

December 2010

ADVENTIST WORLD



The Little Diamond

*Living a life of service—
anywhere and anytime*

12 The "Invisible"
Piano

18 Who Are You?

26 Christians and
Christmas



COURTESY OF THE INDRA GREER FAMILY

COVER STORY

The Little Diamond

By Chantal J. Klingbeil..... 14

The incredible story of a woman whose witness for God would not be silenced

DEVOTIONAL

The “Invisible” Piano By Wilhelmina Dunbar..... 12

We may not see it, but we can still hear its music.

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Who Are You? By Grenville Kent 18

Will you take God’s word for it?

ADVENTIST LIFE

A Strange Coincidence By Sylvia Renz 20

Trying to understand providence

DISCOVERING THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Ellen White and Family Life

By Edyta Jankiewicz..... 22

Advice and counsel for raising well-balanced kids

ADVENTIST SERVICE

One Man and His God

By Charlotte Ishkanian 24

Golden Lapani prays and God answers.

CHURCH WORKS

World View..... 3

World Report

3 News & Views

Window

7 Into Kyrgyzstan

World Vista

8 Virtual Reality?

WORLD HEALTH

Hazards of

Smoking Tobacco 11

By Allan R. Handysides
and Peter N. Landless

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Christians and

Christmas 26

By Angel Manuel Rodríguez

BIBLE STUDY

Prevailing Prayer..... 27

By Mark A. Finley

WORLD EXCHANGE

29 Letters

30 The Place of Prayer

31 Exchange of Ideas

The People’s Place..... 32

On the cover: IN THOUGHTS: Getting ready for the great day—getting married to her life partner Aram Ashod
HOME AWAY FROM HOME: The location of the mission headquarters in Istanbul, bought in the early 1920s



WORLD VIEW

Thy Kingdom Come

One of the most radiant prophecies about Jesus was announced by the “gospel prophet,” Isaiah. Among the many glorious attributes of the promised Messiah, Isaiah confidently asserts that “the government will be upon His shoulder.” If any part of this burst of light in Isaiah 9 can be called especially good news, this is it: “*The government will be upon His shoulder*” (verse 6).

On the doorstep of 2011, we cannot forget that we have witnessed the rise and fall of more governments than any generation in history. We have seen prime ministers, presidents, and opposition leaders gunned down or turned from office. We have felt the surge of “people’s revolutions” as masses of disappointed citizens thronged the streets to topple unresponsive regimes. We have seen dictators climb to power on the bleeding backs of their own people, and we’ve watched them plummet just as rapidly when their cup of iniquity was full—when God in heaven heard the cries of all His hurting ones and restored a little justice. We’ve discovered that the human art of governance is all too frequently corrupted by a sinful lust for power, or wealth, or public adulation.

In democratic nations, we troop to the polls every few years in hopes of lifting the darkness a little by the power of our ballots. But too often we discover that though we have elected men and women of goodwill, they are powerless to bring the light and hope we crave.

Surely, we need this Child of whom Isaiah wrote, this One who takes the government of the entire universe on His shoulders with more ease than one of our children picks up a stalk of grass.

The prophet’s assertion reminds us that we need not fear the future when we remember that the earth is still the Lord’s, when we remember that this Child born “to us” is also the King of the universe. Each time I stand in some crowded hall to listen to Handel’s magnificent “Hallelujah Chorus,” one prophecy about Jesus brings tears to my eyes, no matter how many times I hear it. With every atom of my being, I join millions of believers around the globe in praying for that day, coming soon, when “the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

Even so come—and reign—Lord Jesus.

— BILL KNOTT

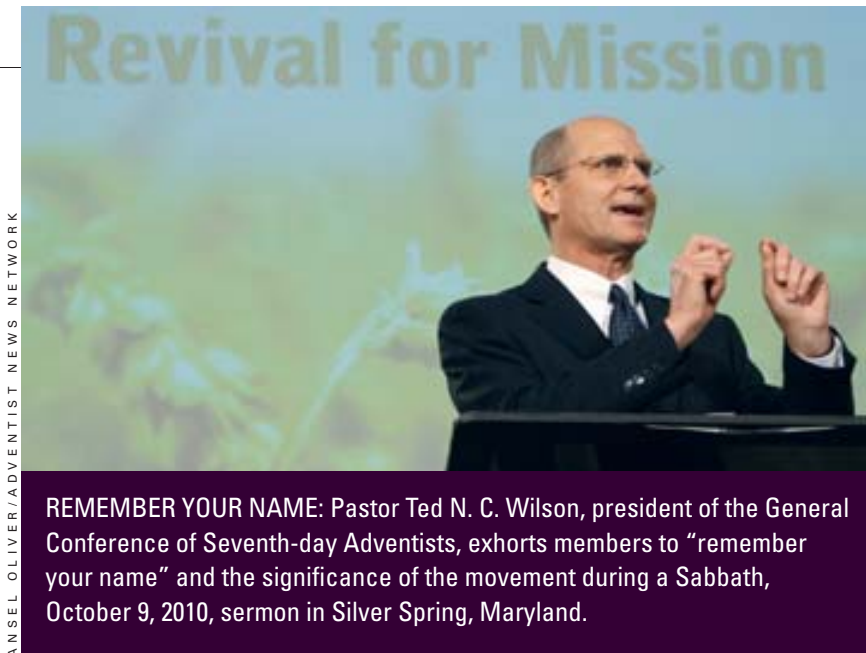
WORLD REPORT

Wilson Exhorts Seventh-day Adventists: “Remember Your Name”

Focus on revival, reformation, and proclamation, GC president says

By MARK A. KELLNER, news editor

■ As the Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated the 150th anniversary of the adoption of its name by a then-nascent group of believers assembled in Battle Creek, Michigan, General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson exhorted members to “remember your name,” by which the global movement is called.



REMEMBER YOUR NAME: Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, exhorts members to “remember your name” and the significance of the movement during a Sabbath, October 9, 2010, sermon in Silver Spring, Maryland.

WORLD REPORT

“God knew that His remnant people needed a distinctive name that would identify them as those ‘who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus,’ as indicated in Revelation 12:17,” Wilson told a packed General Conference Auditorium congregation on Sabbath, or Saturday, October 9. “The selection of the name ‘Seventh-day Adventist’ came after the pillars of our faith—our beliefs—had been established through intensive study and consecrated prayer,” he added.

Wilson’s message, which was broadcast globally on the church’s Hope Channel satellite service, was the keynote presentation of the Sabbath held during Annual Council, a global meeting of the world church’s Executive Committee at which major decisions are undertaken. Although the recently concluded fifty-ninth General Conference session in Atlanta, Georgia, accomplished much of the church’s agenda, the Annual Council meetings are important discussions of church management and personnel issues.

Recapitulating the theme throughout his sermon, Wilson noted the unique significance and importance of the Seventh-day Adventist name.

He declared: “Every time you say it, you preach a sermon!”

Wilson added: “When you share with the public in writing or in speech, don’t just refer to yourself as an ‘Adventist’ or hide behind the abbreviation ‘SDA.’ Every time you say, ‘I am a Seventh-day Adventist,’ you preach a sermon. Never, never be ashamed of our name! When our church began, many names were suggested and considered, but when the name ‘Seventh-day Adventist’ was discussed, God impressed church leaders that that name was best.”

The church name, Seventh-day Adventist, “is so distinctive,” Wilson said. “The ‘Seventh-day’ refers to

God’s power in creating this earth in six literal, consecutive, contiguous, 24-hour days, capping it with a memorial of that creation, the seventh-day Sabbath. This reminds us that we are a direct creation of God and not some chance anomaly of some impersonal evolutionary process.”

Further explaining the significance of the church name, Wilson noted: “‘Adventist’ tells us where we are going. We are waiting for the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and look forward to it as the culmination of all of earth’s history. The literal return of Christ, the blessed hope, is the great objective and goal of every Seventh-day Adventist.”

“That powerful, heaven-sent name, ‘Seventh-day Adventist,’ is a two-word sermon of hope,” Wilson asserted. “It points to God as the author and finisher of our faith. It uplifts Christ in all His beauty. It proclaims the Great Controversy theme from the beginning to the end.”

At the same time, Wilson said, “as joyous as it is to recognize that God has sustained us these many years, such an event should generate a certain degree of uneasiness and more than a little cognitive dissonance in our minds. Think about it: How can a movement, whose sole mission is to prepare the world for the soon coming of Jesus, rejoice in the 150th anniversary of its distinctive name? How many more anniversaries must we concede? How long will this movement continue before the Lord returns?”

Wilson said: “Now is the time for us to be the human voice of God, calling people out of spiritual Babylon as indicated in Revelation 14 and Revelation 18. In a culture steeped in pluralism, relativism, humanism, and hedonism, God has called Seventh-day Adventists to be a counterculture, end-time movement in which every member—in humble Christlike

confidence—is willing to stand for the right though the heavens fall.”

To accomplish that, he added: “I urge each of us in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to unite through the power of the Holy Spirit in finishing the work entrusted to us. Let us press together, everyone working in a united effort, both the organized church, its institutions, and other entities and the supporting ministries, many of which belong to that wonderful organization called ASI, that work side by side with the official church structure.”

“I can only lead as I fall at the foot of the cross and as I personally spend time with Jesus in His Word,” Wilson added. “I do not have the wisdom and ability to lead except that I receive it from Christ. Today, I want to confess before you and my God my pride and arrogance, my selfishness, my neglect of spending enough time needed with God in prayer and Bible study and study of the Spirit of Prophecy. I confess to you my envy and my self-centeredness. I ask you, as my fellow leaders, for forgiveness. I want to do God’s will. I want to humble myself before God, I want to pray and I want to seek His face. I want the power of the latter rain in my life. Will you join me?”
—*Readers interested in viewing a video recording of the sermon or in reading Wilson’s complete text can visit www.adventistreview.com/article.php?id=3817 for these resources.*

Kneeling, Annual Council Members Approve Revival, Reformation Call
Seventh-day Adventists urged to pray for “latter rain” power to finish work
By MARK A. KELLNER, news editor

■ Voting by kneeling in prayer, more than 300 delegates to the 2010 Annual Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Executive Committee approved “an urgent call for revival, reformation, discipleship,



REFORMATION CALL: Dwight Nelson presents morning worship at the Adventist Church's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, on October 11. At right, church president Ted N. C. Wilson looks on.

ANSEL OLIVER

and evangelism” during the Monday morning meeting.

The vote followed an hour-long worship and prayer session, featuring a devotional by Dwight Nelson, senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, in which Adventists were challenged to pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit in “latter rain” power to finish the mission of evangelism given to the movement.

“The Lord wants to finish this work,” Ted N. C. Wilson, Adventist Church president, said during the meeting. “He wants to pour out the Holy Spirit in limitless measure.”

According to the voted document, “God’s Promised Gift,” Adventists have a unique, if unfulfilled, challenge: “The Church’s growth rate is simply not keeping pace with the world’s burgeoning population. An honest evaluation of our current evangelistic impact on the world leads to the conclusion that unless there is a dramatic change we will not complete heaven’s assignment in this generation. In spite of our best efforts, all our plans, strategies, and resources are incapable of finishing God’s mission for His glory on earth.”

The document adds: “There is nothing more important than knowing Jesus and seeking His promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter-rain power for the fulfilling of

the gospel commission.”

Revival and reformation each have their role to play, the document states. Quoting Ellen G. White, a pioneering cofounder of the movement, as she wrote in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* of February 25, 1902, the paper notes: “Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit.”

Accordingly, the document urges seven different commitments from church leaders and members:

1. To personally place priority on seeking God for spiritual revival and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter-rain power in our own lives, our families, and our ministries.

2. To individually set aside significant amounts of time daily to fellowship with Christ through prayer and the study of God’s Word.

3. To examine our own hearts and ask the Holy Spirit to convict us of anything that may keep us from revealing the character of Jesus. We desire willing hearts so that nothing in our lives hinders the fullness of the

Holy Spirit’s power.

4. To encourage the ministries of the Church to spend time praying, studying God’s Word, and seeking God’s heart to understand His plans for His church.

5. To encourage each of our church organizations to set aside time for administrators, pastors, health-care workers, publishing house workers, educators, students, and all employees to seek Jesus and the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit, together through a study of God’s Word and prayer.

6. To use every available media outlet, conference, and workshop to appeal to church members to seek a deeper relationship with Jesus for the promised revival and reformation.

7. To urgently appeal to and invite our entire church membership to join us in opening our hearts to the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit, which will transform our lives, our families, our organizations, and our communities.

The document includes this statement: “We appeal to each church member to unite with church leaders and millions of other Seventh-day Adventists seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at 7:00 each morning or evening, seven days a week. This is an urgent call to circle the globe with earnest intercession. This is a call to total commitment to Jesus and to experience the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit that our Lord is longing to give now.”

Patrick Mulindwa, an administrator in the Eastern Uganda Field, told delegates, “I thank God for this wonderful initiative. This is the right time for this to come.”

Added Heather-Dawn Small, Women’s Ministries director for the Adventist world church, “When I look at this document, I see it as a document of freedom. We each can be revived and reformed” to share the

WORLD REPORT

gospel, regardless of gender.

Peter Landless, an associate Health Ministries director, called it a “timely and needed document,” adding, “I hope we can see the wisdom and light in including a phrase that says this is not a new initiative, but a continuation of the direction of the church.”

Herbert Brugger, president of the church in Austria, noted his nation is “a secular society and a secular church, and we sometimes seek excuses for why we don’t make any impact in society. I ask you to pray for the church in Austria.” Wilson responded by saying revival would be concentrated in countries such as Austria where outreach is difficult in a secular environment.

—*With additional reporting by Elizabeth Lechleitner, Adventist News Network.*

Stable Tithe, Offerings Notable as Adventist Church Withstands Economic Downturn

\$104.5 million 2011 budget an “expression of members’ faith,” undertreasurer notes

By ELIZABETH LECHLEITNER, *Adventist News Network*

■ As it weathers lingering economic challenges, the Seventh-day Adventist Church remains in a strong position to maintain operations and uninterrupted mission funding worldwide, church financial officers said.

Delegates gathered at world church headquarters for Annual Council on October 11 voted to approve a \$104.5 million appropriations budget for 2011. Some \$5.5 million will continue the printing and distribution of *Adventist World* magazine, a journal launched in 2005 that is now printed in seven languages and 1.5 million copies each month. Delegates also approved a special investment of \$1 million to amp up circulation of the church’s Sabbath school quarterlies. Additionally, appropriations to each of the church’s 13

ANSEL OLIVER/ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK



FINANCIAL UPDATE: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists treasurer Robert Lemon delivers his report to the 2010 Annual Council at the church’s headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

world regions will increase by 4 percent.

Delegates also endorsed an additional \$200,000 yearly allocation to the 2015 General Conference session fund for a five-year total of \$7 million, \$1 million more than this past summer’s session budget.

Tithe returned by members in North America is up 1 percent as of August 2010 compared to the same time last year, said General Conference treasurer Robert Lemon. However, that increase is negligible when the exchange rate between Canadian and United States dollars is considered, Lemon said. Currency fluctuations similarly affect mission offerings from North America.

That tithe and offerings in the U.S. have largely held steady despite a sharp rise in unemployment in the country is a testimony to members’ faithfulness, Lemon said. As many charities see a marked decrease in donations, the Adventist Church can “praise the Lord” for financial stability, he said.

While tithe returned in regions outside North America marks a more substantial increase, church financial officers said currency exchanges inflate totals there as well. They estimate such fluctuations account for more than half of a 19 percent or \$2.7 million increase in tithe compared to

2009. Mission offerings for the same period increased to \$5.5 million—an 18.3 percent increase—when considering actual increases in local offerings and exchange rates.

While the global recession initially contributed to a strengthening of the U.S. dollar against many of the world’s currencies, the dollar has weakened since early 2009. The shift is “positive for the [world church] budget, but not for the world church,” Lemon said. Regions that receive appropriations in U.S. dollars now find the amount no longer stretches as far, he said.

Next year’s budget is based on the \$1.9 billion in worldwide tithe received in 2009, said Undertreasurer Juan Prestol, who called that number the “foundation” for all appropriations.

In 2011 church financial officers will begin implementing a shift in appropriations first suggested at a church business meeting in 2008. The move recognizes increased financial self-sufficiency in some areas, shifting additional funds to meet needs in other regions.

The world church headquarters will continue to operate under a cap of 2 percent of world tithe, or \$38 million, Prestol said.

—*Readers can find a link to the full treasurer’s report online at <http://bit.ly/bPAE3K>.*

WINDOW

Into Kyrgyzstan

By HANS OLSON

For centuries a vast network of trade routes linked Europe and Asia. As they meandered through kingdoms and empires, far more than goods were traded. These travelers also exchanged ideas and beliefs.

Today this ancient Silk Road marks a path where Christianity is hardly known—cities with no Adventist believers, whole regions without Christian congregations. This path travels through places such as the Middle East, India, China, and central Asia. One of these countries is Kyrgyzstan. This mountainous, landlocked country in central Asia is bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China.

The earliest known inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan were Sakan-speakers. They were gradually overrun by Turkic expansion into central Asia, and by the fifth century A.D. the first known Turkic state was established in central Asia. Today Kyrgyzstan is one of six countries in the world (including Turkey) with Turkic roots.

Mongols conquered the region during the 1200s and subdivided the

country's regions among a number of chieftains. China took over Kyrgyzstan in 1758 and maintained control until the Khanate of Kokand conquered Kyrgyzstan during the 1830s. In 1876 the Russian Empire expanded into central Asia and declared Kyrgyzstan its own. Russia made Kyrgyzstan into an autonomous region from 1924 until 1936, when it officially became part of the Soviet Union. On August 31, 1991, Kyrgyzstan declared independence from the Soviet Union. Exactly four months later on December 31, the Soviet Union dissolved, and Kyrgyzstan gained its independence.

Today two main ethnic groups live in Kyrgyzstan. The larger group is the Kirghiz, who make up more than half of the population. They have their own language and are known historically as nomadic tradespeople who live in yurt homes made of wool and animal skins. Their traditional way of life was to herd sheep, goats, and cattle. Today only a small minority of Kirghiz live in yurts, and those who do use them do so only during the

summer in the mountains. Nearly all Kirghiz are Muslim, organized into large kinship groups called clans. Families play an important part in Kirghiz social lives. A household can be made up of multiple generations living under one roof. These clans can transcend regional and national politics and government offices.

The other group in Kyrgyzstan is the Russians, who make up nearly 20 percent of the population. Most speak Russian as their primary language and live in Kyrgyzstan's cities, commonly working in the technical or industrial field. People in urban areas mostly live in Soviet-era apartment buildings or small, one-level houses. Nearly all are members of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Adventists in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is part of the Southern Union Conference in the Euro-Asia Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Shortly after the end of Communism in 1993, there were 10 Adventist churches in Kyrgyzstan, with a membership of 667. Today the church has nearly doubled in size, but there is still a long way to go to reach the people of this country.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church took a special offering this past spring for central Asia, called "Lighting a Path of Hope," as part of the 2010 General Conference session, which will help the Adventist Church grow over the next five years in this challenging mission field through a variety of ministries, including education, media, literature, Global Mission pioneers, family and health, humanitarian care, and tentmakers.

To learn more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church's worldwide mission work and the "Lighting a Path of Hope" offering, visit www.AdventistMission.org.



KYRGYZSTAN

Capital:	Bishkek
Official languages:	Kirghiz and Russian
Major religions:	Muslim and Russian Orthodox
Population:	5.2 million*
Adventist membership:	1,096*
Adventist-to-population ratio:	1:4,778*

* General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, 146th Annual Statistical Report—2008

WORLD VISTA

Whether we like it or not, recent world events have changed the apparent innocence of the past. Regardless of where you live and what nationality you belong to, things are different.

War is horrible! Even though it can now be fought with a certain amount of technological precision and finesse from a distance, it does not take the horror out of it—especially for those on the receiving end.

Technology has created laser-guided missiles, remotely controlled bombing drones, night-vision goggles, GPS directional guidance, immediate communication, and a host of other technological wizardry. They tell us that in the near future almost 50 percent of all tanks and assault activity will be done by remotely controlled vehicles.

Virtual Reality—Almost Real (But Not Quite)

In some cultures technological innovations have moved beyond unique conversation pieces to become apparent necessities such as cell phones, laptop computers, and the Internet.

For too many, technology has taken over our lives. It has advanced to the point where it can *almost* replace the Creator. Technology has created a *virtual reality*—that which is almost real!

Virtual reality technology is used for all kinds of purposes—computer games, military activities, aviation training, spatial tours of almost anything, graphic design, life experience simulation—you name it.

In these strange and uncertain times, have people been so influenced

by technology that they assign even God to the category of virtual reality? Do they create a *virtual* Jesus—one who can be manipulated and bent to one's own liking, pulling Him out of the box when He is needed or wanted?

Others don't even want a virtual Jesus: they don't want a Jesus at all.

But Christ is a *real* person who, if I read Scripture correctly, wants to mingle with His creation. In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let Us make man in Our image"; no virtual image, but a real image. If we take this text

He said, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15).

This was the prediction of a real Christ who would leave the power of heaven and come to this earth as a powerless child of "the woman"—a very real birth. Until that time, Christ mingled with His people, speaking to the patriarchs, protecting the Israelites through a pillar, hovering over Sinai, and finally telling Moses, "Let them

Virtual Reality?

Our confidence is in the reality of a living Savior

By TED N. C. WILSON

seriously, there is a clear indication that God is real and that creation is real—after all, we were made in His image. It is our privilege to transmit this reality, this *real* Jesus, to those around us, including also to this technology-driven Internet generation.

God is a real person who enjoyed talking with His creation "in the cool of the day," as Genesis records it (Gen. 3:8). During that fateful conversation in Genesis 3 after sin had entered, our *real* God spoke to the *real* devil, disguised as a serpent, and predicted the very *real* outcome of the conflict.

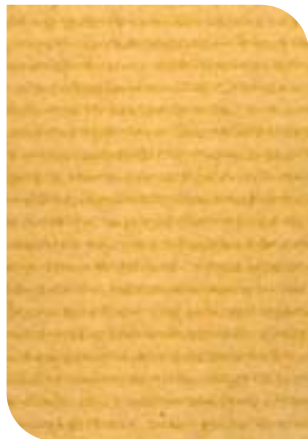
make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8).

Sanctuary Reality

And so the sanctuary was built—there was nothing fake or virtual about it. It was a real place where the Creator God wanted to mingle with His people. In some sense, the earthly sanctuary, although real, was a virtual reality of what is in heaven, a representation, a copy of something real in heaven. Ellen White's comments here are very helpful: "That sanctuary, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf,



Ted N. C. Wilson is the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.



MICHELE RYAN

is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy.”¹

The book of Hebrews calls the heavenly sanctuary “the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Heb. 8:2). The heavenly and earthly sanctuaries showed the picture of a real God and His love, demonstrating how He intended to save us.

The sanctuary pointed to Christ—the substitute Lamb who died for us. We can see a Christ who is mediating as high priest for His people; a Christ



BRAD AUSTIN



who conquered sin, thus showing the ultimate glory of the sanctuary service. As Ellen White put it: “Minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners.”²

The sanctuary pointed to the real Jesus who would live a real life and conquer real sin dying, not on a virtual, graphically retouched, sanitized cross, but on a real, rough instrument of torture in real agony where He would depend on the power of His real heavenly Father.

WORLD VISTA

This very real Jesus would rise to a real heaven to serve as a real high priest in the Most Holy Place of a real heavenly sanctuary. There's nothing virtual about it—it's all real! Real love, real mercy, and a real sacrifice!

Can you imagine the horror of Adam and Eve back in Eden, or a person coming to the sanctuary to offer a sacrifice, as they cut the throat of a perfect lamb (Lev. 5:5, 6). This was no virtual reality, but a bloody reality, pointing to the real death of Jesus for you and me. Hebrews tells us that “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Jesus

from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety.”³

Immense Grace—And an Immense Mission

Can you imagine the hushed galactic war room in heaven as the plan was unveiled? The Supreme Authority spoke with unwavering control and commitment. *We will provide salvation for everyone willing to submit their lives to Jesus Christ.* Today, it is our heaven-ordained mission to proclaim that message through every available means. This is the reason why we exist

through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we come close to Jesus, there is no virtual reality. Jesus is real. His love for us is real. His life and death were real. His resurrection was real. His work in the heavenly sanctuary is real. His work and mission for us are real in sharing this wonderful story with others through our lives and our words. This is our mission, taking the reality of Christ to every corner of this globe.

Seventh-day Adventist Church members around the world are pleading with the Lord for revival and reformation, leading to the latter rain of the Holy Spirit and Christ's soon

Jesus is real. His love for us is real.

shed that blood. He paid the ultimate sacrifice and conquered sin for our eternal life. He returned to heaven to act as our mediator and high priest.

Listen to Hebrews 9:24: “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” A *real* Christ appears right now for you and me. And how is it that He has that right? Verses 26 and 28 provide the clue: “Now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” And, “So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” A *real* Christ who died a *real* death and is mediating as a *real* high priest so He can return in a *real* second coming to take us to a *real* heavenly home! What an incredible God we serve! This was not a divine afterthought but God's plan, laid long before the creation of this earth. “The plan of salvation was designed to redeem the fallen race, to give them another trial. Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator

as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are to present the reality of Christ and the Advent message to the world.

To those who humbly submit and make a commitment, God says in Hebrews 10:16, 17 (quoting from Jeremiah 31:33, 34): “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them, . . . Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” And in verse 19 we are told we have “boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,” followed by these powerful promises in verses 21 and 22 that “having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”


Make It Real

So how do we connect and commune with this real God? In a world of virtual reality, how do we find the *real thing*?

We are to come close to Jesus, spending quality time each day in communion with Him through prayer, the study of the Word of God, the study of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, and sharing our faith with others

coming. We face challenging times and seek communion with Christ that will culminate when He returns the second time—a real second coming, no hologram, no wide-screen 3-D, no high-definition TV wizardry, no virtual reality—the real thing, the blessed hope of Christ's second coming.

This is where the circle will be closing. First John 3:2 says that “when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” This same Jesus who created us in His image—we will see Him as He is—real!

He calls us every day to follow Him through His power and through the leading of the Holy Spirit to share with others the reality of Jesus. I invite you to commit yourself, with me, to seek for revival and reformation through the Holy Spirit's power so we can share the *real* Jesus and proclaim the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, pointing to the *real* return of a *real* Christ—our Lord and Creator, our Redeemer and Mediator, our Friend and very real coming King. 

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.

² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

³ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 250.



HAZARDS of Smoking Tobacco

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

I gave up smoking cigarettes five years ago, but 34 years of it have damaged my lungs, and I now have obstructive lung disease. I became an Adventist five years ago and am very interested in the health emphasis of the church. Is there anything that can be done for my lungs, or are they beyond hope?

The name “chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,” or COPD, is used for the disorder seen in many smokers in which the bronchi become chronically inflamed and narrowed. The small air sacs often are broken and excess mucus is produced, giving rise to chronic cough and sputum production. The disorder tends to be progressive—especially in anyone unable to stop smoking—and leads to breathlessness and wheezing.

It used to be more common in men, but as men as a group have reduced their smoking and women have taken up the habit, we now see equal numbers with COPD. It’s on course to become the third-largest killer in the world, especially as smoking is becoming such a problem in developing countries.

People with COPD often report an inability to tolerate exercise as the major symptom, and fatigue accompanies this exercise intolerance. It’s in this fatigue and lack of exercise that we have the cause of the general problem of muscle weakness seen in people with COPD.

Because exercise makes for breathlessness, many people with COPD become sedentary. This leads to a decrease in aerobic muscle fibers and blood supply. There’s an increase

in inflammatory cells in the muscle and a faster rate of cell death. Couple this with the weight gain that often accompanies inactivity, and we have a formula for disaster.

Actually, because you have stopped smoking, there will have been an improvement in your lung function; unfortunately, much damage is not repairable.

Although exercise will not change the lungs’ capacities, it will ease the muscular and circulation problems. It does this by building muscle function, which bolsters the muscles of respiration by strengthening the diaphragm and intercostal muscles. Exercise also reduces anxiety and depression, which builds positive feedback to the exercise process. Another factor that may be of great significance is the reduction in sensitivity to breathlessness in the brain. This helps a person to push a little more with exercise.

The process of pulmonary rehabilitation involves a group of specialists. Some specialists will help with obtaining relief from bronchospasm, and the possible use of oxygen mixed with helium may ease the work of breathing. This emphasis, however, is aimed at permitting more exercise, the cornerstone of improvement.

Walking is the best exercise to

begin with, but guidance by a physical therapist can be invaluable in building muscle strength, endurance, and mass.

Many hospitals have outpatient programs for pulmonary rehabilitation, and you would be well advised to take advantage of such a program. A typical program will run for eight weeks, with three sessions a week of three hours each.

It’s with difficulty that we overcome the years of abuse, but life is worth the effort. It’s a pity that so many young people are being ensnared by nicotine addiction in their youth. The statistics show that 90 percent who commence smoking in their teens are still smoking in their 50s. If only youth realized what age will tell, they would avoid so many hazards to health! ●



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“*The Invisible*”

*God is beyond good!
And sometimes He makes
that very tangible.*

Piano

By WILHELMINA DUNBAR



“Hurry up, Wil ... I’m picking you up in 10 minutes. We’re going to Jo’burg.”

That was our friend Pat du Toit on the telephone that unforgettable November morning of 2008. He would give me no further information. “I’ll tell you in the car” was all I could get out of him. I had just emerged from relaxing in a warm bathtub and naturally was most curious why I was being given just a few minutes to get myself ready for an unscheduled trip to Johannesburg.

I found two traveling companions in the car: Gladys Leoni and Pat’s wife, Margie. We were all curious to know why we were going to Johannesburg; and Pat began to explain.

But let me backtrack somewhat. We were all members of the Advent Haven Choir, and the choir needed an instrument for an upcoming music program. The piano we used for practicing was a fairly large instrument on loan to the church, and it needed to be returned to its owner. We were in need of a lower piano that would allow me (as choir director and pianist) to have eye contact with the choir members. We had borrowed a keyboard on previous occasions, but this never worked as well as a piano. And finding a suitable instrument

had become a matter of urgency for the whole church.

Pat explained that he had had a surprise telephone call from an anonymous donor.

Who on earth could afford to donate a piano? That was the thought going through all of our minds.

Pat told us he had called every conceivable source to find a secondhand instrument, but that none of them had anything readily available. Which, in itself, seemed strange. Usually one can find secondhand instruments quite easily. We had a good laugh when he told us he had called “Yamaha Dealers” in Johannesburg, who told him they had only motorbikes for sale. However, they did refer him to their music warehouse, whose manager said something strange to Pat. He asked him: “Why are you calling me *today?*”

Pat explained that we were urgently looking for a piano. “But why are you calling me *today?*” he asked again.

“Don’t you want a sale?” Pat replied.

Then the miracle began to unfold.

The manager told Pat that something inexplicable had happened in their warehouse. They had found a brand-new piano, which had been off the market for more than

30 years, unopened in its wooden case. It seemed to have been overlooked for many years. But why they could not say, “You will not find this model anywhere in the world on the floor of *any* of our dealers; it’s obsolete!” he said.

The price?

“You can have it for less than half the price of current models,” he added.

No wonder Pat was excited. He had been thinking of a secondhand piano. Now a brand-new instrument could be bought for the amount of money available! But how was it possible that no one had noticed this piano on the warehouse floor for all those years? We were convinced that God had kept it “invisible” because He knew of our need so many

“Do you want me to cry?” he asked Pat.

But he dropped the price by another third of the “half price” originally quoted. Blessings more than we ever thought possible.

What a God!

The piano was delivered the following day—just two days before our musical program. It came in time to be placed strategically for our final choir practice that evening. What a wonderful God we serve! He answered our need in such a timely manner, even before we asked!

We had a wonderful music program. The choir sang as never before, their gratefulness resounding through the

*“Don’t you want a sale?” Pat replied.
Then the miracle began to unfold.*

years in the future. Says the Lord through the prophet Isaiah: “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (Isa. 65:24, KJV).

We arrived at the Yamaha agent, Lovemore’s Music Shop, to view this wonderful gift. And there it was . . . a beautiful, brand-new, rosewood piano. Even the wood was the right color and would match the interior of our church! It was a genuine Yamaha model of many years ago. I knew, because I have an identical model presently in my daughter’s home.

As I sat down and let my fingers run over the lovely keys, I decided that “Majesty” should be the first anthem I would play. It was a favorite of the choir and it needed strong-sounding chords. As I played I noticed an audience gathering round. I played on and Gladys then took her turn. We were thrilled beyond words! The assistants stated they had never heard such beautiful music. (Did heavenly musicians assist us? I’m sure they did!)

Pat, we noticed, had moved off to one side where he was in conversation with the manager of the outlet. Pat had convinced him that we needed an even larger discount on the piano, for a “cash deal.”

church, and the loud “Amen’s” from the audience adding to their enthusiasm.

We will never cease to be grateful to our anonymous donor—still unknown to us. God moved upon the heart of this person at a time when we were in need. We had no funds to purchase another instrument. But our greatest appreciation goes to our loving Father in heaven—who is *not unknown*. He knew our need long before we had even thought to make it known. What a gracious God we serve! His MAJESTY deserves all the honor, glory, praise, and worship due to Him from our grateful human hearts. ●



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The Little Diamond

By CHANTAL J. KLINGBEIL

*Living a life of service—
anywhere and anytime*



It's the stuff dreams are made of. Just imagine being at the right place at the right time, having the ability to do something that no one else can do and doing it well! We all wish for that defining moment in which we will know exactly what we were born for. The Bible record is full of people, uniquely placed in history, who knew that they had "come into the kingdom for such a time as this"—Esther, Daniel, Joseph, Paul, the list goes on. In a world of mediocrity, wouldn't it be wonderful to find that unique something that only you can do? Wouldn't you like to be a champion?

So what do God's champions look like? God's champions are not all famous. More often they are quietly going about their business. Sometimes they are men; sometimes women; sometimes teens, sometimes children.

Diamondola was one of these unique persons. As a teenage girl she

began her mission life preaching the gospel in Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, and Greece, and later on in Iran, Cyprus, and Lebanon. At the age of 89 she went as a missionary to Africa. Her story is a testament to God's power in the life of a willing witness.¹

The Makings of a Champion

The good news for most of us is that great Bible heroes normally came from humble inconspicuous backgrounds, as did Diamondola, the "little diamond." She was born March 23, 1894, to Theodora and Elijah Keanides. Her parents were Greeks living in Eskishehir, Turkey, a town nearly 250 km. (c. 150 miles) west of Ankara. Diamondola was a very frail child and family and friends wondered if she would make it to her first birthday. When she was only a few months old, she was baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church. Soon after that, several relatives, including her father,

Elijah, and sisters Alexandra (15) and Susanna (13), became Protestants.

Being God's champion means not going with the flow—which is never easy. Diamondola grew up knowing the religious prejudices that ostracized her family from the tightly knit community. Her father's business was boycotted because of his new religious beliefs, and the family was forced to move to Brousa, a town 160 km (100 miles) southeast of Istanbul.

In Brousa, Diamondola's family discovered that following biblical truth doesn't always bring short-term benefits. It was here that the family became Seventh-day Adventists, a choice that complicated their lives still further. Soon Mr. Keanides was imprisoned for possessing Adventist literature. After his release, his health was broken and he became an invalid. The family was



Above: GETTING READY FOR ANOTHER MOVE: Diamondola (on left); her daughter, Indra; her mother, Theodora; and husband, Aram Ashod, prior to their departure for Iran. **Left:** CLOSE-UP: The author of Diamondola's biography, Mildred Olson, and Diamondola.

penniless, so mother Theodora set up silk-weaving looms in their house.

Seize the Moment

God's heroes don't wait for that special something in life. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Eccl. 9:10, NASB)* seems to have been Diamondola's motto. Diamondola educated herself at home while weaving silk cloth, her textbooks propped up beside her loom. Besides the regular school subjects, Diamondola mastered Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and English through self-taught grammar books.

She seemed to understand the commonsense principle that what you don't use you lose. Diamondola began to use her gift for languages when she was only 13 years old. One of the first Adventist missionaries to Turkey, Pastor AcMoody, made an extended missionary trip throughout Turkey, using little Diamondola as his translator.

Three years later, in 1910, she again braved bandits, extreme weather, and mosquito-infested swamps and spent several months translating for another Adventist leader, Pastor Greaves, in Greece and Albania.

Although she had only three years of formal education she was able to graduate from high school in 1912. She was immediately hired by the Adventist Levant Mission in Constantinople as a translator and secretary. She taught herself French and German in the evenings, extending her fluency to six languages. But Diamondola didn't spend all her time holed up studying. She had a reputation for being fun and vivacious. She enjoyed doing fancy needlework and being with friends.

Despite loving her work and being happy to be working for God, Diamondola discovered in a painfully personal way that being God's champion often means following duty rather than inclination. Diamondola fell in love,

and was soon engaged to a promising young minister named Ares Aresian. As World War I loomed, the Levant Mission faced an enormous problem. Some of the countries that made up the mission sided with the Allies; others joined the Central Powers. The mission was already desperately short of workers, with many of the expatriate workers being called back to their home countries or forced to evacuate. Ares was asked by the mission to go to Greece to help with the work there. Initially, the couple wanted to get married and go together, but as they spoke things over, they realized that Diamondola, with her translating skills, was really needed in Constantinople. So Diamondola remained, trusting that the war would soon be over and that they could get married. Soon communication between the two countries was cut off. Six months later she got word that Ares had died of tuberculosis.

Not Immune From Heartache

God's champions aren't immune from heartache but they know where they can go with their pain.

For Diamondola the pain of the loss of Ares made her cling even closer to Jesus. She wanted with all her heart to hasten His coming. Soon she was arrested for sending out what was thought to be Adventist propaganda literature. She was thrown into prison and then brought into the court of Bedri Bey, a cruel chief of security in Turkey. Amazingly calm, Diamondola asked for her Bibles. She gave the judge her Turkish Bible to follow along and then she went on to give everyone present a two-hour Bible



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ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF INDRA GREER FAMILY

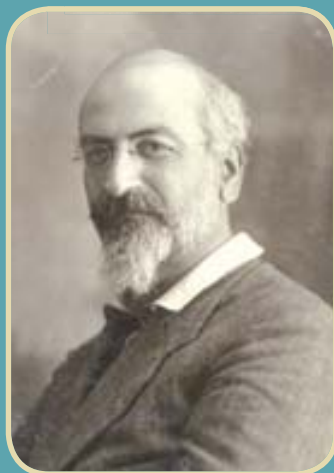
study on the Christian's duty toward government and God. She emphasized the second commandment, which prohibited the worship of idols, and explained that Adventists, believing their bodies to be God's temples, do not use tobacco, alcohol, and pork. Bedri Bey commented, echoing Agrippa's reply to Paul in Acts 26:28: "Almost you have persuaded us to be like you. You are acquitted. Go in peace." Diamondola was set free.

Diamondola's loss of Ares made her even more sensitive to the pain of others. In the winter of 1915-1916, reports began to filter through that Christians were being expelled from the region. Diamondola collected money and supplies and volunteered to travel with Elder Frauchiger throughout Turkey trying to bring food, clothing, and money to them on what turned out to be a death march into Syria. Frauchiger, a German citizen (Germany and Turkey were allies), had some diplomatic immunity, but Diamondola was in real danger of being forced to join the death march. Most Adventists, along with a million other Christians, died.

Living Links

No one becomes a hero in a vacuum. God's champions are almost always part of a God-given community. For Diamondola, being part of this community was literally life-saving. In 1919, with the ministers and colporteurs either dead, deported, or imprisoned, Diamondola and Elder and Mrs. Erzberger,² while operating the Levant Union Mission, were swamped with refugees who started pouring back into Constantinople. All facilities in the city were hopelessly overburdened. Most of the Adventist survivors were desperately in need of medical and nursing care. All the office rooms of the mission became an impromptu hospital. The responsibility of feeding and nursing all these refugees, as well as trying to run the office, fell to Diamondola, the Erzbergers, and Diamondola's elderly mother. Then the only male,

COURTESY OF INDRA GREER FAMILY



Left: A MAN OF PRAYER: Armenian Diran Tcharakian was professor at the University of Istanbul prior to his conversion. He prayed for Diamondola's resurrection. Later he died during the death march of the Armenian Christians in 1920. Out of gratitude, Aram and Diamondola used the letters of his first name (Diran) for the first name of their only daughter, Indra. **Below:** Indra Greer.



GERALD KLINGBEIL

Elder Erzberger, became critically ill with dysentery. This left the women to struggle on alone. One young mother, infected with typhus, died in Diamondola's arms. A few days later Diamondola, weak from exhaustion and overexposure, came down with the dreaded disease. For six weeks Diamondola ran a high fever. She could take only liquids and soon became a wasted skeleton. Then at last she drifted into a coma. For three days she showed hardly any signs of life. Finally she lay totally unresponsive. Diamondola had died.

Mrs. Erzberger, a trained nurse, checked Diamondola for vital signs—there weren't any. Despite their deep sorrow, Mrs. Erzberger and Diamondola's aged mother continued caring for the many refugees crowded into the mission. Six hours

later the two women came to prepare Diamondola's body for burial. They couldn't move her because rigor mortis had set in. The two women prayed for help. Weak themselves from exhaustion, they needed a man to get a coffin and help with the funeral. At that moment God sent Diran Tcharakian.³ He looked down upon the still, stiff form of Diamondola and, like Peter with Tabitha, knelt and prayed: "In the name of Jesus, I say unto you, arise." The two women stared wide-eyed as Diamondola sat up and began to speak.

Beginning—Again

Life, even after this special event, was filled to the seams with caring for refugees and orphans and helping people to find hope in God. But in the midst of all this activity, love came for a second time to Diamondola. In

1921 she married Aram Ashod,⁴ an Armenian Adventist, who had been forced into the Turkish army and then captured and held as a prisoner of war by the British for the duration of the war. Besides their work in the mission office, the young couple felt a real burden for the many war orphans.

They began an orphanage that was later moved to Greece. A few years later, just as the work was again taking root, the volatile political situation forced all the foreign missionaries and church leaders to leave Turkey. Although Diamondola and Aram had the opportunity to leave, they decided to stay. For Diamondola it must have felt a little like the momentous time during World War I when, though isolated from the world church family, she—together with the Erzbergers—worked alone to try to keep the organized church work going. This time Diamondola and Aram held the church work together. They ran the mission, saw to the local church work, kept the accounts, and continued translating, publishing, corresponding, and giving Bible studies.

Farther Afield

Even on gray days there are often sunny moments. After having been involved with orphan children for years Diamondola and Aram were finally surprised by the news that they would become parents. Little Indra was born in 1927 and filled their home with sunshine. Shortly after their daughter's birth Diamondola and Aram were sent to help with a different kind of birthing. They went to Iran where they were to spend an important part of their lives building up the work in Teheran. Their new missionary assignment vividly reinforced the timeless truth that God's champions in each generation are called to take God's love to their contemporary world. Their journey had taken them from Paul's mission field in Asia Minor to the land where Esther and Daniel had served.

Sometime later, when Diamondola and Aram returned to Turkey, they

found that Adventists still had no official church buildings. Adventists were not recognized as a legal denomination by the Turkish government before World War I. All church buildings had been confiscated. After the war the Lausanne Treaty specified that no Christian churches could be built in Turkey. Diamondola and Aram had a foretaste of how life would be for many Christians in the twentieth century as they joined members for secret meetings in different homes on Sabbaths. Although it was a time of great danger as they braced themselves for sudden police raids, it was also a time of experiencing a special closeness to God and to each other. Eventually they were able to rent a room in the basement of the Armenian Protestant church. But even with this small victory the next battle was brewing. With the beginning of World War II once again all foreign workers returned to their homelands. Again, Aram and Diamondola carried the official church work in the region.

Learning and Growing

Living a life with God does not mean living in the past—even though some high points and mountaintop experiences may stand out. God's champions are always ready to learn and willing to grow. For Diamondola and Aram this willingness to learn and be even more useful meant that at the age of 54 and 64, respectively, they learned to ride bicycles when they were called to work in Cyprus in 1948.

And more change came their way. At an age when most people think about retirement, Diamondola and Aram sailed for Beirut, Lebanon. Aram worked at the Bible correspondence school. Diamondola, always willing to do whatever she could for God, gave French and German Bible studies and helped the poor in the community. She loved young people, and later when she had the opportunity she had no qualms about joining a Master Guide class and being instructed by people half her age.

After 45 years of service in the

Middle East, Diamondola and Aram finally joined their daughter and son-in-law in the United States. Aram passed away in 1977 at age 93. Diamondola remained ready for adventure. When her son-in-law and daughter were asked to serve in the Masanga Leprosy Hospital in Sierra Leone, in West Africa, Diamondola, age 89, went along to help, quickly becoming known as “old grandmummy.” Diamondola had once again found an important niche in her mission field. She showed Jesus' love by her willingness to reach out and physically hug the shunned lepers. Her smiles and hugs probably contributed as much as the medications to the healing of the patients.

No Limits

Diamondola passed to her rest on May 12, 1990, at the age of 96.⁵ Her long life of service challenges us not to settle for mediocrity. Each of us is born for such a time as this. We have a unique place to fill. As we strive to be God's champions, He will go with us every step of the way through the adventures, dangers, as well as the everyday doldrums. Diamondola's life legacy demonstrates that there is “no limit to the usefulness of those who, putting self out of sight, make room for the working of the Holy Spirit.”⁶

*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.

¹ This article is based on significant research, including several interviews with Diamondola's daughter, Indra Greer, as well as the following resources: N. Ouzounian, “Diran Tcharakian: A Biographical Sketch,” unpublished manuscript (2004); Mildred Thompson Olson, *Diamondola* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966); Mildred Thompson Olson, *Diamondola and Aram: Middle East Ambassadors* (New York: TEACH Services, 2004). It should be noted that some historical sources spell Tcherakian and Erzburger instead of the spelling that has been adopted in this article.

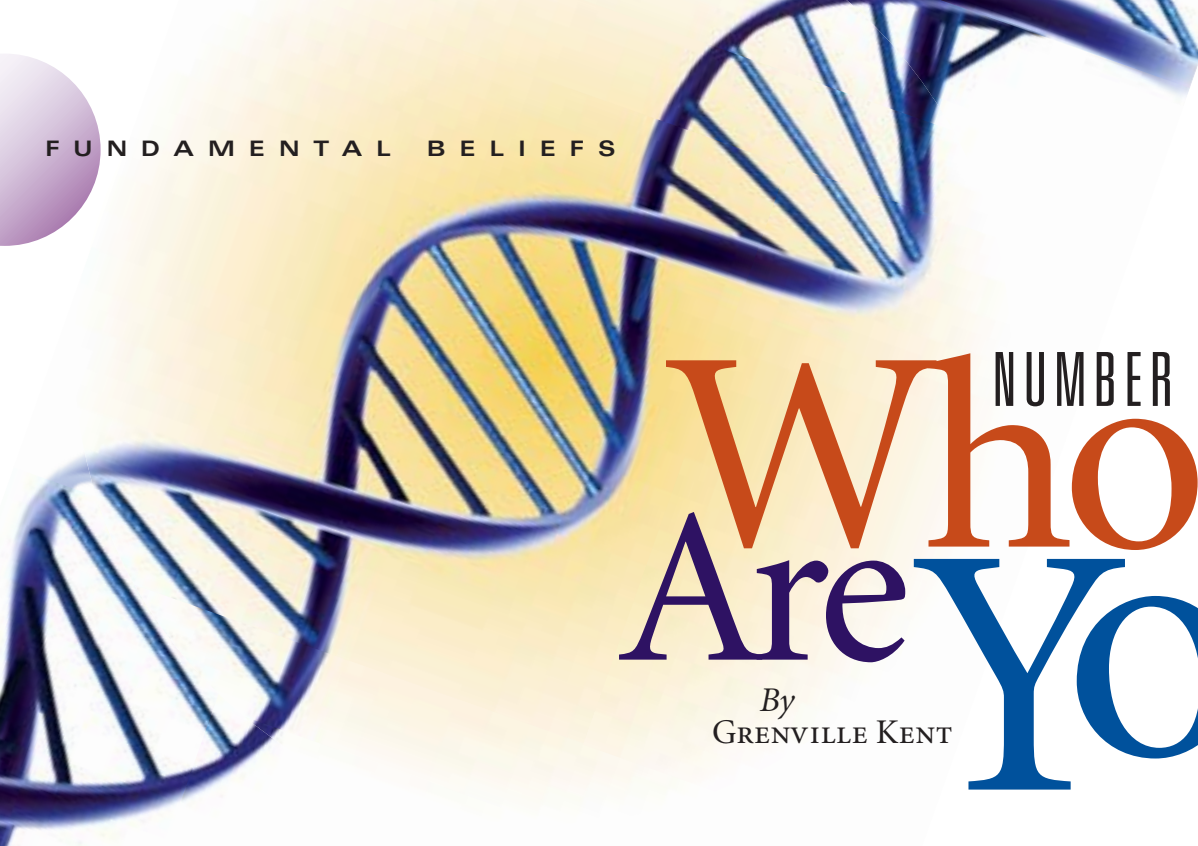
² Elder Erzberger was the son of the European pioneer Jakob Erzberger. See the recent article by Daniel Heinz, “Jakob Erzberger: The Forgotten Pioneer,” *Adventist World*, May 2010, pp. 24, 25.

³ Diran Tcharakian was an Armenian university professor, famous author, and poet. When he became an Adventist he sacrificed everything to follow Jesus. His family left him, and critics dubbed him crazy. He died on the death march in 1920.

⁴ Ironically, it was Aram who had first convinced Diran Tcharakian that there is a God and it was Tcharakian who, in the name of Jesus, resurrected Diamondola in 1919.

⁵ See the obituary note appearing in *Adventist Review*, Feb. 14, 1991, p. 22.

⁶ Ellen G. White, “Taught of God,” *Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1905, p. 10.



Who Are You?

NUMBER 7

By GRENVILLE KENT

In a Berlin park the security guard challenged a scruffy figure slouching on a park bench: “Who are you?” The scruff was the philosopher Schopenhauer, and he sadly replied, “I wish to God I knew.”

Secular thought doesn’t help us much with understanding our identity. “The universe is nothing but a collection of atoms in motion, human beings are simply machines for propagating DNA,” says atheist professor Richard Dawkins, straying outside his specialty area of biology.¹

Funny, I feel I’m more than just a machine.

“You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells,” said Francis Crick of DNA fame.² No more? But our deepest intuitions go beyond our bodies. We feel we matter. We look for purpose in our lives. We love soul-deep. We dream of afterlife—even people who have been told that they don’t have a spirit.

The Bible describes being human in a way that makes sense of our experience. Here is a quick summary:

1. You Are Wanted

You are no accident. God made you for relationships and enjoyment—yours and His (Rev. 4:11). Love and



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joy—what better reason for God to make everything? “In [God’s] presence is fullness of joy; ... [and] pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

2. You Are Multilayered

You are not a soul trapped in a weak body; you’re a whole person. Like the compound terms in a German car manual, you are a *bodymindspirit*. You can *thinkfeelsense* that truth if you learn to listen to the *FatherSonSpirit* of God.

Your body is created good. Your senses were designed for pleasure and relationship. Contrary to Dark Ages church dogma and Plato, your sexuality is God-given, intended for love and joy in marriage—and for creating people, a Godlike power. Both male and female are in the “image of God” (Gen. 1:27). We needn’t feel guilty about bodily love, but only for selfish, loveless attitudes and the actions they produce.

So develop every aspect of yourself: “Jesus grew in wisdom [mind] and stature [body], and in favor with God [spiritual] and men [social]” (Luke 2:52, NIV).

3. You Are Free

The all-powerful God is such a generous Sovereign that He leaves space for you to have a free will. God likes your individuality—He could have made you a remote-controlled cyborg, but would have seen in your dull eyes that you did not love Him freely or cooperate intelligently. So He gave you freedom, and a status just below heavenly beings (Ps. 8:5).

God is in *ultimate* control of what will happen to the universe, but cannot be blamed for what people do with their free will. He chooses to limit evil at times (Job 2:1-10), and is such a good strategist that His overall plans will

succeed whatever you or I individually do. Your choices matter. Life is not just a video game that can be reset at the end without real damage. You can hurt yourself and others, even with eternal consequences.

I am free, but I am not free. I am naturally enslaved to my misguided grabs for happiness, my ignorance, selfishness, and brokenness. Only when God's Spirit reaches my mind—like oil penetrating a rusty lock—can my will really operate. Then I'm free to control myself, to say no to parts of myself (a great feeling), and to be most myself.

Because the bad news is ...

4. You Are Faulty

We can try to suppress this with alcohol or fame or busyness, but don't we all have moments of humbling clarity when we see selfishness and foolish choices?

Look at us, rushing through our work, wired for electronic entertainment but disconnected from the human next to us, disconnected from nature and our bodies—and even from our own feelings and consciences at times. How well have we done in caring for the natural world (Gen. 2:15)? And we can be closed to God, barely missing the company of the most interesting Being. We are relationally dead in the presence of the great Life-giver.

We love to blame our parents for our weaknesses. We vow to do better, only to find ourselves flawed, discovering our faults in our children. Fallenness runs through the entire human family (Ps. 51:5), right back to the first parents.

I have an inner shabbiness no designer clothes can cover. I need kindness, and regular, heavy-duty cycles in God's big gospel washing machine.

If I understand this, I will not demand perfection from people. I may even find grace for my wife, children, friends, workmates—even enemies?—the same grace I need.

At least it's not just *me* that's fallen; it's all of creation (Rom. 8:19-23). Jesus died to restore *everything* that is broken—DNA, ecology, cosmology...

5. You Are Mortal

People die.

You can rage against the dying of the light, curse at the sky because you were not healed, but eventually everyone dies—until Jesus returns. You have about 3,400 weekends, total. But this can sober us and drive us urgently toward wisdom (Ps. 90:12; Eccl. 7:2).

There's one upside to human mortality: nobody will spend an eternity in hell, writhing in pain as flames lick their body, screaming in regret and agony *forever*. What would that achieve? Wouldn't that make God morally worse than brutal dictators, whose victims screamed only for hours rather than centuries? The Bible gives two options: one, "the wages of sin is death"—not eternal life in torment. The second option is "eternal life in Christ Jesus"—and that's a "gift of God," which means I don't naturally have immortality (Rom. 6:23).

If I reject God, I will be ashes (Mal. 4:3).

6. You Are Loved—And Called

Jesus died for you to restore a relationship broken by rebellion (2 Cor. 5:19), and because of the "joy that was set before Him"—eternity with you (Heb. 12:2). The goal is relationship and joy again. Why does He want us to serve people and teach the gospel? So they can know His love and joy forever.

Jesus became human and died to take our guilt and repair all of us. We are everything to Him, and He wants to "forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). That is the most important idea I have ever heard, so perhaps you'd please read this short paragraph again until it sinks in.

"Check out the love God has lavished on us, calling us His children! ... What will we be in the future? That's beyond us now, but we do know that, when He appears, we will be like Him..." (1 John 3:1, 2, paraphrase by author).

"Who are you? Who, who?"

Thank God—we know. 🍇

¹ BBC Christmas Lectures Study Guide (London: BBC, 1991), quoted in John Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion, 2009), p. 56.

² Quoted in Lennox, p. 55.

Nature of Man

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else.

When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred, and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature

and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

I'm a PK—a pastor's kid. But when I was about 14 and living in Frankfurt, Germany, I began to question my childhood faith. At school I was being introduced to thoughts that questioned everything I had previously thought or believed. I reacted by reading widely, and I had endless discussions with other youth at my church. I asked a lot of questions, and finally I owned my faith for myself.

There were 13 girls in my class at school, but the idea of God was a joke to them. Whenever someone would catch me bowing my head over my lunch, giggles would be heard. It was surprising, though, that whenever any of my classmates suffered a heartbreak, I was the one they came to—with red, swollen eyes—for comfort.

At 18, as part of a required course, I did an internship with the family of our English teacher. Years before, this teacher had abandoned his belief in the Bible, and now he seemed to see this as the ideal opportunity to cure this pastor's daughter of her old-fashioned belief in God.

His "therapy" began around the lunch table. I had been toying with the idea of offering a silent, inconspicuous blessing before eating so that no one would notice, but I felt that I would somehow be betraying God. At first, the children around the table wondered why I paused and bowed my head. The 6-year-old son's reaction was the most blatant: he deliberately mocked me with facial expressions. This was embarrassing for the mother, who wanted to teach her children tolerance. The father, my teacher, only grinned condescendingly and used my brief prayer time to think up the next set of difficult questions with which to needle me.

"Sylvia, what did the lion eat in Paradise?" or "Where did Cain get a wife?" or "If God is almighty, can He create a stone so large that He Himself cannot carry it?"

More than once that first bite of my

meal seemed to stick in my throat. I often woke up in the mornings already nervous at the thought of the shared noon meal. In the evening, as I knelt in my small attic room, I would pray, "God, please help me; give me answers that will make them really think."

I'll never forget my teacher's sarcastic grin one afternoon as he said, "Sylvia, what would you say if you discovered that there really is no resurrection? Then you would have wasted your whole life on this religious rubbish!" My mouth suddenly went

school director stated that I would be permitted to reschedule the exam only if the English teacher thought it necessary. This was a nationwide exam, and my future admission to any study program was dependent on it. With shaky knees I went to speak to my former English teacher. With a laugh he said, "And you want to pass this exam even though you haven't been in my English classes for over a year?" I replied, "God will help me to be as good as my classmates who have had the extra benefit of the class." "Really!" he exclaimed. "Now that is

By SYLVIA RENZ

ASTR Council

dry, but I replied: "If there really isn't a resurrection, then I wouldn't be aware of it, as I would be dead. But if there is a resurrection, then what would you do? What would you say as you stood before your Maker?" The smug grin vanished from his face as the words sank in. He excused himself from the table and left the room. That was the last time he openly confronted me about my faith during my internship.

A Test of Faith

In my last year my final exam fell on Sabbath. I had been preparing for this exam on my own, because the special preparation for it was given by the English teacher on Sabbath mornings. The

something I'd like to see. I guarantee that you will fail this exam. You will see for yourself that this God is just a figment of your imagination."

A Time of Preparation

I knew my former teacher would do everything in his power to make the exam as difficult as possible. I had no way of knowing what he had covered in class because no class notes were available and there was no textbook. So I prayed, "Lord, You know that I wasn't able to attend this English class because I wanted to go to church. Your day is holy. You are more important to me than my future study possibilities. But I know that You are mighty and



CAITLIN POTTS

As I entered the exam room a sense of peace flooded over me. I felt that this “battle” would not be mine. My teacher was to be the chief oral examiner. His questions followed as rapidly as machine-gun fire; with equal speed the correct answers came to me. The other examiners on the panel stared blankly from one to the other as if a table-tennis match were in progress. There was no pause; for every “ping,” a “pong” followed.

The teacher finally concluded with a sour expression: “In spite of your horrible Californian accent, I am obliged to give you an A.”

ANSWER dence

Or was it answered prayer?

can help me to pass this exam.”

I tried to prepare as best as I could by practicing conversational English with my American friends, and I also tracked down every English book I could find and wrestled with the text.

Two weeks before the final exam I found a German translation of C. S. Lewis’s book *The Screwtape Letters*. I enjoyed the vivid description of the trials and dilemmas faced by a young Christian. One chapter in particular fascinated me, and I read it through several times. Then I reluctantly put the book aside as the exam loomed before me, and there was so much material yet to review.

First came the oral examination.

My teacher appeared smug as he handed me the literary extract that had been selected for the exam. At first glance, I was shaken by the long complicated structure of the English sentences, and then I suddenly realized that the text was familiar to me. It was taken from the very chapter that had so fascinated me in *The Screwtape Letters*. I practically knew it by heart. I was given 20 minutes to familiarize myself with the text before the oral discussion would begin—in English, of course. Suddenly, all my carefully prepared English notes seemed irrelevant. I wanted the chance to show that God really does exist, and that He is there for those who trust Him.

A Coincidence?

Immediately after the exam the teacher approached me and mumbled, “I still can’t understand it. How were you able to learn English so well?”

“I came across the book that the literary extract was taken from, and I read right up to the place from where that quote was taken,” I explained. He unbelievably shook his head. “What a strange coincidence,” he said. I responded, “Yes, it is a strange kind of coincidence. God really does exist. When we put God first in our lives, He really does take care of all the coincidences.”

Without another word my teacher quietly turned and walked away. I never heard from him again. I learned that he died of cancer a few months later. Had my exam been a door that God was opening to his heart? Did he find his way back to God within those last few weeks? I really hope so! ●



Sylvia Renz works for the German Voice of Prophecy Bible School and is a published author of more than 20 books. She is married to Werner, a retired radio producer and pastor.

ELLEN WHITE

and
Family

By EDYTA JANKIEWICZ

Life
My journey

DINDO JIMENEZ

Ellen White's impact on my thinking about motherhood and family life began several years before my children were born. I had grown up with some ambivalence about her ministry, and didn't often read her books; but every now and again, I would pick up something she had written for my devotional reading. On one morning, as I read about the childhood of Jesus, I came across these words: "The more quiet and simple the life of the child,—the more free from artificial excitement, and the more in harmony with nature,—the more favorable is it to physical and mental vigor and to spiritual strength."¹

Later that day, as my husband and I went shopping, we walked past a gaming alley, where young teens were playing arcade games. As I walked by, the loud music echoing in my head and my pupils dilated by the flashing lights, I recalled Ellen White's words. I turned to my husband and said, "If we ever have children, I want their childhood to be

different than this. I want them to grow up enjoying simple things, like sunshine and buttercups."

Reality Check—And Good Counsel

Several years went by, and when at last my first child was born, the picture of Jesus' childhood that Ellen White had painted

was still in my mind. But the reality of life with a newborn was more about trying to survive on four hours of sleep than about sunshine and buttercups. When a friend told me about a Christian parenting program that promised to teach a baby to sleep through the night, I was initially grateful. As I tried to learn how to help my child sleep, I realized that this program was not simply about infant feeding and sleeping schedules. It was also about God's desire for order and parental authority in family life. Feeling uneasy with some of what I was reading, I searched to understand my new role as a mother. Again I found wisdom in the words of Ellen White.

In *Child Guidance*, Ellen White counsels parents to "bind the hearts of the little ones to them by silken cords of love."² These simple and yet profound words once again created a word picture that helped me to see what God desired for family life. Love is central to the order of the universe that God created; thus, teaching our children to "love God and love others" must be central to Christian parenting.

But where does this capacity to love come from? Research suggests that it is only as children are loved unconditionally, and their needs met responsively, that they are able to internalize love and gratitude.³ This is consistent with the way in which our heavenly Father “parents” us: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19, NIV). As I pondered these thoughts, I realized that in this new job that God had given me, love was more important than order. For my newborn daughter, learning to love and be loved was more important than learning to sleep through the night.

As my daughter grew I realized that the “silken cords of love” that bound her heart to mine were the foundation for

everything else she needed to learn. By this time, I had read many books on parenting and child development, but the words that made the most impact were these: “As the mother teaches her children to obey her because they love her, she is teaching them the first lessons in the Christian life. The mother’s love represents to the child the love of Christ, and the little ones who trust and obey their mother are learning to trust and obey the Saviour.”⁴ These words reminded me that as I learned (often with great difficulty) to put aside my own needs and respond to her needs, my daughter was learning about the love of God. As I was available and responsive (not always consistently) when she needed me, my daughter was learning that she could trust God. This foundation of love and trust would enable her to be obedient, not only to me, but ultimately, to God. I realized that the task of motherhood was more sacred than anyone had ever told me.

Divine Perspective

As I have journeyed through motherhood, the words of Ellen White have continued to encourage me in different ways. When my children were still very young, there were days when the tasks of my earlier professional life seemed more significant than the dirty laundry and runny noses that I faced each day. On those days I found validation in these words: “The king upon his throne has no higher work than has the mother.... An angel could not ask for a higher mission.”⁵ Several years later, while serving as missionaries in the South Pacific, there were days when our decision to homeschool our children threatened to overwhelm me. Were we really ruining our daughters’ education and creating social misfits? On those days I was reassured by these words: “Mothers should be able to instruct their little

ones wisely during the earlier years of childhood. If every mother were capable of doing this, and would take time to teach her children the lessons they should learn in early life, then all children could be kept in the home school until they are eight, or nine, or ten years old.”⁶

My children are older now, and happily settled into school. There are days when it seems that their world is so much wider, and the influence of our home so much smaller. On those days I am both challenged and encouraged by these words: “To a great extent, parents hold in their own hands the future happiness of their children. Upon them rests the important work of forming the character

of these children. The instructions given in childhood will follow them all through life.”⁷ There are also days when the bar seems too high, when the standard of parenting described by Ellen White seems unattainable. That’s when I turn to these words: “Watch what God does, and then you do it.... Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn’t love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that” (Eph. 5:1, 2, *Message*).⁸

As I reflect on these words I am humbled by the enormity of God’s love for me, and I’m reminded that it is only as I behold His love that I can begin to learn how to “love like that.”

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 74.

² Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1954), p. 86.

³ Alfie Kohn, *The Brighter Side of Human Nature: Altruism and Empathy in Everyday Life* (San Francisco, Calif.: Basic Books, 1990), p. 87.

⁴ White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 515.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1952), p. 231.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 351.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), vol. 1, p. 686.

⁸ Texts credited to *Message* are from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.



Edyta Jankiewicz, a trained physical therapist, is currently a stay-at-home mom who enjoys raising her children and, in her spare time, is working on a Ph.D. in Religious Education. With her husband, Darius, and their two daughters, she lives in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.

Golden Lapani is a lay Adventist whom God has called to introduce the gospel message to a special group of God's children in Malawi.

"Every day I pray, 'God, lead me to one person whom I can lead to You,'" Lapani says. "Even if it means risking my life, I want to reach these people for the Savior." God has blessed Lapani's work with almost 11,000 converts in the past 20 years.

Lapani first met the Lord while he became ill while he was teaching school. During his illness he had a dream in which God called him to follow Him and be healed. Lapani knew very little about Jesus. In spite of his parents' disapproval, he declared himself a Christian, and soon afterward he was healed. He began telling others that Jesus had healed him.

His first convert was his elder brother. The brothers worshipped alone in Lapani's room. Then his sisters joined them. The little group of believers continued to grow, and two years after his baptism Lapani had raised up five Adventist congregations and baptized 145 new believers. Six years after Lapani was converted, his father accepted Jesus as his Savior. His mother hesitated for another five years before she gave her life to God and was baptized. Today his mother is one of his strong supporters.

The Murdered Chief

A short walk from Lapani's home lies the village of Damba.* In spite of Lapani's repeated attempts to make friends in Damba, the villagers resisted his efforts to share the gospel with them. Then one day the village chief disappeared. Rumors spread that Lapani had killed the chief and sold his body. Lapani realized the situation was grave, and that without God's protection the villagers could take his life. Lapani, his family, and his Bible workers fasted and prayed for 21 days,



PHOTOS BY OFFICE OF ADVENTIST MISSION

One Man and His GOD

His prayer, "Please, God, one soul for You today," has been answered 10,000 times over.

By CHARLOTTE ISHKANIAN

asking God to reveal the truth of the chief's disappearance so that God's name would be honored.

On the twenty-first day Lapani met a man from Damba on the road. He greeted Lapani by saying, "Pastor, your God is a miracle-working God." The man described how the chief's body had been found in the river, attached to two huge stones weighing almost as much as the chief himself.

The chief's brother was eventually convicted of the chief's murder, and Lapani was invited to visit Damba. When he arrived, the people welcomed him openly. "Tell us about your God, who saved you," they begged. Lapani visited each home, sharing corn and used clothes with those in need. Next he held evangelistic meetings and more than 80 people were baptized.

Recently the government of Malawi visited Lapani to hear for themselves the story of how the chief's death had changed Damba. They recorded his testimony and broadcast it over national radio at least three times. Lapani has received requests from a number of non-Christian village chiefs to come and teach the people about Jesus.

Death Threats

The incident in Damba was not the only time Lapani has stared death in the face. He has been stoned and poisoned, and been the victim of witchcraft and attempted drowning. In one town he drank poisoned water. When he began experiencing severe stomach pains, his young cook admitted to poisoning him. Lapani knew he had only a short time to live, so he prayed. Then he took the cook to the police station to report what had happened. "I may die," he told them, "but I have forgiven this boy. Do not prosecute him."

Church members prayed, and God healed Lapani, who encouraged his cook to give his life to Jesus. Later that

day Lapani preached the gospel and 68 people in the village accepted Jesus as their Savior. Today a church stands in the village, the result of an attempt to kill this faithful witness.

Christ's Method of Ministry

When Lapani first enters a new area, he visits the chief to announce his presence. Then he and his Bible workers visit in homes, praying with people who have needs. If villagers lack food, he provides cornmeal, the most common staple in Malawi. If they are sick, he prays for them and locates medicine if they need it. He brings clothing for the elderly and children. But most of all, he seeks to make friends and win confidences. Then Lapani asks for permission to hold meetings. Usually the answer is yes. But if it is not, he continues to visit people and love them.

After evangelistic meetings one of Lapani's five Bible workers remains in the area to nurture and teach believers for at least six months. Lapani urges the new converts to build a church. He obtains land from the local chief and instructs the believers how many bricks to form and burn, how much sand to gather, and how large to make the church. Then he raises funds to buy sheet metal to roof the church.

Thus far, Lapani has led almost 11,000 people to Christ and built 43 churches in his region of Malawi. He tries to visit each church at least three times a year, makes note of who is not attending, and visits each one to encourage them, help them, and pray for them if they are sick. He returns regularly to hold revival meetings, which have added many more believers to the churches he has established.

In 2004 a drought hit Malawi while Lapani was holding meetings. The people watched their crops wither and die without rain. Lapani and his team prayed for rain for three days, then the heavens darkened and heavy rain fell.

But it rained only in the morning, not during the afternoon when meetings were scheduled. At the end of the series 38 people gave their lives to Jesus.

Paramount Chiefs Bow to Christ


In 2001 Lapani joined a missionary pastor to hold evangelistic meetings in one area that had resisted efforts by other Christians to spread the gospel. They taught cooking classes and needlework to the women and showed a video on the life of Jesus to help bring the people to the meetings.

More than 20 people in this region gave their lives to Jesus, including a principal chief and his wife. Follow-up meetings brought 25 more believers into this congregation. The believers have built a church that includes a large garden of sweet potatoes. Church members tend the garden and sell the produce to support the church.

Two years later more than 50 people, including another important chief and his wife, joined the Adventist Church when Lapani held meetings in their village.

"As long as God gives me strength and provides the funds, I will continue this work," Lapani says. "The devil has tried to put me down, but God is stronger than the devil, and He prevails."

"Pray for me," Lapani pleads. "Pray for those who have become Christians through our work. Pray for our enemies, too."

Our mission offerings provide resources and materials to help strengthen new believers in Malawi and around the world. 

* Damba is a fictitious name, but the village is real.



Charlotte Ishkanian

is editor of *Adventist Mission and Children's Mission*. For more stories

about Adventist Mission, visit www.AdventistMission.org.

QUESTION: *Should Adventists celebrate Christmas?*

Every year I receive letters or phone calls asking whether it is correct for Adventists to celebrate Christmas. The uncertainty is usually based on the absence of any biblical information about the date of Christ's birth, and on the conviction that December 25 has been associated with a pagan festival. Let me provide some historical information about the celebration of Christmas and say something about its significance.

1. Christmas and Adventists: Before I comment on the question, let me clarify that Adventists are not, nor should we be, against Christmas. Why would we be against a period of time when Christians remember the birth of our Savior? However, since this festivity is not ordained by Scripture, we don't consider it to be binding on believers. We recognize only one holy day, the Sabbath; and we keep it holy in obedience to our Creator and Redeemer.

2. Christmas and History: It is well known that the term "Christmas" is derived from the old English word "Christmesse," which means "Christ's Mass." The term originated during the Middle Ages from the practice of having a midnight Mass on the eve of December 25 to celebrate the birth of Christ. In other languages it is called "Nativity" (Latin, *natalis*) or "Holy Nights" (German, *Weihnachten*).

The history of this Christian feast remains unclear. Historians have indicated that the nativity feast began to be observed by Christians during the fourth century. Some Christians calculated it based on the death of Christ taking place on March 25. It was then speculated that He must have been born nine months before on December 25. Others placed the birth of Jesus on March 25.

But the most common explanation is that Christmas is somehow connected with the Roman cult of the Invincible Sun (Latin, *Sol Invictus*), the rebirth of the sun, which was celebrated on December 25. This could explain the importance of lights during the celebration of the Nativity, although "light" is also associated with Christ in the

Scriptures (e.g., Luke 1:78, 79). It is therefore common to hear it alleged that Christians adopted and adapted a pagan feast. This is possible, but it's difficult to demonstrate from available historical evidence.

3. Christmas and the Believer: We should acknowledge two facts: First, we do not know why God, in His providence, chose not to preserve for us a record of the day of Jesus' birth. There is no need to speculate about this. Second, the fact is that the Christian world celebrates the birth of Jesus on December 25. We cannot change this, and there is no reason to try to change it. Attempts to reject the feast are based on the absence of biblical evidence and its possible connection with a pagan feast. Therefore, we

should leave this matter to the conscience of each individual.

Having said that, let me state again that there is absolutely nothing wrong with selecting any particular time to meditate and reflect on the incarnation of our Savior. I would suggest that during Christmas we could spend time thinking about *the mystery* of the Incarnation. It is a mystery in that it testifies to the fact that the Son of God became

"flesh" (John 1:14). The Creator became a creature in order to save us from the power of sin and death.

The Nativity can also be understood as *God's gift* to the human race; in His Son, God gave us the most precious gift He could bestow on us. He was the bread of heaven freely given to us by our heavenly Father (John 6:48-51).

But the Nativity is also a *time of proclamation*. That night angels proclaimed to shepherds the good news: "Do not be afraid... Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you" (Luke 2:10, 11). We should join our voices with that of the angels and proclaim once more throughout the planet the glorious news of peace and freedom from fear and through Christ, the Lord. Christmas provides an excellent opportunity to remind the human race that the Child born in Bethlehem is coming soon. ●



By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

CHRISTIANS & Christmas

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



PREVAILING Prayer

By
MARK A. FINLEY

As we've journeyed through Genesis, we've discovered an incredibly loving God. His heart of heaven-born love flows freely to His children. The stories in Genesis are stories of a persistent God who never gives up, even when His children rebel against Him. His love reaches out to them even when they aren't reaching out to Him. The God of Genesis is a God of limitless love, boundless compassion, and abundant forgiveness. The story of Jacob reveals God's amazing grace.

1. After Isaac promised to bless his eldest son, Esau, what horrible sin did Jacob commit as his father was dying?

"Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me'" (Gen. 27:19).

Jacob pretended to be Esau to _____ his father and claim _____ blessing.

2. Why did Jacob lie to his father? List at least two possible motives.

_____ and _____

Selfishness and greed lead people to do things they never thought they'd do. Jacob paid a terrible price for his sin. Filled with guilt and shame, he fled his homeland. He thought constantly about the terrible sin of lying to his own father when Isaac was dying. Jacob's sin brought him mental anguish, inner conflict, and emotional pain.

It also tore his family apart. Jacob never saw his parents again, and it was 20 years before he saw his brother, Esau.

3. What three assurances did God give Jacob in the midst of his guilt?

"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you" (Gen. 28:15).

I will _____ wherever you go,

I will _____ to this land,

I will not _____ you.

4. After 20 years of self-imposed exile, Jacob decided to return to his homeland. When Jacob received word that Esau was approaching with his fighting men, what was Jacob's response?

"So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies" (Gen. 32:7).

Jacob was _____ and _____.



5. Jacob was a shepherd, not a warrior. In his distress he turned to God in prayer. Suddenly he found himself in a desperate struggle with a Stranger. What was Jacob's prayer of desperation?

"Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day... And [the Man] said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.' But [Jacob] said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!'" (Gen. 32:24-26).

"I will not _____ unless You _____ me!"

6. Why did God honor Jacob's prayer?

"And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed'" (Gen. 32:28).

Jacob struggled with _____ and with _____, and _____.

Prevailing prayer makes a difference. God honors our perseverance in prayer. Persistency prepares our hearts to receive God's blessing. It deepens our desire to know God's will and experience His presence.

7. What miracle did God work because of Jacob's earnest prayer?

"But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept" (Gen. 33:4).

Describe the miracle God wrought in Esau's heart in your own words.

God changes hearts through prayer. God heals relationships through prayer. God brings families together through prayer.

8. How are Jacob's prayer life and Jesus' prayer life similar?

"Then Jacob was left alone..." (Gen. 32:24)

"For you [Jacob] have struggled with God" (Gen. 32:28)

"And it happened, as He [Jesus] was alone praying" (Luke 9:18)

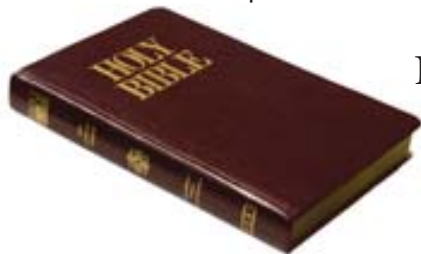
"Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear" (Heb. 5:7)

They both sought time _____ with God.

They both _____ God with all their hearts.

When we are faced with apparently unsolvable problems and overwhelming challenges, as we persevere alone in prayer, God will answer from heaven. He has not left us alone; we are His children. In times of crises, shallow, superficial prayers will not do; but persevering, prevailing prayer will move the arm of God.

Are you facing some overwhelming challenge in your life? Seek God in prayer; don't give up. Persevere and God will work a miracle in your life as He did in Jacob's.



Next month's Bible study,
"Deliverance in Trial,"
will feature the story of Joseph.

LETTERS

Continuing the Conversation

I greatly appreciate the wise and skillful way Angel Manuel Rodríguez indirectly answered the question regarding the ordination of women, particularly his concluding paragraph in “Can We Talk?” (October 2010). He encouraged the body of Christ to come together in a spirit of unity and humility, praying for healing so that we may see where the Spirit is leading.

I am not a theologian or a feminist, but I have been greatly blessed by a female theologian who gave me an enormous amount of time and shared great insight into what our loving, compassionate Jesus is like by her personal example of unconditional love to both me and my husband. She is Jamaican; I am Australian.

MARGARET A. MAJOR
Cooranbong, Australia

Thanks to Angel Manuel Rodríguez for “Can We Talk?” (October 2010) and tackling this subject in the manner he chose. I especially loved the last paragraph urging prayer and seeking the Spirit’s leading. He could not have ended on a better note. God will lead if we are willing to humble ourselves and seek Him.

CLARINE NORDELL
*Crystal River, Florida,
United States*

Since I’m Online Anyway

Congratulations on the August 2010 edition of the online magazine. Continue providing what is an inspiration (www.adventistworld.org/index.php?issue=2010-1008).

RUTHY CHALCO
Lima, Peru

“I’m finding in my spiritual journey that the more time I spend with my Bible, the more I want to be there and the less I want to read the words of others.”

—LINDA STEINKE, *Millet, Alberta, Canada.*



Another Thought

Thanks for all the blessings that come through the *Adventist World*. Since I discovered this uplifting

journal I do not lose the privilege of staying informed of the progress of the people of God in the entire world. May the Lord continue to bless this ministry.

Marvin Atchison’s article “About Hernias and the Holy Spirit” (August 2010) made me think in depth about strangulation and death when an involved organ becomes trapped and its blood supply compromised. I’ve also thought about those who die spiritually, starved for lack of knowledge, and how our witness languishes for not sharing what we know, and worse for not obeying the light God has given us individually. If we do not renew ourselves by study, our spiritual nature will die of starvation and drought in the absence of the Spirit who guides us.

ANTONIO MANUEL MEJIA
Murcia, Spain

Heart, Mind, and Soul

I’m so glad to have read the inspired message “Do You Love Me?” by Mikulas Pavlik (July 2010). I saw the love of Jesus and how He wants me to love Him more.

The question came to me, “Ephraim Lalrodinga, do you love Me?” I cried and said, “Yes, I love You, Lord. Please forgive my sins and make me love You with all my heart and soul.” I give my sincere thanks to *Adventist World*.

EPHRAIM LALRODINGA
Falm, Chin State, Myanmar



Worth of the Word

I read “‘Spiritual Perils’ Revisited,” by Roy Adams (August 2010), but have not read the article yet,

which references *The Shack* (“Spiritual Perils,” Roy Adams, May 2010). I read extensively spiritual books from a variety of authors, Adventist and from other faiths. I’m finding in my spiritual journey that the more time I

LETTERS

spend with my Bible, the more I want to be there and the less I want to read the words of others.

Books are wonderful assets, tools, inspirations. I would not want to eliminate them from my life, but we must be grounded in the Word in order to be wise and discerning.

It seems Adventist waters are becoming murky. I see compromises and sometimes submit to them. Continuing in the Word is where I must find myself. Thank you for the dedication in providing this publication.

LINDA STEINKE
Millet, Alberta, Canada

I thank God for the *Adventist World*. Every month I look forward to it. The articles are informative as well as edifying.

I especially found interesting the article "Spiritual Perils," by Roy Adams (May 2010). One must be attentive

and not let secular ideas separate us from the true God.

LUCIMAGNA AGUIAR
Limeira, São Paulo, Brazil

Information and Inspiration

Thank you for this extraordinary publication. It reveals how our church is moving forward and upward.

EZEKIEL S. RUEDA
Colombia

Through the magazine I have always followed the church and its mission in Brazil. This year through *Adventist World* I have followed the church and its mission worldwide. This mission has increased by the hand of God, His angels, and His chosen people. It is wonderful. I am happy to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

HÉLIO JOÃO-CABO
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

I love *Adventist World*. I use Mark Finley's Bible study section to teach Bible and English to my students at the Seventh-day Adventist Language School in South Korea. I have a Bible study club every Saturday afternoon and print out this section—I print the English version and the Korean version. Many of the university students are poor, and they don't have iPads or iPods. They are benefiting from these studies.

GIOVANNI SABERON
Gumi City, South Korea

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



THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I am new to Adventism. Please pray for me to grow in faith, and for my parents to accept my religion.

CHARLENE, *Zimbabwe*

Let's all pray for more faith and love in Jesus. May the things of this world not disturb our beliefs and faith. Pray for my family and my health.

VALERIA, *Brazil*

Please pray for my sister. She is serving as a missionary teacher and has experienced some discrimination in her mission field. Pray that God will intervene. Also, she needs some winter clothes and comforters. She has

difficulty with the cold weather.

JACOB, *Philippines*

Pray for me, please. I am HIV positive and have cancer as a result.

JOSEPH, *Malawi*

Please pray for us. My mother has cancer and her condition is advanced. Please pray for her and my family to be protected in these difficult times.

MARTHA, *Peru*

Please pray that God's hand will be over a young woman in her divorce and child custody situation. We need His power and intervention for a

satisfactory conclusion to a difficult set of circumstances, and His peace for all.

TIA, *United States*

I need prayer about spiritual struggles. I haven't been to church in a long time and have not respected the Sabbath like I should.

ANONYMOUS

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

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

Gracious
Redeemer

A reader shares Christ-centered lyrics to widely known classical piece.

In my article “Spiritual Perils” (May 2010) I spoke briefly about the theological problems in the lyrics of “Ave Maria,” a Catholic liturgical prayer since the fifteenth century. At the same time I expressed my fascination with its music, composed by Franz Schubert (Op. 52, No. 6). The remark led Sandra A. Haynes of our Roseburg Adventist Church in Roseburg, Oregon, United States, to share with me alternative lyrics she’s composed to fit the tune.*

Here is Haynes’ “Gracious Redeemer”:

Gracious Redeemer, Maker of earth and sea and sky,
O come before Him with thanksgiving,
And humbly now to your Maker draw nigh,
Offer up your silent petitions there,
He will acknowledge your prayer.
The Son of Man, by death our sacrifice,
The King of kings, and the great I AM,
We wait the coming resurrection,
When those in Christ shall see the Lamb.
Gracious Redeemer.

Gracious Redeemer, Lamb from the world’s foundation slain,
This earthly pilgrimage departing,
We seek a better land above,
Where all is peace and heavenly joy,
Blessed by the Savior’s love.
For He alone is worthy of our praise,
No other name must be lifted on high,
Savior, plead our case in Your mercy,
O Jesus, now to Your people draw nigh.
Gracious Redeemer.

Gracious Redeemer, Lord of the holy Sabbath day,
Emmanuel, our God is with us,
Conceived by earthly maiden mild,
Rose of Sharon, bloom in our hearts with Your love,
Save in the tempest wild.
We give You thanks as grateful children,
And baptized from our sins by Your grace,
We seek the rare and heavenly moment,
We view Your radiant, glorious face.
Gracious Redeemer

* To listen to Sandra’s own performance of the piece, go to <http://roseburg.adventistnw.org>; click on “Special Music Library”; then select April 10, 2010.

—SUBMITTED BY ROY ADAMS, former associate editor, Adventist World



“Behold, I come quickly...”

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

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Vol. 6, No. 12

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



SUBMITTED BY EDWIN BANERJEE

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

ADVENTIST QUOTES (profound or spontaneous)

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

JOTS AND TITLES (church-related tips)

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

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

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

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Safety is found not in the absence of danger, but in the presence of God.”

—Malaika Latag, La Island, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines, taken from the August 2010 *Gospel Outreach* newsletter

ADVENTIST LIFE

I want to be able to peer into the brain of a child and see what is going on in there.

Recently I invited Isabella, our 2-year-old granddaughter, to get a book so Grandma could read her a story. As she left the room I said, “Bring a Sabbath book because today is Sabbath.”

She quickly went on her way. Her father and I did not see where she went and commented that we thought she could not really know the difference between what is a Sabbath book and what is not. We had previously selected her books and not much mention had been made of “Sabbath books.”

In moments she returned, carrying, ever so carefully, my heavy study Bible. She delivered it with her beaming smile. She stood so proudly before me. You can be certain that I positioned her on my lap and proceeded to show her my Bible, reading to her two simple texts from 1 John. Then she and I went to search out other Sabbath books for us to read together.

What has been stored in that little curly head? We have never had a conversation about Grandma's Bible. She sees me in my worship chair occasionally, but nothing more. I've simply not explained. What is being stored that I am unaware of? This experience was humbling, to say the least!

—Linda Steinke, Millet, Alberta, Canada



ADAM LAMBERT-GORWYN

ANSWER: At the Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College (BASC) in Gowalbarhan, Gazipur, Bangladesh. Mrinal S. Halder, chairperson of the BBA (bachelor's of business administration) department, poses with his departmental students. Most of these students are graduating in December 2010.