

February 2011

ADVENTIST WORLD



Sharing HIM

The joy of changing lives

ADVENTIST WORLD

February 2011



COVER FEATURE

Sharing Him *By Bill Knott* 16

Lay members around the world are teaming up with pastors to share the gospel.

DEVOTIONAL

God's Will for Your Life? *By Obed Onyiego Soire*..... 12

Can God use us? In more ways than we know.

ADVENTIST LIFE

Glimpses of Sudan *By Llewellyn Juby* 14

How the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) improves living conditions in one country

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Missionaries for Today *By Ellen G. White*..... 21

We don't have to go around the world, or even across town.

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Sharing God's Gifts *By Philip Rodionoff*..... 22

Letting Him use our talents for His glory

ADVENTIST HERITAGE

To Suffer for Him *By Yevgeny Zaitsev*..... 24

The challenges of being a Sabbathkeeper in a repressive regime

CHURCH WORKS

World View..... 3

World Report

3 News & Views

World Vista

8 God's Solid Word in a Chaotic World

WORLD HEALTH

Life-Saving Vaccines..... 11

By Allan R. Handsides and Peter N. Landless

BIBLE QUESTIONS

End-Time Evil 26

By Angel Manuel Rodriguez

BIBLE STUDY

The Divine Helper 27

By Mark A. Finley

WORLD EXCHANGE

29 Letters

30 The Place of Prayer

31 Exchange of Ideas

The People's Place..... 32



WORLD VIEW

Unintended Consequences

Not everything about this magazine turned out as we expected—and we couldn't be more delighted!

When *Adventist World* was launched in September 2005, it was available in just two languages (English and Korean), and only in print. Five and a half years later, 1.5 million copies a month are printed in eight languages, and readers can access the magazine online in 13 language editions, including Arabic, Romanian, and Urdu (go to www.adventistworld.org, and select from the language menu).

This magazine was expressly designed to serve the needs of current church members—not the general public—but stories continue to roll in to our editorial office about how effective *Adventist World* is as a witnessing tool to share the truths of God's Word. We planned this journal to focus on the stories and news that would help to unify and nurture a large and rapidly growing global movement, but then discovered that hundreds—even thousands—of others were eager to look over the shoulders of their Adventist neighbors to satisfy a godly curiosity about God's remnant church.

By now the number of persons who have joined the

Seventh-day Adventist Church because of the ministry of this magazine surely numbers in the hundreds, if not the thousands. One faithful lay member in West Africa counts more than 60 who have been baptized because of the thousands of copies of *Adventist World* he has distributed. Our cover feature, "Convicted by a Scrap of Paper" (June 2010, <http://www.adventistworld.org/issue.php?issue=2010-1006>

&page=14), told of dozens of new believers who came to faith after finding just two pages of this magazine beside a rural road. Every week we read requests from men and women of other faiths who write to ask us how they can get a personal copy—and for now, at least, all we can tell them is "Keep asking the Adventists you know to hand their copies on to you!"

That's actually a very good plan: hand your copy of this magazine along to someone else when you have finished savoring it. Better yet, tell them which articles particularly impressed you, and follow up with a later conversation about what they read.

It's a simple way to love your neighbor, and one that Jesus will surely use to call His own to Him.

— BILL KNOTT

WORLD REPORT

In Cambodia, Adventist Students From Germany Make a Difference

■ "The time I spent in Cambodia was a special experience for me," says Catrin Hoffmann, who participated in a four-week development aid project in 2003. The project was sponsored by Marienhöhe Adventist Academy while Catrin was still a student there. Hoffmann passed her university entrance diploma (Abitur) at Marienhöhe in 2005 and later volunteered as a teacher in the academy's partner school in Cambodia from September 2007 to September 2008.

Hoffmann shared the following thoughts about her experience: "I was especially impressed by the friendliness and thankfulness of the people. Through them, I got to know a completely different culture. Teaching their children and caring for them was a great help not only for them but also for me, as I learned a lot. I have remained in touch with the children since leaving and am always delighted when they tell me about their plans to do something good for their fellow countrymen. Cambodia has become an important part of my life."

Involvement in the Southeast Asian nation began for the school in



EURO-AFRICA DIVISION

AT WORK: Students from Marienhöhe Adventist Academy work on a repair project at a Cambodian school supported by the Adventist students.

WORLD REPORT

2001, when a group from Marienhöhe Adventist Academy went to Cambodia for the first time to help in a development aid project. About 40 sanitary installations were established in a refugee camp located near the partner school. One year later, in 2002, the first orphanage was constructed on the campus.

In the following years more orphanages and school rooms were built, sewers were dug, a dispensary damaged by termites was reconstructed, and a diesel generator was installed to produce electricity. Currently 120 orphans living in five houses are provided with clothing and loving care. This aid has been priceless to the Cambodian people, as they have gone through many hardships. The help allows the children physical and emotional healing, and also prevents them from having to live on the streets.

Students from Marienhöhe Adventist Academy cooperate with the local population. Friendships made often last for many years. The students learn to see the world from a different perspective. They learn that the values of these children differ widely from those in Europe. The students become aware of the luxury they live in; and that openness, friendliness, and the fellowship of the children are worth so much more than money and life in abundance can offer.

The number of students graduating from Marienhöhe Adventist Academy who want to volunteer in the development aid project at their partner school in Cambodia is increasing. In September 2010 the students of Marienhöhe Adventist Academy organized various fundraising activities to earn the money needed to build dormitories for teachers and volunteers working at the partner school in Cambodia.

—Reported by Karl Strassner, Euro-Africa Division



PHOTO COURTESY MONGOLIA MISSION FIELD

CHALLENGING JOURNEY: Members of the Mongolian music group, Descendants, pose in front of their rented van, which broke down 10 times during a recent 750-mile trip to a singing appointment. The Adventist vocalists regularly perform at church-run evangelism meetings in the region.

MONGOLIA: Descendants, Adventist Singing Group, Endures Hardship to Share Message

■ A singing group in Mongolia is supporting evangelism as the Seventh-day Adventist Church grows in the country, after having been established there for less than 20 years.

The seven-member group, called Descendants, offers concerts and classes during five-day public evangelism meetings in areas recently entered by Adventist missionaries. Because of the limited finances of the denomination's Mongolia Mission Field, which is home to 1,600 members, the group is sponsored by private donations.

“Young Mongolians like it. There aren't a whole lot of options for live music,” said Paul Kotanko, director for the Adventist Church's operations in Mongolia.

Though the Descendants are new to the church in Mongolia this year, the concept isn't new in the region—the singing group is modeled after the Golden Angels, an evangelism-supporting music group sponsored by the denomination's Northern Asia-Pacific region, headquartered in Ilsan, Goyang, South Korea.

The church in Mongolia, a territory of that region, is growing fast. Church administrators are con-

sidering purchasing land for a youth training center, and are now applying to the government to register a school, which would be the first Adventist operated school in the country.

Christianity is relatively new in Mongolia. The end of socialist rule in 1990 opened the country to practice religion—about half are Buddhist and more than a quarter are atheist. Shamanism beliefs are also widespread. Adventist missionaries first came to Mongolia in 1992.

Though the Adventist Church is growing in the country, there are only 22 established congregations. The Descendants group may eventually exhaust resources and evangelism meetings at which to perform.

Still, the group has aided church growth, leaders say, and has also contributed to the church's health and cultural outreach. During weeklong evangelism meetings, health classes are led by one of the group's members who is a medical student. Similarly, children's classes are led by the former children's director for the Mongolia Mission.

Onstage the group performs a mix of locally composed songs, Japanese songs, and religious songs. They sing in English, Korean, Japanese, and Mongolian.

“It’s a bit of a novelty here to hear a group sing in another language,” Kotanko said. “Visitors are impressed.”

Many Mongolians used to speak Korean because of the country’s proximity to North Korea, Kotanko said.

The group performs close to home in the capital of Ulaanbaatar, or will drive for two days for a gig. Their rental van recently broke down 10 times on the 750-mile trip to the town of Gobi Altai. “But it made for unity and remembrance of our mission trip,” said the group’s director, Kang HaShik.

More than 400 people attended that concert, Kang said.
—Reported by Ansel Oliver, assistant director for news, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

PERU: New Law Protects Religious Freedom

■ Members of Peru’s congress voted recently to approve legislation guaranteeing the religious liberty of all citizens, a freedom already recognized by the South American country’s constitution.

The act’s passage comes a year after more than 40,000 Peruvians gathered in the country’s capital, Lima, for a festival in support of burgeoning religious liberty there.

The new law guarantees free public and private exercise of religion, except where such expression infringes on the freedoms or fundamental rights of others, or where public order or welfare is threatened, religious liberty advocates said.

Specifically, the act protects students’ religious convictions and requires state educational institutions to respect those convictions, assuring that a student’s practice of faith does not affect his or her academic grades, said Edgardo Muguierza Florián, who directs Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the South Peru Union Mission.

It also prohibits any “action or omission” discriminating against a



LEGISLATIVE DEBATE: Peruvian legislators during the preliminary stages of drafting legislation passed recently to guarantee religious pluralism in the country.

PHOTO COURTESY PARL

person because of religious belief and recognizes religious pluralism, assuring that all faiths enjoy the same “rights, obligations and benefits,” Florián added.

Adventist Church representatives have worked for broader religious liberty protections in Peru for more than a decade, meeting with government officials and faith representatives in the country.

“We are very pleased to see that our work may have played a role in the passage of this historic law,” said

John Graz, director of the General Conference’s Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty.

Graz said the legislation is a testament to the efforts of all defenders of religious freedom in Peru. The country’s religious liberty movement has a long history, making the continued protection of religious freedom there an important investment, he said.
—Adventist News Network

TANZANIA: ADRA U.K. Supports Albino Community

■ The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in the United Kingdom is providing support and training for the albino community in Tanzania, which faces a lack of education, scarce job opportunities, and segregation in the region.

Launched in December 2010, the two-year Tanzania Albino Society Support and Empowerment Project

Continued next page



SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION

BRAZIL’S SEMINARY GRADUATES LARGEST CLASS EVER: The largest graduating class ever presented by the Latin American Adventist Theological Seminary—138 Masters of Theology candidates—assembled outside the campus church on July 31 before commencement exercises. Two of these were pastors from Adventist congregations in Angola, Africa, and seven others received doctoral degrees. The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s South American Division is one of the fastest-growing regions in the world church, and the need for trained workers is great.

Continued from page 5

(TASSEP) works with the region's albino community to provide training in networking, advocacy, and management from their headquarters in Dar es Salaam.

The project follows previous projects by ADRA Tanzania, including the donation of sun-protection products, prescription glasses, and tuition support for albino students. ADRA officials said a follow-up project is expected to focus on microfinance, as well as the medical and educational needs of the albino community.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, discrimination against albinos is accelerating. Social stigma, physical vulnerability to the sun, and poor eyesight contribute to make the estimated 150,000 albinos in Tanzania the country's most impoverished people group. Albinos regularly face ridicule, isolation, and physical threats—some of their body parts are valued on the black market for use in witchcraft, ADRA officials said.

"The community in general has not reached the level of understanding that we are all the same, with only a difference in skin pigment," Zulfa, a teenaged member of Tanzania's albino community, told ADRA officials.

"We all have the same needs. We are all human," she said.

As part of TASSEP, volunteers are expected to form advocacy groups to travel to key locations in Tanzania to raise awareness of the albino community through presentations in schools and churches.

Through songs, dramas, stories, and speeches, the groups will seek to educate the public about albinism and increase support for the albino community, ADRA officials said.

WORLD REPORT

In Philippines, Adventist Conversions *May Stop* Childhood *Pastors, congregations, converts; Adventist lifestyle inspires hope*

By ANSEL OLIVER, *assistant director for news,
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, writing from
Lambuling, T'boli, South Cotabato, Philippines*

Girls get married and have children young in this rural hillside village. Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders here hope that tradition will change for some within a generation.

Their expectation follows a two-year trend in which several ministers of other Protestant faiths in the lush highland farming villages have converted to the Adventist Church. Members who joined with them could gain access to the denomination's schools if sponsors can be found. Soon local families could push their 12- and 13-year-old daughters toward education instead early marriage, Adventist leaders say.

Though it has limited resources, the Adventist Church in the southern section of Mindanao is trying to increase support of new Adventist congregations. Across the territory of the denomination's Southern Mindanao Mission a remarkable 45 ministers have converted in the past few years through the work of Adventist missionaries and local Bible workers, as well as former classmates and professors, who have since converted. Most say church doctrines, such as the seventh-day Sabbath observance and an emphasis on healthful living, convinced them to switch.

Many members of their former congregations have converted along with them—nearly all in some congregations, about half in others. More could still convert, depending on how they view the intentions of their new denomination, Adventist Church leaders say.

"Some switched immediately, some took their time, some are waiting to see if they get benefits or if the missionaries are trying to get benefits from them," said Romulo Tuballes, communication director for the Southern Mindanao Mission, a region home to nearly 60,000 members.



Marriages



Clockwise from left:
LIFESTYLE CHANGE: Girls in the T'boli hillside region of South Cotabato in the Philippines typically marry

at ages 12 to 14 and soon begin having children. Adventist leaders hope newly converted members who have followed their pastor to the Adventist faith will push their daughters toward education instead of early marriage. **REFORMATION:** The Lam-buling church was a Pentecostal congregation until it became an Adventist church at the urging of its recently converted minister. Most churches in the rural hillsides of the T'boli region are made of bamboo thatch walls. **BUSY PASTOR:** William Galagnara oversees 25 churches in the Lake Sebu district of the Adventist Church's Southern Mindanao Mission. He is one of 45 Protestant ministers there who have converted to the Adventist faith in recent years.

Other religious groups have previously come through the T'boli region making promises of support that never came, he said.

"We aren't making big promises," Tuballes said.

Still, leaders have informed congregations here of a proposed Bible school for lay preachers. Most pastors here, like their members, are corn farmers. The denomination doesn't want to create dependency, but Tuballes says he also hopes to aid new pastors and members in more practical ways, such as providing some basic farming tools.

"Their hope could get stronger because they know someone cares," Tuballes said during a 20-minute hike down a steep, narrow dirt path back to his vehicle along the main road one recent Sabbath morning. He had just visited a thatch-roofed church for the third time since its roughly 30 members became Adventists in September.

The trend of ministers finding the Adventist faith is also seen around Lake Sebu, about 20 miles away. A day earlier several recently converted Adventist ministers met for ministerial training at a church in the district. One of those ministers was Arvin Dulay, who established 62 congregations for One Way Outreach, a church-planting movement.

Dulay, 35, said his friends were surprised when he became an Adventist, asking "Why?" He told them he saw more biblical truth in the Adventist Church after having been visited by a missionary and studying the Bible with a local lay member afterward. Five other ministers became Adventist along with him, he said.

Elizar L. Abas, a former Baptist minister, became an Adventist in August. For 20 years he had read books written by Adventist Church cofounder Ellen White about health and family life. He is one of several new Adventist ministers serving in the nearby province of North Cotabato.

Mission president Roger Caderma has implemented a goal of at least one baptism a month for each of the 46 pastors working for the mission. The biggest recent increases in membership, though, are the result of work done years previously, as members of other congregations follow their minister into the Adventist faith.

"It's amazing—we're baptizing here by church, not just individually," Caderma said.

The children of many new members could soon have the chance to attend Matutum View Academy in the town of Tupi. The boarding school is named after the nearby mountain, which looms above the surrounding pineapple fields and palm trees. Several hundred students from five tribes attend the school, and nearly half receive significant tuition assistance with a work-study program. ●

WORLD VISTA

Imagine 745 miles of bookshelves. The Library of Congress in the United States is the largest library in the world, with nearly 145 million items on those 745 miles of bookshelves. The collections include

through to us and communicates His eagerness to save us. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). It was God who inspired the biblical authors. They in turn wrote in human language.

God was, and is, actively involved in the transmission of His Word. Biblical authors were moved long ago by the Holy Spirit to write (see 2 Peter 1:21). And the same Spirit that the inspired the Bible needs to be with us as we

GOD'S SOLID WORD *in* Chaotic Wo *The authenticity of the Bible*

By TED N.C. WILSON

more than 33 million books. While many of the books have been influential, no book has been as influential as the Bible. It's a book that has been loved and hated. Throughout the course of human history and against relentless attacks, it has been miraculously preserved.

While the Bible has greatly influenced political and cultural thought, its uniqueness comes from its source and subject matter. It is God's revelation. Through the Bible God breaks

The Bible is not a collection of “cunningly devised fables” (2 Peter 1:16). The many fulfilled prophecies demonstrate the Bible's reliability and confirm the trustworthiness and reliability of the Scriptures as the infallible revelation of God's will. In spite of attempts to destroy it, the Bible has been preserved with amazing accuracy.

A Question of Authority

Perhaps the main reason many do not accept the Bible as God's Inspired Word is because they would then have to accept the authority of the Bible in their personal lives. The Scriptures have divine authority because in them God speaks through the Holy Spirit.

read it today. Without the Holy Spirit's illumination of our minds we cannot understand the Bible, or even acknowledge it as God's authoritative will.

Accepting that God was and is actively communicating through His Word gives the Bible authority. It becomes the final authority on all matters of belief and of lifestyle. We cannot let scientific and sociocultural forces dictate what the Bible can mean. The apostle Paul's words are as relevant today as when he first wrote to the believers in Rome nearly 2,000 years ago: “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” (Rom. 12:2).



Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Some people, while accepting the Bible as the Word of God, take issue with whether the whole Bible is inspired. Applying different criteria, they claim that some parts of the Bible are not inspired, or not as inspired as others.

JOSEF KISSINGER/AN



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In many Christian circles this criticism of the Bible has reduced the authority of the Bible to a bare minimum, or nullified it altogether. In effect, God's communication with human beings has to a large extent been muted.

The tools or methods generally applied to literature are insufficient with which to approach the Bible. The Bible is superior to all human wisdom and literature. It is the norm by which all other ideas or methods must be tested. Rather than judging the Bible, everything will be judged by it, for it is the standard of character and test of all experience and thought (see 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 10:5).

We Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as the foundation for all our

beliefs, and see in its pages our unique prophetic identity and mission. We must resist the subtle, and not-so-subtle, ways in which the devil seeks to distance us from the Bible and a plain understanding of what God has said is true. We must take all the Bible as authoritative; for how can we trust Christ as Redeemer if we doubt Him as Creator? Or how can we trust the implicit biblical statements about the literal Second Coming if we doubt the biblical account of a six-day creation in its plain, literal sense? We need to

face our everyday challenges with the same solid confidence that Jesus had in the Word when confronted by the tempter (see Matt. 4:4-10). Ellen G. White wrote that "we must be careful lest we misinterpret the Scriptures. The plain teachings of the Word of God are not to be so spiritualized that the reality is lost sight of. Do not overstrain the meaning of sentences in the Bible in an effort to bring forth something odd in order to please the fancy. Take the Scriptures as they read" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 170).

WORLD VISTA


Hands-on

Accepting the Bible's authority involves more than just believing that the Bible is true. The Word of God is a point of contact between us and our Creator. Just as we cannot have a loving relationship with someone in theory, so we cannot accept the Bible's authority in theory and not in

live it, teach it, and preach it without fear or favor, and those who let our individual lives and our lives together be shaped by its clear and compelling truths. One of the important objectives of Ellen White's writings was to encourage us to more avid Bible study. She wrote: "The Bible has been addressed to everyone—to every class

When we accept the Bible as an authoritative message from God, we are provided with a source of stabilization that brings meaning to our lives. We see that God is active not only in the governing of the universe but also in our daily lives. As we look away from the chaos and contradictions of life around us and take the time to look into God's Word we understand ourselves and our glorious destiny. In the Bible we find security in knowing that our worth rests on our creation and redemption by Christ.

God's Word is authoritative for the church and its proclamation to the world. But more important, it is authoritative for my life. My belief in a personal God is formed by my understanding of God's incredible love for us. I can trust God to do exactly what He says He will do in my life according to His Written Word. I can count on it, and I believe it.

It's a great blessing to know that even amid the uncertainty of the world around us we can rest with absolute confidence on the unchanging Word of God. The reading of the Bible, under the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will revive us and reform us. Let us as God's people place ourselves individually and corporately under the authority of "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). Let us covenant to read His Word daily. As we do this we will discover a new power in our spiritual lives that will energize and empower us to proclaim eagerly the good news that the chaos, uncertainty, fear, and pain will not go on forever. Soon Jesus will come. Soon there will be a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1) in which "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (verse 4, NIV). What a blessing that we can rely completely on a plain reading of the authoritative Word of God. 

Even amid the uncertainty of the world around us we can rest with absolute confidence on the unchanging words of God.

practice. As we see that God's divine authority is based on love and truth it must elicit a response of love, faith, and willing obedience in us.

Early Protestant Reformers believed that everyone should have the privilege of reading and studying the Bible for themselves. Luther, Wycliffe, and many others were willing to risk their lives in order to translate the Bible into languages people could understand. They understood that in order for the Bible to have any effect, it must not just be spoken about, but actually be studied. The power promised in its pages will be poured out only on those of us who read it,

of society, to those of every clime and age. The duty of every intelligent person is to search the Scriptures" (*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 20, 1894).

A Solid Anchor

Our environment is marked by instability. Destructive events in nature are increasing in frequency and intensity. There is great confusion in politics as world economies do not make the predicted recoveries. Rampant crime is on the rise. Societal and family values are disintegrating. How we cope with these situations has much to do with our quality of life, with personal satisfaction, as well as our eternal destiny.



Life-Saving Vaccines

By
ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

It seems that new vaccines are being developed and recommended all the time. I get the feeling that they aren't nearly as necessary as doctors make them out to be. What's your opinion?

Disease is miserable. It comes in as many forms as there are pathogens, and tissues and organs that can be affected by it. Some diseases remain mysteries; others are well understood but poorly managed. For-

curbed bacterial infections. Sanitation has avoided the indiscriminate spread of disease. The use of vaccines has reduced the toll of viral illness. Many people, such as those who refuse to wash their hands after using the toilet, can pose a risk to themselves, but more so to others when they refuse immunization. It's foolish to claim immunization is the final answer, but when a shingles vaccine reduces an older person's risk by 60 percent, that's significant.

other two groups were given rotavirus vaccine in varying amounts.

Severe gastroenteritis occurred in 4.9 percent of the placebo group and in only 1.9 percent of the immunized infants.

People who are worried about vaccines think of adverse effects. These occurred in 9.7 percent of the vaccinated group, *but also* in 11.5 percent of the placebo group. This means that what are called "adverse" effects are often just coincidental events ascribed to the vaccine, because there were more in the unvaccinated group.* The 60 percent reduction shown in this study, when multiplied by the millions of children who get rotavirus-related diarrhea, translates into millions of children who were saved the misery and possible death caused by the disease.

As health promoters, this study deserves our attention. ●

*Statistical information taken from Shabir A. Madhi et al., "Effect of Human Rotavirus Vaccine on Severe Diarrhea in African Infants," *New England Journal of Medicine* 362:289-298; NEJM.org, January 28, 2010.

In Africa, severe diarrhea has been a major killer of infants for decades.

unately, the defense systems built into our physiology work remarkably well. Like most things, however, they are imperfect in the face of disease-causing agents. While cancer, autoimmune disorders, and degenerative processes are still poorly controlled, infectious disorders are better managed. Even as recently as a few decades ago, infectious agents killed far more people than they do today. People over the age of 60 may remember the horrors of polio, the misery of measles, the dread of dysentery, the menace of meningitis, and the damaged babies that resulted from rubella.

Much has changed. Antibiotics have

An example of such protection is that seen with a human rotavirus vaccine. In Africa severe diarrhea has been a major killer of infants for decades. It was one of the major killers of bottle-fed babies, who stood a four-fifths chance of dying before reaching 1 year of age. Yet even breast-fed babies died in far higher proportions than did babies in the United Kingdom or Europe. The cause, in many cases, was a virus called human rotavirus. A vaccine was recently tested against this virus in Malawi and South Africa. Nearly 5,000 infants were divided into three groups. One group was given a placebo; the



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Over the past few months, more than ever before, I have been grappling with the issue of God's will for my life. There are two reasons for this. First, I am right now at a crossroad in my career. I don't know whether it is God's will for me to keep serving in the place where I currently live, or if I should move on. And if it would be God's will for me to move on, where would He want me to go? Work in another place, or go back to school for further studies? Second, a close friendship that I had treasured for a very long time (and that seemed to be God's will for my life) fell apart. It left me confused about all those times I was so convinced that it was God's will for me to stay in it. Does this sound familiar?

God's Will for Your Life?

By OBED ONYIEGO SOIRE



Knowing God's Will

I am like any Christian who would like to do God's will—which is, following Paul, “good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2). In his book *The Mystery of God's Will*, Charles Swindoll points out that “in our most thoughtful, mature moments, we want to do His will.”¹ So the issue for me has not been whether or not I want to do God's will; the issue has been how do I know it with absolute certainty?

This can be a very broad and daunting subject. Similar to my own questions, some are interested in knowing God's will as they choose a career. Others ask for God's will as they think about marriage and a life partner. However, I wish to focus on how Christians can understand God's will for their lives in broader terms. What does it really take in order for this to happen? And, disclaimer first, this article will not answer all our questions related to finding God's will, because there are not always straightforward answers.

Starting the Search

Scripture provides many references regarding the question of understanding God's will for our lives. For this article I would like to note the perspective that Romans 12 brings to the discussion. While it is not an exhaustive (or systematic) discussion, it is nonetheless a good starting point.

Through Romans 12 I have come to understand that it is necessary to have a sustained genuine conversion experience before we can begin to understand God's will. This continuous conversion experience ought to be facilitated by fully engaging our God-given gifts in ministry.

Romans 12, particularly the first two verses, is a very familiar chapter to many. Paul offers two important keys to discovering God's will. He starts off by inviting his readers to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (verse 1). Have you ever wondered what Paul meant here? As you read the entire chapter, you will discover Paul is talking about using



talents and gifts that God has given us. From verses 5 to 8 he admonishes the church to accept the diversity of the gifts that have been given and to use them in love. He writes: “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them . . . in proportion to our faith” (verse 6).

Therefore, while we are waiting to discover God’s will for our lives, we should not stop using our God-given talents and gifts to advance His kingdom and for His glory. God’s will is not revealed to those who sit and wait. Rather, it is revealed to those who are active in ministry and putting to use those gifts that God has given them. Swindoll affirms this, suggesting that “following the will of God requires faith and action.”² Ellen White also highlights this important principle, stating that “action pervades the whole creation, and in order to fulfill our mission we too must be active.”³

Second, once we are fully committed in His service, it is in this commitment that we experience a sustained conversion through the transformation of our minds; for Paul continues: “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*” (verse 2).

The phrase “that you may prove” seems to imply that a condition has to be fulfilled in order for something else to happen. The Greek word that Paul uses for “transformed” is *metamorphoo*, from which we get the word “metamorphosis.” This term implies a fundamental change. Not one that is superficial, but one that affects the person completely. According to Paul, we get to prove or know the will of God after we have been changed.

Just as a butterfly goes through a metamorphosis from

being a caterpillar to being a mature butterfly, our minds need to go through a similar change. This happens as we engage our God-given talents and gifts in service. It is hard to imagine well-balanced Christian growth without using our talents and gifts for God.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, while addressing the subject of using spiritual gifts in relation to spiritual growth, Paul sought to emphasize this fact when he wrote: “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, . . . till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-13).

In summary, God’s will is revealed to those who are growing spiritually in Christ through the use of their God-given spiritual gifts. Spiritual understanding takes place in action. Action produces the spiritual growth that is needed to recognize spiritual insights.

Really Living

I remember a program on Hope Channel called *Really Living*. The program featured a couple who, at that time, was serving in an African country as medical missionaries. I may not remember all the details of their story, but what certainly stuck with me was the fact that they both met there as singles, answering a call of God in their lives. They not only answered God’s call, but also found a suitable marriage partner in the process. While they may have had cultural differences (she was from Europe and he was from the U.S.A.), they certainly found a lot in common by the mere fact that they both had shared interests and a similar divine calling. This certainly may not be the experience of every Christian, but it may well serve as a good example of people who find God’s will while actively using their gifts.

As you seek to know God’s will, there is one question you need to ask—at least according to Romans 12: Are you growing in Christ through fully utilizing the gifts that God has given you now while you seek His will for your life? ●

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Mystery of God’s Will* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1999), p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³ Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 214.



Obed Onyiego Soire, originally from Kenya, was working as an English teacher in Japan while writing this article. He is a volunteer youth pastor in Coffs Harbour Seventh-day Adventist Church, Australia.

I couldn't believe what I was reading! Why Sudan? After nine years of serving as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) country director in Mongolia, I was being reassigned to Sudan.

My years in Mongolia had rushed by, and I'd grown content with the long, cold winters and the short, cool summers. So, despite the frigid temperatures that day, I broke out into a sweat as I read, "We have given it careful thought and prayer and believe that Sudan will be a good fit for your strengths."

Did they not know that I was just an old farmer? They were putting me in charge of 640 employees! There would be almost 100 vehicles to care for! And the temperature could rise as high as 50°C (122°F) when I was used to it going down to -50°C (-58°F)! I finally remembered, however, that all things are possible with God, so I trusted His leading and accepted the reassignment to Sudan.

First Impressions

My wife, Renee, and I arrived in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, with feelings of fear and trepidation. We soon adjusted well to our new home, however, and very early each morning we now awake to the beautiful Muslim call to prayer we hear drifting from area mosques. These calls to prayer throughout the day remind us of our need for grace while serving God in Sudan—the largest country in Africa and a land of deserts, wars, and soaring temperatures.

The Work Begins

Darfur comprises three provinces on Sudan's western border. ADRA is working in West Darfur, where the capital city is El Geneina. This is often the least-stable province on the border with Chad.

On my first trip to the ADRA



Glimpses of SUDAN

By LLEWELLYN JUBY

An ADRA country director's perspective

field office there I noted several signs of war, such as the camouflage military uniforms worn by soldiers on the airport runway's perimeter. The ADRA office building is situated behind tall walls with wire and broken glass cemented into the wall tops. The metal gate is closed at all times. Guards are always on duty.

ADRA's program in Darfur involves the help of the rural communities in solving health, food, water,

and sanitation challenges. In order to drill wells a drilling rig mounted on the back of a truck is coupled with a compressor mounted on its own truck. The drill rods, casings, and other equipment are carried on yet another vehicle.

We're also active in drilling and restoring wells in areas where IDPs (internally displaced persons) live in makeshift homes. ADRA then trains well managers in the community to

maintain the wells. What joy there is with every completed well! Water is indeed life in this harsh environment.

Contending With Violence

Carjackings are the order of the day, and ADRA Sudan has not been exempt. A truck carrying a compressor was stolen, then found several months later—minus the engine. The compressor was safe, because it had been welded onto the truck bed. Another time the Land Cruiser driver came face-to-face with a group of AK-47-wielding men who stole the vehicle. The military was called in. They found the Land Cruiser and retrieved it—amid gunfire—on the Chadian border. Sadly, the Land Cruiser again was taken and has never been found. Often these stolen trucks are turned into combat vehicles.

At night in the small ADRA compound, staff members gather under the thatched-roof shelter to share the evening meal. Sometimes rapid-fire gunshots can be heard in the neighborhood as violence breaks out. In these tense times we gain immense comfort from the story of Elisha praying for the opening of his attendant's eyes to see the army of God on the hills surrounding them. To his attendant's question, "What shall we do?" Elisha answered, "Don't be afraid. . . . Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:15, 16).*

Desert Farming in the Sahara

The little-known 30,000-strong Hawawir tribe, living in the dry Sahara region of the northern state of Sudan at Um Jawasir, was seriously affected by the drought of 1980. Most of the tribespeople's wells had dried up, and many herders had lost all their animals. The government brought the pitiful condition of these herders to the attention of ADRA. With the assistance of

ADRA Norway and Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), ADRA Sudan first drilled four wells. Twelve more wells—drilled into a large underground aquifer—have since followed.

Desertification during the drought years decimated the natural indigenous grasses of the desert surrounding the members of the Hawawir tribe living along the Mugaddam Wadi (a dry riverbed). That region has an average annual rainfall of 45 millimeters (1.8 inches). The nights are cold (–5°C, or 23°F), but in summer the days are unbearably hot (48°C, or 118°F). Shifting sands blown by desert winds keep moving across the dry, barren area where the project is implemented. But with 16 wells pumping water to 336 hectares (830 acres) of irrigated land, an amazing transformation has taken place. Because the fields are now irrigated, crops of wheat, broad beans, fenugreek, onions, and okra flourish.

I recently visited the project site, located 200 kilometers (124 miles) north of Khartoum, to see the changes this project has brought. Eighteen years ago, I'm told, herders walked up to a shiny ADRA vehicle and stroked it with awe. Today the once-timid herders are able to overhaul engines, repair wells, and weld their own implements. Soon, when a new government hydroelectric scheme is completed on the Nile River, a transformer will be set up to step down power from the passing power lines, so these herders can use electric pumps to lift water to the surface for irrigation. This will cut the major costs of running the 16 diesel engines that currently operate the massive pumps.


Never-ending Projects

With every project ADRA employs, a host of other interventions are also needed. Education is essential for the children living in the

isolated sand dunes, so ADRA has established a school. Traditionally, girls marry at an early age, and only boys are educated. This mind-set is slowly changing, though, and girls are now attending school. Other programs implemented are literacy training and adult education, which go hand in hand with learning to operate small businesses. Coupled with this are health and hygiene training and a women's forum in which issues pertinent to quality of life can be discussed. ADRA also campaigns against the harmful practices of female genital mutilation and discourages early marriage.

A Success Story

I met Ali during one of my visits to the project. He had begun farming in the area, but within a few months of working his piece of land he became discouraged and quit. He then began herding goats and camels. One evening, Alex the ADRA project manager, visited Ali and noticed that he had bought two bags of alfalfa from the irrigation farmers to feed his animals. When Alex explained how much money Ali could save by growing his own alfalfa, Ali decided to go back to the project with Alex and farm alfalfa. Recently I spoke to Ali and asked him whether, after a few successful years of growing his own crops, he was there to stay. He said, "Even if you offer me a whole herd of animals, I will never give up my irrigation land."

In Psalm 78:19 the question is asked, "Can God spread a table in the desert?". The answer follows in the next verse: "He struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly" (verse 20). 

*Bible verses are quoted from the New International Version.

Llewellyn Juby is country director for ADRA Sudan.

REACHING OUT: Ralph and Sharon Adriance spend time with a community friend on Smith Mountain Lake in Virginia.



*Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare.*

More than a quarter century before the young Seventh-day Adventist Church sent out its first official missionary in 1874, the American poet James Russell Lowell announced a missionary ethic that early worked its way into the fabric of Adventist witness and evangelism: “*Not what we give, but what we share . . .*”

Ten years before John Nevins Andrews and his teenage daughter and son sailed from Boston, Massachusetts, to launch an Adventist magazine in Europe; Hannah More, a lay missionary who had read herself into Adventism, planted congregations of Sabbathkeepers on the west coast of Africa.¹ A year later, a former Catholic priest, Michael Czechowski, found sponsors and traveled to northern Italy, preaching in the Waldensian villages near the Swiss border, and in Turin, Milan, Bergamo, and Venice. His tireless but unofficial efforts produced the first baptized Seventh-day Adventists on that continent, and led directly to the earliest Adventist congregations in Switzerland—which welcomed Andrews when he arrived years later.²

No history of Adventist witness and mission is ever complete unless it tells more than the story of those officially sponsored and employed to preach the three angels’ messages. The success of Adventist evangelism can’t be measured only in the size of annual offerings or even

By BILL KNOTT

Sharing HIM

*The joy of changing
lives*

sacrificial giving. It’s not the sending of talented others to tell the story of Jesus that marks us as believers, but the imprint of the gospel in the shared conversations of daily life that illustrates how deeply the good news has penetrated our own lives. It’s not just what we give *to Jesus*, but what we share *about Jesus* that best persuades an open heart to consider His claims.

“Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ,” wrote Ellen White exactly a century ago. “There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour’s love.”³ Witness is the impulse of every regenerated heart, even if the tongue is not trained and the words at first seem halting.

“For too long and in too many places, the mission of the Adventist Church has been tied to those officially employed and professionally prepared for that job,” says Robert Folkenberg, Sr., director of ShareHim, a ministry of the Carolina Conference and one of the largest and most international evangelistic ministries operated by Seventh-day Adventists. “As a people, we’ve learned to put our effort into what seem to be only thoroughly safe events, even though they don’t yield the harvest God intends for these last days. We measure success by the usual quantifiers—attendance, baptisms—instead of measuring mission success the way God does: by the consistency and continuity of our individual efforts.”

Folkenberg, 70, punches the air passionately as he describes the work he is still engaged in at an age when many long-serving church leaders have retired. A former president of the General Conference (1990-1999), Folkenberg launched the ShareHim organization, then known as Global Evangelism, in 2000 as a way to dramatically increase lay involvement in the church’s evangelistic initiatives. Known



TOGETHER: Irma Jenkins and Debbie Bonds enjoy fellowship during a weight loss program in Virginia.

Shy Student Changes Lives

BY GINA WAHLEN



One day during his sophomore year at Collegedale Academy (Tennessee, U.S.A.) Ethan White made a decision that changed his life. The youth group of the Collegedale church was planning a ShareHim mission trip to Cuba, and Ethan heard

a gentle voice telling him, “You need to go on this mission trip.”

“I was very scared,” remembers Ethan. “I was not someone who likes to get up front . . . but something about this mission trip piqued my interest.”

Ethan signed up as a support person, but was later asked to be a presenter, since one of the original speakers was unable to go.

“At first I was very nervous, wondering what I had gotten myself into,” Ethan recalls. “I knew that I didn’t have any speaking experience, but decided that even though I was scared, the Lord was leading me, so I accepted.”

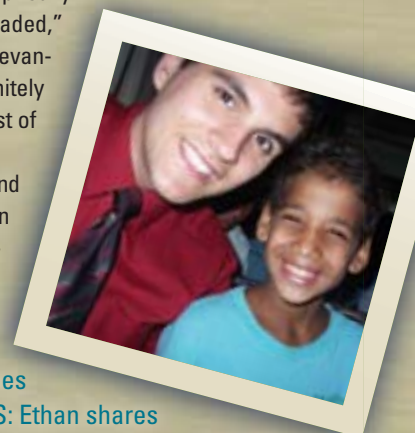
Becoming familiar with the sermons provided by ShareHim, and being assured of having a translator, Ethan felt more at ease in presenting a series of 19 sermons. His confidence grew each evening as he saw changes in the people.

“Something that really impressed me was watching people whose faces revealed the great controversy going on. It was really cool knowing that you were being used by the Holy Spirit to affect those people for eternity. What a reward it is when you see those people coming forward, tears streaming down their faces.”

Since that first trip to Cuba in 2006, Ethan has been involved with six other evangelism series—three more in Cuba, one in Ecuador, and two in the United States.

“That first Cuban mission trip really changed the direction I was headed,” Ethan says. “I got the bug of evangelism in my system. It is definitely something I want to do the rest of my life.”

Ethan is a junior theology and archaeology major at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, U.S.A.



Top: FIRST TIME: Ethan White, 16, preaches in Cuba. **Right: FRIENDS:** Ethan shares smiles with a new friend.

for his warm, outgoing manner and booming voice, Folkenberg led the church during one of the most rapid growth curves in its 148-year history. Global membership was 6.2 million when Folkenberg was elected president of the world church in July 1990, and stood at more than 10.2 million when he left the office in February 1999—an increase of more than 63 percent. That impressive record might have been satisfying to other leaders, but not to Folkenberg.

“The making of disciples—which is what Jesus says is our primary mission—isn’t complete until those disciples are making other disciples,” Folkenberg says thoughtfully. “Adding to the church numerically only really counts if you’re also rebuilding the men and women *already in the church* into the kind of disciples who share Jesus in their everyday relationships—and thus win new disciples. As long as we’re winning new converts who believe that it’s the pastor’s job or the evangelist’s job to go out and witness to others, we haven’t made much headway in our mission.”

Describing the sprawling, multinational ShareHim ministry as a vast “laboratory,” Folkenberg freely admits that he has learned much about witnessing and mission since leaving the denomination’s top leadership position more than a decade ago.

“Learning how to really motivate and equip lay members for effective relationship building and soul winning took a while,” he says with a rueful smile. “It wasn’t some instant revelation, let me tell you. My assumptions about some things were completely wrong. I assumed that if you take a layperson from North America or Western Europe or Australia and give them a wonderful experience in actually doing evangelism in Africa or Central America, they’ll come home and make it happen right where they live. But that’s not what happens: in too many places, they come home after a life-changing experience of preaching the gospel to hungry people to sit in a church that feels completely unlike the place they just visited. And the fire that burned in them while they were preaching slowly dies away.”

Beginning in 2005, the ShareHim ministry began a conscious focus on removing the obstacles—and the excuses—that frequently keep laypersons from involving

themselves in the church's evangelistic outreach. First, ShareHim sets about to create among members the "laboratory" understanding of evangelism—a willingness to try new methods and approaches, all the while searching for what works best for sharing the gospel in specific locations.

Second, the ministry provides a vast array of lay-friendly resources—inspirational videos, training seminars for presentations by pastors, evangelistic sermons, PowerPoint presentations, contextualized graphics, planning calendars—on its large and powerful Web site: www.sharehim.org. At the Web site laypersons and pastors can register for participation in a "homeland"

or "international" evangelistic campaign, download a 70-page resource catalog brimming with ministry ideas and opportunities, follow inspiring stories of outreach, and watch training videos.

A crucial third element of ShareHim's ministry model is relocating the responsibility and coordination of evangelism from higher church structures to lower ones—preferably the local congregation. In the ShareHim model the local pastor and the outreach team are the primary decision-makers and doers, while evangelism coordinators at conference, union, or division levels of the church offer encouragement and support.

A Compelling Desire to Share

BY GINA WAHLEN

After watching *The Ten Commandments*, starring Charlton Heston, 8-year-old Vanessa had a question for her dad: "Why do we bow down to idols when God's commandments clearly say not to?" Pausing, her father replied that perhaps she needed to find the "true religion the Bible speaks about." Thus began Vanessa's 20-year search.

Born into a Roman Catholic family, Vanessa and her sisters were abandoned by their mother when Vanessa was 2 years old, her elder sister 3, and her younger sister only an infant. Their father, an officer in the U.S. Navy, was serving in Okinawa, Japan. After their mother left them, the girls grew up with their father and three different stepmothers in Hawaii, where Vanessa attended public schools and eventually married her high school sweetheart, Ronald Taylor.

Reflecting on her spiritual journey, Vanessa describes 20 years of going through "the maze of many denomina-

tions"—including the Episcopalian and Baptist churches, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witnesses before finally finding the truth for which she had been searching.

Interested in Bible prophecy, Vanessa was praying for help in understanding its mysteries when a brochure arrived in her mailbox, inviting her to a prophecy seminar by Leo Schreven. "It was an answer to prayer," Vanessa remembers.

After attending the first night, Vanessa invited her husband to join her. "Soon we realized that what we were learning was coming straight from the Bible. We found out that Jesus was coming again, and we learned about the seal of the Sabbath. We could see that the Seventh-day Adventist Church followed the Bible accurately." Vanessa and Ron decided to be baptized together on April 16, 1998. Over the next six years they continued to grow in faith, and in 2004 they decided that God was calling them to a special ministry.

Selling everything, the family (which



Top to bottom: SHARING HIM: In Andhra Pradesh, India. **THE FAMILY:** Ron and Vanessa Taylor with their children Brandon, 15, Briana, 17, and Bethia, 9.

Local congregations are urged to authorize and empower their own evangelistic teams to plan and implement an ongoing year-round system of “evangelizing,” reserving only financial decisions for the local church board. “We tell conference leaders and evangelism coordinators to not pour lots of money on local efforts and initiatives,” says Folkenberg with a grin. “Please don’t kill evangelism by paying for it!”

“We’re also working to help members and pastors develop a broader vision of what constitutes evangelism,” says Jeremiah Weeks, ShareHim’s associate director. Through its “making kingdom friends” approach, Share-

Him equips pastors to train members in growing lifelong relationships with unbelievers that allow faith to emerge in natural, unhurried ways. “Evangelism involves message and relationship; both elements are essential. And while some congregations have felt confident sharing a message, many struggle with building relationships. Since relationships grow through shared experiences, eating lunch with a colleague, helping a neighbor with a project, or even playing golf with someone can be a step toward leading that person to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.”

As church members build friendships with non-believers, they document their progress and share their



LOCAL MEMBERS: Vanessa with members of the Santana family who assisted with meetings in their local church in the Dominican Republic.

now included three young children) moved to Michigan, where Ron studied at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. While attending the nearby Filipino-American Adventist Church, Vanessa heard about outreach opportunities sponsored by ShareHim and Quiet Hours international student evangelism program. “After my own experience of searching for 20 years before finally hearing the exciting truth of God’s people, I wanted so much to share Jesus and be part of the gospel commission,” she recalls.

Soon Vanessa was invited to be one of the speakers with a team of Andrews University students going to Zimbabwe. “I knew I was different from the others . . . I

felt so unworthy, having only some college education. But I realized it wasn’t about me; it was all about Jesus and how He saved me, and I wanted to share that story with others.”

Since that first trip to Zimbabwe in 2005, Vanessa has participated in six different ShareHim programs ranging from presenting seminars in Benin, the Dominican Republic, and India to working with a medical mission and Vacation Bible School in Fiji. In addition, Vanessa has found that participating in international programs has given her the courage to share in her home state of Hawaii, leading out in various meetings and encouraging others to become involved with ShareHim programs.

There have been times, Vanessa

admits, when she has faced discouragement, particularly when facing censure from those less supportive of her participating in international outreach. “My dad said that we [Ron and Vanessa] should use our money in other ways, and even someone from my church told me that it was a waste of time and money.”

Nevertheless, Vanessa continues to move forward in her determination to share with others how Jesus has led in her life and the good news of His soon return.

“These experiences have affected my spiritual life tremendously,” says Vanessa. “I know that I can reach out to others through my simple love of sharing Jesus, to keep His commandments in my heart, and to follow wherever He leads me through my faith in Him.”

During her five years of involvement Vanessa has appreciated the support given by ShareHim providing sermons and other materials, along with encouraging team members and support staff at each site who help presenters connect with the local people.

For those considering outreach opportunities, Vanessa is straightforward: “Go and be a living scripture. Follow your heart’s compelling desire to share Jesus. Pray and ask Him to help you. You have a special message that someone is waiting to hear and wants to believe. Don’t be afraid—if someone like me can do it, you can do it too.”

experiences with other members week by week in Sabbath schools or small groups. “Sharing stories builds enthusiasm,” says Weeks. “It encourages members as they recognize the progress they’re making and helps nurture an outward-focused, evangelistic culture.” Outreach teams also use the planning tools offered by ShareHim to put “get-to-know-you activities” and “reaping events” on the church’s calendar—then invite their new friends to join them.

“The Lord is constantly opening doors of opportunity for us to build relationships with others for Him,” Weeks says. “It’s not by chance or by accident that we have the neighbors, coworkers, and family members that we do. The question is what we will do with the opportunities He provides. ShareHim is all about taking the mystery out of making disciples. Jesus didn’t call us to a complex, technical assignment. He called us to utilize the relationships all around us to invited people to accept Him as Savior and Lord.”

Many church entities have partnered with ShareHim to provide motivation, training, and resources for new outreach by laypersons. In its first 10 years of operation ShareHim has helped thousands of lay Adventists to preach hundreds of small-to-midsize evangelistic campaigns in their own countries and internationally. Thirty-nine conferences in the United States have formal agreements with ShareHim, as do conferences in Italy, Germany, Austria, Denmark, and Honduras. A total of 771 evangelistic or “reaping” campaigns were coordinated by ShareHim internationally during 2010; another 629 are already planned for this year. International campaign sites in 2011 include locations in India, the Philippines, Cuba, El Salvador, Colombia, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Madagascar, the Dominican Republic, Malaysia, Honduras, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Kenya, Indonesia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

College student-led campaigns, jointly sponsored by the Quiet Hour ministries, totaled more than 2,200 from 2000 to 2010, with thousands of Adventist young adults, faculty, and staff participating from Adventist campuses across North America, Europe, Asia, South America, and the South Pacific.

“The Lord has commissioned each and every one of us to share the peace and hope we have in Him,” says Weeks. “The work He has tasked us with needn’t be daunting or scary, but it does require a change in our priorities; it takes time and effort. Most of all it takes a God-given passion for people. He can give us that passion. And with His leading, we cannot fail.”



Left: Steve and Regina Boyce.
Above: Jonathan Gregg.

Members Revitalized

BY GINA WAHLEN

Pastor James Volpe is excited to see the impact that ShareHim programs are having in his three-church district in West Virginia. Encouraging member participation in six ShareHim programs has been revitalizing for the church members, he explains.

“The challenge we face in our area is community pastors telling people not to study the Bible with Seventh-day Adventists, so attendance can be a challenge. But the positive side is that our members who have led out in meetings have grown to appreciate our message all the more and have become more involved with outreach into the community.”

Steve and Regina Boyce, who were baptized by Pastor Volpe just two years ago, presented a three-week ShareHim series in their community, and are looking forward to presenting more meetings in their area. They are presently involved in giving Bible studies in preparation for the upcoming meetings.

Jonathan Gregg, another church member, was a popular high school senior when he decided to hold a ShareHim series in a room at his public high school. Being very active in sports, academics, and music, Jonathan invited his friends to the meetings and presented every other night, alternating with Pastor Volpe for the 16-evening series. While no baptisms immediately followed, Jonathan gave excellent presentations and is thankful to have given the series at his high school. He has since graduated and attends Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, an undergraduate institution where the motto is “And the Truth Shall Set You Free.”

“I believe that anytime you put yourself in a place to share the message, you are going to be blessed spiritually,” says Pastor Volpe. For those considering becoming involved with ShareHim, he urges, “Get involved! It will not hurt you. We need to do all we can, while we can, when we can, where we can.”

¹ Stephen Haskell, “How the Message Went to Africa,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Mar. 3, 1921.

² Adriel Chilson, “No Permission Needed,” *Adventist Review*, May 14, 1998.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600.

Those whom Christ has connected with himself will, as far as in them lies, labor diligently and perseveringly as He labored, to save souls who are perishing around them.

A Working Church Grows

A working church will ever be a growing church. They will ever find a

Instead of our ministering brethren labouring among the churches, God designs that we should spread abroad, and our missionary labor be extended over as much ground as we can possibly occupy to advantage, going in every direction to raise up new companies. As long as churches rely upon labourers from abroad



Missionaries *for* Today

By ELLEN G. WHITE

The cause of present truth can be greatly extended by personal effort.

As children of God none of us are excused from taking a part in the great work of Christ, in the salvation of our fellow-men.

All men and women who are Christians in every sense of the word, should be workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

God works with our efforts. We may close the way for sinners by our negligence and selfishness.

We should not hold ourselves aloof from our fellow-men, but come close to them; for their souls are as precious as our own.

Missionaries for God are wanted; faithful men and women who will not shirk responsibility. Judicious labor will accomplish good results.

stimulus and a tonic in trying to help others, and in doing it they will be strengthened and encouraged.

Satan is now seeking to hold God's people in a state of inactivity, to keep them from acting their part in spreading the truth, that they may at last be weighed in the balance and found wanting.

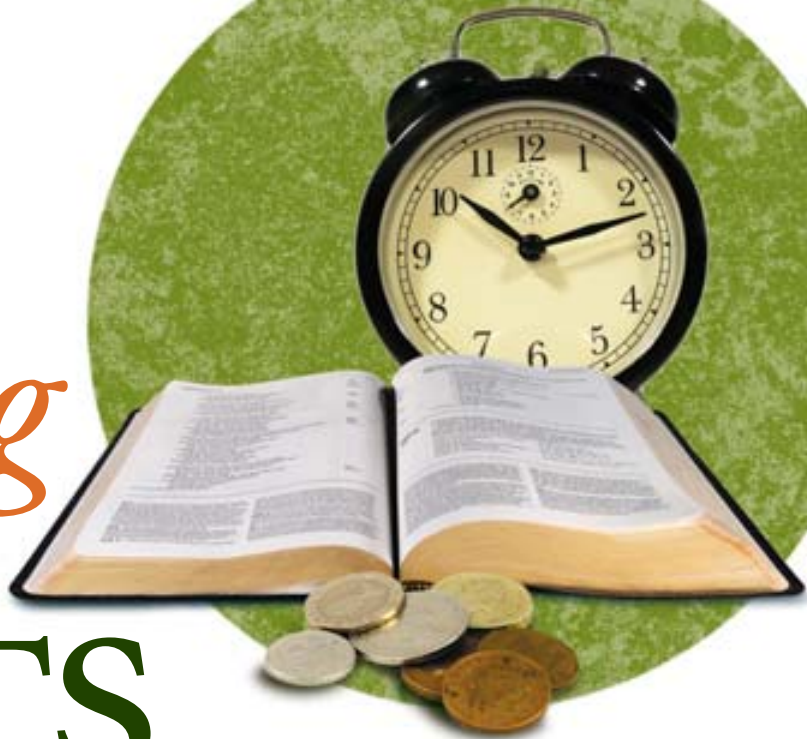
We are answerable to God for the souls of those with whom we are brought in contact, and the closer our connections with our fellow-men, the greater our responsibility.

Every opportunity should be improved to extend the truth to other nations. This will be attended by considerable expenses, but expense should in no case hinder the performance of this work. The Lord has lent men means for this very purpose, to use in sending the truth to their fellow-men.

to strengthen and encourage their faith, they will not become strong in themselves. They should be instructed that their strength will increase in proportion to their personal efforts. The more closely the New Testament plans are followed in missionary labour, the more successful will be the efforts put forth.

This article was originally published as "Ye Shall Be Witnesses Unto Me" in the June 1899 issue of *The Advance*, a quarterly periodical printed in New Zealand. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

NUMBER 21
Sharing
GOD'S
GIFTS
 By PHILIP RODIONOFF



What is the best gift you have ever received?

When I was 10 years old, I was very excited when my parents bought me a saxophone. Every day I looked forward to playing it. But I soon realized that there are more important gifts: time, relationships, and love, for example. Later still, I learned that it can be even more satisfying to give than to receive, a principle that Jesus Himself taught (Acts 20:35).

Scripture tells us that God made everything and that He owns everything: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Ps. 24:1).^{*} The amazing thing is that He has put us in charge of caring for the world (see Gen. 1:27, 28, and 2:15). God has asked us to be stewards or managers of His property. In Bible times a steward would manage the possessions of his master (e.g., Joseph for Potiphar in Gen. 39). However, God is different from an earthly master in that He shares His possessions with us, for we are part of the family of God (cf. 1 John 3:1).

Many people associate the term “stewardship” with tithes and offerings. But that is only a small part of its meaning. Stewardship is living the biblical life fully.

Jesus calls each follower to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27). As we respond to

God’s love, we are motivated to see how much, not how little, we can do. When we consider what God has done for us, we want to respond to His love by serving Him with all that we have, including our time, talents, and money.

Applying the Principle of Stewardship

The principle of stewardship interacts with many aspects of our calling and purpose in Christ Jesus. The following are some key areas.

1. *Time*: God calls us to consider our priorities. This includes our use of time. Life can too easily become a series of distractions. How do we ensure that our lives make a difference, rather than being squandered on the trivial and unimportant?

Believers are motivated to spend time on God’s priorities and opportunities: “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (Eph. 5:15-17; see also Col. 4:5).

2. *Talents, Abilities and Intelligence*: Every person has talents, skills, and abilities. All believers have been given at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7). As 1 Peter 4:10 explains: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

God is honored when we use our minds for His purposes (Dan. 1). Intelligence is not something to be squandered. Rather it is a gift that should be developed to its God-given potential in order to serve and glorify God.

3. *Money (Including Tithe and Offerings)*: God provides



Philip Rodionoff lives on the Gold Coast in Australia. He is a medical doctor who has a Master’s degree in religion from Andrews University and conducts seminars on evidences for the Christian faith.

Stewardship is living the biblical life fully.

the means by which we live. In gratitude we return our tithes and offerings to Him. Malachi 3:10 says: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

My wife and I have friends who have recently gone through a very tough time. They struggled with whether to continue to tithe or wait until their finances improved. They deliberated: “Do we trust God to look after us?” Finally, they decided to place their trust in God. God provided for them—sometimes in unexpected ways—but He always came through. Jesus promised in Matthew 6:33: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

The members of the early Christian church cared for those who were needy in their community (Acts 4:32-35). We are also invited to give freely and cheerfully: “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

4. *Our Bodies*: Scripture clearly affirms that our bodies are important and that we should take care of them. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).


Good stewards will not only want to abstain from harmful substances, but will also strive to keep their bodies in optimal physical condition. If we follow good health

habits, the benefits extend beyond just physical health. Because of the close relationship between mind and body, physical health will impact our clarity of thought and ultimately our connection with God.

5. *Earth’s Resources*: God pronounced that His creation was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). He also placed humanity in a position of environmental stewardship (Gen. 1:28; 2:15). Although sin has tarnished creation and believers look forward to a new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1), this does not mean that we are to neglect the planet. Just as God loves us and has given us this world to enjoy, we are to love and care for all of God’s creation.

6. *Gospel*: The gospel commission has been given to each of us. We have been entrusted with the work of making disciples, of baptizing, and of teaching (Matt. 28:18-20). This is a special privilege. The apostle Paul explains that “men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Cor. 4:1, 2). We have been given the privilege of sharing the good news with the world.

All to Jesus

God ultimately owns everything, and yet He shares by providing us with an abundance of gifts. His intent is not that we use these gifts selfishly, but rather that we use them to serve others. Because of all that God has done for us, we respond with wholehearted gratitude and look forward to the day when we will be able to thank Him face-to-face. 

* All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version.

Stewardship

We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God’s ownership by faithful

service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over

selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27.)

My grandfather, Stepan Zaitsev, served as a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the difficult time of the Soviet regime. He, along with thousands of others, was convicted as an “enemy of the people” in 1937 under Stalin’s famous article 58 of the Russian Penal Code.

My grandfather survived the horrors of the Gulag, the government agency that administered the penal labor camps. My grandmother barely survived with four children. My parents told of how in the springtime Grandmother climbed the hills to find new grass for herself and her children to eat, as they were starving, suffering from constant malnutrition and hypovitaminosis.

A Brief Thaw

On March 5, 1953, Stalin died. With his death the epoch of repression, system of false accusations, and prison camps died out. The years following Stalin’s death are known as the “thaw,” because in many areas of Soviet life, especially in culture and religion, it seemed there was a warming. Confession of faith was allowed as well as holding worship services without any restrictions. This strengthened the hope of many believers that the terrible past would never happen again.

Renewed Persecution

However, this revitalization sparked a new antireligious campaign, which by the end of the 1950s became mass and organized. The campaign reached its climax in the last five years of the Khrushchev leadership from 1959 to 1964. According to researchers, Khrushchev’s antireligious campaign was so cruel, it was second only to Stalin’s persecutions in the 1930s.

During the antireligious campaign many churches were closed, many priests and pastors were arrested. It was in this difficult situation that the faith of my grandfather was challenged again.

“...To Suffer for HIM” “Standing Up for God”

By
YEVGENY
ZAITSEV



Left: PERSECUTED: Stepan Zaitsev in Soviet exile. **Above: FAMILY PORTRAIT:** Stepan Zaitsev (front row, second from left), with family members and friends taken shortly after he was sent into exile.

In the late 1950s Stepan Zaitsev and his family lived in the small town of Zyryanovsk, in eastern Kazakhstan. My grandfather was highly respected by the townspeople. The local newspaper wrote about him as an honest and unselfish man, as a tireless worker, as having “golden hands” and passing on his mechanical experience to young people.

However, with the beginning of a new campaign against religion, the attitude toward my grandfather changed dramatically. In the same local newspaper another article appeared, in which he was shamelessly mocked and slandered. The radio announced that the local people requested Zaitsev to be exiled from Zyryanovsk and to

be judged in a public court. About 300 people came to the trial.

When Stepan Zaitsev was led to the hearing, the judges met with him in a separate room, politely greeted him, and advised him to refuse the “religious narcotic,” promising to close the case and set him free.

“You could have had a career,” they said. “You are a pacesetter. You should just live as all people live, but instead, you believe in some kind of God. You destroy your life as well as that of your family. Come to your senses before it’s too late: deny your faith in God publicly, we will believe you, and you will be free.”

Grandfather looked at them calmly, listening to their cunning speech. At the end he said only one thing: “Do what you’ve planned to do. Do not waste your time. I will never deny my God.”

Stepan Zaitsev was brought into the hall and the prosecutor began his speech. He falsely accused my grandfather of destroying the Soviet family with his teaching, distributing religious prejudices, corrupting the youth, never working, and living as a parasite by deceiving people and living on their money. The prosecutor announced that my grandfather had already had several prior convictions. During the speech cries of indignation—“There is no place for such people in the Soviet Union! We should shoot them!”—were heard from specially prepared people who probably never knew Stepan Zaitsev.

After the avalanche of false accusations, slander, and lies, along with the hostile chants from the audience, opportunity to speak was finally given to the accused.

Faith His Only Crime

“I have been working since the age of 12,” began my grandfather, “and have worked until this day. Recently, the newspapers wrote that Zaitsev had ‘golden hands,’ that he passed on his experience to his apprentices, that he is friendly, courteous, and a good example. So why am I standing before

you as a criminal today? What kind of wrong have I done and to whom?

“Isn’t it true that my fault is that I’m a believer? Yes, I am a believer: I believe in God, Creator of heaven and the earth, and in the Savior Jesus Christ, who gave His life for me and for my sins. I acknowledge the holiness of God’s moral law, expressed in the Ten Commandments, and try to live keeping them.

“You mentioned that I was previously convicted. Yes, I was convicted for my faith. I was in prison for 10 years and after that, two years in exile. Today I’m standing before you, and my only crime is my faith. I’m ready to suffer for my faith again, but I will not deny my Creator and my Savior.”

There was silence in the room for a little while. People were shocked by the reply of the convicted. However, this temporary silence did not last long. Accusations, shouting, and threats showered again.

After a brief meeting, the court announced its verdict: a five-year exile from the East Kazakhstan region.

Exiled but Not Forgotten

A new period of grief and troubles began in the life of my grandfather and all his family. After several months in different prisons, grandfather was taken to a remote village called Novo-Nikolaevka in the Ubaganskaya area of northern Kazakhstan. There, on April 8, 1960, he was put on the record as an exile settler.

When the president of the local collective farm learned the reason why Stepan Zaitsev had been condemned, he exclaimed, “We do not need a fanatic, a loafer; he will only interfere.” Later, however, he radically changed his mind and was convinced that if his farm consisted of such “loafers,” he would soon take first place in the area on all counts.

Recently I visited the place where my grandfather was in exile. The village had changed since that time,

so it was difficult to determine where his dwelling once stood. Almost all the settlers who were exiled to this “God-forgotten” territory departed many years ago. I tried asking the villagers if they had heard about Stepan Zaitsev. No one had, and no wonder, as almost two generations have passed since then. Finally, I managed to find an old couple who remembered the Zaitsev family and shared an interesting story.

These people were young when they were deported, but they still remember how one evening when they did not know anyone and were starving, my grandmother brought them a loaf of freshly baked homemade bread. This act of humanity and compassion—shown in a situation in which everyone thought only about himself trying to survive the inhuman conditions—remained in the memory of these people forever.

The old man showed me the place where the dwelling of my exiled grandparents once stood. There were no hills on which to navigate, but the old man pointed out the exact place, going to a poplar tree.

It was late autumn and the leaves had already fallen down. “Here, at the place of their dwelling, the tree grew,” said the old man.

This tree is perhaps the best memorial to those who left in the remote steppes a part of their lives. Every year it renews its foliage, indicating the indestructible power of life and courage of those who defended their principles and faith in any circumstance of life. ●



Yevgeny Vladimirovich Zaitsev is rector of the Zaoksky Adventist University’s College of Humanities and Economics in Zaoksky, Russia. He has a Ph.D. in Theology and is also an M.D. He and his wife, Valentina, have three adult sons.

The term “antichrist” comes from a Greek term formed by the preposition *anti* (“against,” “in place of”) and the noun *christos* (“the anointed one”). It primarily refers to a being who attempts to usurp the role of Jesus by illegally appropriating His functions. It could also designate the systems used by him to work implicitly or explicitly “against” Christ. This title reveals the two most important characteristics of the antichrist: He *deceives* by pretending to be the Christ, and he *oppresses or persecutes* God’s people in his conflict against Christ.

1. Use of the Term: The title “the antichrist” (Greek, *ho antichristos*) is found exclusively in the New Testament letters of John. First, according to John, the spirit of the antichrist is active through false teachers (1 John 2:18, 22), thus suggesting that the antichrist will work from within Christianity. The title itself presupposes that we are dealing with a corruption of the Christian faith. The antichrist is against the truth as revealed in Jesus, replacing it with his own understanding of Jesus (verse 22; 2 John 7).

Second, the coming of the antichrist was predicted in apostolic teachings. John wrote, “As you have heard that the antichrist is coming . . .” (1 John 2:18). Believers were instructed about this significant threat to their commitment to Jesus.

Third, the antichrist could manifest himself through human systems or instrumentalities: “Even now many antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18). These individuals are not, properly speaking “the antichrist,” but they have the “spirit of the antichrist,” that is, the same mindset. They are his instruments (chap. 4:3). They are historical expressions of the antichrist within the church, and as such they could be described as being manifestations of “the antichrist” (chap. 2:22; 2 John 7).

2. The Person of the Antichrist: The individual called by John the “antichrist” is mentioned in other places in the Bible. Originally he was a heavenly being, a cherub, who rebelled against God and initiated a cosmic conflict (Eze. 28:14-16; Rev. 12:7). He was indeed an anti-God power, therefore the antichrist, who wanted to make himself “like the Most High” (Isa. 14:13). His ultimate goal was

to occupy the place that exclusively belongs to God. He questioned and attacked God’s character in order to justify his actions. He was expelled from heaven and, after the fall of Adam and Eve, made this planet his base of operations.

Daniel dealt with the antichrist using symbols representing a historical power that, after the fall of Pagan Rome, united church and state, changed God’s law (Dan. 7:25), persecuted God’s people, spoke against God (chap. 11:36), and usurped the priestly work of Christ (chap. 8:11). This clearly describes the spirit and work of the antichrist within history.

3. Personal Apparition of the Antichrist: The New Testament predicts the presence of apostasy within the Christian church (2 Thess. 2:3, 4), and considered it a manifestation of the spirit of the antichrist. According to the book of Revelation, apostasy will reach universal dimensions and will be accompanied by the coming of the antichrist in person. Revelation announces the formation of a global coalition under the leadership of demons (Rev. 16:13, 14), accompanied by miracles

and signs, that will reach its climax in the coming of the antichrist, described by John as fire coming “down from heaven to earth in full view of men” (chap. 13:13; cf. 1 Kings 18:20-39). Paul wrote about “the coming [*parousia*] of the lawless one,” using the same term he employed when referring to the “coming [*parousia*]” of Christ (1 Thess. 2:8, 9). The antichrist will try to imitate the Second Coming of Christ.

This powerful apparition of the antichrist will deceive the inhabitants of earth. They will worship Satan (the antichrist), and the religious-political systems that support him (Rev. 13:4). The antichrist will launch a war to exterminate God’s people (chap. 13:15-17), but they will find safety in the Lord (chap. 17:16), not in human armaments. Their mission is to proclaim the eternal gospel of salvation and unmask the antichrist (chap. 14:6-12). Christ will finally deliver them and destroy the antichrist. ●

End-time Evil

QUESTION:

Who, or what, is the antichrist?



By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

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



The Divine Helper

By MARK A. FINLEY

This month we begin a series of seven lessons in which we will study the nature, role, and function of the Holy Spirit. Each lesson is designed to give greater understanding about how to cooperate with heaven's divine gift to live a fulfilling, Christ-centered life. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is one of the most misunderstood truths in the Bible. A clear view of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the life of each believer is absolutely essential if we are going to live a victorious Christian life. We cannot overcome the evil one on our own; we can overcome Satan's temptations only in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Is the Holy Spirit an influence, or the third person of the Godhead? In the texts below, circle the members of the Godhead.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:16, 17).

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

As you read these three passages, does the Bible indicate in any way that the Holy Spirit is merely an influence, or in any way inferior to the Father and the Son?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Whom does Jesus call the Holy Spirit?

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (verse 26).

The word Jesus used is _____.

The word "helper" in the original language of the New Testament is *paraklete*. It is a word rich in meaning. It means one who stands alongside. It was used of a friend in court who provided defense for the accused; one who was always there.

3. How closely did Jesus identify Himself with the Holy Spirit?

"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The Holy Spirit is Jesus' personal _____.

The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Christ." He is Jesus' ambassador. While Jesus and the Holy Spirit are two distinct beings in the Godhead, they are one in purpose and eternal in nature.



4. What is the most significant reason Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit?

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (John 15:26).

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to _____ of Jesus.

5. What three things will the Holy Spirit convict each one of us of if our hearts are open to His promptings?

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of _____, of _____, and of _____.

Each one of us has felt the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. At times, when we haven't lived in harmony with God's will, the Holy Spirit has brought conviction to our hearts. We have felt His promptings to do what is right and have been impressed with the reality that one day evil will finally be condemned and done away with forever.

6. What other name did Jesus give the Holy Spirit?

“The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him or knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:17).

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the _____ of _____.

Why do you think Jesus gave the Holy Spirit this special title? _____

7. How does the Holy Spirit relate to Jesus?

“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is mine and declare it unto you” (John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit _____ Jesus.

The work of the Holy Spirit is not to glorify Himself; it is to glorify Jesus. The work of the Holy Spirit is not to glorify us; it is to bring glory to our Savior. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the great desire of our lives is to glorify Jesus in everything we do, to be more like Jesus.

Would you like to open your heart to the Holy Spirit to make you more like Jesus? Why not bow your head and pray for a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit right now?

Next month's study will feature the next installment in this series,

“Empowered by the Holy Spirit.”



CORRECTION: The Bible study, “Prevailing Prayer” (December 2010), inaccurately stated that Jacob never saw his father, Isaac, again. This was our mistake, not the author's. Our apologies.—EDITORS

LETTERS

Seeing More Clearly

The good got better and still hits the spot! I have greatly enjoyed *Adventist World* lately, more than the occasional *Adventist Review* I could get a copy of. I was truly blessed by “Can We Talk,” by Angel Manuel Rodríguez (October 2010), which dealt with the question Does the Bible support the ordination of woman to pastoral ministry or not?

The way Rodríguez commented on this has broadened my views not only on this issue, but also on how to approach other matters on which I have not found a clear answer in the Bible and other Bible aids on why we believe what we believe. Indeed, we should pray for healing and be able to look at issues like these in a spirit of service to the church.

RUBINET MULLER
Willemstad, Curaçao

I found “Can We Talk?” by Angel Rodríguez very off-putting—not because of who wrote it or what was opined. I guess the part that disturbed me was the comparison that came to mind after reading “Press together...” in “The Incendiary Fellowship,” by Bill Knott, and the extant attitudes reported in Bible Questions. If asked for my opinion (and that has not happened), I would turn to Joel 2 and merely ask this question: If it is true that we are living in the last hours of the last days, why would we mandate leaving half the team on the bench?

In spite of the best-spent arguments I have read, I trust Joel more than all the printed positing that changes nothing and no one. The question is not a theological exercise or an intellectual duel. The question is “Who will go?” And there are those who reply, “Here are we. Send us!”

“All these magazines [*Adventist World*] are changing the lives of the people who read them.”

—FRANCIS OKELLO, *Uganda Union*.

Our church seems to reply, “Sorry. Do not apply ... it’s a matter of historical, cultural, biblical policy.”

EDWIN L. CHRISTIANSEN
*Shelton, Washington,
United States*



Word Power

Thank you to the *Adventist World* publication for the messages written by

the inspired writers. Their messages go far in bringing me closer to God. To mention but a few: Thurman C. Petty, “What Have We Done?” (December 2009); and “The Battle Is On! Understanding the Great Controversy,” by Alberto R. Timm (May 2010). May God’s name be praised.

All these magazines are changing the lives of the people who read them. My request is that as I move into an unentered area of Uganda, many people would like to do Bible studies.

FRANCIS OKELLO
Uganda Union Mission

Still Speaking— Articles From Past Issues

I enjoyed reading the article by Ella Simmons, “Aiming Higher” (July 2009). True education teaches the best use of all abilities and attainment and covers the whole circle of obligation to self, to humanity, and to God.



We have obligations to ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. Our lifestyle contributes to health and longevity.

While we feed our physical bodies with a nutritious diet, we feed our minds with God’s Word to nurture our spiritual life. Our obligation to humanity is vast, and we believe in saving more souls in these last days.

Adventist education is centered on God’s laws—the goal of the learner should be to please the Creator, whatever course or discipline he or she is taking. Education is a lifelong process that leads to the true source of knowledge and life.

LAWRENCE TESORO
Pasay City, Manila, Philippines

Thank you for the article “Meet My Father,” by Clinton Wahlen (March 2009). I grew up in a poor family, parentless, and I have not yet known how good or bad it is to have parents. I always weep when I think about my situation. I face daily challenges of being responsible for family.

Living in a poor family where I have no one to share my sorrows, I have known there exists the Father of the fatherless or parentless. To Him I pour out all my needs. This has helped

LETTERS

me lean on Him. I know that God is my father.

ASA OLUOCH ABAGA
Kisumu, Kenya



“Four Lessons From the Potter’s House,” by Keisha McKenzie (November 2008) was heart-touching and produced tears for me. It

was almost a gospel in itself. Best regards to the author. May the Lord bless you all as you continue to minister to His flock.

HALTON MCNEIL CHANZA
Lilongwe, Malawi

Strength in Inspirational Reading

Thank you for a magazine that allows us to be together in a war with the devil. To God be the glory!

FELIX CHAKA
Harare, Zimbabwe

Thank you so much for the past two *Adventist World* magazines. I have learned so much from them. I am 85 years old and regret that I did not learn more when I was young.

All this should be written for everyone to read, not only for us Adventists. May the Lord bless you with all the work you are doing.

ELVIRA SEEMANN
*Cooranbong,
New South Wales, Australia*

I am one of thousands of your readers. I enjoy *Adventist World*, as do other members of the church. We appreciate the spiritual edification, and like the information about the world church. May God be with you in your ministry.

DAVID MUHINDO KAVUSA
Democratic Republic of Congo

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

Please pray for my spiritual life. I am looking for a sponsorship for my theological studies and am going through a difficult phase in my life. I expect a miracle from Christ. I ask for prayers from the Adventist World Church.

ASA, *Kenya*

I’m asking prayer for a friend in the valley of decision. Please pray that God would do whatever He needs to do to save and bless this individual, as Jesus would like to save and bless him—to the uttermost!

CARYN, *United States*

Thank you for praying for me. I sent a prayer request on November 6. I was

jobless, and I wanted a scholarship for my master’s. We serve a living God. I am now working on my master’s degree. God is so real, and He answers whenever we call.

REBECCA, *Belgium*

I have been appointed as pastor and principal of a school. I think it’s too big for me. I need the power of the Holy Spirit.

NGAIH, *Myanmar*

Thanks for your prayer for my brother and my friend. I can see the progress in their spiritual lives. Please include in your prayer another friend who is experiencing a crisis in his marriage.

Please pray that he can settle his problems with his wife.

DIOVEL, *Thailand*

My brother passed away recently. We are saddened by this loss in our family, but we trust the Lord. Please pray for my dad, because he is very sad; and for my brother, to give his life to Jesus.

EDDY, *Mexico*

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

New Birth

This month, a reader shares a poem based on Isaiah 61:10.

Give me your heart, the Savior pled
And I said “Yes.”
I said “Yes” without counting the cost,
Without knowing
That my heart was where I kept
All my treasures—
The things uniquely mine,
like time
and gold my hands had earned,
my rights,
and all my skills
and talents
and outstanding abilities,
and things I counted dear.

Things that looked good to others
and boosted my ego
and gave me prestige
and honor
and praise
and status
and excuse.

Sheared of these I grasped for a fig leaf
So others might not see.

But lo!

He gave me not a wilting leaf,
But His own beautiful robe—
Woven in the loom of heaven
With not a thread of my own devising.

And I stood in this free gift,
Perfect—
His garment of salvation!

—KATHRYN BARNETT ELTING,
Yountville, California, United States



VERA REIS

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



SUBMITTED BY AIREEN CANALS

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

On November 20, 2010, Dina Mikve became an Adventist when she was baptized. Dina belongs to a traditional European Jewish family and began to attend our community of the World Jewish-Adventist Friendship Center, in 2001. Although Dina lives very near to another synagogue, one day

she saw a poster that advertised the activities of our community and decided to attend. Dina has been part of the family of Beth Bnei Tzion (the name of our temple) for several years, but for us, her decision to be an Adventist fills our hearts. Welcome, Dina!

—Photo and information submitted by Pastor David Barzola, Buenos Aires, Argentina



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe.”

—Church member Odireleng Motlogelwa, from Botswana, to another member in August 2010

ANSWER: In Guimba, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, a few members of the Cawayan Bugtong Seventh-day Adventist Church (CBSDAC) attempt a “jump pose” after their sundown worship. Members of the CBSDAC prefer to conduct their sundown worships on rice fields in order to enjoy nature, one of God’s creations.