

July 2011

ADVENTIST WORLD



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WORLD VIEW

Praying the News

The morning headlines crackle with the pain and pressure of the night:

“Debtor Nations Search for Aid.” “Mystery Illness Baffles Experts.” “Revolutions Rock Dictatorships.” The unrelenting facts of war, poverty, and sadness threaten to undo what Jesus wanted us to have: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

How do we speak of abundant life in the presence of great sorrow? Believers want to greet each new day with something of Christ’s confidence. But there’s a cloud upon our sunrise, a tarnish on our joy.

We know too much; we hear too much. Our hearts grow heavy with the news.

And if He left us with no remedy, we would be, as Paul might say, “of all men the most pitiable” (1 Cor. 15:19). To have His heart but no access to His power would leave us always in our tears.

But the same Lord who teaches us to care also teaches us to pray: “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1). When we are most tempted to despair, we hear even in painful news a

strong, persistent call to prayer. We meet the facts of human woe, not with an airy disregard, but with the deep concern of believers promised that our petitions will be heard and answered. By praying, we align ourselves with the invincible Christ; we express our fundamental agreement with His purposes and His soon-arriving kingdom. What seems our helplessness is, in fact, our greatest claim upon His power.

“Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence,” Ellen White wrote more than century ago. “He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep—the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people, if they will call upon Him in faith. He will restrain all the forces of darkness, until the warning is given to the world, and all who will heed it are prepared for His coming.”*

Today, bring all the news before the Lord—interceding for the hungry, pleading for the victims, strengthening the righteous, lifting up the lost. He who came to preach good news invites you to stay in prayer until that morning when the news will be always and only good.

— BILL KNOTT

* Ellen G. White, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 14, 1905.

WORLD REPORT

Newbold College Board *Appoints* New Principal

■ Philip R. Brown, a noted Seventh-day Adventist educator, is the new principal of church-owned Newbold College in Binfield, Bracknell, England. Brown is currently a vice president at Avondale College in Australia, with responsibilities for learning and teaching. He will become the thirty-first principal in Newbold’s 110-year history.

Brown received his Bachelor of

Education degree from Avondale College; two master’s degrees, in commerce and educational administration, from the University of New South Wales, Australia; a Master of Tertiary Education Management from the University of Melbourne, Australia; and a Doctorate in Education from La Sierra University, United States.

“Through our research we found that Dr. Brown has an excellent grasp



NEW PRINCIPAL: Philip R. Brown is the thirty-first principal, or head, of Newbold College in England.

TED PHOTO

WORLD REPORT

of higher-education issues,” said Bertil Wiklander, the college board chair and the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Trans-European Division, commenting on the appointment. “He also knows how to work hard to make things happen and manage change. We heard very positive comments on his management style, which characterizes integrity, professionalism, and a balance between project-task and people-focus in providing direction and inspiration.

On his appointment, Brown said: “I have a strong commitment to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In particular, I have enthusiasm for furthering Newbold’s vision, mission, values, and contribution to the Adventist identity in the modern world.”

Newbold College is a Seventh-day Adventist college of higher education accredited by the Open University and the British Council. The school’s campus is situated in Binfield Village—40 miles west of London.

—reported by Miroslav Pujic, *ted-NEWS*, and Adventist World staff

One Hundred Forty-Seven Commit to Baptism at German Youth Event

■ On Sabbath, April 23, 2011, 147 young adults committed to baptism as Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Mannheim, Germany, part of the 2011 Youth in Mission Congress, or YiMC. Overall, 547 of the nearly 1,800 participants said they would dedicate their lives to



Above: JOINING IN COMMITMENT: A large crowd of young adults come forward as a sign of commitment following a sermon by Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson (on platform), president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,

during the Youth in Mission conference. **Left:** INTENSE CONCENTRATION: Young adult follows a Bible reading during the Youth in Mission conference held in Mannheim, Germany, in late April 2011.

YIM PHOTOS

discipleship, 174 sought a greater surrender to God, and 46 said they would answer a call to ministry. Three were baptized at the event; the others are expected to join the church in the coming months.

That this would take place at an Adventist youth event is not so unusual—reports of such levels of dedication are regularly received from Africa, the South Pacific, and the

Inter-America regions of the movement. But much of Europe is viewed as postmodern, even post-Christian, a region in which young people have little time for the “old” religion of their parents or grandparents.

According to its Web site, “the motto of the Youth in Mission Movement is: ‘Inspire—Train—Send.’ The

young people shall not only be inspired and trained, but also sent out. If we want to send young people, then we also have to tell them where they can go. In other words, we need mission projects at home and abroad, where they can get involved. This is Youth in Mission, young people who are not only talking and dreaming but also going out to make a difference.”

And go out they did: into the streets and shops of Mannheim, into homeless centers and nursing homes, witnessing and doing good for others. This kind of participation stirred up spiritual interest, resulting in the responses seen on the final Sabbath.

Michael Dörnbrack is one of the Seventh-day Adventist pastors who connected with the attendees. He’s also director of the Josiah mission school in Isny, Germany, and he delivered morning devotionals.

Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference president, spent time with the young delegates, a group he said was very close to his heart. Wilson’s charge: “Be ambassadors for Christ.” And he added, “God is calling you to action, to proclaim the Word of God in word and in action, [and] to be an ambassador of Christ.”

Nineteen-year-old Daniel Kindsvater from Müllheim said, “To me, YiMC was a very special event. It strengthened my decision to go into the mission field for one year after high school. I recommend it to every Adventist young adult to attend YiMC.”

Another participant, 23-year-old Sebastian Naumann from Leipzig, said, “It was the first time I attended.

It was too incredible; [it] exceeded my expectations. It was full of experiences and wonderful guidance that God accomplished.”

The event was held in a school complex, with gymnasium, showers, classrooms, and a cafeteria. Participants slept in classrooms, took showers at the gym, attended workshops in the chemistry lab, and heard preaching again in the gym. It’s uncomfortable, some might say, but also somehow attractive: attendance hit a record for the fifth year in a row.

Adventist Mission Board Reviews Plans

■ The Seventh-day Adventist world church’s newly formed Mission Board recently reviewed plans to streamline the church’s global mission activities, including the processing of church missionaries and volunteers.

A previous analysis of the church’s mission operations revealed a “fragmented” approach to oversight, often resulting in administrative redundancies. Top church executives approved the board’s formation last year in an effort to coordinate the church’s global outreach and better manage mission resources.

Church leaders said they’re confident that actions taken by the Mission Board will result in smoother, more efficient operations.

Among ideas reviewed during the board’s first meeting is a plan to centralize the church’s mission operations at world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. Initial restructuring has already begun. Where previously the world church’s Secretariat and Treasury departments

worked separately to process inter-division employees (IDEs) and Adventist Volunteers—often resulting in duplication—the process now enlists their joint efforts in cooperation with Adventist Mission.

Plans are in place for both departments to share closer work spaces at headquarters, said world church treasurer Robert E. Lemon. As restructuring progresses, the church’s Institute of World Mission is expected to follow suit, moving from the campus of church-run Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. While church officials said they have invited the institute’s three faculty members to move, no information was available on whether they plan to accept.

Since 1966 the Institute of World Mission has helped smooth the transition between cultures for thousands of missionaries and volunteers. The institute trains up to 120 missionaries and their families per year during intensives held worldwide.

Mission Board members also heard a report on urban ministry, a current major mission emphasis from church administration. Ministry to large cities has historically proved challenging, but community-based outreach is generating results, said world church associate secretary Gary Krause, who serves as Adventist Mission director.

WORLD REPORT

Adventist Camporee *Attracts* 20,000 Pathfinders *From* 34 Countries

Historic IAD youth event in Mexico focuses on “Conquering Giants.”

By ALFREDO GARCÍA-MARENKO, reporting from Mexico City

More than 20,000 Pathfinders, youth leaders, and volunteers converged from 34 countries of the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory to participate in a historic six-day international camporee in the Ciudad Deportiva (Sports City), located in the heart of Mexico City, April 19 to 23, 2011.

Fellowship and inspiration, witnessing, worship and commitment opportunities, events showcasing skills learned in Pathfinder honor classes, and a variety of recreational activities were components.

The April 19 opening ceremonies to welcome the Pathfinders began with a cultural program by the host organizations. Subsequently, a colorful parade of the various delegations of Pathfinders and their leaders, dressed in uniforms or national costumes, marched to the huge platform while holding flags in representation of the 21 unions of the region.

Federal and local authorities were present at the opening and closing programs, including Francisco Javier Sánchez Cervantes, first officer and delegation director of the city's Iztacalco borough, and Paulo Tort Ortega, director of the General Management of Religious

Associations in Mexico, who also represented Mexico's president, Felipe Calderón. They congratulated the Pathfinders for their positive contribution to the community and to a healthy lifestyle through their civic and moral values.

During the first general meeting, Israel Leito, IAD president, officially opened the event. “To see all these young people here praising the Lord, enjoying themselves, and getting to know the Lord better in order to conquer their giants—it fills my heart with joy,” said Leito.

Inspirational Speakers

The lineup of speakers for the six-day event included Gilbert Cangy, General Conference (GC) Youth Ministries Department director; Jonathan Tejel, GC Youth Ministries Department associate director; José Vicente Rojas, director of the Office of Volunteer Ministries for the North American Division; Baraka Muganda, former GC Youth Ministries Department director; Bernardo Rodríguez, former IAD Youth Ministries Department director; and Alfredo García-Marenko, former IAD Youth Ministries Department director and former GC Youth Ministries Department associate director.

Leito and Benjamín Carballo, director of the event, gave a combined short message at the closing ceremony.

Each speaker challenged and impacted the lives of the Pathfinders while focusing each message in various aspects on the theme “Conquering Giants.”

Reflecting on her camporee experience, Stephanie Vivas, 13, from the Venezuela-Antilles Union, said, “What I enjoyed the most were the plenary sessions along with the messages, and also the food! What I didn't like were the showers and also the limited water. But the theme of the camporee was just perfect, focusing on the giants we must conquer, those giants we face in our everyday life!”

Musical Drama About King David

More than 50 young actors from the metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist churches in Mexico City, under the leadership of Javier Muñoz and Gina López, a notable artist who became a Christian, prepared a musical drama focusing on the biblical character David. At the end of the camporee delegates received a CD with the presentation's original music.

In addition to the drama, music



COURTESY OF IAD/DANIEL GALLARDO



Top left: RECORD ATTENDANCE: Largest ever IAD Pathfinder Camporee brought more than 20,000. In a mega Investiture Service more than 1,000 Pathfinders received insignias of various AY classes; 260 were baptized. **Left: TO CONQUER GIANTS:** IAD Pathfinders from 34 countries participated in the marching drills to showcase their abilities and be trained to conquer their giants. **Above: FORMER IAD YOUTH DIRECTORS HONORED:** (from right) Israel Leito, Alfredo García-Marenko, Eliezer Meléndez, and Bernardo Rodríguez received a tribute and a souvenir with 34 national flags from Benjamín Carballo (left), camporee director, for their combined legacy of more than 130 years of youth leadership and more than 30 years of service as youth directors of the Inter-American Division. Hilda Montero (not pictured) was also recognized for serving as office assistant for each one of them.

ALFREDO GARCÍA-MARENKO/ADRIÁN SOL

also played a rich role in the program, with an orchestra of 130 Pathfinders from the Montemorelos University Pathfinder Club, along with various other clubs, delivering wonderful music during the Sabbath programs.

“Mega” Investiture Service

On Sabbath morning more than 1,000 Pathfinders, who had previously fulfilled their class requirements, received their awards in an impressive investiture ceremony. The candidates, escorted by youth directors, former directors, club directors, and Master Guides—covered the huge platform and the central aisle, and were surrounded by the expectant crowd who applauded their achievements.

The 20,000-plus crowd affirmed their decision to conquer all opposing giants in the name of the Lord, while shouting in Spanish these words from Jeremiah 20:11: “*Mas Jehová está con-*

migo como poderoso gigante” (“But the Lord is with me like a powerful giant”).

Baptismal Ceremonies

A total of 258 Pathfinders were baptized in multiple ceremonies strategically scheduled in every evening session and on Sabbath. At the close of the final episode of the musical drama, two more people who were directly inspired by the drama director and her ministry—the director’s mother and a close friend—were baptized, bringing a special touch of personal witnessing to the closing program.

At the closing ceremony Leito encouraged the participants to continue with their commitment: “We conclude this event, but we are beginning a life of triumph and victory through Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus we will conquer giants!” Carballo expressed gratitude to those who contributed to the success of the

event, and then an impressive set of fireworks concluded with fire letters displaying the surprising announcement that the next IAD Pathfinder Camporee would be held in the Dominican Republic in 2017.

Media Coverage and Volunteers

The IAD Communication Department did careful work to create awareness, to prepare a professional production along with PowerPoint presentations, and to keep the entire world informed of events via live Internet streaming, along with daily reports, a photo gallery, and video clips posted on their Web site, Twitter, and Facebook. The communication team also prepared video productions with daily news presented to all attendees at the end of the evening programs. The Mexican publishing house, GEMA, published a daily internal newspaper, *El Vencedor (The Conqueror)*. ■

WORLD VISTA

How delightful is your Sabbath? Seventh-day Adventists are sometimes accused of being legalists because of our adherence to the Ten Commandments, especially the fourth commandment. And in some cases church members fuel this idea by making Sabbath observance so onerous and giving the

By
TED N. C.
WILSON

Day of Delight

Making Sabbath the highlight of the week

impression that one can somehow gain heavenly approval because of our denial of something on Sabbath. This behavior takes us back to the times of the Jewish nation, when Sabbath became such a burden that it really wasn't a very happy day.

Sabbath should be one of the most joyous experiences we can have. It is a time of release from the cares of everyday activity: Scripture, the fourth commandment itself, unfolds this perspective. Because it is the sign of God's creatorship, and will thus be the distinguishing seal of God's people in the final days, the devil works furiously against the Sabbath, seeking to obliterate its significance and undermine the joy God intended it to be.

The devil would like nothing better than to encourage church members to see Sabbathkeeping as a method of working our way to heaven, or, better yet, to transform the Sabbath into something so heavy and restrictive that our children will learn to hate it. But every moment of Sabbath, not just the worship experience should be a delight. The Sabbath is "from evening to evening," and it is designed to be a sanctuary in time, through which



JONATHAN ISAAC

we're rejuvenated. As we experience the joy of Sabbath we will hardly be able to wait for the best day of the week to arrive.

Tuning In to God

As Sabbath approaches on Friday evening we will be able to sense a difference. This is the day God sanctified, He blessed the day, He made something special of this particular day (Gen. 2:3). We must remember this and resist the temptation to allow extraneous things to enter into the day, such as business activities that carry over into the Sabbath hours.

In the past, it was easier to avoid intrusions on the Sabbath by simply turning off the television or radio, and not picking up the newspaper. But now millions around the world hold Smartphones in their hands seven days a week. Yes, we may use the new technology for good purposes—reading digital versions of Scripture, even looking at a Sabbath school lesson—but we are too easily connected with unwelcome and unholy things as well.

More than ever we have to take responsibility for not letting anything interfere with the delight of the special day with God. Our busyness is rarely God's path to holiness. As my wife, Nancy, told me: "You just need a rest from that."

But true and joyful Sabbath observance doesn't come simply by turning off the computer or by turning off the TV and just saying, "OK, now we're going to start the Sabbath." Sabbath is not only about what we *don't do*—it's also all about what we *do* on Sabbath. It is about individually taking the time to foster your own walk with the Lord. Keeping the Sabbath holy and finding it a delight is possible only

through a vibrant relationship with the Lord of the Sabbath.

While my relationship with the Lord is very personal and between my Lord and me, the implications of that relationship will be felt by everyone I deal with. For example, instead of rationalizing the commandment and saying, "Well, Sabbath is a day of rest, so I should refrain from work, and go out to eat at a restaurant," I will try as far as I can not to cause extra work for others and help them see the beauty of the Sabbath. Those who come in contact with me should also come to know something of the promised joy and delight of the Sabbath: it is not only a day meant to rejuvenate believers.

The real principle of Sabbath is reconnecting ourselves to the Creator. Rather than focusing on many specific actions, we should look on the Sabbath as a time in which to reconnect to God, with His created world, and with our families and loved ones. When we do this, the Sabbath will take on a new and different significance. It will become a bridge, from one week to the next, that reminds us of where we have come from, why we are here, and where we're going.

Worship and Fellowship

It would be a wonderful idea for local churches to hold Sabbath seminars that focus on the practical ways in which Sabbath can be made a joy, involve families, and promote spiritual growth. The local church plays a pivotal role in whether members will consider Sabbathkeeping as a legalistic practice or see it instead as a beautiful sanctuary in time. God made us, and He provides us with an opportunity to rejuvenate our lives spiritu-

ally and physically once a week as we turn to the One who knows more about us than we will ever know.

Some may say, "Oh, I get my spiritual experience by going hiking in the mountains." And you can do that once in a while to refresh both body and spirit. But God placed us in a fellowship of believers for a good reason: we need to be with those who share our beliefs, and to whom we can minister. For me, one of the best parts of the Sabbath is Bible study and the Sabbath school lesson.

While Internet-streamed worship services and televised religious programming are available in many parts of the world and bless many, these media should never replace belonging to and attending a local congregation on Sabbath. Every Adventist ought to physically "belong" somewhere. The Bible tells us that we should gather together on the Sabbath (Heb. 10:25). If we miss the fellowship of other believers, we will also miss the strength and encouragement God intended for that week of living. People who move from one church to the next, who go to where the best preacher is, or where the best food is, will not receive the full Sabbath blessing.

Sabbathkeeping, while ultimately joyful, will not always be easy. For many families with young children it's often a challenge getting everyone to



Ted N. C. Wilson is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A., and enjoys Sabbath worship in his local congregation.

WORLD REPORT



A One-Day Church

Rampidal, Ecuador

church, and then keeping the children engaged during the service. But it's well worth the effort as you invest in your children's eternal future. Their experience of Sabbath will be built on the positive memories you help them to experience in the company of other believers. Adventist churches ought to be places where members are welcoming of children, and where the occasional childish outburst is not seen as the end of the world.

We are there to worship God and also to fellowship with each other. We have to support each other and to encourage those who may find themselves in some frustrating experiences at the moment.

Active in Worship

Although Sabbath is about rest, it's also about involvement, especially in the worship experience, where as many people as possible should be actively participating. Church should be a dynamic, active place with lots of helping hands. Everyone should find their "niche," whether it is in the worship service or even the fellowship dinner. Young people should especially be encouraged to be involved.

When we gather for worship and Bible study, we also find a place to use the gifts God has given us—in music, in teaching, in service, in hospitality. We give to others in love and care because we have received the gift of God's grace in this blessed 24-hour experience of Sabbath.

As your next Sabbath approaches, invite the Lord of the Sabbath to be the One who guides you into experiencing all of its potential for rest, for worship, for study, for service—and for delight. ■

There are 32 Chachi villages on Ecuador's Cayapas River, and for 18 years Pastor Manuel has been working to grow a Seventh-day Adventist congregation in each one. So far there are four Chachi congregations and one church building—a One-Day Church built by Maranatha volunteers in Rampidal, the most accessible village.

The 28 volunteers, led by Audrey Whiting of Generation of Youth for Christ, flew to Ecuador's capital of Quito, traveled five hours by bus coming down the Andes, three more hours upriver in motorized canoes, then two additional hours *beyond utilities* in dugout canoes.

The congregation had arranged for the church to be built on top of the hill that stands above the village.

It took a few days, but the volunteers soon became part of the village—bathing in the river, playing soccer with the kids, devouring scores of fried, baked, boiled, and roasted bananas, helping gather drying cacao beans when rain threatened, and swatting mosquitoes throughout the night.

One team hauled the One-Day Church steel up the hill and turned it into a church. Another group harvested tall bamboo and transformed it into sanctuary walls. A third team conducted medical clinics for the village, and for anyone who made the four-hour canoe trip from the next Cayapas village.


One afternoon the Rampidal local church elder stood in the center of the almost-completed church and said, "We need seats for the people." He headed into the forest with his chain saw, and the next morning a volunteer team fashioned pews from freshly cut 2 x 12 boards.

Add seven baptisms, hymns by candlelight, prayers in multiple languages, a church dedication, and hugs for all, and you have the first Chachi church building in the steamy jungles of Ecuador.



The One-Day Church program is a collaborative effort between the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI), and Maranatha Volunteers International. These stories come from Maranatha's storyteller, Dick Duerksen.

ASI
ADVENTIST-LAYMEN'S
SERVICES & INDUSTRIES



Fabulous Fiber

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

I love beans, but they hate me. I feel gassy and bloated when I eat them. I've heard they are rich in fiber, and we all need more fiber. What should I do?

Food fiber is an important and desirable part of our diet. The Western diet has become largely dependent on refined and processed foods, and there has been a drop in the fiber content of many diets. When Dr. Denis Burkitt wrote about fiber some 40 years ago, he did so from the perspective of his African experience. The African diet was—in those days—rich in whole grains and legumes and, consequently, provided large amounts of fiber. The low rates of heart disease, diverticulitis, and appendicitis were all linked to fiber in the diet.

Americans typically consume only about 40 percent of the recommended amount of fiber, and get most of it from refined white flour, which is a poor reflection on the Western diet.

Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, and legumes, which means peas, beans, lentils, and peanuts. Usually we speak of two kinds of fiber: soluble, which dissolves in water, and insoluble, which does not.

Insoluble fiber adds bulk to the stool by absorbing water, thereby softening and enlarging the stool. Soluble fiber feeds bacteria in the bowel, makes for comfortable bowel health, and helps with bowel function.

Fiber is required at higher levels than normally consumed for its benefit to be measurable. The Institute of Medicine recommends 21 grams of fiber for women and 30 grams of fiber for men who are over the age of 50 years. The recommended five fruits and vegetables

give this amount when accompanied by six servings of whole grains per day.

A mixture of soluble and insoluble fiber is best, so an apple should be eaten with its skin, which provides the insoluble fiber to match the soluble fiber of the apple's flesh. Fiber helps reduce the risk of heart disease, and every 10-gram increase, up to the recommended 30-gram level, lowers the risk of heart attack by 14 percent and risk of cardiac death by 27 percent.

Fiber tends to lower cholesterol levels, perhaps because it binds bile salts, which are made from cholesterol, forcing the liver to make more and excrete it.

People who eat more fiber lose more weight. Additionally, type 2 diabetes is reduced. The 2007 Nurses' Health Study showed a 21 percent decrease in risk of type 2 diabetes for eating an extra two servings of whole grains daily.

Interestingly, people with irritable bowel syndrome do not get as dramatic a benefit from fiber, suggesting the neurogenic component to this condition may be more dominant.

Persons who are constipated benefit from added fiber, especially when increasing their water consumption along with fiber consumption. We recommend being progressive and intentional as you go about increasing dietary fiber slowly over several weeks.

Now, about your problem with beans: Soaking beans overnight, then throwing away the water, followed by discarding the water with which you



bring them to a boil, will remove a lot of the soluble fiber. As this is the fiber that feeds the bacteria that cause gas, you may find you can enjoy the beans and they have stopped hating you.

If you still can't tolerate beans, fiber can be found in many other foods. It's generally better to get your fiber in food rather than looking for it in dietary supplements. That old-fashioned oatmeal with berries for breakfast is looking awfully good again. ■



Allan R. Handysides, a board-certified gynecologist, is director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.



Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is associate director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

Alan Weisman, in his internationally acclaimed book *The World Without Us*, describes what our planet could be like if humans were suddenly “gone.” So what would earth look like? At first glance things would be good! For one, there would be no more noise from cars, machines, and airplanes. Nights would finally be dark and reveal a starry sky. Cities would disappear. Such coastal cities as Hamburg and Amsterdam would be flooded, as dikes would disintegrate. Statues and monuments would become excellent anchor points for sea life. The tunnel connecting France and England would perhaps survive a few thousand years before collapsing. But even when the sun would burn out there would still be human traces. The many radio and TV waves that we have sent into space would continue wafting through the universe.

What is it about the world without us that so fascinates people? Perhaps it is the underlying question: What will happen to our planet? Will some trace of our civilization remain? Will anyone survive?

A Remnant

Thousands of years ago as Noah and his family left the ark they found a world “without us.” Every step took them over a gigantic cemetery—they were the only survivors. Noah’s ears probably still rang with the scornful laughter of the past 120 years. And then the memory of the terrible darkness as the ark rode out the monster storm! They were survivors through God’s grace! Noah probably promised himself: we humans must never forget this!

The theme of survival and remnant can be traced throughout Scripture. There are Joseph and his family, Moses in the bulrushes, the Israelites facing the sea, Joshua and Caleb, Rahab and her family during the conquest of Jericho, Gideon and his 300 men, Elijah, Daniel’s three friends in the fiery furnace, Jeremiah, Baruch and Ebed-Melech in Jerusalem, Ezra and those returning from exile—the list could continue.

Have you noticed that they all did not belong to the majority! They were the “others,” and I wonder about their shared characteristics.

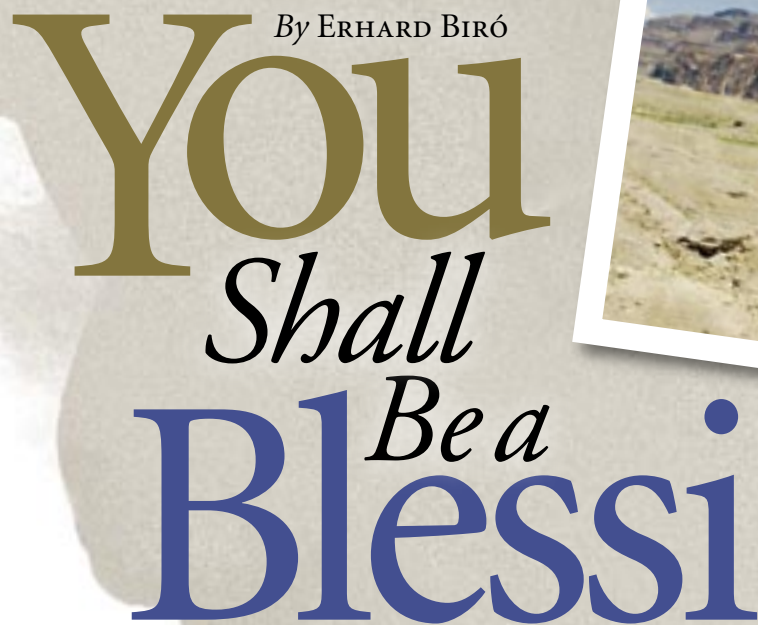
Remnant Features

Genesis 12:1-3 tells us of Abraham’s call. This is the birth moment of God’s people. God challenges Abraham to take three steps: leave the current environment, be completely dependent on Him, and, as a result, be a blessing to all humanity!

God’s call begins with a command followed by a promise. Finally, it ends with a blessing. These three elements are key features of every divine call. We often tend to gladly

By ERHARD BIRÓ

You Shall Be a Blessing



claim God’s promises, and expect His blessing without paying attention to the previously given command.

Abraham belonged to the tenth post-Flood generation. Noah’s descendants had quickly forgotten the lessons learned during the Flood. Soon open rebellion bloomed at Babel. God answered humanity’s rebellion by calling Abraham.

The underlying drive of the tower builders of Babel involved their attempt to overcome the trauma of the Flood, turn their backs on the rainbow (in other words, scorn God’s mercy), and, united, determine their own destiny.

God’s way is completely different. Called by God, the remnant are those who radically separate themselves from everything that disconnects them from God! Abraham was called to disconnect himself from his homeland, community, and family! The city of Ur was one of the oldest Sumerian cities. Its main deity was the moon god Nanna. Excavations confirmed a highly developed culture, with a diversity of temples. Terah, Abraham’s father, worshipped other gods (Joshua 24:2). Why did God call Abraham to take these painful steps? God had to free him from the ties of the past so that He could use him. “Faithful among the faithless, uncorrupted by the prevailing apostasy, he [Abraham] steadfastly adhered to the worship of the one true God” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125). We often think that lifestyle issues are of secondary importance. But this is where God began with Abraham!



ng!

God promised Abraham the very things that the builders of Babel were trying to accomplish *without* God's help. Abraham was to be the founder of a great nation and be noted in the history of humanity. Today we don't know the names of the tower builders at Babel, but even thousands of years later Abraham is still honored by millions. He left everything. God's word was the only thing that he had to hang on to! He had to absolutely depend on it! He became a "friend of God" (James 2:23), father of faith (Rom. 4), and ancestor of Jesus (Gal. 3:8, 29)! Note the influence of one person totally dedicated to God! It pays to trust God, even when it hurts.

We Are Called Out Too

Is Abraham's story an exception? God's "church" in the Old and New Testament is the continuation and repetition of Abraham's story. It is always a rest, a minority, the community of the "called out" (*ekklesia*). They continue the covenant that God made with Abraham so long ago.

In Revelation 12:17 we read that the end-time remnant will keep the commandments of God and are attentive to divinely inspired prophecy (the testimony of Jesus), rousing the fury of Satan. As Seventh-day Adventists today we do not believe that we are the only believers; rather we believe that we are called for a specific mission in our time. We are called to keep God's commandments and hold to the faith of Jesus.

We don't read in the Bible that Abraham in any way earned his calling. He needed grace as much as we do. Abraham was not elitist or aloof. He was considerate to those around him, regardless of their nationality or religion. Surprisingly, he is also not depicted as a faultless hero. The shameful moments of his wavering faith before Pharaoh and Abimelech are not hushed up in Scripture.

Abraham's call was not for any selfish purpose. "You shall be a blessing.... In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 3). At times it may have felt as if he stood alone against the rest of the world. Wouldn't it have been easier to combine some of the religious elements and expectations of the surrounding nations and blend in better by adopting some of the worship styles and rituals of the Canaanites around him? He could have argued that mission required this "adaptation." However, Abraham did not compromise.

The Advent movement is called by God, as Abraham was, to spread the eternal gospel (Rev. 14:6-12) through a clear separation in lifestyle from the world. We are to live out patiently our faith in Jesus as an invitation and warning to the world around us (Rev. 14:12; Heb. 11:13, 16). God reminds us of our mission in life: "You shall be a blessing!" (Gen. 12:2).

The anger of the dragon (Rev. 12:17) directed against the remnant is part of the great controversy between God and Satan. The dragon is infuriated about our commitment to Scripture, our family worship, happily married couples, a Scripture-based lifestyle. He is angry about our church services, mission, friendships, Sabbathkeeping, and faith in Jesus. He is particularly angry at the church of Jesus that proclaims the prophetic word, as this lays bare and predicts his strategies.

Jesus promises that the anger of the dragon will not be the last word in the matter. He promises that in the end radio and TV signals traveling in outer space will not be the only traces of human existence. There will be a new earth that will be the center of the universe, the home of the eternal God and those that loved and followed the Lamb (Rev. 21:1-3). ■



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Conquering Fear

Living every day the victory provided by Christ



By
VICTOR SAMWINGA

A mixture of excitement and anxiety had characterized my 200-mile train journey earlier in the day. But that night, suddenly overwhelmed by fear, I sat at a desk in the hotel room. I had been afraid before, but I could hardly bear the thoughts that filled my mind.

Maybe I hadn't written well enough. Maybe my preparation hadn't been thorough enough. Would the examiners see value in my work, or would they deal it a death blow? All these and many more thoughts tormented me. In less than 18 hours I would be taking the most important exam in my academic life, the Ph.D. viva, an oral examination for my doctoral degree. Doubt and fear are a deadly combination. Unchecked, they can paralyze

Christians and undermine their faith in God.

Ironically, I had worked as an academic in an institution of higher education for the past four years. I supervised and examined dissertations for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. However, faced with my own fate, and staring at possible failure, even my education and experience were not enough insurance against fear and self-doubt. I felt like a physician powerless to heal himself.

The prospect of failure was too great to bear: how would I break such news to my family and friends? What would they think of me if I didn't successfully complete my degree? What a waste of time and energy after all those years of studying. Clearly I

needed assurance that I was not alone, that everything would be all right.

Staying Balanced

Christians have to guard against overconfidence, a malady that sometimes plagued the life of Simon Peter, the disciple of Jesus. His experience is a warning to all who are tempted to trust in themselves as they go through life's challenges.

On the other hand, we have to be confident that God is both able and willing to do what He has promised. Of course, the basis of such confidence is not in anything we can do, but rather in Jesus empowering us.

But that night, instead of focusing on God's strength, I was grossed with self, about how inadequate I felt

for the challenge ahead. Although it's a good idea to be aware of one's shortcomings, it's more important to go a step further: "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Inspired, Encouraged, and Challenged

I knew my fate was probably sealed by this stage, because I had submitted my dissertation for examination months earlier. It was, therefore, pointless to fret and fear; the best I could do was to hope in God. But for a while that thought was far from me.

I felt impressed to refer to the Bible story of Peter walking on the water (Matt. 14:25-33). I wondered if anything new could come out of such a familiar passage of Scripture. As I read the passage, however, it became obvious that Peter's experience, his briefly sinking, and his call for help, were both a reproof and an encouragement for me.

With Jesus' permission, Peter had left the boat to walk on water. He feared neither the law of gravity nor the boisterous sea. But as soon as he focused on the wind and the waves, his faith and his body began to sink.

I realized that God was speaking to me, challenging me to reflect on my journey so far, not on the enormity of the challenge ahead. Had it not been by His providence that I had embarked on the challenge of reading for a doctorate six years earlier? After all, I saw the advertisement for the scholarship only on its closing date. Although it seemed too late, my wife, Lynn, encouraged me to inquire about it, and, providentially, I received the digital application form, completed it, and returned it by e-mail the same day. I was subsequently offered a full scholarship to study for a doctorate.

God had opened that door, just when it seemed every other door of

opportunity was shut. So how could I doubt and fear now? After all, like adventurous Peter, I had gotten out of the boat and onto the water at God's word!

Reassured that God would not leave me alone, His presence and

God's Word is a timeless source of wisdom and encouragement.

peace soon filled my heart as I knelt beside my bed before resting for the night. That's when I remembered that scores of friends and family members on three continents were praying for me. Being in a prayer mode keeps us in tune with those who pray for us.

Lessons Learned

As I reflected on my encounter with fear of failure, I learned a number of lessons:

A healthy amount of self-doubt is all right, provided it leads us to seek help from God. The opposite is a do-it-yourself type of religion that is characterized by self-sufficiency and doesn't feel the need to depend on God constantly.

Although fear is a natural, emotional response to circumstances, it can deteriorate into despair, "paralyzing" its victim and thereby undermining one's faith in God.

While education and experience are essential in many areas of life, they are often insufficient to see us through some of life's challenges. Only a Power outside ourselves can provide sufficient support at such times.

God's Word, the Bible, is a timeless and authoritative source of wisdom and encouragement. Familiar passages of Scripture often come alive, offering timely insights to cope with life's situations.

We lose much when we fail to recall God's gracious leading and providence for us in the past. It is vital that we reflect on our individual spiritual journeys; it results in increased faith and courage to face the future.

Ours is a day when it can be truly

said: "People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world" (Luke 21:26, NRSV).^{*} And we can be sure that Christ was talking about more than sitting for exam, or receiving passing grades. Natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, the fear of an uncertain economic future, or the loss of a job are fears that plague many today.

The antidote to such fearfulness and anxiety is the gift of peace, which only God can provide. Such peace can be ours when we allow Jesus to inhabit our hearts, and rely on His track record of keeping such promises as: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you" (Isa. 43:2). ■

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Why I Believe *in a*

LIFE *to* COME

By WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

Modern humanity increasingly feels like a piece of driftwood afloat in a vast, fathomless ocean. Behind men and women lies an eternity of nothingness out of which, wholly by chance, they emerged eons ago. Ahead stretches an eternity of nothingness into which they will pass after a little span of life. An afterlife? No hope of it. They will live on only through their children, grandchildren, and descendants.

I believe in a life to come. I believe that my story will not come to an end when I draw my last breath. I believe that this life is but the beginning. The best is yet to be.

My belief is far more than just a wish or a hope. It rests on five foundations.

THE FIRST FOUNDATION: *God, Not Chance*

My past has not been a matter of chance, nor will my future be.

In Richard Rodgers' *The Sound of Music*, Maria breaks into a plaintive "nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could." Our reason echoes this sentiment. This world—with its incredible complexity of ecosystems, its rhythms of seasons, its myriad life-forms in ocean depths, on land, in the sky above—did not just happen. We humans with our intricacies of body, mind, and spirit—we didn't originate by chance. This universe, vast beyond imagination, of stars, planets, supernovas, quarks, and black holes—how much more than a "nothing" it is! No way did a nothing generate it.

The renowned cosmologist Stephen Hawking argues that the universe could have originated in either of two ways—

gravity or God. But that begs the question: where did gravity come from? Why not simply posit God as the source of everything?

As we look back over the eternity that lies behind us, the options concerning origins boil down to just two possibilities—naturalism or supernaturalism. The former holds that everything that was, is, or will be can be accounted for by the operation of laws built into the very fabric of the universe. Nothing outside of nature—no miracle, no God—is necessary; nature alone is sufficient. But this approach has no answer to the most basic fact of our existence: the universe *is*. We *are*. How did it all begin?

An interesting development of the past 50 years has been the rejection of the purely naturalistic explanation of origins by large numbers of astronomers and cosmologists. Their studies of probability lead them to conclude that the universe is so finely tuned that the odds overwhelmingly favor the intervention of a divine mind.

Perhaps the most notable example of the change in thinking in favor of supernaturalism was the noted philosopher Antony Flew. Throughout the twentieth century he led the charge on behalf of atheism, arguing persuasively against the existence of God through a series of books, articles, and lectures. Flew, however, throughout his life endeavored to keep himself open to the evidence, and that evidence eventually led him to abandon his long-held position. In *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (HarperOne, 2007), Flew concluded that "the laws of nature, life with its teleological organization, and the existence the universe—can only be explained in

It's more than wishful thinking.

the light of an Intelligence that explains both its own existence and that of the world.... [The evidence] has led me to accept the existence of a self-existent, immutable, immaterial, omnipotent, and omniscient being" (p. 155).

When Flew refers to the "teleological organization" of life, he has in mind the sense of *purpose* that underlies the cosmos. A Designer set it all in place and keeps it moving toward a goal. And I, as part of this cosmos, share in the Designer's purpose. My origins lie not in chance but in God. My future therefore lies not in chance, but in God. There will be life after this.

THE SECOND FOUNDATION:

Music

Of all the divine serendipities that point us beyond ourselves, none is more powerful than music. Although music may be used to feed our basic instincts, rightly employed it lifts us to the very throne room of God.

Music is mysterious. Although it has no necessary relation to the world, it is deeply rooted in our nature as human beings. Showing itself in infancy, it is manifest and central in every culture. Famed neurologist Oliver Sacks calls this propensity to music "musicophilia." In his book by this title, he quotes Charles Darwin on the puzzle of music's origins: "As neither the enjoyment nor the capacity of producing musical notes are faculties of the least use to man ... they must be ranked as among the most mysterious with which he is endowed."¹

If evolution cannot account for our love of music, the Scriptures can. They inform us that music was present at

the beginning of Creation, when "the morning stars sang together" (Job 38:7). And music will be present when the great controversy between Christ and Satan is finally resolved. Then the redeemed of all ages will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and all heaven will burst into anthems of praise and thanksgiving (Rev. 15:2-4; 7:9).

As we live out our time on earth, music can be our constant companion, lifting us up, cheering our hearts. William Congreve said it right: "Music has charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak." Even when we cannot hear, music without sound can ring in our ears.

I cannot imagine life without music. This divine gift is integral to who I am. It pulses within my being, assuring me that I am a child of God and that He wills for me an endless existence in His presence filled with heavenly melody.

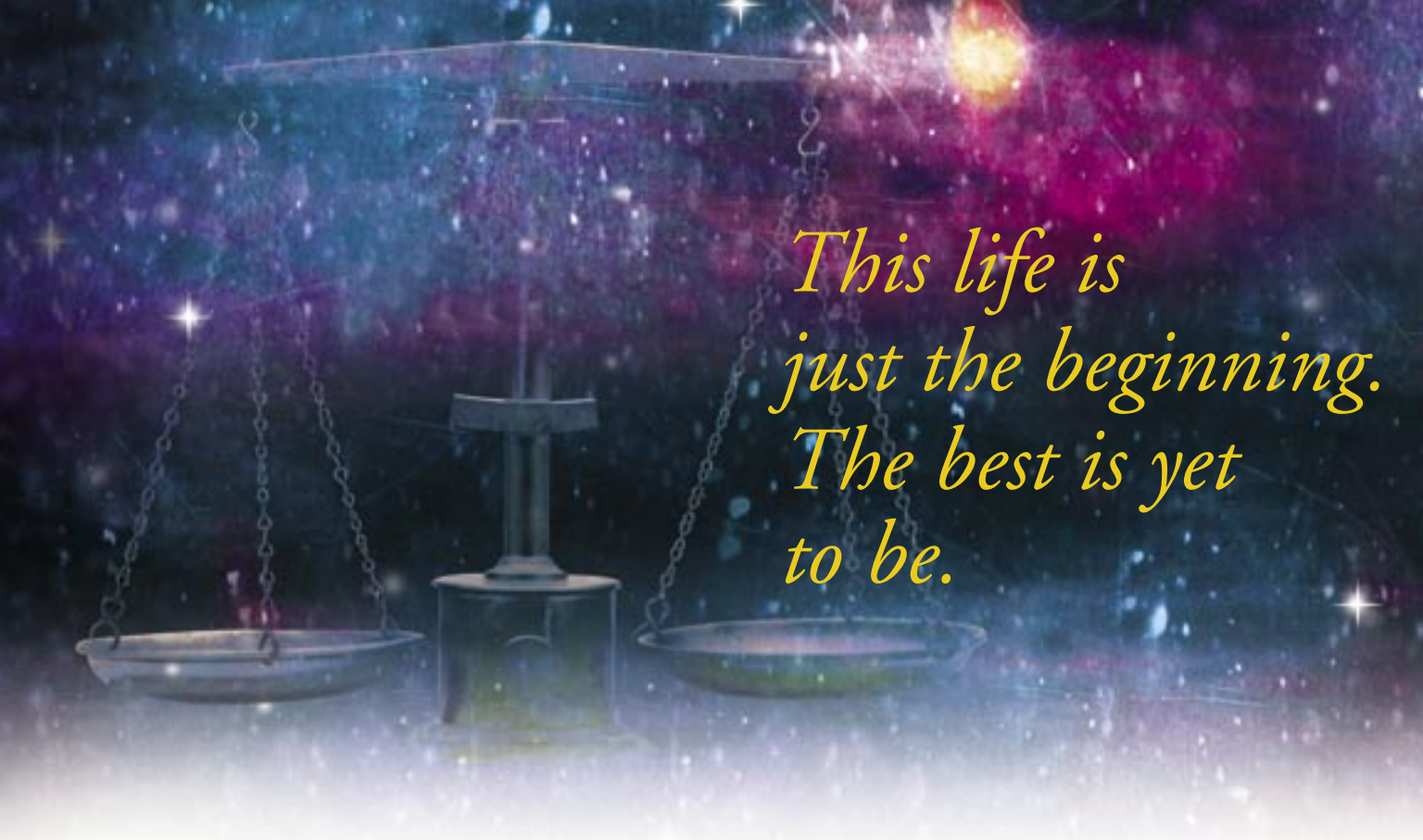
THE THIRD FOUNDATION:

Justice

Like love of music, a sense of justice is basic to being human. Someone who lacks a sense of right and wrong, as some people do, we consider to be sick mentally. We call them psychopaths.



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*This life is
just the beginning.
The best is yet
to be.*

Just like music, justice cannot be accounted for on wholly naturalistic terms. We understand and feel justice because we were made in God's image, and God is just.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" asked Abraham (Gen. 18:25). Indeed, if God cannot be counted upon always to act rightly—if He is fickle—we are in big trouble. Moral chaos becomes the order of the day, with everyone behaving according to their own rules. But, as the Bible emphasizes, God is faithful, unchanging in character, one on whom we may always count to do right.

In our present broken world, justice very often hangs her head. Life is not fair. Frequently those with enough money escape charges, while the poor, the marginalized, and the alien are denied justice. The Lord of the universe, He who is holy, takes note of every injustice. He who commanded His people to be fair and honest in all their dealings and to stand up for the poor, the orphan, and the foreigner (Deut. 24:17) will not permit this state of affairs with "truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne" to continue indefinitely. "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained" (Acts 17:31).

I believe in a life to come because justice demands it; there must come a day of reckoning for all humankind. Not only my sense of justice demands it—God's nature as just and righteous mandates it. That is why the book of Daniel portrays a grand court scene in which the "Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom" (Dan. 7:22).

THE FOURTH FOUNDATION: *Intimations of Eternity*

For the person of faith heaven comes down even in this life and gives a foretaste of what is yet to be. "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" exclaims the apostle John (1 John 3:1, NIV).² And he continues: "And that is what we are!" (verse 1).

Doubters and unbelievers may assemble their learned arguments against the existence of God and the afterlife, but for us who have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord, they amount to nothing at all. We have the Answer within ourselves—Jesus.

This same letter of 1 John rings with assurance. Over and over the apostle writes: "We know ... we know ... we know ..." This confidence reaches a climax as he brings the epistle to its close:

"We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:18-20, NIV).

Already in this life God gives us intimations of eternity. But the best is yet to be when Jesus comes again and we see Him face-to-face: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2, NIV).



THE FIFTH FOUNDATION:

Jesus

Among all the untold billions of children born on this earth, one stands apart, unique. Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, is the man of the ages.

Although Jesus was born in humble circumstances and died young, He is widely acknowledged as the most influential person who ever lived. His life of gentle, compassionate service to others, and His teachings, simple yet profound, ordinary yet timeless, have inspired and continue to inspire a vast number of men and women who accept His claim to be the Son of God.

Jesus lived a life that, while rooted solidly in this earth, constantly looked beyond it. He spoke of existing before He was born of Mary, and of returning to the Father after His time here was completed. He declared Himself as having come on a mission: to reveal what God is like and to seek and to save the lost. He taught and lived good news—God’s love and acceptance poured out upon all, especially on the poor and the marginalized.

The movement that sprang up around Jesus soon posed a threat to the religious authorities, who plotted to get rid of Him. They had their way: a spring Friday morning saw Jesus of Nazareth impaled on a Roman cross. By evening He was dead, His body placed in a rock-cut tomb.

The Jesus movement should have collapsed and this Man’s name become lost in the history of the Jews. But something startling happened: the body disappeared! A large stone had been rolled across the entrance to the tomb and a guard kept watch. Nevertheless, the body of Jesus

disappeared, a fact that to this day has never been satisfactorily explained on a naturalistic basis.

Then, almost immediately, reports that He was alive began to circulate. Jesus appeared to His close followers on several occasions, sometimes to a few, at other times to large numbers. They saw Him, they heard Him, they touched Him; He ate with them. They were absolutely convinced that it was the same Lord they had known before Calvary. And they went out telling the story near and far, eventually to the ends of the earth: Jesus is risen from the dead!

The earliest records of Christianity, the New Testament documents, throb with the certainty of Jesus’ conquest of death. Several of these books were written by the apostle Paul, who was not one of the original twelve, but to whom Jesus appeared a few years after His resurrection. Paul summarized the good news this way: “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, . . . he was buried, . . . he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3, 4, NIV).

One word captures the essence of Jesus: life. “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind” (John 1:4, NIV). “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36, NIV). “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10, NIV).

The life that Jesus offers is eternal both in quality and duration. It begins now as we “receive Him” (John 1:12, NIV): we cross over from death to life. And because we are bound up together with Jesus, we shall live forever with Him after this little time on earth is over. He assures us: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25, 26).

Perhaps you say: Words, words, words! Who knows if they are true?

But we *can* know. Because Jesus is alive, we can know Him. He can be our Savior, Lord, and Friend. Listen again to Paul: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).

Jesus. He is the last and greatest reason I believe in a life beyond this.

We are creatures of dust, but we were made for the stars. Eternity beats within our hearts: we were created in God’s image and He calls us to His home.

If we fail to come home, heaven will suffer loss. Our place will be empty at the great banquet table. Forever we will be a might-have-been.

Dear friend, there is a life to come. Already we catch strains of its music deep within, already we feel its pull. Jesus, the risen Lord, calls us home. ■

¹ Oliver Sacks, *Musophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (Vintage Books, 2007), p.x.

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NUMBER 24

CHRISTIA *Aren't*

Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary

This is what the bumper sticker said: “Christians aren’t perfect—just forgiven.” When I first read it, I was intrigued. Is this really what we are, “just forgiven”?

The theological one-liner made two assertions, and both were true. Yes, no human being (beside Jesus) is perfect. It is also true that God provides free forgiveness without exception to all who accept Jesus as their Savior—period. Yet there seemed to be something wrong with the message of that sticker, especially if you just read it on the bumper of a car that rudely cut you off in traffic. Is “being forgiven” really the only thing that identifies a person as a Christian or the only thing that matters in Christian life? The Bible seems to point to more. Remember John 10:10, which tells us that Jesus came to this earth and died not only to provide forgiveness but also to give us life, and to give it *abundantly*. If this is true, the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian should go beyond the fact that one of them is forgiven. There should be a notable

difference in the “lives” they experience, don’t you think?

The answer we give to these questions has a lot to do with how we understand the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

More Than Just Sin Management

Some think that Jesus is just the head of a very efficient system of sin management for the universe, located in the heavenly sanctuary. Jesus is

much more than that! The proper disposal of waste is imperative to human survival. Governments spend great amounts of money to collect, transport, process, and recycle or dispose waste because they understand this is crucial to the preservation of the environment and the health of their citizens. God also understood from the very beginning that sin destroys life. Thus, before the creation of the universe, He made a plan to dispose of sin forever, should it arise (1 Peter

Christ's Ministry *in the* HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2,300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative

judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

NS Perfect...

By
FÉLIX H. CORTEZ

1:20). This is what is called the plan of salvation, and the three members of the Godhead were fully involved in it.

God, however, is not only interested in collecting and disposing of our moral garbage. He is not content with being the garbage truck that comes every other day to take care of our sins. God wants to eradicate sin itself. That is why Jesus' ministry in the heavenly sanctuary provides not only forgiveness but also the possibility of a new life—a life empowered by God.

New Covenant Blessings

The purpose of Jesus' ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is to ensure that we receive the benefits of His sacrifice on our behalf. That purpose is fulfilled only when, after being cleared of the penalty of death, we are also delivered from enslavement to the devil. Jesus' enthronement at the right hand of God guarantees these freedoms.

All over the world, governments protect certain rights of an individual. The second paragraph of the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, highlights four freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of belief, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—which is “proclaimed as the highest aspiration.” Jesus' sacrifice was to protect the right of human beings to enter into a new

covenant with God. Hebrews says that as a high priest of the heavenly sanctuary Jesus became “the guarantor” (Heb. 7: 22, NIV)* or “mediator of a better covenant” (Heb. 8:6, 7).

The new covenant guarantees or promises four things to believers: (1) God will put His laws in our minds; (2) He will be our God; (3) everyone will know God; and (4) God will forgive our sins (Heb. 8:8-12). The way Ezekiel refers to the promises of this covenant is enlightening (see Eze. 36:26, 27). Together with putting His law in our hearts (Jer. 31:33), God also promises to put His Spirit in our lives. Both promises refer to different aspects of the same reality. By giving us His Spirit, God gives us the power to obey His laws (Rom. 8:1-4). These guarantees effectively liberate us from enslavement to the devil and prevent future bondage to him.

With Confidence

God offers the guarantees of the new covenant to human beings not because it is their inalienable right. They forfeited these rights when they rejected His rule. These benefits are the inalienable right of Jesus. Because of His victory Jesus has been appointed “heir of all things” (Heb. 1:2) and ruler of a new people of God. Just as any country benefits from a good government, believers benefit

from Jesus' rule. Believers reap the benefits of Jesus' victories over His enemies. Thus, when Jesus asks blessings for us, He is not asking the Father a favor on our behalf. He is claiming the benefits of His victory to share with us. That is why Hebrews says that we need to approach God's throne “boldly” (Heb. 4:16) and “in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22). We may have doubts about our own worthiness, but never of Jesus' worth.

Not all human beings can approach God with confidence, though. This is very important. Only the followers of Jesus benefit from the guarantees that the rule of Jesus provides. This helps us understand an important aspect of Christian life. What determines our eligibility to the benefits of the new covenant is not our ability to defeat the devil (Jesus already did that) but our loyalty to Jesus. The crucial issue is not how strong I am, but how much do I love Jesus.

When I think of Jesus' ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, I cannot help thinking about the contradiction of our situation. We have so rich promises but often live so poorly. We should claim those promises right now. I like how Ellen G. White says it: “With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, we may present our petitions to the Father, claiming all that He has promised [that is, the new covenant promises]. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 158). ■

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One hundred years ago Ellen White released the final version of what many consider to be her most important book. “I am more anxious,” she declared, “to see a wide circulation for this book than for any others I have written; for in *The Great Controversy*, the last message of warning to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books.”¹

The book began with a two-hour vision that interrupted a funeral in 1858.² Her first published account of that vision was only 219 small pages, 3.5” x 5.5” (8.9 cm. x 14 cm.), titled *Spiritual Gifts: The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels*. Some may wonder why she wrote so briefly and then for 50 years repeatedly enlarged it.



The Great Controversy:

A timeless book turns 100

By
JERRY MOON

Because of the urgent need for the message, she hurried her early books into print despite imperfections. To Review editor Uriah Smith she explained: “I was shown years ago that we should not delay publishing the important light given me because I could not prepare the matter perfectly... I was shown that I should present before the people in the best manner possible the light received; then as I received greater light, and as I used the talent God had given me, I should have increased ability to use in writing and in speaking. I was to improve everything, as far as possible bringing it to perfection, that it might be accepted by intelligent minds.”³

Later Editions

During the next 20 years Ellen White wrote five more books on biblical history, but not until 1884 did she find time to expand her coverage of the postbiblical history to 492 pages—four times the comparable section in the origi-

nal volume. Shortly after the release of the 1884 edition she spent two years in Europe (1885-1887). As she visited the historical sites of the Reformation, she resolved to write on it again, to make it more appealing to a general reading audience, and to show more clearly the continuity between the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation and the Adventist movement. She wrote some 190 pages of new material for the 1888 edition, bringing *The Great Controversy* to its final size of 678 pages. When the publishers reported in 1910 that the printing plates from the 1888 version were so badly worn that the type needed to be reset, she decided to review the book and improve it once again.⁴

Use of Historical Sources

A significant issue for the 1911 edition was changing literary standards. In nineteenth-century America it was common for both secular and religious writers to freely reproduce material from other authors, with or without

source references.⁵ To meet the rising expectations of the twentieth century, however, Ellen White mandated her literary assistants to track down and identify the sources of all the quotations in the 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy*. In doing so, her helpers found that some quotations were easily available for verification; others were not. She directed them to replace historical quotations from books no longer in print with similar statements from better and readily available sources, so that readers who wanted to check her claims could do so in public libraries.⁶

Ellen White was delighted with the new edition and unequivocally endorsed it.⁷ However, such editorial work on a book that Seventh-day Adventists regarded as inspired raised questions about the relationship between her visions and her use of historical sources. In a statement that his mother specifically approved, her son W. C. White explained: “The things which she has written out are descriptions of flashlight pictures and other representations given her [in vision].... In ... writing out ... these views, she has made use of good and clear historical statements to help make plain to the reader the things which she is endeavoring to present. When I was a mere boy, I heard her read D’Aubigné’s *History of the Reformation* to my father.... She has read other histories of the Reformation. This has helped her to locate and describe many of the events and the movements presented to her in vision.”⁸

An experience from the Whites’ years in Europe illustrated this point. W. C. White recalled that one Sabbath, at Basel, “as I read [Wylie’s *History of Protestantism*] to Mother she interrupted me and told a lot of things in the pages ahead, and told me many things not in the book at all. She said, ‘I never read about it, but that scene has been presented to me over and over again.’”⁹

Surprised, he asked her, “Why did you not put it into your book [*The Great Controversy*]?” She replied, “I did not know where to put it.” From this he understood that while the controlling content of her historical writing was derived from visions, she used historical works to identify the geographical and chronological connections of the events she had seen in vision.¹⁰

Special Spanish Edition

During the translation of *The Great Controversy* into Spanish, someone noticed that it made no mention of the Reformation in Spain. When this omission was brought to the attention of Ellen White, she directed her staff to compile an additional chapter for the Spanish edition. As a result, the Spanish *Great Controversy* has one more chapter than the one in English. Chapter 13, “The Awakening in Spain,” carries a footnote: “This chapter was compiled by

C. C. Crisler and H. H. Hall, and was inserted in this book with the approval of the author.”¹¹

Greater Results to Come

Millions of copies of *The Great Controversy* are in print, but according to its author, its greatest results are yet future. “The results of the circulation of this book are not to be judged by what now appears,” Ellen White wrote. “By reading it, some souls will be aroused, and will have courage to unite themselves at once with those who keep the commandments of God. *But a much larger number who read it will not take their position until they see the very events taking place that are foretold in it.* The fulfillment of some of the predictions will inspire faith that others also will come to pass, and when the earth is lightened with the glory of the Lord, in the closing work, many souls will take their position on the commandments of God as the result of this agency.”¹²

For a stirring refresher on the foundations of the Adventist faith, *The Great Controversy* is in a class by itself. It is available in many languages and formats, including condensed, abridged, and simplified editions in English. ■

¹ Ellen G. White letter 281, 1905, in *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 127.

² Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 265, 266; Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 367, 368.

³ E. G. White to Uriah Smith, Feb. 19, 1884 (letter 11, 1884).

⁴ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Later Elmshaven Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1982), vol. 6, pp. 302-337.

⁵ George Callcott, *History in the United States, 1800-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), pp. 134-136, quoted in R. W. Olson, *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981), pp. 66, 67; see also Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1951), pp. 406, 407, cited in Jerry Moon, “Who Owns the Truth? Another Look at the Plagiarism Debate,” *Ellen G. White and Current Issues Symposium* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 46-71.

⁶ For details, see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 6, pp. 302-321; Arthur L. White, “W. W. Prescott and the 1911 Edition of *The Great Controversy*,” Ellen G. White Estate Shelf Document, (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 1981); also available online at www.whiteestate.org; see also W. C. White, “*The Great Controversy*—1911 edition,” Appendixes A and B in Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 433-450.

⁷ E. G. White to F. M. Wilcox, July 25, 1911 (letter 56, 1911), reproduced in Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 6, p. 336.

⁸ W. C. White to “Our General Missionary Agents,” July 25, 1911. Ellen White’s endorsement is in E. G. White to F. M. Wilcox, July 27, 1911 (letter 56, 1911).

⁹ W. C. White, “The Visions of Ellen G. White,” Dec. 17, 1905, p. 4, Ellen G. White Estate Shelf Document.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; see also Jerry Moon, W. C. White and Ellen G. White: *The Relationship Between the Prophet and Her Son* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1993), pp. 427-431.

¹¹ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 6, p. 337. Clarence C. Crisler was Ellen White’s chief literary assistant at the time, and Harry Harvey Hall was a manager at Pacific Press.

¹² E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry*, pp. 128, 129. (Italics supplied.)



Jerry Moon teaches church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

By
STEPHEN
CHAVEZ

The Path to Enlightenment

What do Adventists have to share with nearly a billion of the world's Buddhists?

It's one thing to compare scripture with scripture when you're having a conversation with someone who sees the Bible as authoritative. But what is your approach when the person with whom you're having a conversation about spiritual things doesn't see the Bible as inspired?

That's the challenge faced by Scott Griswold, director of the church's Global Mission Buddhist Study Center in Thailand. And while Griswold and others connected with the center work primarily in countries in Southeast Asia, where Buddhism is the primary religious philosophy (Thailand, Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, etc.), Buddhism is increasingly being practiced in Western societies as well.

Embracing the Challenge

The Buddhist Study Center is a direct outgrowth of the Global Mission initiative that was launched at the 1990 General Conference session. Delegates to that session, recognizing the necessity of taking the gospel of Christ to parts of the world where people don't have a Christian worldview, issued a mandate that created five religious study centers to find ways to interact with those who are believers in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and secular/postmodernism.

Scott Griswold, with his wife, Julie, has been director of the Buddhist Study Center since 2002. They live about 90 minutes north of Bangkok, in Ayutthaya, Thailand. "We wanted to be right among the Buddhists, so we could live out what we're telling peo-



Top: PASS IT ON: Teaching others how to repair a pipe is an opportunity to model the importance of mentoring.

Left: QUIET TIME: Scott Griswold, director of the Buddhist Study Center, takes a moment to reflect on the challenges and opportunities connected with reaching Buddhists for Christ.

ple to do,” says Griswold.

Most Buddhists believe in karma, the law of reaping what you sow. Griswold points out that the Adventist concept of judgment focuses on a loving Judge who offers forgiveness and salvation from eternal death. “All that Buddhists are trying to be through many lifetimes of rebirth, Jesus is ready to give them through His mercy and grace,” says Griswold. “This is important, but our actual deeper connection to Buddhism is that we present a gospel that not only forgives but transforms the life. This is far more than the cheap gospel that many other Christians present, which teaches that people are saved no matter what they do. Our perspective of judgment is distinctly different in that we emphasize repentance and transformation.”

Quite a few conscientious Buddhists don’t eat meat, and refrain from drinking alcohol—again, principles familiar to Seventh-day Adventists around the world that provide another good connection. One of the most special connections that Griswold sees is the Sabbath.

“As we invite them to experience the Sabbath, they will be blessed by much-needed physical and emotional rest,” says Griswold. “Their family relationships will be enhanced by spending time together on that day. We can invite their families to join our families out in nature, enjoying the lessons God has placed there. Then we can gently introduce them to the Creator God.” The Sabbath connects Buddhists to concepts of peacefulness and a rejection of materialism.

Bridging the Gap

But how does one get close to a Buddhist in the first place?

Buddhists are not likely to attend traditional evangelistic meetings. They might attend church services at the invitation of a friend, but may find it so different from what they’re used to that they’re not likely to attend services reg-

ularly. According to research that Griswold has discovered, Buddhists respond primarily to two things: (1) caring family and friends, and (2) personal experiences with answers to prayer.

So it all boils down, he says, to embracing Christ’s method for reaching people as described by Ellen White: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with [them] as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow me’” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

Because reaching people in this way can’t be done en masse, Griswold recognized the need to multiply workers among Buddhists by careful discipling. The team at the Buddhist Study Center put together a program called disciple-multipliers initiative.

They invited several people from each of six countries in which Buddhism has a major influence. For three weeks they lived on the same property in guest rooms and guest houses—studying together, working together, fellowshiping together, and praying together. “We covered such things as ‘How do we become disciples of Jesus ourselves?’ ‘What’s the relevance of our message for Buddhists?’ ‘How do we reach out to Buddhists?’ A lot of it was an emphasis on dependence on the Holy Spirit and what that means.”

Learning to multiply was also a major component in their time together. And that, interestingly, came on one occasion with the help of a broken water pipe.

Griswold took one volunteer and showed him how to repair the pipe. Then he instructed the first volunteer to demonstrate pipe repair to the second volunteer, who demonstrated the process to the third volunteer. “We went through the process of the four generations passing something on, and the last person fixed the pipe.

“To me, that’s what we’re often

missing in our church,” says Griswold. “We know how to teach, we know how to preach, we know how to train. But we don’t know how to disciple in a way that multiplies.”

Griswold hopes that the church leaders, pastors, and lay members who cycle through the training process will become better equipped to train others in reaching out to Buddhists. He looks for people who are Christ-centered and Holy Spirit-empowered—converted and consecrated disciples who are leaders of loving families. He wants servant leaders who can help meet felt, tangible needs, as well as those who can use stories and personal experiences to communicate Bible truths. Most important, he looks for mentors who can mobilize and train new workers.

Griswold points out that after more than 100 years in Thailand, the Seventh-day Adventist Church numbers only about 13,000 members in a population of 68 million. “We have solid educational and medical work,” he says. “But seeing significant numbers of people come to Christ from Buddhist backgrounds is still rare. It’s a huge mission field.” This is true in other Southeast Asian countries and is especially true of the millions of Buddhists in China, Japan, Korea, and beyond.

Griswold believes that God is about to change that. He is eager for Seventh-day Adventists around the world to help this happen by praying for Buddhists and learning how to reach them. ■

For more information about the Global Mission Buddhist Study Center, and to sign up for an e-newsletter, Prayers Among Buddhists, visit www.Bridges-ForMinistry.org.



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

QUESTION: *Will rebellion and sin rise up again in the new earth?*

The question you're asking is not as simple as it appears. If the answer is no, then we would have to deal with the question of the freedom of the creature. If the answer is yes, then the sacrifice of Christ would not have been powerful enough to deal with sin *once and for all*. The universe would then exist under the shadow of another unavoidable conflict. Under such circumstances, would heaven be totally enjoyable for intelligent beings? In trying to answer your question, I will say two things that we can clearly affirm; and based on these I will add one other comment.

1. *The End of Satan, Sinners, and Sin:* The originator of sin is not eternal, and neither is his kingdom; they will both come to an end. This will take place at the moment of Satan's final assault against God and His people, when fire will consume him (Rev. 20:7, 10). This is one of the most important events in the resolution of the cosmic conflict. The originator of sin and rebellion and the instigator of sin in others will cease to exist, without leaving behind a vacuum in the cosmos to be filled by someone else. Because of Satan's absolute corruption, his presence in the universe is unnecessary.

Once the enemy is deleted from the cosmos, his supporters—demons and rebellious humans—will not remain as an extension of his person and power. They, also, will go into oblivion, leaving behind no trace of their existence and corruption. Fallen angels will face God as judge on the great day of judgment, and will experience eternal death (cf. Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). The destruction of the wicked will also be a radical one and will take place in conjunction with that of Satan and his fallen angels (Rev. 20:7-15). Malachi expressed the idea well when he concisely stated concerning the wicked: "Not a root or a branch will be left to them" (4:1, NIV).^{*} This extreme cosmic surgery will permanently destroy the anomaly of sin in all its diversity of expressions.

2. *God's Eternal Kingdom:* With the destruction of the enemy and his hosts the universal sovereignty of God's

kingdom is reestablished. A vision of a new world that assumes universal and inalterable cosmic harmony is given. The eradication of suffering and death is expressed in ways that exclude its resurgence (Rev. 21:4). The redeemed ones will "never" leave the temple of God (Rev. 3:12), "never" again hunger or thirst (Rev. 7:16, NIV), and their names will "never" be removed from the book of life (Rev. 3:5, NIV). God and the Lamb will be praised "forever and ever" (Rev. 5:13), and Christ and His people "shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15; 22:5; see Dan. 7:14). The curse will not come back (Rev. 22:3; cf. Nahum 1:9). Not a single biblical text suggests or hints at the idea that God's new creation could be ruined again by sin.

3. *Safety Only in the Cross: Human Freedom:* This is my suggestion: The cross of Christ inoculated the cosmos against a resurgence of sin. The atonement solved the cosmic problem of sin, and it is powerful enough to prevent another cosmic conflict. It was God's divine purpose "to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ" (Eph. 1:10, NIV). He did it, and He will continue to hold everything together throughout eter-

nity (cf. Col. 1:19). After His resurrection Christ went "into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him" (1 Peter 3:22, NIV). The future safety of the universe is based on the meaning of the sacrificial death of Christ. Hence it will be our eternal topic of analysis. All intelligent creatures will voluntarily and permanently submit to the Lord on the grounds of the magnitude and magnificence of God's love for them revealed on the cross of Christ.

Ellen G. White wrote: "The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb" (*Signs of the Times*, Dec. 30, 1889). ■

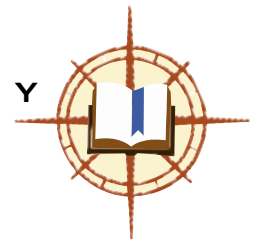
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Never Again!



By
ANGEL MANUEL
RODRÍGUEZ

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



The HOLY SPIRIT and a Finished Work

By
MARK A. FINLEY

Have you ever wondered how the gospel will be preached to the entire world in preparation for the coming of Jesus? The challenge is huge. With billions of people populating Planet Earth, how will they ever be reached with the message of Jesus and Bible truth?

From a human standpoint this appears impossible. Even with radio, television, the printed page, and the Internet, our human resources are just too limited to reach humanity's masses. But God has a plan. His message of love and truth will be preached to the ends of the earth. In this lesson we'll study God's plan for finishing His work.

1. In Jesus' memorable sermon about last-day events in Matthew 24, He lists various signs of His return. What final sign does Jesus give His disciples that the end is near?

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14).

The _____ of the _____ will be preached in all the _____.

2. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission and made a great promise. What was His Great Commission? What was His great promise?

"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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Great Commission: _____ disciples of all the _____, _____ them ... ,
_____ them to observe all things.

The great promise: You shall receive _____ when the _____
has come upon you; and you shall be _____ to Me.

Jesus' commission to preach the gospel to the end of the earth is accompanied by His promise of power. Everything God asks us to do, He supplies us with the power to do. His grace is always sufficient for the task. His Holy Spirit always empowers those who step out in faith to share His love with others.

3. How will God's work on earth be finished? What promises does God Himself give us about the finishing of His work?

"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

"For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).



God will finish His work by _____.

And it will be cut _____ in righteousness.

4. If God is going to finish His work through the mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit, what role will His people play?

“Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain” (Zech. 10:1).

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you” (Hosea 10:12).

God invites us to ask Him for the _____.

In Palestine the early rain fell first to bring the seed to harvest. The latter rain fell to ripen the harvest and bring it to fruition. Without the latter rain the harvest would languish in the field. The latter rain was essential for an abundant harvest. Both Old and New Testament writers use the symbolism of rain to represent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (see Joel 2:23-29; James 5:7, 8). The early rain was poured out upon the early church at Pentecost to launch the Christian church. The latter rain will be poured out upon God’s remnant at the end time to complete God’s mission on earth.

5. The apostle John saw God’s message of last-day truth speedily proclaimed to the ends of the earth. Describe each group to whom the message is preached. How complete is this final proclamation?

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

God’s message will go to every _____,

and _____. In other words, to _____.

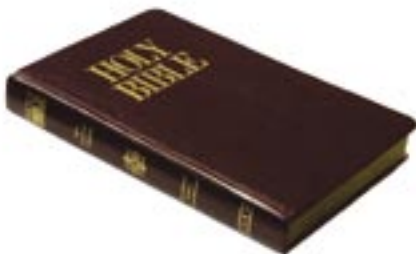
6. What amazing promise does God make about the final display of His glory?

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14).

“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory” (Rev. 18:1).

The earth will be _____ with the _____ of the _____ of the Lord.

What an amazing prediction! The earth will be filled with the glory of God. His people, filled by His Holy Spirit, will both live and proclaim His message of grace and truth. They will reveal His love in their lives and their words. The entire world will see living demonstrations of God’s grace in the lives of His people. They will hear the message of truth proclaimed from lips that are aflame with His love, and hearts that are filled with His grace. This is the time to seek Him with all our hearts, so that we, too, can be part of this last-day revelation of His character to the world.



Our next Bible study will
examine Spirit-filled living.

LETTERS



Sustainability
“Lessons From Two Missions,” by Nancy Weber Vyhmeister (April 2011), was very interesting and brought home a simple and self-evident truth: if

one wants an enterprise to continue, there should always be people knowing how to run the enterprise. I love such simple and unassailable truths.

As the author pointed out, for missions it includes involving locals at all levels in the running of the mission. When missionaries are no longer there, locals will be able to carry on. Of course, it doesn't always work, but at least there is a chance the mission will carry on. With no local knowledge and experience it will surely die.

CHRIS MALAN
*Balwarra Heights,
New South Wales, Australia*



Needed: Energy, Creativity

Having dedicated so many years of my life to youth ministry, I was really inspired to read the article “Young and Ready,” by Ted N. C. Wilson (April 2011). He's right on, challenging church leadership to involve our young people in meaningful service for the church! Not only do they need mentors, but we must trust them and invest in their talents. An article by

Hannah Beech in *Time* magazine, “Rising to the Challenge” (Apr. 4, 2011), about the disaster in Japan, mirrors his thoughts: “Can its young people save Japan? After the earthquake and tsunami, they're rolling up their sleeves—and shaming an ossified establishment.”

If young people in Japan have been challenged to help in the aftermath of the earthquake, so young people in our church, given an opportunity, will shake the lukewarmness of many churches. They have knowledge and technical skills that were not available to us. Recently, while attending a world youth advisory in Maryland, I was amazed to see how Aareli Barbosa, youth director of the South American Division, communicated with the young constituency in a Week of Prayer by Twitcam. He sent messages of five minutes each, entitled Minutes of Hope, to prepare the young people for another project, Friends of Hope. As Wilson's article says: “Don't fear innovation.” We must create service opportunities for this “army of workers.”

LEO RANZOLIN, SR.
Estero, Florida, United States

Change of Direction

For the past five years my dedication and commitment to the Lord has been completely gone, because I had backslidden and gone astray from the Lord. I have recently wholeheartedly taken a major step in my life. I am thirsting for righteousness, and I have asked for God's help.

The article by Ellen White, “Watch and Pray” (April 2011), has significantly impacted my life. May the Lord continue to bless this ministry.

NATHANAEL NSANA
Lusaka, Zambia

Gratitude

I am a practicing Catholic. I was able to read the *Adventist World* dated June 2010. The contents are inspiring and spiritually uplifting. Articles such as “Convicted by a Scrap of Paper,” by Kimberly Luste Maran, made me think how the Lord truly loves humanity and how His saving grace encompasses time. Your evangelizing efforts to all corners of the globe prove that Adventists are missionaries, bringing the truth to those who don't know about God's omnipo-



tence, and making a difference to people of all colors and races. *Adventist World* is world-class literature.

Please include me in your mailing list. Thanks to God for knowing you. May your tribe increase!

PEDRO S. VILLASOTO
Quezon City, Philippines

Something's Missing

Each month I look forward to receiving *Adventist World*. It is exciting to see how God is working to bring His message to the world. However, as a missiologist, I am going through withdrawal symptoms! I really miss the one-page feature “Window Into . . .” that has long been a highlight of the magazine. This great little feature kept before us the task of Adventist mission in various countries around the world. Please do not diminish the focus on Adventist mission and the challenges facing the church in fulfilling the gospel commission, which is not to be

LETTERS

“Thank you for the free distribution of this magazine. I like it for helping me to know the nearness of Christ’s second coming and to get ready to meet Him and be forever with Him.”

—NGALA KEM THANG, *Taungngu, Myanmar.*

confused with reporting on what is happening within Adventism around the world.

In a paper called *Adventist World* it could be easy to become more focused on Adventist introspection and ministering to ourselves at the expense of maintaining a focus on mission, which is our very reason for existence. I appreciate your efforts to maintain a balance, but if you must err, please err on the side of informing and inspiring us in mission!

GRAEME J. HUMBLE
Papua New Guinea

Encouragement for Life

It seems like a miracle for me to have the *Adventist World* magazine monthly. Thank you for the free distribution of this magazine. I am blessed in many ways. I like the colorful covers, pictures, and quality of the paper with its stories, events, and biblical messages. I am motivated



physically, mentally, and spiritually. I am inspired to do regular exercise and get more sleep for a balanced life.

I find help for difficult questions, and it helps me to know what is happening in the Adventist world by reading about the works and services of Adventist people. I like it most for helping me to know the nearness of Christ’s second coming and to get ready to meet Him and be forever with Him.

NGALA KEM THANG
Taungngu, Myanmar

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am quite encouraged by *Adventist World*.

DISMAS WANGILA MASINDE
Kenya

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



THE PLACE OF PRAYER

I have a praise—I recently passed the board exam for nursing for which I requested prayer! It is my prayer that God will continue to bless me as I apply for a job in a local hospital.

ABELEE, *Philippines*

My brother is facing many difficulties regarding his faith and the Sabbath. He is separated from his family and is suffering because of this situation. Please pray that God will work in the hearts of his family members.

TAMARA, *Germany*

Please pray for my father, who is not yet an Adventist; and also my father-in-law, who has had a stroke.

THANG, *Myanmar*

May the Lord assist us with our one-day church structure by providing resources so that we may complete it. The building is still at foundational level.

MBALISI, *Zimbabwe*

I ask for prayer for my 14-month-old son, who has been diagnosed with a condition that slows down development. He is not sitting up, creeping, walking, or talking, and has mild seizures.

ALICIA, *Jamaica*

I have had a lot of personal problems since childhood. There is no professional help here. I am HIV positive. Please pray for me, lest I die never to see Jesus in His glory.

AUDREY, *Zambia*

Praise God for answered prayers. My daughter has been accepted for a full-time job, but we need continued prayers for the family. We have a lot of issues, but God knows them all.

BRIGIDA, *United States*

Please pray for a woman who attended a course we had for our Jewish community. She has been looking for a Jewish group that believes in Jesus and feels that our community will be hers!

DAVID, *Argentina*

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

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

The International Face of Our Church

This month a reader shares how mission work is vital.



Our church is growing so fast internationally! We are reaching more people for the Lord's work than ever before, and my family is proof. We are an international "family." My husband and I are both converts to Adventism. He grew up in a Southeast Asian home of worshipping Hindu, and I grew up in a legal-

istic church background of another major denomination. We both have come to the Lord after our struggles as adults from different paths. Adventist doctrine crossed each of our paths at different times and in different ways.

Our great commission as Christians, as found in Mark 16:15 ("Go into all the world and preach the gospel ...") is how each of us found a more full life in Jesus. I thank God that our church is committed to missions, and that we do have a growing international membership.

Jesus sees how all of us are at the moment, and how we can become changed in Him. As Ellen White states: "The world is our field; with a firm hold on God for His strength and His grace we may move forward in the pathway of duty, as collaborators with the Redeemer of the world. Our work is to spread the light of truth and advance the work of moral reform, to elevate, ennoble, and bless humanity" (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 2, 1879).

The Lord has brought not only my own family but the end-time church to Himself. Missionary work has allowed our family to be brought to the Lord—and brought together. We have a family face that covers a multitude of nations—my husband and I. This is the face of our church today, and it will be the face of the glorious church in heaven.

—REBEKKAH SAX-GUPTA, *Mesa, Arizona, United States*

"Behold, I come quickly..."

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

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Vol. 7, No. 7

The PEOPLE'S PLACE

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The truths of the Bible are simple enough for a child to wade in and splash around—yet deep enough for the most accomplished diver to never fully plumb their depths.”

—Brad Gorrell, during Sabbath school at the New Haven Seventh-day Adventist Church in Overland Park, Kansas, United States

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



SUBMITTED BY ANNIE WEGMULLER, FRANCE



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

We are looking for brief submissions in these categories:

ADVENTIST QUOTES (profound or spontaneous; heard during worship services, for example)

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

FAMILY OF GOD (JPEG photos of church members doing community service, worshipping, singing, etc.)

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

ADVENTIST LIFE

The children's story each Sabbath at our Tantallon, Nova Scotia, church is enjoyed almost as much by the adult audience as the children seated at the front of the church. But the story on February 26, 2011, was better than usual due to

the immediate, amusing, and unexpected response of one of the children.

In the story the mother suggested that her daughter send a card to a nice elderly woman in their neighborhood as an act of kindness, but the daughter said she didn't want to. At this point

the storyteller paused and asked the children, "And what would your mother say to you?"

Without missing a beat, a boy on the front row shouted emphatically (in his mother's tone of voice), "One, two, three!"

—Eileen Moores, Tantallon, Nova Scotia, Canada

ANSWER: In Nzerekore, Guinea, church workers represent the disaster and relief agency, with ADRA right on their license plates! All of the vehicles clearly represent the disaster and relief agency, with ADRA right on their license plates!