

The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists

January 2009

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WORLD VIEW

The Whole of Scripture

A favorite story from my grandparents' dinner table still finds a place in my life today. When one of the children would venture to express their distaste for some item served, usually a vegetable, my grandfather would wryly observe: "It's because you lack it in your system." In his humorous way, he was reminding fussy eaters that they sometimes most disliked the foods they needed most.

Now there's not much science in a line like that. You'll spend more than an afternoon trying to convince me that my distaste for canned beets stems from the fact that I truly need such a disagreeable vegetable in my diet. But a line like that has a way of lingering on the edge of the memory, reappearing at many life moments.

As when I sit down to study Scripture, for instance. Like many other young Christians, I began my life with Jesus by feeding on the Gospels, consuming the stories of His grace and healing as though I could never get enough. I spent comparatively little time in other portions of the Word of God that seemed less attractive to me: the prophetic books of the Old Testament, the works of Moses, in Kings and Chronicles. But then I heard my grandfather's line echoing

from the past: "It's because you lack it in your system." Was I, in fact, avoiding those portions of Scripture that I needed most in my search for what brought me comfort and encouragement? Was my "system" of studying Scripture missing what God really wanted to say to me?

As maturing Christians, we need the fullness of God's Word to help us "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15).^{*} The entirety of the Word of God—history and prophecy, parables and epistles, psalms and warnings—is what ought to nourish us, even though our tastes may not seek out all these things. As the apostle elsewhere tells us, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Your system for studying Scripture—like mine—needs balance and proportion, grace and judgment, encouragement and correction. Let's covenant to be men and women opening our lives to all that Jesus wants to tell us in His Word.

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

Romanian President Attends Adventist Church in Madrid

■ Romanian national president Traian Basescu visited a Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madrid, Spain, earlier this month, drawing attention to the country's significant Romanian immigrant population—6,000 of whom are Adventists.

"While the Romanian Adventist community in Madrid is loyal to its current country, its soul remains linked to ... those who are at home in Romania," he told members of the newly built Eben-Ezer Adventist Church on October 4.



PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: Romanian president Traian Basescu greets members of the Eben-Ezer Adventist Church's children's choir. More than half of the students at the church's local elementary school are children of Romanian immigrants.

WORLD REPORT

Eben-Ezer is one of 14 Romanian Adventist churches in the region.

Over the past decade, Spain has absorbed more than 3 million immigrants from Romania, Morocco, and South America, among other countries. More than 11 percent of the country's 44 million residents are now foreign-born, one of the highest proportions in Europe, *BusinessWeek* reported last year.

About half of the Spanish Union membership is now Romanian, said Teodor Hutanu, president for the Adventist Church in Romania. However, economic changes in Spain will likely curtail the trend, he said.

Basescu, in Spain for Forum Europa 2008 meetings, visited several Romanian-speaking religious communities during his stay.

His visit to Eben-Ezer—widely covered by Romanian television and newspapers—generated interest in the Adventist Church and raised its profile in the community, local church officials said.

Basescu joined more than 2,000 congregation members for Saturday morning worship services. He was accompanied by Lazar Comanescu, the Romanian minister of foreign affairs; Maria Ligor, the Romanian ambassador in Spain; and various secretaries of state, deputies, and members of the European Parliament.

During his remarks, Basescu thanked the Adventist Church for its positive role in society and applauded the values it promotes. Pointing out a friend in the congregation, he added that the visit was not his first experience in an Adventist church.

Basescu also visited the church's elementary school, where more than 50 percent of the students are children of Romanian immigrants.

Hutanu called the visit a sign of "a new appreciation" the church is receiving from government officials who recognize its impact in the community.

Slovenian Adventists Mark Century

■ Hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists in Slovenia gathered in their country's second largest city,

Maribor, last autumn to mark 100 years of Adventism in the central European country.

Celebrations began in January with an exhibition at the City Museum in the country's capital, Ljubljana, presenting the church's beliefs and history. Slovenian Adventists also offered concerts, panel discussions, health courses, cooking classes, poetry readings, and national television programs.

Slovenia's oldest Adventist pastor, Mihael Virtic, 85, attended the centenary and said he remembered



Above: PIONEER: Early Adventist pioneer Albin Mocnik baptizes a new believer. Mocnik and others introduced central Europeans to Adventism in the early twentieth century. **Right: EXHIBIT CELEBRATES 100 YEARS:** Slovenians file through an exhibition presenting the Adventist Church's beliefs and history at the City Museum of Ljubljana. The display, which began in January 2008, kicked off a year commemorating the church's presence in the central European country.



COURTESY ADRIATIC UNION CONFERENCE

God's leading as the church first took root in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Adventism arrived in Slovenia in 1908.

More important than its 100 years of existence in Slovenia is the church's reputation there, Branko Bistrovic, president of the church's Adriatic region, said at the celebration. Citing humanitarian projects, educational seminars, and community involvement, Bistrovic called the church's presence in the country "positive" and said its members "significantly contribute" to Slovenian society and culture.

Bertil Wiklander, president of the church's Trans-European region, also spoke at the event, cautioning those gathered not to let busyness obliterate time for God. A "time-consuming lifestyle" can lead Adventists to "neglect our spiritual growth and our mission," he said.

Representatives from other Protestant churches and the director of Slovenia's Office for Religious Communities, Drago Cepar, joined church members and officials for the event.

Cepar applauded the church's "good cooperation" with the Religious Freedom Act, passed last year, which requires denominations to register to receive full legal status and tax benefits. The Adventist Church was the first of Slovenia's 43 religious groups to officially register.

Nearly 550 Adventists worship in 13 churches in Slovenia. The church also operates a publishing house and a Bible correspondence school in the country.



STEPHEN VELE/PAU

TURN YOUR RADIO (STATION) ON: PAU's development director, Fifaia Matainaho (right), receives a radio operating permit from Une O'ome, manager of Licensing and Business Relations, PANGTEL.

Papuan Adventists to Launch Radio Station

■ Pacific Adventist University (PAU) has received a governmental permit—and a significant donation—to aid the start-up of the first Adventist-owned radio station in Papua New Guinea.

The university had anticipated that its license application would take several months to be accepted, but the proposal was greeted very positively and was quickly approved by the Papua New Guinea Radiocommunications and Telecommunications Technical Authority (PANGTEL) in August 2008. This presented PAU with a significant challenge, however, as the license requires that the station be operational within three months. The university had originally expected that it would have time for fundraising activities while its application went through the approval process.

A contribution of US\$50,000 from Adventist World Radio (AWR), the world church's shortwave service—approximately half of the funds required for the project—will enable the 1,000-watt FM station

to be finished by the deadline. It is being built on PAU's campus in Boroko and will reach listeners throughout the capital city of Port Moresby. Papua New Guinea has had occasional Adventist radio broadcasts in the past, but this will be the first station that is owned and operated by Adventists.

"This project is about much more than just 'radio'—it's bringing people together with a vision to make a difference," says Branimir Schubert, PAU vice chancellor. "I believe this is 'divine timing,' and we will make this happen. What you have done through AWR is historic in many ways and will have a ripple effect on many levels. People are already talking to us about what we can do to use this station to make a difference."

"This new station will be a valuable extension of AWR's ministry," says AWR president Ben Schoun. "AWR is able to provide assistance for this type of project because of the generosity of a family who shared their resources with us for the purpose of carrying the gospel to the unreached people of the world."

Vietnam Grants Adventist Church Official Recognition

“Dream come true” for members

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Vietnam received official recognition in October, granting the church in the Southeast Asian nation legal status to operate, church officials said.

Leaders met in Ho Chi Minh City October 22 to 24 to elect officers during the first church constituency meeting in the country since 1975. The church’s executive committee for the country is now seeking funds to purchase land for establishing a Bible school, a top priority for the 13,000 members in Vietnam.

“This is a dream come true for our members,” said Khoi Tran, stewardship director for the church’s Vietnamese Mission, who visited the church’s world headquarters near Washington, D.C., United States, on October 29.

Khoi attended the constituency meeting in which some 130 delegates voted a constitution, bylaws, operation plans for the next four years, and an executive committee.

“This session was a crucial step toward completing the legal procedures required for church recognition,” Khoi said.

The committee elected Tran Cong Tan as president, Tran Thanh Truyen as secretary, and Nguyen Thi Bach Tuyet as treasurer.

According to news agency VietNamNet, Nguyen Thanh Xuan, vice chairman of the government’s Committee for Religious Affairs, addressed the group, saying “the government’s religious policies have helped religious organizations, including Protestant groups, to develop and actively participate in community activities.”

Nguyen also emphasized the government’s commitment to ensuring a proper legal environment for the operation of religious organizations in accordance with their defined religious principles.



Left to right:

RECOGNITION: The

last Adventist out of Saigon, Le Cong Giao, center, initiates the Communion service marking the government’s recognition of the Adventist denomination in Vietnam. About 130 delegates met in Ho Chi Minh City October 22 to 24 to approve the denomination’s reorganized Vietnamese Mission. **HEADQUARTERS:** Delegates arrive at the Phu Nhuan Adventist Church in Ho Chi Minh City for the Vietnamese Mission constituency meeting.

PHOTOS COURTESY VIETNAMESE MISSION

“We have prayed and applied for church recognition for 33 years,” Khoi said. “Now we’ll be able to freely publish and distribute literature, and build new churches.”

Vietnam has 50 cities and provinces and only 20 of these have an Adventist presence, mostly in the south and central regions. There are six Adventist church buildings in Vietnam and about 100 registered Adventist groups meeting in homes.

“Most important, we’ll be able to start a Bible school to train our young people to become Bible workers,” Khoi said. “The work is expanding, and we need many trained workers.”

Khoi, 33, son of Vietnamese Mission president Tran Cong Tan, is the first Adventist pastor to have received training outside Vietnam, earning a bachelor’s degree at Spicer Memorial College in India and a master’s degree in ministry from the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines.

Upon completing his education, Khoi served as an Adventist Global Mission Pioneers missionary in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for two years, planting churches among Vietnamese immigrants.

“This work was very satisfying, but I longed to spread the gospel in my homeland,” Khoi said. He returned to Vietnam in 2002.

—Reported by Adventist Mission and Adventist News Network

WINDOW

Into the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of the Congo

By
HANS OLSON

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has been known as Zaïre, Congo Free State, and Belgian Congo. To many it evokes images of war, natural calamities, and political unrest.

Not to be confused with the neighboring country Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DR Congo, was colonized by Belgium in 1908. In 1960 Congo received its independence, which was followed by years of political and social instability. In 1965 Joseph Mobutu declared himself president in a coup and changed the name of the country to Zaïre.

Mobutu remained president for the next 32 years. In 1994 a large inflow of refugees from neighboring Rwanda and Burundi sparked a civil war that eventually toppled Mobutu's government. Three years later, Laurent Kabila became president and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The next year more fighting broke out. A cease-fire was signed in 1999, but sporadic fighting continued. In 2001 Kabila was assassinated and his son, Joseph Kabila, was named head of state.

On January 17, 2002, Mount Nyiragongo erupted in eastern DR Congo, just outside Goma, leaving 120,000 people homeless. Following the eruption 400,000 people were evacuated from the city. Six months later nearby Mount Nyamuragira also erupted. Both volcanoes are still active.

Located at the heart of sub-Saharan Africa and bounded by nine countries including Angola, Sudan,

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Capital:	Kinshasa
Official Language:	French
Religion:	Roman Catholic, 50%; Protestant, 20%; Kimbanquist, 10%; Muslim, 10%; other, 10%
Population:	62.7 million*
Adventist membership:	522,387*
Adventist to population ratio:	1:120*

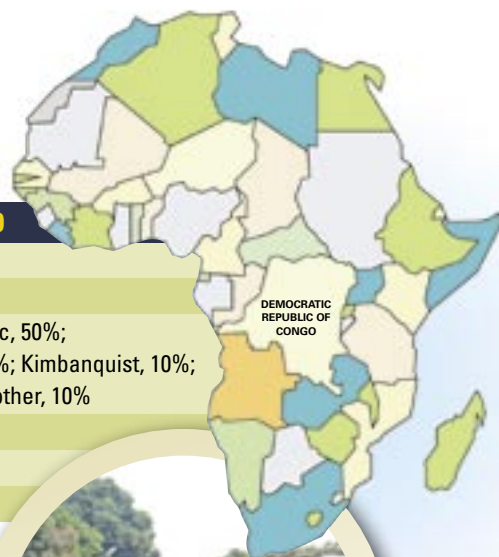
Tanzania, and Zambia, DR Congo straddles the equator. As a result DR Congo experiences large amounts of rain and has the highest frequency of thunderstorms on earth. DR Congo's rain forest is second only to that of the Amazon.

The terrain and climate of DR Congo makes road travel difficult. With few good roads or railways, many people rely upon the thousands of kilometers of navigable waterways to transverse the country.

DR Congo's population grew from 47 million to 63 million over the past decade. As many as 250 ethnic groups live in the country, and some 700 local languages and dialects are spoken.

Adventists in DR Congo

The Adventist Church's work in DR Congo started nearly 90 years ago, when Christopher Robinson and his wife established Songa Mission Station in southern DR Congo in 1920. Two years later A. C. Le Butt established Katanga Mission Station and opened a school. In 1925 the Adventist Church in DR Congo was officially organized as the Zaïre Union Mission. From 1932 to 1961 there were 11 Adventist mission stations in the country, each with at least two missionary houses, a primary school, a church, and in many cases a medical clinic.



The Adventist Church's medical ministry is important in DR Congo. The Robinsons' Songa Mission is now home to Songa Adventist Hospital, the only urgent care medical facility within several hundred miles. Besides offering medical treatments, its staff travels into surrounding villages to care for those who can't get to the hospital. Across the country another 33 Adventist hospitals and clinics serve local populations.

The Adventist Church has grown by nearly 70 percent since 1996 to more than 500,000 members.

To learn more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visit: www.AdventistMission.org.

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

WORLD VISTA

A Dynamic Church for Difficult Times

As news broke last October of a global economic crisis, more than 300 members of the Seventh-day Adventist world church's Executive Committee were meeting in Manila, Philippines, to discuss key issues of church administration. Jan Paulsen, president of the church's General Conference, sat down afterward with Adventist World editor Bill Knott to discuss some of the far-reaching decisions that emerged from Annual Council 2008.

BILL KNOTT: How would you explain to a member in the pew or on a rustic bench how the church benefits from holding meetings such as the 2008 Annual Council outside North America? What does the church gain from this?

JAN PAULSEN: Even as we met in Manila, the world was experiencing what has been described as an “economic meltdown.” This obviously impacts everyone—individuals, organizations, governments. And, of course, it impacts us as a global church also. Against that background one may well ask, “Why take an Annual Council outside North America, with the extra effort and expense that entails?”

I would answer: This is the cost of keeping the family united! Some 94 percent of our global membership lives outside North America, and so it is very important that when church leaders come together and sit in council that the membership around



RAY DABROWSKI/ANN

the world has a sense of being at the heart of what is happening, a part of the process.

We have some 700,000 members in the Philippines; we have universities and hospitals and other institutions throughout the country. The church is well known in the public media and government—we are a known quantity and a known name. Some 14,000 people attended the Sabbath program in Manila, and there was a wonderful sense of fellowship and a tremendous spirit of celebration.

I think it's good for the leadership of the world church to emphasize the global character of our church family by holding events such as this. In past decades Annual Council has been held in South America, Central America, Australia, Europe, and Africa. And so it was right this time that we came to Asia.

You're saying there are times when you have to physically move yourself to another place so that church members will find it credible that you are listening to other than North American concerns?

Yes, of course. It's the physical presence that makes all the difference. Members throughout Asia see that we came, and we “hoisted the flag.” It was significant for the Adventist Church in the Philippines: members felt good about their church. They could celebrate its strength and be encouraged and motivated by that.

You referred earlier to the news of the global economic crisis that broke while we met in Manila. To what extent did this affect the course of the meetings, and how do you see

this impacting the church in the weeks and months to come?

There’s no predictable path for a financial calamity such as this. No one in the secular markets knows how this will play out in the next day, the next month, or the next year. Those of us who work in church administration need to ask: How do we relate as a church to these matters? How do we even vote a budget? Our budgets are based on faith—on the faithfulness, in tithes and mission offerings, of our members *next year*; not on money we already have in the bank.

We’ve been wonderfully blessed in years past, and it has given us a strong base for planning. But the uncertainties of the current financial markets are unprecedented in recent history. So do we just proceed as though nothing has happened? No, of course not. When we presented the budget at Annual Council, we proposed that the General Conference Administrative Committee, the in-house operating council, retain the ability to make interim adjustments to the budget—to have the flexibility to respond and adjust our finances as we see how the global economic situation continues to develop.

How do you see these events affecting church operations through the 2009 budget year?

Church members need to know that we will be moving forward carefully and prudently as we wait for a clearer long-term economic picture to emerge. It’s important for them to know, also, that these circumstances will affect the amount of funding available for our operations at the world headquarters. We’ll be exercising restraint in our own staffing—holding off filling some current vacancies—as well as working to find ways to reduce expenditures in other areas.

It seems that the goal of retaining financial flexibility in order to deal with current economic realities providentially converged with another significant issue discussed at Annual Council: flexibility with regard to church structures.

Yes, the Commission on Ministries, Structures, and Services delivered

by embracing a principle of “flexibility”—providing the ability for the church locally to define, within certain boundaries, administrative structures that best fit its own needs and unique set of circumstances. We said: “There must be a high level of trust; there are times when we must allow the church locally to decide

We simply have to be more deliberate in choosing women as members of the General Conference Executive Committee.

We also have to include more young lay professionals under age 35 ... because they bring competencies and skills we very much need as we do the church’s business.

its final report, and two important recommendations were adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee at Annual Council. What the Executive Committee is saying with these recommendations is: We’re a growing, dynamic, global community. So it’s right that we ask ourselves, every so often, What is the most effective and most responsible way forward? We have certain forms and structures that have been defined some decades ago. Are these the best, most efficient way for the church to fulfill its mission? Or does the sheer growth of the church and the changing environment in which it operates mean that we need to streamline certain processes?

The commission has been studying these questions for the past three years—its members have processed a vast quantity of information and input from each part of the world church. At the 2007 Annual Council we adopted the first part of the commission’s recommendations

how it can best pursue our church’s common values, identity, and mission within its own particular context.”

Now, at this most recent Annual Council, the commission recommended that we look again at the best method for defining and staffing the General Conference departments that serve the world church. The commission is saying: “Let’s extend this principle of flexibility and trust, so that the world church Executive Committee meeting every year at Annual Council can respond in a dynamic way to current realities, review needs, and respond to challenges quickly if needed.”

So we will ask the General Conference session in 2010 to consider a recommendation to give the Executive Committee greater interim responsibility; to ask: “What will serve our church best? What is the most sensible, most prudent course of action? Should we continue doing things the same way, solely because we’ve always done it that way?”

WORLD VISTA

It's important to remember that in proposing that some responsibility be delegated to Annual Council, we're not talking about a small or unrepresentative group.

Church members need to know that we will be moving forward carefully and prudently as we wait for a clearer long-term economic picture to emerge.

Certainly not a telephone committee!

No, no! We're talking about a group of some 300-plus church leaders, frontline pastors, and laypeople from each part of the world church who meet in council each year. It's a unique body—there may be fewer in numbers than at a session, but it's no less representative.

We've often said, and rightly so, that when the church meets at a General Conference session, God is uniquely present and guiding His church. But I believe that's true also when delegates to a session choose to devolve some of their responsibility.

The blessing of God—His presence with His people—doesn't end when the session terminates.

That's right. There was a second important recommendation that the commission made and which was adopted at Annual Council: that is, that the election of associate directors for the General Conference departments and ministries take place at the first

Annual Council following a session.

What's the benefit of this? I've sat on the nominating committee of a General Conference session twice as a president and I know that there is so much—too much—that has to happen in just a few hours. In some cases, perhaps, it is not done as well as it should be. It's a process that sometimes raises questions. But if the commission's recommendations are adopted, it would allow future sessions more time to consider, in a more deliberate way, the selection of people who will be voted into core administrative offices, and who will give leadership to the departments.

Second, it gives to the directors who have been elected at the session some two or three months to consider, in consultation with the president and administration, how their team would best be composed. I also stated publicly in Manila that the nominating committee at Annual Council, which would be entrusted with putting forward names for departmental positions, must be composed in a way that fairly reflects the global church; it must fairly represent laypeople and local church pastors.

You have the impression when you look at the total Annual Council delegation that it admirably presents the racial and ethnic diversity of the world church. But church statisticians tell us that 65-70 percent of the world church is female, and no more than about 10 percent of the delegates are female. How do we address that reality?

This has historically proved to be a very slow process for us. Because previous GC sessions decided not to ordain women to gospel ministry, women haven't had the same access to leadership positions. It's been more difficult to find individuals with the

background and experience to fully participate in the Annual Council process. But there's no question that there has to be a more deliberate effort to correct that. We simply have to be more deliberate in choosing women as members of the General Conference Executive Committee. We also have to include more young lay professionals under age 35—not because they fill a leadership role in the church, but because they bring competencies and skills we very much need as we do the church's business. We also need to ensure that they can serve for an adequate length of time—perhaps up to 10 years—so that they can function as productive and contributing members of the Executive Committee.

This model seems to me to be a much more responsible approach to planning, and lends itself to bringing together the best and most representative team of men and women to serve within the departments.

Where do these recommendations from the Manila Annual Council go from here?

They'll be considered by delegates to the 2010 General Conference session in Atlanta, where I'm sure they'll generate more discussion, as they should. You know, through all this process we've been saying: Let's not imprison the church within rigid forms or structures that cannot be changed, which have become "sacred" simply because "we've always done it that way." Let's keep our eyes constantly on the larger picture; on the needs and demands of an ever-growing church; on our obligation to constantly look for more efficient, more effective ways of doing the work of the church. And in all we do, let's stay focused on the paramount values of mission and unity, and then move forward confidently where the Lord leads us. ●

GLOBAL CHURCH PREACHES

Antismoking Message

By Allan R. Handysides
and Peter N. Landless

What has happened to our tobacco cessation initiatives? We don't seem to be involved in tobacco control much these days.

The Adventist Church was certainly one of the leaders in spreading the important information about tobacco and its lethal effects. It was on the forefront as information grew about the harmful effects of smoking. The Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking® was timely, and fit easily into a church's outreach because it was a short but very effective education tool. Its long-term benefits have been incalculable. But times have changed.

Today the antismoking lobby has grown into a large, well-financed, politically savvy group, and our local church groups may have become intimidated or additionally discouraged by the small numbers who attend Breathe-Free® programs. The power and backing of the antitobacco lobby may seem to be something Adventists are not comfortable with. Part of our problem may be our introverted attitude when it comes to working with groups other than our own.

Perhaps we should remind ourselves of the enormity of the tobacco crisis.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report on tobacco for 2008, a person dies because of tobacco usage every six seconds. Tobacco kills between a third and a half of all the people who use it, and the 5 million who die each year from its consequences represent one tenth of all deaths in the world annually.

Of the world's current population, 500 million will die of tobacco's effects,

and the twenty-first century could witness tobacco killing 1 billion people.

Secondhand smoke has serious health consequences. Some 46,000 cardiac deaths and 3,400 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States alone are attributed to secondhand tobacco smoke. The 200,000 episodes of childhood asthma, 71,900 preterm deliveries, and 24,500 low-birth-weight infants calculated to be a result of secondhand smoking in the U.S. surely give pause for reflection.

I hope such reflection will result in our becoming a part of the solution!

Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) said, "When meditating over a disease, I never think of finding a remedy for it, but, instead, a means of preventing it." Those interested in tobacco control should secure from WHO their 2008 report on the global tobacco epidemic.

Active participation at local government levels and with organized antismoking activities are much encouraged. The effects of collaboration are much greater than isolated, uncoordinated action.

An International Conference on Healthful Lifestyle and Primary Care will be held in Geneva June 23-28. WHO, Adventist Health Systems, Loma Linda University Medical Center, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and the General Conference will be working together with representatives of other faith-based organizations to create

collaborative strategies for a wide front of health initiatives.

If you would like to be an agent of change for the better, plan to attend this conference. Watch www.health20-20.org for information about the First International Conference on Healthful Lifestyle and Primary Care.

All of us can be partners by adopting the WHO strategy, seeking to empower governments, agencies, and local groups in the battle against tobacco. Let's adopt the acronym MPOWER, which stands for:

M = Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies

P = Protect people from tobacco smoke

O = Offer help to quit

W = Warn of dangers

E = Enforce bans on advertising promotion and sponsorship

R = Raise taxes on tobacco

Let's do all we can to be agents of change.



Allan R. Handysides, M.B., Ch.B., FRCPC, FRCSC, FACOG, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.



Peter N. Landless, M.B., B.Ch., M.Med., F.C.P.(SA), F.A.C.C., is ICPA executive director and associate director of the Health Ministries Department.

In our eagerness to claim the “Laodicea” label, we tend to overlook a lot of the good stuff about the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2, 3.

First up has to be the identity of the sender: the risen Christ. These are seven “letters from heaven.”

Then there is the fact that they were written to seven specific places in Asia Minor; and from the local knowledge they contain, we can tell that they were addressed to the needs of seven specific city congregations.

Finally, in our desire to delve into new layers of meaning, we have assigned the seven messages to seven consecutive periods of Christian history. But that’s only part of their relevance.

By DAVID MARSHALL

Letters From Heaven

Sent 2000 years ago, they’re as current as today.

Always Current, Always Relevant

The seven letters from heaven went to seven specific city churches toward the end of the first century.* Seventh-day Adventists also believe that they have prophetic significance for the Christian church across the last two millennia or so. But, I would argue, their greatest prophetic significance is in this: *at any given time all seven messages have been applicable somewhere.* I have seen the sites of the seven first-century cities. But more to the point, in 40 years of preaching, I have preached at all seven churches!

Yes. I’ve been to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—most of them many times over—and found English spoken in them all. In all seven letters—not just the last one or two—the risen Lord is speaking to us all, and doing so now.

“We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body,” the church (1 Cor. 12:13).” The fellowship in which we either grow spiritually or stagnate or whatever we do is our local church (Eph. 4:11-14). There we either remain like “infants, tossed back and forth by the waves” or we learn to “[speak] the truth in love” and “grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Eph. 4:14, 15). Over time,

local churches take on characters of their own. We may put the characteristics they develop down to diversity or geography; but, at root, we know there is more.

Whether one congregation morphs into the other—all the way from Ephesus to Laodicea, I’ll leave others to debate. The fact is that the risen Christ certainly saw a pattern of problems and sent seven letters to address them.

What Would He Say to Your Local Church?

All letters start with the words “To the angel of the church in write.” Then following the words, “I know,” Christ affirms what is good in that particular church. Following words like “I hold this against you,” Christ points



Top: A doorway in the recently excavated site of ancient Laodicea recalls Jesus’ words to the church: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” **Bottom:** A tourist strolls down the main thoroughfare of Ephesus, the first of seven churches addressed in the Book of Revelation.

out the problem areas in that church. Just before the end of each message, there is a warning. And at the very end is a promise, typically beginning with the words, “To him who overcomes, I will give...”

What message would the risen Christ give “to the angel of the church” of, say, Loma Linda or London, Toronto or Taunton, Berlin or Birmingham—or wherever? What would He say to the church where you live? What qualities would He affirm? What words would follow “I hold this against you”? What would be the warning?

Would He affirm “your hard work and your perseverance,” as He did for Ephesus? Could He say to your church, as He did to Pergamum: “I know where you

What message would the risen Christ give to your own local church?

live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name”? To Thyatira He said, “I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance.” Could He say that of you and your congregation?

Despite its hard work, Ephesus had forsaken its “first love.” Sardis was told, “I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.” Sardis had superb organization, but it was dead on its feet, no longer fit for purpose. Laodicea thought it was rich, but was wretched; believed it had everything, but had nothing. Jesus was still outside knocking at the front door, trying to get in.

It is often suggested that the cure for the Laodicean condition—the gold, the white clothes, the eye salve (Rev. 3:18)—amounts to the gospel of salvation by grace through faith. A good start would be to let Jesus in (see Rev. 3:20).

The cure prescribed for Sardis’ condition—the superbly organized church that was dead and dying (Rev. 3:1, 2)—was *resurrection*, the biggest wake-up call of all time. There was hope even for Sardis! (Rev. 3:1-6).

But the cure prescribed most often for the conditions diagnosed in the seven churches can be said in one word: REPENTANCE.

Has your church become so materialistic in its outlook that it is indistinguishable from the society around it? Has your church become so intolerant of its youth that they are hemorrhaging by the week? Have you come to see the church structure as something to be scaled and controlled in the interests of some primitive power instinct?

Begin With Me!

If your answers to the above questions—and to hundreds of others for which I do not have room—are in the affirmative, then let the repentance of your church begin with your own.

I commend to you the reputation, message, and mission of Philadelphia (see Rev. 3:7-13). Despite every inducement to do differently, the members at Philadelphia had not denied the name of Christ. Because of their record of faithfulness, the risen Christ had placed a door before them that no one could shut. Theirs was an unnerving environment of earthquakes and tremors that had them running in panic at no notice. To them Christ promised citizenship of “the city of my God, the new Jerusalem.”

The message to Philadelphia? “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown” (Rev. 3:11). That was the nearest Philadelphia came to a warning. Esau had forfeited his place to Jacob, Reuben to Judah, Saul to David, and literal Israel to spiritual Israel. Philadelphia is told: keep a tight grip on what you have. Hold on! Don’t let anyone distract you and steal your crown.

There was once a small congregation whose pastor was executed as a criminal. The chairman of the board swore he’d never been on it; the treasurer committed suicide; the rest of the board members ran away at the time of trial. The only members who showed signs of faithfulness were a handful of female members. They were last at the cross and first at the empty tomb.

God used that church to take His gospel of grace to the world in the power of the Spirit. That being the case, there is hope for your church no matter how tough the times become. ●

*All seven letters are found in Revelation 2 and 3.

**All Scripture references are from the New International Version.



David Marshall is senior editor at Stanborough Press in Lincolnshire, England.

Anyone monitoring the pulse of technology-related ministry opportunities these days can't help noticing some very unconventional doors being flung wide open. And in some very far-flung places—even cyberspace!

Light Stream International, a lay-run ministry based in Oregon, United States, is taking advantage of cutting-edge technology to reach people in numerous world regions with the gospel message. Examples of the organization's diverse outreach methods include:

- Christian-oriented cable television programming for thousands of subsistence-level families in India recently given televisions by their government.
- Cyberspace messages of hope and healing for young adults searching the Internet for meaning and purpose in life.
- A “secular” evangelistic tool that connects, for the Chinese mind, prophetic Messianic concepts in ancient Oriental writings with fulfilled prophecies of the Christian Bible.
- The gospel message framed in culturally-relevant, contemporary media including film, art, and music to meet spiritual needs in places such as Singapore, Bolivia, Australia, Africa, the Philippines, and Europe.

Leading-Edge Ministry

A strong conviction that Christ's followers must meet people where they are—with truth—led founders Win Wheeler, Cindy Waterhouse-Wheeler, and D. Lynn Bryson, pastor of the McMinnville, Oregon, Seventh-day Adventist Church, to establish Light Stream International in 2007.

Win began sharing God through multimedia while in college. After returning from serving as a student missionary, he presented the needs of Africa in pictures and sound to churches throughout the United States. Upon graduating from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, Win worked with Fortune 500 companies designing automated business systems while volunteering in his church as audio/video engineer. Believing that God has called him to a unique ministry, Win now functions as ministry technologies director for the McMinnville church, executive director of Light Stream International, and systems and sound engineer for the North Pacific Union Conference's (NPUC) Project Momentum.

Cindy, who earned a business degree from the University of Oregon, has managed nonprofit organizations and taught college-level classes. A musician and composer, she writes music for worship and broadcast. Currently, she edits audio/video content, trains editing volunteers, writes for the ministry, and assists with coordinating schedules.

Bryson, a pastor in the Oregon Conference since 1985 and a survivor of a near-fatal airplane accident, holds a deep conviction that communicating the Advent message



CINDY WATERHOUSE-WHEELER

MINISTERING
the
“Techie”
 By
 CAROLYN SUTTON and
 CINDY WATERHOUSE-
 WHEELER
Way *It's*

via television is essential to living the commission that Christ gave the church.

“We must carry our message beyond our church walls and into the homes of the people,” Bryson says. “Most people will never walk into our church buildings, but many will eagerly watch and listen on the airwaves.”

With the help of more than 50 McMinnville church volunteers and numerous affiliates and partners, Win, Cindy, and Bryson have developed a high-definition recording studio that has given birth to this innovative system of evangelism. This system allows Light Stream to keep expanding as new technologies and market-demographic needs evolve.

The Light Stream Approach

So how does the Light Stream “approach” work? Light Stream directors trust the Holy Spirit to “introduce” them to technology-related global outreach opportunities. Then the organization's team develops projects to reach hearts and introduce Christ in culturally-relevant ways, using the most appropriate technological approach.

Light Stream International projects include:

- **Project Momentum**—a biannual collaboration



Left: IN CONCERT: D. Lynn Bryson, pastor of the McMinnville Adventist Church in Oregon and a cofounder of Light Stream International, praises God in song with Mary Grace, a professional concert pianist who raises funds through her talents for

lay pastors in the Philippines and other regions.

Below: COLLABORATING: *Change of Heart* director Tim Adams (left) consults with Light Stream International executive director Win Wheeler during production of the Christian film that explores concepts of forgiveness.



RYAN MONTGOMERY

nontraditional—but effective.

between the NPUC and Light Stream International, which creates an evangelistic series for broadcast on the Hope Channel, Better Life Television, and other community- and Christian-based broadcasting stations.

Former Project Momentum efforts have included programs such as “Snapshots of the Savior” with Pastor Ron Halverson, Sr., the “For God So Loved” series with former NPUC president Jere Patzer, and “Revelation Now” with Jac and ’dena Colón. Distribution of the series’ DVDs has resulted in baptisms thousands of miles from the original evangelistic meeting locations.

■ **Change of Heart**—a short film targeting the secular Western audience. It presents the Christian concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation using cinematography, dialogue, and music to unfold the story of a father asking his son’s forgiveness for their past hurtful relationship before the father found healing through Christ’s concepts of love and mercy.

In-Progress Global Projects

■ **Light Streaming India:** Light Stream is currently developing a Christian television studio for the largely unreached millions of the Tamil province of India.

■ **Light Streaming Singapore:** Working with church-planting efforts in this part of the world, Light Stream is focused on building content for distribution there and beyond, by sharing discussions of God’s truth in video format as well as video storytelling of true stories that reveal the Creator God as the “God of all gods.”

■ **Light Streaming China:** Light Stream is planning a documentary that will demonstrate biblically accurate, prophetic Messianic concepts in the writings of Confucius and other historical Chinese sages.

■ **Light Streaming to young, around-the-globe YouTube aficionados:** Light Stream collaborates with students from Adventist and other Christian-based universities to create short YouTube messages of hope, healing, and truth about the reality of a loving God. The target audience is the millions of young adults who are searching for life’s meaning and purpose.

■ **Light Streaming South America:** McMinnville Television Ministries, a brand and affiliation of Light Stream International, is now forwarding Sabbath sermons to be broadcast via satellite to some countries in the Americas, the Caribbean, the Philippines, Europe, Africa, India, and Australia.

Into All the World

Light Stream International’s mission is to step forward, beaming the light of God’s love and truth to diverse regions of the world. In creative ways and by God’s grace, it is doing its part to help fulfill the gospel commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19, 20, KJV). ●

For more information, contact *Light Stream International*, P.O. Box 1171, McMinnville, OR 97128, USA; or go to its Web site: www.lightstreaminternational.com.



Carolyn Sutton, a freelance writer and a volunteer field representative for Adventist World Radio, is a retired educator and a former editor of *Guide* magazine.



Cindy Waterhouse-Wheeler, Light Stream International codirector, brings her directing, editing, music, and writing skills to this ministry.



The
Bounty
and the **B I B**

How the Adventist message found its way to Pitcairn Island and stayed



ADRIFT: When the mutineers of the *Bounty* cast Captain William Bligh and his followers adrift, they had no idea what the future held for them.

By
HERBERT FORD
and WILONA
KARIMABADI

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SPLENDID ISOLATION: Pitcairn Island lies about halfway between New Zealand and Chile deep in the heart of the South Pacific Ocean.

In December of 1787 the British naval ship H.M.S. *Bounty*, under the command of Lieutenant William Bligh, put to sea from Spithead, England. The ship's mission: to bring breadfruit plants from the island of Tahiti to the West Indies to provide food for the slaves of plantation owners there.

On October 26, 1788, the *Bounty* anchored in Matavai Bay, Tahiti, amid shouts of welcome by the friendly Tahitian people. In the embrace of South Seas friendship the ship's crew was promptly put to work gathering hundreds of breadfruit plants. The task was a tricky one: to make sure each plant was healthy enough to endure the months at sea before *Bounty* would reach the West Indies.

When the breadfruit gathering task was completed, there were 1,014 breadfruit plants aboard, and on Saturday, April 4, 1789, the *Bounty* weighed anchor and set sail for the West Indies. But once they were again under the harsh discipline of Captain Bligh, a number of crew members began to plot against him. Early in the morning of April 28, some of the crew, under the leadership of Masters Mate Fletcher Christian, revolted, forcing Bligh and crew members loyal to him into the small ship's cutter, which was then set adrift.

Safe Haven

Christian and his fellow mutineers sailed the *Bounty* back to Tahiti, but the islanders there were not as welcoming as before. After attempting to settle on another unfriendly island, Christian realized that he had to find a safe hiding place, for he knew a ship would be sent from England to track him down; sailors did not mutiny in the Royal Navy and escape punishment.

So the *Bounty* set sail again, this time to find some speck of land in the vast Pacific

Ocean that would be safe. This time, however, the nine mutineers on *Bounty* were not alone. They were joined by 18 Polynesians—6 men, 12 women, and a baby. The women became the wives of the mutineers, with three others being companions to the Polynesian men.

In the *Bounty* the mutineers visited a number of Pacific islands, none of which seemed safe. At last, Fletcher Christian saw on the ship's admiralty charts a tiny island far off to the east. It was named Pitcairn's Island, later changed to Pitcairn Island, and had been first seen from the rigging of the ship H.M.S. *Swallow* in 1767 by Midshipman Robert Pitcairn. Captain Carteret of the *Swallow* decided to name it after young Pitcairn. Christian decided to sail the ship toward the island, and on finding it a safe haven the little colony of mutineers and Polynesians went ashore in early January 1790.

The new arrivals emptied the *Bounty* of all salvageable material and began to build shelters on Pitcairn. On January 23, 1790, the ship was set afire so passing ships would not see *Bounty*'s tall masts rising beside the island.

Bligh and the 17 crew members with him in the *Bounty*'s cutter survived what many believe is the longest open boat voyage in the Pacific Ocean. Once his story was heard in England, a ship—



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

Left: AWAITING THE RESURRECTION: The grave of John Adams, the mutineer who led the colony to Christ, is well tended on the island. **Below: REGULAR SERVICE:** The Seventh-day Adventist church—the only church on the tiny island—still holds services every Sabbath, rain or shine. Attendance may include more visitors and non-Adventists than members some Sabbaths.



H.M.S. *Pandora*—was dispatched to bring the mutineers to justice. The 16 crew members who stayed on Tahiti were captured and three of them were eventually hanged. On Pitcairn, though, the little colony was safe, and the world would not even know its existence for nearly two decades.

Paradise Lost

The first few years on Pitcairn were relatively calm, and the mutineers and their families thrived. Then the calm was shattered by a series of violent events. The wife of one of

the mutineers fell to her death while out gathering food, and her widowed husband demanded the wife of one of the Polynesian men. This triggered a series of plots to kill the English sailors. The women, however, were loyal to their European husbands and warned them of the danger. The hostility and treachery on both sides led to the deaths of five of the mutineers. Soon the Polynesian men were also murdered.

One of the remaining mutineers, William McCoy, having had earlier experience in England, began to brew

alcohol from the native ti plant. He and others of the four remaining mutineers spent much of their time in a drunken state. McCoy perished at his own hand while drunk. At last all but two of the men on Pitcairn were dead. Then mutineer Edward Young died from illness—the first on the island to die a natural death.

Young's death left only mutineer John Adams as the lone adult male on the island. With 11 women and 23 children, the sons and daughters of his former companions, Adams began to realize that he had a great responsibility to lead them into a better way of life.¹

Adams said that in a dream he was told to repent of his former life and to teach others to live the lives God intended for them.²

Fletcher Christian's son, Thursday, remembered his father having a Bible and a prayer book among his possessions. It was from these books that Adams, who had very little education, read and began to understand the precious words that would change the lives of the Pitcairners. Adams became the teacher and spiritual leader of Pitcairn Island.

In 1808 the inhabitants of Pitcairn were discovered by the American ship *Topaz*. Captain Matthew Folger and his crew were astonished to discover they had solved the mystery of missing *Bounty* mutineers. Even more, they were impressed to find English-speaking, devout Christians living lives of peace and tranquility.

The island population continued to thrive over the years, at one

point necessitating the need for its inhabitants to resettle. One attempt, to Tahiti in 1831, proved disastrous and resulted in the deaths of a dozen Pitcairners. In 1856 the entire population of Pitcairn sailed to Norfolk Island, near Australia, and settled there. In time, however, several Pitcairn families returned home.

The Adventist Message

In 1876 two Seventh-day Adventist preachers in California's Napa Valley in the United States—J. N. Loughborough and James White—having learned of the little colony on Pitcairn, acted to tell the islanders the “good news” of the Christian gospel. They filled a box with literature, took it to the docks in San Francisco, and there found Captain David Scribner of the sailing ship *St. John*. Scribner, acting on their request, took the box ashore at Pitcairn where it was read by several of the islanders, but they continued their practice of the doctrines of the Church of England, which they had been following.

Ten years later—in 1886—in Oakland, California, an Adventist layman, John I. Tay, was having health problems. His doctor told Tay he was suffering from the polluted air of Oakland and he needed to go where there was better air quality. A retired seaman, Tay decided he would go to sea again, and with the imperative of Matthew 28:19 burning in his breast, he also decided he would go to Pitcairn Island and tell them of the faith he had come to love.

On October 18, 1886, the Royal Navy's sloop *Pelican* arrived off Pitcairn Island with John Tay aboard. He spent five weeks in Bible study and prayer with the Pitcairners, and at the end of his stay a large number said they wished to be baptized as Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Tay explained that as a layman he could not perform the rite, but that he would one day bring them an ordained minister who could.

The challenge of carrying the gospel story to hundreds of islands

in the Pacific Ocean swept over the Seventh-day Adventists of America in 1890, and nickel and dime fundraising in the Sabbath schools resulted in the building of a missionary ship named, appropriately enough, the *Pitcairn*. In October 1890 the ship, with John Tay and Edward H. Gates, an ordained minister, set sail from San Francisco for Pitcairn Island, arriving there in November. Several baptisms over the next few months resulted in most of the Pitcairners joining the Adventist faith.

Very soon after their conversion, the missionary spirit began to grip many on Pitcairn Island. As the ship *Pitcairn* would depart from the island on each of its six voyages into the Pacific, Pitcairners would leave for lay missionary service in other islands. Others, realizing their need for formal missionary training and education, returned on the ship to San Francisco, where they enrolled at Healdsburg College, forerunner of Pacific Union College, so that they might be better trained for service.

For decades many Pitcairners have been part of a unique form of Christian witness. Because of their isolation from the rest of the world, Pitcairn has often been branded the most remote island in the world: no air service, no scheduled ship service, closest hospital 1,200 miles away. Their only face-to-face contact with the outside world is with the captains, crews, or passengers of ships that call. Early on, the Pitcairners began bidding farewell to each departing ship by singing hymns from their longboats. Scores of entries in ship's logs, journals, and books testify to the power of this Christian witness.

Life on Pitcairn

Today the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist faith on Pitcairn is small, largely because of the exodus of a large number of people from the island to New Zealand and other countries. But the Sabbath day is still remembered: though not all islanders are present in church, the

community rests on the seventh day. A pastor is still provided from the South Pacific Division for a term of two years, and Ray Codling is currently serving the island in his second term. Of the Pitcairn people, whom he loves, he says, “The Pitcairn people are lovely people, always willing to help. They welcomed us to the island.”

In addition to ministering to the spiritual needs of the community and the number of visitors to the island, Codling and his family are immersed in the everyday lives of the Pitcairners—even in their burgeoning honey export business. The Pitcairners are also a very social group of people, and to the island pastor, these gatherings are important. “The islanders love to get together and fellowship over a meal. Birthday parties are a big thing. Every three to four weeks I announce a community dinner in the town square on Friday evening, and after the meal we go into the church for an opening Sabbath sing-along. About half the island comes and participates,” says Codling.

Opportunities for witness seem to have increased also, as several ship lines now schedule visits of their huge cruise vessels to Pitcairn. In addition, there are visitors who spend a week or more living in Pitcairn homes enjoying the genuine hospitality of the islanders. “All these folk—on the cruise ships and visitors in the homes here—are our evangelistic field,” says Codling.

Pitcairn Island, which holds a special place in history—for both the world and the Adventist Church—continues to represent a unique mission field. But the spirit of the gospel is still alive even as it was when the early descendents of the *Bounty* mutineers first heard the message of the redemptive love and grace of Jesus all those years ago. ●

¹Ferris, Norman, *The Story of Pitcairn Island* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), p.39.

²*Ibid.*

* Pitcairn Island has received worldwide attention during the last several years as reports of alleged criminal activities and subsequent legal trials have been covered by the media. Seventh-day Adventists on the island and throughout the world church are working toward bringing healing and reconciliation to those involved.

NUMBER 9 *It Is*
Why did Jesus have to die? **Finished**
 By ROLF PÖHLER

According to the Gospels, Jesus Himself repeatedly indicated that He would die a violent death, and He even said that it “must” be so (Matt. 16:21; John 3:14). “The Son of Man must suffer many things ... and be killed” (Mark 8:31; cf. Luke 9:22; 17:25; 24:7). Jesus saw this as the fulfillment of ancient biblical prophecies (Luke 18:31; 22:37; 24:25 ff., 44 ff.) and considered His whole life to be the realization of a divine plan (Luke 2:49; 4:43; 13:33; 19:5, 10; John 9:4; 10:16). As He hung on the cross, He cried out: “It is finished!” (John 19:30). Task completed, mission accomplished.

But just what was the mission that He had fulfilled?

What His Death Means for Us

The meaning of Jesus’ death has intrigued Christian thinkers of all ages, even worried them. Countless

books have been written about it, and many shelves filled with works have tried to explain the deeper significance of the death of Jesus. They all attempt to interpret the passages in the New Testament that shed light on how Jesus understood Himself and how the disciples in turn understood Him. The biblical statements are summarized in the Adventist Fundamental Beliefs statement No. 9 (see sidebar).

However you may try to describe the biblical teaching on salvation through Christ, you cannot ignore certain terms such as atonement, reconciliation, righteousness, sin, and forgiveness. They belong to the essential vocabulary of the Bible and are linked to the core of Christian faith.

Based on the sacrificial ministry of the Old Covenant, the early Christians understood the death of Christ on the cross as God’s “means of propitiation,” by which God Himself had taken away our guilt (Rom. 3:25). The sacrifice on Calvary—the total commitment of His life—was necessary, in order “to make propitiation for the sins of the people [of Israel]” (Heb. 2:17), and not only for them, “but also for the [sins of the] whole world” (1 John 2:2).

The real mission of Jesus was therefore “to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:5 f.; 1 Peter 1:18 f.). His perfect obedience and substitutionary

sacrifice liberate us from our guilt; we receive forgiveness and a new life (Eph. 1:7; 5:2; 1 Peter 2:21 ff.; Heb. 9, 10). The prophet Isaiah had already prophesied that the “servant of God” would give His life as a sacrifice for our guilt. “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5; cf. Dan. 9:24).

But that doesn’t mean that Jesus was trying to placate an angry God and move Him to be benevolent toward us. After all, it was the Father Himself who sent His Son into the world “that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9 ff.). It was not necessary to win God over for us; He already was on our side. God does not love us because Jesus died for us; Jesus died because God loves us. God’s love is the reason and source, not the result or effect of the atonement.

But what was it then that made atonement and satisfaction—and therefore the death of Jesus—necessary? Is it the profound disgust that God, the Perfect and Holy One, feels for all injustice? Is it the disregard for His just and holy law (Rom. 7:12)—the reflection of His character—that must be punished? Do we feel something of the same indignation—indeed, the “righteous



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This article is a condensation of a chapter in Pöhler’s book on the Adventist Fundamental Beliefs in the German language and translated by Brent Blum.

anger”—that God feels in the face of the million-fold presence of sin and appalling injustice (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18 ff.; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 6:16 f.)?

Christ Triumphant

As Jesus died on the cross, His opponents rejoiced. To be crucified meant to be cursed of God (Gal. 3:13). Therefore, in the eyes of the

its purpose (Rom 4:25; 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:17). Through it, Jesus the condemned criminal was “vindicated” by God Himself (Acts 2:22 ff.). Beyond that, it is also the basis for the Christian hope in the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12 ff.). If the power of death is broken, then it is broken forever and for everyone. In this respect,

believers already know today will one day be confessed by all: *Christ is triumphant!* (see Phil. 2:5 ff.).

The hour of His greatest defeat has become the moment of His greatest triumph. The victory over sin, death, and the devil has been won.

The atonement for our guilt also brought the reconciliation of humankind with God. God was always

It was not necessary to win God over for us; He already was on our side.

public, Jesus was history. No one would ever again dare to claim He was the Messiah. Had not He Himself, shortly before His death, admitted that God had abandoned Him? This was without question the bitterest moment in His life and presumably the reason for His quick death (Mark 15:34, 37, 44).

But what gave His enemies cause to rub their hands in satisfaction actually turned out to be a crushing blow for themselves. When a short time later He broke the shackles of the grave and revealed Himself to His disciples as the living and glorified Christ, it became clear that He had left the scene of these terrible events not as the loser, but as the winner: *Christ is triumphant!*

As difficult as it may be to scientifically prove His resurrection, the testimony of the many witnesses who saw Him with their own eyes is still remarkable (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20–21; 1 Cor. 15:1 ff.). And the empty grave can also hardly be explained any other way except that something very unusual happened (Matt. 27:62 to 28:15). Even the doubters among His disciples finally became convinced (Matt. 28:17; Mark 16:11 ff.; Luke 24:11, 41; John 20:24 ff.).

The physical resurrection of Christ is the sign that His sacrifice was not in vain, but had fulfilled

the resurrection of Jesus is “an event that happened in the past, but not a happening that has passed” (B. Klappert). Therefore it takes its rightful place at the core of the Christian message.

John, an eyewitness, interpreted the events like this: “The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8, NRSV).^{*} Another New Testament writer commented this way: Christ became human, “that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14 ff.). What

on our side, but we had separated ourselves from Him, turned our backs on our Lord and Savior, and rebelliously rejected Him. In Christ God has overcome the separation, restored peace, and won our trust. We are reconciled with God! Men and women who hear and understand this gospel cannot remain impassive (see Rom. 5:10 ff.; 2 Cor. 5:18 ff.).

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31). ●

* Bible texts credited to NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God’s law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God’s triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20–22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19–21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6,11.)

Ellen White is reported to be the most translated American female author in history: her book *Steps to Christ* has been translated into more than 160 languages, and 13 others into more than 25 languages. Her writings have shaped Adventists and many others.

Ellen White was born November 26, 1827, in Gorham, Maine, in the northeastern United States. She and her twin sister Elizabeth were the youngest of eight children born to Robert and Eunice Harmon, members of the Methodist Church. In 1842, she was baptized and joined the church her parents attended in Portland, Maine, where the family had moved. In Portland the family attended meetings conducted by William Miller, a Baptist farmer-turned-preacher, who concluded from Bible prophecy that Christ would return sometime about 1843 (later revised to 1844).

The Harmons became “Millerites,” which resulted in their being disfellowshipped from the Methodist Church in 1843. Young Ellen felt a strong burden to help others find Jesus. She fully expected Him to return on October 22, 1844, the date Millerites believed marked the end of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. When Christ did not return, the Millerites were terribly disappointed. In December 1844, God gave Ellen the first of an estimated 2,000 visions and prophetic night dreams received until her death in 1915. That first vision confirmed that God’s presence was with the fledgling group of believers, and they would eventually reach the Holy City.

Ellen was encouraged to give her messages by a young Adventist minister, James White. They married on August 30, 1846, and soon started keeping the seventh-day Sabbath based upon Bible evidence in a tract written by Joseph Bates. Later, Ellen had a vision confirming the Sabbath as the correct day to keep.

The small group of Sabbathkeepers continued studying their Bibles, searching for truths. The visions given to Ellen often confirmed their conclusions. Sometimes, God’s instruction pointed them away from erroneous conclusions. The visions never replaced their need for Bible study.



James R. Nix is the director of the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland.

In 1851, Ellen White wrote a booklet, reprinted in *Early Writings*, the first of well over 100 publications currently bearing her name.

James and Ellen White traveled widely, speaking, encouraging, and counseling members of the growing church. Being a mother of four boys was challenge enough without also having the pain of being separated from them. She experienced the sorrow of losing two of her sons through death, John Herbert as a baby of only about 3 months of age, and Henry Nichols at 16. James Edson and William Clarence both became ordained Seventh-day Adventist ministers.

ELLEN WHITE: Who Was *The Little Woman Who*

Many of the visions that God gave Ellen White contained messages of hope and encouragement, some warnings and reproofs. It was difficult to deliver some of those strong messages. Being the Lord’s messenger was not an easy assignment! God spoke through her, guiding the church through many challenges.

Ellen became a very popular speaker, often in demand at Adventist meetings. She was perhaps better known as a speaker than a writer. She became a popular speaker on Christian temperance among non-Adventist temperance groups.

In 1863 God gave Mrs. White a major vision on health. It stressed the importance of proper diet, exercise, rest, and fresh air; and the concept that preserving one’s health is a religious duty. The principles of that vision eventually were adopted by many Adventists around the world.



COURTESY OF THE ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

She?

By
JAMES R. NIX

Talked About Jesus

Recent scientific studies have demonstrated that practicing God's recommended lifestyle results in a longer average lifespan for Adventists than the general population.

Ellen White felt inadequate as a writer to describe what God had shown her and read widely—other authors helped her to describe what God had shown her. Occasionally choice phrases would stick in her mind, and she used them in sermons or talks. Mrs. White never claimed infallibility or that she was perfect, or that her writings were equal to the Bible. Yet she firmly believed that the messages God gave through her were of divine origin, her writings produced under the guidance of God's Spirit.

Stories abound about Mrs. White's generosity. While living in Australia she kept bolts of cloth on hand—if she saw a lady who needed a new dress, she gave her material. She bought pieces of used furniture; then if a need arose,

she could assist immediately. She would often send funds to help an elderly minister who needed financial assistance.

Mrs. White often entertained guests and usually retired early in the evening. She would often rise at 2:00 or 3:00 in the stillness of the morning to write. Some books, such as *Steps to Christ*, are devotional. Others, such as *Testimonies for the Church*, are selections from many letters and manuscripts she wrote to offer counsel.

The five "Conflict of the Ages" books are more historical, describing the struggle between Christ and Satan that began in heaven and will end with the eradication of all sin at the close of the millennium. Readers are continually invited to choose God's side in that battle. Today books such as *The Ministry of Healing* and *Education* are considered classics in their field.

At the time of her death on July 16, 1915, there were 24 books in print, plus two others nearly completed. Some 5,000 periodical articles were published in various Adventist journals; another 50,000 pages of mostly unpublished manuscripts are housed in the vault in her office building. As she instructed in her will, a number of thematic compilations have been produced.

For 70 years Ellen White faithfully delivered the messages given to her by God. Her counsel was constantly sought by church leaders. Despite little formal education, her visions resulted in today's worldwide Adventist education system. She had no medical training, yet she encouraged a network of Adventist hospitals, clinics, and medical training facilities around the world. She was never an ordained minister, but her writings continue to influence millions of people in the more than 200 countries where the Adventist Church now operates. God's messenger continues to help people find the Lord, accept His pardon, and share His grace with others.

During the last years of Ellen White's life, she enjoyed going riding in her buggy. Passing a home, she would remark, "I wonder if the people in that house know anything about Jesus." She would stop to visit neighbors in their yards, often leaving fruit from her orchard or garden produce, plus some literature. For several years after her death, she was remembered as the little lady dressed in black who came by in her buggy and talked about Jesus.

In our increasingly rushed world where spiritual things often get overlooked or completely ignored, the example and writings of Ellen White may help the seeker find a deeper experience with God. Her writings point continually to the Scripture, where God has provided guidance for His people. ●

Embracing *the* Challenge

By
LAURIE
FALVO

Taking the gospel to Southeast Asia requires



The Southern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is home to nearly 750 million people. This beautiful region of the world is mind-boggling in its diversity. Each country has its own exotic mix of languages, religions, and cultures.

This immense diversity makes this territory one of the most challenging areas in the world in which to share the gospel. Church growth has been slow, but exciting things are beginning to happen.

The Southern Asia-Pacific Division is made up of 18 countries tucked between China, India, and Australia. This area includes the Southeast Asia region, the countries of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, and the Oceanic missions of Guam and Micronesia.

Another great challenge to mission in this division is its staggering population. It has more than 20 cities greater than 1 million people each. Eight of the 18 countries have fewer than five Adventist churches or companies for every million people. And 77 unique ethnic groups have more than 1 million people who may have never even heard the name of Jesus.

"We have between 800-900,000 members in the Philippines and Indonesia, where the majority of our members live," says Rick McEdward, division Adventist Mission coordinator. "But in the areas that are more difficult to reach, it's a real challenge. The percentage of our members living outside these two countries is quite small."

The challenges are huge, yet the church is growing.

Cambodia

In 1975 the Pol Pot regime took power in Cambodia, killing millions of people and crushing the backbone of the Adventist Church in that region.

Thousands of refugees poured into crowded camps, bringing nothing with them but hunger, fear, and the clothes on their backs. Yet in their darkest night, Adventist missionaries were there to offer a glimmer of hope.

Dick and Jean Hall were missionaries in southern Asia for 25 years and personally ministered to the displaced people of Cambodia. "One day," says Pastor Hall, "the refugees asked us why the Adventist Church bothered to help them when they could give nothing in return. We said, 'We're here because of Jesus. 'Well, who's Jesus?' Then we'd begin to tell. 'God sent His Son to this world because He loves us and wants to help us. We're in need, and He asks us to go out to all the other people in need and help them.' And they said, 'We want to learn more about Jesus.'"

From the refugee camps a handful of new believers went back to Cambodia as pioneer workers. The Cambodian church was reborn. Today it's growing rapidly through Global Mission pioneers, the help of supporting ministries, and a carefully planned small-group ministry movement.

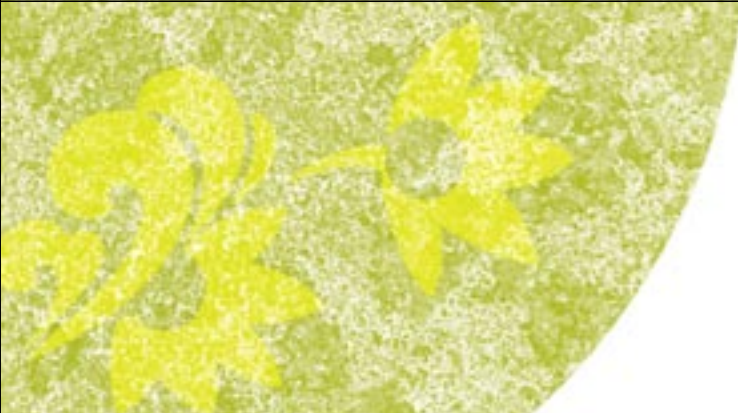
Laos

The tiny country of Laos, nestled between Vietnam and Thailand, has few Christians.

Before political changes closed formal Adventist work, Dick and Jean Hall served there as missionaries, operating a small school in a mountain village.

"The thing I am most proud of," says Hall, "is that the Lord was able to use us in reaching some of the Hmong, the mountain people, who went to our little school. They became pastors and now they've gone out and raised up churches."

In 1961 the Halls were forced to evacuate. But before



more than human resources.

leaving, they helped many of their students leave via their plane. Today the church is impoverished. Without a single ordained minister in the entire country, it desperately needs training and resources.

Indonesia

Jakarta, Indonesia, is the largest city in the largest Muslim country in the world. It's a city of stark contrasts. Here modern buildings and conveniences clash with shocking poverty and despair.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has chosen Jakarta as one of its Hope for Big Cities projects, an initiative to build the church in some of the largest cities in the world. Here pastors and lay members are partnering to reach the 18 million people in their city. They're giving Bible studies, training new workers, and ministering through small groups.

And they're reaping a small harvest. When the church held a recent evangelistic series, more than 1,600 people gave their hearts to Jesus and were baptized.

Yet very few of these conversions were from the majority Muslim population, which continues to be extremely difficult to reach.

Jon Dybdahl, a former missionary to Southern Asia, shares some of the challenges of presenting the gospel in this part of the world.

"One of toughest challenges is that most of the people here are non-Christian Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and therefore we don't share a common background. Most of us in the West—Europe, Australia, and North America—have been trained to share our faith with people from a Christian background. You don't realize that until you move out and try to work with another religion."

Thailand

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, lies in the heart of the 10/40 window, where two thirds of the world's population live. It is home to many world religions, relatively few Christians, and rapidly growing cities.

Until recently there were only five Adventist churches in Bangkok. Doug Venn is coordinator for the Hope for Bangkok church planting project that is working to reach the city's 10 to 13 million people.

"With the Hope for Bangkok project and help from the world field, we've started 10 new church plants," says Pastor Venn. "These all started from small groups. We've had changed lives and baptisms. But the most exciting thing is that the laypeople have just seized the work. So our investment of 10, thanks to the sacrifice of the world church, has blossomed and another eight more have started."

The success of this church planting project is astounding. Especially when you realize that the church has had a presence in Thailand for more than 100 years. Yet throughout all of Thailand we have a relative handful of believers—and most of these come from small minority groups, not the dominant Thai population.

Building bridges of understanding is what the Global Mission Center for Ministry Among Buddhists is all about. Center director Scott Griswold, who has lived among Buddhists for many years, is seeking more effective ways to help them understand Adventist beliefs. Every Sabbath the Griswolds hold a church service in their home and invite their Buddhist friends and neighbors to attend.

Recently their Buddhist landlady, friend, and aunt to their children accepted Jesus as her Savior.

"We praise God for so many good things that are happening in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division," says Adventist Mission director Gary Krause. "But we still see the tremendous challenges that remain. We don't have the answers. We don't have the plans. We don't have the resources. But we must pray that even though we are not sufficient for these things, we will trust in God who is. And we will be committed to be part of His plan to reach every man and woman, boy and girl, with the good news about Jesus Christ." ●



Laurie Falvo is a Communication Projects manager for the Office of Adventist Mission at the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters. To learn more about Seventh-day Adventist missionaries and what is happening in mission in the world church, visit www.AdventistMission.org.

QUESTION: *Is Mary, the sister of Martha, the same as Mary Magdalene?*

I have been asked this question many times, suggesting that it interests many people. It has often been a topic of discussion in the history of the Christian church. Let's examine the biblical evidence.

1. *Mary of Bethany:* We know little about this Mary, unless she is identified with Mary Magdalene.

This is what we know: She was the sister of Martha and Lazarus and lived in Bethany, in the region of Judea (Luke 10:38, 39; John 11:1, 2). She used to sit at Jesus' feet to learn from Him. Since this was the posture assumed by a disciple, we can conclude that she was a disciple of Jesus. She anointed Jesus shortly before His crucifixion, revealing her devotion and love for Him (John 11:2; 12:1-8). This act was her expression of gratitude for the forgiving love of the Savior she experienced (Luke 7:47, 48). Luke implies that she had been forgiven much. After the anointing, no other mention is made of Mary of Bethany.

2. *Mary Magdalene:* The full name of this woman has traditionally been taken to imply that she was from the city of Magdala, located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. The first time she is mentioned in the Gospels she is specifically included among women who had been healed by Jesus from their sickness or from demonic possession; specifically that she had been freed from seven demons, most probably by Jesus (Luke 8:2). These women were Jesus' disciples—they accompanied Him during His second Galilean tour—and they provided financial support for His ministry (verses 2, 3). In other words, Mary Magdalene was relatively wealthy.

3. *Same Person?* Based on the biblical evidence I can only say, "Perhaps" or "Probably so." Most interpreters believe these are two different persons, because no historical evidence exists to support the position that they are the same person.

Besides, there is the problem of the place of origin. Bethany is in Judea, while Magdala is in Galilee. One could speculate that perhaps early in her life Mary left her home in Bethany, went to live in Magdala, and after

she met Jesus she returned to Bethany. This does not contradict any of the biblical evidence, but simply goes beyond it.

Another detail to suggest we are dealing with the same person is that the anointing of Jesus recorded in Luke describes Mary as "a woman who had lived a sinful life" (7:37, NIV). In this case it would be difficult to deny that this refers to Mary of Bethany. Besides, they were both disciples of Jesus, and they appear to have had some financial resources that were placed at the service of the Lord. Based on the Bible I cannot provide a final answer to your question. Please, do not get frustrated; we don't know everything.

4. *What Really Matters:* Perhaps what is significant for us in the discussion of the identity of Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany is that, whether or not they were the same person, Jesus trained women to proclaim the good news of salvation. He called men and women to the service of the gospel.

Mary Magdalene came to play a significant role in the gospel narrative. She almost became the disciple *par excellence*. She

witnessed Jesus' death on the cross (Matt. 27:55, 56; John 19:25) and accompanied His body to the tomb (Matt. 27:60, 61). On Sunday morning she was the first to get to Jesus' tomb, and, seeing that it was empty, went and informed the disciples that someone had taken away Jesus' body (John 20:1, 2). The other disciples came and found it to be true and went away, but Mary stayed behind and was the first to see the risen Lord (verse 15). He commissioned her to tell the disciples He had been resurrected (verse 17). In obedience, she and the other women went to the disciples and announced that the Lord had risen (John 20:18; Matt. 28:7; Luke 24:9).

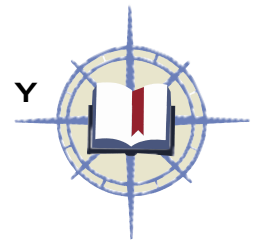
If the resurrected Savior used women to proclaim to the male disciples that He was alive, we should also make full room for women in the proclamation of the eternal gospel. ●

The Gospel According to Mary



By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

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



New Beginnings

By MARK A. FINLEY

Most people like new things. There is something exciting about getting a new pair of shoes, a new suit or dress. At times we long to replace old, broken items with new, perfect ones. Each year God offers us the joy of considering new opportunities He opens before us.

1. What promise does God give each of us regarding our future? Read the text below and fill in the blanks.

“Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” (Isa. 43:19).

God promises to do a _____ in our lives.

At times our lives are like a barren desert. There seems to be little real joy and peace; we seem to be wandering in the wilderness of discouragement. But God promises to do a new thing. Trusting in Him we find new direction and purpose.

2. How often will God send this newness into our lives? Circle the correct answer in the text below.

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22, 23).

Each day God provides us with new opportunities to know His love, experience His grace, and enjoy His goodness.

3. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, what amazing miracle does He work in us? Read the text below and explain on the lines provided what it means to be a new creature in Christ.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

To be a new creature in Christ means _____.

4. Throughout the Bible a name represents our identity or character. What does God give those who, through His grace, are overcomers? Read the passage below and write your answer in the blanks provided.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes... I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it” (Rev. 2:17).

Jesus will give to those who overcome a _____.



This is a wonderful promise. Jesus loves us so much and desires to have such a close relationship with us that He has a special name that He calls us when we fellowship together. It is a sign of the intimate relationship He has with each one of us.

5. In prophetic vision the apostle John heard heavenly beings singing. What were they singing?

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth’” (Rev. 5:9, 10).

John heard the angels sing a _____.

No wonder John’s heart was filled with joy! He heard the heavenly beings singing praises to Jesus in the form of a song of deliverance. Our voices can join in heaven’s chorus today. We have been redeemed. Through Jesus we are priests and kings of God. Praise His name.

6. When the Holy City descends, what divine proclamation does our Lord make? Circle your answer in the text below.

“Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful’” (Rev. 21:5).

7. How does the Bible describe the climax of all human history? Read each text and write the common answer these texts provide in the blanks below.

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind” (Isa. 65:17).

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Rev. 21:1).

God promises to create a new _____ and a new _____.

The God we serve offers us newness in His love every day. His mercies are new every morning. He changes our lives and gives us a new heart. One day the age of sin and suffering will be over and He will create a new heaven and a new earth.

This new year let’s rejoice in the promises of all the new, wonderful things He does for us now, and what He will do for us in the future.



LETTERS



Bible Study Blessings

For a long time I have had the intention of writing to thank Mark Finley for the Bible studies that he prepares for *Adventist*

World. They have been immensely helpful to me and of great benefit to my father, who recently died at the age of 98.

My father's education was minimal, but from his youth he loved to study God's Word. In the last few years he was beginning to struggle with diminished comprehension. He was also obsessed with guilt over the things that he had done in his life, fearing that they would cut him off from God. Despite constantly endeavoring to reassure him of the good news of the gospel, his mind would be overtaken with these fears.

I was able to read Mark Finley's Bible studies to him again and again. He derived great encouragement from them. He was able to comprehend them because of their simplicity of structure and received comfort from them. I, in turn, received comfort and encouragement on seeing my father's spirits lifted. Now he is at rest awaiting our Lord's return. So thank you, Elder Finley, and all concerned.

GRETA ANSCOMBE
Watford, England

Spirit of Prophecy

I recently read the article "Foundations for Ellen White's Prophetic Call" (*Adventist World*, September 2008).

I appreciated Gerhard Pfandl's understanding and the way the article was presented. I have felt

"To read these stories moves me very much and tears roll down my face while seeing God's power working in the lives of other people."

—HULDA NOHEMI CHAMBI MAMANI, *Brazil*



uncomfortable at times when people use the term "Spirit of Prophecy" from Revelation 19:10 to refer only to the prophetic gift as written by Ellen G. White.

I feel this is limiting the meaning of Revelation 19:10.

I do believe in Pfandl's statement that "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." He ties Revelation 19:10 to Revelation 22:8, 9. This gives a broader understanding to include "those who have been called by God to be prophets," which I believe includes Ellen G. White.

RAY MAYOR
Michigan, United States

Waiting for God's Call

I always wait eagerly for the next issue of *Adventist World*, and the first thing I do is look for the missionary stories. To read these stories moves me very much and tears roll down my face while seeing God's power working in the lives of other people.

Early today I received the October 2008 issue, and I was very touched by

the article "No Fault of Their Own," in which Loren Seibold writes about the work that is being done in Kolkata for the prostitutes and their children. While I was reading, I was thinking about strategies that might be used to help these types of people, and it seemed difficult because any project needs financing.

I was shaken when Pastor Loren was asked by a brother, "Pastor, is there something you need?" I realized that every project with the intention of helping others is approved by God and has financing from above.

I am waiting for God's call to do a similar work, and stories like this and others fill my soul with the zeal of working for others.

HULDA NOHEMI
CHAMBI MAMANI
Brazil

Blessings

Blessed is our Lord, for He is using you to do a good work on this planet Earth. The *Adventist World* magazine has really given us hope of worshipping our God in truth!

JOVEN NYANGAU
Via e-mail

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

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I am a doctor, baptized four years ago. I took Bible studies, and in our group three were baptized. Six more hesitated. Please pray that the Spirit of God will help them decide to give themselves to Jesus, and that I will have strength to accomplish the work for God.

AMAND, *France*

I'm a theology student who has finished my B.Th. program and I want to continue with the M.A. in theology, but I don't have the money. Please pray for me so that I can become a good pastor.

GAISIAMLUNG, *via e-mail*

Pray for my father, who is HIV positive, so that God will prolong his years.

VINCENT, *Zambia*

Thank you so much for praying for financial and educational help for me. I thank God for people like you who spend time praying for people like me who need prayers. This is not only for me but also for the good of my family. Please also pray for the building of our church here in Happy Valley. It has been four years since the construction stopped because of financial problems.

REHUEL, *Philippines*

I am a female in need of getting married. I am a little desperate because I was hurt. Please also include other women in my church. We need more prayers for health and God's providence.

THEO, *Uganda*

I am a student and ask for you to pray so that God helps me in my exams. Please pray that our heavenly Father will give me intelligence to complete the year and continue on.

NDIKUMANA, *Burundi*

Please pray for me that God will grant me a blessing so that my coconut trees will yield much fruit so that I can sell them at the market and pay for my school tuition.

GEORGE, *Philippines*

I am 16 years old. My supplication is that the Lord may help me penetrate my secular high school with the three angels' messages. I also ask that you pray for boldness through the Holy Spirit that I may be a youth of actions and not merely of words.

DANIEL, *via e-mail*



ADRIAN VAN LEEEN

Please pray for financial blessings for me and my family. I am unemployed and have had a hard time finding a job. I am 18 years old.

SIMBARASHE, *Zimbabwe*

Please pray for my sister, Beverly, and her three children as she battles stage IV colon-rectal cancer.

CATHY, *from Outpostcenters*

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.

Andrews University Undergoing Accreditation, Public Invited to Comment

Andrews University, a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning operated by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, is seeking comments from the public about the university in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The university will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit March 22–25, 2009, by a team representing the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Andrews University has been accredited by the Commission since 1939. Its accreditation is at the doctoral degree level and includes degree sites at various other locations around the world.

The team will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet the Commission's criteria for accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the university:
Public Comment on Andrews University
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago IL 60602, United States

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed. Comments cannot be treated as confidential.

All comments must be received by February 22, 2009.

“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

The Son and His Sacrifice

Read about a little gift from a big heart.



He was 7 and I was 21. It was an unlikely scenario that our paths would have crossed. I went as a student volunteer to do work in the Andaman Islands of India. I did not know who would receive me at the seaport, where I would be living, or what exactly I would be doing, yet I pressed forward, knowing that the Lord would provide.

On the ship, I met a man who, besides being an Adventist, was also the chief cook of the ship. He invited me to his home and I gladly accepted. He lived with his family of seven in a small house with only two small rooms and a kitchen. He, his wife, and the rest of the family gladly accepted me to live with them.

They had only one son, who was 7 years old, whom they fondly called “Sunny.” Sunny was my guide in that little town; he would show me the way to the store, restaurant, and houses of the church members.

For six weeks I was busy conducting Vacation Bible School and the church services because there was no pastor for that congregation. The time passed quickly, and all too soon it was time for me to return to Spicer Memorial College in Pune, India, to continue my studies.

As the last week rolled in, we had mixed feelings. Every child became a special friend. Being together for more than a month, had created a bond of togetherness that was very strong.

Too soon the time came to eat the last meal in the home of the dear family that had helped me the most. As the mother served, Sunny sat by my side at the table. Very often, Sunny would fuss with his mother about the food, and his mother, a very patient woman, fed him almost every meal. She didn’t mind because he was their only son. But for this meal he sat with me and ate all that his mother served him, without any fuss whatsoever, by himself.

After the meal as we gathered for prayer, the father of the family said, “This is for you,” handing me a 50-rupee currency note (about one U.S. dollar). As I was wondering what this was all about, he joyfully told me what had happened before the meal while I was packing my stuff to leave.

Sunny had asked, “Father, what will you give me if I eat my food on my own and not fuss or trouble my mother?” The father, very pleased with his son, said, “Choose whatever you want.” Sunny asked for 50 rupees. The deal was made. Sunny ate his food. The father was very impressed, and just as he was about to give him the 50 rupees, Sunny said, “Please give it to my VBS teacher.”

The amount was small, but to me it was very sacred. We prayed, we wept, and I left the Andaman Islands—only by distance, not by heart.

As I traveled alone I was reminded of another Son who went to His Father and asked, “What will you give me if I drink this cup?” And the Father gently asked the Son to choose, and He said, “Please give life eternal to that VBS teacher and to all who believe in me.”

—JESIN ISRAEL KOLLABATHULA is currently a graduate student at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

In January 2008, Alberto Tasso Barros left his home of Franca, Brazil, to volunteer for one year at Casa Mia Old People's Home in Forli, Italy.

"As a Christian and a theology student," says Alberto, "I decided that I could not just sit back and watch a planet that is destroying itself, but instead that I should participate in bringing to it the light which comes from the gospel and the hope which belongs to those who believe in the second coming of Christ."

Having been at Casa Mia for several months now, Alberto is doing his best through his service to bring light and hope to its residents. He helps residents exercise, reads to and plays games with them, and even has Bible studies with several of them. Two have already been baptized! Alberto truly enjoys working with Casa Mia's elderly residents.

"It's incredible," he says, "how a smile, a hug, some time spent in conversation, or just a simple 'hi' can

transform their lives." To others who are thinking about volunteering, Alberto adds, "It will change your life!"

If you would like to read stories about other Adventist volunteers around the world, or learn about how you can participate in the volunteer program, go to www.adventistvolunteers.org.

—Jill Walker Gonzalez, Adventist Volunteer Services, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Md., U.S.A.



SOUNDBYTE

"If we want the water of life to seep deeply into our lives, then

we must have more than a splash-and-go mentality."

—Pastor Jim Park, in "How to Make Manna Tasty," posted on his Web site, DiscipleTree.com

ADVENTIST LIFE

I volunteer at the Adventist Medical Center in Portland, Oregon United States. I was on my way to the hospital one morning and stopped in at a store. The cashier, seeing my volunteer uniform (white pants, sweater, and navy blue cardigan), asked, "Do you work for an airline?" Offhandedly, I replied, "No, Adventist Hospital." "Oh!" she exclaimed enthusiastically, "I love the Adventist Hospital. Adventists are *sooo* nice." Somewhat taken aback, I said only, "Thank you, thank you."

She turned to the next customer and I went out to my car. As I drove across the bridge to Portland, I thought, "I hope everyone who comes in contact with an Adventist or Adventist institution today has that positive of a response."

—Bette W. Miller, Vancouver, Washington, United States

