

October 2009

# ADVENTIST WORLD



For the beginning  
of the world

CELEBRATING

Creation



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# ADVENTIST WORLD

October 2009



NASA/HUBBLE HERITAGE TEAM/DIGITALLY MODIFIED

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## WORLD VIEW

### Into All the World

I pause each month before writing these words to think of some of the places where they may be read.

In Mumbai, India, a weary young adult opens his laptop after a 12-hour workday and scans the *Adventist World* Web site, eager for faith and a sense of connection to millions of brothers and sisters he cannot see.

In São Paulo, Brazil, a retired homemaker repeats the ritual of her Friday evening rhythm: a comfortable chair, a CD of favorite hymns, the cat beside her on the couch, a copy of this magazine bent to favorite sections.

Somewhere north of Calgary, Canada, an Adventist schoolteacher opens up these pages with an eye toward what will tie her small community of elementary students to a movement that circles the globe. She looks for what her students need: geography, Bible study, history, faith.

In a village three hours drive from Nairobi, Kenya, the ninth reader of these words inherits a copy much smudged and marked from all the handling. Even beneath the fingerprints and stains, words still live, still move, still bind the scattered flock together.

More than 1.5 million copies of this magazine are distributed every month in six print languages (English,

Korean, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Bahasa/Indonesian). Tens of thousands of persons—who knows for sure how many?—access the magazine in five of those languages on the Web or in four more Web-only translations (Chinese, Russian, German, and this month—Vietnamese).

Now in its 160th year, Seventh-day Adventist publishing has reached an unprecedented milestone for a journal of a worldwide faith. Nearly two thirds of all the 17 million Adventists in the world are within reach of the news, inspiration, biblical teaching, and hope provided by *Adventist World*. Not since the 1870s, when the membership of the infant Seventh-day Adventist Church was not much different from the subscription rolls of the *Review and Herald* magazine (now the *Adventist Review*) that helped to coalesce the movement, has there been such an opportunity for the worldwide family of Seventh-day Adventists to meet in common study, devotion, and focus on the second coming of Jesus.

You, dear friend, are a vital part of that great connected family of readers and believers for whom this journal exists. And for you, just now, I lift up my voice to thank the Lord for the message and the magazine that bind us together.

— BILL KNOTT

## WORLD REPORT

### Australian Government Grants A\$100 Million to Adventist Schools

*Government grants spark building projects.*

■ Seventh-day Adventist Church schools in Australia have received more than A\$100 million (approximately US\$83 million) as part of the Australian government's education modernization program.

"It has been an unbelievable bonus that has come to the school system," says John Hammond, director of Adventist Schools Australia for the



**GOVERNMENT FUNDS:** New construction commences at Mountain View Adventist College in western Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

SPD RECORD

## WORLD REPORT

Australian Union Conference. “It is a large amount of money, and we’re very happy that we have been able to assist the government in spending that money.”

Adventist schools in Australia are using the money to fund a number of projects, which include building libraries, learning centers, and multipurpose centers; refurbishing existing areas; as well as a variety of landscaping and repair work.

“Our schools are growing and do not have assembly areas, multipurpose centers, sports stadiums, or a place to do dramas. These are all ‘bits’ that we plan to ‘put on later,’” says Hammond. “The extra funding has given the school system such a push forward.”

The three-year, A\$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution (BER) project—part of the Australian government’s economic stimulus strategy—will benefit all 9,540 state and private schools in the country.

The BER consists of three elements: “Primary Schools for the 21st Century” (PS21), providing A\$12.4 billion in funding for all Australian primary schools, kindergarten–Year 12 schools (primary school component), and special schools to build new facilities or upgrade existing ones; A\$1 billion for “Science and Language Centers for 21st Century Secondary Schools”; and A\$1.288 billion for the “National School Pride” (NSP) program, which will fund minor capital works and maintenance projects. Under the NSP program, individual schools will be

eligible to receive up to A\$200,000 for maintenance and building works.

There are 55 Adventist schools in Australia with a total enrollment of more than 11,000 students.

In the South Queensland Conference, projects to be undertaken include a sports auditorium and library extension to the cost of A\$3 million at Northpine Christian College; new prep classrooms and refurbishment of the library and primary classrooms at Brisbane Adventist College; and new libraries for Noosa Christian College, Gold Coast Christian College, Darling Downs Christian School, Coral Coast Christian School, and Ipswich Adventist School.

All schools will also be receiving further funding to cover a range of smaller projects. In the Western Australian Conference, projects include the refurbishment of the Carmel Adventist College (Secondary) library and the extension of the pre-primary playground at Riverside Community School as part of NSP. As part of PS21, new libraries will be constructed for Brookdale Adventist School and Esperance Christian Primary School.

Carmel Secondary is also planning to submit a proposal for a science and language center, according to Hammond. Avondale School in the North New South Wales Conference will build a new primary library/learning center to replace its current library. Macquarie College will also build a new library, as will the Port Macquarie Adventist School. Kempsey Adventist School will replace some of their temporary classrooms with

permanent structures with the funding they receive.

Prescott Primary Northern School in South Australia has been successful in obtaining a grant of A\$2.5 million, which will enable the school to build an information technology center and four additional classrooms.

The Greater Sydney and South New South Wales conferences will also see work conducted at a number of schools, with a variety of maintenance projects scheduled. New buildings will be constructed at a number of schools, with refurbishment of existing structures also planned.

—Reported by Melody Tan, South Pacific Division communication staff; reprinted courtesy of the SPD Record

### Israel: First Religious Liberty Festival Draws Hundreds

■ Hundreds of religious liberty proponents from Israel and the Palestinian territories gathered in Jerusalem on July 26 for the historic city’s first festival of religious freedom.

The event generated a “climate of good understanding” among attendees that organizers hope will spur increased tolerance in the region, said John Graz, secretary-general for the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), which sponsors festivals worldwide to encourage freedoms of religion.

Hosting the event in a city holy to three major world faiths—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity—was particularly significant, said Graz, who also directs the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL).



**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY:** From left, Eugene Hsu, a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; John Graz, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director; Richard Elofer, president of the Adventist Church in Israel; Rabbi James M. Lebeau, director of the Fuchsberg Center for Conservative Judaism; and Harold Wollan, of the Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists, at a religious liberty festival in Jerusalem, July 26, 2009

COURTESY ISRAEL FIELD

While Christians enjoy broad freedoms and are allowed to conduct outreach on a limited basis in largely Orthodox Jewish Israel, treatment of Muslims is a subject of international controversy, according to the Religious Freedom World Report, a PARL publication.

Conservative Jews, who embrace a non-fundamentalist interpretation of the Jewish faith, also face hurdles to religious freedom, said Rabbi Yaacov Lebeau, who spoke at the event. Because of the dominance of Orthodox Judaism, weddings and other ceremonies conducted in Conservative synagogues are not fully recognized, he said.

“It could be very easy to be influenced by extremist groups

and fall into exclusivism,” regional Adventist president Richard Elofer said. Given the “multicultural and multiregion” makeup of Israel, defending inclusive freedoms is a priority to ensure that doesn’t happen, he added.

Some 300 religious liberty advocates from Jewish and Christian communities attended the event. —*Adventist News Network Staff*

### **Switzerland: Paulsen Dedicates New Adventist School Building in Zurich**

■ More than 350 people attended the July 4, 2009, dedication ceremony for the new Wolfswinkel School and Church Center in Zurich-Affoltern. Guests enjoyed a presentation by Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, along with musical selections,

refreshments, and other festivities. Ideally located on the outskirts of the Zurich city center, the new Wolfswinkel Center now hosts the “A-Z” private school, the Oerlikon Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the offices of the German Swiss Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The “A-Z” private denominational school was founded in Zurich 55 years ago. However, the school’s location in the bustling city center was no longer conducive to the concept of wholistic Christian Adventist education. Beginning about 20 years ago, the school’s constituent churches started feeling that the school should be moved to a more natural setting on the edge of the urban environment. This vision encouraged the initiators (Heinrich Walder, Ivan Fagioli, and others) to convince the executive boards and the churches of the Swiss Union Conference to support the idea of relocating.

Over the past 20 years the planning commission visited 30 potential sites. However, even after finding an ideal location outside the city, it seemed that the dream of a new school would have to be abandoned, for another set of problems began to surface. This time, problems came in the forms of official construction requirements and a neighbor who wanted to prevent construction.

These problems allowed God to work miracles. First, the state construction office granted authorization to build a school in a 90-percent occupant density area. Second, a consensus was reached with local authorities on the building

## WORLD REPORT

MICHAEL URBATZKA/CD EUD



**TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL:** General Conference President Jan Paulsen and his translator, Ivan Fagioli, addressing the opening ceremony for a new Adventist school in Zurich, Switzerland

cube and multifunction rooms. Finally, an agreement was reached with the neighbor. Construction was completed in the spring of 2009.

In his keynote address Pastor Paulsen emphasized that humanity has problems only God can solve. Anyone who accepts reconciliation with God is called to share this message with others. “Talk about your experiences with God with your children,” Paulsen encouraged the audience.

—Reported by Michael Urbatzka, Euro-Africa Division

### Ghana: Church Holds First-Ever Stewardship Summit

■ A first-ever stewardship summit in the West-Central Africa Division was held in Ghana on the Valley View University campus at Techiman. The West-Central Africa Division in collaboration with the Ghana Union Conference organized the event, and 300 people attended.

The objective was to introduce delegates to the new strategies for stewardship promotion.

According to Armando Miranda, a general vice president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, “stewardship is the lifestyle of one who has a living relationship with Jesus Christ, accepts His Lordship and walks in partnership with God, and acts as His agent to manage His affairs

on earth. This transcends financial stewardship, which [formerly] has been the emphasis.”

For the world church stewardship director, Erika Puni, the summit has been able to bring church leadership, district pastors, and laypersons together to learn about wholistic stewardship.

“Too much attention has been given to financial stewards in the church, yet stewardship is wholistic; it is about one’s relationship with Christ and his response to God. Delegates must understand the principles of the new approach and then go back to adopt them to fit their environment,” said Puni.

Hosting the summit was both an opportunity and a challenge for the Ghana Union Conference (GUC), said GUC President Samuel A. Larmie. “It was an opportunity to host” the event, he said. “It also comes as a challenge, because since we hosted it, the GUC will be expected to yield some good results after the summit,” he added.

Some 300 delegates, comprising church officers, pastors, and laypersons, attended the five-day event held under the theme “Faithfulness in the Mission of Hope.”

According to Emmanuel Odenke Abbey, stewardship director of the Ghana Union Conference, “the attendance has been good. This is the first-ever stewardship summit in the division, and I am glad it was held in Ghana.”

—Reported by Solace Asafo, Ghana Union, and Gilbert Weeh, West-Central Africa Division, with Adventist World Staff.

WINDOW

# Into Denmark

By HANS OLSON



Although small in size, the Kingdom of Denmark has had a major impact on Europe and the rest of the world during its long history. Known in the Middle Ages as home to Viking warriors who raided various parts of Europe, Denmark today uses its military for more peaceful endeavors. As a founding member of both the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Denmark claims to have sent more personnel on peacekeeping missions since 1948 than any other country in the world.

Denmark is the southernmost of the northern European Scandinavian countries. It consists of a main landmass, Jutland, which extends north from Germany into the North Sea, and a series of archipelagic islands to the east, which are in the Baltic Sea. Denmark also has two major colonies, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

Denmark's civilization dates back to at least 1800 B.C. Although no written records exist from this period, crude rock carvings show that ancient Danes were agricultural settlers who worshipped the sun. During the twelfth century A.D., Christianity made its way to Denmark in part because of the influence of tribal kings who wanted to enter into trade agreements with the Holy Roman Empire.

The Lutheran-led Protestant Reformation had a major impact on Denmark. When the New Testament was first published in Danish in 1524, it quickly became a best seller. By this time Roman Catholicism had integrated itself into many aspects of daily Danish life and imposed various

DENMARK	
Capital	Copenhagen
Official language	Danish
Religion	Lutheran, 95%; other Christian, 3%; and Muslim, 2%
Population	5.45 million*
Adventist membership	2,523*
Adventist-to-population ratio	1:2,161*

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

fees upon the general population.

Danes welcomed independence from Roman Catholic ideology. In 1536 Danish King Christian III founded the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark. Today nearly all Danes are members of this state-supported faith. The monarch, currently Queen Margrethe II, serves as head of the church, with a minister of ecclesiastical affairs serving as the church's highest administrative authority.

### Adventists in Denmark

Adventism reached Denmark in 1872 by means of a Danish monthly magazine, *Advent Tidende*, published by John Matteson, a Danish national, who started it to reach Scandinavian immigrants living in the United States. Matteson sent the magazine to Denmark in response to letters received from people interested in keeping the Sabbath. By 1874 some 1,000 copies of *Advent Tidende* had been sent out. In 1875 a Danish printer, M. A. Sommer, asked Matteson for permission to include articles from *Advent Tidende* in his monthly journal. Matteson readily agreed.

As a result, Matteson received even more letters from Denmark in response to the two journals. In

1877 he wrote to General Conference president James White asking to be sent as a missionary to Denmark. Thus, he became the first Adventist missionary to northern Europe, just three years after J. N. Andrews went to Switzerland. Within months after his arrival, Matteson baptized nine people. A year later he organized the Alstrup Adventist Church in Vendsyssel with 27 members. In 1880 Matteson helped organize the Denmark Conference with seven churches and 120 adherents—the first Adventist conference outside North America.

Though the majority of Danes are members of the Lutheran Church, they are not necessarily religious. Most are secular or postmodern and have little or no religious experience. By some accounts less than 4 percent of Danes attend church regularly. Young people are especially secular. As of 2007, Adventist Church membership in Denmark had dropped by 9 percent over the previous decade. Please pray for Denmark and for those looking for creative ways to tell others about Jesus Christ.

To learn more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in Denmark, please visit [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org).

WORLD VISTA



*Why Do They*

# Walk Away?

*Keeping youth and young adults engaged in the church must be one of our highest priorities.*

By  
JAN PAULSEN



When we consider the course our life has taken, it's easy to project back a certain quality of "inevitability"—the path we took in our education and career, the life-partner we chose, the family we raised. And yet, this sense of inevitability is an illusion. In that critical early phase of decision-making—in the teenage and young professional years—when so many of our choices have such long-lasting, unknowable consequences, the shape of our future is far from certain. It balances precariously upon a multitude of variables, tipped this way and that by circumstances or opportunities or choice.

I look back at my own teenage years and I think: *How slim the margins were! How easily could an ill-judged decision, or a coincidence of circumstances, have pushed things a completely different way.*

And I look at those in our church family—those under 35—who are in the process of making these same life-decisions. They no longer merely reflect the attitudes and beliefs of their parents or teachers. They're testing these values for themselves—"trying them on for size," deciding whether they'll keep them, modify them, or replace them with something entirely different.

Then I consider the exodus of young people from our churches, and it distresses me deeply.

Why do so many walk away? At the risk of oversimplifying something of such grave importance to the church, I'd like to offer a few reflections that have taken shape in my mind over time, but which in recent years have gained an increasing sense of weight and urgency.

In talking about this, we have to differentiate between two broad groups—teenagers, and young adults or young professionals. Although some issues overlap between them, their struggles and experiences are essentially different, therefore their reasons for leaving the church will be different, too.

### Teenagers

Many years ago something happened to a young person who was very close to me. He was struggling with a number of things at the time, and it was not easy for him to get up each Sabbath and go to church. He arrived at the door of the church one Sabbath morning, a little late, dressed in jeans. The head elder who met him there said, "You're not suitably dressed. Go home and change your clothes." So he went home and he didn't come back. And there began his long journey into the wilderness where he has spent a long, long time. Occasionally he comes out from the wilderness, but this is more a reflection of love he has for his parents, and his sense of their unquenchable love for him.

Was this incident the sole reason he left the church? No. But for him it was a defining moment when the church said to him, "You really don't fit the role of someone who

should be worshipping here. Go home and put on more suitable clothes."

Many teenagers choose to leave the church primarily because they feel "picked on." They are made to feel unworthy; they have no useful role; they have no safe place within the church to work through those questions of behavior and standards with which they and their peers struggle. We could make a long list of these: social activities, choices in music and entertainment, relationships and sexuality, their need to express their growing sense of individuality and independence. They'll talk about these things among themselves, but quietly, with the feeling that they'll be condemned if they're heard.

How do we more effectively embrace our teenagers?

- Make it personal. Think of your own family, your own kids. Does it take much for your son or your daughter to establish "worthiness" with you? Of course not! They are blood of your blood, flesh of your flesh.

If we take time to think about each young person in our congregation as we would our own son, or our own daughter, there's an amazing shift in perspective. It's only when a teenager feels the same kind of warmth from the church collectively that a child feels within the close bonds of family that we can effectively offer guidance and correction.

It has to be personal. This isn't a task to be delegated to youth ministries or Pathfinders or Sabbath school. It's *my* attitude to the younger members of my congregation that makes the difference. What are they sensing from my words and attitude toward them?

- Put it in context. Teenagers do and say some crazy things; they just do. They're teenagers, and doing and saying crazy things is actually quite normal. It's the nature of teenagers to test the waters, to make choices that rattle and unsettle the "elders." It may be due to peer pressure, an act of rebellion, or simply the fact that they've grown up in one world—an Adventist world—and want to taste, smell, and experience the "other world." Quite simply, the values of parents aren't passed on genetically; the teenager is actively questioning and testing—it's a process that belongs naturally to this stage of their journey. So let's extend grace and patience and be willing to take the long view.

- Remember. Remember: *I was there once, and I also made mistakes. Many mistakes!* Can you remember when you were a teenager? Sometimes you didn't feel very good about



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

## WORLD VISTA

yourself. You were self-conscious about every single thing: every pimple on your face, every perceived shortcoming, and so you were exceptionally vulnerable to others' opinions.

A word thoughtlessly spoken by an older member of a congregation can have untold consequences for a young person whose fragile self-opinion is easily shattered. Yet a few words of affirmation can have an equally powerful, positive impact.

### Young Adults and Young Professionals

Then there are those who survive the teenage years—they're still in the pews, at least most Sabbaths. They're finishing their education, embarking on their careers, establishing families. What makes the difference between those who put down strong, long-lasting roots within the

community ties they crave. One young professional wrote to me recently: "When someone is struggling, do they immediately reach out to the church as a place they know they will be loved and cared for? Or is the church the last place they consider 'safe' to open up and ask for help? Too often it's the latter."

For generations of young people shaped by the postmodern world, being "right" will take you only so far. You can speak the truth ever so eloquently, you can be correct in every detail, you can cite chapter and verse, but they will still walk away if they do not also strongly sense a deep, embracing warmth and acceptance.

■ **Function and trust.** Young adults and professionals also walk away because they are filled with ideas, opinions, and energy, and yet find no room to release this within the

## What difference does the label "Adventist" really make in practice?

community of believers and those who will drift in slow degrees toward the door?

■ **Relevance.** There's a group of friends, young professionals, who sometimes get together socially. They come from different countries, but their careers have brought them and their families to the same city in western Europe. Some still have strong ties to the Adventist community, others have lost the connection along the way, but they've all traveled much the same path together in their education and early life experiences. Sometimes they talk about the church. They ask: *How relevant is Adventism? Does it have anything significant to say about the everyday issues of life—about social justice, poverty, and human rights, about the environment, about ethics, the economy, or about the communities we live in? What difference does the label "Adventist" really make in practice?*

For many young adults, their perception of how well the church answers these questions can determine whether they will stay or walk away. They're disenchanted with religion that focuses wholly on the time to come and neglects the present. It's not that they've ceased to believe what the church teaches, but they've lost faith in the church's ability to speak meaningfully to life as they experience it every day. They're frustrated by what they perceive as the church's unwillingness to bring its moral and theological weight to bear on the issues in society that trouble them most.

■ **Community.** But more important still, for some in this age group the church does not adequately provide the

church. It's not that they believe the church is irrelevant to them, but rather they believe they're irrelevant to the church! So they may stay on for a while—for family or social reasons—but they've already "checked out."

### A Call to Action

I don't have the words to express the depth of my conviction that *we must give young adults meaningful roles within the church*. It can't be mere "busywork," but we must vote them into substantive roles that bespeak a high level of trust, include them in decision-making processes, seek their involvement in ways that say: "We want to hear your voice."

For teenagers and young professionals alike, "trust" is the pivot upon which so many of these issues turn. Not the kind of trust that says: "I'll give you this defined responsibility, and after a time we'll see if you measure up." I'm talking instead about a trust that frees and empowers young people to be active partners in shaping the worship and witness of their congregations; a trust that acknowledges one doesn't have to be 40, 50, or 60 to have a passionate desire to serve God; a trust that recognizes their love for the church runs as deep as mine and that they, too, have chosen this place as their spiritual home.

Will their expression of these things sometimes be different from the way I would express them? Yes, perhaps. Is there risk involved? Maybe. But the risk of *not* trusting our young people is far greater. For if we don't trust them on some level, they will simply walk away. ●



# The Growing Concern About Food Allergies

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES  
and PETER N. LANDLESS

**My granddaughter's doctor has diagnosed her with food allergies, and I am very worried. What does this mean? She is not a good eater as it is, and I am concerned she will become malnourished.**

A true food allergy, as opposed to food intolerance, is an allergic response to certain foods (not all). It involves an activation of the body's immune system in such a way that an inflammatory reaction takes place. We call this an immunoglobulin E-mediated immune response.

Though up to 25 percent of adults may report symptoms related to certain foods, only about 3 percent are truly allergic to food. Children are more likely to manifest food allergies, and 6 to 8 percent of children in the United Kingdom and the United States are thought to have food allergies. Cows' milk, hens' eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, and sesame seeds account for the majority of children's allergies, with kiwi fruit being a newcomer to the group. Egg and peanut allergies are the most likely childhood allergies; and in the case of egg allergy, some 66 percent will resolve and disappear by age 5, and 75 percent by age 7 or 8.

Symptoms of a food allergy range from hives (an itchy, red, raised rash) to life-threatening anaphylaxis (throat constriction, breathing difficulty, and collapse). Persons with food allergies often have eczema, a chronic skin disease

characterized by inflamed and, at times, blistered skin, which often affects elbows and knees over their flexor surfaces.

Asthma and allergic rhinitis are more common in children with food allergies.

It should be obvious that avoidance of relevant foods will reduce symptoms. The problem comes when there are multiple food allergies. Consultation with a trained dietitian is invaluable in getting help, and we urge you to encourage such a consultation. Dietitians are trained to give advice that will ensure adequate nutrition and prevent secondary deficiencies. When dealing with multiple food allergies, children thrive and grow optimally when managed by a team approach of dietitians, nurses, and physicians. Potential problems of rickets, anemia, impaired growth, and osteoporosis in adulthood can thus be avoided.

Occasionally, acute symptoms will be encountered. If there is an anaphylactic reaction, prompt and appropriate management is required, which will include rapidly acting antihistamines and intramuscular epinephrine, inhaled bronchodilators, and corticosteroids. Anaphylaxis should not be underestimated—it can be very serious. Intramuscular epinephrine should be given in the lateral thigh. Delay in the use of epinephrine can prove fatal. A child with a history of anaphylaxis should have instant access to epinephrine, which is available in special one-dose injection kits produced especially for such eventualities.

While it is appealing to think exclusive breast-feeding might reduce immunoglobulin E-mediated food allergy, this has not been shown in studies. A reduction in eczema has been noted, but not in food allergy. In contrast, in the mouse model, early exposure to food antigens has reduced food intolerance.

Fortunately, the majority of children with food allergies find the allergies disappear or are reduced as they reach adulthood.

Skin-prick testing and a detailed history delineate the problem; acute reactions are controlled by a kit for emergencies, and team management will improve outcomes.

Resources are available online for those dealing with food allergies. These are the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology ([www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)), the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network ([www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)), and the Anaphylaxis Campaign ([www.anaphylaxis.org.uk](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk)).



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

I have experienced many discouraging nights when I felt as if I were a modern Job. From my baptism to this day I have thought about how I was robbed of a promising future. If this were a test, it begged the question, “When will this end?”

I can still recall how I didn’t get the highest honors I strived for in elementary school; how I started great in high school, only to end up taking the final exams at a hospital, getting perhaps the lowest average in my class, and losing my dream scholarship. My dreams of a bright future in college were lost because of a financial catastrophe and disheartening family issues that shocked my existence and challenged my courage. While my public aura exuded composure, I was expected by everyone to come in summa cum laude; but I was the only class officer graduating without honors.

I could not go to medical school. I’d worked hard only to end up five points short of a scholarship, beset by psychosomatic symptoms from a mind-set troubled by my family’s condition. In each job I took, I was seen with much potential, only to be defeated by politics. I tried to get back to studying. I was granted a scholarship for a law school that was taken away when it was learned I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I tried another school and was accepted, only to be told I had to attend Saturday classes. I found out that law schools without Saturday classes are extremely expensive in my country, and totally beyond my financial ability. With my dream becoming more and more elusive, I asked God, “What is your journey for me?”

I came to learn four things:

### 1. The need for a heart of gratitude

*“Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).\**

Each breath is a gift that only the miracle of God can bestow. Packaged with no-matter-how-grave-a-challenge are countless unseen blessings.

Our problem is a lack of gratitude.

When we allow ourselves to appreciate the smallest of blessings, we will see how they keep coming, creating the big picture of God’s amazing providence. But if we choose to see ugliness, we will die hopeless, with the gloom we have chosen to dwell on.

I remember Ronalyn, an out-of-school, 7-year-old girl whom I taught through my university’s community extension initiative. I saw her eat a lump of rice no bigger than her fist; she even shared it with her brother. She came to class in a public school uniform much too large for her (she probably got it from a used clothes donation) just so she could feel that she was finally going to school. I asked



# The Journey Ahead

*Learning to trust in God’s leading*

By  
ARMON PEREZ  
TOLENTINO

her to pray, and in spite of her situation, she still said clearly: “Thank You, Lord. You never forsake us.”

I had come to teach her but, instead, I learned from her. She chose to give thanks even for the little that she had. She was a contagion of deep joy and blissful calm in our little corner.

## 2. Pressure is often self-imposed

*“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Phil. 4:11).*

We suffer only the pressure we impose on ourselves. No matter what happens around us, we can choose to be content.

*If we truly believe in God, we must understand that He is in control. We can then go on living our lives in peace.*

While it is true that my circle of friends have had successful career journeys while I am still waiting for my break, I can’t deny the fact of how blessed I am. I’m still alive and I can still dream.

Our problem is a lack of contentment.

When we lack contentment, we fail to do the task we have for today, missing the truth that this will be our preparation for the days to come. While looking too much at the big future, we ignore the greatness of the present. The secret is to learn to accept what comes.

## 3. Patience pays

*“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15).*

We live in an instant society. We enjoy fast food, fast action, and just about anything that utilizes a remote control. We want everything to happen in a snap; and if it doesn’t, disappointment and murmuring follow. Haven’t we learned what happened when Abraham went ahead of God, in his hurry to become the father of many nations?

Our problem is a lack of patience.

I once wrote an article about a woman who was tired of caring for her sick daughter. She talked angrily with

God, until she realized that “when the night was bleak, dawn surely broke in time; and after the rains poured ... flowers [always] started to grow.”

## 4. God is in control

*“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).*

Why should we worry about where we are and what height we have reached, based on some earthly scale? If we believe in God, we should understand that He is in control. We can then go on living our lives in peace.

Our problem is a lack of faith in God’s providence.

Many biblical stories attest to God’s care. Joseph became a ruler; the Israelites were delivered; the bad became good; the weak became strong. Then there’s the phenomenon of prophecy—prophecy whose fulfillment cannot be stopped. What more do we need in view of such telling evidences of God’s omnipotence?

I just need to submit to His will and go where He leads in His time and in His way. This is how I gain the victory over the trials of life.

### The Joy-inspiring Harbors

When will this all end? What is God’s plan for me? It’s a journey of gratitude, contentment, patience, and faith in God’s providence. It’s an exciting journey! And all along the way are joy-inspiring harbors in which we can find shelter. ●

\*Scripture references taken from the New International Version.



**Armon Perez Tolentino** is the assistant to the president as well as assistant director for news and publications of the Central Luzon Conference in the Philippines.

**S**ylvain Romain, outgoing president of the Albanian Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, recently talked with Adventist World associate publisher Claude Richli about the joys and challenges of Adventist life in Albania. Romain served as a missionary in Thailand in the 1980s, in Turkey in the 1990s, and most recently in Albania. He is now the district pastor in Bogenhofen, Austria.

**RICHLI:** Sylvain, tell me about your background in Adventism.

**ROMAIN:** I'm in the sixth generation of Adventist pastors and missionaries in my family, so I was raised with the Word of God, end-time prophecy, and a passion for Jesus and His mission. This is a huge grace and a privilege. I've lived and worked on three continents, and my life has been moved by a burning desire to spread the gospel.

**You've lived and worked in many places, and, as I recall, speak many languages. Your last assignment was to lead the Albanian mission. Tell me about the challenges you faced in this region.**

Albania is a European country where elderly Balkan women in black outfits push their cows along the dusty roads, while the men sit and drink coffee. For 45 years it was reputed to be the most restrictive Communist regime in the world. People were completely isolated from the rest of the world, and the ban on religion was so severe that just wishing someone a "Merry Christmas" would bring you six years of imprisonment. However, this ended 18 years ago, in 1991. Since then, Albanians have been suffering from an unquenchable thirst to catch up with the Western world. They have quickly learned the rules of a free market.

While the economic situation has considerably improved, residents still struggle with daily power outages and

# Adventism in Postcommunist Albania

*The challenges are different, but they're still challenges.*



**EVANGELISTIC CENTER:** Sylvain Romain, president of the Albanian Mission when this photo was taken, assists university students with a research project at the Adventist-owned Evangelistic Center in downtown Tirana.

chaotic traffic. The biggest challenge, though, is bringing structure to the lives of these extremely friendly people, who have begun to lose their hopeful vision of a better life because of the side effects of uncontrolled freedom and growth. They desire a more meaningful life and

a better lifestyle, so providing solutions to the dilemma is both our opportunity and our challenge.

**Describe the religious situation there.** Seventy percent of Albanians are Muslim; most of the rest are Greek

Orthodox or Roman Catholic. Yet most people have no connection with the religion of their ancestors. Two generations without God have resulted in their having no religion to teach to their children. Without religious books and church buildings, the values of society were based on superstition and old customs such as blood feuds or forced marriages.

### **What did you try to do when you first arrived?**

I arrived in a country that had been enjoying full religious freedom for 15 years. The beginning of this time of freedom and openness was pure euphoria. Everyone wanted to know about God, the West, and the rest of the world. The churches, including ours, grew very fast.

The problem was that at the end of Communism, the country needed so much material help that the first foreign visitors had to focus on basic aid. Christianity, therefore, was presented mainly in its social dimension. It soon became almost impossible to preach Jesus without promising material advantages. Thus, the newly established Evangelical groups appealed to the disadvantaged classes of society.

Every church needed members. There was also a need to train people as local pastors, but qualified and willing individuals were hard to find. At the same time such an easy field drew lots of foreigners who did not always have the best training or even the best motivation. The result is that the many educated and influential Albanians have come to despise Christianity as a religion that tries to “buy” people, and they ignore the real reasons for its existence.

### **Did the Adventist Church there respond differently?**

In some regards, yes, primarily because of its exceptional theological

standards. From the very beginning, this made a strong impression even on high-level government officers. Our church is known for its high intellectual level and has attracted personalities from both social and political life.

Another strength of the church is ADRA [Adventist Development and Relief Agency], which, as the first NGO [nongovernmental organization] presence in Albania, has been careful to distinguish between practical help and evangelism.

Adventists in Albania are known also for their courage during the time of persecution.

### **In what ways?**

Just before the Communist takeover in 1944, a young Albanian left for the United States to study at Harvard University. There, he became an Adventist and decided to return to his country to spread the good news about Jesus, knowing that he would have to face hardship and persecution. He became a true martyr. Until his death as the result of torture, his heroic life impressed many of his prison inmates. When most Albanians dreamed of emigrating to the United States, he graduated from Harvard to come back and die for his faith.

Another well-known example is the Adventist woman who kept her tithe in a box for more than four decades, waiting for the day when she would be able to hand this holy money to the worldwide body of Christ.

### **Do you mean that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is well known in Albania?**

Well, 300 members are not very many—nor are five churches and a few groups. Our pastors are working very hard, but there is still a lot to do. We have been working on a strategy

to develop an attractive image of our church in Albanian society.

### **Can you explain?**

First, we tried to create a stronger sense of ownership among church members, to involve them in witnessing programs. Then we started establishing contacts with authorities, such as government officers, religious leaders, and other personalities.

### **What about the wholistic approach that Adventists advocate?**

This has been one of my foci. Albanians are asking for training in healthful living and family life; they are ready to spend a lot of money for it. This is why I consider Albania to be a country of unlimited opportunities for health evangelism and educational institutions.

My goal also was to give Albanian Adventists a chance to develop their own business as a place of witnessing. Albanians do not easily accept the concept of missionaries receiving money to preach, but they respect citizens to whom they can relate on an equal level.

God has blessed us with a large number of precious souls.

### **How do you envision the future?**

Deep-rooted and dedicated members, a hard-working pastoral team, an ongoing public relations effort, and a focus on health and education will surely help our church become stronger and stronger until the task has been completed. ●



**Claude Richli** is associate publisher for *Adventist World*.

## C E L E B R A T I N G

*God's work  
is beyond  
fantastic, beyond  
incredible!*

## Creation

By  
GEORGE T. JAVOR

If God chose, He might have created a safe, virtual universe, populated by virtual inhabitants; and could have spent eternity observing the virtual lives of His virtual creation.

But that's not what happened. Instead, God created, with full awareness of the consequences, a real universe of incredible complexity. Space, matter, and time were brought into existence along with (most amazingly) living creatures. The study of God's purposes in creating the universe is an exciting and rewarding subject that would be worthy of contemplation throughout eternity. But this much is already clear: a manifestation of infinite love prompted the Godhead to share the bliss and joy of existence with created beings (Isa. 45:18).

### **Mind-boggling Energy**

Creation of matter required the output of a mind-boggling amount of energy and ingenuity that is, at this time, beyond human capacity to grasp. Everything that followed in the physical world—gravity, electromagnetic radiation, electricity, the strong forces between subatomic particles, the laws of physics and chemistry, the formation of stars and planets, the creation of living organisms—were all derived from the way by which energy was compressed, stabilized, and packaged into nearly 100 different types of atomic nuclei.

It is estimated that there are between 1050 to 1080 atoms in the observable universe. If these were only hydrogen atoms (the lightest of all elements), it would have required a minimum of  $3.6 \times 10^{39}$  to  $3.6 \times 10^{69}$  calories of energy to create.<sup>1</sup> (By comparison, the world's total electricity consumption in the year 2005 was  $1.4 \times 10^{19}$  calories.)

While all matter came from the hand of the Creator, it was a gift to His creatures. God is not in matter. Nonetheless, the Creator is aware of every aspect of His creation, down to its smallest, subatomic level. The Lord knows the location and function of every one of His 1080 atoms. This much may be inferred from the reference Jesus made to God's awareness of the smallest entities of the physical realm. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" He said. "Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. 10:29, 30).\*

After creating billions of diverse galaxies, each with billions of stars and untold numbers of inhabited planets, God decided to bring into existence a new order of being, created, we are told, in *His own image* (Gen. 1:26, 27)—which Ellen G. White suggests was both in outward resemblance and in character.<sup>2</sup> In that capacity, humans could serve as new links between the Creator and His other creatures.

A space was allocated for a star (the sun) and planets in the "Milky Way" galaxy, where some 300 billion stars were already rotating in the fashion of a flat disc with a diameter of 100,000 light years. In a circular model of the Milky Way, with a diameter of 80 miles, Earth's solar system would occupy a mere 2 millimeters.





### **Our Neighborhood**

At the center of the solar system the Creator placed that massive star we call the sun, consisting of approximately  $2 \times 10^{27}$  metric tons of heated hydrogen, undergoing thermonuclear fusion to helium. This process results in a loss of 685 million tons of matter every second, yielding radiant energy and the emission of charged particles. (By comparison, the atomic blast of Hiroshima resulted from the destruction of only 1 gram of plutonium.) At the current rate of burning, the sun has enough fuel to last billions of years.

Closest to the sun, God placed four “terrestrial” planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars—Earth being the largest. These were made primarily of silicate rocks. The four “outer” planets, much larger than the terrestrial ones, were composed of mostly gases. Jupiter and Saturn contained mostly cold hydrogen and helium, while Neptune and Uranus were made from ice, methane, and ammonia. Orbiting around these outer planets are some 150 moons, some of which are close in size to the terrestrial planets.

The combined mass of the planets and their moons is less than 1 percent of that of the sun, which holds all of these bodies under its gravitational control.

When the biblical account of the earth’s creation is combined with current astronomical data, a plausible scenario emerges in which the Creator likely brought into existence during Creation week the entire solar system (besides the earth, the sun, and the moon). If this was so, then it may be surmised further that what followed here during Creation week was but the first step in making the entire solar system habitable for humans.

The text, “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array” (Gen. 2:1), likely refers to planet Earth and its immediate surroundings.

The atmosphere of the freshly created earth was likely different from what it is now (see Gen. 2:5, 6). It was probably substantially richer in carbon dioxide, so that the luxurious verdure covering the pre-Flood planet could adequately be supported through photosynthesis.

The surface of the newly created earth was diversified with gently sloping hills and mountains, crisscrossed with rivers and lakes. There were no rocks, swamps, or deserts. The landscape everywhere on earth rivaled the most elaborately decorated grounds of palaces.<sup>3</sup>

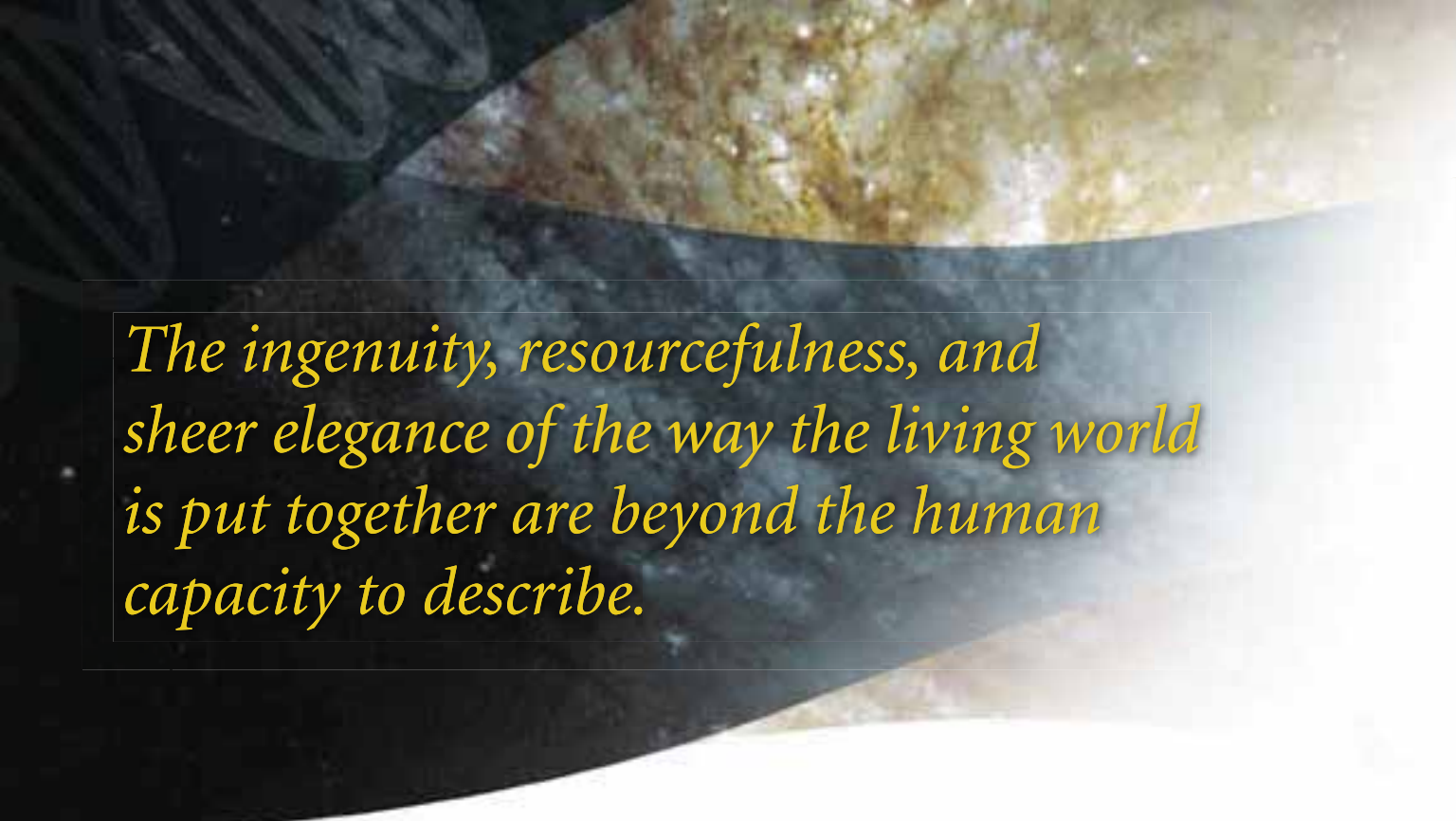
### **Breathtaking!**

What followed the formation of Earth is nothing short of breathtaking. Using primarily the elements hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, and sulfur, the Creator called into existence structures of almost unimaginable complexity that could absorb solar or other forms of energy; and that could grow, divide, move about, and sense their environment. In short, living organisms.

To create the smallest living unit, the cell, required the



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*The ingenuity, resourcefulness, and sheer elegance of the way the living world is put together are beyond the human capacity to describe.*

construction of thousands of different types of exquisite, giant assemblies of atoms into the macromolecules of protein, nucleic acid, polysaccharides, and lipids. Some of these constructs were used as structural elements; others became specialized machines facilitating specific chemical changes.

The phenomenon of life is the net result of hundreds—or even thousands—of chemical changes within cells. A chemical change is the rearrangement of specific clusters of atoms (molecules) into new clusters. In live cells, chain reactions of chemical transformations occur continually. This is what separates living matter from inert, nonliving entities. While scientists are able to produce some of the macromolecules required for living matter, they are unable to start or restart the hundreds of separate, continuous chain reactions happening in each cell. This biological phenomenon is an incontrovertible proof that life has been created and could never have started spontaneously.<sup>4</sup> The biochemical chain reactions, started in every cell of every organism at Creation, continue in an unbroken continuum through hundreds of generations to this day. Biologists have identified this law by saying that “life comes only from life.”

The Lord created two kinds of living organisms. Some creatures were endowed with a nervous system, giving them mobility and memory, and enabling them to sense their environment through sight, sound, and touch. Besides humans, the Creator brought unnumbered orders of creatures (large animals, birds, fish, insects, etc.) into existence.

The second category of newly created creatures was birobotic—that is to say, they lacked a nervous system

and are unaware of their own existence. Such organisms serve as receptors of solar energy, food, building material, and “decoration.” They also serve as integral components of the biosphere. They include plants, flowers, trees, and microorganisms.

### **Interdependence**

All living organisms on earth belong to an integrated biosphere. The relationships among organisms may best be characterized as one of mutual support. None of the creatures on earth were designed to exist independently. For plants to grow, they need to capture the nitrogen gas from the air assisted by nitrogen-fixing microorganisms living in their roots.

The abundant solar energy bathing the earth is captured by plants and photosynthesizing algae. Plants use solar energy to manufacture carbohydrates from carbon dioxide out of the air and from water. This mutual interdependence among organisms is illustrated in the figure below.

The Garden of Eden was to be a model to be imitated by the generations that would populate the earth. Instead of cities, much of the habitable portion of the earth was to be covered by gardens, where nature continually spoke to humanity of the Creator’s wisdom and love.<sup>5</sup>

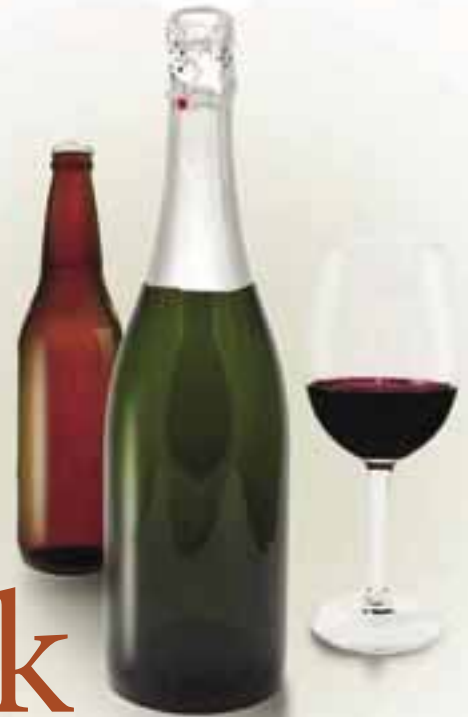
In the center of Eden was a very special tree, whose fruit was needed for humankind’s continuous existence. No organisms were created immortal (although microorganisms come close). Humans were to partake occasionally of the fruit of the tree of life to maintain life.



From time to time one reads in the popular press that a daily glass of wine helps prevent heart disease. To many people this affirms the common belief that the Bible approves of the moderate use of alcohol. They wonder why Seventh-day Adventists are so strongly opposed to its use. I'm writing to explain *why* from both a biblical and health perspective.

positive references such as Numbers 18:12, "All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of those which they give to the Lord, I give them to you."<sup>1</sup> Usually, positive comments about wine appear mostly as a reference to an abundance of the typical food products of Palestine—olive oil, grain, and wine (Deut. 7:13; Jer. 31:12).

Yet negative comments persist:



By TOM SHEPHERD

# Why I Don't Drink Alcohol

NUMBER 22

### Wine and Beer in the Old Testament

Several Hebrew and Greek terms referring to wine and beer are used in Scripture. Both positive and negative statements are made about these beverages. Most references about wine in Genesis speak of very negative events—Noah becomes drunk in Genesis 9, Lot's two daughters practice incest with their father after getting him drunk with wine (Gen. 19), and Jacob deceives Isaac with food and wine (Gen. 27). However, one can also find some

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Proverbs 23:29-35 provides a striking description of the woes of alcoholism.

### What About Jesus and Wine?

Some may respond that this is simply an indictment of the abuse of alcohol. Didn't Jesus make an abundance of wine at the wedding of Cana (John 2)? Indeed, He made something like 150 gallons (about 600 liters) of wine (*Greek oinos*) for the festivities. However, like many of the positive statements about wine in the Old Testament, the reference to *oinos* in this context is within a description of a festival event where an abundance of food and drink highlights a joyous occasion. Furthermore, note the words of the superintendent that sound much like a proverb: "Every person

first puts out the good wine and when people have drunk well, the inferior."<sup>2</sup> He then continues tellingly, "You have kept the good wine until now."

This "proverbial saying" is seen by many as a shrewd insight on the stupefying effect of alcohol. When people first begin to drink they can perceive the wine's quality. But after they have become drunk, everything seems the same, so why waste good wine on drunk people?<sup>3</sup>

However, this misses a key element in the passage and misinterprets the significance of food and drink in a festival setting. The key element it bypasses is the fact that the superintendent of the feast could still tell the difference between good and inferior wine. He obviously was not drunk and just as obviously had been drinking what had been served earlier, since he noted the difference.



**Tom Shepherd, Ph.D.,** Dr.P.H., is professor of New Testament interpretation in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

The significance of food and drink in a festival setting was that the abundance was part of the rejoicing. Tied intimately with this was a deep traditional emphasis on hospitality. With such a set of social norms, the placing of the “good wine” before guests at the beginning of the feast would be done to honor them.

Furthermore, there are instances in Greek literature where *oinos* is clearly nonalcoholic in nature and thus it is reasonable to believe that, in its context, this is exactly the kind of beverage Jesus provided.<sup>4</sup>

### Is Abstinence a Moral Imperative?

Some may concede that, given these explanations, one could logically support the value of a Christian life devoid of alcoholic beverages. But is it a moral imperative? Several lines of evidence combine to suggest that it is. First, World Health Organization statistics present the heavy toll alcohol produces.<sup>5</sup> It accounts for approximately 1.8 million worldwide deaths annually (3.2 percent of total deaths) and 58.3 million disability-adjusted life years (4.0 percent of the total). It accounts for 20 to 30 percent of worldwide deaths from esophageal cancer, liver cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, homicide, epilepsy, and motor vehicle accidents. Its consumption is on the rise in developing countries with mostly no infrastructure for prevention and treatment of the problems associated with alcohol's effects. If for no other reason than Christian concern for our neighbors, we have a moral responsibility to preach and teach total abstinence from alcohol.

### Being Ready for Christ's Return

But there is an even more pressing reason to support total abstinence. It is the soon return of Jesus Christ! The New Testament is replete with warnings to stay alert and sober in

light of the Lord's soon return (Luke 21:34-36; 1 Peter 1:13). I call this concept *eschatological temperance*. In contrast, alcohol puts the mind to sleep! Its use conflicts with Jesus' instruction to stay alert at all times.

People sometimes ask if this or that Bible command still applies to us today. Often, the question implies that the command does not apply any longer. Rarely do people consider the possibility that some commands may apply to us even more today than in the past. I believe this is the case with abstinence from alcohol. In the ancient Mediterranean world alcoholic beverages existed, but for most people were not available in great abundance. Furthermore, their alcoholic content would not be greater than 10 to 15 percent in the case of wine (only 4 to 6 percent for beer), and wine was usually diluted with one to three parts of water in normal usage.<sup>6</sup> The situation is vastly different in today's world, in which alcohol is much more readily available and

at much higher concentrations in distilled spirits (commonly 40 to 60 percent). The WHO statistics tell the sad story of the woe that alcohol has brought and how its dark shadow is spreading across the globe.

I am a Seventh-day Adventist looking for the soon coming of Jesus! In light of this great event, I believe I must keep my mind and body ready and alert for action at all times. I believe I have a responsibility to help my neighbor prepare for our Lord's return and that a healthful lifestyle is consistent with Scripture and incumbent on the Christian. That's why I don't drink alcohol. ●

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Scripture are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> My translation.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek verb is *methuskō*, which can mean either “become drunk” or “drink freely.”

<sup>4</sup> See Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 384.a.4, 5 and 388.b.9-13 for the generic use of the term *oinos*.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics from the World Health Organization Web site, [www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/facts/alcohol/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/alcohol/en/index.html).

<sup>6</sup> “Unmixed wine” in Revelation 14:10 would be wine with no water added. In the dramatic warning of Revelation 14 God's wrath is poured out, unmixed with mercy. For references to wine dilution see David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), p. 833.

## CHRISTIAN Behavior

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to re-create in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

*We are the  
building blocks  
of unity*

By ELLEN G. WHITE

# *Between* Nations *and the* K I N



**I**f any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 7:37; 4:14.

If, with these promises before us, we choose to remain parched and withered for want of the water of life, it is our own fault. If we would come to Christ with the simplicity of a child coming to its earthly parents, and ask for the things that He has promised, believing that we receive them, we should have them. If all of us had exercised the faith we should we would have been blessed with far more of the Spirit of God in our meetings than we have yet received. I am glad that a few days of the meeting still remain. Now the question is: Will we come to the fountain and drink? Will the teachers of truth set the example? God will do great things for us if we by faith take Him at His word. Oh, that we might

see here a general humbling of the heart before God!

### **God Understands Different People Groups**

Since these meetings began, I have felt urged to dwell much upon love and faith. This is because you need this testimony. Some who have entered these missionary fields have said: “You do not understand the French people; you do not understand the Germans. They have to be met in just such a way.”

But I inquire: Does not God understand them? Is it not He who gives His servants a message for the people? He knows just what they need; and if the message comes directly from Him through His servants to the people, it will accomplish the work whereunto it is sent; it will make all one in Christ. Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike.

### **Unity in Diversity**

The Jewish temple was built of hewn stones quarried out of the mountains; and every stone was fitted for its place in the temple, hewed, polished, and tested before it was brought to Jerusalem. And when all were brought to the ground, the building went together without the sound of ax or hammer. This building represents God’s spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue, and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. These are not dead substances to be fitted by hammer and chisel. They are living stones, quarried out from the world by the truth; and the great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple, is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spiritual temple. When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men; for its Builder and Maker is God.

*“Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike.”*

# G D O M



Let no one think that there need not be a stroke placed upon him. There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified.

I was almost afraid to come to this country because I heard so many say that the different nationalities of Europe were peculiar and had to be reached in a certain way. But the wisdom of God is promised to those who feel their need and who ask for it. God can bring the people where they will receive the truth. Let the Lord take possession of the mind and mold it as the clay is molded in the hands of the potter, and these differences will not exist. Look to Jesus, brethren; copy His manners and spirit, and you will have no trouble in reaching these different classes. We have not six patterns to follow, nor five; we have

only one, and that is Christ Jesus. If the Italian brethren, the French brethren, and the German brethren try to be like Him, they will plant their feet upon the same foundation of truth; the same spirit that dwells in one will dwell in the other—Christ in them, the hope of glory. I warn you, brethren and sisters, not to build up a wall of partition between different nationalities. On the contrary, seek to break it down wherever it exists. We should endeavor to bring all into the harmony that there is in Jesus, laboring for the one object, the salvation of our fellow men.

### **Let God Work in You**

Will you, my ministering brethren, grasp the rich promises of God? Will you put self out of sight and let Jesus appear? Self must die before God can work through you. I feel alarmed as I see self cropping out in one and another here and there. I tell you, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, your wills must die; they

must become as God's will. He wants to melt you over and to cleanse you from every defilement. There is a great work to be done for you before you can be filled with the power of God. I beseech you to draw nigh to Him, that you may realize His rich blessing before this meeting closes.

There are those here upon whom great light in warnings and reproofs has shone. Whenever reproofs are given, the enemy seeks to create in those reproofed a desire for human sympathy. Therefore I would warn you to beware lest in appealing to the sympathy of others and going back over your past trials, you again err on the same points in seeking to build yourselves up. The Lord brings His erring children over the same ground again and again; but if they continually fail to heed the admonitions of His Spirit, if they fail to reform on every point where they have erred, He will finally leave them to their own weakness....

Each one will have a close struggle to overcome sin in his own heart. This is at times a very painful and discouraging work; because, as we see the deformities in our character, we keep looking at them, when we should look to Jesus and put on the robe of His righteousness....

As workers together for God, brethren and sisters, lean heavily upon the arm of the Mighty One. Labor for unity, labor for love, and you will become a power in the world. ●

This article has been excerpted from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 179-183 and was originally presented at the European Union Council, Basel, Switzerland, September 24, 1885. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

# A Mission to Many

By DANIEL WEBER

*In the South Pacific, using challenges to advance the gospel*

From its sun-drenched islands to the wild sands of the Australian outback, the South Pacific Division is a wondrous part of the world. More than 400,000 Adventists live in this division, a ratio of one Adventist for every 86 people. At first glance this may seem as though the church is doing well, but more than 34 million people have yet to be reached with the Adventist message of hope—people who need to know that Jesus loves them.

## Air Force

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering last came to the South Pacific Division in 2006. That offering set a record for the largest Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Many Seventh-day Adventists learned about Papua New Guinea from Eric Were's film, *Cry of New Guinea*. Were spent 40 days following missionary Len Barnard up rough mountain trails, through hot sticky jungles, over rushing rivers, and finally to the highlands where they met the cannibals of Karimui. There they helped heal the sick and, most important, taught them about Jesus. Today the fruits of this work can be seen in the lives of the more than 235,000 Adventists living in Papua New Guinea.

Today that same trip taken by the pioneer missionaries can be accomplished in about 30 minutes in a new mission plane. The plane is based in Goroka at the Adventist Aviation Service hanger. The pilot, Roger Millist, is on his second tour of duty as a mission pilot. He returned to Goroka in 2005 and has turned the mission flight service into a top-notch operation. Millist and the plane ferry local missionaries who live and work among the small villages that dot the mountains around Goroka. These missionaries commit at least one year of their

lives to telling the story of Jesus' love and forgiveness.

The plane is also used to transport teachers, church leaders, and health workers to small villages and communities scattered throughout the islands of Papua New Guinea.

The mission plane excels at getting around to these small mountain villages. Not many planes can land or take off from airstrips that are only several hundred meters in length. Add in the fact that some of the airstrips have close to a 14-degree incline and it's easy to see why not everyone is skilled enough to do this dangerous work.

The mission plane, a PAC XL, can haul large amounts of cargo, as well as up to 12 people at a time. The plane often carries roofing for new churches being built in the jungle, as well as local produce that is taken back to larger cities and sold so that people in these remote villages can earn a living. By carrying this cargo for a small fee, Adventist Aviation Service helps to cover the costs of moving missionaries and materials around the islands.

Adventist Aviation is fulfilling the call to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

"It means a great deal to us to have been able to get into this new turbine-powered aircraft," says Millist. "It has significantly raised our levels of safety and performance for pilots as well as for passengers. Almost daily I get e-mails from people saying, 'You're in our prayers every day.' We work in a very challenging area, and to know that church members around the world, as well as church members here in the South Pacific Division, have all banded together with Adventist Aviation, ... we know we're not alone in what we're doing."

## Moving a College

The 2006 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering also helped build a worship chapel at Fulton College on the island of Fiji. The school is home to more than 200 theology, arts, and business students. The school serves as the training center for the Trans Pacific Union Mission, which has more than 93,000 members, and is located on a picturesque campus in northeastern Fiji. It was established in the early 1940s and



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



**Right:** A NEW CAMPUS: Fulton College, named in honor of pioneer Adventist missionary John Edwin Fulton, will soon be relocated to a more convenient site on Fiji.

**Below:** PICTURE THIS: Picture rolls make it easy to take the gospel to remote locations.



has trained Adventist young people to serve the church, not only in the South Pacific but around the world as well.

Nemani Tausere, former principal of Fulton College, says about the school's influence: "The contribution that the graduates and others [make] who have just passed through Fulton, in their years of training and study, their contribution to the community, and to the government, and to the church is significant."

The college is located near the capital city of Suva. Recently the nation's High Court in Suva ordered that the school property be returned to its traditional landowners.

Responding to the court decision, the South Pacific Division will use a portion of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to begin moving the school to a new campus. A beautiful location has been found near the city of Nadi (Nandi), where the international airport is located. Moving the school here will make it easier for international students to get to campus. Until now they've had to take a 12-hour bus ride to get to the school's current location. The new property is only a 15-minute drive from the airport, making it much more convenient for students and visitors. The area is called Sabeta (Sembeto) and there are already roads, bus service, medical clinics, a post office, and telephone service available. Waisea Vuniwa, president of the Trans Pacific Union Mission, has secured a 99-year renewable lease with the landowners, who are pleased that a Christian school will make its home on their property.

Vuniwa describes the role that the new school will play in the mission of the church: "We will be training young people who will go out and serve the community and lead people to a better knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This place will become an evangelistic center, too," he says, "where the unreached groups in our communities will be reached."



### **The Portable Gospel**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has seen tremendous growth among the people of the South Pacific islands. Here small church groups meet under tarps in the jungles until new church structures can be built. One of the greatest needs in these quickly growing areas is for teaching materials for young children who come to church each week with their parents. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will also provide Picture Rolls to the Sabbath schools in the islands. These teaching tools will help train a new generation to fulfill the mission of the church in the South Pacific.

Over the years members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have helped support the work in the mission fields of the South Pacific. Now the South Pacific is one of the leading providers of missionaries around the world. But there's still work to be done; there are still many to be reached.

Thank you for your prayerful support of Adventist mission. Your offerings will help train young people to minister to those who live on the islands of the South Pacific. Your offerings will also help nurture children who are learning of a God who loves them and wants to take them home.

To learn more about Adventist mission, visit: [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org).

**QUESTION:** *What did Paul mean when he wrote: “Women will be saved through childbearing” (1 Tim. 2:15, NIV)?*

As I often say, some passages lend themselves to different interpretations. In those cases we have to examine the immediate context, as well as the general biblical context, and offer what we consider the best option without being dogmatic. I assume that what many find disturbing is that this text seems to suggest that salvation is not by faith, and that it reveals a restrictive view of women (e.g., their place is at home rearing children).

**1. Comments on Terminology:** Notice these three terms. The first one is the verb “to save” (Greek, *sozo*), used in the Pastoral Epistles (1, 2 Timothy and Titus) to refer to the spiritual salvation effected by God through Jesus (e.g., 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:4; 2 Tim. 1:9). This salvation is always appropriated by faith. The second term is the preposition “through” (Greek *dia*). It appears to introduce the means of salvation, as, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 15:2. The third term is the noun “childbearing” (Greek *teknogonia*), whose verbal form means “to bear children,” and implies the pain that accompanies it (1 Tim. 5:14).

**2. Variety of Interpretations:** Those words are interpreted in different ways. The verb “to save” is taken by some to mean “to keep safe/preserve,” in the sense that the woman’s life will be preserved during childbirth. This is hardly defensible since Christian women have died during childbirth.

Others introduce ideas not found in the text. The noun “childbearing” has been taken as designating the birth of the Messiah. Women will be saved through the birth of the Child promised to Eve. But this, although possible, goes far beyond the text itself.

Many retain the traditional reading (“women will be saved through childbearing”) but interpret the preposition “through” in different ways. One of them is that women are saved “despite bearing children with pain” (i.e., childbearing is the accompanying circumstance of salvation, not the means), or that they will be saved by virtue of fulfilling their role as mothers.

**3. Contextual Considerations:** In 1 Timothy 2:11-14 Paul instructs women concerning proper attitudes during instruction in church. These learning experiences should take place free from divisiveness and in submission to the teacher. This counsel was needed because false teachers were using women to promote their teachings. Paul wants women to learn and not act independently of others. He illustrates the situation using the experience of Adam and Eve. Eve acted independently of Adam in her search for knowledge; and as a result fell into sin and became an instrument of the enemy. Paul does not want this to happen in the church. He wants women to experience salvation and to persevere in it.

**4. Suggested**

*Interpretation:* Why is childbearing mentioned, and to what is it referring? First, notice that the subject of the verb is singular—“She will be saved.” In context the reference is to Eve as a representative of female members of the church. Second, childbirth seems to allude to Eve’s experience after the fall. The Lord said to her that she was going to have “pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children” (Gen. 3:16, NIV). This was one of the results of her fall. It would also appear that false teachers

discouraged marriage and procreation and Paul seems to be opposing them (cf. 1 Tim. 4:3). Third, if that reading of the text is correct, it would be better to take the preposition “through” to mean “despite,” describing the circumstances under which salvation takes place (cf. 1 Cor. 3:15). The woman will be saved despite the fact that she continues to experience pain in childbearing—a reminder of her sin. That salvation is not through childbearing is indicated by the use of the passive verb (“she will be saved”), implying that God is the One who saves (the implied subject of the action). Fourth, the last part of the verse states that “they” will be saved “if they continue [persevere] in faith, love and holiness with propriety” (2:15b, NIV).

Salvation requires perseverance, not childbearing. The memory of our fallenness should not disturb our certainty of salvation, but should motivate us to faith, love, and holiness. ●

# Salvation by Childbearing?



By  
ANGEL MANUEL  
RODRÍGUEZ

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



## REVELATION'S

# Last-Day Church

By MARK A. FINLEY

The Bible's book of Revelation describes the ages-long battle between Christ and Satan. The evil one challenged God's character by declaring that God is unjust.

But in His life, death, and resurrection Jesus met Satan's challenges head-on. Christ's loving life, perfect obedience, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection reveal a God who loves us supremely.

Revelation describes heaven's last-day church as a body of believers totally committed to Christ, reflecting His love to those around them as they await His return.

## 1. What did Jesus say about knowing truth? Read the texts below and summarize Jesus' teaching about knowing truth on the lines provided.

*"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).*

*"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on my own authority" (John 7:17).*

*"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth" (John 17:17).*

To know the truth is to: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. What two action words reflect the commission God gave His last-day church?

*"And he said to me, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings'" (Rev. 10:11).*

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

The two action words are: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

God's end-time church will be a worldwide movement with a passion for sharing the everlasting gospel.

## 3. What great event will God's last-day church focus upon?

*"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe'" (Rev. 14:14, 15).*

*"The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels" (Matt. 13:39).*

The focus of God's last-day church is \_\_\_\_\_.

## 4. Why is the devil angry with God's end-time people?

*"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17).*

Satan is angry with God's last-day church because it:

a. Keeps the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

b. Has the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_



God has always had a people who were loyal to Him and kept His commandments. In the last days His faithful people are also guided by the “testimony of Jesus Christ.” The testimony is the prophetic gift that has guided God’s people through the centuries (Rev. 19:10; 22:6; 1 Cor. 1:4, 7; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

### **5. What specific features of God’s last message to the world are found in the first angel’s message of Revelation 14?**

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

God’s last-day church will call humanity:

- a. To \_\_\_\_\_ God,
- b. Give \_\_\_\_\_ to Him,
- c. And \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

To fear God is to respect Him in everything we do. To glorify God is to honor Him in our lifestyle. To worship Him as Creator is to worship Him on His Sabbath, the memorial of His creative power.

### **6. Why is God’s last end-time message so urgent?**

“For the hour of [God’s] judgment has come” (Rev. 14:7).

God’s last-day church will proclaim the message of God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

God’s judgment-hour message to the world is a wake-up call. It is heaven’s appeal to prepare for the coming of Christ.

### **7. What is the result of accepting this last-day message?**

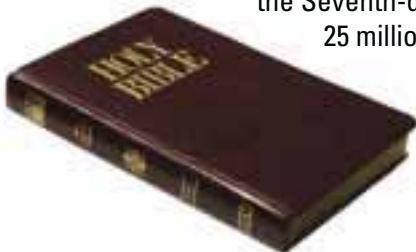
“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

God’s last-day church will:

- a. Keep the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_
- b. And the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

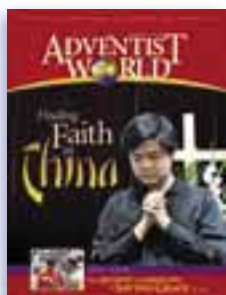
Revelation reveals God’s last-day, end-time people as deeply in love with Jesus. They glorify Him in their lifestyles, honor Him as Creator by keeping His Sabbath, and accept His guidance through the gift of prophecy. They enthusiastically proclaim the message of His redeeming love to the world.

God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to proclaim His truth for these critical moments of earth’s history. If you are already a part of God’s church, why not recommit yourself to sharing His love and truth with others? If you are not yet a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I invite you to join this end-time movement of nearly 25 million, in more than 200 countries, who await His return.



Next month’s Bible study will examine  
“**Revelation’s Last Appeal.**”

## LETTERS



### Memories

What an inspiration to see these dedicated faces of China in “Finding Faith in China” (August 2009). The last time we

saw Hau Xajie was in January 1997 as she easily chucked our four heavy suitcases out the window of an extremely crowded train in Shenyang train station. She seemed to appear from nowhere in the crowd, explaining that we were on the wrong car and should be in another one farther down the track.

We had attended the Beishi church on Sabbath, having been brought by two friends in a government van down an almost impassable alley filled with bicycles. We met Xajie there, and we, too, were impressed with her “inner strength.”

During our year of teaching English at Shenyang Polytechnic University in 1992-1993 we had searched for the church in Shenyang, a churning city of 6 million, several times but could never find it. We eventually formed our own group of interested students for Sabbath worships and even visited the U.S. consulate on many Sundays to worship with a conglomerate group of expatriate Americans. Xajie told us that had we found the church during that time we would certainly have created political problems for the church. The law as interpreted then by local Communist leaders said, “No foreigners worshipping with the Chinese.”

May God continue to lead the believers in China.

NICK AND CLAUDIA PARKS BENNET  
*Nebraska, United States*

### Honoring the Creator

Thank you for the explanation from Angel Manuel Rodríguez in “Honoring the Creator God” (July 2009) outlining the difficulties some theologians are having with the Genesis account in terms of “how” Creation occurred. May I encourage those wishing to be successful Seventh-day Adventist theologians not to give up studying the Bible? If they keep reading, they will inevitably find a passage that says: “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9).

TIM MATSIS  
*Invercargill, New Zealand*

### The Church and the Environment

With surprise and great appreciation I read “A Plastic-Polluted Planet” (April 2009). Thank you, Allan R. Handysides, for reminding us of the environmental responsibility entrusted to us by our Creator. Unfortunately, this topic is not in the main focus of our worldwide church activities as are health, education, and social welfare. As far as I know there is no Adventist environmental organization yet.

“Jesus is coming soon; why bother to protect nature?” is a common Adventist attitude. Shocked by this indifference, I ask: How do we honor His handi-



“God loves not only humanity, but also His creation! I would love to see my church making more efforts to raise global awareness of our environmental responsibility.”

—OLAF BERGER  
*Kirchheim Teck, Germany*

## LETTERS

work? How can we put it into practice in our daily life (beyond thanksgiving and vigorous talks about creation vs. evolution)? While the world is already one step ahead, we are still hesitating to understand God's mission. God loves not only humanity, but also His creation! I would love to see my church making more efforts to raise global awareness of our environmental responsibility.

OLAF BERGER

*Kirchheim Teck, Germany*

### Subscription Question

I always enjoy reading *Adventist World*, but this month our church received the issue for January 2009. It is good, but now a little outdated. Could I receive a monthly magazine subscription and pay the postage? Would you let me know if this is possible? I would also subscribe for my three sons who live in Quebec and

my daughter who lives in Texas.

Thank you for your reply. May God bless your good work.

CHRISTIANE HERMANS

*Granby, Quebec, Canada*

*Adventist World is sent free of charge to church members around the world. Many locations receive the magazine in bulk for area churches. Delivery systems vary, making it difficult to estimate its arrival and distribution. No subscription to the magazine is available, and though you may receive it after the issue date, most articles will stand the test of time. We encourage members in the North American Division to contact their local union office to be added to the mailing list.*

### I Like It

I received the August 2009 *Adventist World* a few days ago and read it cover to cover. That was the first time I

found the articles so riveting! I hope you keep up the quality of this issue in all future ones!

W. R. VAN ARTSDALEN

*Waycross, Georgia, United States*

### Correction

In the editorial process for the August 2009 *Adventist World* issue Randall W. Younker (coauthoring the article "Creation Wonders") was mistakenly linked to Southwestern Adventist University. He is, of course, professor of Old Testament and biblical archaeology in the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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

## THE PLACE OF PRAYER

Please pray for my uncle in Peru. He has diabetes and is losing his sight as a consequence of the diabetes. He is going to undergo surgery on his eyes so he can recover his sight.

MIGUEL, *United States*

Please pray for the health of my aunt who was diagnosed with cancer a few days ago. The doctors say she is in a terminal condition and only a miracle can save her. My mother is suffering with depression because of the news about her sister. Please pray for my family.

ETELVINA, *Guatemala*

Please pray for the Forward for Christ Crusaders, an evangelism ministry in Malawi that focuses on areas not yet

reached with the Adventist message. Pray that more people will get to know Christ through this ministry.

PAUL, *Malawi*

I am requesting prayer for my son-in-law who lives in Hawaii. He is supporting a church project and evangelism in the Philippines. The project here is affected by the economic crisis. Please pray that he can find a job and continue to support the mission.

RUTH, *Philippines*

Please pray for the health of my mother. I also ask for prayer for the health of my wife, that the Lord can strengthen our joy with the blessing

of a baby. Finally, please pray for a change in my employment situation.

EMILIO, *Chile*

Thank you for praying for all the past requests. I see how God has answered my prayers. Please pray for me to obtain a part-time job; school fees; for my family needs; for my responsibilities as Pathfinder leader and nurturing leader in the church; and for my spiritual life.

ROBERT, *Vanuatu*

**The Place of Prayer; send to [prayer@adventistworld.org](mailto:prayer@adventistworld.org).** Send us your prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer). Keep your entries short and concise, 75 words maximum. Items sent to this category will be edited for space and clarity. Even though we will pray for each entry during our weekly staff meetings, not all submissions will be printed. Please include your name and your country's name with your entry. You may also fax requests to: 1-301-680-6638; or mail them to *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

*“Behold, I come quickly...”*

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Vol. 5, No.10

## EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

# A Snake Represented Jesus?

*This month a reader shares his thoughts about Christ's crucifixion.*



**I**t was a traumatic moment for the disciples. The body of their dead Master was still hanging on the cross and the sun was setting. They knew that if they didn't act quickly, the officials would yank

the body from the cross and drop it to the ground. Then they would drag it down the side of the rocky hill and all the way to the graveyard that was reserved for criminals. Even though their hopes had been dashed to a million pieces, they still valued their Master's body and wanted to give Him a proper burial.

But how could they get permission from Pilate? None of them had any connection to anyone in the governor's office. Also, they knew that if they ventured to seek permission they would arouse suspicion and they could end up on crosses. They cried and waited in suspense for fate to run its course. Then they saw two prominent cabinet members of Israel approach the cross (John 19:38, 39). The men were both wealthy and had a lot of influence. The disciples were familiar with one of them. One had consulted their Master under the cover of darkness. His name was Nicodemus.

When their Master died, the disciples' faith in His claims that He was the Messiah and the Son of God was terribly shaken. Had they wasted three and a half years following Him around from village to village? "But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21, NIV). A waste? A humiliation? So they wondered.

However, when Nicodemus gazed at the blood-covered corpse that was silhouetted against the evening sky, his faith in the young Teacher's claim to be the Son of God soared to new heights. His lingering doubts were forever erased. His mind went back to that midnight interview. Jesus had told him, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15, NIV). Now as he gazed at the lifeless body on the cross, the significance of these words came cascading over Nicodemus.

While darkness was subtly creeping over the landscape, a new day was dawning in the mind of Nicodemus. The copper snake that was raised by Moses above the desert sand looked like the snake that brought terrible pain and death. In the same way, the naked body that was raised on Calvary resembled the fate of a terrible sinner. The Romans reserved crucifixion for only the worst criminals. Nicodemus was able to see what the disciples couldn't: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21, NIV). Hallelujah!

—DARIUS MATUPIT, *Papua New Guinea*

# The PEOPLE'S PLACE

## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Edwin Banerjee, from Gazipur, Bangladesh, is a regular reader of *Adventist World*. He sent us this photo, which includes college students of Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College. Every Sabbath Edwin and his fellow students visit nearby places and share the gospel. Lots of Muslims and Hindus live close to the college. These people do not know about Jesus Christ, and Edwin's group looks for creative ways to share their message. This picture was taken when the students were praying under the open sky in a Muslim community. Each student is also a member of the Bangladesh Missionary Work group.

## ADVENTIST LIFE

I was recently watching an *Amazing Facts* program on the Internet. Doug Batchelor was teaching one of the Sabbath school lessons for the quarter. Right in the middle of the program I decided to switch to another program. I chose the one on heaven.

Somehow, something went wrong, and the following message came up on the screen: "An error has occurred. Error: Heaven is currently unavailable."

How fortunate this happens only on the Internet!

—Veslemøy Hogganvik, Royse, Norway

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"Everywhere we are, [Adventists] establish schools and strive to have good relations with other religions. We are staunch defenders of freedom of conscience and worship."*

—Pastor Jan Paulsen, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's world leader, during a stop at the Yanjing Theological Seminary in Beijing, part of his historic July 2009 visit to China

## SHARE WITH US!

The People's Place is a cornucopia of items from across the world; these are 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)

**ADVENTIST LIFE** (anecdotes, humorous or profound)

**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](mailto: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.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



MELOJEANE ZAWILINSKI



EDWIN BANERJEE

**ANSWER:** At the Taiwan Adventist Academy campus in Yu Chih, Nantou County, Taiwan, Melojeane Zawilinski works at the new Taiwan Adventist International School located with the other schools on the same scenic campus.