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ADVENTIST WORLD



An urgent appeal for
Revival, Reformation, Discipleship,
& Evangelism

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WORLD VIEW

Praying for the Rainy Season

“Into each life some rain must fall.”

The poet’s proverb¹ reminds us of the inevitability of disappointment and discomfort in our lives. Rain is his metaphor for all that keeps us from living in perpetual sunshine.

But to a parched people and a languishing landscape, the inevitability of rain reads more like a promise, or even a prophecy: *“Into each life some rain must fall.”*

Around the world, God’s people lift up hands to heaven to pray for promised latter rain. We do so with the holy boldness of believers confident that this is one plea heaven can’t refuse to answer: “Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month” (Joel 2:23).

This special edition of *Adventist World* is focused on a call to Seventh-day Adventists around the globe to open their lives to a new experience of revival and reformation. Unlike any other edition in the five-year history of this journal, this issue clusters readings and resources designed to call your attention to God’s desire to renew His people.

“God’s Promised Gift” (page 8) is a compelling call to personal and corporate revival unanimously voted by the delegates at October’s Annual Council meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee. Read it carefully—and prayerfully.

WORLD REPORT

Inter-America: Church Grants Commissioned Minister Credentials to Eight Employees

■ Seventh-day Adventist leaders of the church in Inter-America recognized the service of eight of its church employees by granting commissioned minister credentials during a special ceremony held at the Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Fort-de-France, Martinique, on November 6, 2010. The ceremony took place at the end of the church’s executive committee meetings.

“We are communicating that the

leaders of the division are committed, consecrated people able to do a quality job under the leadership of the Holy Spirit,” said Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America. “This is why we have had this commissioning ceremony: To give witness to the division and gratitude to them for the faithful years they have served well.”

Five workers were granted commissioned minister credentials in

Gerald Klingbeil’s devotional, “The Nehemiah Story,” traces the narrative of one of the most important revivals in the history of Israel—with lessons for today.

“Why Not Now? Reflections on Revival” underscores the practical experiences and new attentiveness that will characterize any group of believers opening their lives to God’s latter rain power.

This month’s Spirit of Prophecy selection, “True Revival,” reminds us that the Word of God must be central to every genuine experience of renewal.

“Revival and Reformation Resources” offers readers a sampler of biblical material, devotional books, media materials, and Web sites that will call you and your congregation to prepare for the outpouring of Holy Spirit.

“Already Under Way,” an interview with a pastor whose church is currently experiencing revival, underlines the simple steps that draw congregations into a new awareness of God’s power.

And this month’s Fundamental Belief article, “Our Most Urgent Need,” reminds us that revival and reformation have one world-changing event in focus—the Second Coming of Christ.

Read this special edition when your heart is quiet and you have time to ponder and pray.

And get ready for the showers of blessing.

¹ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Rainy Day.”

— BILL KNOTT



CREDENTIAL PRESENTED: Héctor Sánchez, ministerial secretary for Inter-America, grants a commissioned minister credential to Dinorah Rivera, children’s ministries director for the church in Inter-America, during a special ceremony in Fort-de-France, Martinique, November 6, 2010.

LIBNA STEVENS/IAAD

WORLD REPORT

May. Two others, both women, were commissioned in 2006, marking the first such commissioning in the Inter-American Division (IAD). In total, there are now 15 men and women commissioned as ministers in active service in the IAD and its publishing association.

“This is the highest recognition the church can give to nonministerial workers, so we wanted them to have that assurance and that affirmation as they do their work in the division territory,” Leito said.

According to the church’s working policy, whenever an employing organization considers it prudent to offer commissioned minister credentials to any of its workers, a ceremony is held to officially confer upon such a worker this high honor of the organization’s approval of the service of the worker. It is also a ceremony that sends the worker forward to continue toward fulfillment of the mission through organizational service.

In order to be considered for the commissioned minister credential, the employee must be in regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church with more than five years of service, and be able to demonstrate proficiency in the assigned responsibilities.

Commissioned ministers may serve as associates in pastoral care, Bible instructors, treasurers, departmental directors, associate and assistant departmental directors, institutional chaplains, presidents and vice presidents of major institutions, auditors, and directors for Christian Record Services International, Inc. “In addition, such commissioned ministers are not normally on the path of ordination,” states the General Conference *Working Policy* (“Credentials and Licenses,” pp. 191, 192).

The ceremony was held to officially confer the special credential to IAD

employees Belkis Archbold, health ministries director, with 31 years of service; Myrna Costa, vice president, with 31 years of service; Leticia De Los Santos, Shepherdess coordinator, with 13 years of service; Cecilia Iglesias, women’s ministries director, with 26 years of service; Abel Márquez, associate communication director, with 18 years of service; Louise Nocandy, youth ministries director, with 30 years of service; Dinorah Rivera, children’s ministries director, with 28 years of service; and Faye Patterson, associate education director, with 28 years of service.

Ella Smith Simmons, a general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, delivered a special message during the ceremony to a packed church.

Simmons reflected on Matthew 25:1-13 and the need for the candidates to be constantly filled with the power of the Holy Spirit as they continue in the service of the mission of the church.

“We must shine as lights; we must set it out for the benefit of the cause,”

said Simmons as she reminded candidates to be different in the sight of God and ensure that evidence of what’s inside shines bright on the outside.

“This may be a high turn for you and the church,” continued Simmons, “but you must come down and walk on earth like Jesus did. This [commissioning] is for life; you don’t drop out when the going gets tough or you get tired. You are now bound to God in a special relationship.”

Before the prayer of commission, Héctor Sánchez, ministerial secretary for the church in Inter-America, charged those being commissioned to continue serving God.

“It is wonderful to work for God, to live for God, and to work for this wonderful church. May people see in you and be influenced by your determination and commitment to finish the work,” Sánchez said.

For Myrna Costa, one of three vice presidents for the church in Inter-America, the ceremony signaled a renewed commitment to her work.



SPECIAL CEREMONY: Eight Inter-American Division employees were granted commissioned minister credentials during a special ceremony in the Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fort-de-France, Martinique.

LIBNA STEVENS/IAD

“To me this caps my experience in working for the church; it gives me a thrust to go forward, to do more, to reach other goals and levels in the cause,” she said.

“This ceremony means recognition,” said Dinorah Rivera. “It empowers you to accomplish your mission with a stamp.” She added that while this credential does not change her responsibilities, it does inspire a renewed commitment to the mission of the church.

Elsewhere in the territory, men and women have been granted commissioned minister credentials in the Caribbean and the West Indies regions. Other church regions are open to granting such credentials in the near future, while other leaders agree that it may be in the future.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America has more than 3.3 million members worshipping in more than 10,395 churches and congregations. It operates dozens of education and health institutions, schools, and health food companies throughout its 21 church regions. —Reported by Libna Stevens, assistant communication director, Inter-America Division.

Russian Media Center Marks 20 Years of Sharing Gospel

■ It has been two decades since the call sign of the Voice of Hope Media Center in Tula, Russia, was transmitted for the first time in the largest country in the world. “It was nothing but a miracle, because the radio broadcasting stations of the Soviet Union, which had been built in order to spread Communist propaganda, now began broadcasting Christian programs,” says director Sergey Kuzmin.

The media center began as a small studio in a private house, and over the years it developed into a large media center with its own radio and televi-



VOICES OF HOPE: Staff of the Voice of Hope Media Center in Tula, Russia, which recently observed its twentieth anniversary.

ADVENTIST WORLD RADIO PHOTO

sion production. Its correspondence school has processed more than 1 million letters and packages, and the center has also hosted satellite TV evangelistic campaigns. Thousands of people have become acquainted with Christ as a result, and many of them have accepted Him as their Savior.

Approximately 1,000 church members, as well as representatives from the Moscow government, other denominations, and religious media, attended the anniversary celebration, held in the central Adventist church in Moscow. The Adventist artists who performed during the event had all recorded their music in the Voice of Hope studio over the years.

“Our radio program was the first religious media program broadcast in Russia after the fall of Communism in the Soviet Union,” said Peter Kulakov, the first Voice of Hope director.

Adventist World Radio has played a significant role during the media center’s 20-year history by sponsoring airtime on Radio Russia and other Russian stations and networks, broadcasting Russian programs through shortwave from its station on Guam, and starting Russian podcasts this year.

“Today we are doing our best so that through radio, television, and the Internet the biblical truth will reach the most remote parts not only of our country but also the whole planet,” Kuzmin says.

Listeners such as Francesca Skoro-

dumova are responding. She writes from the city of Novocherkassk, in the Rostov region: “I would like to thank you for the wonderful programs. When we wake up, the first thing that we do is turn on Radio of Russia in order to listen to your new program. It is with great pleasure that we listen to your radio interviews and talks about Christ, the Bible, and faith. Each time we are surprised at the spiritual condition that comes to us after we listen to your programs, because it feels as if healing oil has been poured [out].” —Reported by Shelley Nolan Freesland, *Adventist World Radio*.

Philippines: Education Department Specifies Right to Sabbath Observance

■ The Philippines Department of Education recently solidified its support of freedom of religious expression for students wishing to be exempt from Saturday school classes and activities.

A recent departmental order is already allowing Seventh-day Adventist students to successfully petition teachers for exemption from Saturday classes and exams. The order is a follow-up to a January 2010 memo granting exemption for Adventist members working as Education Department personnel from attending professional development and exams held on Saturdays.

“I am glad [this order] came, and I am sure our students will greatly rejoice over this new development,”

said Jonathan Catolico, director of public affairs and religious liberty for the denomination's Southern Asia-Pacific region.

The October 14, 2010, order said in part: "Personnel and students belonging to any religious group where Saturday is their rest or 'church day' should not be required to attend seminars, examinations, special classes, trainings and other school activities on Saturdays."

The order also states that students who incur absences on Saturdays because of religious worship will not have their grades reduced.

Catolico credited Congresswoman Daryl Grace Abayon, who he said had received complaints from Adventist students who felt excluded by the January memo. Abayon wrote to Education Secretary Armin Luistro to address the concerns, Catolico said.

Several students have already made use of the order. "It helped me to explain to my teachers that Adventists are worshipping on Saturdays, and now I am exempted on my Saturday classes," said Ralph Waldo Camay Realisan, a fourth-year student at Young Achievers International School in Manila.

Care Mae Aguirre, a student at E. Rodriguez High School, said her grades had been reduced after the school required Saturday classes last year following school time lost to typhoons. "This [order] will cause a great relief for the students that are worrying too much about their studies," she said.

Her father, Eric Aguirre, a member of PUC Remnant Adventist Church, said, "As parents, through this order, we will no longer have to explain to the teachers why our children must be in the church, not in the school."

"I hope that through this we can teach the Adventist students to stand for the Sabbath," Aguirre said.

—Reported by Ron Genebago, Adventist News Network.

WORLD REPORT

Outreach to Miners *Repaid at* Evangelism Event

Two rescued Chilean miners appear at Robert Costa's campaign

Two of the miners rescued from 2,100 feet below ground at Copiapó, Chile, were interviewed by Robert Costa, a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist who recently became an associate ministerial secretary for the General Conference, during an October 2010 satellite campaign held in Santiago, the nation's capital.

"We were not 33 [underground]," one of the miners told Costa. "We were 34 —because Jesus was with us."

The Time of Hope evangelistic series originated in Santiago, but was relayed via satellite to 17,000 additional locations, Costa said in an interview. Estimates are that some 2 million people saw the programs, via live satellite or cable broadcast and DVD recordings.

A prominent feature of the meetings was the brief interviews with the two miners, Costa said. Though neither is a Seventh-day Adventist, the two miners, including Mario Sepúlveda, who emerged from the mine with gifts of rocks for his rescuers, feel close to Pastor Carlos Parra Díaz, the Adventist pastor who arranged for 33 miniature Bibles to be sent down to the trapped miners.

"This book brought us hope, hope that something good is going to happen," one of the miners told Costa.

Costa also displayed a Chilean flag signed by each of the miners, on which gratitude is expressed to those who encouraged them,



Top to bottom: FLAG OF THANKS: Flag signed by 33 trapped Chilean miners is dedicated to Asaf, a Seventh-day Adventist musical group. Adventist pastor Carlos Parra Díaz arranged for miniature Bibles to be sent to the miners, who appreciated his help. **EVANGELIST IN CHILE:**

Robert Costa, now an associate ministerial secretary for the General Conference, with his wife, Nancy. Costa preached an October 2010 satellite evangelism series in Santiago, Chile, where two of the liberated miners spoke.

MARK A. KELLNER/ADVENTIST WORLD

including Asaf, an Adventist singing group that sent recordings down to the trapped workers.

Meanwhile, family members of the first miners rescued from the San José mine are excited and surprised not only at the impact of seeing their family members again, but also to see that some of them were wearing a t-shirt with a spiritual message over their rescue suits, the South American Division reported.

According to the Terra Web site, “The T-shirts have a large white star over a blue and red square on the chest, with writing of Gracias ‘Señor!’ [Thank You, Lord].” Above that is also written, “In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. To God be the honor and glory” which corresponds with Psalm 95:4.

Pastor Carlos Parra Diaz, of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the region of Atacama, told Terra that the T-shirt’s message is precious and that the miners kept their use a secret.

Alberto Segovia, brother of David Segovia, one of the 33 miners, was pleasantly surprised. “We did not think that they would come out with them, only with the green rescue clothes, but when we saw the first with the T-shirt, I was surprised,” he said.

Segovia believes that the fact that they used the T-shirt with this message makes it clear that the miners are emerging spiritually renewed from the earth. “[David] told me that after he leaves here, the first thing he will go to do is go to a church to thank God,” he stated.

On August 5 a landslide in the San José mine in Copiapó left 33 workers trapped in a passageway nearly 2,100 feet (700 meters) deep. After 17 days the rescue teams succeeded in contacting the group and discovered through a note sent to the surface that they were all alive. From then on, the operation to get them safely out of the mine began.

The pipeline excavation that reached the miners lasted 33 days. The process ended on Saturday, when the drills reached the refuge where they were. After this step the rescue teams decided to reinforce the pipeline, although partially, to increase the safety before taking them out. Workers were hoisted into the capsule Phoenix II, which has a diameter of approximately 21 inches (53 centimeters), for the journey to freedom. ●

—Reported by Mark A. Kellner, news editor, Adventist World, with additional information from Felipe Lemos, South American Division.

General Conference Executive Committee members on October 11, 2010, at the church's world headquarters voted to endorse the following document, a call for revival, reformation, discipleship, and evangelism among church leaders and members worldwide. —EDITORS.

God has uniquely called the Seventh-day Adventist Church both to live and to proclaim His last-day message of love and truth to the world (Revelation 14:6-12). The challenge of reaching the more than 6 billion people on planet Earth with His end-time message seems impossible. The task is overwhelming. From a human perspective, the rapid fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission anytime soon appears unlikely (Matthew 28:19, 20).

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.

Christ's Promise to His New Testament Church

The challenge of taking the gospel to the world is not new. The disciples faced this challenge in the first century. We face it in the twenty-first century. The New Testament church was seemingly confronted with an impossible task. But empowered by the Holy Spirit the church exploded in growth (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31). These early Christians shared their faith everywhere (Acts 5:42).

The grace of God overflowed from their hearts to their families, friends, and working associates. Just

GOD'S *Pro*



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*An urgent
appeal for
revival,
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&
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a few decades after the Crucifixion, the apostle Paul could report that the gospel is “preached to every creature under heaven” (Colossians 1:23). How was it possible for an obscure group of relatively insignificant believers to impact the world in such a short

amount of time? How could so few Christians be used of God to change the world forever?

Christ’s Great Commission was accompanied by His great promise. The Savior commanded His disciples “not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). The Savior promised: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The love of Christ controlled every aspect of the lives of the disciples and moved them to a passionate commitment to His service. They sought God for the promised power of the Holy Spirit and knelt before Him in heartfelt confession and earnest repentance. They placed priority on seeking Heaven’s blessing. They set aside times for prayer and searching the Scriptures. Their petty differences were swallowed up in their all-consuming desire to share Christ’s love with everyone they met. They were absorbed in reaching the world with the gospel. Nothing was more important. They recognized that they were powerless to accomplish the mission without the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Describing the experience of the disciples, Ellen White wrote: “Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship.... Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them.... The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ promised” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37).

Christ fulfilled His Word. The Holy Spirit was poured out in Pentecostal power. Thousands were converted in a day. The message of Christ’s love impacted the world. In a short time the name of Jesus Christ was on the lips of men and women everywhere. “By the co-operation of the divine Spirit, the apostles did a work that shook the world. To every nation was the gospel carried in a single generation” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 593).

Christ’s Promise to His End-time Church

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in the early rain was only a prelude of what is to come. God has promised to pour out His Holy Spirit in abundance in the last days (Joel 2:23; Zechariah 10:1). The earth will be “illuminated with his glory” (Revelation 18:1). The work of God on earth will be finished rapidly (Matthew 24:14; Romans 9:28). The church will experience a spiritual revival and the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s power like never before in its history. Speaking of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter gives us this assurance:

“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). Ellen White adds: “Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 464).

Hundreds of thousands of people will accept God’s last-day message through the teaching and preaching of His Word. Prayer, Bible study, and witness are the elements of all true revival. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit will intensify as the end approaches: “Near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man” (*The Faith I Live By*, p. 333) and “By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 612).

There is nothing more important than knowing Jesus, studying His Word, understanding His truth, and seeking His promise for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter-rain power for the fulfilling of the gospel commission. God’s last-day prophet to the remnant wrote in words too plain to be misunderstood: “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121).

If a genuine spiritual revival is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs, should we not as leaders place priority on seeking Heaven’s promised blessing with all our hearts?

Our Great Need: Revival and Reformation

When we seek Jesus, He fills us with His presence and power through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We long to know Him better. The Holy Spirit reawakens the dormant spiritual faculties of the soul. There is nothing we desire more than to have a deep and life-changing relationship with Jesus. The revived heart experiences a vital connection to Jesus through prayer and the Word. Reformation is the corresponding change that comes into our lives as the result of revival.

“A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. 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. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 128). Reformation does not manifest itself in a self-righteous attitude that condemns others. It is the transformation of character that reveals the fruits of the Spirit in the life (Galatians 5:22-24). Obedience to God’s will is the evidence of all true revival. Our Lord longs for a revived people whose lives reflect the loveliness of His character. There is nothing that Jesus desires more than a people who are passionate about personally knowing His love and sharing that love with others.

Commitment and Appeal

As leaders and representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church assembled at the world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States of America, for the 2010 Annual Council, we give thanks to our great and awesome God for His faithfulness and abundant blessings to His church since its inception. The rapid worldwide expansion of His church in both its membership and institutions is nothing short of a miracle of God. Although we praise Him for marvelously working to fulfill His



*More than
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purposes through His church, and thank Him for the godly leaders who have guided His people in the past, we humbly acknowledge that because of our human frailties even our best efforts are tainted by sin and in need of cleansing through the grace of Christ. We recognize that we have not always placed priority on seeking God through prayer and His Word for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter-rain power. We humbly confess that in our personal lives, our administrative practices, and committee meetings we too often have labored in our own strength. Too often God's mission of saving a lost world has not taken first place in our hearts. At times in our busyness doing good things we have neglected the most important thing—knowing Him. Too often petty jealousies, ambitions, and fractured personal relationships have crowded out our longing for revival and reformation and caused us to labor in our human strength rather than in His divine power.

We accept the clear instruction of our Lord that “the lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ’s parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50).

We are confident that all heaven is waiting to pour out the Holy Spirit in infinite power for the finishing of God’s work on earth. We acknowledge that the coming of Jesus has been delayed and that our Lord longed to come decades ago. We repent of our lukewarmness, our worldliness, and our limited passion for Christ and His mission. We sense Christ calling

us to a deeper relationship with Him in prayer and Bible study and a more passionate commitment to share His last-day message with the world. We rejoice that “it is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of the Saviour” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600).

Therefore, as representatives of the world church and on behalf of our entire membership, we commit ourselves:

- 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.

We especially recognize that God is going to use children and youth in this last mighty revival and encourage all our young people to participate in seeking God for spiritual revival in their own lives and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to share their faith with others.

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.

We believe that the purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter-rain power is to finish Christ’s mission on earth so He can come quickly. Recognizing that our Lord will only pour out His Spirit in its fullness on a church that has a passion for lost people, we determine to place and maintain revival, reformation, discipleship, and evangelism at the top of all our church business agendas. More than anything else we long for Jesus to come.

We urge every church administrator, departmental leader, institutional worker, health worker, literature evangelist, chaplain, educator, pastor, and church member to join us in making revival, reformation, discipleship, and evangelism the most important and urgent priorities of our personal lives and our areas of ministry. We are confident that as we seek Him together, God will pour out His Holy Spirit in abundant measure, the work of God on earth will be finished, and Jesus will come. With the aged apostle John on the Isle of Patmos we cry out, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). ●

It had been a time of utter darkness for God's people.

With Jerusalem in ashes, the Temple destroyed, and most of the people in Babylonian exile the situation seemed hopeless. But then God had done the impossible. Babylon had fallen and the new superpower of Medo-Persia allowed God's people to return to their home—the Promised Land—in a second exodus. The Lord had “stirred

access to great universities, and what would they return to? A destroyed city, neglected fields, unfriendly neighbors, and a dangerous location somewhere on the fringe of the empire between Egypt and Mesopotamia.

When we read the first chapters of the book of Ezra we immediately recognize the immensity of the task and the many problems (cf. Ezra 3–7). However, a careful look at the larger picture tells us

there is silence for many decades. We jump to the year 445 B.C., roughly 70 years after the reconstruction of the Temple, and Jerusalem is in trouble. Nehemiah, a high ranking official at the Persian court, receives bad news about Jerusalem, and in one of the great prayers of Scripture he brings his anguish before the Lord (Neh. 1:1-11). He confesses his sins and the sins of his people, but he also claims

The Nehemiah Story

Paying close attention at a biblical revival meeting

By GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

up the spirit of Cyrus” (Ezra 1:1), the Persian king; and when God moves on a heart, who cannot respond in kind?

Tough Beginnings

Based on extrabiblical documents, name lists, seals, and other inscriptions, scholars estimate that the roughly 50,000 people (Ezra 2:64, 65) who returned under Zerubbabel represented only a small number of the Jews living in the Medo-Persian Empire.¹ Many had settled down nicely and did not want to move. The mortgage was nearly paid off. Life under the new regime was good, their children had

that the issue was bigger than a destroyed city and major opposition from the outside. The prophet Haggai tells us that the returnees had a *spiritual problem*: they struggled with warped priorities, worldliness, selfishness—and soon had to recognize that without putting first things first their efforts would not amount to anything (Haggai 1:2-11).

Enter Nehemiah

Scripture tells us that the temple was finally rebuilt about 20 years after the return from exile and that the Jewish community celebrated their first Passover (Ezra 6:13-22). But then

the divine promises of renewal and transformation (verses 8, 9). As he prays he seems to recognize that he is not only part of the problem (see his confession) but needs to also be part of God's solution.

Still praying, but with trembling heart and wobbly knees, Nehemiah approaches his boss, who happens to be an absolute monarch whose simple gesture or word is enough to end one's life in an instant. God does another miracle and Nehemiah leaves Persia, empowered by the Persian king, in an official government capacity. He now has the clout to make things happen.



Revival in Jerusalem

Jerusalem is defenseless, its walls neglected and destroyed, its hostile neighbors gloating. Nehemiah inspects the damage in a secret night operation (Neh. 2:11-16), then sets out to work. However, he realizes that this great work requires a community, and, describing God’s recent blessing at the Persian court, Nehemiah invites the leaders to join in the great work



AMY BURTON

of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:17-20).

You remember his single-mindedness. Nobody and nothing is going to stop him—and, God be praised, Jerusalem’s walls were rebuilt in record time (cf. Neh. 3, 4, 6, 7). But revival and reformation is not just a matter of action. It calls us back to basics. And as we continue reading the Nehemiah story we are part of a great public assembly in Jerusalem during the seventh month.² Ezra, the priest, reappears in the story and reads from the Torah, the law, referring most likely to the Pentateuch (Neh. 8:1-3),

taking turns with other Levites. Everybody listens for hours—concentration spans must have been longer in those days.

One of the keywords of this revival meeting is the term *understand*, which appears six times (8:2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12) in the chapter. Men and women, young and old, understood that their lives were not in harmony with God’s Word—and they weep and mourn (Neh. 8:9), so much so that Ezra and Nehemiah need to remind them that God’s grace is all-sufficient. As a matter of fact, the joy of the Lord is their strength (and ours as well), exhorts Nehemiah (8:10).

What Can We Learn?

Something important began on that day in Jerusalem—a revival that involved the clear recognition that God and sin do not go together; and that also led to changed relations among the members of the postexilic community. Here are some key elements of biblical revival that we can glean from Nehemiah’s story:

1. Revival is not a one-time event but a constant (and conscious) decision. We read about other revivals in the postexilic community (e.g., Ezra 3 and 10), and prior to that we have numerous examples of revival in earlier periods. Revival needs to be a daily commitment.

2. Revival is Scripture-based, not focused on emotions and the right accompanying music or group dynamics. When God’s people are confronted with divine revelation, when they look into the mirror of God’s Word and recognize who they really are (yes, we are sinners!), revival happens.

3. Revival in God’s people involves a community: women and men, young and old, rich and poor—all came together to listen to the Word—and they responded as a community. While it’s true that personal revival

is a daily commitment, there are key moments in the life of a church in which the momentum of personal revival leads to a corporate revival.

4. Revival is not focusing upon a revival leader. Yes, Nehemiah and Ezra were strong leaders and had a burden for Jerusalem and its troubles. But they could only move forward when others also caught the vision. They *led*, but they did *not generate* the revival.

5. Revival looks at the big picture and avoids being sidetracked by outside distractions. I am sure Jerusalem’s enemies wanted the city to focus upon its problems. However, instead, the faith community focused upon God’s Word and His message for its time.

Restore Us, O Lord

Do you feel in need of this personal renewal of your spiritual life? Is your time with Scripture and in prayer limited by too-busy schedules and too many (even helpful) appointments? Nehemiah’s story is personal and, at the same time, far-reaching. He must have often read in the Psalms about this restorer-God: “Restore us, O God; cause your face to shine, and we shall be saved!” (Ps. 80:3). God did let His face shine upon His people—and He is ready to do it again. ●

¹ Compare the discussion in Laurie E. Pearce, “New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming, eds. (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 399-412, and additional bibliography there.

² The Old Testament seventh month, corresponding to September/October of our calendar, is important in the Jewish religious system. Three key events fall in this month, including the feast of trumpets (Lev. 23:24), the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), and the festival of booths (Lev. 23:34). It is really a revival and reformation month!



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During the Annual Council gathering of representatives of the world church of Seventh-day Adventists, October 8-13, 2010, at the General Conference headquarters, God's presence was felt in a marked way. Numerous delegates shared the significant spiritual impact the meetings had on their lives.

The theme of the Annual Council was "Revival for Mission." The main item on the agenda was an emphasis on revival, reformation, discipleship, and evangelism. In addition to the morning devotionals, simple, earnest prayer sessions throughout the day and testimony meetings provided a setting for the Holy Spirit to work powerfully. The delegates voted a major document entitled, "God's Promised Gift: An Urgent Appeal for Revival, Reformation, Discipleship, and Evangelism." It's evident that God did something special. But this leads us to a number of questions: What are the hallmarks of true revival? Are there any dangers in being misled by counterfeit revivals? What is the ultimate goal of all revivals? How can the Annual Council document on revival be applied to divisions, unions, local fields, local churches, and our personal lives.

Hallmarks of True Revival

All true revival is characterized by three things: earnest, heartfelt prayer; a deep searching of the Bible; and a passionate commitment to win lost people. These three essentials of true revival are manifest in the disciples' experience in Acts. Jesus' promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not given without conditions. The disciples were to wait not in idleness but in united, earnest prayer and heartfelt supplication. And they did! The Acts narrative records, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:14). At the right moment, when the Redeemer was exalted at God's throne and the acceptance of His sacrifice acknowledged by the Father before the entire universe, the Holy Spirit was poured out in its fullness. Like these early disciples we are counseled, "It is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121). Without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit through prayer, we are powerless to face Satan's temptations and incapable of being effective witnesses for the Master.

The disciples bathed their lives in prayer and the study of God's Word. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was a masterful presentation based on the Old Testament evidence of Jesus as the Messiah. The 3,000 people baptized that day "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship" (Acts 2:42). The disciples "spoke the Word of God with

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Why Not Now?

Reflections on Revival





boldness” (Acts 4:31) and gave themselves “continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly” (verse 7). The authoritative truths of Scripture are the foundation of all revival and reformation. All true revivals are anchored in the Word of God. There is no genuine revival without a corresponding increased interest in Bible study. “There is nothing more calculated to energize the mind and strengthen the intellect than the study of the Word of God. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible” (*A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 69). As we read and meditate upon the Bible, the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible inspires us as we read its pages.

The purpose of our prayer and devotional life is not to achieve a degree of holiness that makes us superior to others. Instead, it helps us realize our need to come humbly before the Lord to receive His righteousness, grace, wisdom, and strength. It empowers us to reveal the loving character of Jesus to others so we can be powerful witnesses of His grace and truth. The disciples’ lives were focused on mission. The book *The Acts of the Apostles* opens with these words: “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world” (p. 9). The “disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ” (*Ibid.*, p. 37). Prayer without a clear focus on mission leads to self-righteousness and pharisaical pride. Mission without prayer leads to a powerless and ineffective witness. Prayer and mission without the foundation of God’s Word and His truth create a climate for doctrinal aberrations and heresy. Prayer, Bible study, and mission are the hallmarks of all true revival.

The Annual Council call to revival is the call of the Holy Spirit to a deeper experience with Jesus in anticipation of the latter-rain power for the final proclamation of the three angels’ messages. The current call for revival does not imply that the Holy Spirit has not been guiding, instructing, and empowering His church in the past. Without a doubt He has, and continues to do so. The remarkable growth rate of the church in recent years, the more than 1 million accessions a year, and the faithfulness of God’s people are clear indicators of the blessings of God. Yet, whatever the Holy Spirit has done for and through His people in the past is not sufficient for today. The Holy Spirit is calling us to a renewed experience now. We need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s final mission in this critical hour of Earth’s history just before Christ’s second coming. God has wanted to pour out the latter rain on His remnant church for many

years. It’s up to us to submit in humility before the Lord, asking for forgiveness for our pride and self-centeredness. We are told that “the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now.... We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it” (*Evangelism*, p. 701).

Our Lord urgently appeals to every member of the church to have a deeper relationship with Him in prayer, Bible study, and the study of the Spirit of Prophecy as manifested in the writings of Ellen G. White. He calls us to a deeper commitment to witness and evangelism. He invites us to seek the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the power of the latter rain to finish His work on earth. God’s mission must be accomplished in God’s power (see Zech. 10:1; Rom. 9:28; Rev. 18:1).

True and False Revivals

The devil hates revival. He will do anything he can to keep revival from happening among God’s people. The evil one knows that as the Holy Spirit is poured out in latter-rain power, God’s work on earth will be finished. “There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 124). The fruits of a true revival are revealed in a transformed character that manifests the fruits of the Holy Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-24*). A genuine revival leads men and women to reveal the fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives. There is no true revival without repentance, confession, and obedience to God’s revealed will in His Word. Shallow, superficial revivalism primarily focusing on miraculous signs, physical manifestations, and wonders is a deception. God can and does work miracles. There will be a mighty manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s power in the last days. But here is the point: the major object of revival is not miracles; it’s a revelation of the loving character of Jesus in our lives and the desire to share His love and truth with others. Because Satan hates Jesus, he hates those who want to be like Jesus and witness for Him.

Throughout Christian history from Acts to the Reformation to the Advent movement, the devil has tried to counteract the influence of the heaven-anointed revival movements. “He [Satan] is working with all his insinuating, deceiving power, to lead men away from the third

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We believe God's dream of a finished work will soon be accomplished.



OLIVIA MADAKOR

angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with mighty power. If Satan sees that the Lord is blessing His people and preparing them to discern his delusions, he will work with his master power to bring in fanaticism on the one hand and cold formalism on the other, that he may gather in a harvest of souls" (*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 19). When genuine revival occurs, then churches "petrified by formalism" are set ablaze with new life in Christ. The "form of godliness" that characterizes Laodicean complacency in so many churches gives way to earnest prayer, serious Bible study, and enthusiastic witness. In genuine Holy Spirit-led revivals, God's people are not caught up in an emotional excitement and enamored with signs and wonders. They are in love with Jesus, committed to the truths of His Word, and long to share Jesus and His end-time truths. In other

words, true Heaven-ordained revival is balanced and not extremist in fanatical behavior or uniquely emotional demonstration. It's focused on Jesus and His Word and finds expression in witness and service.

God's Goal for All Revival

The question must be asked, "Revival for what?" The answer is: the purpose of all revival is to know Him better so we can share Him more. Revival is not a means for the church to have some warm, fuzzy spiritual experience. Revival provides the motivation and power for mission. The more we love Jesus, the more we desire to share Jesus' love; and the more we share Jesus' love, the more we will love Jesus. Mission is not only the goal of revival but part of the means of revival. We are drawn nearer to Jesus by sharing His love with others. "God could have reached His objective in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice—we must participate in His labors for their redemption" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 142). When the church fails to place priority on soul winning, it dies spiritually. "The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission. To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay. Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim" (*Ibid.*, p. 825).

Revival does not lead to "sanctified self-righteousness." It leads to evangelism. Its passion is winning lost people. Its goal is men and women redeemed for the kingdom of God. Its heart cry is for fellowship with Jesus and His redeemed people throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

The Annual Council Appeal to You and to Your Church

We believe God's dream of a finished work will soon be accomplished. The latter rain of the Holy Spirit will be poured out without measure. Christ's mission on earth will be finished. Jesus will come soon. Will you join us in personally accepting this call to a deeper spiritual experience through prayer, Bible study, study of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, and pleading with God for the latter rain? Will you commit your life to sharing His truth, proclaiming the three angels' messages, living a life of Christian service, and being a witness for Him? Will you pray for your brothers and sisters of this mighty Advent movement around the world as the church humbles itself before the Lord for the last warning to this dying world? Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will be poured out mightily upon God's people and Jesus will come soon.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). ●

Spiritual Health

By ALLAN R.
HANDYSIDES and
PETER N. LANDLESS

I'm worried about my spiritual health. Our pastor is doing revival meetings, but having folk confessing sins and giving testimonies arouses a sense of suspicion in me that's disturbing. I feel guilty that I feel this way. What's wrong with me? Can you give me a spiritual prescription? I do want to be a good Christian.

From reading your question it's apparent that you're feeling guilty about not experiencing an emotional high over this revival process. Possibly you've seen this before and may have doubts about the sincerity of the revival in your church. You may be a different personality from others, and we need to make allowances for those differences.

Many of us fail to grasp that the Holy Spirit is not some "liquid-like power" or "vapor" that envelops one, but is a Person—the "Comforter," the "third Person of the Godhead." Spirituality is a *relationship* with the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the Father. To grow in spirituality is to fall in love with Jesus and to enjoy a relationship that is rich, mature, and ongoing.

We all need constant revival, renewal, healing, and a rewarding relationship, but, depending on one's personality, there are different ways of nurturing a relationship. We all don't fit the same mold.

God made each of us unique. Some of us are sober and intense; others are extroverted and flamboyant. Some pastors may strive to be "revivalists." They may have developed a "cookbook" approach to spirituality and feel that if you do "thus and so," you will become revived. For many, such structured processes do give results, but not for all.

Think of how people fall in love. Once the attraction is there, they can't do enough for their sweetheart. They think about that person all the time and say nice things. Some buy gifts for their loved one. They enjoy walks together on the beach, holding hands in the moonlight. Each person falls in love *their way*, in a manner that suits their personality.

God is able to be all things to all people, and He understands you. He's not worried about the *process* of your becoming His friend—as long as you *do* become His friend. The Spirit comes seeking to woo us. We often mistake the process for the whole objective.

Bible study and prayer are very important, yet how each of us reads the Bible may differ. One person may try to imagine being in the crowd and participating in the Bible story. Reading for 10 minutes, but then thinking about the story for the next 10 hours, can get some individuals into the story so intimately that they can feel the hair stand up on their neck as Lazarus comes forth. That is not to disparage the person who can read for a solid hour or two, but we must realize that people are different.

We definitely need a constant relationship with God. Reading the Word, meditation, and prayer are vital. Meditation and prayer should become

anytime or all-the-time activities, especially as we sense His presence.

After decades of marriage many marriage partners understand their spouse so well that they can finish their sentences. In good marriages love and respect for each other grow. That's the relationship God wants with us: natural and true, honest and open. Refocusing on God helps to revitalize the relationship, but it has to be done in ways that are natural.

Don't worry about the methodology someone else uses; become content with seeking God in the way *you* feel most comfortable. A revival of true godliness finds expression in gentleness, humility, compassion, and caring—a willingness to suffer rather than to hurt another. These are the fruits of sanctification, which is a lifetime of revival. ●



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True Revival

By ELLEN G. WHITE

Wherever the Word of God has been faithfully preached, results have followed that attested its divine origin. The Spirit of God accompanied the message of His servants, and the Word was with power. Sinners felt their consciences quickened. The “light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” illumined the secret chambers of their souls, and the hidden things of darkness were made manifest. Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. They had a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and felt the terror of appearing, in their guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. In anguish they cried out: “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” As the cross of Calvary, with its infinite sacrifice for the sins of men, was revealed, they saw that nothing but the merits of Christ could suffice to atone for their transgressions; this alone could reconcile man to God. With faith and humility they accepted the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Through the blood of Jesus they had “remission of sins that are past.” ...

Revivals brought deep heart-searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. Men and women prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of souls. The fruits of such revivals were seen in souls who shrank not at self-denial and sacrifice, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and trial for the sake of Christ. Men beheld a transformation in the lives of those who had professed the name of Jesus. The community was benefited by their influence. They gathered with Christ, and sowed to the Spirit, to reap life everlasting....

This is the result of the work of the Spirit of God. There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow men, the sinner may be sure that he has found peace with God. Such were the effects that in former years followed seasons of religious awakening. Judged by their fruits, they were known to be blessed of God in the salvation of men and the uplifting of humanity.


But many of the revivals of modern times have pre-



sented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving the darkness more dense than before.

Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the

In many of the revivals which have occurred during the last half century, the same influences have been at work, to a greater or less degree, that will be manifest in the more extensive movements of the future. There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need be deceived. In the light of God's Word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths



Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed.

imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.

With every truly converted soul the relation to God and to eternal things will be the great topic of life. But where, in the popular churches of today, is the spirit of consecration to God? The converts do not renounce their pride and love of the world. They are no more willing to deny self, to take up the cross, and follow the meek and lowly Jesus, than before their conversion. Religion has become the sport of infidels and skeptics because so many who bear its name are ignorant of its principles. The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from many of the churches. Picnics, church theatricals, church fairs, fine houses, personal display, have banished thoughts of God. Lands and goods and worldly occupations engross the mind, and things of eternal interest receive hardly a passing notice....

which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed. And by the rule which Christ Himself has given, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16), it is evident that these movements are not the work of the Spirit of God.

In the truths of His Word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. It is a neglect of these truths that has opened the door to the evils which are now becoming so widespread in the religious world. The nature and the importance of the law of God have been, to a great extent, lost sight of. A wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and the obligation of the divine law has led to errors in relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church. Here is to be found the secret of the lack of the Spirit and power of God in the revivals of our time. ●

This article has been excerpted from chapter 27 ("Modern Revivals") of the book *The Great Controversy*. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

REVIVAL & REFORMATION

RESOURCES

*Not sure how to start?
Consider the following.*

Compiled by SANDRA BLACKMER and KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN

These two pages contain a variety of resources and inspirational quotations to help bring revival and reformation to our readers and their congregations. For other resources relevant for your world region, contact your local Adventist publishing house or book centers. —EDITORS.

Bible Texts

■ **Psalm 85:6, 7:** “Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, Lord, and grant us Your salvation.”

■ **Isaiah 57:14, 15:** “And one shall say, ‘Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.’ For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”

■ **Romans 12:1, 2:** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that

you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

■ **1 Timothy 4:12:** “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Quotations From the Writings of Ellen G. White

■ “I tell you that there must be a thorough revival among us.... There must be confessions, repentance, and conversions. Many who are preaching the Word need the transforming grace of Christ in their hearts.” (letter 51, 1886, in *Last Day Events*, p. 189).

■ “Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish” (*My Life Today*, p. 15).

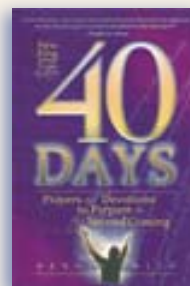
■ “The world will be convinced, not by what the pulpit teaches, but by what the church lives” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 16).



JAKE STROHAUER

Books, Study Guides, DVDs, and Brochures

■ **True Revival**, by Ellen G. White (2010, Review and Herald Publishing Association)—A recent compilation on revival and reformation in a small (94-page) paperback. A Spanish and Portuguese translation is in production. To order, go to www.adventistbookcenter.org.



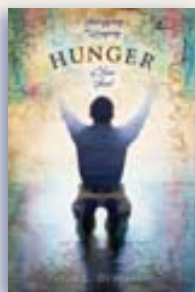
■ **40 Days: Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming (NKJV edition)**, by Dennis Smith (2010, Review and Herald Publishing Association)—

Daily devotional readings that focus on prayer and seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A Spanish translation is in production. To order, go to www.adventistbookcenter.org.

Sandra Blackmer and Kimberly Luste Maran are assistant editors of *Adventist World*.

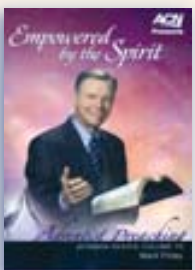


■ **Coming Together series**, by the Center for Creative Ministry (1999, distributed by AdventSource)—Four study guides designed to bring revival and reformation to local churches, Sabbath school classes, midweek meeting series, or small groups. There are 13 lessons each on prayer life, Bible study, personal witnessing, and contemplating Christ. The fifth volume is a leader’s guide for the series. To order, go to www.adventsource.org.



■ **Hunger: Satisfy the Longing of Your Soul**, by Jon L. Dybdahl (2008, Autumn House, distributed by Review and Herald Publishing Association)—A practical volume

that penetrates deep into the spiritual life of the reader. To order, go to www.adventistbookcenter.org.



■ **Empowered by the Spirit DVD** (2008, Adventist Communication Network, distributed by AdventSource)—Revival sermons by evangelist and *Adventist World* editor-at-large Mark

Finley. It includes five sermons on two disks plus an interview with Finley. To order, go to www.adventsource.org.

■ **Possibilities for Prayer Ministries in Your Home Church**, by Rick Remmers (order or download at www.nadadventist.org/article.php?id=200&action=print)—A brochure that outlines 20 easily instituted prayer ministries for local churches.

Adventist World/ Adventist Review Articles Featuring Revival and Reformation (online)

- “Everyday Revival and Reformation,” by Kathy Beagles, Feb. 16, 2006, *Adventist Review*, www.adventistreview.org/article.php?id=344.
- “Dreaming Revival,” by Fordson Chimoga, April 2007, *Adventist World*, www.adventistworld.org/article.php?id=54.
- “The World Is Waiting,” by H.M.S. Richards, Sr., June 2008, *Adventist World*, www.adventistworld.org/article.php?id=335&search=revival.
- “The Incendiary Fellowship,” by Bill Knott, October 2010, *Adventist World*, www.adventistworld.org/article.php?id=854&search=revival.

Web Sites

- **www.revivalandreformation.org:** a Web site serving as a clearinghouse for revival and reformation resources recommended and/or developed by the General Conference.
- **www.discipletree.com:** A Web site produced by Jim Park, professor of evangelism and mission at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (the General Conference university for the Northern Asia-Pacific and Southern Asia-Pacific divisions), who was for years a pastor and evangelist in California, United States. It includes many study guides for small groups, books, revival sermons, etc., on the theme of revival and reformation.
- **www.nadadventist.org/article.php?id=37:** A Web site that suggests numerous resources on the topic of prayer.

Online Access for International Resources

- **www.atc3004.org**
A Web site produced by the Adventist Training Center (Jaerimyeonsoowon) for prayer and spiritual revival and reformation has been established by Korean Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This Adventist Training Center has produced several programs for revival seminars, Christ-centered Bible lectures, sermons, personal prayer rooms, and “Trekking” courses.
- **www.iebc.org**
Used for revival and spiritual growth in churches and groups in the Franco-Belgian Union is “Osez grandir” (“Dare to Grow”), a written course of 16 lessons offered by the Bible Correspondence School in France. The complete set is available online for 2 euros. It is generally printed material, but also offered online to people who enroll as students in the school.
- **www.ellenwhitebooks.com/**
In Portuguese, to find the book entitled *Reavivamento e seus Resultados (Revival and Its Results)*, visit the above Web site and click on the title from the list of 162 available book titles. You can read through this book, as well as use the search tool near the bottom for specific words/topics.

Hymns From The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, 1985, Review and Herald Publishing Association

- “Jesus Is Coming Again,” by Jessie E. Strout, No. 213.
- “God Is Working His Purpose Out,” by Arthur C. Ainger, No. 225.
- “Take My Life and Let It Be,” by Frances Ridley Havergal, No. 330.
- “Father, Help Your People,” by Fred Kaan, No. 353.
- “Fill My Cup, Lord,” by Richard Blanchard, No. 493.
- “This Little Light of Mine,” arranged by Alma Blackmon, No. 580.

Already Under Way



SANDRA BLACKMER

Adventist World editor Bill Knott recently sat down with Pastor Brett Townend (left) from Murwillumbah, North New South Wales Conference, Australia, to talk about the remarkable changes occurring in Townend's 400-member congregation.

Your church is right now experiencing a time of renewal and revival that hundreds of other Adventist congregations are longing for. What is different now than was true 18 months ago?

There's a new level of enthusiasm for Bible study, for one thing. Prayerfulness is the second major difference from a year and a half ago. The third thing is a renewed interest in "What can we do for our community? How can we make contact with other people so we can share the gospel?" Three major things are different—a renewed interest in Bible, prayer, and reaching out to the community.

Were there specific steps you encouraged your church to take to prepare for revival?

First, we did an honest assessment of our condition as a church, and initially everything seemed to be going quite well. But what we discovered was that there was a lack of passionate spirituality. In other words, we were going through the motions, and everything looked good (maybe keeping up appearances), but we weren't really having a significant impact on anyone (lukewarm, I guess). So we asked, "What can we do about it?" The first thing we did as leaders—because we really didn't know what to do—was to say, "Well, let's get together each week, and let's simply spend time in prayer and see where that takes us."

Was the habit of meeting for prayer already well established in your congregation, or was this something new?

We had to build that habit. We simply announced that we would meet from 6:30 to 7:00 each Tuesday evening. We weren't asking for a huge chunk of time, but we had a specific time picked out. We focused on two things, revival for our church, and revival for our church school. We prayed for nearly 12 months as a leadership group before we began to see noticeable results in the life of the church—and we're still praying as they continue.

What did you gain personally from that experience?

One of the key things I learned was *This is God's church*. I had been feeling a lot of pressure as a pastor to be successful, but only His presence brings success. Then I learned, *Our school is God's school*. I was chair of the school council and feeling a lot of weight because of declining numbers: we needed 140 students to be viable, but finished the year with 103. As we prayed, we turned our biggest challenges over to God, and we said, "These are Yours. We want to do what You want us to do. It's Your church and Your school. Tell us where to go and what to do."

Your congregation now has 50 people coming out every week for Bible study, where previously there were only four or five. How did that start?

One of the best things that happened to us was a Bible reading program. I had always believed that prayer and Bible study were key elements of the Christian life, and I had been preaching and trying to encourage people in the Word. But if people aren't reading for themselves, it's like getting a snack on Sabbath morning and trying to live the rest of the week on that nourishment. At a seminar that several leaders attended we heard about a Bible reading program. So we asked ourselves, "What can we do between July and December to get people engaged with the Bible?" We decided, "Let's read the New Testament." We divided the New Testament into daily readings—usually a chapter a day, sometimes two chapters. And we gave everyone a



bookmark on which were printed three questions: *What is God saying to you personally through these readings? What do you think He's saying to us as a church community? And What can we do to respond to God's leading?* Within a few weeks a show of hands indicated 70 percent of the congregation was following the Bible reading program.

Seventy percent started reading the New Testament just because you offered them a plan and some direction?

I challenged them, saying, "We're supposed to be people of the Book; let's stop pretending!" We've actually gone through three reprinting of the bookmarks, because members started giving them away to friends and family members. They came to believe we were serious about Bible study, especially when I chose to preach about what was being read in the Bible.

You took your preaching topics from that Bible reading calendar?

It was a good discipline for me as a pastor: systematically preaching the Bible moves you into topics and truths you might not usually address. I began to offer introductions to the books of Scripture from the pulpit, helping members know what to expect in the text, helping them understand, for instance, why John wrote his Gospel. The church members reacted very positively to that approach.

Second, we decided to meet on Wednesday night for soup and buns, and then divided into groups to discuss what we had been reading. Some people were anxious about how groups would form and who would lead them, so we said, "Let's just make it simple. We've been reading God's Word; let's get together, eat together, and share His Word together." So that's what we did. And attendance jumped to nearly 50 people each Wednesday night.

What about the school?

In a little more than nine months, the enrollment has climbed from last year's finish of 103 to 153, and indications are that we'll start next year with 180. God answered our prayers and those of dedicated and committed staff.

This story gets very personal for you, for it involves your own son. Tell me about him.

My 17-year-old son is a great kid, but he had turned away from spiritual things because of very painful things that had happened in his life. When Lachlan was 14, his best friend died of cancer, even though the whole church community had prayed and prayed for him. Another boy in the same class died of cancer as well. For a 14-year-old, that's pretty hard. Then his grandmother also was diagnosed

with breast cancer, and she died as well.

He turned to sports—he's a very good basketball player—and immersed himself in the game, even getting himself selected to the regional under-18 team. But as the basketball success piled up, he just felt really, really empty. One day he decided, "Well, Dad keeps talking about this Bible reading, and others talk about it. What have I got to lose? I'll do it." So he started studying the Bible just about the time we actually launched the Bible reading program. He found the Lord for himself, and his life turned around. He shared his testimony at a school chapel service, and appealed to the other kids to find the Lord as well. He told them, "I want to start a youth group as part of our church's Wednesday night gathering; come and join me." Twelve or 13 showed up the first night, and now the group is nearly 30—a number from non-Adventist homes and seeking baptism.

And there's nothing more dramatic than gathering around Scripture? No games, no Christian rock concerts—

Nothing else. Soup and buns. Eating together and sharing the Word together.

And teenagers are finding that satisfying?

They're finding it very exciting—more than satisfying. Some of them have grown really serious about seeking the Lord for themselves.

You mentioned a third component to revival: reaching out to your community.

We decided, "Let's see if we can find some folk who really need some help." We work with a regional respite-care facility to identify people who are unwell or physically in need. We take a team of 20 people there and, in a couple of hours, transform the place. People ask us, "Well, what's the catch?" We tell them, "There is no catch. We believe as a church community that Jesus came to serve. We call ourselves His followers, and we're just here to serve. And we hope you're blessed by what we've done for you." We've received tremendous letters of response from people we've served. Young people get involved and are keen to do something practical with their faith.

I have a sense that God isn't finished with your congregation yet.

I think what God has in mind is to make us the kind of people that He wants us to be in sharing His love. Ours is a pretty secular country, but as we become a people of prayer, as we grow as students of the Word, our witness will make a practical, godly difference in the lives of our neighbors. ●

Our Most Urgent

I wish you had been there. Hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists crowded into the train station, waiting for the Metro to take them to the Georgia Dome. They sang, “We Have This Hope,” while others wondered about this joyous celebration. It was the final Sabbath of the General Conference session in July 2010. What a joy to be a Seventh-day Adventist! What a blessed hope we have!

The Signs of Christ’s Coming

Christ spoke about His return. You know His signs sermon, don’t you (Matt. 24; 25)? Did you notice the disciples’ question, “What will be the sign [singular] of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3)? Christ answered, “Take heed that no one deceives you” (verse 4), and went on to mention several signs. Was Christ ignoring their question? Or did He have a deeper burden beyond signs, even though signs are important? Finally, Christ pointed to His coming in the clouds as “the sign” (verse 30).

Christ spoke about false christs and prophets who will deceive (verses 5, 11, 24). But His ultimate concern was the preeminent false christ (Satan): “If they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it” (verse 26), for my coming will be like lightning flashing across the sky (verse 27; cf. 1 Thess. 4:16-18). “Don’t be deceived by Satan impersonating Me” was His warning (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14). “Only those who have been diligent

students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive.”¹

A Needy Church

Christ said that many end-time people would be cold (Matt. 24:12). That’s the culture surrounding the church. How about the church? Christ said His church thinks it needs nothing when it really needs everything—for Christ is kept outside (Rev. 3:14-22). Christ knew that some in the church would love pleasure more than God, “having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:5). Christ then told the parable of the 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). All 10 virgins fell asleep. The foolish virgins were like the others, except they lacked oil (verses 1-5, 8). Christ once said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). Christ wants His church to be filled, not satisfied with a little oil when they could have so much. Christ knew that sleeping virgins needed a revival and a reformation.

Christ said that people in Noah’s days were surprised when the Flood came and they were outside the ark. He said

His second coming would be a surprise like that (Matt. 24:38, 39). It would be like the coming of a thief, “at an hour you do not expect” (verse 44). “Wait a minute,” says one. “Wouldn’t we expect Christ’s coming after an international Sunday law, international death decree, and the seven last plagues? How could we be taken by surprise? “Important question,” comes the reply. “It’s not about signs, but about oil.” The 10 virgins know about these end-time signs, but five of them lacked sufficient oil. These went to buy oil, evidently got some, tried to gain entrance, but Christ said, “I do not know you” (Matt. 25:12). They must have had counterfeit oil (Matt. 7:21-23).

The Other Second Advent

Did you know there are two second advents? Christ’s and the Holy Spirit’s. The Spirit’s first advent, or former rain, was at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-39); and the second advent, or latter rain, is in the end-time (Joel 2:28-31). Consider the first advent of Christ. Was the Jewish nation ready for Him? No. Did He come according to their expectations? No. They looked for a Messiah to conquer the hated Romans and give them national freedom. They overlooked the quieter



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Need

By
NORMAN R. GULLEY

coming of Christ to save humans through His death. Just so today, our church looks forward to the conquering King of kings to liberate them from a hostile world (cf. Rev. 19:14-21; 13:1-8, 11-17); but some overlook the quieter coming of the latter rain to save them (through sealing them).

A global divine decree goes forth, “Hold back winds of strife so My people can be sealed” (see Rev. 7:1-4). The sealing is “a settling into the truth, both intellectually [know the truth] and spiritually [love the truth], so they cannot be moved.”² The latter rain seals us so we will remain true to Christ, come what may. This is God’s

insurance policy that nothing in the end-time will deceive us. The bottom line is this: If we are not ready for the second coming of the latter rain we will not be ready for the second coming of Christ. The good news is this: if we are ready for the second coming of the Holy Spirit, we will be ready for the second coming of Christ. Guaranteed!

Here Comes the Big One

There’s no sign to warn us that the latter rain is coming. Those who wait for the latter rain to get them ready will be too late.³ The latter rain doesn’t come to prepare us. That’s the work of the former rain. The

latter rain comes to seal us. We must be ready now—before He comes! His coming is the next event. Christ knows that some will abandon their faith and give heed to spirits of demons (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; get false oil), that some will resist the latter rain, because He does not come according to their expectations (similar to Christ’s first coming, when He was resisted and crucified).⁴ What an utter tragedy to resist the very power that guarantees a secure passage through end-time events. It doesn’t get any worse than that! To be unready for the coming of the latter rain is to experience the thief in the night.

Now is the crucial time in final events. I am praying to God for a deeper infilling of the Holy Spirit, to be ready, to be sealed, to give myself wholly every day to Christ and His will, to be totally dependent on Him. I long to receive the fullness of the latter rain, the holy oil, the sealing Spirit. This is my urgent need, and it is our urgent need. Let’s seek God now and be ready for the *other* second advent. Then we will be ready for Christ’s second coming. ●

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 625.

² Ellen G. White, Manuscript 173, 1902 in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 4, p. 1161.

³ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 71.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, pp. 209, 210.

Second Coming of CHRIST

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Savior’s coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the

righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ’s coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

Money is one of those things that we consider ours in a particular way. It represents the fraction of our lives that we accumulate through the investment of our energy and time. It is life preserved in liquid form; that is to say, we exchange it for almost any goods we may want or enjoy. Therefore we usually don't want others to tell us how to use it or what to do with it. For believers life is a gift from God, whether in the form of the breath of life or in the form of money. Therefore, it is to be used to the glory of God. With these comments as a background, let me address your specific concern.

1. The Owner of Tithe: Tithe is a percentage of the money that reaches us as the result of the investment of our time and energy. It is therefore natural to conclude that it is ours and that we should decide how to administer it. Here the Scripture surprises us by making a claim that is scientifically unverifiable. Tithe—the 10 percent of our income or increase—belongs to the Lord: “A tithe . . . belongs to the Lord [*Yahweh*]; it is holy to the Lord [*Yahweh*” (Lev. 27:30, NIV). From the human point of view all income is the result of the investment of our time and energy. Yet this text rejects that conclusion by indicating that a portion of our income/increase is fundamentally different from the rest of it. It is described by the Lord as “holy.” In this passage divine ownership is clearly emphasized by using the Hebrew preposition *le* (“belonging to”) two times, along with the word “holy.” The “holy” designates that which God set apart for His divine purpose that, therefore, belongs to Him. We do not consecrate tithe to the Lord; the Lord has already declared it holy. He has placed in our hands something that is holy, and we are sanctified when we, in obedience to His will, use it the way He intended us to use it.

2. Determining Proper Use: Once we acknowledge that tithe belongs to the Lord, the next questions would be Who has the authority to determine its purpose,

and who should receive it? The answer is obvious. If it belongs to God, He is the one who defines its purpose and destination. This was clearly the case in the Old Testament. “I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel . . . for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting” (Num. 18:21, NIV). Tithe is assigned by the Lord to a specific group within His people, and its purpose is to pay them for the work they do at the sanctuary on behalf of the people, a work assigned to them by God.

3. God Established a System: Not only were the purpose and use of tithe determined by God as the owner of tithe, but also the system through which tithe reached those appointed to receive it. The Israelites were to separate their tithe at home and bring it to the house of the Lord for the Levites (Num. 18:24; Mal. 3:10). The “storehouse” refers to rooms in the Temple employed to store the tithe that was to be distributed among the Levites. In other words, people were not free to give their tithe to whomever they wanted, or to deposit it in any

other place except the Temple. Specific persons were in charge of collecting and distributing it to the Levites and priests (2 Chron. 31:12, 13, 15, 16). In the church tithe is to be used only by those recognized by the church to be God's appointed instruments in the proclamation of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:13, 14).

We are expected to return tithe to the church through its local treasury, not send it to individuals or groups who run their own personal religious businesses. Let God's tithe be used by the Lord as He intended it: for the fulfillment of the mission of His church. ●

Holy to the LORD



QUESTION:

Is it correct to return tithe to any organization or individual who claims to be doing the work of the Lord?

By ANGEL
MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ

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



Deliverance *in* Trial

By MARK A. FINLEY

Throughout the Old Testament a few Bible heroes really stand out. They were noble men and women of faith, who were loyal to God in the midst of challenging circumstances: Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Esther, Elijah, David, and of course, Joseph. Joseph's life reveals God's constant blessings for those who trust Him in times of trial and difficulty.

In this lesson we will discover how the principles that guided Joseph's life can guide ours as well.

1. What mistake did Joseph's father, Jacob, make in raising his son?

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all of his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him" (Gen. 37:3, 4).

"Now Israel _____ Joseph _____ all of his children."

A parent's partiality to one child can easily create friction in a family. Joseph's brothers gradually developed an attitude of envy and jealousy toward him.

2. How did Joseph's actions contribute to his brothers' jealous attitudes?

"Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.... 'There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf'" (Gen. 37:5-7).

Not only did Joseph have a dream—he _____ it to his brothers.

Joseph's brothers were certainly responsible for their own attitudes and actions, but Joseph's unwise decision to tell them his dream contributed to the jealousy that was already growing in their hearts.

3. What did the jealousy in the hearts of Joseph's brothers make them willing to do?

"Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him" (Gen. 37:18).

They conspired to _____ him.

Jealousy and envy lead people to do things they would never imagine doing. But in this case God had other plans. Joseph was eventually sold as a slave to Egypt.

4. How did God honor Joseph, even as a slave?

"The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master [Potiphar] saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand" (Gen. 39:2, 3).

Potiphar saw that the Lord prospered _____, and everything he did _____ in his hand.

Throughout history God has especially blessed those who have been faithful to Him. He has given them a peace in the midst of their storms, strength in their trials, and wisdom in the face of overwhelming perplexities. God's favor has not always come in the form of material blessings, but at times it has.



5. When Potiphar’s wife attempted to lure Joseph into temptation, what was Joseph’s response?

“There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he [Potiphar] kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9).

Joseph said, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and _____ against _____?”

Joseph’s loyalty to God was stronger than the temptation placed before him. He would not dishonor God by indulging in the passions of his youthful heart. Potiphar’s wife was furious and accused Joseph falsely. Eventually Joseph was unjustly condemned and thrown into prison.

6. How did God honor Joseph’s choices, even in prison?

“But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison” (Gen. 39:21).

The Lord gave him _____ in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Read Genesis 40 and discover how God brought Joseph into further favor by allowing him to interpret the dreams of two other inmates.

7. When Pharaoh dreamed of seven fat cows and seven lean cows, seven full heads of grain and seven withered heads of grain, what was Joseph’s interpretation?

“Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land” (Gen. 41:29, 30).

“Seven years of _____ will come throughout the land; but after them seven years of _____ will arise.”

Pharaoh was amazed at the wisdom God gave Joseph, and appointed him second in command over the entire kingdom to oversee the storage and preservation of grain during the years of plenty so that the nation could survive the years of famine.

8. Years later, when Joseph met his brothers again, what was his testimony?

“Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about this day, to save many people alive’” (Gen. 50:19, 20).

“You meant _____ against me; but God meant it for _____.”

As Joseph looked back over his life, he had absolute confidence that God had guided him. He knew that in spite of the trials and difficulties he faced, God had worked things out for his good, and for the glory of heaven’s eternal purposes. Joseph honored God, and God blessed him.

When, even in difficult times, we place God first in our lives, He will bless us in remarkable ways. And, like Joseph, we will look back over our lives with remarkable confidence that God does all things well.



Next month’s Bible study, “**The Divine Helper**,” begins a new series about the Holy Spirit.

LETTERS

Then and Now

Thanks for “Can We Talk?” by Angel Manuel Rodríguez (October 2010). Some topics can’t be sorted out just by reading Scripture. There is more to it than just an “it is written,” because our time differs from biblical times so much; therefore biblical texts have to be interpreted.

I appreciated this article because it tells the truth—that many quarrels emerge just because of fear (liberal versus mainstream versus extreme right, etc.). I’m happy about being a member of a church that has, on one side, strong fundamentals, and also realizes, on the other side, that some topics contain various possibilities to transfer theology from theory to life.

I, too, agree that we must talk to and pray with each other much more, for God is the one who gives unity.

Please give some follow-ups in this style and cover some more issues like vegetarianism, jewelry, music, and others.

CHRISTIAN MACHER
Salzburg, Austria

Reading for Myself

I really enjoyed the article by Sylvia Renz, “Hungering for the Word” (October 2010). I identified so perfectly with her experience of the “I already know this” syndrome, and the mental blockades she described that distract us during our reading and study.



Still, it’s hard to explain, but the more I read the Word, the more precious it becomes. I’m finally starting to understand what always just seemed to me like a childish cliché: the Bible is God’s love letter to me. Reading it brings me peace.

Thank you for the article and for all the wonderful work that your publication does for God.

SUZETTE PETERSON
*Redlands, California,
United States*

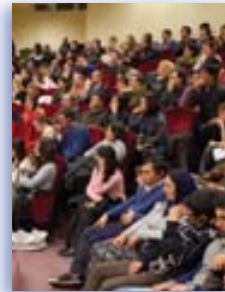
Doing Unto Others

I felt so sad when I read “Mustaq,” by Sudha Khristmukti (October 2010). I cannot believe people treat others as Mustaq was treated. Were these Adventist students? Why didn’t the teacher step in and offer to help Mustaq, or at least reprimand the other students for their un-Christlike behavior?

I felt so ashamed of the students. Why did it have to be pointed out to people of their age that he was poor? Couldn’t they tell? I found myself angry at his tormentors and at his teacher. I wanted to put my arm around him, pull him close to me, and let him know someone cared.

Unfortunately, it is not only young people who are guilty of snubbing or ridicule. We can find it of all ages right in our own churches. Aren’t we who call ourselves Christians supposed to be walking with Jesus toward sanctification? How can we call ourselves by Christ’s name when we treat others as Mustaq was treated?

JEAN CUMMINGS
Via E-mail



Tactfully Treated

I have worked for more than 10 years as director of a Bible class. We are currently studying with a group of 15

people. I was happy to read the article about evangelism in the city of Rome through the work of Shawn Boonstra, “Adventist Outreach Takes Rome by Storm” (July 2010).

Having lived in Europe, I well understand the difficulty of preaching the gospel in cities such as Rome. I am part of an outreach project aimed at the upper class. I am curious about how complex and controversial issues were addressed.

CARMEN SILVA
Salvador, Brazil



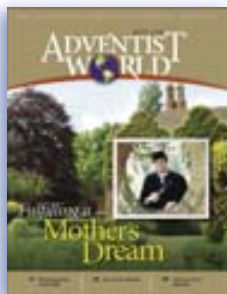
Instruction

I am a member in the Himo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania. I saw the *Adventist World* maga-

zine and “Beginning to ‘enditnow’” (May 2010). I read it and understand especially how Adventists should be. God bless all of you who participate in writing [for this magazine].

WILSON MJEMA
*Kilimanjaro, Moshi district,
Tanzania*

LETTERS



Outreach

I am a pastor of a Baptist church here in Malawi. I have read *Adventist World* and the story "Fulfilling a Mother's Dream," by

Samuel Neves (April 2008). After reading this, I decided to become an Adventist minister, but I don't know the procedure. I ask if you can give me the process.

LEONARD KAZEMBE
Blantyre, Malawi

Appreciation

Thanks for the international journal *Adventist World*. I got some magazines in Chillán, Chile. Congratulations for this publication with such interesting topics that inform and teach us so much. May God bless the ministry of this magazine.

JOSE ORLANDO SOTO OJEDA
Chillán, Chile

Congratulations for the *Adventist World* magazine. I like it. My favorite segment is The Place of Prayer, so we can pray for people from around the world and enrich our spiritual life.

Thank you and kind regards.

MARIA TERESA PASCUAL
Llaida, Spain

I receive *Adventist World* every month. I am thankful that it is edifying my spirit. God bless you.

ANGELA PAIEA
Cordeiro, Recife, Brazil

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



THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I urgently need your prayers for my financial hardship. I need to complete my tuition fee for this semester. Satan is working hard to disorganize the way that the Lord has prepared for me.

OCEN, *Uganda*

My family and I need financial blessings. Because of hardship my parents decided not to help to continue my second semester studies. I really don't want to stop my studies.

MAY ANN, *Philippines*

Please pray for our daughter who has been diagnosed with cancer. I would like prayers for her from all over the world.

JOANNE, *United States*

I completed my master's degree last May and am looking for a job. I am searching but not able to get into a company. I am becoming weak in my faith, though since childhood I have leaned on God for everything. Please keep me in your prayers.

CAROLINE, *India*

Readers of the *Adventist World* in Urdu are increasing every day. People are interested in studying the Bible. One person has urged almost 300 pastors to open the site and make sermons from it. Please pray for this ministry.

SALEEM, *Pakistan*

Thank you to all who have prayed for me. I requested prayer for my cancer last spring, and the indicators were very low in September. It has no cure, they say, but God does not know that.

RALPH, *United States*

Pray that the Holy Spirit will work on my husband's heart and give him light and understanding so that he can find Jesus again.

PETRA, *Germany*

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.

“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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EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

Rock Solid

This month a reader shares what a rock collection taught her about God.

Yard work has never been something I enjoy. As a youth I was responsible for the mowing of the lawn and the raking of the leaves. It was a year-round job, and I had wishes of having a yard full of treeless sand that needed neither raking nor mowing.

As an adult, I still do not enjoy the beautiful leaves in my yard as they fall to the ground. The grass seems to grow faster every year, and weeds pop out uninvited. My husband has severe allergies to grass, so I am alone in these chores.

I decided to collect rocks—large, beautiful rocks that need no maintenance and by the nature of their size would take up space on my yard, helping to eliminate the amount of work I had outside. Whenever we traveled, I would bring home a rock for a souvenir. I had my husband drive off the regular, familiar routes into the countryside in search of rocks. I have walked through creeks, mud, and other terrain in quest of rocks. Our children had clear directions that on every holiday or birthday I wanted rocks for the yard.

Looking out my window, I see the collection. Rocks from the week my teen daughter and I camped and hiked alone during summer 2006, rocks from various hikes in the mountains, and rocks my loving husband stopped and bought me in lieu of the flowers most women would want for a sweet surprise. Has this obsession with rocks reduced my yard work?

Unfortunately, no. In fact, getting leaves out from around rocks is indeed *very* time-consuming. But to me the rocks have become visions of beauty, power, and hope.

Every time I move one, sit on one, or walk by one in my yard, I am reminded of the Bible verse from 1 Peter 2:5: “You also, as living stones, are being built up [as] a spiritual house.” I am a living stone, full of strength and possibility to develop into more of the person God wants me to be. Sometimes I have chips, cracks, and dents in me, weathered down by life and poor choices. Sometimes I am small but serving a big purpose, and sometimes I am like a huge stone, formidable and sturdy, embracing the power of the Holy Spirit who empowers me.

Rocks, stones, and pebbles remind me that we are all unique inside and out, but with one unified purpose: to know God and to make Him know by the way we live.

I pull up the weeds encroaching on the center rock, with its red veins and sharp edges. I sit and admire its beauty, knowing God had designed its intricacies. I wonder how the “stones” in my life are shaping up. How was my spiritual house being built? Were there too many weeds taking root? Stones cause me to stop and reflect on such questions and remind me that, as Psalm 94:22 reads: “My God [is] the rock of my refuge.”

—MALINDA FILLINGIM, *Rome, Georgia, United States*



CHARLES THOMPSON

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



SUBMITTED BY CRISTIAN YOLY SERRANO

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Prayer can make doubters and unbelievers ask, ‘How did it happen?’”

—Pastor Desmond Michael, associate evangelism director, Aba Central District, East Nigeria Conference, during a sermon in 2010

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Yessy is a 6-year-old student in one of our Adventist schools in the Central Andina Misson of Peru. Yessy was born without limbs. He is an inspiration to each of the students, the staff, and the parents of the students. To see the face of Yessy full of joy in spite of his limitations is really inspiring.

About one year ago Daniel Pecho Ojeda, education and communication director for the Central Andina Mission, along

with other church members, encouraged Yessy’s parents to send him to the Eben Ezer Seventh-day Adventist School in Marankiari, Peru. Even though they are Adventists, they strongly resisted the idea, fearing that Yessy would be ridiculed. Fernando Ingaruca, school director, convinced the parents to send Yessy. The boy is now enjoying school and all the activities there, including reading and writing. Yessy is enthusiastic about drawing too. Recently he saw a video of Nick Vujicic,



SUBMITTED BY DANIEL PECHO OJEDA

a young adult motivational speaker born without arms and legs, and became inspired to do many things, one of which is to learn to swim. To “meet” Yessy, follow this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1xVnc70BCs.

ADVENTIST LIFE

My family was involved with Ellen White many years ago. Here is the story.

My aunt Edith Barnes told me that in 1910 the Northern California Conference wanted Mrs. White’s counsel in regard to the debt Lodi Academy had acquired. My maternal grandparents, the Barneses, had a large home, so they fixed up a nice room for Ellen White and Sara McEnterfer to stay in while they were in Lodi. (McEnterfer prepared White’s meals.)

The Barneses ate in the basement kitchen, which had all the comforts of home. The last day Ellen White was in Lodi she wanted to eat with the Barneses. Grandma prepared a good meal. Grandpa and Aunt Edith helped Mrs. White down into the basement. Once there she remarked, “If I’d known there was such good food and such nice people, I’d have eaten all my meals in the basement!”

—Faye Jull, Auburn, California, United States

ANSWER: In Colombia church members in San Juan Nepomuceno (Bolívar) enjoy nature together on the hillside after celebrating Thirtieth Sabbath at church in early 2010.