

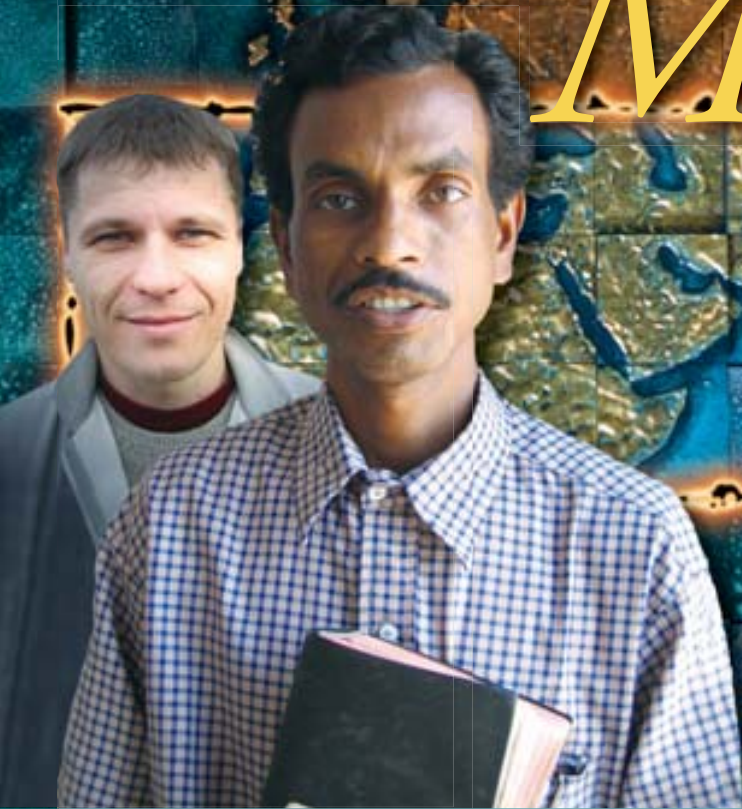
The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists

October 2010

# ADVENTIST WORLD



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## WORLD VIEW

### The Incendiary Fellowship

On some long ago camping trip to the pine forests of east Texas, my father taught me the mechanics of building a fire. Raised in the woods and meadows of New England, he has a deep respect for the land, and shared with me his delight in the crisp morning air that always welcomes a well-built fire.

I watched in fascination as he gathered twigs and dry grass for the blaze that was soon to be. There was thought and experience behind each movement: the tenting of the combustibles; the gathering of the larger fuel; the attentiveness to wind speed and direction. I knew before the age of 4 that building a sustainable fire requires planning, preparation, and observation.

I think of those long-ago lessons often these days, particularly as I bow in prayer for the success of the revival fires now springing up among God's people. I am careful not to pray for just any kind of burning. I do not ask the Lord for lightning strikes to set the land ablaze. Charred stumps and burned-over districts testify to the wastefulness of unplanned and unattended blazes. No, instead I plead for sustainable fires that warm and brighten, gathering places from which a watching world draws comfort, light, and encouragement.

Even as a child I grasped the importance of consolidating the combustibles that keep the fire fueled. Stray twigs and bits of straw may flame with momentary brilliance, but soon are spent, a blackened witness to what might have been. Pushed—or better yet, pressed—together, one fiery branch ignites another, and then another, each adding to a blaze so many times the size it might have individually produced.

The principle holds true when revival fires spring up in what Elton Trueblood once called “the incendiary fellowship”—this body of believers God has called into His remnant church. Apart from each other, we may flare with bright but temporary light. But pressed together—consciously collected for the Spirit's fiery purposes—the personal revival that God is now bringing to hundreds of individuals will soon become that great and general revival for which we've all been praying.

“Press together, press together, press together,” Ellen White reminded us more than a century ago. “Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity there is strength.”<sup>1</sup>

So step closer to the fire, my friends. Decide to be part of the new Pentecost God is now lighting among His people. The heart you find on fire will surely be your own.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 904.

— BILL KNOTT

## WORLD REPORT

### Adventists Participate in Germany's Friendship Chain

■ An autobahn was shut down, not because of an accident, not for a few hours, and not just for a few kilometers. This was something much bigger and definitely much nicer. The main freeway into the German Ruhr region, the A40, was closed over a distance of approximately 60 kilometers (37 miles) for a whole day on July 18.

People in the Ruhr region were invited to 20,000 tables (forming the longest table in the world) set up on the closed freeway. This event, called *Still-Leben A40* (Still Life A40), was

sponsored by state and local authorities to promote commerce and tourism.

Organizers expected about 1 million people for the event. At least 2 million came! People stood, sat, or walked on the closed freeway for six hours. Adventist congregations in the area also took their place at the table. The churches wanted to emphasize their multicultural nature, especially considering the fact that they are made up of more than 15 different ethnic groups, thus demonstrating that people of different cultures and backgrounds can live together peacefully, united by their shared faith.

From this came the idea to make



BEN TEGEMAN/EANN

**NEARLY THERE:** The final tally was 812 meters (approximately 2,660 feet). A tired but happy team looks on.

## WORLD REPORT

the longest friendship chain in the Ruhr region. Under the slogan “Friendship Links,” church members were invited to participate in the activity. Old and young, men and women participated, and in anticipation of the event tied together 2,750 friendship wrist bands. The teenagers and Pathfinders in the area tied an additional 750 bands. On July 18 at 11:00 in the morning the church opened a stand on the closed freeway. Visitors were invited to join the chain. The response from the public was overwhelmingly positive. As a thank you, each participant was given a pamphlet about Adventists and a professionally knotted friendship band. People were also invited to sign the “enditnow” petition against violence toward girls and women.

By 5:00 p.m. all the available friendship bands had been tied, then came the big moment: The carefully rolled chain was measured and found to be 812 meters long (approximately 2,660 feet)—a new record for a friendship chain in the Ruhr region.

The 1,200 Seventh-day Adventists in the Ruhr area worship in 14 local congregations. Visit [www.adventistenimruhrgebiet.de](http://www.adventistenimruhrgebiet.de) for more information.

—Reported by Manuel Bendig, with Chantal J. Klingbeil.

### Adventist Headquarters’ Neighbors to Get Book Mailing

The Great Controversy going to 22,000 area homes in outreach

■ An estimated 22,000 homes are located in the area immediately surrounding the General Conference (GC) of Seventh-day Adventists headquarters building in Silver Spring, Maryland. But, how many of these neighbors know what Adventists believe?

A new book-distribution project is expected to give residents in the



MEGAN BRAUNER

**GREAT CONTROVERSY BOOKS:** Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists president (second from left), is among world church officials posing with copies of *The Great Controversy*. Copies of the book will be mailed to homes near the world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. From left: Publishing Ministries director Howard Faigao; Wilson; general vice president Armando Miranda; associate publishing director Wilmar Hirle; and Mark B. Thomas, president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

20904 postal zone an opportunity to learn about biblical prophecy, church leaders announced recently.

During July 28, 2010, worship at GC headquarters, employees donated more than US\$40,000—approximately 42 percent more than was needed—to fund the printing and mailing of *The Great Controversy*, church cofounder Ellen G. White’s capstone volume in her Conflict of the Ages book series. Money raised above the basic costs will go toward sending copies of the book to adjacent geographical areas.

*The Great Controversy* presents a comprehensive view of God’s activity in saving human beings, and particularly focuses on the history of the Christian church from the first century A.D. forward. Bible prophecies that point to end-time events are highlighted throughout. First published in 1888 and revised in 1911, the

book has been circulated worldwide in many editions and translations.

The project is part of a nationwide effort to distribute copies of the book to an estimated 116 million homes in North America, said Mark B. Thomas, president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, which is responsible for printing, packaging, and shipping the books.

“This project has the potential to tell our neighbors what [current] events are all about,” said General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson.

Each paperback copy of *The Great Controversy* costs \$1.25 to print, package, and ship, Thomas said. Church members have personally handed out some 30 percent of copies distributed in the project so far.

The project is a “privilege” for church headquarters and an opportunity to impact the surrounding

community, instead of leaving witness solely up to area churches, said Armando Miranda, a world church general vice president.

Each copy of *The Great Controversy* comes with an invitation card for Bible correspondence, an unobtrusive way to encourage Bible study, Miranda said.

In closing comments before a dedicatory prayer for the project, Wilson pointed to the positive impact of the distribution project: “Those who are truly seeking truth will be attracted to this book,” he said.

Additionally, Wilson said he hopes the project will serve as encouragement for church administrative offices and individual churches worldwide to participate in similar distributions.

“The Publishing Ministries Department has a plan to engage the whole church and all departments in launching a huge distribution of millions of copies of *The Great Controversy* around the world in 2012,” Wilson wrote in a follow-up e-mail. “Our people are excited to distribute the book Ellen White said she wished were distributed above all [her] other books.”

—Reported by *Adventist News Network Staff*.

### **African Leaders Receive Doctorates From Andrews University**

■ Summer of 2010 marked the graduation of the first Doctor of Ministry students to receive degrees from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, yet completing all their studies while still in Africa. Not only was this a historical first for Andrews University; it is also a first for the Adventist Church on the African continent.

It started in the summer of 2006, when the Andrews University Depart-

ment of World Mission partnered with the West-Central Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists to launch a Doctor of Ministry cohort in Global Mission Leadership. In this cohort, which is a group that starts and finishes the program after four summer sessions together, were 34 students from that division who met for their first session at Babcock University in Nigeria. The students in this program represented church leaders from West-Central Africa, who did not have to leave their homes and travel around the world to study. Instead, the seminary found a way to meet their higher education needs while enabling these church leaders and ministers to continue their ministries in Africa.

From the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary’s Department of World Mission, Bruce Bauer, chair and professor of world mission, along with Rudi Maier, professor of mission; Gordon Doss, associate professor of world mission; and Jon Dybdahl, adjunct

professor of spiritual formation and mission, ushered the students through this four-year process. Bauer and Maier were with the group at Babcock University for three of the four summers.

“The goal of the faculty,” says Maier, “is to provide a rigorous academic program that provides students with skills not only to analyze their own context of mission but also to apply relevant tools appropriately to various mission conditions.”

Along the way, this cohort made history again. On June 30, 2009, Boubakar Sanou became the first African student to defend his doctoral dissertation for Andrews University in Africa. On Tuesday, March 9, 2010, a handful of seminary professors signed dissertation approval pages for 33 of the 34 graduates of the 2006 Global Mission Leadership Concentration of the Doctor of Ministry program. The approval page for the thirty-fourth student was signed a few weeks later.

*Continued next page*



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY PHOTO

**DEGREES UNDER AFRICAN SKIES:** Nigeria’s Babcock University was the setting for a June 2010 graduation for Andrews University doctoral graduates. Andrews professors Bruce Bauer and Rudi Maier are shown with the degree recipients.

*Continued from page 5*

The research and dissertations offer a glimpse of the kind of work these graduates have been preparing for and are now set to launch in their own ministries. Ezekiel A. Adeleye, president of the South West Nigeria Conference, wrote *How to Keep Adventist Young Adults in the Church in the South West Nigeria Conference: A Pilot Project*.

The impact of this cohort's work reaches far and wide. Allah-Ridy Koné, one of the 34 students in the cohort whose dissertation focused on *A Contextual Approach to Present the Gospel to Muslims in the Republic of Chad*, says, "You made our dream to become a reality.... God is doing [a] tremendous job through me here in Africa as I applied what I have acquired in the class."

This African-based cohort is just one way Andrews University is serving the world church. According to Maier, Andrews is on the forefront helping many Adventist colleges and universities strengthen their academic standing by providing them graduate education. Those affiliations have offered master's degrees to hundreds of African students in Africa. Today these educational institutions—Babcock University, Solusi University, Helderberg College, and Newbold College, to mention a few—have received their own academic recognition in-country because Andrews helped them create a mind-set of what graduate education is all about. Bauer also says plans are in place with the newly established Adventist University of Africa (AUA), located in Kenya, to offer a new Andrews University Doctor of Ministry degree on their campus. The goal of this new cohort is to coteach with African professors, empowering them to offer their own D.Min. program in the future.

— Keri Suarez, Andrews University

## WORLD REPORT

# At Edinburgh Conference, Missions

By GORDEN DOSS, professor of mission, Andrews University

The "Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today" mission conference in Scotland celebrated a landmark in the history of modern Christian missions. And, as they were 100 years earlier at the first Edinburgh conference, Seventh-day Adventists were involved in many aspects of the proceedings.

From June 2 to 6, about 300 delegates representing the full spectrum of Christian denominations met to remember the historic Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, and to reflect on mission during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Edinburgh 1910 had many outcomes: the large body of study materials produced by that event facilitated ongoing scholarly study about Christian mission. Some new mission journals were started and seminaries increased their mission courses. The ecumenical movement traces its roots to the conference, even though the focus in 1910 was not theological dialogue. Sadly, the two world wars, the Great Depression, Communism, ecumenism, secularism, and the resurgence of non-Christian world religions have all undercut the great progress anticipated in 1910.

The state of the world and the church changed a lot between 1910 and 2010. In 1910 the church was mostly European and American, while by 2010 Christianity was truly a global religion. At the 1910 conference the 1,200 delegates were predominantly Protestant Europeans and Americans, with only a few others included. In 2010 the organizing committee attempted to include among the 300 delegates representatives from the full range of denominations and ethnicities.

The program included worship, small group fellowship and prayer, plenary sessions, and study sessions on nine different themes. John Bell, of the historic Iona Community, led the diverse group in singing scores of songs in many languages from different lands. Dana Robert, mission historian at Boston University, presented the plenary "Mission in Long Perspective." One statement that reverberates from her paper was: "In 1910 we mourned the fact that only one third of the world was Christian. Today we rejoice that one third of the world is still Christian."

As the main sessions drew to a close, the delegates discussed, then approved, a "Common Call." The discussion had points of special interest for Adventists. First, one delegate requested a statement against "sheep stealing," or "proselytism." The group responded with

# Adventists Make Impact



**HISTORIC MISSION CONFERENCE:** Ganoune Diop, director of the Adventist Church's Global Mission Study Centers, presents at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in June.



**UNITED IN SONG:** Delegates to the conference joined voices in song during the conference's worship services.

GARY DOAK

a resounding silence and the request was not approved. Instead, speakers spoke repeatedly for active evangelization. Second, the group approved the addition of a statement about Christ's soon return.

The final meeting took place in the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall, where the 1910 conference had met. The

large Nigerian choir, the Indian pantomime choir, and a sermon by the archbishop of York (a Ugandan) demonstrated how much global Christianity has changed since 1910. The historic Assembly Hall venue prompted deep reflection about Christian mission—past, present, and future.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was represented at both Edinburgh conferences. In 1910 L. R. Conradi, General Conference vice president for the European Division, was joined by W. J. Fitzgerald, British Union Conference president, and W. A. Spicer, General Conference secretary and Foreign Mission Board member. They represented an Adventist membership of about 90,000.

The 2010 delegation included Ganoune Diop, General Conference Global Mission Study Centers director; Cheryl Doss, General Conference Institute of World Mission director; and John McVay, Walla Walla University president. Diop functioned on the organizing committee before, during, and after the conference. At the final meeting in the Assembly Hall he was master of ceremonies. The Adventist delegation represented about 16 million Adventists, and their inclusion was a recognition of Adventist mission work.

The 2010 conference, like the one in 1910, was ecumenical in the sense of being multid denominational, but not in the sense of seeking "unity" through theological compromise. The main focus was the conversion of non-Christians. Because Adventists, like many others at the 2010 conference, are not part of the ecumenical movement, participation in ecumenical events puts us on guard. McVay spoke of his participation as a "bracing, uncomfortable at times, but stretching and broadening experience." He found special satisfaction in a feature about Andrews Memorial Hospital in Jamaica titled "A Seventh-day Adventist Witness." Doss believes Adventist participation could "break down prejudice and create openness to Adventism that can only benefit the mission of our church." The delegates could observe and learn much about the challenges of doing mission in different contexts and the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of different methods and approaches.

Later, Dana Robert reflected on Edinburgh 2010. She said she was amazed by the convergence of thinking about the nature of mission. The past century has seen much conflict over the relationship of evangelism and social action (medical care, disaster relief, education, etc.) in mission, with people taking extreme opposing positions. Adventists have mostly avoided the debate because of our conviction that mission following Christ's model addresses human needs and then calls for conversion. Adventists can find satisfaction that their wholistic view of mission is now the view of many other Christians. ●



# Walking *in* Paul's Footsteps

By TED N. C. WILSON

*The following presentation is abridged from one given by Ted N.C. Wilson on July 15, 2006 at a Bible Conference of Adventist scholars and administrators in Izmir, Turkey.*

—EDITORS

After his conversion on the way to Damascus, Paul knew nothing except Christ crucified, risen, interceding in the heavenly sanctuary for each of us, and coming again. It animated everything he did. He could not stop pointing people to Jesus and His righteousness, His justification, His sanctifying power, and ultimately, His glorifying power.

Paul's theme was to preach Christ, crucified, risen, and coming again. And wherever we go, we are to proclaim that same precious Advent message—the message of hope.

Bible scholars, pastors, teachers, administrators—all are nurturers of the Advent hope. There's nothing that so unifies this church worldwide as the power of the Holy Spirit working through the consecrated

Pauls of today, preaching salvation and hope in Jesus Christ. Yes, our structure, finances, policies, Sabbath school lessons, institutions, mission program—all of them help—but that which unifies us in the most powerful way is the Holy Spirit keeping the church together as we share, preach, and witness the power of the Word of God. The great truths that we hold dear as Seventh-day Adventists—these are what unify us in Jesus Christ.

Yes, we need to share these truths in careful ways, sensitive to and respecting the various cultures around the world in appropriate ways. But remember, brothers and sisters, there is only one name given among men whereby we might be saved, and that is the name of Jesus Christ.

We do well to take Paul as our example. Paul left the shores of Asia Minor from Troas and journeyed towards Greece. He ended up in Athens, about 325 kilometers west from these beautiful waters across the Aegean Sea. As we look at Acts 17:1-15, we learn that Paul preached the word of Christ in Thessalonica,

but because of unrest he had to go to Berea. When he arrived in Berea, some of those troublesome Thesalonians followed him, and because of additional difficulty, the “brethren” arranged to have him go to Athens.

Driven from several locales for preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, Paul found himself in Athens alone. Ellen White tells us in *Acts of the Apostles* that he was “oppressed by the feeling of solitude.”<sup>1</sup> (p. 233).

But while waiting for Silas and Timothy to come join him in Athens, we discover in Acts 17: 16-17 that Paul had his heart stirred by the idolatry he saw. The Athenians were absorbed in idolatry. Truthfully, very little has changed in today's culture. Wherever we turn, we see idolatry in full swing, though perhaps not in the more blatant and obvious forms in which Paul observed it. When he saw the profound errors multiplying in Athens, he couldn't help himself: he wanted to share with them the beautiful message of the one true God—of Jesus Christ crucified, risen, interceding, and coming back again. We learn





in Acts 17 that he talked to the Jews in the synagogue, that he understood the challenge they felt of living in a polytheistic culture. The leading philosophers and thinkers of that city soon heard about his presence, and also about his presentation of what they deemed strange doctrines. They thought of making fun of him, but his presence, his manner of delivery, and his logical thinking held them back.

You in this room are following Paul's footsteps, both literally on this trip and in your professions. The intellectual capacities and skills represented in this room today are astounding. I thank God for what He has done, for giving this small group, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, so many fine, solid, academically trained scholars who give credit not only to their profession but to God. In *Acts of Apostles* we read of Paul, "They, (the philosophers) and all others who came in contact with him, soon saw that he had a store of knowledge even greater than their own. His intellectual power commanded the respect of the learned while his earnest, logical

reasoning, and the power of his oratory, held the attention of all in the audience."<sup>2</sup>

Paul was taken to Mars Hill, the seat of polytheism and paganism, which would today be the equivalents of pluralism and relativism. And in the quietness of that Mars Hill environment, Paul shared the message of the Advent hope. The Advent hope was shared with artists, poets, philosophers, scholars, the educated—Athens' academic elite. As recorded in Acts 17:22, Paul pointed out the great missing truth: a firm belief in the one true, unknown God, whom Paul knew—Jesus Christ.

Mars Hill is represented today by all the false theories and the twisted truths that Satan has fabricated in opposition to the ennobling truths of the unknown God, the ruler of the Universe. Mars Hill is a metaphor, in my opinion, for the efforts of Satan to bring confusion into society in general, into every culture, and into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular.

The confrontation is truly unavoidable. We are all in Athens,

on Mars Hill, and all of us are in the midst of a great battle, a great controversy between Christ and Satan. Nothing much has changed since the beginning of sin. The Mars Hill mentality has invaded society in general and to some degree our church itself. We have all in some sense been affected by it: in lifestyle, music, outreach approaches, views of the future, understanding of the Great Controversy theme, interpretation and acceptance of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. It has affected the purity and the simplicity of God's church and the genuineness of personal religious experience.

As was Paul, the apostle, the theologian, the evangelist, we are called to speak for truth with clarity and simplicity. We are called to oppose the Mars Hill mentality by pointing to the Solid Rock, the Solid Anchor, Jesus Christ our Lord. You as leaders, theologians, Bible teachers, and scholars, are called to nurture the great Advent hope in this heaven-initiated Advent movement—this remnant people, this remnant church of people who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.

That's just what Paul did on Mars Hill in his eloquent and masterful defense of the only true God. He preached what we can fairly call the "Adventist message." Verses 24-26 of Acts 17 record that Paul told them about the unknown God who made the world. Paul understood and endorsed the Biblical account of creation, and that he was explaining a



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## WORLD VISTA

creation of recent origin that occurred in six, literal, consecutive, 24-hour days. “The Lord of heaven and earth, who dwells in the heavenly sanctuary, didn’t need sanctuaries made or idols made,” Paul said, “to visually substitute [for] him in worship.” Paul explained that this God created all men equal, smashing elitism, and that God allows the rise and fall of people groups in the outworking of His will.

Acts 17:27 shows us Paul appeal-

tion between a reaffirmation of it and a call to repentance and reformation.” As nurturers of the Advent hope, you are appointed to call God’s people to repentance, to revival, and to reformation.

We are continually and personally in need of these same experiences. We need a strong influence of simplicity regarding heaven-guided theology, teaching methods, and church growth practices. There can be no denying

have been committed to them to be given to the world.”<sup>3</sup>

We, as individuals and as a church, need to return to an experience of humble, primitive godliness, and this is only possible through submission to Christ, and by realizing that it is He who provides the power for this great Advent movement. There is to be no pluralism and loss of mission focus in God’s ranks. We will be united in theology and mission as we are

## *Paul’s theme was to preach Christ, crucified, risen and coming again.*

ing to the great thinkers gathered on Mars Hill by telling them that this great God Whom he knew has made it completely possible to seek Him—to feel after Him, and to find Him, because He is never far from us. Perhaps Paul quoted Jesus: “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Perhaps he anticipated what Jesus would say to the Laodicean Church: “Behold I stand at the door and knock.” In verse 28, Paul underscores the crucial task, the preaching of Jesus Christ crucified, risen, interceding, and soon to return: “For in him we live and move and have our being.”

While standing in opposition to their belief systems, Paul illustrates his contextualization to their society by quoting one of their poets. That contextualization doesn’t prevent him from doing what he came to do. However: he speaks against polytheism and paganism—the pluralism of that time—and calls for repentance.

As theologians, Bible scholars, pastors, and leaders, you are called to proclaim the need for repentance and reformation. As Angel [Rodriguez] pointed out in his opening address to this conference, “With respect to the Christian world, the remnant exists in

it: we have grown Laodicean. We’ve become smug in our sophistication and in our evaluation of ourselves. We’ve become fascinated with our own understanding of how we think things should happen. Whether we like the thought or not, we are Laodicea. We are the embodiment of the church identified in Revelation.”<sup>3</sup>

Through God’s grace, Christ’s righteousness, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we need to humble ourselves in submission to God. I’m not only speaking to you: I’m speaking to myself as well. We need a clarity of purpose and mission, a fuller understanding of who we are as Seventh-day Adventists—the end-time Advent movement, God’s remnant people.

Listen to Ellen White’s beautiful statement: “Seventh-day Adventists have been chosen by God as a peculiar people, separate from the world. By the great cleaver of truth He has cut them out from the quarry of the world, and brought them into connection with Himself. He has made them His representatives, and has called them to be ambassadors for Him in the last work of salvation. The greatest wealth of truth ever entrusted to mortals, the most solemn and fearful warnings ever sent by God to man,

personally and corporately connected to Jesus Christ. The great sin of Israel was to be so often disconnected from God, allowing the gods around them to absorb their attention. The same sin is our temptation today as Laodiceans—to allow other things to divert our attention from Christ and His mission for us as a people.

Hear Ellen White again: “In a special sense, Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God.”

Do you feel light shining on you at this very moment? Ellen White continued: “They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”<sup>4</sup>

It is Christ alone Who gives meaning to this message that we are to present—the message that is entrusted into your hands. ●

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 19



# Symptoms of a Stroke

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

**So many people seem to be having strokes, and I worry because my wife has had several transient ischemic attacks—which they say may predict a stroke. What should we do?**

A stroke is where an interruption of the blood supply to the brain results in damage that can be permanent, even lethal.

Most strokes occur in people with hypertension and a family history of stroke. Other types of stroke may involve a thrombosis, or embolism (a clot migrating to the brain). A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel bursts and bleeding into the brain causes damage. A person with symptoms suggesting a stroke should receive *immediate* medical attention, as the diagnosis may permit emergency measures that can reduce the severity of the stroke.

Prevention, where possible, would be much better.

For Adventists, among whose ranks are found many who disdain medications, we need to recognize that careful studies have shown that the use of antihypertensive medications reduces the risk of stroke by 22 percent. The use of angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors appears to have an added and independent benefit. We stress this point not because it's the primary recommendation we wish to make, but because it can be a major sticking point for some and not using physician-prescribed medications can have devastating consequences.

Obviously, the benefits of exercise and a diet low in fat and sodium

play an enormous role. Avoidance of tobacco and alcohol lowers the risk of stroke. While medication may lower one's risk of stroke by 22 percent, an unhealthy lifestyle raises the risk twofold. Those eating five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco, and limiting alcohol had less than half the number of strokes than the control group.

It's important to have regular medical checkups. One of our family members had atrial fibrillation before the days when anticoagulation was recommended, and she suffered a stroke with a consequent 14 years of paralysis. Prevention is key, but good medical surveillance can detect medical problems that need management. Many strokes can be prevented by astute recognition of the danger signals.

**I have high triglyceride levels and my doctor is concerned. What lifestyle measures should I adopt?**

First, we would reemphasize the importance of following your doctor's advice. She or he knows you as an individual; we're talking to lifestyle in general here in these columns.

Elevated triglycerides may actually reflect an inherited condition and can be modified by specific medications. But in Western society today, the prevalence of high triglycerides can involve a third of the population.

High triglycerides may play a role

in several conditions including heart disease, the metabolic syndrome, and pancreatitis.

Triglycerides are a form of fat, and high levels are seen in the obese, the inactive, smokers, heavy alcohol consumers, and persons consuming a high carbohydrate intake. The epidemic consumption of giant-size soda drinks in some world regions such as the United States is likely a significant factor, as this is a serious factor in obesity.

Triglyceride levels should be less than 150 mg./dL. to be normal. Borderline high levels run between 150 and 199, high 200-499, and very high above 500 mg./dL.

Weight control, exercise, and a heart-healthy diet (vegetarian) will prove helpful. Alcohol is harmful to triglyceride levels.

The danger of triglyceride elevation is an increased risk of heart attack and acceleration of arteriosclerotic change in blood vessels. It's important to know your numbers and keep triglycerides within the normal range. ●



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NUMBER 1

# Hungering for the Word

By SYLVIA RENZ

I love reading! Ever since I understood that the little black marks on the white paper told colorful stories, I've been keen on everything printed. I read adverts, labels on food products, cereal boxes, magazines, and books—even instruction manuals.

For my seventh birthday I was given my first Bible. I loved that little book. Now I was no longer dependent on a grown-up to find out whether or not Daniel survived the lion's den or how David got the better of Goliath! Now I could read these stories for myself. Ruth and Esther, Joseph and David were the stars of my childhood. They "belonged" to the family so much so that if Moses were to walk through the kitchen door I wouldn't have batted an eyelid; rather, I would have calmly set an extra plate at the table for him.

## More Than a Story Collection

Later I came to understand that the Bible was more than simply an exciting story collection. It gave advice and encouragement, and put its finger on the problem. It showed me which way to go when I saw no way out (2 Tim. 3:16), and, above all, it was here that I met Jesus Christ introducing me to my heavenly Father (John 5:39; 14:6, 9).

God communicates His plans, His will, and the way He works through the Bible. Pious feelings carry about as much weight as a melting ice sheet. Wonderful experiences in my faith life will eventually fade and become as brittle as the rose in last year's birthday bouquet. But the Word of God remains.

The Bible bridges the beginnings of human history



**Sylvia Renz** works for the German Voice of Prophecy in Alsbach-Hähnlein, Germany. She is an accomplished author and has published numerous books for children and adults.

## *Wonderful experiences in my*

right to us, postmoderns (Gen. 1:27; 2:18; Matt. 19:4-6; Rev. 19:6-9). It shows us God's plan of salvation, interwoven with our own lives. The Bible lets us in on God's thoughts, His style, and His wishes (2 Peter 3:9). Foreign cultures come closer to us, as we read of people in far-off times who loved, suffered, experienced joy or cheated, took revenge or forgave injustice.

From their victories and mistakes we learn how it is done and what we could do better. We can test their goals and values and perhaps incorporate them into our lives. Through daily contact with Scripture we will be transformed (Ps. 1:1, 2; 119:1-11).

## Reality Check

In the mirror of biblical reality we see many ideas for what they are—crumbling lies (Heb. 4:12). Here are some: "Everyone must love me," "I must make everyone happy," "I am worth nothing," "I am always right," "I am better than you." Many lead a miserable life, caged in by rules and conventions made by others. However, when we discover in the Bible what God really wants, the iron chains that hold our thoughts captive fall. We are free! We are saved! "The truth will set you free," said Jesus (John 8:32, NIV)—and He meant it.

I recently got to know a single-minded businessman who realized, through Bible study, that his worth was not dependent on his achievements. Listen to what he wrote: "Since I realized this, I feel so much more at peace. I don't have to prove anymore to anyone how good I am. I can also handle failure. There isn't any guarantee that everything should work out perfectly for me. The Bible greets also had

their share of misfortunes. And did they immediately give up? Did they doubt God's love? I learn so much through the Bible. I don't want to forfeit my time with my Bible for anything. Since I began spending time with my Bible I have new courage. I used to often contemplate suicide. But now I believe that I have been given a second chance. The Bible has become so precious to me that I am prepared to give anything for it."

I am amazed when I hear his story. Do I share the same experience? Of course, I value the Bible; after all, I've grown up with it, and all the precious promises it contains. But would I really be prepared to risk my life for it like the ancient Waldenses? And is the time I spend daily with my

speaks to me is worth a thousand words that I may be able to repeat from memory with beautiful intonation. Do my own stubborn plans create a background noise that keeps me from really listening to God's Word? Perhaps it's the guilty memory of a harsh interchange that I had with someone yesterday that is stopping me from concentrating. Of course, there is the still small voice of the Holy Spirit that wants to speak to me from the open book and may be interfering with my own selfish reading agendas. Then there is also the painful memory of an injustice that I have suffered that can well up and interfere. Or perhaps it is my fears: What about my children's future? Will our church be able to cope with its internal tensions? How will we manage financially on our

*life will eventually fade. But the word of God remains.*

Bible really the highlight of my day? Or do I often have to fight the "I know this all already" syndrome?

It is really a strange contradiction. A part of me is as excited about Bible reading as someone discovering a treasure cave. Another part of me wants to turn on the computer first thing in the morning and catch up on my e-mails. Often it is already mid-morning before I realize that I haven't made time for some uninterrupted time with my Bible. I know that there is so much more to having time with God than a half-awake prayer first thing in the morning and a quickly mumbled prayer over lunch. I am ashamed to admit it but sometimes I have to force myself to read my Bible.

#### **The Bible and I—And You**

Am I overfed? Have I absorbed too many theories and left the practice far behind? Perhaps a single verse that

pension? These are all walls that can block out the Word. I read but don't comprehend a thing. I pray and my prayer rises no higher than the ceiling, or so it seems.

Yet our heavenly Father sees all and understands us. He wants to help us remove these blockades. He wants to give us daily, fresh gifts in His Word. Only when we hungrily take this daily bread will this void be filled—when we eat it with a thankful heart, when we "chew" it well. God's Word loses its appeal only when we handle it as a theory rather than allowing it to transform us from the inside out; when my memory slots are full, or when His Word gets stuck in my mind and doesn't make it to my heart and into my hand. Perhaps the truest path to finding the joy in Scripture is to pray "Lord, give me a thirst for the Bible and let Your Word take root in me. Help me put into practice what I know; let me become more like You." ●

## *Holy* Scriptures

knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the

The Bible gives us a particular kind of worldview—a remarkable meta-narrative that pulls back the curtain between heaven and earth. Here we are given the reason for the sinful mess that this world is in. Further, we are given the only solution in all the universe whereby people can understand the chaotic world of disease, violence, disaster, and death in which we live.

We call this biblical drama *the great controversy between God and Satan*.

Ellen G. White has given one of the clearest expositions of this biblical theme. Throughout her ministry of 70 years, in spoken and written words, she has outlined in simple terms how sin developed, how the minds and bodies of men and women have been affected, and how God has entered the picture to provide relief and hope for a future without sin and suffering.

#### The Key Issue

Ellen White highlights how the controversy erupted when Lucifer, God's chief angel, became dissatisfied with what he thought was the arbitrary way God was running the universe. His personal dissatisfaction led to other angels sharing his baseless challenges to God's authority. And as Revelation 12:7-9 tells us, war broke out in heaven and the rebels were cast out, ending up on this planet.

This rebellion eventually became a universe-wide concern because God, the Creator, was charged with being unfair, severe, and unforgiving: "The enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor.... It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men."<sup>1</sup>


Beyond the angels in heaven and

human beings on earth, God knew that Satan's charges had to be answered and His government vindicated: "God, the One infinite and all-wise, sees the end from the beginning, and in dealing with evil His plans were far-reaching and comprehensive. It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of the rebellion. God's plan was unfolding, showing both His justice and His mercy, and

and the race for whom Christ was giving His life might see the righteousness of God's purposes. Those under the control of the enemy must be allowed to reveal the principles of his government."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Great Rescue

So the big questions are: How does God plan to reverse the damage that rebellion has done to this earth and its inhabitants? How would He convince humanity that He has been completely



# The GREATEST STORY Rarely Told

By  
HERBERT E.  
DOUGLASS

*How God plans to clean up this world's mess*



fully vindicating His wisdom and righteousness in His dealings with evil."<sup>2</sup>

How could a fair, loving, and gracious God "unfold" a plan so that the universe would be forever settled regarding His character? He did so by letting Satan have the opportunity to fully "unfold" his way of running the universe: "In the great controversy between good and evil, Satan must be given every opportunity to develop his true character, that the heavenly universe

fair in handling Satan's rebellion? Listen to this: "By His life on earth He honored the law of God. By His death He established it. He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the law might be shown to be immutable.... Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot

obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts."<sup>4</sup>

Jesus lived and died, not only to demonstrate God's fairness; He also provided a way for men and women to be forgiven and restored, defeating Satan in their own lives through the drama we call atonement—restoration from the ranks of Satan to the family of God:

"To have faith means to find and accept the gospel treasure, with all the obligations which it imposes."<sup>6</sup>

**God's Final Word**

God will ultimately do away with all sin on earth, including removing sin from the hearts of those who believe in Him! Becoming righteous by faith is the process and goal of all who are loyal to God: "The law requires righteousness,— a righteous life, a perfect character; and

very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ."<sup>7</sup>

The sanctuary service in both the Old and New Testaments teaches the fundamental purposes in God's plan to rescue men and women from sin: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."<sup>8</sup>

Our daily lives are determining our destiny! "The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society.... Our daily lives are determining our destiny. Defects of character must be repented of and overcome through the grace of Christ, and a symmetrical character must be formed while in this probationary state, that we may be fitted for the mansions above."<sup>9</sup>

Satan would like to keep our world, and that includes each of us, in a state of sin and sadness forever. But soon, God will completely eradicate all suffering. When Jesus comes, the great controversy between Christ and Satan will be forever decided. Satan will be annihilated. It is the privilege of every Christian to cast our vote today on God's winning side. ●



SARAH CATES

"The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters."<sup>5</sup>

The key word on which each person's salvation depends is "faith"—our response to grace. Faith is more than intellectual belief or assent to truth:

this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men.... More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> *Steps to Christ*, pp. 10, 11.  
<sup>2</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 78.  
<sup>3</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 5, p. 1107.  
<sup>4</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 314.  
<sup>5</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1074.  
<sup>6</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 112.  
<sup>7</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.  
<sup>8</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 489.  
<sup>9</sup> *Last Day Events*, p. 295.



**Herbert E. Douglass, Th.D.**, is a retired pastor and professor who has served the Adventist Church in a number of roles over the past 60 years.

# MISSION

# Matters

By  
STEPHEN  
CHAVEZ

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands poised for greatness—not for our glory, but the Lord’s,” wrote former General Conference president Neal C. Wilson in his introduction to the Global Mission initiative that was presented to the delegates to the fifty-fifth General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1990. “He is calling us to something bigger and more difficult and more exciting than anything we have ever dreamed or attempted,” he continued. “As our world has become a global village, He is calling us to a global mission.”\*

The document contained in that first *General Conference Bulletin* of the session was a tacit admission that the church’s efforts to take the gospel to “every nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev. 14:6, NIV) had, to that point, been somewhat insignificant when compared to the gigantic portion of the world’s population that had yet to be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Wilson pointed out that at the time 1,800 ethnic or language groups in the world, representing more than 2 billion people, had absolutely no connection with Adventists and their unique message.

The goal of Global Mission, according to Wilson, was “to establish an Adventist presence in each of the 1,800 untouched groups of 1 million people before A.D. 2000.



**Stephen Chavez** is managing editor of *Adventist World*.

*Global Mission—  
20 years after its  
birth*



PHOTOS BY GLOBAL MISSION



*“That means planting at least one new church every other day in these unreached areas during the next 10 years!”* he wrote.

### **Some Perspective**

Gary Krause is director of the Office of Adventist Mission at the General Conference. Now that 20 years have passed since the Global Mission initiative was adopted in Indianapolis, he cites the major difference between mission outreach pre- and post-Global Mission.

“Historically the Christian church, including Evangelicals, has tended to put resources—financial, people, whatever—to work where the church is the strongest,” he says. “[Global Mission] was now a rethinking of that, saying, ‘Actually, we need to shift resources, focus, and attention to people groups and geographical areas of the world where we’re not strong.’”

This was a somewhat risky departure for those in the Adventist Church who put a premium on measurements of growth that included numbers of baptisms. It was a declaration that instead of working in areas where one could reasonably expect thousands of baptisms, the church was going to put its resources into areas where the evangelistic work would be more difficult. “It had the potential of saying to the world church, ‘Let’s slow growth down,’” says Krause.

And while the new initiative was seen as a huge challenge, it also held the promise of opportunities for unprecedented growth in the long term. But the need to alter the church’s mission focus and redirect it to parts of the world where Christianity was rarely or barely known was inescapable.

Charles Taylor, now retired in Ooltewah, Tennessee, was tapped by Neal Wilson in 1985 to develop what, at the time, was called a “Global Strategy” for taking the gospel to the entire world.

Taylor started working on a

strategy that began the process of developing leadership and financial self-support, so that the church in developing countries would no longer be so dependent on leaders and financial support from the church in other more developed countries.

In the process, Taylor and others began looking at mission models developed by other Christian organizations and denominations. The result was an emphasis away from just numbers of baptisms to reaching “unreached people groups,” defined as “a people group among whom there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside [cross-cultural] assistance.”

Taylor remembers the impact of preparing a printout more than 100 pages long, 50 lines to a page, each line a geographical area of the world with a population of a million or more—1,700 of them without a single Adventist. When Taylor and GC vice president Robert Kloosterhuis stretched the printout across the front of the General Conference chapel, the

message was clear: While there were parts of the world where Adventist mission outreach was strong and growing stronger, other parts of the world were being reached barely at all.

### **Grassroots Planning**

After the 1990 General Conference session, Mike Ryan, who is now a general vice president for the General Conference, was brought in to head up the new Global Mission initiative. Based on work he had been doing in Indonesia, Ryan began developing a mission model that was based on something he called a Global Mission pioneer.

A Global Mission pioneer is a layperson chosen by the church, given a small stipend, and asked to move into a community and teach the gospel while modeling the values of Christianity. “This was a new way of thinking,” says Krause. “The traditional model, of course, had been for us to send missionaries from where the church is established. While traditional missionaries were and still are desperately needed, pioneers serve a unique and special role in starting new congregations in new

## *Funding a* **GLOBAL MISSION**



Initial funding for Global Mission came from the sale of Loma Linda Foods in 1989 and 1990. The proceeds of that sale went to establish an endowment fund that supports Global Mission operational costs. The Annual Sacrifice Offering that comes during the annual Week of Prayer goes to Global Mission projects, and Global Mission is also supported by individual donors.

The 2005 General Conference session in St. Louis established the Office of Adventist Mission to both oversee Global Mission and also raise awareness of Adventist mission in general. Since the mid-1950s Adventists have increasingly donated to specific local projects, so that mission offerings have experienced a steady decline in terms of percentages of donations received.

The Sabbath School Offering supports new and established mission programs—hospitals, clinics, schools, etc.—while donations to Global Mission fund outreach to areas and people groups where there is no Adventist presence.

For Adventist mission resources and reports, visit [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org).

# Breaking *It* Down

From 2005 to 2009 the Office of Global Mission received applications for 6,765 projects, involving 9,702 Global Mission pioneers in 163 countries. The total cost of those projects was more than \$68,300,000, for which Global Mission provided roughly a third of the funding; the rest came from local divisions, conferences, and missions.



areas, among new people groups. But wherever pioneers work, they look like everybody else, live like everybody else, serve in an incarnational ministry, and make friends with people, build bridges.”

Krause says that in the first years of Global Mission, pioneers were brought in for an average period of 12 months. But it soon became apparent that for this type of ministry one year was not enough to make a lasting difference. “It’s one thing to plant a church,” he says. “It’s another thing to make sure they’re grounded and disciplined.” Now the average length of time a pioneer commits to a community is at least three to five years.

Global Mission projects are meant to take the adventist message to where the need is most apparent. The church in a local area might become aware of an area where there are no Adventists. A request for funding goes from the local conference or mission to the local union conference or union mission, is then forwarded to that particular division, and eventually ends up at the General Conference Global Mission Office.

“We have an administration committee that looks at every project,” says Krause. “We ask the questions: ‘Is this a new area? Is it a plan to start a new congregation?’ If it doesn’t meet both requirements, we have to send it back.”

But projects that are approved return to the local area with funding from each of the organizational levels of the church, so there is buy-in from each level. “We don’t get too many

complaints from the field about projects,” says Krause. “They’re the ones who came up with them. There’s ownership in the sense that everyone’s contributing to it financially.”

## Challenges Ahead

Now that 20 years have passed since the General Conference session in Indianapolis, how should Global Mission be evaluated? “When Global Mission began, the church was a church of 6 million members,” observes Krause. “Now we have somewhere between 16 and 17 million. Global Mission hasn’t been responsible for all that [growth], but if you were to look at the church planting that has taken place during that period of time, some would suggest that the majority have come through Global Mission initiatives.”

But while the church has grown, so also has the world population—from nearly 5 billion in 1990 to 7 billion today. And while the goal was to establish an Adventist presence in all 1,800 ethnic and language groups of a million or more by the year 2000, the church has succeeded in reducing that number to only about 1,400. And in two parts of the world the number of unreached groups of a million or more has actually increased in the past 20 years.

Ryan explains: “We began to work on the 1,700 [unreached people groups], but immediately the population began to grow.” Two billion more people on the planet equates to roughly 2,200 more groups who have not yet heard about Jesus and His gospel.

“We’d now be at about 3,600 [unreached groups] if we had not come along and intentionally said, ‘We want this analysis done, and we want to establish these churches.’”

But this begs the question: What constitutes an “Adventist presence”? Ten Adventists in a population of 1 million or more technically means Adventists have a presence there. But because that presence would probably be unknown to 999,000 of those who live in that area, another measure of progress continues to be raw numbers.

Ryan quotes some impressive statistics: In 1990 there were approximately 318,000 Adventists in India. Now, 20 years later, that number stands at nearly 1.4 million. In 1990, 18,000 Adventists could be identified in China; now 400,000 people identify themselves as Seventh-day Adventist. In some countries the number of Adventist congregations could be numbered on the fingers of one hand; today, says Ryan, “we have dozens of churches throughout those areas—very tough, difficult areas.”

In fact, according to Ryan, the church has grown in membership 270 percent in the 10/40 window over the past 20 years, compared to a growth rate in the rest of the world of about 90 percent.

Clearly, the challenges ahead are daunting. The Office of Adventist Mission has identified three major challenges to the spread of the gospel:

The first, of course, is the 10/40 window—that part of the world that contains the largest population of

non-Christians. The area extends from 10 degrees to 40 degrees north of the equator, and from North Africa to China. The area is home to 60 percent of the world's population, the vast majority of which is not Christian.

The second major challenge to Global Mission is the huge number of people who live in urban areas of the world, its big cities. More than 50 percent of the world's population lives in cities such as Mumbai, Shanghai, Tokyo, Mexico City, São Paulo, etc. And while Christianity may be known in some of those cities, in many the Adventist presence is all but insignificant.

Finally, the third major challenge to Global Mission is the growing secular and postmodern populations, especially in Australia, western Europe, and North America, in addition to many of the major cities

in Asia and South Africa. In these parts of the world interest in religion of any kind is actually decreasing. Where in the past people could be engaged on some level by a discussion of spiritual things based on the Bible, more and more of the population is biblically illiterate, and the Bible is seen as irrelevant.

To address these challenges, Global Mission Religious Study Centers have been established in several parts of the world to develop materials and methods for reaching out to people whose background is not Adventist, not Christian, maybe not even religious (see sidebar).

"We have to be candid," says Krause. "There are more people on Planet Earth today that are unreached by the Adventist Church than there were when Global Mission began.

"But we have to realize that God has invited us to be part of His plan. We are not His plan; we are part of His plan. Our task is to be faithful; to take every opportunity to share His love, to share the Adventist message in as many creative ways as we can, to pray for the Holy Spirit, and to pray for new avenues to open up."

And Ryan highlights another criterion with which to measure the church's mission outreach: "What we have to focus on as our major contribution is that we pass the torch of mission to the next generation. Twenty years later some of us are going off the scene. Are there people from 18 to whatever who are burning with a passion to take the gospel to the world?"

Well, are there? 

\*Global Mission insert, *General Conference Bulletin 1, Adventist Review*, July 5, 1990.



## Understanding Our NEIGHBORS

Part of the Global Mission initiative has been the establishment of Global Mission Religious Study Centers, set up to provide training and materials for people who interact with believers (or nonbelievers, as the case may be) of the great faith traditions of the world: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Secularism/Postmodernism.

Adherents to these religions typically live in the 10/40 window, where Christians are often a minority of the population. But because of immigration, adherents to these world religions are increasingly found in the so-called Christian countries of western Europe and North America.

"The 10/40 window is coming into the Western world," says Ganoune Diop, director of the Global Mission Study Centers for the Office of Adventist Mission. "Our neighbors are often Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Secular/Postmodern. People from distant lands have now come to be our neighbors."

Research indicates that in North America 35.6 percent of Buddhists, 22.7 percent of Hindus, and 67.8 percent of Muslims say they know any Christians (in Europe those numbers are 31.8 percent of Buddhists, 57.6 percent of Hindus, and 18.5 percent of Muslims). The conclusion: Many Christians are out of touch with the non-Christians in their communities. (Source: Todd M. Johnson and Charles L. Tieszen, "Personal Contact: The *sine qua non* of Twenty-first Century Christian Mission," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 2007, p. 494.)

Obviously, foreign missionaries aren't the only ones with a mission.

For more information about, or contact information for the five Global Mission Religious Study Centers, visit [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org) and click on "Global Mission" on the right side of the page.

# Understanding

By ROY ADAMS

## the Word\*

And discovering the Person

*“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.... In a loud voice they sang: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’” (Rev. 5:11, 12, NIV).*

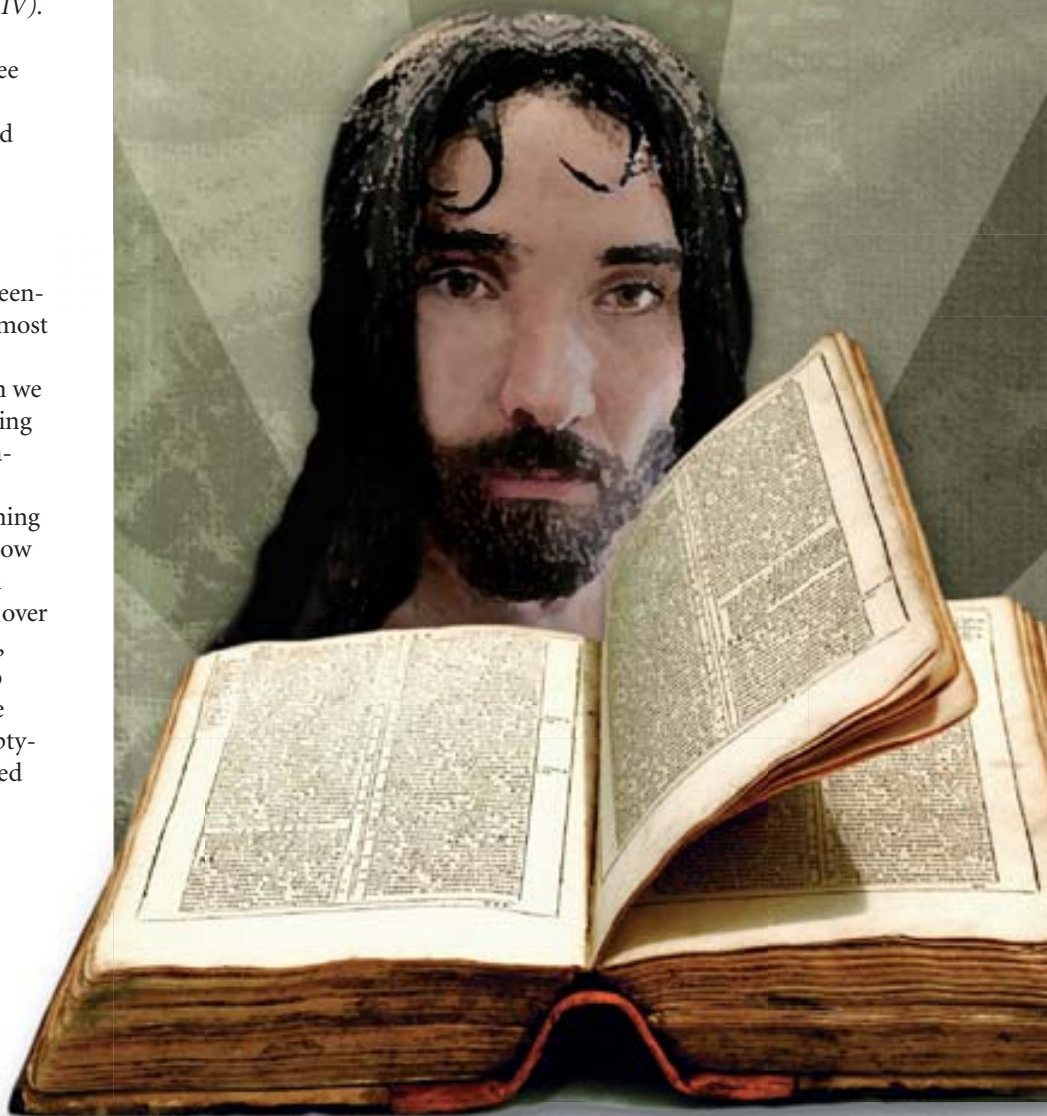
I’ve divided the article into three parts: *First*, What we’ve got; *second*, How to decipher it; and *third*, The point at the heart of it.

### First: What we’ve got

I begin with a strange personal story out of my boyhood—those teenage years when girls feature uppermost in the heads of young boys. In my case, those were also the days when we young men had something bordering on dread for those mysterious creatures we called the opposite sex.

And so, with a dance party coming up, some of us, boys, wanted to know ahead of time whether that certain young woman we’d been drooling over would accept our offer for a dance, after we’d crossed the entire hall to ask her hand. We knew it would be most embarrassing to go back empty-handed, all eyes on us. So we wanted to know the outcome in advance.

*\* This article is an abridgment of the author’s sermon presented at the annual Professional Growth Seminar in Pasadena, California, April 20, 2010, sponsored by the General Conference Ministerial Department.—EDITORS.*



To find out, we'd take the main house key—one of those long, large-headed keys of yesteryear. We'd place it in a Bible at a particular chapter (that I will not identify); strap the Bible tight around it; then two of us, the tips of our fingers at the neck of the key-head, would hold the suspended Bible in the middle. The contraption in place, we'd repeat

## at its center

together a certain formula (that I will not mention); then, in turn, we'd each put our question: "Will Diana [or Jane, or whoever] dance with me this Friday night, if I should ask her?"

If the answer was no, the Bible remained stationary between our fingers; but if the answer was yes, the Bible would turn of its own accord and drop to the floor, unless we grabbed it first.

I tell this quaint story not to suggest that this phenomenon could not perhaps be replicated using other books and other formulas, but only to show how, as a non-Adventist young teenager, *I became impressed, for the first time, that the Bible is not an ordinary document.* It was a lesson exclusively for me.

But leaving aside the prankishness of this boyhood experience, a fundamental question still remains: *Was my conclusion, nevertheless, correct? What have we got here? What is this document we call the Bible?* In a world literally choking with books and publications of every species and variety, what makes *this one* special—different?

As I reflected on these questions, my mind wandered back some

2,600 years across the centuries. With hostile foreign forces lurking on the outskirts of Jerusalem, waiting for an opportune moment to strike, a certain young man comes forward claiming to have special supernatural intelligence as to how the nation should respond to the crisis: *Surrender to the Babylonians, he says. Give yourselves up. It's your only viable option* (see Jer. 27:6-17). For the powers in Jerusalem, that was treason. And Jeremiah was thrown "into a vaulted cell in a dungeon" (Jer. 37:16, NIV).

But one day a royal messenger appeared with a summons from the king. Entering the royal palace, Jeremiah faced a trembling monarch with a bad case of siege fatigue. Dropping his voice and bending forward, a frightened Zedekiah whispered the critical question we find in Jeremiah 37:17: *"Is there a word from the Lord?"* (NASB).\*

It's an extraordinary question! And the utterly outrageous claim of the Christian church is that this document called the Bible *is, indeed, a word from the Lord.* At the beginning of Romans 3, Paul raised the question as to whether Jews had any advantage in the world, then went on to give the (shocking) answer: "Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God" (Rom. 3:2, NIV).

As Christians, we believe we have what they had plus the New Testament, in a complete Bible. And what we discover—not unlike my boyhood experience—is that this book is not an ordinary document, but is "living and active" (Heb. 4:12, NIV), probing the deep, secret recesses of our souls. There is something uncanny about the way it tears us asunder... then, thank God, puts us back together again!

*That's what we've got here:* the Word of the living God!

### Second: How to decipher it

The Scriptures are not like the Delphic Oracles of ancient Greece, whose forked-tongue messages could always be twisted to mean whatever suited the interpreter's fancy. On the contrary, we need to approach the Bible with a "scientific" mind-set, if you please.

This means, among other things, *having a feel for its original languages.* And as we approach the text, we need to keep inquiring: (a) What did this particular scripture mean for those who first received it? (b) How have believers across the centuries understood it? And (c) What does it mean for us today?

There's a high risk of seriously misunderstanding Scripture when we read it as though it were written directly to us in the twenty-first century. This calls for historical perspective, remembering that the Bible was written over the course of some 1,600 years; and under a wide variety of political, social, and cultural circumstances.

Furthermore, given the complexity of the subject, a multitude of disciplines must be brought to bear on the text. We need the linguist; the historian; the archaeologist; the biblical theologian; the systematic theologian; etc. Then we need to consider the different genres of writing in the one document we call the Bible: poetry, history, prophecy, apocalyptic, story, parable, etc. Each of these forms requires a different orientation, a different approach, a different set of tools.

That's what I mean by a "scientific" approach to Scripture.

But here's an extremely important caveat: Notwithstanding all of the



**Roy Adams** is an associate editor of *Adventist World*.

above, we impugn the character of God if we leave the impression that everyone needs to spend years, if not decades, in college and university before they can understand the gist of the biblical message. That would be like saying that a newborn infant needs to be taught how to breathe and suck. No, breathing and sucking are too critical to have them depend on formal training.

So however risky it might be to say it, we have to affirm that this mysteri-

### Third: The point at the heart of it

Vanderbilt University student Katherine Precht, responding to skeptical scholars who describe the Bible as “full of errors, contradictions and a murky historical record,” says none of that shakes her faith. “That’s because Precht embraces a big-picture view of biblical truth,” said a recent *Washington Post* article. For Precht, “it means the Bible speaks truth on ultimate things, such as Creation and salvation.”†

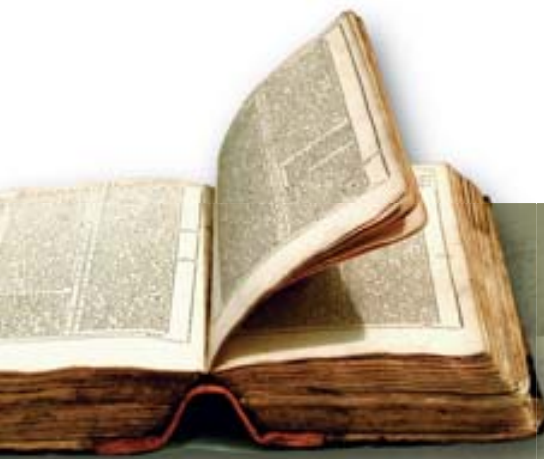
Touché!

Properly understanding the Bible means seeing the big picture. The Creation story is what it is—a factual, historical account of the origin of

it all is Jesus. *He is the point!*

As Revelation 5, the passage at the beginning of this article, opens, John sees a scroll in the hand of God, and weeps bitterly to discover that no one in the universe is worthy “to break the seals and open” it (NIV) — until Jesus steps forward, appearing as “a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain,” and depicted as “standing in the center of the throne . . .” (verse 6, NIV).

A difficult scene to picture; but I think it means to portray Jesus at the heart and center of universal power, with everything revolving around Him. As He opens the awful document in the hand of God, the entire



*There is something uncanny about the way the Bible tears us asunder . . . , then, thank God, puts us back together again!*

ous book is designed in such a way that we can spend several lifetimes probing its enormous depth and still not reach bottom; yet ordinary, uneducated people can have direct access to its most vital message—the essential message they need for eternal life.

This is part of what Jesus meant when He said in Matthew 11:25 that God had hidden certain things “from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children” (NIV).

Moreover, in our cynical, postmodern times, the message of the Bible becomes credible not when we’re able to articulate and expound it with flawless accuracy, but when it becomes incarnate in our souls; when our lives reflect the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:1, 14).

the human family, an indispensable plank in what biblical theologians call *Heilsgeschichte* (“salvation history”); but in the wake of the Fall, Creation also points us to God’s re-creation in Jesus Christ. The Exodus is what it is—a factual account of the rescue of Israel from Egyptian slavery; but understanding the bigger picture means looking beyond the multitude of details in the story, and seeing the event as a depiction of the release of the entire human race from spiritual bondage through our Cosmic Liberator, Jesus Christ.

As we explain the Word, we should keep imagining millions of people wondering as they listen to us: *What’s the point?* And we should keep making the case that the point at the heart of

universe—more than 100 million angels, joined by “every creature . . . on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them”—breaks loose in worship: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” (Rev. 5:13, NIV).

Understanding the Word means knowing that the ghastly, age-old drama of this planet ends in a triumph of grace, with all creation singing around the throne of God, Jesus Christ at the shining center. ●

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

† G. Jeffrey MacDonald, “Putting in a Good Word for the Bible,” *Washington Post*, Apr. 3, 2010 ([www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/02/AR2010040203993.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/02/AR2010040203993.html)).

**BY REPUTATION:** Known as the “most honest man in town,” David Hewitt (1805-1878) was the first convert of Adventist pioneer Joseph Bates in Battle Creek. Hewitt first proposed the name “Seventh-day Adventist” during a meeting held on October 1, 1860 in the simple church structure that served the believers.



# What's *in a* Name?

By  
JAMES R. NIX



## *The naming of Seventh-day Adventism*

**N**ames identify persons and organizations. It was 150 years ago on October 1, 1860, that the Adventist pioneers chose the name “Seventh-day Adventist” for our church. Some thought we should call ourselves “Church of God.” Others thought that too presumptuous, not to mention the fact that other churches were already using the name, thus possibly causing confusion. Consequently, after considerable discussion, the name “Seventh-day Adventist” was chosen.<sup>1</sup>

Actually, the process of choosing our denomination’s name wasn’t quite that simple. It was only after a great deal of discussion that our pioneers finally voted to legally incorporate the publishing house, our church’s only institution at that time. Obviously, to complete the incorporation process a name needed to be chosen for the publishing association they just voted to create. Even as the decision to organize the fledgling church’s publishing house had not come easily, neither was the decision to choose a name made quickly. For several months prior to the conference held in Battle Creek, Michigan, September 28–October 1, 1860, where these matters were discussed and decided, several articles as well as letters from readers were printed in the church paper—then called *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Discussions between church members and traveling ministers also occurred prior to the conference—both regarding whether to incorporate the publishing house, as well as regarding choosing a name.

James White initiated the discussions. At the time both the publishing house and the 28- by 42-foot (8.5 by 12.8 m.) meetinghouse in Battle Creek in which the conference was being held were owned by individuals—not the church

members. James White owned the publishing house (it was legally in his name), and the meetinghouse was built on property owned by Stephen Belden, James’ brother-in-law. Should either man die or decide to do something else with his property, the church members who contributed to the estimated \$5,000 net worth of the publishing house, or the nearly \$900 invested in construction costs for the meetinghouse when built three years earlier, would lose their investments. For his part Elder White urged that a method be found for the church to take title legally to the publishing house as well as to church buildings built by local congregations. He was not at all interested in seeing the current arrangement continued. By this time church membership was approximately 3,000, and continuing to grow.<sup>2</sup> Something obviously needed to be done.

### **Name, Organization—And Babylon**

Although the decision to incorporate would seem to us to be an easy one, because of their background it was a difficult decision for many of our pioneers to make. Because of their Millerite Adventist experience, including their strong belief that the churches that rejected biblical truth as discovered and believed by them were part of Babylon described in Revelation 14:8, taking any action—however



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



**HISTORIC RECORD:** Joseph B. Frisbie noted the name of the church in his diary entry for October 1, 1860. He was one of the 25 delegates of the session, which was chaired by Joseph Bates.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE / CENTER FOR ADVENTIST RESEARCH, ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

seemingly small or insignificant—that might in any way appear to be moving toward the formation of a formal church caused them real concern. Under no circumstances did our pioneers want to become part of Babylon! After all, having been called to come out of Babylon, they certainly did not want to vote anything that might cause them to return to it! Not having experienced what they went through as Millerites, including the years immediately following the Millerite movement, we find it impossible to understand fully the very deep and sincerely held convictions of our pioneers regarding organization.

However, after more than a full day of discussion, not to mention all the discussions that had preceded the conference, the vast majority of those in attendance finally decided that legally incorporating did not of itself constitute Babylon—at least they all voted to proceed toward organizing. That decision having been made, they next turned to the discussion of a name. Again, “making a name” caused theological concerns for some present that weekend. As with the organization issue, the apparent reason for their concern is found in the book of Revelation. The eleventh verse of chapter 14 warns against worshippers of the beast and anyone who receives the mark of his name. Consequently, choosing a specific name for either the publishing house or our churches in general also caused real concern for many.

### Choices

Admittedly, from a practical standpoint the situation was already causing confusion. The first Sabbathkeeping Adventist congregation to incorporate was in Parkville, Michigan, about 40 miles southwest of Battle Creek. They did so on May 13, 1860. Because “no name has yet been decided upon by the remnant as a body,” they chose to

call themselves the “Parkville Church of Christ’s second advent.”<sup>3</sup> Later that summer the congregation in Fairfield, Iowa, chose to organize under the name “The church of the living God.”<sup>4</sup> It was reported that at least three other congregations in Iowa were awaiting word from the conference before also proceeding. Actually, a number of different names had been used at various times, and by various ones, to identify the small, but growing, church. Probably the most widely used was “Church of God.” Others included “The Little Remnant Scattered Abroad” (sometimes shortened to “The Little Remnant” or just “The Remnant”), “The Little Flock,” and the “Church of Jesus Christ.” J. N. Loughborough recalled that sometimes the names “The Lord’s People” and “Christians” were also used.

Regarding this confusion, James White mentioned that when asked by friends to which church he belonged, he was embarrassed at not being able to tell them. He observed that the movement had grown beyond the early days when no specific name was necessary. As he put it, “It seems to me that the child is now so grown that it is exceedingly awkward to have no name for it.”<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Ellen White was right then at home, having given birth to her fourth son on September 20, 1860. Elder White was acutely aware of the need to name children since he and Ellen had not yet named their newborn.

After finally agreeing to incorporate the publishing house, there seemed to be general agreement that by doing so, some name would have to be chosen. To those few who still argued that no specific name should be adopted, James White pointed out that others were already applying a variety of names to us. Thus, by default we were allowing others to decide what Sabbathkeepers should be called. To those who argued that “Christians” or “Church of God” were the only acceptable names since they are the only ones



used in the New Testament, others responded that both names were too generic, not to mention that “Church of God” seemed too presumptuous. James White was not the only person who came to the conference favoring the name “Church of God.” However, as the discussions continued, he came to see the wisdom of choosing a different name.

### A Breakthrough

As the discussion progressed James White commented that the name should be one that would be the least objectionable to the world at large. The name “Seventh-day Adventists” was then “proposed as a simple name and one expressive of our faith and position.”<sup>6</sup>

The first known use in print of the name “seventh-day Adventist” is found in a letter to the editor of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* written by S. T. Cranson of Tompkins, Michigan. His letter dated March 20, 1853, appears in the April 14, 1853, issue of the paper.<sup>7</sup> It was David Hewitt, the first Sabbathkeeper in Battle Creek, who eventually moved,

“Resolved, That we take the name of Seventh-day Adventists.”

The motion was “freely discussed,” but was then withdrawn in favor of the following revised motion:

“Resolved, That we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists.”

After a lengthy discussion, the resolution was adopted, with only one vote in opposition. Apparently the change in language between *taking* the name and *calling* ourselves Seventh-day Adventists sufficiently satisfied those who had still had reservations about the expression taking a name based upon Revelation 14:11 to allow them to vote in favor of the new name. All that remained then to be done was to vote to recommend “the name we have chosen to the churches generally.” That resolution also passed with only one dissenting vote.<sup>8</sup>

John Byington, who was unable to attend the conference because of illness, shared his reaction with the readers of the *Review*. “As to a name I have sometimes thought the plain scriptural term, ‘Church of God,’ was all that is necessary. But in reflecting more on this subject, I see that God has given to His people and to individuals names suitable to the time and circumstances under which they were placed. . . . I would say to my brethren scattered abroad I cannot see a reasonable or scriptural objection to the name Seventh-day Adventists, as it is significant of the position the church of God must occupy in the time of the end.”<sup>9</sup> Less than three years later Elder Byington would be elected the first president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

A few weeks later James White reported that a new church in Richmond, Iowa, incorporated, using the new name Seventh-day Adventists. Others followed, including the church in Parkville, Michigan, that in 1863 legally changed its name to “society of the Seventh-day Adventists of Parkville, Michigan.” From those small beginnings, the name Seventh-day Adventist is found in more than 200 countries around the world, still declaring the fact that we are seventh-day Sabbathkeepers who earnestly look forward to Christ’s second coming. ●

<sup>1</sup> *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 23, 1860, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> George R. Knight, *Organizing to Beat the Devil* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001), p. 34, estimates that by 1852 there were 2,000 Sabbatarian Adventists. Given that an estimated 3,500 members existed at the time of the organization of the General Conference in 1863, I have concluded that the membership in 1860 was somewhere in the vicinity of 3,000 adherents.

<sup>3</sup> *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 29, 1860, p. 9. Interestingly, in both the notice in the *Review* as well as the incorporation papers that were actually filed with the court, the words “second advent” were not capitalized.

<sup>4</sup> Godfrey T. Anderson, “Make Us a Name,” *Adventist Heritage*, July 1974, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 16, 1860, p. 170.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1860, p. 179.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 14, 1853, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1860, p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 30, 1860, p. 189.

# Ellen White

## on the Name SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

*Because of having recently given birth to her fourth son, Ellen White apparently did not attend the conference during which the name Seventh-day Adventist was chosen. She later wrote the following about the choice of the name. Her full statement can be found in Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 223, 224.*

—THE EDITORS.

“No name which we can take will be appropriate but that which accords with our profession and expresses our faith and marks us a peculiar people. The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world. Here is the line of distinction between the worshipers of God and those who worship the beast and receive his mark....

“The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind. Like an arrow from the Lord’s quiver, it will wound the transgressors of God’s law, and will lead to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 223, 224.

**QUESTION:** *Does the Bible support the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, or not?*

I will not answer your question directly, but I will comment on the reasons why the church is divided on this issue. Let me make two preliminary comments. First, the church has not taken an official position on the biblical support (or lack of it) for the ordination of women to the ministry. It has simply voted against leaving the decision up to each world division of the church. The final decision is to be owned by the world church. Second, this issue is not to be raised to the level of a fundamental belief. As far as I know, *ordination* to the ministry was not a test of Christian fellowship in the apostolic church. With that in mind, let's deal with the reasons for the present impasse.

**1. Liberal Theologians:** A strong impetus for the ordination of women to pastoral ministry came from more-liberal Adventist theologians. In their discussions the biblical text played some role, but they argued from a sociological and moral point of view. They were influenced by the feminist movement, with its emphasis on gender equality and the liberation of women from a male-controlled society. In their eyes equality raised the issue of the ordination of women to the level of a moral mandate. Such a strong rhetoric, coming from a group that had questioned some of the distinctive doctrines of the church, brought an almost immediate reaction against the ordination of women.

**2. Mainstream Theologians:** These theologians are fully committed to the message and mission of the church. Surprisingly, they were divided on the topic, and still are. Here the main discussion is about biblical interpretation. Theologians who do not find scriptural support for the ordination of women have been quite vocal. They demand a "thus says the Lord" in order to ordain women, and no one has found it.

Theologians who believe that there is enough information in the Bible to support the ordination of women have also been vocal. They demand from their opponents a "thus says the Lord" forbidding the ordination of women to the ministry, and no one has found it. Both groups

develop their cases through inferences drawn from particular passages. The debate revolves around arguments; about who can come up with the best arguments. Often in such debates theological pride inevitably creeps in; no one wants to give up. Some champion themselves as defenders of the Scriptures against other theologians who, they believe, are not as loyal to the Scriptures. And the debate goes on.

**3. Extreme-Right Adventists:** This group is heavily influenced by conservative theologians who oppose the ordination of women to pastoral ministry and consider such

ordination to be an agenda of liberal theologians. They ignore the conservative theologians who support it. They are influential among church members who sustain their independent ministries, which are sometimes characterized by a strong negative attitude toward the leadership of the church. They tend to view the ordination of women as a potential act of apostasy.

**4. Cultural Ideas:** In many countries around the world the role of women in society is quite limited and

the idea of equality does not seem to predominate. In such cultural settings it is not difficult for church members and leaders to question and oppose the ordination of women to pastoral ministry. Such individuals would naturally align themselves with theologians claiming to find no biblical support for the practice.

So what's next? We should work and pray for healing. The debate among theologians indicates that in this particular case the Bible is not as clear as some may think. Both groups should keep this in mind. Theologians in particular have contributed to the problem by being dogmatic in their views and unwilling to listen to each other.

Perhaps the time has come for all of us to sit together, look at the issue in a spirit of service to the church as the body of Christ, and pray for healing in an effort to see where the Spirit is leading. This will require humility and willingness to work together in building up the church. ●



## Can We Talk?

By ANGEL MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

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



# Preserving FAITH

By MARK A. FINLEY

The life of Abraham (Gen. 12–25) provides an example of preserving faith. Throughout his life he clung to God’s promises, even when he couldn’t foresee the outcome of following God’s commands. Abraham is part of a line of faithful men and women, who, through the centuries, obeyed God’s instructions when the road ahead looked dark and the future uncertain. These stalwarts of faith learned to trust God through the most challenging experiences of their lives. In this lesson we will discover how Abraham’s faith led him to triumph over some of life’s greatest obstacles.

## 1. What unusual command did God give to Abram? Read the text below and write your answer on the lines provided.

“Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you’” (Gen. 12:1).

God instructed Abram to leave his \_\_\_\_\_, his \_\_\_\_\_,  
his father’s \_\_\_\_\_, and travel to a place he’d never been before.

What a challenge Abram faced! God asked him to leave the familiar, secure surroundings of his home to venture out into unfamiliar territory, to accomplish a mission he never imagined possible.

## 2. What promise accompanied God’s command?

“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:2, 3).

God promised Abraham that He would make Abraham’s descendants into a great \_\_\_\_\_.

God’s commands are accompanied by God’s promises. When we obey His commands, we experience the blessing of His promises.

## 3. How did Abraham respond to God’s command?

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Heb. 11:8).

By faith Abraham \_\_\_\_\_ .... He \_\_\_\_\_, not knowing where he was going.

Abraham’s faith led him to obey God’s commands. The apostle James described well the relationship between faith and obedience when he wrote: “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17). Abraham’s faith was so good it worked. Living faith—genuine, authentic faith—always leads us to do exactly what God says.



#### **4. When Abram was 99 years old, who did God declare Himself to be? What promise did God make to Abram?**

*“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless’” (Gen. 17:1). “I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you” (Gen. 17:6).*

God declared Himself to be \_\_\_\_\_.

God promised to make Abram exceedingly \_\_\_\_\_.

God would have to be almighty to make Abraham, when he was almost 100 years old, the father of many nations. It was impossible for Sarah to conceive at her old age. But for those who trust Him, God is the God of the impossible.

#### **5. Why was Abraham able to believe these seemingly impossible promises of God?**

*“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Rom. 4:20, 21).*

Abraham did not \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_.

Abraham was fully \_\_\_\_\_ that God was able to fulfill His promises.

Faith is the ability to go forward, convinced of God’s ability to do what He promised.

#### **6. What was the supreme test of Abraham’s faith?**

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son” (Heb. 11:17).*

Abraham’s greatest test was to offer up his son \_\_\_\_\_.

God often touches the things closest to our hearts. His tests involve the things that matter most to us. God’s strategy is to lead us to trust Him in every area of our lives.

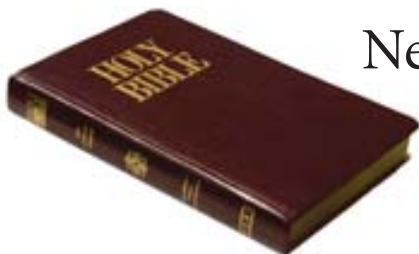
#### **7. How did Abraham respond to Isaac’s question regarding the sacrificial lamb?**

*“And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering’” (Gen. 22:8).*

Abraham had absolute confidence that \_\_\_\_\_.

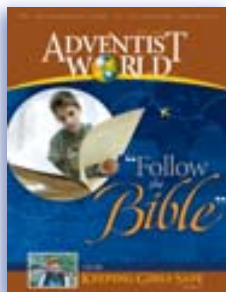
Faith looks beyond present circumstances and clings to God’s promises. Abraham believed God and God honored Abraham’s faith. When we come to God recognizing our unrighteousness, our sinfulness, our lost condition, and cling to His promises, believing by faith that He will provide His perfect Son as our Savior, we too receive deliverance from the death penalty of sin.

Today we can reach out to the One who provided the “perfect Lamb” in our place and know for sure that we, too, serve a God who keeps His promises.



Next month’s Bible study will examine  
**“The Price of  
Compromise.”**

## LETTERS



### Reading and Writing

Thank you for the editorial “Those on the Shore,” by Bill Knott (July 2010). It is heartwarming. It’s an excep-

tionally splendid issue.

GEOFF GARNE  
*Auckland, New Zealand*

### Even the Least Is Much

I am very pleased to receive the *Adventist World* magazine in Spanish. Kimberly Luste Maran’s article “Convicted by a Scrap of Paper” (June 2010) was very informative because it showed me the importance of the magazine in the world. I thank the Lord for inspiring leaders to undertake this project.

It was also very timely to read “In God’s Image,” by Richard Spillman; it came at a time when I was preparing a sermon on Fundamental Belief No. 7, the Nature of Man.

DARIO HIRAM ROSTAN  
*Libertador San Martin, Argentina*

### Cleverly Disguised

I greatly appreciate the article by Roy Adams entitled “Spiritual Perils” (May 2010). This form of subtle spiritualism seems to surround us in our daily life in Christian books, music, television programs, even well-intentioned e-mails. This is an issue beyond our identity as Adventists; it is, as Adams rightly states, about the “integrity of our faith.”

NATALIA HERRA-CRUZ  
*Belfast, Northern Ireland*

### Knowing My Work in the World

The article by Kari Paulsen entitled “What Happens to the Wanderers?” (January 2010) really touched me. I sent it to my fellow Adventist youth to help to realize our commission on earth.

ISAIAH MAKORI  
*Via e-mail*

### It’s Really a Good Thing

I write to request *Adventist World* magazine published by your loving organization. I came across the May 2009 edition of the magazine, and having gone through the articles therein, I was richly blessed, although I am not a Seventh-day Adventist.

I pray that the Lord will continue to strengthen and support your ministry. Thanks a lot for your labor of love as regards the expansion of the kingdom of God.

OWOADE EMMAN OLUTUNDE  
*Dugbe, Ibadan, Nigeria*

I am grateful for *Adventist World* and have answered the questions [in the Bible Study]. I congratulate your office very much for the devotion to sending these to reach everyone in the world. Be blessed abundantly.

ELIZABETH K. OMBASO  
*Kenya, Kisii, Kenya*

I commend the good work done by the publishers of this magazine. It has been a real blessing to me and my friends, both Adventists and non-Adventists.

I paraphrased information written

by William G. Johnsson about forging relations between Muslims and Christians. I used the note in our leading newspapers, and it was a blessing to many.

Keep up the good work and disseminate the publications even more.  
FRANCIS ONTOMWA  
*Nairobi, Kenya*

### Satisfied Readers

Greetings in Christ Jesus! It’s a great satisfaction being a reader of *Adventist World*, which is certainly blessed by God’s hand. Each month since 2007 I see my dear brothers in Christ, church programs, and the outside world in many different situations. What is amazing is that the distances seem to disappear through the faith that unites us through this link.

The articles are excellent spiritual food. I get it every month and read all of it without missing a single article. I do not know whose idea it was to create *Adventist World*, but I know it was directed by God. This magazine is a powerful way to connect the people of God throughout the world until the glorious day when we can live together forever with the Lord! Pray without ceasing for the return of the Lord Jesus! We love our church and all that is produced by it. May God continue to bless.

RODRIGO NOGUEIRA  
*Xapuri, Acre, Brazil*

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

## EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

# Mustaq

Mustaq had unkempt hair and smelly feet, and a torn and perpetually dirty schoolbag holding equally dirty notebooks and textbooks. There were frequent, sniggering remarks made about him by other students.

“Does he ever bathe?”

“Ugh! I wish he were in some other class!”

“Why does the school allow him to be here?”

In India, we wear school uniforms up to grade 12, and when I was in grade 10, Mustaq wore the filthiest uniform I had ever seen. He sat alone on the first bench on the left side of the classroom and mostly looked out the window in between classes when the rest of us would chat and laugh with one another.

No one talked with him, no one bothered. He looked a rather forlorn figure, alone on his bench.

Not only was he smelly and dirty, but it didn't matter the subject—math, history, geography, or language—Mustaq needed double the assistance from our teachers. We wondered if he would make it through high school.

Mustaq was the saddest in English class—I believe he hated poetry in particular. And reading aloud. He was terrified when he had to, because every time he mispronounced something, our class broke into muffled giggles and continued until our teacher sternly shushed us and threatened detention.

One afternoon I saw him rooted to his bench, preparing for a test. I approached him and asked if he would like help.

As line by line I revealed the poem's meaning, suddenly

my eyes were drawn to a torn page stuck with some awfully thick gooeey stuff.

“What is this?” I exclaimed.

He hung his head in shame and, in a barely audible voice, confessed, “It is cooked rice. I can't afford to buy glue. My mother and I are very poor,” he went on, “and these are old discarded textbooks a retired teacher gave me.”

Stunned, everything finally dawned on me. I told my friends about his plight—he had only one uniform, which he hand-washed; his uneducated, poor mother earned so little they could barely buy food.

One morning, when Mustaq walked to his desk, he found a large new glue stick, a pencil box, a pair of socks, new blank notebooks, and a neatly folded, ironed uniform. Too overcome, he gave me the look of someone betrayed, and fled the class.

We found him sobbing under a staircase. “Thank you,” he choked. When we returned, two other classmates were sharing his usually vacant long bench, and he smiled through his tears.

After that, every now and then, classmates surprised him with things he needed, including a new red schoolbag. Mustaq had changed for the better—he smiled frequently, lost his stammer, and no longer stared out the window.

But he had changed us even more. He had made us realize our own blessings and how we took them for granted, and the need for us to show compassion instead of judgment—not to be smugly wrapped up in ourselves, our activities, our plans.

We had discovered he was poor, materially. But we discovered we were poorer—in spirit.

It was a lesson we badly needed to learn.

—SUDHA KRISTMUKTI, *Gujarat, India*



## THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I am a student in Kagumo Teachers Training College in Nyeri. Please pray for our Seventh-day Adventist group to be strong in faith. Thank you.

ASKENAS, *Kenya*

**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.

Please pray for me and my two daughters. All three of us are in bad health.

MARY, *United States*

I have been working in Thailand for almost five years now. My contract is ending. I pray for another job, as my heart is willing to be of service to God in the church, and I want to help my family. Include me in your prayers.

JENNELYN, *Thailand*

Thank you to your prayer group. My brother is enjoying the best health he's had for 20 years! Please pray for my mum, and that I will obey Jesus in every area of my life so I can fulfill His plan for me—friendship evangelism.

CLAIRE, *United Kingdom*

*“Behold, I come quickly...”*

Our mission is to uplift Jesus Christ, uniting Seventh-day Adventists everywhere in beliefs, mission, life, and hope.

**Publisher**

The *Adventist World*, an international periodical of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The General Conference, Northern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists®, is the publisher.

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*Adventist World* is published monthly and printed simultaneously in Korea, Brazil, Indonesia, Australia, Germany, Austria, and the United States.

Vol. 6, No.10

## AWR UPDATE

# AWR Speaks in Tongues— 107 to Be Exact...and Counting!



You will probably agree that if your neighbor doesn't know Christ, they should. But what if you are literally unable to speak their language? If English is your only language, for example, how can you communicate with your Vietnamese, Ethiopian, or Turkish neighbor about the peace and hope you have through Jesus Christ?

It is this challenge that prompted Adventist World Radio (AWR) to launch a massive Internet podcasting outreach that makes gospel programming available to listeners around the world in their own languages, regardless of where they live. Just imagine the possibilities! Now almost 2 billion Internet users across the planet can access the Adventist message of hope in Christ in more than 100 mission-critical languages.

In its first 90 days of going “live,” the United States has become the largest consumer of almost every one of the 107 languages now available on the Internet. But there is more!

To help church members utilize the podcasts to reach their neighbors, AWR is developing downloadable “neighbor invitations” in every broadcast language, which can be printed and shared with friends and neighbors. Check it out now by going to [awr.org/invite](http://awr.org/invite).

“When people are living far from their homelands they are especially anxious to hear messages in their mother tongues,” says Benjamin Schoun, AWR board chair.

“This is amazing technology,” says Dowell Chow, AWR president. “AWR is committed to helping you share the good news of salvation with people right in your own neighborhood. And now it is easier than ever before.

“Because of faithful ministry partners like you, AWR has grown in ways that the organization’s leaders could hardly have imagined when they aired the first broadcast in 1971. Today, we are truly speaking in tongues by blanketing almost 80 percent of the world’s population. We are on the air thousands of hours each and every day using AM, FM, shortwave, Internet, and podcasts.”

The Holy Spirit is being poured out around the world and now is the time to act. Please pray for us today!

# The PEOPLE'S PLACE

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



SUBMITTED BY JESEL NAVAKALOMANA

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

—Jesus, recorded in Matthew 11:28 (NIV); inscription in Croatian language, on the wall behind the pulpit of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Pula, Croatia, circa 1972; submitted by Guillermo and Cristina Herbert, Valencia, Spain

## ADVENTIST LIFE

A friend, who was having special music for the worship service at church, announced that he was going to attempt to play “Without Him.” After church he said, “I didn’t do too well on that song.”

With humor, my husband replied, “That is because you tried to play *without* Him!”

—Jean Tinlin, Whitefish, Montana, United States

This past July my husband and I were spending our last vacation morning at the beach,

watching the sun come up.

We were discussing the difficulties we’ve experienced in our lives during the past year and how life has become so fast-paced, so out of control. We wondered how we were going to manage it all.

As we were talking we noticed a plane leaving a line in the beautiful sky. A short while later a second airplane crossed the line, making a cross in the sky. This cross shape appeared just at the time when we were feeling discouraged and overwhelmed. I believe this was not



a coincidence, but a sign and reminder that God will never leave us and we are never alone.

—Lois Rhoades, Takoma Park, Maryland, United States

**ANSWER:** In Fiji, at the new Fulton College site, these men are holding a whale's tooth, a traditional gift given to the chief of the Village of Sabeto for the land he donated to the Adventist Church.