

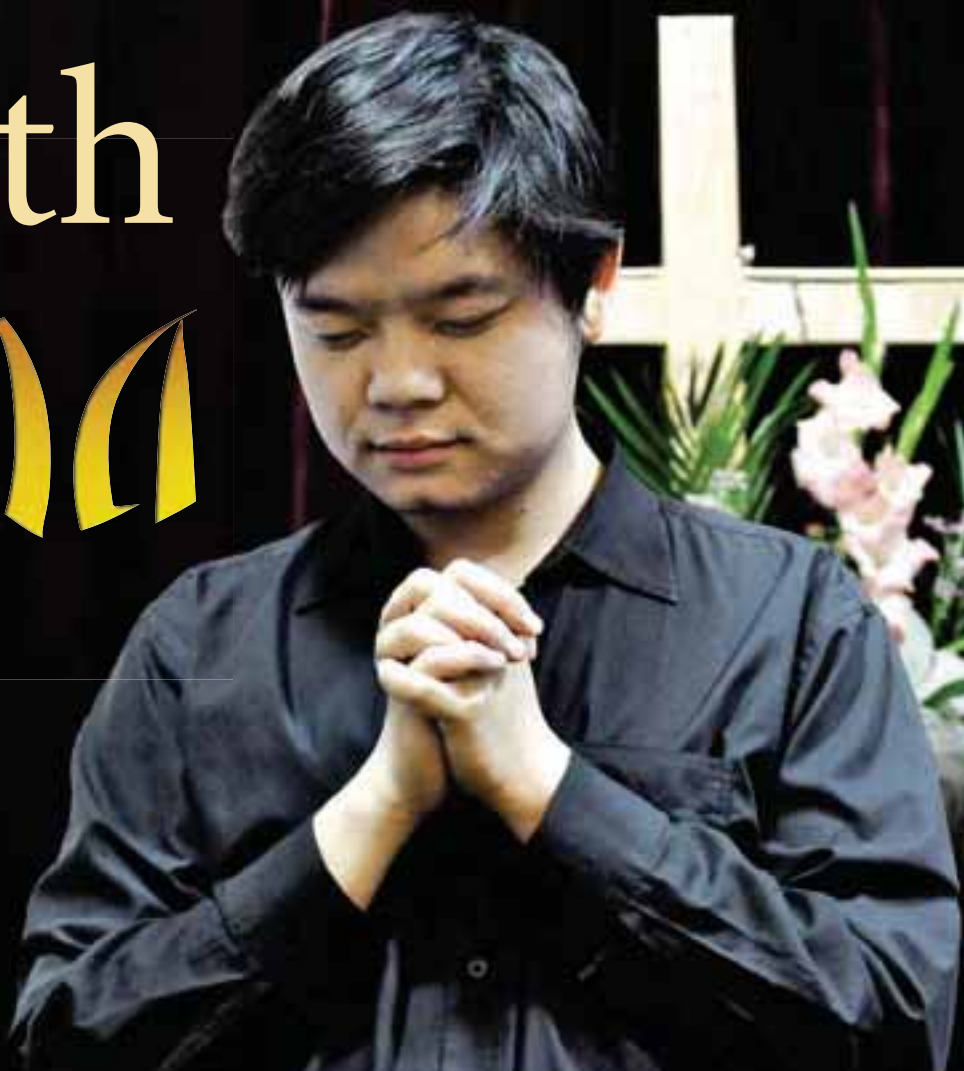
The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists

August 2009

ADVENTIST WORLD



Finding Faith in China



SPECIAL FEATURE

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ADVENTIST WORLD

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GLENN MITCHELL/NSD

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ON THE COVER: Chen Liyan, pastor of the Gangwashi Adventist congregation in Beijing, prays during one of its services. Photo by Rajmund Dabrowski/ANN



WORLD VIEW

Common Prayer, Uncommon Grace

I prayed with an old friend last night—hands clasped, hearts bowed toward heaven and each other. We have been praying together for most of 40 years now, beginning when we were both teenagers and novices at talking with God.

In dorm rooms, in restaurants, at pastors' meetings and camp meetings, we've prayed each other through the stuff of our lives: singleness and marriage; classwork and employment; griefs and celebrations, times of crisis and a growing quest for balance.

His is the oldest praying friendship of my life, a place where I find limitless security in the memories of his frequent intercessions for me. Though we have only rarely lived in the same town—a year in college, some months in seminary—we long ago covenanted that prayer would be a part of every meeting, however many months might have lapsed since last the Lord allowed our paths to cross.

When praying with my friend, I lose the need to be someone other than the man God made me. Whatever is true, authentic, basic in my life with Christ emerges in our times of prayer.

And this is as the Lord intended it, for He announced that He would join whenever two were gathered in

His name. We meet—we three—in plain, unvarnished conversation about the struggles, sorrows, joys, and needs of living the disciplined life. And faith is built, and grace is shared, and eyes refocus on that day when we three shall meet in person and in perpetuity.

I am more sure than ever in my life that the vital question of Christian spiritual life is not "For whom do you pray?" but "With whom do you pray?" The solitary Christian, so much lauded in our usual descriptions of spiritual life, is not well-suited to the crisis soon to break upon the world. Christ calls His people in these awesome times to "Press together, press together, press together."* The Lord who promised "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20, KJV) holds as we hold each other.

This month, seek out a praying friend, or make one as your need may be. Find in that prayerful fellowship the strength you lack, the courage needed to stand for the right "though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps. 46:2, 11).

*See Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 374.

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

It's Sir Patrick Now, as Queen Honors Jamaica's Adventist Governor- General

■ The first Seventh-day Adventist pastor to serve as governor-general of Jamaica is now a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. Sir Patrick Linton Allen, ON, DC, GCMG, the immediate past president of the West Indies Union of Seventh-day Adventists, was knighted



private audience in Buckingham Palace. Sir Patrick, a former president of the West Indies Union, was made a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

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ADVENTIST
KNIGHTED: Britain's
Queen Elizabeth II
knighted governor-
general of Jamaica
Sir Patrick Allen
accompanied by his
wife, Lady Patricia
Allen, where he
was presented his
credentials during a

WORLD REPORT

by Queen Elizabeth II on June 12 in a Buckingham Palace ceremony.

On February 26, 2009, Allen became Jamaica's sixth governor-general since independence, shortly after stepping down as union president. He had been elected president of the West Indies Union in 2000 and began his pastoral service in the church in 1981, after a decade of working for the Jamaican government.

The order is "awarded to men and women of high office, or who render extraordinary or important non-military service in a foreign country," according to the official Web site of the British Monarchy. Originally intended for those serving in the Ionian Islands and Malta, the order expanded to officials in the Mediterranean.

"Towards the end of the nineteenth century, due to the expansion of the British Empire, the Order was then extended to those who had given distinguished service in the Dominions and Colonies, as well as foreign affairs generally," the Monarchy Web site indicates. "Today the Order consists of the Sovereign, a Grand Master (currently The Duke of Kent), and includes three classes: 125 Knights and Dames Grand Cross (GCMG), 375 Knights and Dames Commander (KCMG and DCMG), and 1,750 Companions (CMG)."

Sir Patrick, as he shall henceforth be known, is a Knight Commander of the Grand Cross; his wife is now called

Lady Allen. In an exclusive interview with *Adventist World*, Sir Patrick said that while he missed church work, "I am sure and confident that this is what the Lord wants me to do now" (July 2009).

Sir Patrick said, "As much as I miss it, I am aware that my service is in a broader scope.... Where I work [now], I have a vast and comprehensive universe in the nation."

Sir Patrick is neither the first Adventist governor-general nor the first to be knighted by Queen Elizabeth. Those twin designations went to Sir James Carlisle, a lay member from Antigua, who served as governor-general of that nation from 1993 to 2007. Sir James' investiture into the same Order of St. Michael and St. George came in 1994, also at Buckingham Palace.

—By Mark A. Kellner, news editor

NIGERIA: Paulsen Returns to Former Appointment, Observes School Growth

■ During his first visit to Nigeria in a decade, Seventh-day Adventist world church president Jan Paulsen spoke about the church's commitment to education and life governed by integrity in his address at Babcock University's June 6 graduation.

Once a missionary to Ghana and Nigeria in the 1960s, Paulsen participated in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of Babcock University (BU), where he once served as principal. Initially established as the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA), the school is located in

Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, some 70 kilometers north of Lagos.

"We are committed to doing our utmost in education, health, and social issues and ... to be good partners in building community," Paulsen said during a meeting with Goodluck Jonathan, vice president of Nigeria, in the nation's capital, Abuja, two days earlier.

"[Adventist] standards are exceptional," the vice president told Paulsen, referring to the church's impact on society in Nigeria.

During his visit, Paulsen also met with the country's former president Olusegun Obasanjo, who is himself a Babcock alumnus.

"Babcock University made a mark among private universities in Nigeria," Obasanjo said, applauding the church's dedication to character building and moral values, which "other universities tend to ignore."

Noting Obasanjo's involvement in conflict resolution in Zimbabwe, Somalia, and Congo, Paulsen called the former president a "minister of peace and reconciliation on the African continent." Obasanjo noted he returned home the previous evening from Sudan where he was involved with peace talks.

Obasanjo, who received an honorary doctorate from BU in 2003, also participated in the graduation ceremonies on Sunday, June 7, where he praised church members for their honesty.



Left: EXECUTIVE ENCOUNTER: Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and delegation visited Nigeria’s vice president, Goodluck E. Jonathan, in the capital, Abuja. **Right:** GRADUATION PARTICIPANTS: 901 students graduated on June 7 from Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria. Pictured are Jan Paulsen; Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria; Babatunde Osotimehin, minister of health; and J. A. Kayode Makinde, president and vice chancellor of BU.

PHOTOS BY RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN

During a visit with a group of 10 chiefs from Ilishan-Remo, Paulsen thanked them for their support—local chiefs originally donated 486 acres of land when the church established BU in 1959. “You gave land to establish a school in Ilishan-Remo. Such a decision required vision and hope for the future,” Paulsen said, calling the move an “investment” in the community.

In 1964 Paulsen joined the college as a teacher and registrar, three years later becoming its principal.

During his commencement speech, Paulsen said he hardly recognized the area. “There was only one dirt road that led between old bakery buildings at one end to the staff houses. We began where every such institution starts—small. And look where you are now,” he said.

During his baccalaureate address Paulsen congratulated the new graduates and spoke about identity and Adventist values and education.

“I want the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nigeria to be a healing community,” Paulsen said. “Our education ... deals with the wholeness of a person. We want people to know that we are not only dealing with a faith-based reality, but a physical reality, too,” he said.

Addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS and malaria, Paulsen told the congregation that the church would continue to collaborate with religious

WORLD REPORT



HAPPY DAY: Some of the hundreds of Babcock University graduates listen to the commencement address.

RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN

and secular organizations to “create a good and healthy society [and] a better future for our children.”

The church’s first college in sub-Saharan Africa soon sought broader accreditation outside of the Adventist Church. Eventually, the school began offering theology degrees in partnership with Adventist-owned Andrews University in the United States. Some 40 years after its founding, the school transformed from a primarily ministerial institution to a multidisciplinary school, adopting its current name, Babcock University, in 1999.

Today, the university has an enrollment of 6,000 and offers 30 degrees ranging from theology, law, and public health to technology, agriculture, and mass communication.

Paulsen was also briefed on the early stages of expansion plans for the university, which include establishing a health and medical sciences complex.

Speaking at the graduation on behalf of the country’s president, Babatunde Osotimehin, Nigeria’s minister of health, referred to BU’s “outstanding contribution to life in Nigeria” and challenged the university to integrate research with its plans to open a medical school.

“Devote 30 percent of your resources for research,” he said. His remarks addressed the larger issue of the importance of research for the benefit of nation building. “It is only through [research] that we can make progress, because that is where national development, national security, growth, and indeed the heritage we are to leave for the people come from,” he said. He lauded religious groups for their contribution to Nigeria’s education and development.

Matthew Bediako, the Adventist Church’s world general secretary and an alumnus of the college, referred to BU’s “bread basket beginnings.” The university complex has grown from a single bakery on campus to include health-food production, four banks, and a water-bottling factory.

About 30 percent of the university’s students are Adventists, giving the school a mission emphasis, Bediako said.

Nearly 1,000 people joined the church this year as an outcome of an evangelistic outreach program conducted at the newly commissioned university stadium by evangelist Mark Finley, a general vice president of the world church.

“When each school year ends, the number of students who graduate as Adventists increases,” said J. A. Kayode Makinde, BU president and vice chancellor. “Our school emphasizes spirituality and shares Adventist values with those who study here.”

—By *Rajmund Dabrowski*, communication director, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



What to Do About Swine FLU

By ALLAN R.
HANDYSIDES
and PETER N.
LANDLESS

I am worried about the outbreak of the new flu called swine flu. What is it, and how do I get infected?

Officially, the new influenza is called H1N1 influenza A. It has genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia as well as avian (bird) and human viral genes.

The virus was first called “swine flu” because it originated in pigs and was spread from pig to pig. Originally confined to pigs, it underwent some genetic changes that made it possible to infect humans. The way this change occurs is related to the way viruses live. They cannot survive for long periods outside the host cells. When the virus enters the host cell, it does so through a special “door” called a receptor. When it is inside the cell, it takes over the host cell to copy its own (viral) RNA. In the process it may pick up and include some of the host’s genetic material. If two separate viruses (a human virus and a pig virus) enter the same pig cell, for example, this sets the scene for mutation, or sharing of genetic material, changing the ability of the virus to infect new hosts. In this scenario, a pig virus now is able to infect a human host.

The virus spreads briskly from person to person, especially because it is “new” to the human immune system. Emergency monitoring of such viral outbreaks is put in place because it is not known how aggressive or serious the illness produced by the new strain of virus will be. The emergence

of various strains of the influenza virus makes it necessary to modify the vaccine for each flu season.

It spreads by droplet infection from respiratory secretions; viruses are readily propelled into the air in large numbers when people cough and sneeze, and this is the most common way in which we become infected. The virus tends to linger for a time on surfaces such as desks, door handles, stair rails, and, of course, hands.

What can I do to avoid being affected?

There is no vaccine available yet, but the hope is that one will be ready within the next few months. But even then, one needs to practice appropriate measures to decrease the chances of infection:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough. Discard used tissues.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. One can also use alcohol-based hand sanitizers to clean the hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, because germs spread very readily this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who have the flu. This is especially important to practice when you yourself are ill with the flu.
- Stay home for seven days when you are sick or until you have been totally symptom-free for 24 hours.
- Follow school and work closures as well as recommended public health

measures for your region. Avoid crowded places as much as possible.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza A?

They are the same as seasonal flu with fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, chills, and fatigue. A significant number of people with this flu have complained also of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. As with seasonal flu, some individuals have been very ill and some have died as a result.

Has the world’s reaction to this new virus been excessive?

No, it has not. The pattern of a pandemic cannot be predicted as it unfolds over at least a two-year time period. We are still in the early days with parts of the world entering the peak flu season and others approaching it. We need to be wise, prudent, and vigilant. ●



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From
REVENGE
 and **GRENADES**
 to
 Saving
 Stories from
 “Adopt a Minister
 International”
Grace



Some work in Muslim areas where their safety depends only on the Lord; many are in charge of 20 churches or more. The majority of the churches they serve are in the poorest of conditions. Yet the ministers who share their testimonies here are happy to be serving the Lord; and they are grateful for ministries such as Adopt a Minister International, which helps them survive and enables them to serve. Read their gripping accounts of working for God in challenging places.—EDITORS.

A Promise Made to Be Broken

By CHRISTOPHER V. LUAYA¹

“Father, when I grow up I will kill all the people involved in your death.” I made this promise at my father’s grave in 1991.

I grew up in a non-Adventist family. For many years my father was known as “Kumander Ingo.” He was a rebel commander of the New People’s Army.² From time to time Philippine military men came to our house looking for my father. We were told by the rebel leaders never to disclose his whereabouts.

After a long time my father decided to surrender to the government authorities and was put in prison. Sometime later he was pardoned. My father continued to get involved in killing people. He was hired and paid to kill others.

Our lives were troubled. My father had so much anger in his heart. He stayed drunk all the time; it was his way of coping with his lifestyle. Sometimes my family and I would run away in the night to escape my father’s cruelty.

Several years later, however, things changed and my father dedicated most of his time to farming our land.

But one day, while he and his friends attended a town fiesta, they were arrested and thrown into jail. A few days later, they were killed. We were told that the police shot them while they tried to escape, but we knew this was a lie.

I was devastated to see my father’s wounds. His elbows and knees were broken. Bullet wounds covered his entire body. I was enraged. As I looked at him, I promised to take revenge—I would kill

those responsible when I got older.

But when I turned 15, I heard about a Savior, Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary for me. In 1992 I accepted Him into my life, and instantly my vengeful spirit was changed. The love of Jesus filled my heart. I no longer wanted to kill the people who killed my father. I went to Central Philippine Adventist College as a working student for eight years and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in theology. I have already introduced many people to Jesus. Today, my way of thinking is to consider every soul precious to God.

For Christ’s sake a promise is sometimes made to be broken.

The Bomb and the All-Knowing Timer

By JUN CABER³

The sun had just set. It was a Monday evening, and I had just left the house of a paralyzed patient whom I had been looking after for several months. Hunger pains made me hurry back to the Adventist Center, a



REVA L. MOORE

PUBLIC EVANGELISM:
As the result of public evangelism by South Philippine Adventist College theology students (some are sponsored by AMI), many are baptized in Maragusan, on December 29, 2007.

parsonage and mission station where I and many others were staying. The station is built on stilts on the water just like the other buildings on this small island in Tawi-Tawi, in the western part of Mindanao, Philippines.

I joined my group for supper, and after a hearty meal I rested my back on the wall by the front door.

Jerry, a student, stepped outside and onto the six-inch-wide wooden plank that served as our pathway to the mission station. The plank was nine feet above the water. While standing there, Jerry noticed a man down below in the water. The man wasn't moving. Alarmed, Jerry quickly ran back inside.

"What's the matter?" we all chorused.

"There's a man in the water, and he looks dead!" Jerry whispered, pointing down to the floor.

While Jerry was still talking, I heard an object drop into the water followed by splashing sounds. Maybe it was just someone trying to steal our small boat. We didn't get alarmed

What Is Adopt a Minister INTERNATIONAL?

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN

Adopt a Minister International (AMI) is a nonprofit organization that pays the salaries of unemployed ministerial graduates in the Philippines and other countries through donations and sponsorships of people from all over the world. AMI works with the conference officers of the Philippines, who place ministerial graduates in pastoral positions in the Philippines. According to AMI, there are more than 500 unemployed theology graduates in the Philippines. Around 40 to 50 new graduates are added every year to the total number of the unemployed. A few work for a small stipend (\$30), or for a sack of rice per month provided by church members.

After much soul-searching and prayer, Reva Lachica Moore, originally from the Philippines and currently living in the United States, decided to start AMI, helping scores of theology graduates follow their calling. Since November 2000 more than 500 graduates have received help from this organization. Currently, about 400 graduates are part of the AMI program. They receive about \$130 per month salary.

Most of the donations that go to supplement worker salaries come from Adventist church members. Many learn of this program through benefit concerts performed by pianist Mary Grace Gellekanao. Gellekanao, a young adult with the congenital absence of her right arm, is also Filipina, and has been using her significant musical talents to serve God for years. Says Gellekanao: "Since the time I learned to play the piano I have dedicated my life to serving the Lord and others. It's been a humbling experience. I give concerts to raise funds and find sponsors who would pay the salaries of [these] unemployed ministerial graduates."

The graduates AMI helps work in some of the most challenging circumstances imaginable. Yet these workers are happy to be serving the Lord, and thankful for the ministry that helps make this possible. For more information visit: www.a-a-m.org.



REVA L. MOORE

HOME SWEET HOME: Sonny Mercurio, currently employed by the Negros Occidental Conference, is an ordained minister and married with three children. This is a photo of Mercurio at the hut he lived in when he was sponsored by Adopt a Minister.

The Two Alarm Clocks

By ARNIE ROA⁴

I am assigned in mainland Bongao in Tawi-Tawi, Philippines, under Adopt a Minister. In this territory Muslim missionaries called *tablegs* dislike the presence of Christians on their island, especially educators such as me. La Island, another small island in Tawi-Tawi, is known to be a private sanctuary where Muslim bandits (and small rebel factions) take refuge. Here the islanders make sure that every man owns a gun to be able to fight their enemies.

With this kind of situation in La Island, even other Muslims are afraid to go there without escort. But several years ago, a group of Adventist teachers from Mountain View College came to live on La Island. This alarmed the *tablegs* and a group went to La Island to investigate.

A *tableg* approached me in the Bongao pier as I was boarding a boat for La Island. “Sir,” he calmly inquired, “are you one of the teachers of La Island?”

“No,” I said. “But the teachers there are my companions. Is there anything I can do for you, my brother?”

“Very well,” he said. “I am a *tableg* assigned to that island. I am just concerned about the lessons the Adventist teachers are teaching. All of your teachings are very good and my relatives on the island are very thankful and proud of your people. But one thing I am very concerned about is the ‘values’ subject. I saw in your notebooks that ‘God’ and ‘prayer’ and other things are taught the Christian way. I’m afraid your teachers are teaching my people to be Christians!”

The *tableg* got angry as he explained his view. He excused himself so I didn’t have the opportunity to clarify that the Adventist teachers were using English as their method of instruction so that *God*, *prayer*, and all the terms that pertain to worship were in English, not Arabic. If they used Arabic, what would appear in the students’ notebooks would be *Allah* for God, *Sambayang* for prayer, etc.

I quickly returned to La Island

because the boat was securely tied by the door and within sight.

A few minutes later, three of my companions and Bert, our leader, went outside to call our neighbor, Abula. Armed with a bolo (a sharp, long knife) and a flashlight, Abula went around our parsonage in his boat. By this time it was already dark. By the light of a flashlight we saw a pair of flip flops floating, apparently left by the fleeing man. A piece of wood with red electrical tape was floating next to it. Bert used a stick to turn the wood over.

What we saw next made us shake with fear: a hand grenade taped onto the piece of wood and connected to a timer with red electrical tape that could explode once loosened.

My companions started to pack up while exclaiming, “We will die! We will die!” In all the chaos and panic, I managed to ask all of us to kneel down and pray with Bert’s leading. After the prayer we felt better.

Bert asked me to go inside the parsonage to get the long chain and padlock so we could secure the boat. With flashlight in my hand and numbed with fear, I walked the plank to the parsonage door. I stared at the bomb underneath for a few seconds, my heart pounding. I found the chain and padlock and headed back out.

However, because of my fear, my mind went into “autopilot.” I noticed my unfinished laundry in the corner, and without conscious thought picked up the bucket of clothes and started hanging them on a clothesline inside the parsonage.

Bert wondered why I wasn’t coming out, so he walked part of the plank to see what was keeping me inside. He saw me wringing my clothes and putting them on the line to dry.

“Hey, get back out here! Forget about your laundry!” Bert angrily yelled at me.

Still in a daze, I emptied the water from the bucket outside where the bomb was floating. Immediately I realized the danger and I ran outside. I quickly tied the boat to a post, only six feet away from the bomb.

Once on the ground, Bert and I ran to the other side of the building. Just as we reached safety the bomb went off! We all were grateful that our heavenly Father didn’t allow the bomb to go off while we were inside the parsonage.

In the morning we saw the devastation. Our parsonage and boat were destroyed. But, remembering Psalm 91:14, I thanked God for keeping us alive!

and told the teachers of the alarming comments of the *tableg*. That night we had a special prayer and slept soundly.

I didn't know that the teachers had scheduled nightly prayers at midnight. Michard, one of the teachers, set their only alarm clock to wake them up. I did not hear the alarm, nor did they wake me when it sounded.

As they prayed, another alarm clock went off near my feet. This woke me up. When I opened my eyes, I saw through the moonlight the silhouettes of the four teachers on their knees. As I prepared to kneel, I touched another figure on his knees where the clock was buzzing. I prayed beside the one who was kneeling by me.

When I finished praying, the four had already finished and they were waiting for me. *But who is this one praying beside me?* I asked myself. I lit the gas lamp to see who it might be, but the light revealed no one. I told the teachers about the praying visitor beside me, and they couldn't believe their ears. They said they heard two alarm clocks go off and couldn't understand it because they have only one.

We didn't call it a mystery. We knew that God sent His angels to watch and preserve our lives (Ps. 34:7).

God Called Me Back

By SONNY MERCURIO⁵

I worked my way through college, and when I finally graduated I was thrilled. But my joy instantly turned to despair. Negros Occidental Mission wasn't hiring, and more than a dozen graduates had applied ahead of me. Employment through the mission comes only when someone retires or passes away. Like the others, I visited the mission office often looking for short-term work. But with so many other applicants, I was passed over many times. I worked for churches as a volunteer, receiving only food and lodging.


After months without funds, I abandoned the ministry to sell bottled water. With a heavy heart, I drove the

water truck on my first day of work. I pleaded with God to send me financial help so I could go back to work for Him. It was at lunchtime when the mission president called to tell me of the good news. I was being sponsored by Adopt a Minister International.

A few days later, I found myself working for God in a mountainous place four hours from town. Romeo Castro, my sponsor in America, had asked that I be assigned in his hometown here in the Philippines. The church was old and located in the middle of a sugarcane field. The few members who attended every Sabbath walked through a muddy field during rainy season to get to it.

I made friends with the people of the community and I visited Castro's relatives. I gave them Bible studies and

invited them to church. In a year's time the church's membership grew to more than 100. Today, Castro is building a new church closer to the road.

On my list of converts are Castro's relatives and three Baptist ministers. I thank God for Adopt a Minister. I don't know where I would be today if this program were not in existence. 

¹Christopher V. Luaya was a ministerial applicant in the Negros Occidental Conference in the Philippines when he wrote this article.

²The military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the NPA is a Maoist group formed in March 1969 with the aim of overthrowing the government through protracted guerrilla warfare.

³Jun Caber (not his real name) was a young volunteer missionary in the Philippine mountain tribes of Bukidnon. He also worked in the Muslim territory in Western Mindanao for two years. Five years ago, he was called to work in South Korea and is currently serving as a missionary in the northern part of Thailand under Adopt a Minister.

⁴Arnie Roa works as a layman with the Zamboanga Peninsula Mission. He and his wife, a teacher at the Bongao Adventist Elementary School, are the parents of a healthy 18-month-old, who was born weighing only 1.65 lbs.

⁵Sonny Mercurio is now an ordained minister of Negros Occidental Conference and married with three children.



Giving Back

Reva Lachica Moore received a gift and passed it on.

More than anything, Reva wanted an Adventist education. She could not afford it, however. Her sister suggested that she write to someone in the United States because she had heard that kind people live there. One day Reva discovered a return label on a package of used Adventist publications that my grandmother, Beryl McLarty, had collected and sent to the Philippines. Reva's father had warned the children not to touch the package, but when Reva saw the label she couldn't resist. She tore the label off, hid it in her room, and eventually wrote to the person. The request: money to go to school.

My grandmother opened her heart and her meager funds and sent Reva to Philippine Union College, where she completed a degree in medical technology. (Some of the money undoubtedly came from my father, but Grandmother took in boarders, etc., to raise money for her mission projects.)

During that time my father flew Reva to the U.S. as a Mother's Day surprise for Grandmother. My father also brought Reva to my graduation from Andrews University in 1969.

In the United States Reva married a man who eventually died of a brain tumor. She used the life insurance money to build a church in Boitiano, Philippines. My father contributed to that project when she ran out of money to finish the church. Dad has also been part of her Adopt a Minister program.

On April 4, 2009, Reva drove from Louisiana to Tennessee for my mother's memorial service. When she stood and spoke, Reva recounted all my parents and grandmother had done for her and concluded her comments by saying she was "the seventh McLarty child." That final statement sums up her relationship to our family.

—MARILYNN PEEKE, Columbia, Maryland, United States

A small fire blazes in the dirt street. Thin orange flames dance gently, their incandescent tendrils igniting glowing embers in the pile of rubbish. It is a harmless blaze—a ritual, really—set every evening about this time to burn the trash accumulated throughout the day.

At the voice the small girl's eyes dart toward her mother, then back to the stick, still glowing with intriguing sparkles. It is obvious; the prohibition had sparked a shift from innocence to intention. She is no longer satisfied with inspection. Now she *must* touch the forbidden coal.

By
JENNI GOODWIN

Touching Fire

*A small child
and a burning
stick taught
me an important
lesson.*

A thousand fires like this one happen around the city each day.

A toddler, not more than 2, plays quietly in the street, fascinated by the colors and movement of the fire. She dawdles by the flames, gripping a long thin strip of wood in her hand. Mussy wisps of hair cling to her cheeks as she stares intently, thinking hard. Slowly, carefully, the little tyke stretches the long sliver out in front of her until the tip is glowing a warm orange, then pulls back to examine it closely. As she is examining her prize, her mother catches sight from the sales table.

“Josias,” a warning voice calls sharply. “Don’t touch the fire. It will burn you!”

Defiance ... and Guilt

Josias’ fingers twitch. A short battle rages in her mind as she considers the possible consequences, should her mother catch her disobedience. Decision made, one small hand creeps toward the dormant fire. Eyes focused; brows furrowed with guilt. Josias glances once toward her mother, furtively. Then she touches.

Brown eyes widen to show the whites. Mouth drops open. Hand jerks back, recoiling involuntarily from the surprise of pain. It is a whole-body reaction as the burn wreaks its havoc on her tender flesh. Tears welling in her eyes, Josias nurses her injured

finger, comforting herself for just a moment. Then she turns her attention to evaluate the cause of her pain: the glowing stick.

The trial is set. The defendant is identified. Passing blithely by the fault of her own blatant disobedience, an inanimate humanly manipulated object, *the stick*, is judged guilty. With the same response that humanity has used for ages to excuse its own misdeeds, the diminutive child smiles vindictively. Forgetting her burn, she concentrates on meting out ill-designated justice. Securing the slender twig in both her baby hands, Josias smashes the glowing ember into the dirt with all



*Even our birth
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the violent force her toddler's body can produce ... repeating the process until the stick is black and mangled. After a short pause, she carries the stick back to the fire, relights it, and then smashes it into the dust. Again. And again. And again.

That's How It All Began

I sit, my back leaning against some rickety slats as I wait, watching. I am the sole observer. How blatant her defiance, choosing to do exactly the opposite of what her mother has instructed ... to her own detriment! Short-lived innocence intentionally traded for the promised knowledge of experiencing the reality of good

and evil. Warning was provided. Understanding was present. Josías used the rational ability of her little mind to choose, and she *chose* to disobey. It doesn't make any sense, really. But it doesn't stop there.

Josías received the consequences of her choice, yet she refused to accept them as such. Blame came automatically, the passing of her self-owned guilt to an innocent third party. Punishing another for one's own sin. It was a classic paradigm repetition of sin's birth on this planet.

I rise slowly to my feet, and start toward home, replaying the child's actions in my mind, amazed at the resemblance of Josías' encounter with sin to that of Adam and Eve's first experience in the garden. Both parties were previously completely innocent. Both received instruction from the one who cared for them, with the sole purpose of preventing them pain and suffering. Both made a deliberate choice to disobey those instructions. Both refused to accept their own responsibility in the resulting consequences, instead passing the blame to someone or something else. How far, I marveled, we have fallen as a sinful race, with sinful tendencies now engrained in our beings from birth!


All of Us Tarnished

To see the innocent child soiled, immersed in the bleeding stain of experiencing sin, I am sharply reminded of my own life, grubby and tarnished with a thick crust of accumulated sin. It's not so fresh and shocking anymore. Sin for me isn't so new: it's really routine. More accepted. Even expected. I realize suddenly the trap humanity has fallen into, and the desperate need we have spiritually. Even our birth innocence is tainted. There is nothing

good in our humanness. We are in dire need of a spiritual rebirth. I've known it all along, but suddenly it makes much more sense.

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:4-6).^{*} "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

How often, I reflect, do I play "Josías" with God? God sets guidelines to protect and care for me. He knows what will happen when I disobey, and He wants to prevent me from experiencing pain. Warning is provided. Instruction is clear. I know what's right. I understand. I don't want to experience pain. It's really quite simple. So why do I still choose to touch the fire?

Today a small child and a burning stick opened my eyes and taught me a valuable lesson. It's time to break the mold of burning fingers and bashing sticks. It's time to ditch the perversion of our supposed birth innocence and be intentionally reborn. Reborn through His merits into His perfection. 

*All Scripture references are from the New International Version



Jenni Goodwin, a nurse and paramedic, is coordinator of Touch of Love, a nonprofit ministry of Ambassadors Medical Outreach and Relief Projects in northeastern Peru.

The first rays of the early dawn lay in long shadows over the corrugated roofs of the Phillipi squatter camp as I followed Dennis over the white sand dunes to a little tin shanty. A strong smell of smoldering smoke hung in the air.

The door creaked as Dennis unhooked the wire catch. He stooped low as he peered into the dim light of the little shack. In his one hand he clutched a yellow plastic bag filled with groceries from the store. I followed close behind him as he made our presence known.

“Good morning, Miriam. I’ve come to visit you, and I have a friend with me.” His voice brought warmth to the chilly air of the early winter morning. He made his way to her bedside in the faint light seeping through the open door. Inside, I vaguely discerned the few odd pieces of furniture in the small room.

As my eyes grew accustomed to the low light, I could see Dennis standing next to her bed in one corner of the room. In the opposite corner, I noticed a chair and a little wooden table covered with a red cloth.

As I stood there in the dim light of the tin shanty, I suddenly became aware of a strange feeling of discomfort that, for a fleeting moment, took me back to my childhood days and my great-grandmother’s little house on the prairie—the dancing shadows of the candlelight on the walls and the fear of the dark that tied my stomach in knots.

It was then that I saw the big brown eyes of Miriam. Her cheekbones stood



Hein Von Horsten is an Adventist pastor whose ministry serves the Adventist medical personnel living and working in South Africa.

*One man’s
encounter
with an AIDS
victim*

The Only Love I Know

By HEIN VON HORSTEN



WITNESSING LOVE: Dennis Wadley held the woman’s hand in his and asked, “Miriam, do you know that Jesus loves you?”

HEIN VON HORSTEN

out sharply, and I watched as Dennis knelt beside her bed and took her hand in his. For a few moments there was a silence in the room, as I watched him stroke her head lovingly.

The predominantly Black community of Phillipi lives under very harsh circumstances, caught up in the stranglehold of poverty and AIDS. Miriam’s family had left her because she contracted the AIDS virus. They did not want to be associated with

this dreaded disease that brought shame upon the family. They feared rejection and stigmatization from the community, so they abandoned Miriam and left her to die.

Then Dennis broke the silence again: “How are you, Miriam?”

Licking her dry lips with her tongue, she said: “I am very tired.” His hand kept stroking her bony fingers.

“I have brought you some good food that will make you feel better,

Miriam. And I want you to meet my friend, Hein. He has joined me so that he can take some pictures. I am going to send the pictures overseas so that the folk there can see how people are suffering here, and hopefully they will send us donations for medicine and food. Will that be OK with you?"

He turned and with a nod of his head invited me to come closer. Miriam's eyes slowly moved across the room to where I was standing, and they seemed even bigger then. With great effort she lifted her hand as a sign of greeting.

*The wounded,
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"Hello, Miriam." My voice sounded hoarse under the corrugated iron roof. I did not feel comfortable going closer to her bed, so I instinctively started fiddling with the knobs on my camera. I wasn't afraid of anything, but I became aware of a strange realization, as though death, unobtrusively, wanted to sneak in under her blankets.

"Miriam, I've come to anoint you today." Dennis's voice was filled with warmth and compassion as his knees

dug deeper into the white sand floor. As he reached for the bottle of sunflower cooking oil in the yellow plastic bag, her brown eyes stared at him.

"Miriam, do you know that Jesus loves you?" His hand reached out and touched her cheek. As I stood watching amid the solemn silence, it was as if a voice whispered: "Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground."

The silence enfolded us again. Miriam stared up at the roof as Dennis held her hand in his.

"Do you know that He loves you, Miriam?"

Her head slowly turned toward his. "The only love I know," she said, "is the love that you have shown me." As she closed her eyes, I could see how the tears gleamed down her cheeks. It was as if One had come to fill her Martha-and-Mary home with His presence, as the silence echoed the melody of her words: "The only love I know...."

A Life of Service

I was introduced to Dennis Wadley by Arthur Ammann, president of Global Strategies for HIV Prevention in California, United States. Dennis is the director for Bridges of Hope, an international group that seeks to bring hope to the destitute through its outreach ministry.

Dennis and his family left the comfort of their home in Santa Barbara, where he pastored a large and wealthy church, to come to South Africa as missionaries. Like Mother Teresa, he and his staff have been laboring among the poor of Phillipi. The outcasts and orphans have been cared for; the wounded, left behind on the battlefields of AIDS, have been tended with such love that even the angels have watched in awe.

The Greatest Sermon

I have often thought of my experience in Phillipi and the words


spoken by Miriam that winter morning in her tin shanty. Without doubt, it must have been the greatest sermon I have ever heard. It touched my life in such a meaningful way and reiterated the old truth: that it's not what you know in life, but what you give of yourself.

Prior to my experience in Phillipi I was fortunate to be enrolled in the course HIV/AIDS in the Workplace at South Africa's Stellenbosch University. For 12 months we sat at the feet of lecturers and covered the social, legal, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the epidemic. A year later we were capped and received our well-earned diplomas.

But it was only in Miriam's tin shanty a year later that I was confronted with the truth: true love, unselfish love, is not wrapped up in knowledge but in the compassion that we show to others. True love is the willingness to unhook the wire catches of the doors of the deserted; to stoop low into the dim light of their suffering; to feel the sand under my knees as I kneel at the bedside of the stigmatized; to reach out with a loving hand and touch the afflicted; to affirm the love and pardon of God for sinners; to anoint the down and out.

The last rays of the twilight of earth's history are casting long shadows over the suffering of humankind. Amid the pleasure-seeking multitudes of the mother cities, you and I are daily confronted with the tin shanties of society.

If we decide to labor for those who are down and out, those who are deserted and rejected by society, those who are stigmatized by sin; if we decide to reach out and build bridges of hope, we will also hear the melodious words: "The only love I know is the love that you have shown me!"

Then we will know that our lives have not been in vain. 



Finding Faith in



PHOTOS BY RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN



Left: GREETING THE FAITHFUL: Pastor Jan Paulsen preaches at the Beishi Adventist Church in Shenyang, China, while Eugene Hsu translates. **Below:** The world church president greets members of the Wuxi congregation after a Wednesday evening prayer meeting.

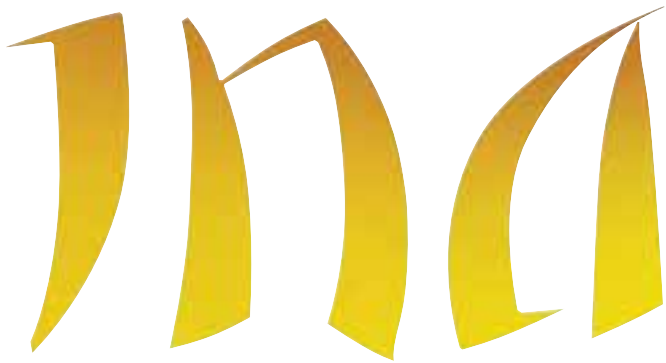


The Beiguan Adventist Church in Shenyang serves more than 3,000 members.



GLENN MITCHELL/NSD

For the first time since Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949, a Seventh-day Adventist world church president has been able to lead an official delegation to visit Adventist believers in China. In May Pastor Jan Paulsen and other church leaders from the world church headquarters and the Northern Asia-Pacific Division traveled to China for a week-long itinerary coordinated by Pastor Eugene Hsu, a Chinese-born world church vice president. Pastor Paulsen spoke to Adventist congregations in Beijing, Wuxi, and Shenyang; visited with local church pastors; and met with religious and political officials.



Adventists in China worship under extraordinary circumstances. The state considers the Adventist Church part of the broader Chinese Protestant church, which is coordinated by the government-sponsored China Christian Council/Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Although recognized as a distinct belief group, Adventists have no autonomous administration, no institutions to provide Adventist pastoral training, and congregations often share church buildings with Sundaykeeping groups. But in spite of the challenges, they are a growing group within Chinese Christendom. Current estimates suggest there are almost 400,000 Adventists in China, meeting in around 4,000 congregations and home churches.

Adventist World editor Bill Knott was part of the delegation. He sat down with Pastor Paulsen just a few days after their return to Silver Spring, Maryland, for a conversation about this historic visit.

KNOTT: The week in China was filled with amazing sights and experiences. What impressions from your visit were most striking to you?

PAULSEN: I don't think I have ever been anywhere where I have been so stirred, spiritually and emotionally. On the whole, the people are not well-off. They have comparatively

little. And yet I saw again and again how they rejoice, and how highly they value that which they have in Christ.

But let me be more specific. Sometimes you meet a person and there is a spiritual atmosphere that surrounds them. It defies explanation; you can't really describe it other than that they exude a sense of "spiritual" power and strength. I sensed this with two senior women pastors we met.

I think all of us in the delegation sensed that as well.

Hao Ya Jie is the senior pastor of Beiguan Adventist Church in Shenyang. When she began her ministry 20 years ago there were only a few dozen members. And now, 20 years on, she has a community of 7,000! Three thousand are there at the main church, and the others are spread out in the district among 117 churches.

Before I preached in her church, she said to me, "Afterward, I would like to invite people to come forward. I do this every time." And I was told that this was her pattern every Sabbath. She has seven full-time assistants, and so when at the end of the sermon 150 people came forward, these assistants stepped in and immediately took care of those who responded. It was done in such an extraordinary manner.

When Hao Ya Jie looks at you, even though somebody else is translating her words, there is an incredible sense of strength and warmth in her eyes.

Did you hear the passion in her prayer? Her voice almost broke as she prayed for people to respond to her appeal. I wished we could have heard a live translation of her prayer.

And this sensation of spiritual strength was reinforced by the second pastor we met, who came from the northeastern province of Jilin. Zu Xiu Hua is in charge of a district of 20,000 members. Twenty thousand! When restrictions on religion were loosened in the 1980s, the church in that area experienced major growth for more than a decade.

She related one story of a huge baptism conducted by the only Adventist pastor there at the time. He was planning to do all the baptizing, but it became too much for him to handle. So he stood in the river and spoke the words, and the deacons lowered the candidates into the water and brought them up. The pastor stood in the river for three days, and baptized 3,000 people—1,000 a day! I mean, I've stood in a river in Africa when we baptized 300, and it took four hours of sinking down into the mud of the river. But this—this is incredible!

We asked Zu Xiu Hua, "How do you account for this? What is the extraordinary appeal?" She said, "The people come to the teachings, and they see our zeal and the Holy Spirit."

"They see our zeal." Here is a disarmingly simple answer, and yet so powerful. And I said to myself, *Would that our people everywhere had this zeal which is so visible and so strong!*



PHOTOS BY RAJMUND DABROWSKI/ANN



GLENN MITCHELL/NSD

CHINA SNAPSHOTS: **Upper left:** A choir of Seventh-day Adventists performs at the Wuxi Protestant Church during a service at which Paulsen preached. **Upper right:** Hau Xajie, pastor of the Beiguan Adventist Church in Shenyang. **Lower right:** Pastor Paulen, Jairyong Lee, Eugene Hsu, and Reverend Gao Feng, president of the China Christian Council/3-Self Patriotic Movement hold a special “Follow the Bible” copy of the Bible, written in several languages.

One of our colleagues on the trip asked her, “What do you most like to preach about?” And she looked at him and said, “The cross—what else?” In her interview, she alluded to this issue of zeal; that this is what distinguishes Adventists from other Protestant groups in the countryside. And for that reason, the Adventist Church has seen remarkable growth. In some places the growth has been unreal. This sense of the member’s zeal continues to linger with me. It made the whole visit, for me, such a spiritual experience. I have said to the Lord more than once, “I went there wanting and praying to be an instrument of some kind, and yet I was the one who received so much!”

If these two women were pastors in a North American or Western setting, their volumes would be on bookshelves everywhere because they would be the pastors of megachurches. How should the rest of the Adventist Church look at the phenomenal growth in China and relate to its emerging leaders?

Well, China is incomparable. Whatever you see in China, you can’t place other things next to it and say, “Therefore...” Their journey has to do with hardship, and it has to do with God finding an Elijah in a setting where things are so difficult. God is finding these voices, this commitment, these people, and is spiritually equipping them and using them in this phenomenal manner.

The fact is we have at least half a dozen women pastors

who are ordained as ministers in China. We recognize them as ordained ministers; they are in our records in the statistics in the *Yearbook*. Should anyone from the Western world say to me, “There, you see, they did it in China, they can do it here!” My response would be, “Would you want to become like China?” China is unique, and the fact is we don’t have true control over who is ordained. Technically, the CCC [the state-regulated China Christian Council] has the final say, but the decision is usually made in consultation with the local Adventist congregation. In reality, though, it’s a process that doesn’t always work the same way in every situation.

We need to recognize that God works with reality in a given place. I’ve said many times before, “Obedience to God is always obedience where you are.” And you can’t simply transfer that to another place, because you don’t have the same situation or the same ingredients.

Someone on the trip spoke of two biblical analogies for what’s happening in China: First, the Jerusalem Council, where the church had to come to grips with things it couldn’t control. And second, the baptism of Cornelius, which forced the church to recognize the Holy Spirit working in unexpected ways and places. Are these good parallels to what you are describing?

When we think of China, we need to recognize that it’s

unique. There are limitations that operate there, while at the same time there's an almost unlimited potential. We must have the strength and courage to allow this to develop, even if growth in China takes a different shape from that to which we're accustomed.

It's clear the Holy Spirit is at work in China. In one church where we worshipped there were two halls, one on each floor, both the same size, and both of them were filled. And people were sitting in the stairways between them, just sitting, so they could catch some of what was going on. There is such a *hunger* for both the Word of God and for fellowship with other believers. Bill, how can you experience this without feeling, *Would that we had this everywhere!*

I saw those believers sitting in the hallway, faces alight, singing hymns as though they were on the front row. And they were only within earshot of an old, decrepit loudspeaker. It was deeply moving to me to see how absolutely attractive the gospel is to them. Another sentiment which lodged in my mind, and I'm sure also in yours, has to do with their vision for training lay people. Our ministry in China is basically lay-driven and lay-trained. We have a few people who go to seminaries operated by the China Christian Council. In these institutions our people receive general theological training and biblical instruction, but they don't, at this time, get the particular Adventist dimension they need.

Therefore, most of those who serve our churches as pastors and deacons (who are in reality pastors, but not fully employed as such) are trained in the local church. It's on-the-job training, but it's also very focused and disciplined.

One might be tempted to say, *Most of the people who will lead the training are themselves not fully trained!* But then you look into the eyes of these two pastors we spoke of earlier. If somehow this zeal can be transferred from one generation of church leaders to another, what a blessing!

I was touched as we were leaving the Beiguan church by a spontaneous moment when the choir came out and surrounded you and just started singing. It wasn't something they'd planned to do—it grew up in the moment. This was one of the most memorable moments of the trip for me. I had seen the politeness, the reserve, the decorum of their society. But suddenly there was this moment when I thought I was in West Africa! The singing, the clapping! You've talked about what this visit meant to you. What do you think this visit by a delegation from the world church meant to Adventists in China? Well, I hope they felt enormously affirmed; that they received the sense that, "We're part of a family. We haven't been forgotten. We're not outside the circle. And these people, by coming here, have showed us that we're family."

You spoke in this way at each place we visited, and I thought, *This is what they're hungry for. This sense, not only of a connection with*

each other, but a sense of connection with a world family.

How you would assess the longer-term impact of this visit. Do you think it will have any effect on the church's ability to operate more successfully in Chinese society?

Yes and no. I think internally the church will feel empowered by its own expanding strength to find ways to hold things together. But I think, as far as the public officials are concerned, it could increase suspicion. Religious authorities are committed to limiting that which is too "distinctive"; they describe Protestant Christianity in China as "postdenominational." But I feel strongly that this is a political description which has little to do with the true essence of Christianity. It lacks the freedom that is so precious to all Christians; the freedom to be who you are chosen to be, and to express your values.

It's difficult to predict future developments. I sense that Adventists in China need to explore the boundaries of what's possible. As long as the church is Chinese, led by Chinese people, and as long as we respect the limitations of how we, internationally, relate to the church in China, the authorities can probably tolerate a fair bit. They seem not to be overly embarrassed by the fact that, "Yes, you have your special characteristics, such as Sabbathkeeping." But as far as linking internationally is concerned, we have to be very cautious and prudent.

There are many ministries within the world of Adventism that may have an interest in how they might serve in China. What would you say to those ministries, based on this visit?

I would say that Adventists in China, because of the extremely delicate nature of their situation, are best placed to take care of their own mission. Sometimes when supporting ministries go into places such as China they create vulnerability and exposure that is not helpful to the church. So I would say, "Please pray for your brothers and sisters in China. If there are resources you can make available to help them, then do so. They need more churches. But let them carry the initiative."

Keep in mind, also, that they have access to a lot of printed Adventist literature. Forty-five Ellen G. White books are already translated into Chinese. My sense from this visit, and also from visits in the late 1990s, is that Seventh-day Adventism in China has not "gone astray." I sense it is very mainline Adventist, very traditional, and richly nurtured in its Adventist identity.

So you would say, "Resource the church, but don't feel like you have to go in and reshape it."

Exactly. I feel that no one should take such an initiative upon themselves. If someone is wondering how they can support the mission of the church in China, then let's talk. Let's counsel together, and find a good way. ●

NUMBER 6

Creation

WONDERS

Why special creation matters

By JOHN T. BALDWIN, LEONARD R. BRAND, ARTHUR CHADWICK, and RANDALL W. YOUNKER

Charles Darwin famously concluded that the Old Testament contains a “manifestly false history of the world” and therefore the Bible is “no more to be trusted than ... the beliefs of any barbarian.”¹ Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church live in a world that takes evolution for granted and generally follows Darwin’s logic. Furthermore, an increasing number of Christian scholars and scientists conclude that since the account of the beginnings is not to be trusted, other “truths” of the Bible cannot be accepted at face value.² However, Adventists continue to cherish the biblical teaching of special creation (that is, a recent creation week). Why?

This article considers why the doctrine of special creation still matters so deeply, by addressing first its scriptural basis as recently endorsed by the General Conference Executive

Committee,³ which will be followed by a closer look at the impact of the doctrine of special creation to four key doctrines.

Special Creation in Scripture

The biblical teaching of special creation is based on seven key biblical passages regarding special creation, namely Genesis 1; 2; Exodus 20:8-11; Psalms 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; and Hebrews 11:3, which need to be linked to Revelation 14:6, 7.

The listing of Genesis 1 and 2 is important. These two complementary chapters intentionally teach the account of earth’s history and of the origin of the first life forms on this planet.⁴ Exodus 20:8-11, written by the finger of God, reminds us of the central place of the seventh-day Sabbath as the memorial of creation. The fourth commandment only makes sense if creation week was a literal seven-day event and clearly refers back to the Genesis accounts. It unambiguously describes God’s creation in terms of a short period. His work culminated with creatures bearing God’s own image and charged with the responsibility to care for the world.

Adventists have generally endorsed the view that these historical days of Creation were neither mythical, metaphorical days, nor so-called literal divine days in which each of the six days allegedly translates into multimillions

of earth years, amounting to a few billion years.⁵ The days of Creation were days like our own, comprising 24 literal hours.

Additionally, the chronological material in Genesis 4, 5, and Matthew 1 are only compatible with a time since creation of a few thousand years, not millions of years (deep time). But why does it matter how long ago it was? Why do we care about time? It matters a great deal, and the reason involves our response to modern scientific interpretations of geologic time and what it says about the nature of God and of the Bible. Deep time and the theory of the evolution of all creatures go hand in hand. Our choice is between deep time plus evolution of life forms, or a recent biblical creation week.

The concept of a recent creation is important. It guards against the concept of theistic evolution, or progressive creation, which seems to creep into some Adventists’ understanding of special creation.

Revelation 14:6, 7 highlights the importance of the doctrine of special creation in the context of today’s post-modern culture. The specific language of God’s last message to the world is such that it earnestly calls all people to worship God because He created by the brief, peaceful, compassionate method of six days alluded to in Exodus 20:11. It reaffirms a special creation worldview in the end-time.

This article represents a unique collaboration between biblical and theological scholars and scientists. **John T. Baldwin** is professor of theology in the Theology and Christian-Philosophy Department at Andrews University. **Leonard R. Brand** is professor of biology and paleontology at Loma Linda University. **Arthur Chadwick** is professor of geology and biology at Southwestern Adventist University, and **Randall W. Younker** is professor of Old Testament and biblical archaeology at the same university.

In a neo-Darwinian world, God is thereby shown to be wholly worthy of worship because of the brief, recent temporal method He used in Creation.

As the climax of Creation, God rested on, blessed, and sanctified the seventh day, thereby instituting for all humanity (Mark 2:27) the creation-based, seventh-day Sabbath, the day called Saturday in our current calendars. The Sabbath serves as an unchangeable memorial of a completed Creation in six days, and as a sign of the sanctifying relationship existing between the Creator and the beings created in His image.

When Creation was finished, God declared His creation works as “very good” (Gen. 1:31). The later author of Psalm 19 echoes this divine approval and excitement by linking Creation to God’s glory (Ps. 19:1-6).

Special Creation and Other Biblical Doctrines

Four key reasons combine to show why belief in a recent historical creation matters. *First*, special creation is indissolubly linked with the authority and inspiration of Scripture. If a literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2 cannot be trusted, who or what will be the guide to indicate “trustworthy” or “doubtful” parts of Scripture?

Second, the alternate worldview of theistic evolution and progressive creation produces intractable problems involving the biblical teaching of the loving character of the Creator (1 John 4:8). If one would accept theistic evolution as the supposed intentional divine method of creation, one would have to harmonize more than 3.8 billion years of trauma (predation), disease, death, mass extinctions, suffering, countless regional geologic catastrophes of all sorts, and other natural evils with the biblical image of a loving and caring God.⁶ Scientist David Hull agrees by saying that the God implied by evolutionary theory is neither loving, nor a God to whom one would be

inclined to pray, but is nearly diabolical.⁷ This is definitely not the God who sees every sparrow that falls (Matt. 10:29-31).

Third, the millions-of-years creation worldview necessarily requires the denial of a historical, literal Fall, a global flood, and a historical Adam through whom sin and death passed to all humanity, and ultimately involves the denial of the need to accept Jesus as Savior through His life and death on the Cross (Gen. 2:9, 17; Rom. 5:12, 14; 6:23; 8:20, 21; 1 Cor. 15:26). In this view death in the animal realm, including protohumans, appears millions of years before sin, thereby undermining the atonement and redemption.

Fourth, a historical special creation confirms the divine rationale for observing the Sabbath. Consider some implications if, as some suggest, God, in the Sabbath commandment of Exodus 20:11, is only using language humans can understand and is not telling us the actual way in which He created life forms on earth in six literal days. If so, God Himself bears prohibited false witness at least twice in the Sabbath commandment. Contrary to its claims, read literally, He neither created in six days, nor rested on the seventh day. (Did He even bless the seventh day?) If the commandment is understood in this nonhistorical sense, God grounds the divine rationale for worshipping on the seventh day on events that never

happened. In so doing it would seem that God would impeach His own wisdom and trustworthiness.

Bringing It All Together

Special creation preserves the integrity of Scripture, safeguards the loving, praiseworthy character of God, establishes the reality of the atonement and redemption, and the soundness of the seventh-day Sabbath. These reasons, and more, show why a special creation worldview matters so deeply to the Adventist message and mission. ●

⁶Nora Barlow, ed., *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin 1809-1882* (New York: Norton, 1958), p. 85.

⁷Langdon Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future: Reflections on Myth, Science and Theology* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1970), p. 9.

⁸Due to the importance of special creation, the Adventist Church recently sponsored two International Faith & Science Conferences on Creation (2002 and 2004) and encouraged regional conferences throughout the world in 2003. A consensus document emerged at the Denver International Faith & Science Conference (2004) entitled, “An Affirmation of Creation,” which was forwarded to the General Conference Executive Committee at its 2004 Annual Council. This 353-member General Conference body discussed and accepted the report from Denver and voted a historic reply called: “A Response to an Affirmation of Creation.” This document, published, among other printing channels, by the NAD edition of the *Adventist Review*, August 4, 2005, p. 11, affirmed a recent, literal, historical creation week composed of days like our own, along with a global flood. The word *global* was significantly used for the first time in a voted General Conference statement on Creation.

⁹Randall W. Younker, “Genesis 2: A Second Creation Account?” in *Creation, Catastrophe & Calvary*, ed. John T. Baldwin (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2000), pp. 40-68.

¹⁰This view is formulated by Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Science of God: The Convergence of Scientific and Biblical Wisdom* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

¹¹See Thane Hutcherson Ury, “The Evolving Face of God as Creator: Early Nineteenth-Century Traditionalist and Accommodationist Theological Responses in British Religious Thought to Paleontological Evidence in the Fossil Record.” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2001).

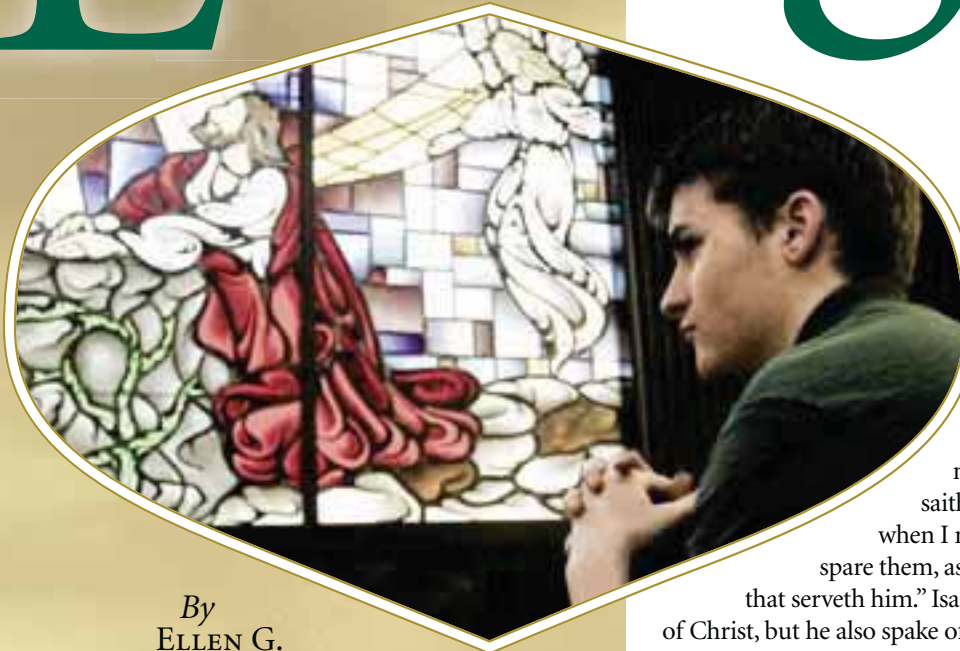
¹²David L. Hull, “The God of the Galápagos,” *Nature*, vol. 352, No. 6335 (Aug. 8, 1991), p. 486.

Creation

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made “the heaven and the earth” and all

living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Pss. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

The Power of a Living Will



By
ELLEN G.
WHITE

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Isaiah not only beheld the glory of Christ, but he also spake of Him. While David mused, the fire burned; then spake he with his tongue. While he mused upon the wondrous love of God, he could not but speak of that which he saw and felt. Who can by faith behold the wonderful plan of redemption, the glory of the only begotten Son of God, and not speak of it? Who can contemplate that unfathomable love expressed in dying upon the cross of Calvary, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life, and have no words to utter to extol the Saviour’s glory? Who can become partakers of His love, and not admire and reverence and adore?

As they behold Christ, those who love and fear the Lord will be led to assemble together and speak to one another in words that are full of fervour. “Yea, he is altogether lovely.” He is “the chiefest among ten thousand.” “In his temple doth every one speak of his glory.” The sweet singer of Israel praised Him upon the harp: “I will speak of the glorious honour of Thy majesty, and of thy wondrous

PHOTO BY MATTHEW HERZEL

works.” “And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.... They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.” Such will be the conversation of those who are specified in the scripture, “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” And God is represented as listening to their words and writing them in a book.

tness

Your Witness Uplifts

The testimony of John the beloved disciple is, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

Surely, those who speak to one another of the goodness of the Lord are highly privileged. “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” We have rich themes for thought and conversation, themes that it will interest and encourage and uplift the soul to dwell upon; and if God’s witnesses, those who are the subjects of His grace, upon whom the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness are shining, should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. God will be glorified.

Your Witness Unites

If the members of the church are one with Christ, they will be in union with one another. And this unity of believers will be a living testimony to the world of the power of the Gospel. United in one, they receive bright

beams of light from the Sun of Righteousness, and diffuse this light to a world in darkness. Oh, why cannot we see from the lessons and especially from the prayer of Christ, how Christians may be perfect in one, and thus represent the glory of their Redeemer? If those who believe the truth would bring the prayer of Christ into their practical life, they would grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. They would grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. As believers in Christ, they “are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are build together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

The believer in Christ needs to understand the working of the powers of darkness to bring dissension and division into the church, that its members may not present the oneness for which Christ prayed. God’s people have greatly dishonoured His name, and misrepresented the truth by their alienation, their lack of love for one another. As love for God has grown cold, they have lost the childlike simplicity that knit heart to heart in love and tenderness. Hardheartedness has come in. There is a drawing away from one another. Many are saying by their actions I care not for the prayer of Christ. They feel under no special obligation to love one another as Christ has loved them. Jesus can do little for these souls; for His words and Spirit are not permitted to enter into the heart.

Your Witness Saves

Many are in darkness, and know not the cause. They are not at peace with God, they are not one with Christ, nor in unity with one another. They seem to think they are at liberty to act out the natural feelings of the heart. Words and actions testify that they do not desire to be in union with those who do not exactly meet their minds, even among believers. Now all who entertain these ideas and cherish these feelings need to be converted. They need to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The religion of Christ is not to be controlled by impulse.

Love for one another is not to be manifested in praise and flattery, but in true fidelity. If we see one in danger, we should tell him plainly, kindly, even at the risk of his displeasure. We must lean wholly upon God; we need to pray much. We should hold the truth with firmness, but we are to hold it in righteousness. While we speak the truth with fidelity, we should speak it in love. ●

This article was published in *The Present Truth*, January 12, 1893. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

With a membership of more than 2.5 million members the South American Division is growing at a rapid rate. Yet the church faces challenges that threaten to slow the pace of growth. From big cities to rural areas millions of people still need to hear the gospel. There is also the need to educate pastors and lay members to help sustain the growth that has already taken place.

“We are part of the world church, doing our part, with speed and passion,” says Erton Köhler, president of the South American Division. “With the growth we have had, and the challenges we face, we need the world church to join hands with us in the mission of the church in South America. Financial resources give us the means to preach the gospel.”

Working the Neighborhoods

One of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings in 2006 helped build chapels and churches in northern Argentina, expand schools in Brazil, and start the work of reaching out to the people in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro.

One of the schools to receive a por-

tion of the offering was Petrópolis, located in the mountains outside of Rio de Janeiro. This school is now home to more than 400 students, more than half of whom live in campus housing. The 2009 offering is now expanding the boys’ dormitory and will be completed in time for the new school year in January 2010. Students on this campus are learning how to witness for Jesus.

The people working in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro also benefited from the 2006 offerings. These crime-ridden neighborhoods are home to millions of people who live in trying and difficult circumstances. The work here is hard and progress is slow. Your offerings have helped buy land where a new church will be built to nurture the new members who have come to live a new life in Jesus.

Pastor Sal Costa began having Bible studies in a garage. His small group started out with three members, and now more than 40 people have been baptized and are attending



The church in South America benefits from the generosity of Adventists around the world.

Growing South

By DANIEL WEBER



church each Sabbath. “We are thankful for the offering for the work in the garage and we continue with this small group,” says Costa. “We have been able to purchase a small house to continue the work.”

Affordable and Accessible Education

One of the fastest growing areas of the South American Division is the North Brazil Union Conference, growing at such a rapid rate that in 2010 it will be split into two union conferences. The North Brazil Union Conference has been adding about 45,000 members each year and now has a membership of more than 350,000 people. This may sound like a lot, but the Union covers more than 45 percent of Brazil’s entire land mass and encompasses 3.85 million square kilometers (almost 1.5 million square miles).

This has led to two major challenges for the church in northern Brazil: First, because of the incredible growth that has taken place there is now a great need for trained pastors to shepherd new flocks of believers.

Second is the need to reach out to the outlying areas of this union to touch the unreached people who live in the forests and along the rivers of northern Brazil.

To help prepare workers to support this dramatic growth, the South American Division is building Adventist Amazon College, which will open its doors to theology students in 2010. A portion of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a dormitory on the campus to house these future pastors. The school will eventually expand to offer five majors, and will be home to more than 1,500 students. The buildings are designed to be environmentally friendly, with the latest energy-saving techniques to keep the cost of education affordable.

Currently Adventist young people have to travel either to São Paulo or Bahía (3,000 or 1,500 kms

respectively), to attend an Adventist college-level school. Most attend local public schools, where theology training is unavailable. When construction is finished, the school will be the major source of new pastors to help grow and nurture the church in northern Brazil.

Reaching Out With Radio

On the western coast of South America is the mountainous country of Ecuador, one of the fastest growing regions in the South American Division. Ecuador is home to 13 million people, and the Adventist Church has more than 76,000 members. The church has grown here because of a strong effort to reach people through radio ministry.

The church operates a network of radio stations that reaches an audience of some 200,000 listeners. In the past five years the radio station has been responsible for more than 700 people joining the church, while giving out 4,000 Bible studies in northern Ecuador alone.

The station focuses on programs that deal with health, family, and spiritual growth. The majority of the audience is educated, and some 95 percent are not Seventh-day Adventists. The programs are created and broadcast from a small station in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. The staff of three people is led by Miguel Martínez, director of the radio station.

Jorge Cruz, radio station chaplain, oversees the Bible study program. More than 90 volunteers give Bible studies and meet with listeners who have requested visits in their homes. One volunteer couple, Yolanda and Augusto, work in the town of Alangasi on the outskirts of Quito. Recently they visited the home of María Roque, a single mother.

While visiting with María, Yolanda suggested she listen to the Adventist radio station. Maria liked what she heard and soon asked Yolanda and Augusto to study the Bible with

her. Now María, along with her son and daughter, are baptized members of the Adventist Church. Cruz says that the radio station is a great way to enter the homes of the people in Ecuador. “God is in this radio station,” he says.

A portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help to expand the outreach of the radio ministry in Ecuador. Miguel Martínez says, “We hope this offering will be a generous one, because it will be used to purchase antennas and repeaters that will link our four current radio stations.”

A three-hour drive from Quito is the small town of Santo Domingo de los Colorados. Here the church runs Colegio Adventista del Ecuador, a K-12 school that is also home to 65 seminary students. More than 400 students attend this school from all over the country to receive an Adventist education. A portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help renovate the boys’ dorm, which houses seminary students (the dorm is badly in need of repair), so that the school can continue to help train future pastors of the Adventist Church in Ecuador. As the church continues to grow through its outreach ministries, the need for newly trained pastors also grows.

Ever since Thirteenth Sabbath Mission Offerings began in 1912, Seventh-day Adventists have supported the growth of the church through their faithful prayers and offerings. Today these same offerings help to spread a message of hope in Jesus’ soon return to the people of South America. Thank you for your prayers and support.

To read more about the progress of Adventist mission, visit www.AdventistMission.org.



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

QUESTION: *Why was Ham so severely punished for seeing his father naked (Gen. 9:18-27)?*

The biblical passage you refer to has been interpreted in different ways, suggesting that it is indeed a difficult one. The main problem is defining the sin of Ham—what does the phrase he “saw his father’s nakedness” mean? The second problem is the severity of the punishment itself. Before I address these questions, let me summarize the different interpretations of the passage.

1. Inappropriate Sexual Act: Many interpreters have argued that this narrative is about Ham’s sexual misconduct. This is based on the phrases “to see his father’s nakedness,” “to uncover the nakedness of” someone. These same phrases are employed in Leviticus 20:17 (NASB) to designate sexual intercourse. So, some suggest that this is a case of paternal incest (homosexuality). Others have suggested that since the phrase “to see the father’s nakedness” could mean to have a sexual relationship with the father’s wife (cf. Lev. 18:14), Ham violated Noah’s wife. Still others have argued that Ham castrated his father. This is based on the fact that the Bible describes what Ham did as “what his youngest son had done to him” and that nothing else is said about Noah having more children. These suggestions, however, ignore or explain away the immediate context of the story.

2. Contextual and Linguistic Considerations: What is occasionally overlooked is that the phrase “to uncover the nakedness” is not found in Genesis 9:18-27. What we find is a drunken Noah who, before falling unconscious, removed his clothes and was lying “uncovered inside his tent” (verse 21, NIV). According to Hebrew lexicons, the verb *gālāh* in this particular case means “to expose oneself.” Nothing in the context suggests that Ham uncovered his father. Therefore, that phrase should not be imported into the story to clarify Ham’s sin. This makes highly unlikely the suggestion of incest.

Second, the meaning of the phrase “to see the nakedness” should be determined by its immediate context. In Leviticus it designates heterosexual intercourse, never homosexual relations. This rules out the suggestion that Ham violated his father.

Third, in the narrative the verb “to see” is understood in a literal sense. We are told that Noah uncovered himself and Ham saw him. We are also told that his two brothers took precautions to avoid seeing their father naked. They “took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father’s nakedness” (verse 23, NIV). The text even adds, “their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father’s nakedness.” It is impossible to argue that the verb “to see” is used here figuratively. The brothers did all they could to avoid seeing what Ham had seen. This is the plain sense of the text, and it does not support any other interpretation.

3. The Sin of Ham: In the ancient Near East this would have been a serious matter. The obvious question is Why? In the case of Ham, the problem was not what he saw, but that he told others about it. These two actions, even if the first one may have been accidental (though the verb *ra’ah*, “to see,” could mean “to inspect, to look at”; [Gen. 11:5; Num. 21:8; cf. Gen. 6:2]), showed great disrespect for Noah and constituted a violation of the commandment to honor one’s parents. The narrative suggests that Ham dishonored and disgraced his father. The curse pronounced was an invocation to God, a request for justice. It was not intended to fix the fate of Canaan; but Ham’s son became the object of the curse, thus implying similarity of character. The head of the family was punished through communal responsibility based on family solidarity.

The narrative may sound somewhat strange, but it tells us something about family responsibilities and the need to avoid conflicts that may result in pain for parents, children, and even descendants.

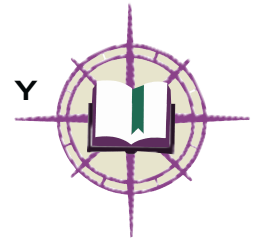
The story also points to the need to be vigilant; because what takes place in the family as a social nucleus will have a negative or positive impact even on the nation. A family united in love and service to God and others will fulfill God’s intended purpose for it. ●

Why So Hard on Ham?



By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

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



REVELATION'S Interceding Priest

By
MARK A. FINLEY

Revelation, the Bible's last book, describes Jesus as our living Lord. He is alive. He reigns from His throne in the heavenly temple. The affairs of this world are in His hands. He watches constantly over His children. Everything that concerns us, concerns Him. Our resurrected Lord ministers before God's throne on our behalf. As we gaze into heaven through the eyes of Scripture this month, we will once again marvel at His infinite love and tender care.

1. How did John describe Jesus, our resurrected Savior?

"Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:4, 5).

Jesus is the _____ witness.

Jesus is the _____ from the _____.

Jesus is the _____ over the _____ of the earth.

Jesus, the faithful witness, understands each experience we pass through. He has conquered death itself, so He is fully capable of handling any challenge we face. From His throne He guides the destiny of our planet. Our ultimate future is in His hands.

2. What did Jesus declare about Himself?

"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Rev. 1:18).

Jesus was dead, but now is _____.

3. What promise did Jesus give to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3?

"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (Rev. 3:8).

God has set before the church an _____.

In Revelation 4:1 John stood amazed as he looked and saw a door standing open in heaven. Gazing up into heaven, he saw the Father seated upon His throne amid the praise and adoration of the entire universe. In chapter 5 Jesus, the slain Lamb, now the living Priest, stands in our behalf. He is there at the Father's throne interceding for us. When the question is raised, "Who is worthy to open the scroll?" (verse 2), Jesus steps forth. He is the only one in all of heaven who is worthy. There at the throne of God our interceding priest presents His perfect, sinless life on our behalf. He presents the merits of His atoning sacrifice before all of heaven just for us.



4. Where is Jesus now?

“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2).

Is there a real sanctuary in heaven? Circle the right answer.

Yes No

In your own words, write why it is so encouraging to know that Jesus is alive and ministering in heaven’s sanctuary.

5. What is Jesus doing now?

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

Jesus ever lives to make _____.

The entire purpose of Jesus’ life—the reason He ever lives—is to save us. Nothing is more important to Him. Heaven would hold no joy for Him if we were not there with Him.

6. What gracious invitation did the apostle Paul make?

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15, 16).

Our Lord invites us to the _____ of _____.

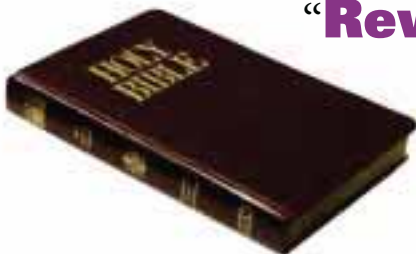
So that we may obtain _____ and find _____ to help in time of need.

Jesus, our interceding High Priest, stands before God’s throne to present His perfect righteousness in the place of our unrighteousness. All that we are not, He is. He provides pardon for our past and power for our present. In Jesus we find mercy and strength, comfort and hope, joy in our sorrow. He not only understands our needs, but He is fully capable of doing something about them. He not only offers sympathy, He offers help in times of need.

What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, our Lord. Our interceding High Priest—Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord—provides everything necessary for us to live happy, contented, grace-filled, obedient Christian lives. Place your faith in the living Christ today. Focus your attention on heaven’s sanctuary and rejoice in all that Jesus offers you.

Next month’s Bible study will outline

“Revelation’s End-time Conflict.”



LETTERS

A Question of Compassion

I just read Bill Knott's editorial "A Question of Compassion" (*Adventist World*, June 2009). It's not just the content and the writing, the flow of language and ideas, it's also the tone and poignancy. And more.

God bless us more through these words, and *Adventist World* magazine.

LAEL CAESAR
*Berrien Springs,
Michigan, United States*

Meet My Father

I was touched by the March 2009 *Adventist World* article, "Meet My Father," by Clinton Wahlen. I grew up in the poor family of the fatherless, and I have not known how good or bad it is having a father. I always weep when I think about my situation. I am facing daily the challenges of being responsible for family. Living in a poor family where I have no one to tell my sorrows, I have known that there exists *the* Father of the fatherless. To Him I pour out all my needs. This has helped me lean on Him—I know that I have God as my Father. I am currently facing difficulties in paying for my fees at Solusi Adventist University in Zimbabwe, but I know that He will do good things for me.

I do ask for prayers from the church so that I keep on trying Him



MATTHEW HERZEL

as I look for a sponsor to continue my theology studies.

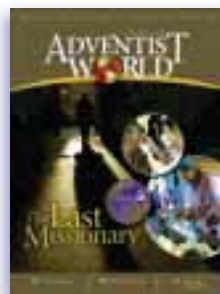
Lastly, I say to all the fatherless: Meet our Father.

AKIM
Bulawayo, Solusi, Zimbabwe

I would like to thank *Adventist World* for the article "Meet My Father" (March 2009). As a growing person I learned that our earthly fathers change but our heavenly Father does not. It thrilled me to note that He knows what we want beforehand. This article lifted me up spiritually.

Please keep on publishing such articles.

DIANA NCUBE
Bulawayo, Solusi, Zimbabwe



The Last Missionary

I went through the *Adventist World* magazine dated October 2008, with the cover on "The

Last Missionary." The whole issue was a blessing, but what took my attention most was this: "For individuals or churches to remain healthy, new ideas, insights, and perspectives need to be continually available and accessible" (see article "The Last Missionary," by Homer Trecartin).

I need to get more new ideas, especially on the challenges our

LETTERS

youth face, because I am a 24-year-old young man. I hope you print articles on this topic in the near future.

ISAAC BARASA NAMASAKA
Kitale, Kenya

A Great Magazine

Thank you very much for *Adventist World*. I am one of your regular readers and enjoy every article in *Adventist World*. It is a great magazine of our denomination. May the good Lord bless all of you in your service to the whole world church.

K. MEGUERDITCHIAN
Beirut, Lebanon

“For individuals or churches to remain healthy, new ideas, insights, and perspectives need to be continually available and accessible.”

—ISAAC BARASA NAMASAKA
Kitale, Kenya

We are gratified that readers are enjoying Adventist World. Be sure to look for us on the Internet too, at www.adventistworld.org.

—EDITORS.

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

It's not easy for me to study in a secular university; please pray that I will not disappoint God and will be able to finish my studies. I thank God for the many miracles He already has performed for me.

MARGARITA, *Paraguay*

Please pray for healing for my children. They suffer from depression and anxiety, diabetes, kidney disease, and high blood pressure. Pray that they will have a relationship with Jesus.

LINDA, *United States*

It's good news to hear someone is praying for you when you are in adversity. Despondency is weighing me down. I believe in God and am still convinced that He has not abandoned us—He will make a way! I need your prayers for faith.

EDMORE, *Zimbabwe*

Please pray for a friend who has moved away from his family and is an alcoholic—pray that he will return to his family and church and move away from the friends who have led him down a bad road.

BERTILIA, *Mexico*

Please pray for my health. I am not well. Also pray for my relationship: I am supposed to get married soon, but my future husband and I are bankrupt.

NETSAI, *ZAMBIA*

For more than a year I have suffered from fibromyalgia. I would like to ask that God heals me according to His will, or that He gives me courage and faith in the painful moments. Thank you.

GILLES, *Guadeloupe (French West Indies)*

Please pray for the Holy Spirit to be in all who are members of my church in Guatemala.

WENDY, *Guatemala*

I would like your help in praying for my mother, who was in an automobile accident several years ago. She is in a wheelchair now, unable to walk, and suffers from diabetes. Also pray for me to get a permanent job and a husband to help me raise my daughter.

CARREN, *Kenya*

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

Are We Qualified?



*This month
a reader shares
thoughts on
being qualified
followers of
God.*

For many people, paper qualifications have become all-important. Some even resort to “purchasing” a degree so they can present themselves with the “right qualifications.” Others have even resorted to fraud and misrepresentation by falsifying certificates, buying forged qualifications.

A person I know who had never been to university once jokingly expressed to me that he had studied at the INOGO University of Hawaii. He then explained that it was his way of expressing “I no go university” in poor, broken English. It made me wonder if I should put MWQ, that is, “My Wife’s Qualifications,” as one of my credentials.

As I considered the topic of qualifications and the importance placed on them, I thought about the qualifications that might impress God. Do we need qualifications *before* we can serve Him?

I got my answer from Scripture. It is recorded in Isaiah 6 that the Lord’s question of “Whom shall I send?” was answered by Isaiah *after* he had repented and God had forgiven him. Isaiah’s response was “Here am I! Send me.”

I began to realize that God asks whom He forgives to also serve Him. The “qualification” God seeks in His servants is a repentant heart. This notion is affirmed in Hebrews 9:14: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Repentance, forgiveness, and readiness are far more important qualifications than paper qualifications.

—MERVYN APPADU, Kwazula-Natal, South Africa

“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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The PEOPLE'S PLACE

ADVENTIST LIFE

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

When my younger brother, Kenneth, was 5 or 6 years old, one beautiful summer day he was out in the yard all by himself sitting in his wagon laughing and laughing. Suddenly he stopped and said, “I sure get a kick out of life.”

I think he was enjoying the “abundant life.”

—Don Burgeson, Mesa, Arizona, United States

One Sabbath I explained 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19 to the children in Sabbath school, and how God wants our bodies to be “temples” for the Holy Spirit. The next Sabbath I baked healthful apple, raspberry, and “pumpkin” (home-grown buttercup and sweetmeat hybrid winter squash) pies.

Rather than trying to figure out which pie to eat, one 6-year-old boy wanted a small piece of each! He devoured the apple and pumpkin slices, but the raspberry was rather tart for a child his age. When he told me he wasn't going to finish eating the raspberry dessert, he demonstrated diplomacy and remembrance, saying, “I don't want to eat too much—because I want God to live in me!”

—Pastor Teodoro Carpintero, Idaho, United States

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



RAJMUND DABROWSKI

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“When you return tithe you are saying, ‘God is God in my life.’ When you give an offering you are saying, ‘God is good to me.’”

—Pastor Watson Mbiriri at the April 2009 camp meeting for Lusaka Central, Brentwood, and University churches in Lusaka, Zambia

SHARE WITH US!

People's Place is a cornucopia of items from across the world—short slices of life that will make readers think, laugh, and enjoy their Adventist family more. We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

QUOTES (profound or spontaneous)

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

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR (high-quality photos *with* short biographical profiles of newly baptized members, Adventists engaged in active community service, or small groups undertaking new efforts in sharing the gospel; maximum words: 75).

E-mail to marank@gc.adventist.org; fax to 301-680-6638; or send to World Exchange, *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600, U.S.A.

ANSWER: In China, Adventists attend the church service at the Beiguan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Shenyang. Crowds on many Sabbath mornings top 3,000, including those gathered in the main sanctuary and large meeting hall with one 26-inch closed-circuit TV televising the service. See this month's cover story inside for more on the church in China.