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WORLD VIEW

A Majority of One

Someday, by the grace of God, I will get to be a part of a vastly popular mass movement.

In all likelihood, however, that probably won't happen until I stand one day with the millions of white-robed saints pictured in Revelation 7. They gather before the throne and before the Lamb with palm branches in their hands, crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:9, 10).

Between now and then, as a disciple of Jesus, I will probably know much more about belonging to a small and sometimes unpopular minority, for the faith of Jesus always passes through the narrow gate. I shouldn't expect to hear ringing public affirmations of the Bible truths to which I am committed from those who follow other gods or walk the broad highway or put on their Christianity but once a week, and only then for an hour.

It's certainly easier to write or read these words than to live them, for our hearts hunger for the knowledge that we have joined a popular majority. Sometimes, unconsciously, we even judge the worth of things by how many of our neighbors are choosing what we choose or living as we live.

One hundred fifty years ago a man who had learned the quiet strength of choosing what is right over what is popular wrote lines I have emblazoned on the walls of my life. Persons convicted in their souls of a great truth should "*not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.*"*

Seventh-day Adventists, growing rapidly as a world movement of Christians, still do well to hear these words. Few Adventists are privileged to live where their faith is held in high esteem or celebrated by a majority. Many believers live the loneliness that Moses experienced in the wilderness or the apostle John knew on Patmos.

To them—to you, if you are one of them—I underline the consolation that comes from being true to the Word of God and the leading of the Spirit: "*It is enough if they have God on their side.*"

Yes, dear friend—it still is enough.

*Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*





— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

Global Preaching Seminar Available via Satellite, Online

■ Pastors of all denominations are being invited by the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Ministerial Association to attend—in person or remotely—a free seminar on preaching. The 2009 program, titled "Beyond Pulpits and Pews . . ." will be broadcast live to a global audience from North America on Tuesday April 21, 2009, 1:00-4:30 p.m. EDT or 17:00-20:30 GMT.

Presenters this year include a number of well-known and dynamic preachers from Adventist and other

MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

PRESENTERS: Renowned expositors (from left) Michael Quicke, Chris Oberg, Fred B. Craddock, and Israel Bamidele Olaore will participate in the 2009 PREACH seminar, which will be broadcast live on April 21. The program is available free, worldwide, as a gift from the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Ministerial Association.

WORLD REPORT

traditions: Fred B. Craddock, Bandy Distinguished Professor of Preaching Emeritus, in the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, United States; Israel Bamidele Olaore, senior university pastor and head of the Division of Spiritual Life at Babcock University in Nigeria; Chris Oberg, senior pastor of the 1,200-member Seventh-day Adventist church in Calimesa, California, United States; and Michael Quicke, professor of preaching at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois, United States.

“These are some of the top expositors of the Word who are working today,” said Anthony Kent, associate secretary of the Ministerial Association. “We are delighted to share their knowledge with pastors around the world as a free gift and a public service.”

The PREACH seminars, as the program is now known, is part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s outreach to pastors of all Christian faiths; the church also sends thousands of copies of *Ministry* magazine, free, to non-Adventist pastors six times a year. The seminar is another way to share useful resources with other pastors, as well as to familiarize them with Seventh-day Adventists.

Each of the speakers brings a distinguished background to their task. Craddock was selected by *Newsweek* magazine as one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world. Olaore has pastored in the U.S. and Nigeria, and ministered in South America, Asia,

New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, and Bermuda. Oberg has grown one of the largest Seventh-day Adventist congregations in North America. Quicke, who had a congregation in Cambridge, England, of more than 500, which also serves 4,000 people weekly through its mission center, was recently named as “one of the premier thinkers and writers on preaching today” by *Preaching* magazine.

During the live broadcast, global participants will be able to e-mail questions to each of the presenters. Along with the Internet, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Hope Channel Europe, Hope Channel International, and Hope Church Channel satellite networks will air the broadcast, and other satellite arrangements are possible.

Full details on the PREACH seminar and how to participate can be found online at www.ministerialassociation.com, Kent said.

—Adventist World Staff.

BRAZIL: Seventh-day Adventists Win Sabbath Exemption in Santa Catarina

■ Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other Sabbatharians in Santa Catarina, Brazil—which has a population of nearly 6 million people—will be able to keep the Sabbath while pursuing educational goals, it was announced in January.

Governor Luiz Henrique da Silveira signed a bill guaranteeing that entrance exams for public and private universities in the state would be held between 8 a.m. on Sunday and 6 p.m. on Friday, times that would not interfere with Sabbath

worship. If exams must be given on the Sabbath, or Saturday, those unable to participate would be given a separate chance to take the test, the law states.

“We could perceive that, since the preliminary phase of the creation of the law, the hand of God directed the human minds involved, since the work resulted in a greater benefit for His people in the state of Santa Catarina,” said Wilson Knoener Fields, an attorney and legal secretary for the Judicial Court of Santa Catarina who also is a Seventh-day Adventist church member. Several other Adventist legislators participated in the effort, reports indicate.

—Reported by Felipe Lemos/ASN; with AW Staff.

Friedensau Begins Theological Master’s Program

■ Friedensau Adventist University in Möckern-Friedensau, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany, has begun a master’s program in theological studies, offering concentrations in Adventist Studies and Mission Studies. The course is accredited by the German agency AQAS (Agency for Quality Assurance Through Accreditation of Courses) in Bonn.

According to the school, the program “offers students advanced education in the field of theology which will broaden their horizon and deepen their knowledge in a selected area of emphasis.”

The Adventist Studies program “encompasses advanced studies of the history and theology of the Adventist Church. It leads students



IN CONVERSATION: Bernhard Oestreich, dean of Theology (left), in conversation with program coordinators Stefan Hoeschele and Rolf Poehler about the new master's program in Adventist Studies at Friedensau Adventist University in Germany.

to a better comprehension of the development, self-understanding, and societal role of the denomination and enables them to serve in leading functions in the church or work in the field of inter-church relations," the school's brochure states.

Students in the Mission Studies program will "develop a thorough theological understanding of Christian mission. Students will gain advanced competencies and skills that are relevant for serving in countries where Christianity is not the traditional religion or cultural background."

Both programs will be taught in English, under the direction of Rolf J. Pöhler and Stefan Höschele. Friedensau is located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) west of Berlin, Germany, and boasts an international student body. Information on the program can be found online at www.thh-friedensau.de/en.

—AW Staff.

WORLD REPORT

UNION PRESIDENT IS Jamaica's New Governor-General

Adventist Patrick Allen renders national service.

By MARK A. KELLNER, news editor

For the first time in the 47-year history of Jamaica as an independent nation, a Seventh-day Adventist will hold the nation's highest office: Patrick Allen, until recently president of the church's West Indies Union, was expected to take office as Jamaica's sixth governor-general in late February. Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding announced his appointment in a parliament session on January 13, 2009.

"It is astounding and I don't think I can wrap my head around it, and I'm not sure what the Lord is doing here, but He has some Joseph and Daniel role for me to perform," Allen told *Adventist World* in a telephone interview that day from Freeport, Bahamas, where he was helping to conduct an audit. "I'm just praying about it and making myself available for God to use me in whichever way He chooses best."

Allen said he would resign his present position as West Indies Union president. A special executive session was held February 10 to name a successor, said Israel Leito, Inter-American Division president.

Continued next page

GOVERNOR-GENERAL: Patrick Allen, until recently president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the West Indies, is the new governor-general of Jamaica, a nation where roughly 11 percent of the population is Seventh-day Adventist. He is the first pastor, and third Seventh-day Adventist member, to hold such a position in a British Commonwealth nation, and the first Adventist to hold the office in Jamaica.

RAJ MUND DABROWSKI/ANN



WORLD REPORT

“The church serves the community, and we can do this from within the church organization or as individuals in other activities,” Leito said in a statement. “The appointment of Dr. Allen as governor-general of Jamaica is something very historic in Jamaica and the world field; as far as memory goes, this has never happened before, but the Inter-American Division is so pleased that one of our leaders through the high standing of the church has reached such a notoriety that he could be considered for such a position.”

Leito added: “We wish Dr. Allen all the best, realizing the serious challenges he will have—to be the leader with nonpolitical authority but still in a leadership position for a whole nation. We will continue praying for him, and he can be assured that anytime he is willing to return to the ministry that the doors of the church are always open for him. The church will always be praying for him in this position.”

Orville Parchment, himself a native of Jamaica and the assistant to the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, said the world church leadership was happy at the news: “On behalf of Pastor Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and our worldwide church family, we congratulate Pastor Allen on his new appointment. We pray for God’s continued blessing as he carries out his new civic responsibilities.”



PAST AND PRESENT: In this 2006 photo, Sir Kenneth Hall, then the governor-general of Jamaica (left), presents Patrick Allen with Jamaica’s Order of Distinction on the country’s Heroes Day. Allen was honored for his contribution to the church and religion in Jamaica. Allen was tapped to succeed Sir Kenneth on January 13, 2009, and was sworn in six weeks later.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JAMAICA GLEANER

Allen, who turned 58 on February 7, replaced Sir Kenneth Hall, who was appointed governor-general in February of 2006, and who reportedly resigned for health reasons. Ironically, Sir Kenneth presented Allen with the Order of Distinction on the country’s 2006 Heroes Day for his contribution to the church and religion in Jamaica.

According to the Jamaica Information Service (JIS), the governor-general “represents the queen on ceremonial occasions such as the opening of parliament, the presentation of honors, and military parades.”

Jamaica’s constitution gives the position additional powers, the JIS reported, including “appointing and disciplining officers of the civil service, in proroguing [dissolving] parliament and so on, but only in [a] few cases is he empowered to act entirely on his own discretion. The governor-general also exercises the prerogative of mercy on behalf of the queen” including “the power to grant [a] pardon to any person who has been sentenced to death.”

Golding, who has held the prime minister's office since November 2007, is married to Lorna. The Goldings are regular attendees at Adventist worship services. Allen said the church's work to improve life in Jamaica brought his name to the leader's attention.

"I suspect [Prime Minister Golding] has grown to appreciate the [Seventh-day Adventist] church and its function in the country over the years," Allen said. "The church in Jamaica is very significant and playing a role in nation-building. One of our strategic roles is 'the church in the community.' The work we have been doing and the execution of that strategic issue has caught the attention of the government."

Allen recounted that Golding "said to me that what he needs for the nation is what he thinks I can bring to bear: the integrity, the moral bearing, and the leadership."

A nation of 2.8 million people, Jamaica is a constitutional parliamentary democracy that gained its independence from Britain in 1962. It remains a part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and Queen Elizabeth II is its monarch; the governor-general represents the queen.

Allen was educated at Moneague Teachers' College in Jamaica, and then at church-owned Andrews University, where he studied for undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate degrees. He holds a Ph.D. in educational administration and supervision, a master's degree in systematic

theology, and a bachelor's degree in history and religion.

He is an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was elected to the position of president of the West Indies Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in October 2000 and reelected in 2005.

Prior to that, Allen served in many other posts within and outside of the Adventist Church. He served as president of the Central Jamaica Conference, director of Education and Family Life at the West Indies Union Conference, and as a district pastor. As a trained teacher he also served as principal of schools, and adjunct professor at West Indies College, which is now Northern Caribbean University (NCU). Allen currently chairs NCU's board of trustees.

"I'm extremely proud, on behalf of Andrews University, to have one of our alumni three times over be considered for this important position," said provost Heather Knight. "As a fellow Jamaican, I have warm thoughts about the office of governor-general. It's held in very high esteem."


Sir James Carlisle, who served as governor-general of Antigua for more than 14 years and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his service, was the first Seventh-day Adventist to hold the head-of-state position. "That's wonderful news," he responded when a reporter called to inform him of Allen's selection.

"It's a wonderful office of witness as well," Sir James told *Adventist World*. "Your very presence there is a witness. Most people know who Adventists are."

Sir James added, "Jamaicans love their institutions. They have tremendous respect for their institutions. I'd be very surprised if he doesn't have a lot of knowledge; [although] there's nothing like doing the job."

Jamaica is home to the West Indies Union and church-owned Northern Caribbean University. About 11 percent of the population is Seventh-day Adventist. Allen said he was conscious of his new visibility as governor-general.

"It is a great day for Adventism and also for the church in Jamaica," Allen said. "I think the members are going to be very excited about this, and they will also come into an awareness that they are going to be ... scrutinized and the searchlight will be on. It is an opportunity to witness in areas where we were not able to access easily. I think that is the most exciting part of all of it. We'll be able to introduce our faith and learn more about who we are, especially in the higher echelons in society. It bodes well for the church."

He conceded, "There will be some challenges, but I doubt they will be insurmountable. We have a God who is always looking out for us, and He will give the wisdom." 

—*With information from Nigel Coke, West Indies Union, and the Jamaica Information Service.*

WORLD VISTA

The Elijah Project

Youth worldwide proclaiming the gospel

By MARK A. FINLEY



In 2005 the General Conference (GC) Center of Global Evangelism—in cooperation with the GC Youth Department, Adventist-Laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI), and the world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—launched a comprehensive evangelistic strategy to involve thousands of Adventist youth and young adults in the direct proclamation of the gospel. Since that time, nearly one quarter of a million young people have been engaged in conducting between 35,000 and 40,000 evangelistic meetings.

The Holy Spirit has been poured out powerfully through the preaching of these consecrated youth. In the past four years more than 100,000 people have been baptized as the result of their efforts. The GC Center of Global Evangelism and ASI have provided evangelistic sermons, DVDs, picture rolls, and a financial subsidy of nearly \$1.5 million to world divisions.

While thousands of Adventist youth and young adults between the ages of 15 and 30 each year are involved in a variety of community service, witness, volunteer, and student missionary projects, the Elijah Project is unique. It focuses on direct evangelistic proclamation. It is a comprehensive strategy to involve youth and young adults in the presentation of a full-scale, Christ-centered, doctrinal evangelistic series. Just as Elijah proclaimed God’s message in his generation, youth are confronting the twenty-first-century culture with biblical truth for our time.

Referring to the powerful preaching of John the Baptist, Scripture declares: “He will also go before [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the

just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). The ministry of John the Baptist, “in the spirit and power of Elijah,” prepared a generation for the first coming of Christ. The proclamation of God’s end-time message, “in the spirit and power of Elijah,” prepares the final generation for the second coming of Christ.

Commenting on this last-day evangelistic thrust, Ellen White added: “Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ’s first advent” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 62). Just as Elijah boldly challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, youth today are challenging the idols of our time. They are calling for commitment to God’s eternal truths, and dramatic miracles of conversion are taking place.

India

Nilay Samanta, an Adventist young person in India, recently joined the Elijah Project. One day while sharing Jesus’ love in a remote village, Samanta was confronted by Pallab Ghosh. Ghosh and his family were idol worshippers. They worshipped Kali, a goddess of *shakti* (power). Fearlessly, Samanta, in the spirit and power of Elijah, invited Ghosh to attend the evangelistic meetings.

Samanta preached about Elijah, Ahab, and the prophets of Baal from 1 Kings 18, and the Spirit of God touched Ghosh’s heart. As he continued attending the meetings, he sensed God was leading him to make dramatic changes in his life. Transformed by God’s grace through the preaching of a young Adventist preacher, today Ghosh is a baptized member of the Adventist Church, awaiting the return of his Lord.

SPIRIT OF ELIJAH: Young preachers working with the Elijah project baptized scores of villagers in Nigeria after God used His Holy Spirit and a poisonous snake to convict their hearts.

Nigeria

Youth actively working for Christ around the world are also experiencing the power of God. Some are witnessing modern-day miracles. Jean Emmanuel Nlo Nlo, youth and communication director of the West-Central Africa Division, shares this amazing story from a village in the eastern part of Nigeria:

As the Elijah Project youth team entered a particular village and began visiting homes to prepare for an upcoming evangelistic series, one young evangelist was bitten by a poisonous snake. The consequences could have been deadly. The young people prayed earnestly. They claimed the promises of God, such as, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find” (Matt. 7:7). Miraculously, the poisonous snake bite had no harmful effect on the young preacher. But Satan was not through yet. During the evangelistic meeting in the village that evening, another poisonous snake slithered down the aisle in an attempt to attack the preacher. Once again God moved powerfully and the villagers killed the snake. The Holy Spirit was poured out. The entire village sensed the moving of God, and scores were baptized.

United States

Someone wisely said, “Give young people a challenge, lift their vision to see what is possible, and they will do the impossible because they do not know it cannot be done.” Robert L. Robinson, an evangelistic coordinator in India, confirms this thought in a report on youth evangelism: “Someone had forgotten to inform Michael that it is impossible for a 13-year-old to preach a sermon, let alone conduct a full evangelistic effort in the Sunderban islands. Michael was part of a group of students from Sunnysdale Academy in the United States. Conducting evangelistic meetings at 12 different sites in India, these enthusiastic young people witnessed 770 people baptized as the result of their efforts.”

South Pacific

Nonouti Island is a remote dot in the ocean south of Tarawa in the South Pacific. Only about 3,000 to 4,000 people live there. Under the direction of Gilbert Cangy, youth director of the South Pacific Division, youth targeted Nonouti Island. They began by visiting families, praying in homes, developing relationships, and sharing God’s love in a variety of ways. During their youth-led evangelistic meetings, 19 people were baptized.

The youth of the South Pacific were also actively involved in a major evangelistic campaign in the archipelago of Vanuatu in the city of Santo Town, and 245 people were baptized.


Challenged to Witness

The testimony of tens of thousands of youth is that their own faith grows as they become involved in service for Christ. These faith-filled young people aren’t content to sit on the sidelines and criticize the church. They are taking the reins, shaping the future, and becoming actively engaged in making the church all they long for it to be.

Research reveals that youth are eager to be involved in the life and witness of the church. A 10-year study conducted by Roger Dudley and a staff of researchers at Andrews University in Michigan, United States, of 1,523 teenagers—all baptized members of the church scattered throughout North American Division territory—concluded that “most [young people] would welcome a challenge to witness.” Dudley adds: “In spite of the moderate level of spirituality and church activity, overwhelming numbers exhibit interest in creative ventures for Christ. Our youth seem to be saying, ‘I may not be a great Adventist right now, but I really would like to get involved if you could challenge me with a mission.’”*

There’s a deep heart cry from Adventist youth who want to be involved. They don’t want to be simply entertained.

The Adventist Church has so much more to offer its youth than the world’s amusements clothed in garments of religion. Ours is a vision of reaching a lost world for Christ. To accomplish this overwhelming, seemingly impossible task the church needs its brightest and best minds.

Witness is the life calling of every Christian. Young and old alike are called by God to make a difference for His kingdom. The church needs the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of its youth, and hundreds of thousands are actively involved in sharing their faith. Heaven rejoices in their commitment to a finished work in this generation. 

* Roger Dudley, *Adventist Review*, July 18, 1991, pp. 21, 22.



Mark Finley is a vice president for global evangelism for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

WINDOW

Into the Philippines

By HANS OLSON

Visited in 1521 by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and claimed for Spain, the Philippines carry the name of Philip II, then king of Spain, though known for centuries under other names by visitors from China, India, and Arabia. The Philippines are a collection of some 7,100 islands off the southeast coast of Asia between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The islands are mostly mountainous with narrow coastal lowlands.

This archipelago remained a Spanish colony until 1898, when it became a United States territory as a result of the Spanish-American War. After centuries of foreign control the Philippines became a self-governing commonwealth in 1935. President Manuel Quezon was elected president and asked to prepare the country for independence during a 10-year transition period. However, the islands were invaded by Japan in 1941, and during World War II Allied forces fought along with Filipinos to regain control. The Philippines finally gained independence in 1946.

Adventists in the Philippines

Adventist work started slowly in the Philippines. The first Adventist missionary, a literature evangelist, arrived in the Philippines in 1905, followed by several more missionary families the next year. However, it took six years for the first person to be baptized. Today that's all changed: nearly 600,000 Adventists live and worship in the Philippines. As the Adventist Church grew, many educational and health-care institutions sprang up, some of which—such

as the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS)—serve the Adventist Church throughout Asia.

Other major Adventist institutions in the Philippines are:

- Central Philippine Adventist College
- Manila Adventist Medical Center
- Mountain View College
- Northern Luzon Adventist College
- Philippine Publishing House
- Philippine Adventist University

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the first quarter of 2009 will support three educational projects in the Philippines. The first is at Palawan Adventist Academy in the northern Philippines, where for more than 50 years young people have been trained for Christian service. A recent study revealed the need to add vocational and technical training to the academy's curriculum. Courses such as auto mechanics and computer classes will enhance the education the school can offer, and will expand the outreach of this school to its community. Your offerings will help build classrooms to accommodate these additional classes.

The second project is in Dumaguete, a city in the central Philippines, where there is a thriving elementary school. But secondary students must choose either to attend public schools or travel to another island to continue their Adventist education. Offerings will help build classrooms, the first step in establishing an Adventist secondary school in this region of the country.

The third project is in Zamboanga, a large multiethnic and multireligious city on the southwestern tip of Mindanao, one of the southern islands. Here an elementary school has long served students from every faith in the community. Recently the elementary school was rebuilt and work started on a secondary school so that students won't have to leave the Adventist school system in order to complete their secondary education. Again, offerings will help complete this school.

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



THE PHILIPPINES	
Capital:	Manila
Major languages:	Filipino (official, based on Tagalog) and English (official); eight major dialects—Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan
Religion:	Roman Catholic, 81%; Muslim, 5%; Evangelical, 3%; Iglesia ni Kristo, 2.3%; Aglipayan, 2%; other Christian, 4.5%; other, 2.5%
Population:	88.7 million*
Adventist membership:	571,653*
Adventist-to-population ratio:	1:155*

* General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, 145th Annual Statistical Report



Living with Sciatic Pain

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES *and* PETER N. LANDLESS

I have a lot of pain that radiates from my back into my buttock, and down the outer side of my leg at the back. It is worse if I walk a lot; and though I've seen doctors and a chiropractor, it keeps coming back. Do I just have to live with it?

The condition you have is often called *sciatica*, though perhaps a more highfalutin term is “neurogenic claudication.” It is a fairly common problem, becoming more common in older age groups.

The group of conditions causing this problem is called lumbar spinal stenosis, or a narrowing of the spinal canal through which the nerves must pass. A result of the narrowing is compression of the nerves, with resulting pain.

Lumbar spinal stenosis causes symptoms at an earlier age than other causes, often in people of 20 to 40 years of age. Such people are born with shortened, bony pedicles, which make the spinal canal narrow.

Degenerative processes are the most common cause. Here, osteoarthritis or degeneration of the intervertebral disc apparatus can result in bulging onto the nerves, or even a hypertrophy, or thickening, of the ligaments with a subsequent nerve compression. The typical age for symptoms to begin is between 60 and 90 years.

Other causes are trauma, and even surgery may be followed by stenosis at the level of the surgery or one space up or down. Movement of one vertebra upon the other, a condition called spondylolisthesis, can also compress the nerves.

Patients with this problem of spinal stenosis in their lumbar region have complaints like those you describe. If your doctor raises your leg while it is not bent at the knee, you may find the pain is made worse. You may also have difficulty walking with your eyes closed, because the position-sensing nerves may be compromised.

Osteoarthritis in the hip often causes groin pain made worse by rotating the hip inward, and a condition called trochanteric bursitis is associated with tenderness over the bony part of your thigh bone at the top. Pain in the calf when walking is not influenced by flexing or extending one's back, whereas lumbar spinal stenosis is often made worse by extending backwards.

Unfortunately, treatment is not easy. Fortunately, the condition does not usually progress rapidly, but dramatic improvement is also unlikely.

Exercises such as bicycling and swimming are better tolerated than walking and running. Abdominal exercises help avoid excessive lumbar extension. Corsets may help with posture, so are worth a try. When pain medications—either in tablet form or injection—fail, a patient may consider surgery. Symptoms should be severe enough to justify what can be less than

totally satisfactory surgery.

Studies show that although some 80 percent of patients may have some pain relief after surgery, at least a third will report back pain 7 to 10 years later.

Those with the most severe nerve root compression are most likely to have their symptoms relieved by surgery. Different procedures are being used, but the studies needed to define clearly the best approaches are limited in number at this time.

Before surgery, MRI imaging is usually necessary where it is available, and less aggressive treatments should have been tried. Maintaining the strength of core muscles is important, and avoiding jogging-type exercise is imperative. We suggest you see a physiotherapist or an orthopedic doctor for advice and suggested exercises. ●



Allan R. Handysides, M.B., Ch.B., FRCPC, FRCS, 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.

One of the hymns we Christians like to sing is the classic “He Hideth My Soul,” by the famous Fanny J. Crosby. The refrain says:

“He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand.”*

It seems that the author got her inspiration from Moses’ experience at Mount Sinai, as told in the book of Exodus. I don’t know about you, but I have difficulty relating to this song. So I grabbed my “good old pal,” my faded-and-a-bit-torn Bible (inherited from my late dad), and with the aid of *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* did some exegesis on the scriptural narrative.

It Moved Me

The main passage that connects to this particular hymn is Exodus 33:21, 22:

“Then the Lord said, ‘Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by’” (NASB).

I have to admit that this passage has an astounding effect on me. Nonetheless, one aspect of it that outshines the rest (at least, for me) has to do with perceiving “the glory of God.”

The Scriptures explicitly reveal that one of the means of knowing God involves being exposed to His ways (Ex. 33:13). It appears that God’s glory is exhibited in His character. In Exodus 33:18-22 Moses asked God to “Please, show me Your glory.” Then God said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ But He said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’ And the Lord said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by’” (cf. Ex. 34:5-7).



Nixon de Vera is an Adventist Volunteer Services pastor assigned to the Seventh-day Adventist Okinawa International Church, in Okinawa, Japan. The church’s Web site is www.oicweb.org.

THE Crack IN THE Seeing God through

These passages present God as both a God of mercy and of justice. And verse 7 of chapter 34 indicates that forgiveness covers three facets of our spiritual fall: iniquity, transgression, and sin.

In Hebrew, iniquity (*avon*) means turning from the truth; transgression (*peshah*) means rebellion; and sin (*chatt’ah*) means to go astray. These all stand in contrast to repentance (Hebrew: *nocham*, penitence, sorrow; and Greek, *metanoia*, change of mind, conversion).

Downfall and Restoration

While reflecting on Moses’ witness to this awesome epiphany, I realized that getting to know God is proportional to benefiting from His goodness, which means basking in His infinite grace and mercy. He is patient and compassionate to those who seek repentance and renewal. On the other hand, He does not ignore the stubbornness and recklessness of the wicked; and they will definitely receive their due penalty. It’s thus in our interest to seek His all-encompassing forgiveness.

But what does it really mean to be forgiven?

The Lord Himself discloses that a person’s spiritual downfall involves at least three stages. At first, a typical person, whether Christian or nonbeliever, will have a tendency to live at variance with God’s will or to question the validity and practicality of the Scriptures. As a result, that person will disregard the supreme authority of God and, in essence, live a life of rebellion. In the end, that person will be found guilty and be lost beyond redemption, unless there is a break in this downward pattern.

Although our main passage (about the cleft of the rock) points to a literal phenomenon, we still may draw symbolic meaning out of it.

By NIXON DE VERA

Rock

the darkest times



*I believe that
“seeing His glory”
means, in essence,
to be acquitted and
restored.*

SAMANTHA VILLAGRAN/DIGITALLY MODIFIED

For instance, when we consistently resist God’s pleading, our hearts can become as stubborn as that of Pharaoh—as hard as an immovable rock (see Ex. 4:21; 7:3). But when we allow God to strike those stony hearts of ours, then through the *crack* created, so to speak, we’ll be able to see the glory of God. And I believe that “seeing His glory” means, in essence, to be acquitted and restored.

The Lord in His loving-kindness is always ready to intercept our downward fall, whether physically or spiritually, and the lives of Joseph and Moses in the Old Testament attest to that kind of miraculous intervention. At some point both were consumed with pride and impulsiveness (see Gen. 37:2-11; Ex. 2:11, 12). But God in His mysterious way changed them dramatically (Gen. 41:16; Ex. 3:11), changes that eventually became evident in the outcome of their lives (see Gen. 45:5; Deut. 33:3).

However, not all people will experience genuine repentance and conversion after being exposed to God’s glory. Like Joseph and Moses, Pharaoh was also proud and impulsive (see Ex. 5:2-9). And as He did with both Joseph and Moses, God also worked with him, bringing him almost to the brink of repentance (Ex. 12:31, 32). Unfortunately, after personally witnessing God’s manifest wonders over all, Pharaoh’s pride made him more stubborn than ever (Ex. 14:6-9).

Seeing His Glory

We should reconsider our beliefs and motives in light of the inspiration we get from the Scriptures. We should return to truth if we’ve been tempted to doubt God’s Word, and fully submit to His authority—instead of merely living for ourselves. Then we should remain in His presence, despite the allurements of worldly pleasure and the influence of human reason. But if we willingly and persistently resist God’s steadfast love, then we’ll suffer the ultimate consequence of separation from Him—eternal death.

Let’s remember, however, that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Eze. 33:11). Instead, He wants to rescue us if we’d let Him. The most challenging and difficult moments in our lives can make us better acquainted with Him. As in the cases of Joseph in the dungeon and Moses in the wilderness, answers will not come easy. But we’ll find that unsatisfied questions will providentially lead us to soul-searching and eventually to restoration.

So let us allow the Lord to cover our faces with His right hand. And as the Lord passes by, we’ll be allowed to see the long and dreadful scars on His back. Then gazing through “the crack in the rock” of His hand, we’ll realize that those scars are the stark evidence of His glory. ●

* *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, No. 520.

By EVE HARPER

A Dream, a Seed, and Two Friends

The growth of God's work in China



"Tell me more," Meifen* insisted of her neighbor Zhu. "I need to know more." Zhu's answer was emphatic, "No, no, not now. I have to go. I'll come back tomorrow and tell you more."

Zhu was nervous discussing Bible verses of hope and encouragement at her friend's house. In China some 40 years ago the law did not allow her to talk about God or share the gospel. She and Meifen were good friends, but if anyone—including neighbors or even children—reported what she was doing, there would be trouble for everyone involved, and probably punishment for Zhu. She was afraid, yet she knew she was doing the right thing.

It Started With a Dream

After finding Meifen sick one day, Zhu visited her friend frequently to help her during her illness. Then one night Zhu had a dream that troubled her because of its vividness and urgency. She felt it held personal meaning for her. She told her husband about the dream and asked him to help her interpret it.

"I dreamed I was home and that I had one seed," Zhu told her husband. "Then a very real voice told me that I should go to my neighbor Meifen's house and plant this seed in her front yard. Then Meifen and I took care of it and watered it, and in time it grew to be a thin, small tree. The

tree grew and had a large trunk and many, many branches that spread out and up, until it was a massive tree with thousands of leaves. Then the dream ended and I woke up.

"It was not like other dreams," she added. "I'm sure there is a meaning and that I must do something."

Zhu and her husband discussed and prayed about the dream. Her husband concluded, "The only seed we have is the knowledge of the good news of eternal life found in the gospel message. I think God wants you to go and take it to your neighbor.

"I know it's dangerous," he admitted, "but God is giving you instruction to go to your friend's house and share the only seed you and I have, which is the gospel of Jesus and eternal salvation. You need to do God's will regardless of the consequences. You are a follower of Christ, and you must follow His instructions."

Zhu agreed with the interpretation of the dream and decided that the one seed would be one Bible verse and its meaning. With each visit to her friend's house she would tell Meifen one Bible verse of hope and courage—no more.

Day after day Zhu visited Meifen, and day after day they prayed together. Each evening Meifen waited for her husband to come home from work to share with him the new verse of knowledge and its meaning.

Left to right: STUDYING INTENTLY: Church members come prepared each Sabbath to study and learn with Bibles, notebooks, pens, pencils, and other materials. They sit at pews designed for study with writing ledges. **THE TRUNK OF THE TREE:** Some 4,000 believers worship God each Sabbath in this fast-growing church in China, whose roots originated almost 40 years ago in a two-family house church. **HAND-COPIED BOOKS:** Young adults in China hand-copied books from Ellen White's Conflict of the Ages Series.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVE HARPER

Eventually, Meifen and her family were baptized, and the two families formed a house church. They met for Sabbath worship every Saturday. Others saw the joy and peace in their friends' lives and chose to join the believers—and more house churches were formed. These believers had sons and daughters who were studious and hardworking, but they could not continue their formal education because freedom of conscience had not been extended to students who kept the Sabbath. Led by their thirst for more knowledge, they dedicated themselves fully to the study of the Scriptures.

Passing on the Flame

The house church families felt privileged to own a Bible, but excitement mounted when they began to discover books owned by various members written by spiritual writer and speaker Ellen White (1827-1915). White, an American, had traveled in Europe as a speaker and later lived in Australia. Her books have been translated into numerous languages, including Chinese, and reading some of these books encouraged the new believers and taught them how to live more spiritual and healthful lives. Meifen's children, who were then in their teens, borrowed some of White's books from others and copied them by hand, word for word, on paper hand-sewn to form a book.

Soon many more people joined the family of believers. The children of both Zhu and Meifen became teachers of the Scriptures and leaders in the growing church. From Ellen White's books they learned how to plan and organize, how to be healthier and happier, and how to work wisely for the good of the neighborhood.

The seed had been planted, and it had grown into a solid trunk that was beginning to have branches.

Fast-forward

Now fast-forward to today in one of the largest cities in northeastern China. It is a growing industrial city of 7.3 million that is spreading out and enjoying stability, prosperity, and freedom of worship. Its citizens who believe in God and keep the Sabbath holy enter a large, beautiful church building there each Saturday and worship the God of heaven.

In this congregation believers begin arriving for prayers as early as 5:00 a.m., when the morning sunlight bathes the spire, clock, and cross of this huge gleaming church. Once inside, the first impression is of being in an outdoor cathedral, as the light streams in through the glass ceiling four stories above. The members come prepared to study and learn with Bibles, notebooks, pens, pencils, and other materials. They sit at pews designed for study with writing ledges. In front of each member, attached to the pew, is a hook on which to hang their sack lunch, which they eat with friends between the morning and afternoon church activities.

The first congregational Bible study starts at 7:00 a.m., followed by additional Bible studies at 8:00, 9:00, and 10:00. By the time the 11:00 a.m. worship hour arrives, more than 4,000 people have assembled to praise God in prayer, worship, and song.

Worshippers say they are grateful to have a church facility in which to assemble freely. They add that they don't forget to pray for those who do not have freedom to worship as they choose.

The Seed Becomes a Tree

Zhu and Meifen continue to worship here in this church, which represents the trunk of the seed planted some 40 years ago. It is a huge tree of faith with many, many branches and countless leaves. Seeds of it are spreading, and the joys of a pure life are being planted.

The shared dream has become a reality. 🍊

*The names in this article are pseudonyms.



Eve Harper is working on a program for teachers and university students to learn Chinese language and culture. She writes from Massachusetts, United States.

Left to right: CAMPUS PRAISE: The Campus Ministry Department of Korea's Sahmyook University mobilizes professors, students, pastors, and others to reach out to the school's high ratio of non-Adventist students. Students here are praising and worshipping God. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING: Sahmyook University's Centennial Hall.



Fishing for S



By SANGLAE KIM

ouls

*Sahmyook University
strategizes for mission.*

Sahmyook University in Seoul, Korea, had much to celebrate when it reached its centennial milestone in 2006. Named Euimyung College when it was first established more than 100 years ago, what was once considered a small school now boasts some 5,500 students studying in 33 academic tracks in six colleges and four graduate schools. Sahmyook has provided theological education for 60 years of its 103-year history; other departments gradually have been added since 1967. It moved to its present site on 200 acres situated 12 miles (20 kilometers) from downtown Seoul in 1949.

Deluged With Students

Each January more than 10,000 anxious youth applying for acceptance to Sahmyook University pack its campus. Only about 10 percent, or 1,242, of them—mostly non-Adventists—are accepted as new students. The ratio of successful applications from Adventist students is much higher than that of non-Adventists, yet the actual number of Adventist students annually accepted hovers near 200, or about 1 in 6.

Sahmyook University faculty and staff view this situation positively as an opportunity for mission, observing that every year 1,000 new seekers of truth are “storming” the school. The exuberant youth walking around campus are reminiscent of the fish that crowded around Peter’s fishing net in response to Jesus’ command: “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets” (Luke 5:4, NIV). The question now is how to handle the situation.



Sanglae Kim, Ph.D., is professor of theology and head chaplain at Sahmyook University.

Left: STUDYING TOGETHER: Small-group Bible studies are one of the multidirectional outreach programs. **Below: STUDENT LEADERS:** University students lead out in a chapel service.



Right: FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR: Hundreds of students are baptized as a result of the university's Campus Ministry program.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAHMYOOK UNIVERSITY

The Triple-S Principle

Sahmyook University operates a multidirectional campus ministry to win these young adults to the Lord. Campus Ministry functions with the financial and administrative support of the school and fully mobilizes pastors, professors, and Christian student peers. The chaplain's office calls this mission approach the "Triple-S Principle," an acronym for Spirituality, System, and Strategy.

Using the spirituality principle, the chaplain's office has established the following model for the campus mission: (1) It views the campus not as a job site but a battlefield for winning souls for Christ. (2) The students are the souls to be saved, members to be cared for, and gospel colleagues to be trained. (3) Teaching, counseling, and sharing fellowship are the methods of approach.

An Organized Approach

Sahmyook has established an organized system for faith education and mission. The faith education program is part of the curriculum. Requirements include (1) achieving 12 credits of Bible classes within six to seven semesters, (2) attending chapel once a week, (3) going to the Week of Prayer every semester, and (4) attending Sabbath worship during the students' first year. The chaplain's office is striving to deliver faith-based education effectively to the students by mobilizing and arranging human resources and forming strategies.

The strength of this system is in its human resources. Many pastors are part of the faculty at Sahmyook University—theology professors, full-time Bible teachers, and pastor-professors who are teaching in the departments of their areas of specialization. Also, the local

conference assigns young and capable pastors to serve in campus ministry for a term of two to four years. All the pastors assist students by guiding and giving them direction.

Faith-based education emanates from the professors in each department, because they are the most influential mentors to the students. They support mission work through counseling and endeavor to be good examples to the youth.

But this is not all. Forty sophomore theology students are also fully engaged in campus ministry. They serve as youth pastors in each department. Adventist student volunteers devote themselves to this mission. They are called SAY, an acronym for Sahmyook Adventist Youth. They approach the other students as peers and accomplish many things that pastors and professors cannot. The three sources of human cooperation participating in campus

ministry are known as the Three Ps: Pastors, Professors, and Peers.

Back to Its Roots

Bible classes and chapels are the root of faith education at Sahmyook University. The pastors counsel students personally in connection with these classes.

Senior nursing student Boyung Lee came to know Jesus through her freshman Bible class. She was influenced by her professor, who patiently answered her many questions. Now part of SAY, she is serving as a Sabbath school superintendent.

Other approaches besides Bible classes are also needed:

1. Sabbath Worship—Sahmyook University maintains a Sabbath attendance system for freshmen. All the faith leaders attempt to make Sabbath the most attractive day of the week. From their first Sabbath on campus, students encounter what they cannot experience at any other university. They receive a hearty welcome to Sabbath schools prepared by their peer Sabbath school leaders. The professors then meet with the students in small groups and have conversations with them.

When Sabbath school is over, the students gather in the main auditorium and participate in an evangelistic-oriented worship service. A fellowship lunch is then provided, with every department taking turns each week to prepare and serve the meal.

The school organizes and offers four types of on-campus Sabbath worship services: the “formal” style of worship for regular members, an “open” worship for freshmen, a “youth” worship for training Adventist students to evangelize, and an “English” worship for those interested in listening and communicating in English.

2. Week of Prayer—The Week of Prayer is the most important faith event of the semester. During this week of spiritual emphasis many students encounter the essence of the Christian faith. The Word of God,

prayer, and praise fill the campus.

Among recently held Weeks of Prayer, the students’ positive response has been particularly evident, especially during a segment of the program school officials call “Sharing the Story of My Life and My Faith With Youth.” This is when notable Adventists in political and academic fields are interviewed in front of the students by the university’s head chaplain.

Yena Park, a junior majoring in social welfare, had never encountered Christianity before entering the university. In the fall of 2006 she had such a strong experience that she shed tears while listening to the preacher during the Week of Prayer. The Holy Spirit worked in her heart and changed her life. Yena is now in charge of SAY’s worship service.

3. Festivals to Nurture and Encourage Student Leaders—About 200 SAY members (excluding theology students) devote themselves to campus ministry at Sahmyook University. They nurture new believers and help them to adapt to the church. The student leaders, however, also need spiritual food, so programs are organized to enhance their spiritual growth. The Festival of JS (Festival of Jesus’ Second Coming) is a three-day event held near the end of each semester. Its purpose is to spiritually strengthen and encourage faith leaders. Another event, the Small-Group Festival, is held off-campus during summer and winter breaks. The student leaders build strong spiritual fellowship bonds through this festival.

4. Mission Trips Abroad—Another important faith program that unfolds during school breaks is mission trips to other countries, during which many students discover authentic faith. Even nonbelievers who simply want to serve others join these mission adventures, and as a result often accept Christ as their Savior. Nothing is better for developing faith than practical service in connection with mission programs. Eleven teams in 2007 and 12 in 2008 from Sahmyook went on mission trips

to Russia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Taiwan, China, and other world regions.


A Personal Approach

Jongsook Song, a graduate English major, came to know and accept Christ while a student at the school, and then made spreading the gospel to her peers a priority. Even as a graduate student, she is continuing to serve in campus ministry.

Senior pharmacy major Sungwon Yoo had a negative view of Christianity; however, he accepted the Adventist beliefs because of the influence of another student, a sophomore theology major. Sungwon is now focusing on evangelizing other students in his department’s mission group.

This report is too brief to tell the stories of all the lives changed at Sahmyook University, but hundreds of students accept Christ each year and are baptized. In 2008 more than 460 students were baptized by the beginning of December. Helping these new believers to both grow in their faith and learn how to share their faith are key goals of the overall spiritual program of the university.

Sahmyook is putting forth its best effort to lead youth to Christ. School faculty and student leaders know well, however, that all the work accomplished is by the power of the Holy Spirit. “No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Because leaders recognize this truth, the chaplain’s office formulated the PQR guidelines for its ministry—(1) **Prayer** versus **Program**, (2) **Quality** versus **Quantity**, and (3) **Relationship** versus **Record**. This is the code they live by, because they know that even though the fishing net of Sahmyook University is narrow and dense, it can also be torn at any time. But they strive to do their best to mend the net frequently.

Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). At Sahmyook University that call is being clearly heard—and clearly answered. 

By
CLINTON
WAHLEN

NUMBER 3

Meet My Father

I have come to know Him personally... and so can you.

What image comes to mind when you think of God the Father? All-powerful and all-knowing, but distant and mostly busy running the universe? Or maybe your idea of the Father is somewhat vague, as mine was, until I realized just how frequently the Bible speaks about Him. How we view our heavenly Father is really important, because it also affects how we see Jesus and salvation, and how we read the rest of what the Bible has to say.

But most of us already have an idea of what “father” means, which may or may not be helpful in seeking to know our heavenly Father.

The mental image of my father has changed over the years. I don’t know what kind of father you had—stern and strong, weak and immature, kind and tender, or perhaps a blend of these. I have known people whose fathers seem to be everything a son or daughter could want. I have also known people whose fathers are nothing less than scary.

One thing I do know: No father is perfect. Mine is not, as he will freely admit. And I am far from being a perfect father for my children. But I know Someone who is perfect, because He has been there for me when no one else has.

Our ideal of what a father should be is distorted by our own experience, or limited by our imperfect understanding. That is why God speaks to us as a Father, to help us understand; and, more important, to be for us more than any human father could be.

What is our heavenly Father like? He is Someone who disciplines us because He loves us and knows better than our human fathers what it is that we really need.

There is one particular passage in the New Testament that I especially appreciate, because it contrasts human fathers with our heavenly Father. It

says that human fathers discipline us “as seemed best to them, but He [our heavenly Father] for our profit” (Heb. 12:10). In other words, our fathers, as hard as they might try and as godly as they may be, can never really fulfill the role that God fills in our life.

My earthly father did what *seemed* best to him (most of the time!), but my heavenly Father *knows* what’s best for me (all the time!). Not only because He knows me better than I know myself, but also because He knows how everything will turn out, and, most important, He knows what I need so that *I* will turn out the way He intended. And He will fulfill the plan He has for my life. That’s why, when we approach God in prayer, we can do so with confidence, because our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask him (Matt. 6:8).

God is small enough to *really care* about our little worries (and not just pretend, like I do with my children sometimes). Jesus said that the Father knows the number of hairs on our heads (Matt. 10:29-31). We can trust Him to care about *everything* that concerns us. At the same time, the Father is big enough to rule the universe and to have thought out the solution to the sin problem long before it ever arose (1 Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8).

Father

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

Like Jesus, Like Father

My heavenly Father is a rock of strength (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 46:1). “He is my strength when I am weak. He is the treasure that I seek. He is my all in all.”¹ We sometimes prove unfaithful, but He is always faithful because He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). He has adopted us into His family, giving us the Spirit as the seal of our connection to Him and of our belonging within His family. Likewise, the Spirit gives us courage to “come boldly” to His throne of *grace* and to cry out to Him in the most intimate (and respectful) way possible: “Abba, Father!” (2 Cor. 1:21, 22; Rom. 8:14, 15).

Because God is our Father, He is more deserving of honor than any earthly parent, and He calls us to love Him above even our closest family ties here (Deut. 33:9; cf. Mal. 2:10; 1:6; Matt. 10:37).

But the most amazing fact about our heavenly Father is that He is in character just exactly what Jesus is. As Jesus reminded Philip, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” He says the Father “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (John 14:9; Matt. 5:44, 45).

Sometimes our heavenly Father, in response to our pleas, settles for giving us only “the good.” But He is determined and constantly at work to give us His *best* (Matt. 7:11; see also Luke 11:13; Matt. 16:17; 18:19), though we often fail to see it. And the best gift of all is illustrated by the parable of Jesus that says more about the Father than any other: the parable of the prodigal son. This parable teaches us that as deluded, ungrateful, and prodigal as we may have been, the Father longs for us to return. At the first glimpse of our change of heart, He runs to us, embraces and kisses us, and lavishes us with tokens of His acceptance and undying love (see Luke 15:11-32).

The Father so loved the world that He gave His only Son. *The Father* is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,” forgiving but also One who “will by no means clear the guilty” (John 3:16; Ex. 34:6, 7). He forgives sin, but He cannot tolerate it forever. The day will come when, in what Scripture calls “His strange act” (Isa. 28:21, KJV), the Father will do what He has never done before. He will forever destroy that part of His creation that cannot be redeemed—more accurately, those who have *refused* to be redeemed—swallowing up sin and sinners in cleansing flames like no other.

My earthly father did what seemed best to him (most of the time!), but my heavenly Father knows what's best for me (all the time!).

That fiery destruction will give way to a new creation, and for one final time the Father will bring a blessing out of a curse, making all things new, enabling the earth to grow more beautiful and the people who inhabit it more loving.

God's Yes

I've learned that fathers sometimes say “Yes” when they actually mean “No,” and sometimes say “No” when, as children, we want only to hear “Yes.” But with our heavenly Father, “Yes” always means “Yes” and “No” always means “No.” And when the answer to our prayers is “No,” it always at the same time means “Yes” to something better. But usually it takes

time to see it, and we must trust and believe that “*all things* work together for good.” Sometimes we may not see it at all in this life, but we have the assurance that someday, because He's the wonderful Father that He is, God will wipe away all tears from our eyes and make all things new (Rom. 8:28; Rev. 21:4, 5). How could we wish for a better God than that?

And yet, one thing we will learn as the years of eternity come and go is that He *is* infinitely better than that, and that it will require no less than an eternity to see this as fully as our human limitations permit us. And we will love Him more and more

... forever! Said Ellen G. White, “As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character.”²

¹ Adapted from lyrics by Dennis Jernigan, Shepherd's Heart Music, 2002.

² *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.



Clinton Wahlen is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

The stature of Ellen G. White in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is significant. We believe she had the prophetic gift; her influence was seen in church life during her lifetime and is still seen today. What was the nature of her contribution to the development of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine? Some allege that she is its source.

Seventh-day Adventist doctrines have been summarized in 28 fundamental beliefs. Some of these beliefs we hold in common with other Christian denominations—the doctrine of God, creation, sin, salvation. However, of all the major denominations in the world, we hold beliefs that uniquely distinguish us. These include the postadvent millennium, the seventh-day Sabbath, Christ's ministry in

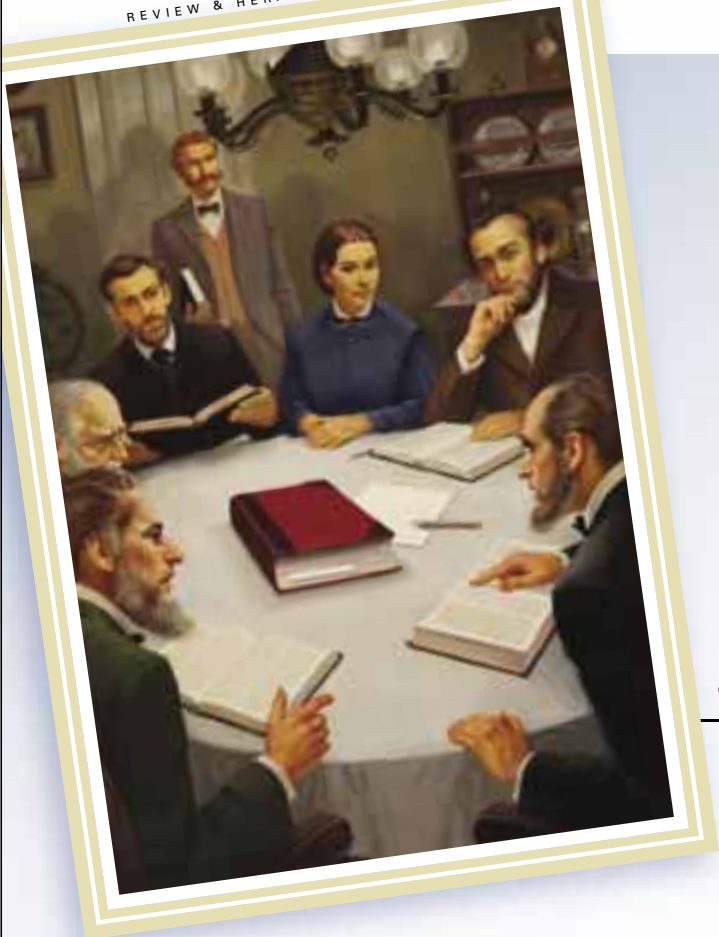
the heavenly sanctuary, the preadvent judgment, the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, and the conditional immortality of the soul. To discover Ellen White's contribution, we focus especially on these.

Sources of Beliefs

In the development of Christian doctrines in general, it is possible to detect direct and indirect influences. In proceeding with our inquiry it may be helpful to explore Ellen White's contribution from these two perspectives. Did she contribute directly to the distinctive Adventist doctrines?

It may come as a surprise that in spite of her prophetic status, Ellen White did not have much direct influence over the development of our doctrinal beliefs. For example, the seventh-day Sabbath doctrine came through the influence of Seventh-day Baptists; and the doctrine of conditional immortality came principally through George Storrs, a

REVIEW & HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION



Ellen White's Contribution to ADVENTIST DOCTRINE

*Careful Bible study yielded
the rule of our faith.*

By
KWABENA DONKOR

member of the Millerite movement. The doctrine of the sanctuary, the preadvent judgment, and the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath for the end time came through pioneers such as O. R. L. Crosier and Joseph Bates. The Millerite movement even addressed the three angels' messages. Does this mean that Ellen White did not have any influence in the development of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine? Not at all—her influence is to be found in indirect ways.

Pioneers of the Faith

As a general rule, the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church arrived at their distinctive beliefs through intense Bible study. The period between 1848 and 1850 witnessed about 23 Bible conferences, during which our unique beliefs were forged. At these conferences the pioneers met to study and pray, sometimes the entire night. Ellen White remembers that for a few years she could not understand the reasoning of the “brethren” and the meaning of the Scriptures they were studying. “I was in this condition of mind,” she writes, “until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God.”¹ Apparently, God did not want His people to shortcut serious Bible study by depending exclusively on Ellen White’s visions. Her influence came instead in several indirect forms.

Clarity and Confirmation

One indirect but important way in which Ellen White influenced doctrinal development was her visions that confirmed the conclusions arrived at through Bible study. This phenomenon occurred time and again during the Bible conferences mentioned above. But in at least one instance Ellen White’s vision helped to solve a difference of opinion about an emerging doctrine. The conflict centered on when to begin Sabbath observance. Views varied from midnight Friday night to sunrise Saturday morning, from 6 p.m. Friday or from sunset on Friday.

J. N. Andrews was commissioned to study the issue and to report at a conference in Battle Creek in November 1855. He concluded that the time to begin the Sabbath was sunset Friday. Even after Andrews presented his study, Ellen White and Bates held to their view of 6 p.m., only to be corrected by a vision a few days after the report.

A Guide By Which to Measure

At a time when creeds had a strong hold on churches, Ellen White was instrumental in encouraging the church to stand by the Bible as the only source of faith and practice. She was firm on the principle of “the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the

basis of all reforms.”² This commitment to the primacy of Scripture that permeated the thinking of the pioneers continues to be emphasized in Adventist thinking today.

Most systems of doctrine have inner consistency because, consciously or unconsciously, a church’s set of doctrines has a center that brings them together to form a system. One of the key results of Ellen White’s 1858 great controversy vision was to give Seventh-day Adventists a perspective of thinking that brought coherence and meaning to their doctrines. Of course, Ellen White was not the first to speak about the concept of a cosmic conflict between good and evil. But placing the law of God and the seventh-day Sabbath at the center of the conflict was a new focus. The significance of the great controversy motif on the development of Adventist doctrine should not be minimized. It illuminated biblical texts by providing perspectives that otherwise would have been missed. It gives the church a philosophy of history and explains the church’s unrelenting commitment to the law of God and related doctrines as history winds down.

The Gift of Grace

From its beginning, Seventh-day Adventists have been mission-focused, preaching a message that calls people back to neglected biblical truths, including the law of God. This has sometimes led some to overemphasize the law and “truth” to the neglect of the grace of Christ. Against those who insisted “You should not be reaching for the righteousness of Christ, and making so much of that. You should preach the law,” Ellen White remarked, “As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God.”³ Ellen White’s counsels have saved the church from a legalistic focus in its public declarations.

Seventh-day Adventists hold the prophetic gift of Ellen White in high esteem. However, neither God nor the pioneers deemed it necessary to develop doctrines directly from her writings, visions, or personal direction. Doctrines were developed from intense Bible study. ●

¹ *The Early Years*, p. 145.

² *The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

³ Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p. 560.



Kwabena Donkor is an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

One of the most skilled surgeons in the world, Dr. Harry W. Miller (1879-1977) had a distinguished 58-year career of service. In China he treated high government officials, the wealthy, and the poor alike. During World War I he served as medical superintendent of Washington Sanitarium (now Washington Adventist Hospital), returning to China in 1925. He worked with soybeans, creating products that were flavorful and practical—his crowning accomplishment was tasty, affordable, nutritious soy milk, which saved the lives of many Chinese babies. In 1956 Miller received the Blue Star of China, the country's highest award, from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. In his 90s Miller continued as a consultant to the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. He still made frequent trips to eastern Asia,² though he had said he would not!

Dr. Miller was walking with Stella Houser, one of his older students, when she inquired about his plans for the future. As a former secretary to the Foreign Mission Board of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, she was constantly on the lookout for possible missionaries.

"I think I'll continue with surgery and teaching," he answered. "Why?"

"I think it would be a wonderful thing if you and your wife would go to China," she said earnestly.

Miller had thought vaguely of an excursion to Mexico or Australia sometime, but China had never entered his mind. Her suggestion followed him wherever he went. He talked it over casually with his wife, Maude. Suddenly questions tumbled

over one another. Was there a divine plan behind all of this? What was China really like? They knew only that China had two cities, Peking and Shanghai, and that it produced Chinese laundrymen.

Getting Serious About Service

Miller talked to his former roommate Arthur Selmon, whose fiancée, Bertha, was also a physician. He and Bertha volunteered to go, [as well as] two nurses. The idea was snowballing. [It] was one thing to decide to go to China, and quite another to get there. None of the group had more than a few cents apiece.

Stella quickly passed the word on to the secretary of the mission board. The sad news came back: "the board has no funds to send you." If they were to go, they would have to find their own way, their own money, their own transportation.

China became the subject of much study. Tackling it like a seventh-grade social-studies class, they wrote letters to missionaries in China. They bought a mission book entitled *Chinese Characteristics* and studied about J. Hudson Taylor, pioneer Methodist missionary. Even though they were going as doctors, they would need Christian literature. They would have to print it themselves. The more they learned about Chinese characters and the complex language, the more prohibitive the task became. The undertaking was going to require more perseverance and sacrifice than they had anticipated. They spent a lot of time on their knees, [wanting] to be certain that they were on the right track.

Making a Choice

When Dr. John Harvey Kellogg learned of their plans, he determined to dissuade them. There were, he said, high stations awaiting them in a number of medical schools and hospitals. He was persuasive, but the needs of China stood out in stark relief against the attractive

Slow

alternative. [The] decision to part with Dr. Kellogg [was] a decision clouded with occasional forebodings about the future in a country that had been a graveyard for many well-meaning missionaries before them.

Traveling an Ocean Away

A number of people promised financial help, and the missionaries-to-be felt reassured by unmistakable answers to their prayers. The elements of the puzzle began to fit into place. Miller's home conference of Ohio, and the Iowa Conference from which Selmon came, agreed to pay their transportation and to contribute a small allowance for the first year—about seven dollars a week for each family. Out of this they would pay the nurses. The conferences also bestowed ministerial credentials and sent the dedicated little band on its way, ordained to the medical ministry of China.

They soon found that the cheapest ocean transportation available was third-class—actually steerage—on the Canadian Pacific's *Empress of India*. It cost precisely one hundred dollars apiece. That voyage remains a vivid memory in Dr. Miller's mind: "On the afternoon of October 3, 1903, as the *Empress* moved away from the pier and down Puget Sound, we moved up to the deck, confident in the beginning of our great adventure. We paraded up and down the ship assuring each other that we would all be good sailors. None of us felt the least bit sick. [But] we were still in inland waters, level and friendly as a garden pond. Except for the vibration of the engines there was little sense of motion.

"We made a brief stop at Victoria and then headed out into the deep, cocky as ever. By this time we were all in bed, and the boat was beginning to



Raymond S. Moore spent most of his career as an educator, both in public and Adventist settings.

Boat to China¹



*Harry W. Miller—
China doctor, selfless
servant*

By RAYMOND S. MOORE



Top to bottom: BLENDING IN: Soon after their arrival in China, Harry and Maude Miller pose in the dress of those they came to serve. **A CAREER OF CARING:** Miller and his wife, Maude, made their maiden voyage to China on the *Empress of India* (lower left). Throughout his career Miller served in hospitals and clinics around the world.

rock. If it had just rocked one way it wouldn't have been so bad, but it was rocking all ways and always. A terrible sensation came over me. Selmon and I were in the same airtight cabin, and the four women in another. Soon we were so sick that neither of us could even get up to check on the women.

"Surely this will let up," we comforted one another. But it only became worse. The sicker we became, the more dehydrated we were because we couldn't eat or drink a thing. Nor could we sit up or even get out of the cabin. And I, the cockiest one, was the worst of all. There were no effective seasickness remedies in those days.

"Finally, after four days and nights of lying there in agony, I consented to go up to the deck. With unspeakable weakness I half crawled, and was half lifted, up to the deck, where I sprawled like [a drunk]. The fresh ocean air was exhilarating and the ship's personnel attentive and kind, but I didn't leave the cabin or deck chair for the next nine days, except for one excursion, before arriving at Yokohama. My first impression of that oriental city was that all of its streets and buildings were rocking up and down, and I walked gingerly to meet its movements."

One Vow Unfulfilled Points to a Lifetime of Service

Dr. Miller still remembers the vow he made: "I'm going to China and stay there all my life. I'm never going back to America again. I'll die before going through a siege of seasickness like that."

But Harry Miller was no seer. In the future he would complete scores of ocean crossings by ship and airplane. His medical ministry was to carry him into all parts of the United States and to more than fifty nations of the world in one of the widest-ranging and most significant medical practices in history. ●

¹ "Slow Boat to China," excerpted from *China Doctor, the Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, Raymond S. Moore. Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1961. The phrasing in every case is the author's.

² *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 11, pp. 71, 72. Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996.

QUESTION: *Are the time periods mentioned in Daniel 12:11, 12 (1290 days and 1335 days) to be understood literally or symbolically?*

Adventists follow the historicist method of prophetic interpretation, by which the prophecies received by Daniel span the time from the days of the prophet to the establishment of God’s kingdom. According to this approach the year-day principle (Eze. 4:6) is used to interpret prophetic periods. The historicist approach claims that those periods were years, and that they found their fulfillment during the late Middle Ages.

Some Adventists now argue that the year-day principle does not apply to these two prophecies, and that these prophetic periods should be understood as literal days of events to be fulfilled before Jesus’ return. They are forced to speculate about which events will mark the completion of those periods. Let’s examine the context of the passage for guidance.

1. Immediate Context and the Time of the End. Not everything described in Daniel 12:5-13 is related to the time of the end. For instance, the sealing of the book and the increase in knowledge begin before that time (verses 4, 9); it is before the time of the end that the heavenly being swears “by him who lives forever” (verse 7), the breaking of the power of the holy people occurs, and the “wonders” come to an end (verse 8). The refinement of God’s people takes place throughout history, not simply at the time of the end (verse 10). Therefore, it is incorrect to say that because the immediate context mentions the time of the end, the prophetic periods belong to that same time.

2. Prophetic Periods in Daniel: Even if we were to recognize that prophetic time periods are in a context in which there are no visions and that the language is predominantly literal, that would not mean the days themselves are literal. In Daniel prophetic periods are never given in a visual form. The prophet hears or is told them by a heavenly being. In Daniel 7:25 the 3½ times is introduced not during the vision, but during the angel’s explanation of the vision. In Daniel 8:14 the 2300 days are given in the context of a revelation in which the language is predominantly literal. Finally, in Daniel 9 we find the

prophecy of the 70 weeks given to Daniel through an oral explanation. In all those cases the language used in the interpretation of the vision is basically literal, but the prophetic periods are not. They are introduced after the vision as additional information, but their symbolic content is not fully explained. This is exactly what we find in Daniel 12:11, 12. During the oral presentation prophetic periods are given without a detailed interpretation. Daniel is unable to understand them, but he is led to believe that God’s people will understand them in the future.

3. Connection Between the Time Periods: The 1290 days are an extension of the 1260 days mentioned in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 as a “time, times, and half a time.” The difference in Daniel 12:11 is 30 days, suggesting that an

additional month has been added to extend the period (a common practice in lunar calendars). Because the period of 1290 days is based on the 1260 days, and because it is acknowledged by historicist interpreters that the 1260 days are years, we have to conclude that the year-day principle also applies to the 1290 days.

The reference to the 1260 days in Daniel 7:25 emphasized the time during which God’s people would suffer persecution. Daniel 12:7 emphasizes

the moment when the activities of God’s enemies would come to an end. The 1290 days in Daniel 12:11 emphasize the moment when prophetic time begins. In order to synchronize the beginning of the prophecy with a specific event, the period is extended by adding an extra month—instead of 42 months (1260 days) we now have 43 (1290 days). This intercalation allows the angel interpreter to be more precise concerning the event that initiates the period, as well as to its full length. The prophetic period of 1290 days is then extended by 45 extra days, making it total 1335 prophetic years, based on the year-day principle.

In conclusion, these two time periods are extensions of a well-established prophetic period, and they should be interpreted symbolically, consistent with the rest of the prophecy. ●

It's About Time

By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ



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



Overcoming Addictive Habits

By
MARK A.
FINLEY

Have you ever struggled with a habit that felt impossible to overcome? Is there some persistent sin you commit again and again? Have you wished that you could be free from the bondage that at times enslaves you? There is hope. In today's lesson we will discover biblical principles that will enable you to experience the joy and victory that come in Jesus.

1. What does the Bible indicate regarding every temptation we face? Read the text below and write your answer in your own words.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Every temptation we face, others have faced. God promises that every temptation from the evil one comes with a way of escape for those who draw strength from their faith in Christ.

2. How did Isaiah describe the work of the Messiah in setting us free and delivering us from bondage? Read the text below and put your answers in the blanks below.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isa. 61:1).

Jesus came to proclaim _____ to the _____

and the opening of the _____ to those who are _____.

3. How do we cooperate with Christ in the process of overcoming? Read the text below and circle the two words that show us how to cooperate with God.

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

We cannot overcome without God. But God will not overcome sin in our lives without our cooperation. As we submit to His will and open our hearts to receive His power, the Holy Spirit takes control of our lives. This does not mean we will never be tempted; it simply means that we are now able to resist through the power of the living God.

4. Why does it seem that we fail repeatedly and commit the same sin again and again? Read the text below and fill in the blanks.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

a. Jesus invites us to _____ in Him.

b. As we abide in Christ, we will _____ much _____.

c. For _____ we can do nothing.



One reason we fail again and again is because we attempt to live the Christian life in our strength, not His.

5. What assurance did the apostle Paul give regarding victory in the Christian life? Read the text below and write your thoughts. What does this Bible passage mean to you personally?

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

6. Is it possible to read the Bible and not receive the spiritual strength God intends? Find another missing link in overcoming sin in our lives. Read the text below and fill in the blank.

"For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it" (Heb. 4:2).

To benefit us, the Word of God must be mixed with _____

God has provided for us mighty spiritual aids in overcoming the bondage of sin. He has sent us His Holy Spirit. He has given us His Word to give us courage and hope, but unless we receive His promises by faith, they will not profit us.

7. When we accept God's Word by faith, what promise does He give us? Read the texts below and write in your own words on the line what God promises you personally.

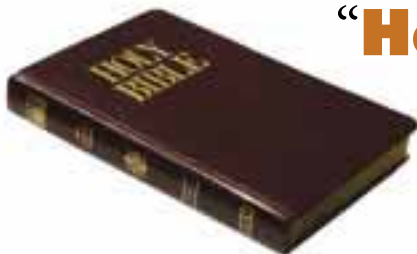
a. *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).*

b. *"By which have been given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).*

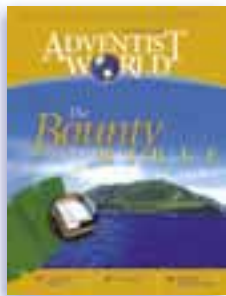
Throughout the Bible, as men and women opened their hearts to receive God's power, their lives were transformed. God's grace is greater than sin. God's power is mightier than the power of the evil one. The weakest child of God receiving His grace is stronger than all of the powers of hell. So today, open your heart to receive by faith everything God has for you, and your life will be one of victory, not frustrated defeat.

Next month we'll explore the topic:

**"How to Get Answers
to Your Prayers."**



LETTERS



The Bounty and the Bible

Thank you for the wonderful article on Pitcairn Island (see “The Bounty and the Bible,” by Herbert Ford and Wilona Karimabadi,

January 2009 *Adventist World*). I read the online version at www.adventistworld.org. As I read it I remembered 2004, when the island was in the news for all the wrong reasons.

I wonder what the role of the Adventist Church was; and what is the role now?

GEOFFREY CHEGE
Gilgil, Kenya

The Gospel According to Mary

Angel Manuel Rodríguez’s column is always thought-provoking and often challenging. I must respectfully part company with him, however, for one misstatement in his January 2009 column regarding Mary Magdalene, in which he writes that “she had been freed from seven demons, most

probably by Jesus (Luke 8:2).”

If one reads the Gospel of Mark (KJV), no such “most probably” speculation exists, for the writer states unambiguously that “he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9).

Omitting these significant closing verses of Mark effectively sabotages at the same time some corroborative commentary by Ellen White, among which we find this: “Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. . . . It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568).

JERRY A. STEVENS
*Fairfield Glade, Tennessee,
United States*

Unique and Unrivaled

In the December 2008 *Adventist World* is a unique article by Angel Manuel Rodríguez about the “Unique and Unrivaled,” speaking of the Godhead we all love and worship.

I found the article and its subject

matter very informative although I have been an Adventist all my life. Rodríguez’s approach is to be commended. He covered it well.

It thrills me to read such articles. We really appreciate the *Adventist World*. It should be in every Adventist home. Keep the articles like this one coming.

JAMES WALLACE
*Russells Point, Ohio, United
States*

My Journey... So Far

I recently read the September 2008 article “My Journey...So Far” and was truly inspired. I believe Fiona Peart’s story is a quintessential



young adult’s experience. There is often that uncomfortable feeling of launching out into something or going somewhere unknown. So, like Peart, we often lay out the plans we want for our life and sometimes fail to ask God what He wants us to do with our life. I praise God for reteaching me the importance of allowing God to lead our lives daily and letting go of fear.

My sister first read this story and then beckoned me to read it. So, here I am, saying, “Wow! This is truly a great testimony!”

Thanks so much for the ministry of *Adventist World*.

NOREEN MALCOLM
*New York, New York,
United States*

“Wow! This is a truly great Testimony!”

—NOREEN MALCOLM
New York, New York, United States

LETTERS

The Third Ministry

I was touched by the August 2008 article “The Third Ministry,” written by Benjamin and Esther Lau, who visited the Mei Hwa Sanitarium in Gulangyu, Xiamen, China. I grew up in the beautiful island of Gulangyu and attended the elementary school where the sanitarium is now. I grew up in a Buddhist family and became an Adventist after I came to Canada. I returned to Gulangyu in 1984 and visited the local Adventist church. I was greeted by the pastor’s wife, Mrs. Shei, with tears streaming down from her eyes. She was the nurse who

delivered me when I was born. Little did I know that they were Adventists. It must have been because of her prayers that I am an Adventist today.

My parents-in-law abandoned their Buddhist faith and joined the Adventist Church in 1998 in California. During the Cultural Revolution, I witnessed Pastor Shei’s aging mother publicly humiliated by the Communist Red Guards because of her faith. Praise the Lord that the Adventists in this beautiful island can now worship Him freely, and they are once again witnessing for Christ. My thanks go to the Laus for making

such a great contribution to my hometown.

F. TJHATRA
Ontario, Canada

Correction:

We incorrectly identified a jackfruit tree as a durian tree in our “Where in the World?” answer on our back page of the February 2009 *Adventist World*. We regret the error.

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 Christian in need since my house was crushed by a cyclone. I am also troubled by evil spirits. Please ask God to [cleanse] me and give me good thoughts. I need your prayers.

REGIS, *Haiti*

I am on death row in prison. I was wrongly convicted. Please pray for the sisters and brothers that have helped and encouraged me during my eight years in prison. Pray, too, for the Adventist prison ministry here in Zambia. I will be appearing in court for my appeal in 2009; please also pray for me in regard to the appeal.

MUDIMAH, *Zambia*

Let us pray for students around the world to succeed in their studies.

DAN, *China*

Please pray for my spiritual life. I am Chilean. I am going through financial

problems—and that brings problems at home.

CARLOS, *Brazil*

I have been searching for a job for a whole year and I went through a rather difficult phase in my life. I just joined the Adventist Church a few months ago. I am expecting a miracle job from Christ in this new year and I would like to request prayer.

COLLINS, *Kenya*

I am a Christian man and enjoy running short distances, especially 400 meters. Would you pray for me to get the spiritual power and physical ability to spread the good news among other sports-interested people? Hopefully, God can [direct me] and I can participate in some competitions and share hopeful words about our Lord and Savior Jesus.

PER, *Sweden*

Please pray that my daughter’s boyfriend, who has studied in an Adventist university, can obtain work. Also pray for my two daughters, and pray for the spiritual growth of the Adventists in my town as they share the gospel.

ADRIANA, *Argentina*

I am requesting that Adventists around the world pray for an Adventist church, which has been closed for the past eight years, to be reopened. It is located in Bellary City, Karnataka, India.

BHASKAR, *India*

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.

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

Neighbors in Transit



A reader shares some thoughts about being neighborly.

Neighbors and neighborhoods were once an important part of a person's social fabric. I remember growing up on a street in rural New South Wales, Australia, where we knew every neighbor's family on a first-name basis. Information that was exchanged whenever paths crossed nurtured both the giver and the receiver.

But for most people, that picture has changed. The suburban jungle, with its mega-sized homes on miniscule blocks of land, has jammed people closer together, but this has resulted in more isolation rather than increased intimacy.

While the motor vehicle tends to isolation, public transport can also be an interesting phenomenon in isolating us from each other. This is also true of air travel. On a recent flight lasting several hours, the cabin staff issued "Please do not disturb," "Please wake me for meals," and "Please wake me for duty-free shopping" stickers to each passenger.

None of those options appealed to me particularly, and apparently they did not impress my immediate seatmate either. A young mother of Italian descent, she took no time in introducing herself, and thus began several hours of very enjoyable interaction. An obvious entrepreneur, she and her husband were balancing family responsibilities and the launching of a new product in an already competitive market niche.

Her husband is also of Italian descent, and while they both live and operate in the modern era, they also live and thrive in their rich cultural heritage. In the midst of their busy schedules, the extended family meet, not just to socialize, but to combine forces in making their own sausages, pasta, ricotta cheese, olives, and sauces.

And then all of this spilled over into the street where they live. On her initiative and invitation, all her multicultural neighbors joined together for a Christmas meal in the middle of the street. The street was closed to traffic while they shared food, recipes, laughter, and most of all, neighborliness.

The act sparked a contagiousness that has repeated the event for the past several years.

After the boy Jesus had baffled the religious leaders in the Temple with His keen mind and biblical insights, the Scriptures simply state: "He went down ... and came to Nazareth [His hometown], and was subject to [His parents].... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:51, 52).

Perhaps, after all, in our frantic and disconnected world, we, too, can again discover the art of being a neighbor.

A return to vibrant, multicultural neighborhoods, whether in transit or on the street where we live, may do more for the world's ills than all of the money and government policies or legislation put together.

We might also be surprised at the evangelistic spin-off as well.

—KEVIN GEELAN, *Australia*

"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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To Writers: We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Address all editorial correspondence to 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, U.S.A. Editorial office fax number: (301) 680-6638

E-mail: Internet: worldeditor@gc.adventist.org

Web site: www.adventistworld.org

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The PEOPLE'S PLACE

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



ARUP PANDEY

ADVENTIST LIFE

During my senior year at the Adventist University of the Philippines, I was invited to speak before an “international group of Pathfinders.” The group consisted of Japanese, Koreans, Indonesians, Burmese, Thais, and so on. I asked the people attending this question:

What was really the cause of Jesus’ death?

An outspoken African platoon leader said: “Sir, after the Roman soldiers pierced Him in His side, the blood did flow.” The leader paused. Then, an adamant Swedish girl came to the rescue: “Sir, Jesus could have died of hemorrhage.”

A Filipino child, without raising his hand, answered confidently: “Sir, the tip of the spear was rusty—Jesus died of tetanus!”

The group was amazed to learn, with the sermon’s conclusion quoted from Ellen G. White, that Jesus died of a broken heart!

—Jonathan Tabingo, Republic of Palau

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

ADVENTIST QUOTES (profound or spontaneous)

ADVENTIST LIFE (short anecdotes, especially from the world of adults)

JOTS AND TITLES (church-related tips)

CAMP MEETING MEMORIES (short, humorous, and/or profound anecdotes)

WHERE IN THE WORLD? (high-quality photos of members from around the globe)



JORGE VICENTE

Please send your submissions to The People’s Place, *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; fax: 301-680-6638; e-mail: marank@gc.adventist.org. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be acknowledged or returned.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“This message is animated by compassion. It’s a message that finds its fullest and most attractive expression not in theological exegesis ... but in active concern for other people.”

—Pastor Jan Paulsen, in his December 2008 holiday address, broadcast by the Hope Channel, for the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s nearly 16 million members worldwide; in regard to the church’s message of hope.