legs missing at his hips, Halil was little—yet he was a giant with his faith and his intellect. Young people were attracted to him as bees to flowers. He was a retired physics teacher, and the young people described him as a talking library.

During his last two months I had the honor of serving this brother by giving rides to doctors and nurses who visited his home. We knew that our job was not only to preach, but we had to reach others with the love of Christ. Part of this was assisting these medical professionals, sometimes even twice a day. Through this experience I believe we all became spiritually richer.

Our dear brother closed his eyes to this life. Though he is sleeping now, we know that one day not too far away the loving call of our Savior will wake him up and lead him to our real home. And we also know that this time Halil will have better and stronger legs than do even the athletes in the Olympics.

On that December Sabbath day we laid him to rest on a small hill with pine trees overlooking the Aegean Sea. Under the rain we wept for ourselves, for we would not see him for a while.

Returning home we reminisced. Unlike many funerals, as we talked, there were smiles on our faces because of his life and the assurance in our hearts. We all learned a lot through our relationship with Brother Halil. We all look forward to Christ's return, and reuniting with Halil, our friend and little giant.

—ERKIN ALTINKAYNKA, *Ismir, Turkey*



EMEL ISTAN

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

ADVENTIST LIFE

My daughter Luisa was a hyperactive child and always had her hands in or on everything. But I never told her anything that could have led her, when she was about 3 years old, to draw the following conclusion (which I assured her was not the case):

“I’m not going to heaven,” she declared to me one day.

“You’re not going to heaven?” I asked.

“Why are you not going to heaven?”

“Because Jesus doesn’t want me there!”

“Why doesn’t He want you there?”

“Because I’m going to touch Jesus’ things!”

—Isabel Nobre Cordeiro, Rio Maior, Portugal

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Parents, let the sunshine of love, cheer, and happy content enter your own hearts, and let its sweet influence pervade the home.”

—Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, page 426

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



JERRY KARUNDENG

DID YOU KNOW?

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return.

That’s at the heart of the church’s mission and is accomplished through preaching, teaching, and healing ministries. To learn more, visit www.adventist.org.

ANSWER: This picture was taken in the central Philippines during the mission trip “Into the Heart of the Philippines—2008.” The children are lining up while one of the volunteers is giving away biscuits. One of our projects is to help renovate a house for those kids.