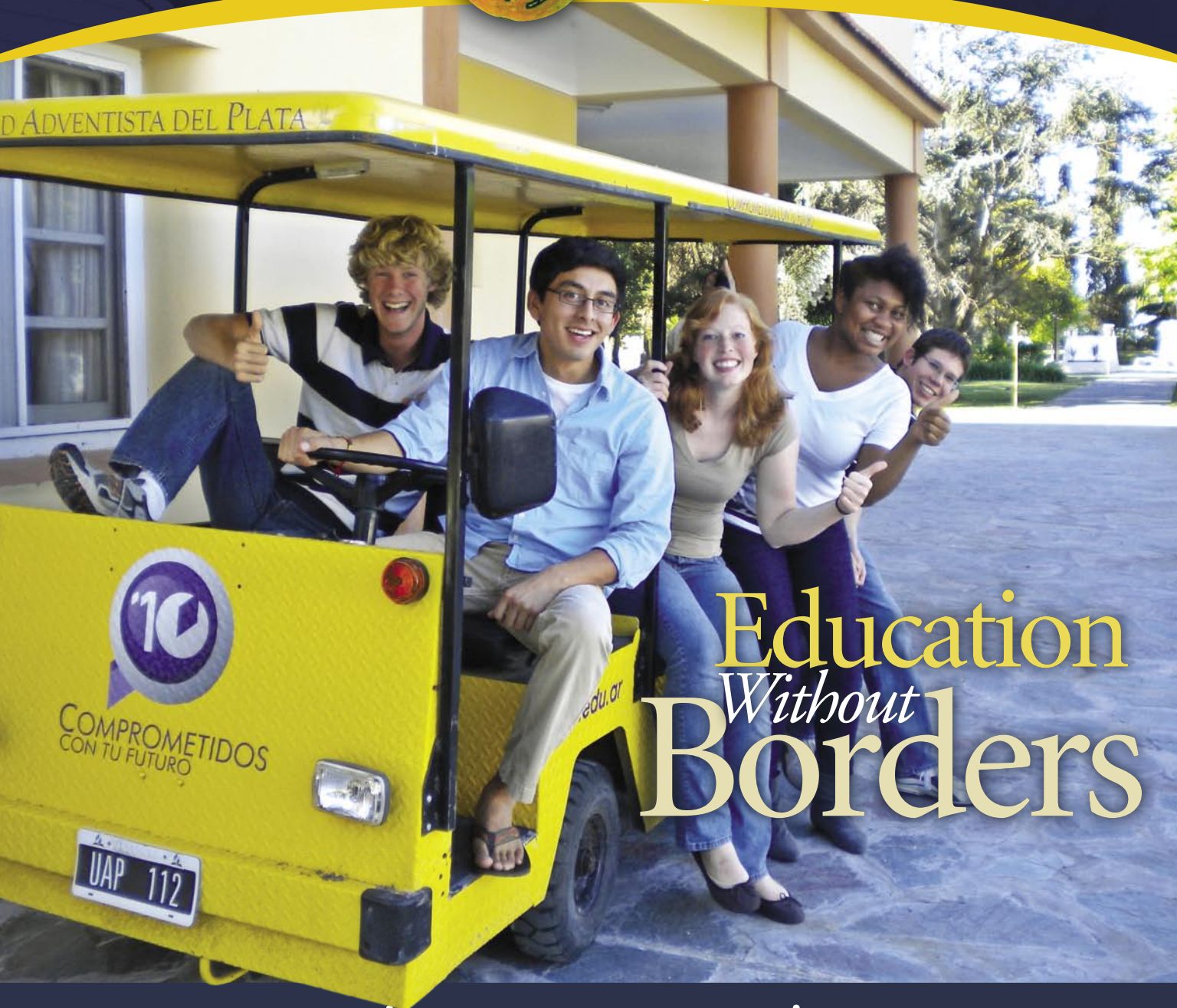


December 2011

# ADVENTIST WORLD



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# ADVENTIST WORLD

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HANNA RODRIGUEZ (WWUJ)

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## WORLD VIEW

### The Lord of Displaced Persons

It is too easy to forget them, especially when the world is awash in images of Christmas joy and festivity. We turn from the anguished faces on the newspaper page or the whispered stories we have heard—thirdhand—from “over there.” Hungry for our annual merriment, we look away when their eyes seem too pleading, too insistent, too abandoned.

They are the refugees—by latest count, an estimated 62 million people around the globe—a number equal to almost 1 percent of the world’s population. Their single common denominator is no link of race, ethnicity, age, or economic status: it is, instead, that they have been displaced—by war, by famine, by economic turmoil, by natural disasters, by ideologies bent on hate or “purity.” In an era when mobility is so much prized, they have too much of it. “Home” is always some other place—back there—a day away, a week ago, behind some strands of wire.

We, the ninety and nine who safely lie in the shelter of

the fold, do well to remember them as we end another year. We may have little or much, be well-fed or lean, but we at least have “home.” Whether they know Him or own Him, the Bible reminds us that the displaced of this world are the special concern of Jesus. His parents were forced to flee with Him before He was many weeks old. He had, He said, “nowhere to lay His head,” except, perhaps, on the borrowed cushion of a storm-tossed boat. And the peace He wants to bring to those of good will He seeks to give soonest to the “little ones” who have almost never had it.

Somewhere nearby, within a kilometer or a mile of where you live, someone camps beneath a bridge, huddles in a soggy tent, waits for that day when what they think of as luck will turn. Seek them out this Christmas, in the name of the Lord of Displaced Persons, to offer them what He would surely give—a warm meal, a cool drink, a needed embrace. In so doing, you appropriately commemorate the birth of the Lord who offers Himself as the refuge of the homeless and the lost.

— BILL KNOTT

## WORLD REPORT

### In Solomon Islands, *More Than 5000* Respond to Public Evangelism



**MASS AUDIENCE:** Some 32,000 Honiara residents attended the final night of evangelist John Carter’s outreach series in the Solomon Islands during September 2011.

■ In the largest Seventh-day Adventist baptism in Solomon Islands history, hundreds of people joined the church there during a September 2011 public outreach series conducted by evangelist John Carter.

More than 500 people were baptized in the Lunga River near Honiara on September 17, while men with poles stood nearby to push away any crocodiles that swam into the area. Some 10,000 people stood on the riverbank and a nearby bridge to witness the ceremony.

Most of the people baptized had come forward during two altar calls at

## WORLD REPORT

Carter's meetings, which began September 9 at a soccer stadium in Honiara. Carter spoke about the latest discoveries in astronomy and scientific evidence for the existence of a Creator.

At Sunday night's final meeting, attendance peaked at 32,000—more than one third of the city's population. About two thirds of those attending were not Adventist church members, church leaders in the South Pacific said.

The meetings took the city by storm, said Solomon Islands prime minister Danny Philip, who spoke at the final meeting.

"The church in the Solomons has been praying for revival, and it is a joy to see first hand God's Spirit sweeping across this nation," said Wayne Boehm, president of the Adventist Church in the islands.

"I continue to hear miraculous stories of people attending these meetings, some of whom have been keeping the Sabbath on their own . . . now coming to these meetings to have their faith affirmed," he said.

One newly baptized member is the now former president of a Protestant denomination in the Solomon Islands.

"We praise God for the large and enthusiastic attendance at the evangelistic meetings," Adventist world church president Ted N. C. Wilson said later in an interview. "It's obvious that many are being drawn to . . . the Bible and its answers for today's many problems. Truly, Jesus is the only answer to the challenges we face in today's highly unsettled world," he added.

Many of the newly baptized members are expected to attend a new church this Sabbath at the Adventist-owned Maranatha Centre in the Solomon Islands, said Boehm.

The church in the Solomon Islands plans to establish a radio network so that every person in the region can continue to hear the church's message. —*Phil Ward/Adventist News Network*

## Middle East Unit Now an Attached Field of World Headquarters

■ Top leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted October 9 to transfer administrative oversight of church operations in the Middle East from the church's Trans-European and Euro-Africa divisions to church headquarters.

The newly formed Greater Middle East Union Mission is home to 21 countries and more than 500 million people, and has 2,900 Adventists worshipping in 70 churches and companies.

Under the new organization, South Sudan becomes part of the church's East-Central Africa Division, and the church's Southern Asia-Pacific Division will oversee the Pakistan Union. Culturally, Pakistan can better be served by the division that also serves Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, leaders said.

The church's Euro-Asia Division will absorb Afghanistan. The world church headquarters will directly oversee the Israel Field and the new Greater Middle East Union Mission. That union mission will also include the Trans-Mediterranean territories. South Cyprus will remain in the Trans-European Division.

After more than 100 years of outreach to the region, data indicates that the mission of the church is moving with challenges in the region, members of the church's Greater Middle East and Mediterranean Survey Commission said in an October 9 report to Annual Council delegates.

Attaching the "high-priority" Middle East region directly to world church headquarters will enable quicker implementation of projects, commission members said in the proposal. "It would make movement of personnel, funding, and ideas easier across what



**DIVISION LEADERS:** Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division, addresses the chair with his support as well as some concerns about the proposal to adjust administrative structure in the Middle East, which includes his division. Behind him, Bruno Vertallier, president of the Euro-Africa Division, waits to speak. The proposal, later passed, also affected his division.

ANSEL OLIVER/ANN

used to be different division boundaries," they said. The realignment would also group countries together that have similar cultures.

Commission members also said the Middle East "should be the focus of the entire church," citing another advantage for moving regional leadership to oversight by world church headquarters.

In 2010 the church charged the commission with studying Adventist work in the Middle East, with the intent that a territorial realignment might be necessary. A study of historic, demographic, and statistical evidence seems to indicate that the church grows best when overseen by a unified and geographically contiguous body, commission members said.

The Middle East is part of a region called the 10/40 window, where two thirds of the world's population lives, only 1 percent of which is Christian.

"I want you to think of the incredible challenges in the Middle East," world church president Ted N. C. Wilson told delegates. "We want to give full credit to

the workers already there,” he added.

Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division, said he and his team had some reservations about parts of the proposal but would fully support it if approved by the world body.

“We have personal ties to our people in this area, and we have spent much time in prayer with and for them. We have thoroughly enjoyed working in our attached fields and have poured our best time, talents, and resources into it,” Wiklander said.

Euro-Africa Division president Bruno Vertallier said that in recent years the region has redoubled its work in the Middle East and that the administrative shift would be considered difficult for some people.

“Our recommendation is to strongly emphasize the training of local people,” Vertallier said. “We have some wonderful people working there right now, and we must add to them. The great challenge will be to train more people in local fields and give them the best tools possible to meet the needs of Adventists and community members.”

Wilson said the move would signal that the region is a priority for the denomination.

“The Middle East is a unique place,” Wilson said. “We have to take this area of the world field as a special burden. We’re also grateful for what Euro-Africa and Trans-Europe have done to foster and nurture Adventist mission in those areas of the Middle East.”

World church undersecretary Homer Trecartin was later appointed to serve as president of the church’s newly formed Greater Middle East Union Mission; reappointed was Tibor Szilvasi, who will continue in his capacity as union secretary for the region.

—Elizabeth Lechleitner/Adventist News Network

## Guam-Micronesia Mission Now Part of North American Division

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Guam-Micronesia Mission, an administrative region comprising islands in the western Pacific Ocean, will now report to the denomination’s North American Division.

The shift, approved by the denomination’s Executive Committee October 10, moves oversight of the region from the church’s Southern Asia-Pacific Division, which is based in the Philippines.

The mission region includes the United States territories of Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau.

“Over the years there has been discussion whether it would fit better elsewhere,” said world church under-

secretary Myron Iseminger. “Regulations are U.S.-oriented, and many employees come from North America.”

The region is home to roughly 4,500 Adventist Church members. The Adventist Church there also operates numerous elementary and secondary schools, which are staffed largely by student missionaries.

North American Division president Dan Jackson welcomed the move. “We are always happy to cooperate with the world church, and we will embrace the peoples and the ministry of the Guam-Micronesia Mission,” he said.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division president Alberto Gulfan confirmed that his executive committee had made several requests to shift oversight of Guam-Micronesia. That division acquired administrative oversight of the movement’s operations in Pakistan in a territorial realignment on October 9.

—Ansel Oliver/Adventist News Network



**GULFAN SPEAKS:** Southern Asia-Pacific Division president Alberto Gulfan addresses the chair of Annual Council regarding the shift of the Guam-Micronesia Mission to the North American Division. Dan Jackson, NAD president, sits nearby.

## New Brazil Administrative Region Recognizes Growth, Financial Independence

■ Top Seventh-day Adventist world church leadership voted October 12 to split the Northeast Brazil Union Mission into two administrative bodies—the Northeast Brazil Union Mission and East Brazil Union Mission.

The move recognizes burgeoning membership and impeccable handling of finances in the region, church leaders said. It comes on the heels of a similar realignment of the church’s administrative structure in Brazil last year.

The former Northeast Brazil Union Mission is home to almost 340,000 Adventists and a growing network of churches and church-run schools.

ANSEL OLIVER/ANW

Membership there has more than doubled since the union was established in 1996. As of July this year, the church in the region welcomed more than 20,000 new believers, or about 3,000 accessions per month.

“This region for us has a strong potential for growth,” said South American Division president Erton Köhler. “The people there are very receptive. We believe that a new union there can give strong support to our church in the region and help fulfill the mission.”

The newly formed Northeast and East Brazil union missions will each begin in 2013 with more than 100 percent of ideal working capital, said world church undertreasurer Juan Prestol. Neither region has any debt, he added, and both are in “exceptional” financial condition.

—Elizabeth Lechleitner, *Adventist News Network*



**NEW UNION:** A PowerPoint graphic shows the Southeast Brazil Union Conference. Church leaders renamed the union today when they split another union in two, creating a similarly named church region. The new union demonstrates church growth and financial stability in Brazil, church leaders said.

ANSEL OLIVER

## WORLD REPORT

# A D V E N T I S T 2010 GIVING *Remains Faithful in* Turbulent Global

*2012 budget reallocations free up  
Hope Channel now separate*

By ELIZABETH LECHLEITNER, *Adventist News Network*

Every Sabbath during 2010, Seventh-day Adventist Church members put an average of US\$40 million into offering plates worldwide, for an annual total of \$2 billion.

“To me, that is a miracle,” world church undertreasurer Juan Prestol told Annual Council delegates during a treasury report at world church headquarters on October 10, 2011.

“No one is forcing anyone to do this. People do it voluntarily because the Lord impresses them to give. This is a tremendous testimony,” Prestol said, particularly amid today’s turbulent economic climate.

Part of that \$2 billion in tithes and offerings received worldwide in 2010 is the foundation for the church’s 2012 budget, church leaders said. Delegates voted to budget \$166.7 million for the church’s appropriations next year.

One third of the increases in the appropriations budget will go toward outreach, ministry, and leadership to the 10/40 window. The church’s Loma Linda University, South American Division, and Inter-American Division were among institutions and entities to see decreased funding as the church frees up money for the largely unreached areas of the world stretching from northern Africa across the Middle East and Asia.



**FINANCIAL UPDATE:** Robert E. Lemon delivers the treasurer's report to Annual Council delegates at church headquarters on October 9, 2011. The world church treasurer said budget allocations for 2012 will respond to growing financial needs in some of the world's most unreached areas.

# Economy

*funding for unreached regions;  
financial entity*

The reallocation, recommended in 2008 by the church's Appropriations Review Commission, recognizes growing self-sufficiency in some areas, transferring additional funds to meet needs in other regions.

"In the past we have had a tendency to pay financial attention to regions with high membership, but many are now capable of carrying their own weight," world church treasurer Robert E. Lemon told delegates.

The church is seeing a dramatic shift in funding as Adventist membership worldwide grows. Between 2006 and 2011 church income from outside North America nearly doubled. While tithes from North America still funds a majority of the church's world budget, the church's finances are more vulnerable to fluctuations in currency exchange rates than in previous years.

The strengthening of the U.S. dollar against many of the world's currencies has a "major effect" on the church's work worldwide, said Lemon. While a strong dollar can cramp the world church budget, regions that receive appropriations in U.S. currency now find that the amount stretches further, offsetting some of the loss, he said. Church financial officers deal with the opposite effect when the dollar weakens.

As the church, especially in the U.S., continues to emerge from a tenacious recession, Lemon said steady tithes and offerings are a blessing. Church members have felt the "strain" of uncertain financial times, but remain faithful, he said.

Tithe returned by members in North America is up 3.5 percent as of August 2011 compared to the same time last year, Lemon told delegates. Outside North America, tithe grew 17 percent in the same time period.

While some of that increase can be attributed to currency exchange rates, tithe in local currency has also seen "substantial increases," Lemon said.

Likewise, mission offerings from outside North America increased 20.5 percent or \$7.2 million, because of actual offering increases coupled with favorable exchange rates, Lemon said.

World church Stewardship Ministries director Erika Puni asked the chair to consider including a line in the approved budget expressing gratitude for the work of local stewardship leaders.

Educating members in biblical stewardship is a "crucial area" of work, said Ted N. C. Wilson. Last year the world church leader challenged regional church leaders to hire full-time stewardship directors. "Some of you have done that, and I believe you are seeing an incredible return on that investment," Wilson said.

Responding to another delegate's question, Wilson also pledged to make the church's financial reports available to the world church in an "easy electronic format." For members who sacrifice to return faithful tithes and offerings, knowing how the church handles those funds is rewarding and motivating, the delegate said.

Delegates also voted on October 20 to establish the church's official television network, Hope Channel, as a separate financial entity, and provide it with the appropriate working capital as of January 2012. The network is already separately incorporated. ■

## WORLD VISTA

Who or what has shaped your identity as a Seventh-day Adventist? Why have you chosen to be a part of this worldwide movement? And—directly to the point—how do we create a network of nurture that will encourage young people to develop a strong faith and identity as Seventh-day Adventists?

These are important questions every Adventist ought to think about.

### Early Positive Influences

My own choice to be a Seventh-day Adventist was shaped by many things and many people, all brought together by God to help influence me to be a part of His remnant people. Some of the individuals whose faces rise up in



# Network of Nurture

*Tracing the factors that shape Adventist identity*

By TED N. C. WILSON

my memory will certainly never know this side of heaven the impact that they had in steering my young life toward commitment to the church.

Harry Baerg, an artist for *Guide* magazine many years ago, was my Sabbath school teacher, and a most fascinating person. Harry was an amazingly talented illustrator: several generations of young Adventists and their parents treasured his illustrations in church periodicals and on the back page of *Guide* magazine. He brought

many interesting things to class week by week that stirred my curiosity—puzzles, animal stories, surprises. We always looked forward to coming to Sabbath school each week because of a talented, prepared teacher.

Another person who shaped my life was a missionary physician, Dr. Roy Cornell, who worked at the Benghazi Adventist Hospital in Libya when I was a boy growing up in Egypt. While caring for patients during a polio epidemic, he contracted polio

and became paralyzed. As a hobby, he had for years played the clarinet, but since he was no longer able to play, he gave his beautiful Buffet clarinet to me after we returned to the United States from mission service in Egypt. That gift helped change my life. With his high-quality instrument in hand, I started taking clarinet lessons and became active in the Columbia Union College orchestra while I was still in grade school. We also had a small orchestra at my home church in



Takoma Park, Maryland. The group enjoyed getting together each week to play in the junior Sabbath school.

These seemingly chance associations were not, in fact, chance at all: God used these individuals to lead me to identify with His church. Fifty years later I still remember and treasure the associations, the encouragement, and the relationships that tied me to other believers.

### **In the Church**

Lessons learned in Sabbath school and church are certainly important, but we shouldn't lose sight of the impact of even shorter encounters. The kinds of interactions that are probably the most meaningful are not long, drawn-out tutorials, but brief words of encouragement and smiles from those whom youth respect and admire.

My own story underlines this principle: *Pay attention to younger people.* Smile at them and say their name. Shake their hand and say, "How are you today? We're so glad you are a part of our church." That's all you have to say, and kids will remember it long afterward.

Admittedly, I grew up in a highly Adventist-oriented community. Not every child has that particular opportunity. Some may find growing up in that kind of community to be restrictive, but I found it to be extremely positive. I found that participating in church activities, Friday-night youth meetings, mission presentations, and evangelistic meetings all helped form my attachment to this Adventist movement. Even when they weren't designed to "reach" me, those programs made a distinct impression on me. They helped me understand that I belonged to an organization that had dedicated, caring people, worldwide resources, worthy goals, and world-class objectives.

### **In the School**

Not every Seventh-day Adventist will have the opportunity or the means to obtain a Christian education, but there's no doubt from both Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy that attending a church school is the ideal situation to help form that crucial identity of a young believer.

In an Adventist school setting students learn Christian values not only in the ways subjects are taught in the classroom, but also they learn those values on the playground—how to get along; how to respond in conflict; how to be a peacemaker. A Christian educational setting reveals the moral principles and the biblical foundations that ought to guide all social interactions.

Reflecting on my own experience, I

ought to have some connection with an Adventist school—either their own or in a cooperative venture with nearby Adventist churches, even if it is just a one-room school.

As a young pastor I was assigned a small church with fewer than 100 members. At one time a church school had operated there, but it had died out for lack of interest. However, we found a group of dedicated parents who valued Christian education, and so in just eight weeks we reorganized the school and got it equipped. Conference leadership worked with us to obtain a qualified teacher, and we opened the school year with 13 students. That school ran successfully for nearly 40 years, influencing hundreds of students for faith.

*We want all our young people to see Jesus with their hearts.*

realize just how much Christian teachers have influenced my life. All of them made an impact—even when I didn't recognize it at the time. As an impressionable young person, I looked to them and their instruction to decide how to react in certain situations. I learned to appreciate their dedication and commitment: I wanted to be like them when I grew up.

### **A School for Every Church**

There's no doubt about it: I'm a strong believer in Christian education. I think that every Adventist church

Adventist schools are so important because they add a strong fabric to the relationship between child and parent by creating opportunities for involvement with each other, with other families, with school programs, and with other positive activities. Adventist education is a catalyst for creating a network of nurture for young people, whether it's a small school or a very large one. That total school program, combined with the church's ministries and youth activities and parental support in the home—that triangle of church,

## WORLD VISTA

school, and home—is an incredible booster of self-worth, personal development, and improvement. School, church, and home—working together—help youth understand the talents and gifts that the Lord has given them. When parents give their children the gifts of a committed home, active participation in a faithful congregation, and attendance at an Adventist school, they position their children to flourish as citizens in the community and as citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Few things in this world will ever count more for the coming kingdom than operating a church school on behalf of a congregation's children, and I heartily encourage every Adventist church throughout the world to do everything possible to operate or share in the operation of a Seventh-day Adventist school. The injunction of Scripture is clear: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

### **What About Preparation for the "Real World"?**

Education, particularly Christian education, helps youth understand the complexities of a world in which difficult choices will confront them in almost every arena—in relationships, in career selection, in lifestyle, and particularly in living godly, service-oriented lives. Our academies, colleges, and universities give students the foundational understandings that they will need in order to choose wisely amid all the counterfeits. Questions—including challenges to faith—will inevitably arise, and while the school and the church do have a large part to play in securing faith, the most important element of all is the integrity of the Adventist family. If the home isn't undergirded by a

strongly biblical viewpoint and a belief in the Spirit of Prophecy, then the church and the school can work valiantly, but there is no guarantee that they can remedy what the home isn't providing.

As I was growing up I never heard my parents say one negative thing about the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy: they made only very positive comments. They never discouraged me in my growing relationship with the Lord, but instead always encouraged me and my connection to the church. Their example has blessed me many times over, and it would bless thousands of other families if they adopted it as well. If in our families we refrain from making critical remarks about leaders or sermons or decisions we don't like, and instead emphasize positive, faith-building things, our children will breathe in an atmosphere of trust that will deepen their identity as committed Seventh-day Adventists. Children are just like sponges: they soak in what they hear and experience at home. When they are prayed with—and prayed for—by parents who understand the importance of forming that special Adventist identity, they will move toward a personal faith that will weather all kinds of difficult life storms.

### **When There's Love—and Faith—at Home**

We don't need generations of cultural Adventists. What we want is a generation of young people who want to be Adventists because they love Jesus. An important, practical way to encourage that is to spend time in family worship—especially in the evening. We dare not let a favorite activity—a sporting event, a television show, time on the Internet, or conversations with friends—become the evening prayer of Adventist

homes. It's vitally important to stay in close contact with our kids—talking with them, asking how their day went, encouraging them, drawing out their expressions of faith. An evening family worship time is one of the best opportunities through which to impress upon them that they need to connect with Jesus—that He is their best friend.

From a very early age children can gain a real understanding of their relationship with the Lord. Several years ago my wife, Nancy, was enjoying an hour with our 2-year-old granddaughter, Lauren. When Nancy reached for her glasses, little Lauren spoke up and said, "Nani, you don't need your glasses—you can see Jesus with your heart."

We want all our young people to see Jesus with their hearts. That's why we give them every advantage God has made available to us—in the family, in the church, in the school. That's why we sacrifice, spend time, and rearrange our adult lives—because we know that it is the sum of all the "little things" that helps to form that Adventist identity in our kids. They won't form that faithful identity just because we did, or by osmosis. The most important legacy we will leave to our children is a positive inclination to freely choose for themselves the faith we have chosen. Nothing we do this side of heaven is more important—and nothing brings greater joy or satisfaction. ■



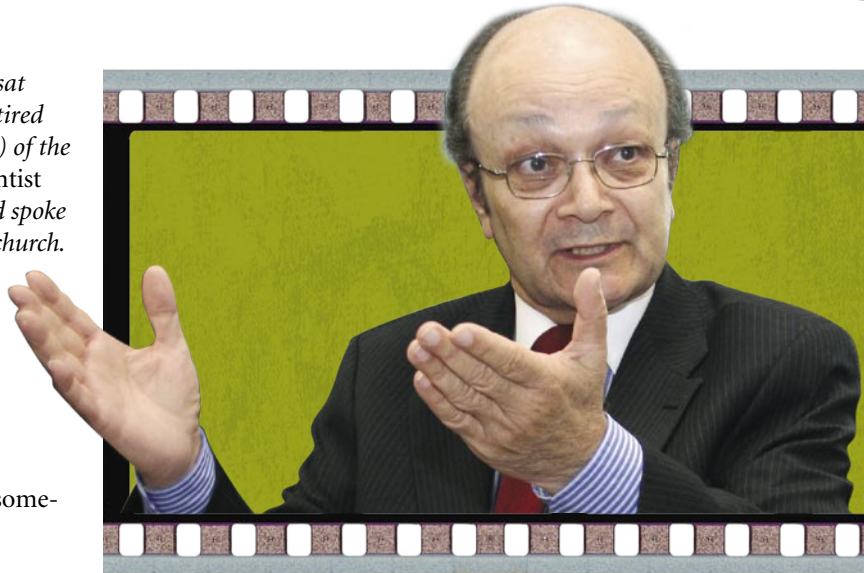
**Ted N. C. Wilson** is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver

Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

**A**dventist World associate editor Gerald Klingbeil sat down with Angel Manuel Rodríguez, recently retired director of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) of the General Conference and well known to readers of Adventist World as the author of the Bible Questions column, and spoke about Scripture and the role of theology in the life of the church.

**Angel, after nearly 20 years of service at the BRI of the General Conference, 10 years as its director, you have recently retired. I know that you worked as a pastor, a university professor, and administrator. As you look back over your ministry, what comes to mind?**

You know—the Lord is wonderful! He knows where He wants us, and He little by little shapes us. This is some-



SANDRA BLACKMER

# The LORD Is Wonderful!

*Looking around the corner for Adventist theology*

thing that also impresses me with my colleagues [in BRI]. I look at them and I listen to their stories, their pilgrimage with the Lord. And I can see how the Lord was shaping them, preparing them, for what they are doing now. And I look back and I say to myself, really, the Lord was guiding me and preparing me for what He intended me to do.

**During your nearly 20 years of service at the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church you have seen many changes. Millions joined the church; the church has become more international. I think more members of our church are speaking Spanish or Portuguese nowadays than English or French or any other language. Does this mean anything for Adventist theology?**

Of course it does. Adventist theology has become more international. Before this growth explosion, Adventist theology was influenced mainly by Western theologians from North America, Europe, and Australia. But then there was this explosion of membership around the world, and all of a sudden you had most Adventist theologians living out-

side of the Western world. This was a new development, and it brought with it wonderful blessings, but at the same time we faced tremendous challenges. One of the things that we decided to do was to take measures, steps, that would avoid fragmentation among this large number of new theologians around the world.

**Mention some of those steps.**

One of the first things that we thought of involved the Biblical Research Institute Committee (BRICOM). This committee meets twice a year. It plans projects dealing with theological and doctrinal issues that require further study and the production of material. BRICOM members were mainly from North America because that's where we had most of our theologians. With this incredible growth, one of the first things we had to do was to open up BRICOM to other non-Western theologians. The church is a world church, and we cannot do theology in isolation from the world church. Many of these new theologians are relatively young fellows. That's another great side benefit, because they will give

# Built on Amazing Grace

*Dixie Rodríguez, a columnist of the Adventist Review and daughter of Angel Rodríguez, shares a more personal facet of her father.*

Our family tradition has never been lost: *my family sings.*

Childhood moments are vivid: daily worship and welcoming the Sabbath with song. It always started the same way. My father would say: *Let's sing a song.* He led the way.

In every melody my father would incorporate a Bible story. With every musical harmony he taught us Bible verses that spoke of hope, the power of prayer, and trust in divine guidance. God was never far or absent from our song. *We sang together.*

The best advice my father gave me was: *Put God first. Things may get difficult.*

*Don't forget to sing.* He was right. Things get difficult. Yet my father would always remind me: *He's watching you. Leave your worries to Him.* Then, as a final reminder of our journey together as a family, he would add: *Soon we will sing again.*

Every day my father reminds me how close our voices are to God's ears. For him, God has been not only a Savior but also a compassionate, powerful friend. Now I watch him teach his granddaughters to sing. Our inheritance will always be a home built on "Amazing Grace."

many more years of service to the church. As they see how we work together in trying to research biblical, theological, and doctrinal issues affecting the unity of the church around the world, they become extensions, so to speak, in their own areas in trying to nurture that theological unity.

The second thing we decided to do was to empower them, to tell them, "We trust you. You can do theology for the church. We can work together with you and do great things for the church." So we encouraged the divisions to establish Biblical Research Committees (BRCs), not institutes but committees, in their own territories to work with theological issues relevant to those divisions. Many divisions have done that, and those committees are already working. There is constant communication between the BRI and those committees. Whenever any of these committees meet, one of us is there with them.

**When we face theological tension in our local churches or unions, I hear people say, "Why do we need so much theology? Why do we have to invest so much in bringing all these theologians together? Shouldn't we just focus on mission and evangelism?" What would you say to them?**

We need to focus on evangelism and the mission of the church. This is nonnegotiable; this is the gospel commission. The question is What is the role of theological reflection in that mission? And we have to make it clear that theological reflection is part of the mission of the church. It is not an addendum. It's not something that the church does if there is a problem and we have to react to it. No, doing biblical study, thinking theologically, is as important for the church as going out and doing evangelism.

Theology has the function of placing itself at the service of mission and evangelism, providing relevance and biblically grounded thinking that informs the evangelist. I have never separated theology from mission.

**Most people reading this interview will not be theologians. How can we help our nontheologians think biblically**

**or theologically? Is that important, or is it just the task of the pastor or professor at the university or college?**

Of course, the question is What do we mean by thinking theologically? It's very simple. It's being able to express your conviction biblically, in a rational way, in an appealing way, grounded in Scripture. That's what is needed. And of course we do it, depending on the training, at different levels. The function of the trained theologian is to provide materials that pastors, Bible teachers, and laypersons can also use to enrich their understanding of any particular doctrine.

**Stepping back after 40 years of ministry provides a great vantage point. Where do you see the issues of Adventist theology currently? Which questions do we need to address as a church?**

As I think about this it seems that the key theological topic is and will remain ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church. It has always been an important topic in the church, but *primarily* because of the growth of the church, this topic has become extremely important. Like never before we have come into contact with world religions. It's important for us to interact with them, and it's important for them to know the Adventist Church, who are we, what are we doing here, what is our mission. The church has grown and is therefore no longer invisible. Other denominations cannot avoid seeing us, because we are everywhere. Our eschatology is becoming more relevant day after day. So because of that we need to have answers, biblical and theological answers, appealing answers. We need to reaffirm the commitment to our Savior, the commitment to the message and mission of the church among church members. They need this because most of our church members are new converts.

**Are there theological issues arising out of the tremendous church growth we are seeing?**

What I think is probably one of the most important issues has to do with new converts. You see, the growth is so rapid that it's very difficult even to keep up with it. Because of the



speed, we need to really think for a moment about the dangers. And the danger I'm going to mention is a real one. It's the danger of baptizing individuals coming from a different Christian tradition, or a non-Christian background, who are not well informed about the biblical message. They receive a brief introduction to the Adventist message and they're baptized. There is little follow-up. These people are Adventists—based on the little they've come to understand. They retain some of the ideas they brought in with them. There is almost an element of syncretism, because they've never understood Adventism well. Doctrinal and theological diversity is finding a place within the local congregation.

Not long ago we blamed the theologians. They were the ones creating theological and doctrinal polarization. There is truth in that, I cannot deny that. But this is a new phenomenon because often the new converts do not really understand what Adventism is about.

**So, you are concerned about biblical discipleship?**

That's correct. It's not simply "Oh, yes, I'm emotional; I want to be baptized." No, this is about that which is important, teaching the person to understand the message and to be able to go and share the message with others.

**Angel, do you have a pearl of wisdom for our readers? Something that you've learned, something that has become important to you over the past decades of ministry?**

Well, perhaps two things. I have learned what we all know, that our safety in our pilgrimage is in Scripture. The moment we drift away from it, there's danger. In my moments of difficulties, in my job, trying to find solutions, I do go to the Scriptures. And together with that I use Ellen White. I don't apologize for this wonderful gift that the Lord has given to us.

The second one is how you deal with others. We need to learn how to treat each other. Learn from the Master, our Lord, and His kindness and His love, even to His enemies. And learn to write and speak in a way that provides the opportunity for reconciliation, for common understanding. Now, I know, of course, that when it comes to theological disagreements and radical ideas within the church, we have to take a position. And we should take a position. I'm not afraid of that. But I have always tried to do it in a kind way. There's no need to get into personal debates and insult each other and be rude. It seems to me that the Spirit of Christ would move us to kindness. ■

# Passionate for the WORD

*Artur Stele, Ph.D., a general vice president of the General Conference and current director of the Biblical Research Institute, reminisces about Angel Manuel Rodríguez' ministry and passion.*

I have known Angel since the nineties, when I was appointed a BRICOM member from the Euro-Asia Division. It was rewarding to hear Angel present a paper, hold a seminar, teach a class, or speak to pastors, teachers, and church administrators. He was always kind, balanced, and committed that the church remains a "people of the Book!" The world church was blessed by his ministry,

visits, and written work. The good news is that he is not leaving BRI completely. He will continue to be a vital and vibrant part of the institute! The BRI will continue its work based on the strong foundation that was left by Angel Rodríguez and his predecessors.

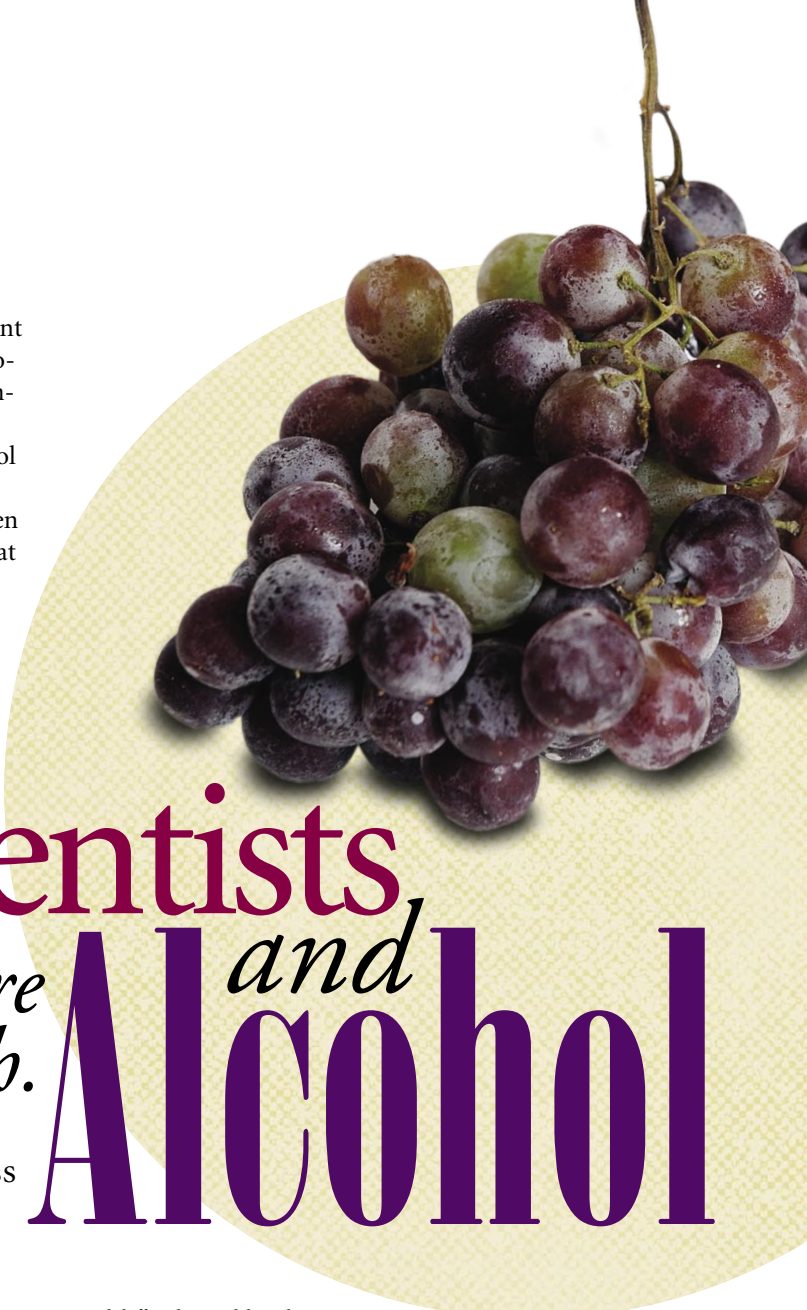
*For a longer version of this interview, visit [www.adventistworld.org](http://www.adventistworld.org).*

“When is the Seventh-day Adventist Church going to change its position on alcohol use?”

This question was asked of me during one of my recent itineraries when I had the privilege of speaking at an alcohol symposium, following an Adventist health professionals conference. I was stunned!

Studies abound that tout numerous benefits of alcohol consumption on heart health, and many people now are questioning the church’s position of total abstinence when it comes to drinking alcohol. But the simple answer is that the Seventh-day Adventist Church cannot change its stance, because it’s not merely an issue of physical health. So, how should practicing, health-conscious Adventists respond?

As a physician I understand the dilemma, and will



# Adventists *It involves more than personal health.* and Alcohol

By  
PETER N. LANDLESS

seek to clarify the issue in order to help people make a well-informed, evidence-based, and, most important, spiritually sound decision.

We should avoid all things harmful, including—perhaps especially—those that cloud the mind and may impair our sensitivity to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, jeopardizing our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Although the consumption of alcohol has many significant health risks, the prime reason to abstain remains a spiritually moral one.

## **Alcohol Consumption and Global Health**

Alcohol consumption varies widely between countries, depending on cultural traditions. A disparity between developed and emerging economies also exists. Alcohol, like tobacco, is being exported to developing countries, adding huge burdens to already inadequate health systems. According to the “Global Status Report on Alcohol and

Health,” released by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, February 2011:<sup>1</sup>

- Approximately 2.5 million people die from alcohol-related causes each year;
- Fifty-five percent of adults have consumed it;
- Four percent of all deaths are related to alcohol through injuries, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and liver cirrhosis;
- Globally, 6.2 percent of male deaths are related to alcohol, and 1.1 percent of female deaths;
- One in five men in the Russian Federation and neighboring countries dies from alcohol-related causes.

The pattern of alcohol consumption is changing, as mentioned previously. Figures for 2001-2005 released by the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>2</sup> revealed that worldwide, 6.13 liters of pure alcohol were consumed per year, per person, aged 15 years or older. This amount appeared to



be stable in the Americas and the European, Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Pacific regions; however, marked increases were noted in Africa and Southeast Asia. Health risk increases even more when binge drinking occurs; in other words, when people drink to get drunk. Binge drinking may be defined differently according to the region of the world: in the United States more than five consecutive drinks for a male and more than four for a female; in Australia more than four drinks per night (previously, more than seven drinks per night for men and five for women). Binge drinking is increasing in many parts of the world, mainly among youth, but all age groups are affected.<sup>3</sup>

A recent book on research and public policy states that “alcohol is a risk factor for a wide range of health conditions and social problems. It accounts for approximately 4 percent of deaths worldwide and 6 percent of the global burden of disease, placing it alongside tobacco as one of the leading preventable causes of death and disability.”<sup>4</sup>

Alcohol is no ordinary commodity and is dangerous.

### **Risks of Addiction**

Alcohol is a known addictive substance. The susceptibility (or likelihood) of becoming an alcoholic (euphemistically termed “problem drinker”) depends on numerous factors. The chance of alcoholism developing over a lifetime is 13 percent (13 people of every 100 who drink alcohol). If there is a first-degree relative (father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandparent) who suffered from alcohol dependence, this percentage doubles. If experimentation with alcohol begins under the age of 14 years, the percentage chance of dependence increases to 40 percent-plus.<sup>5</sup> This demonstrates the importance of alcohol education from an early age and fostering relationships and connectedness with youth. This social support develops resilience, enabling youth to cope with difficult decisions and choices despite peer pressure. An additional and vital layer of protection for young and old is connection to a set of values, such as the principles of the Bible and walking with the risen Savior.

### **Alcohol and Cancer**

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death globally. An interesting example of the relationship between drinking alcohol and cancer comes from the European Union, where cancer is the second-most-common cause of death and 2.5 million people are diagnosed with cancer each year. It’s

estimated that 10 percent of cancers in men and 3 percent in women can be directly attributed to alcohol use. It’s further estimated that 30 percent of cancers in this part of the world could be prevented through healthier lifestyle choices. The 2010 Eurobarometer Report, however, found that 1 in 5 European citizens do not believe that there’s a connection between alcohol and cancer; 1 in 10 is totally ignorant of the fact that alcohol consumption can cause cancer.<sup>6</sup> Sadly, being ignorant does not spare us the consequences.

There is robust evidence linking alcohol as a cause of breast cancer in women and colon cancer in both men and women. These findings have been summarized and reported in the World Cancer Research Fund’s comprehensive reports in 2007 and 2011.<sup>7</sup> The point strongly emphasized in these and many other scientific reports is that there is no safe limit/dose of alcohol that may be recommended to avoid its carcinogenic effect. This places the perspective on any recommendation that alcohol be used for health benefits, even cardiac, because the associated side effects are real and dangerous.

### **Alcohol and Society**

It is well known that alcohol use is associated (often causally) with accidents of all kinds: road fatalities, domestic violence, murder, rape, and other criminal activities. In 2010 Professor David Nutt and coresearchers published an analysis in the prestigious *Lancet* medical journal showing that in the United Kingdom alcohol is more harmful than heroin and crack cocaine. This is because the researchers focused on the effect the drugs/toxins had on not only the user but others as well (family, community, and society). Heroin, crack cocaine, and methamphetamine were the most harmful drugs to individuals.<sup>8</sup>

Alcohol is also the leading cause of preventable mental retardation in the world. This is because alcohol readily crosses the placenta and damages the developing brain of the unborn baby. Again, there is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.<sup>9</sup>

### **Alcohol and Heart Health**

For the past 30 years alcohol has been promoted as being “heart healthy” and protective against coronary artery disease. Much has been written in the popular and scientific literature on the subject. All the scientific studies have been retrospective analyses, which makes them subject to what are known as “confounders.” Confounders are factors that make interpretation of the results of the data being analyzed more difficult and also may result in erroneous conclusions. Naimi and others concluded in 2005 that some or all of the apparent cardiac protective effect of moderate drinking may be because of these confounders.<sup>10</sup> Other studies have con-

tinued this caution and noted that the non drinkers included in many of the studies had more risk factors for heart disease, were less well-educated, had less access to health care and insurance, and were from poorer socioeconomic groups. Some included in the nondrinking group had been drinkers prior to the studies being done and had stopped drinking for health reasons.<sup>11</sup> A recent paper by Dr. Boris Hansel adds weight to the view that the real explanation of positive cardiac outcomes in moderate drinkers is not that alcohol is protective, but that the average health status and healthful lifestyle in other behaviors, such as exercise and diet, is better than that of nondrinkers.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, taking into account the significant health risks related to alcohol use, it does not make sense to promote its use for heart health, especially when there are proven and safe interventions for heart disease prevention, such as daily exercise and a healthful diet.

**Conclusion**

We sometimes persist in trawling the shark-infested waters of the definite evidence showing the dangers of alcohol in search of one sardine’s worth of positive, healthful evidence in favor of alcohol use. Instead, we are blessed to have a blueprint that offers protection against the problems alcohol inevitably brings in its wake: informed choices, exercise, rest, healthful eating, fresh air and sunshine, pure water (within and without), trust in God, social support, a good dose of optimism, and, of course, temperance, which by definition encourages us to dispense entirely with all things harmful and to use wisely those things that are

healthful and good. Temperance, lived through the enabling power of our gracious Lord Jesus Christ, serves as a foundation for a Spirit-filled experience that can celebrate life free from alcohol and its attendant ills.

So should people who don’t drink start to drink alcohol? Based on the evidence, definitely not! Should those who currently drink alcohol quit? Based on the same evidence, unequivocally yes!

“You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20, NIV).

To whom do we belong? ■

<sup>1</sup> www.who.int/substance\_abuse/publications/global\_alcohol\_report/en.  
<sup>2</sup> www.who.int/substance\_abuse/publications/global\_alcohol\_report/msbgsrupfiles.pdf.  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>4</sup> Thomas Babor, *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity*, second edition (New York: Oxford Press, 2010), p. 70.  
<sup>5</sup> Richard K. Ries, et al., *Principles of Addiction Medicine*, fourth edition (Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer, 2009).  
<sup>6</sup> www.eurocare.org/library/latest\_news/alcohol\_and\_cancer\_the\_forgotten\_link.  
<sup>7</sup> www.wcrf.org.  
<sup>8</sup> David Nutt, et al., “Drug Harms in the UK: A Multicriteria Analysis,” *The Lancet*, Nov. 1, 2010.  
<sup>9</sup> *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity*, p. 1,393.  
<sup>10</sup> Timothy S. Naimi, et al., “Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Confounders Among Nondrinking and Moderate-Drinking U.S. Adults,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28, no. 4 (2005) p. 369.  
<sup>11</sup> Kaye Middleton Fillmore, et al., “Moderate Alcohol Use and Reduced Mortality Risk: Systematic Error in Prospective Studies and New Hypotheses,” *Addiction Research and Theory*.  
<sup>12</sup> Boris Hansel, et al., “Relationship Between Alcohol Intake, Health and Social Studies, and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in the Urban Paris-Ile-De-France Cohort,” *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 64:561-568.



**Peter N. Landless**, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is an associate director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



# 6 Reasons Not to Drink

BY PETER LANDLESS

- 1.** Alcohol is a toxin and damages the human body.
- 2.** Alcohol is potentially addictive.
- 3.** Alcohol is a proven carcinogen—it causes various cancers.
- 4.** There is no safe level of alcohol intake to avoid its many serious side effects and consequences.
- 5.** Any purported benefit to heart health (coronary artery disease, specifically) is neutralized and eclipsed by the dangerous and proven harms associated with alcohol use.
- 6.** The global consequences of alcohol use are growing, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church has the opportunity and responsibility to educate, foster, promote resilience, and play a leading role in advocacy against alcohol use.



By  
ELLEN G.  
WHITE

# GOD'S Good Gifts

*The best way to enjoy them is  
as God intended.*

Jesus Christ is the originator of all missionary work done in our world. He worked miracles to heal the sick, but He never worked a miracle in His own behalf. His first noted miracle was performed at a marriage feast in Cana, when He turned water into wine....

By this miracle Christ wished to teach that unfermented wine is far preferable to fermented wine. Christ never created fermented wine. The wine made on this occasion was exactly like the wine that comes fresh from the cluster. Christ knew the influence of fermented wine, and by giving them pure, unfermented wine, He showed them the only safe way in which to use grape juice.<sup>1</sup>

I have a few acres of land that, when I purchased it, was set out to wine grapes; but I will not sell one pound of these grapes to any winery. The money I should get for them would increase my income; but rather than aid the cause of intemperance by allowing them to be converted into wine, I would let them decay upon the vines....

## Gifts of God

Apples and grapes are God's gifts; they may be put to excellent use as healthful articles of food, or they may be abused by being put to a wrong use.... We stand before the world as reformers; let us give no occasion for ... unbelievers to reproach our faith. Said Christ: "Ye are the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." Let us show that our hearts and consciences are under the transforming influence of divine grace, and that our lives are governed by the pure principles of the law of God, even though these principles may require the sacrifice of temporal interests.<sup>2</sup>

It is not safe, by any means, for some to have wine or cider in the house. They have inherited an appetite for stimulants, which Satan is continually soliciting them to indulge.... A professor of religion who loves these stimulants, and accustoms himself to their use, never grows in grace....

## No Laughing Matter

Many, as they read this, will laugh at the warning of danger. They will

say, "Surely the little wine or cider that I use cannot hurt me." Satan has marked such as his prey; he leads them on step by step, and they perceive it not until the chains of habit and appetite are too strong to be broken. We see the power that appetite for strong drink has over men; we see how many of all professions and of heavy responsibilities, men of exalted station, of eminent talents, of great attainments, of fine feeling, of strong

nerves, and of high reasoning powers, sacrifice everything for the indulgence of appetite....

Let all who profess to believe the truth for this time, and to be reformers, act in accordance with their faith.... We are to be followers of Christ, to set our hearts and our influence against every evil practice. How should we feel in the day when God's judgments are poured out, to meet men who have become drunkards through our influence? We are living in the antitypical day of atonement, and our cases must soon come in review before God. How shall we stand in the courts of Heaven, if our course of action has encouraged the use of stimulants that pervert reason, and are destructive of virtue, purity, and the love of God?<sup>3</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> *Christ Triumphant*, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> *Temperance*, pp. 99-101.

<sup>3</sup> *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Mar. 25, 1884.

Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

Living in Spain and studying to become a Spanish teacher were not Anne Leah D. Guía's original career goals.

"I wanted to be a doctor," says Guía, a junior at La Sierra University (LSU) in Riverside, California, United States. "I took Spanish classes in academy and college, and my Spanish teacher kept telling me I should go to Spain. But I wondered, *Why? I'm going to be a doctor.*"

Guía finally succumbed to her teacher's pleas and applied to the Adventist Colleges Abroad (ACA) program to study at the Spanish Adventist Seminary (formerly Sagunto Adventist College) in Valencia, Spain. She first signed up for the 2009 summer program, but before the six-week course had ended, her life plans had changed.

"I loved it!" Guía says. "I returned for the 2010-2011 school year, and I'm now planning to teach Spanish."

Even though she had taken three years of Spanish, Guía says she had difficulty understanding the language when she first arrived in Spain. It was living among Spanish-speaking people and studying the language full-time, she says, that made the difference.

"You're immersed in Spanish here," she notes. "Sometimes I even think in Spanish now. It's been a great experience."

#### ACA History

Half a century ago 90 students together with music and language professor John Hamilton from LSU traveled to the French Adventist Seminary in Collonges-sous-Salève, about five miles from Geneva across the Swiss-French border, for the first-ever ACA program. Hamilton stayed with the students the entire year as they studied the French language and its culture. According to current ACA program director Odette Ferreira, that number of students has never been topped.

"It was the first and last time that that many students went abroad just from one school to one school," Ferreira says.



LARRY BLACKMER

# Education Without Borders

## Adventist Colleges Abroad Celebrates 50 Years

By SANDRA BLACKMER



**Left: BOGENHOFEN:** ACA school director Gabriele Vogel (center, wearing white jacket) poses with her students on cannonballs while visiting a local castle.

Today a total of 350 to 400 students from North America study abroad each year through ACA summer and full-year programs. Seven ACA tertiary institutions offer full-year courses:

- Adventist University of France (formerly Salève Adventist University), Colonges-sous-Saleve, France
- Brazil Adventist University, São Paulo, Brazil
- Bogenhofen Seminary, Bogenhofen, Austria
- Friedensau Adventist University, Friedensau, Germany
- Italian Adventist College, Villa Aurora, Florence, Italy
- River Plate Adventist University, Villa Libertador, San Martin, Argentina
- Spanish Adventist Seminary (formerly Sagunto Adventist College, still commonly called Sagunto), Valencia, Spain

All the schools except for Friedensau also offer summer programs. Adventist colleges in Greece, Japan, Thailand, and Ukraine provide summer programs only.

ACA is a member of the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), the largest consortium for study abroad in the world. Ferreira says she has learned much

from CIEE, but adds that “they have also learned a lot from us.”

“We have the church behind us,” Ferreira explains. “That’s an advantage over a non-Adventist school with an exchange program. When one of our students goes to an ACA school, they already have their housing and their meal arrangements in place. CIEE is always looking for housing, for families who will take in the students. But we have our dorms.”

Ferreira has served as ACA director for 15 years. She speaks six languages: French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. She holds a master’s in Philology (the science of language), and a doctorate in Linguistics applied to Latin languages.

“I love ACA,” Ferreira says. “ACA is my life.”

**Program Offerings**

The six-week summer curriculum is geared for beginners and focuses exclusively on learning the language. It’s “almost like a brainwash in the language so the student in a short time gets enough knowledge to be able to communicate,” Ferreira says.

Classes in addition to language are offered during the school year.

Depending on the school, these include literature, culture, history, and art pertaining to that country. Villa Aurora in Italy is currently adding classes in international and European law, and human rights in Europe.

“The programs must meet the academic requirements of the U.S. universities as well as conform to the rules of the European Convention,” Ferreira notes. “The courses also prepare the students for examinations required by the state universities in that country. Taking these examinations is optional, but students who do take them and pass receive a diploma that opens up the language and teaching opportunities for them anywhere in the world.”

All Adventist universities in the U.S. are members of the ACA North American Consortium. Six boast a language department and are particularly active in the program: Andrews University (AU), La Sierra University (LSU), Oakwood University (OU), Pacific Union College (PUC), Southern Adventist University (SAU), and Walla Walla University (WWU). Canadian University College also participates, but financial aid for students who go abroad is not as readily avail-

ers.



Left to right: Friedensau Adventist University; Salève Adventist University; Bogenhofen Seminary



able from the Canadian government, which reduces the number of students who can afford to study outside their home country. These tertiary institutions assist students with applying to the ACA schools, and accept the credits earned during the year abroad. LSU—perhaps because of its history with the program—particularly recognizes the accomplishments of ACA graduates by providing them with a graduation sash embroidered with the flag of the country in which they studied.

“The ACA program is one of the best examples of a synergetic connection between colleges,” says Larry Blackmer, chair of the ACA board and vice president for education for the North American Division. “The program provides students at U.S. colleges with enough credit hours for them to earn a major or a minor in a language, without the cost to the American schools of hiring additional language professors. And smaller Adventist colleges, such as those in Europe, are given a boost with their yearly enrollments. Everyone comes out a winner—particularly the students who learn not only a second language but how people live and communicate in a culture very different from their own.”

### What Do the Students Think?

Each ACA school is unique in its culture and surroundings; they also differ in their rules. Some lean toward traditional dorm policies that include curfews and dorm room restrictions regarding media—television, Internet access, and so forth; others are more lenient. But these variations don’t seem to affect the overall experience of the ACA students.

“The atmosphere and the close-knit classes and the relationships you build here—they’re unforgettable,” says J. C. Carreon (LSU), who attended **Bogenhofen in Austria** during the 2010-2011 school year. “The teachers encourage us; they really want to see us succeed. It’s like a family away from home.”

Another plus of Bogenhofen, students say, is its central location to the rest of Europe. With a train station within walking distance and situated only a few hours’ travel time from cities such as Vienna, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich, the students can get in a lot of sightseeing. Campus diversity also adds to the experience. About 20 nationalities are represented among the total student body of 150.

Jeff Stahlnecker (WWU), an ACA student at **Friedensau in Germany**,

says he immediately felt accepted on campus and got involved. “People are really open and easy to talk to,” he says. Stahlnecker conceded that the seclusion of Friedensau, which is nestled in a forest, is sometimes a challenge. “It’s a long distance to the nearest town,” he says. He compensated by taking up mountain biking. “There’s also a ropes course and lots of sports and other activities to get involved with,” he says. Twice-weekly bus trips into the nearest town and once a month to Berlin also help dispel any feelings of isolation.

The opportunity to travel throughout Europe is one of the leading draws of study abroad. During the past school year ACA students at **Villa Aurora in Italy**, participated in more than 10 ACA trips. Among those were visits to Venice, Sicily, Naples, Milan, and Rome. Travel to other European countries on weekends and during school breaks is convenient and inexpensive. Flights on some airlines within the European Union are as low as 20 euros (US\$28.62) one way.

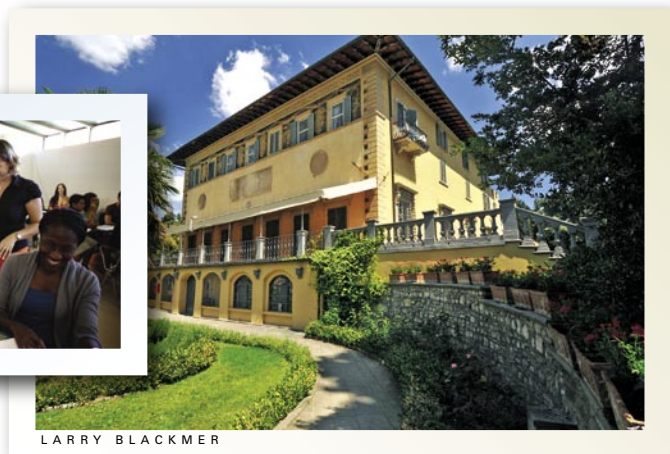
“If you want to learn something about yourself, live for a while in a foreign country,” Timothy Hucks (AU), of Rochester, New York, says. “You find out what things you take for granted.



NATAN VIGNA



NATAN VIGNA



LARRY BLACKMER

Left to right: Villa Aurora Italian Adventist College.

The way you live your life is entirely different from the way they live theirs. You learn things—how to slow down, how to change for other people.”

Villa Aurora is particularly historic. The oldest building on campus, which serves as the girls’ dormitory and the cafeteria, is centuries old. Following World War II the school property and original three buildings were purchased with funds from the Adventist Church’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

The school’s ACA director, Antonietta Riviello, says that art is one of Villa Aurora’s leading inducements. “Seventy percent of the entire world’s art is in Italy,” she says.

Californian Casey Bartlett (PUC), who attended **Sagunto in Spain**, described his time abroad as eye-opening. “Sometimes we live in a small box, but when you open that box, you realize that there’s so much more out there,” he says.

Spanish Adventist Seminary ACA director Juan Antonio López has worked at the college for more than 40 years. The ACA program has been in existence there for about 30 years. López advises students who are considering study abroad to learn the basics of the language beforehand, and to plan not to speak English on campus.

“They must immerse themselves in the language while here,” López says. “Listen to radio stations in Spanish. Surf Spanish sites on the Internet. And don’t be afraid of making friends or making mistakes.”

Kenneth Wright of Florida attended Sagunto College as an ACA student during the 1993-1994 school year. This was followed by a summer at Southeast Asia Union College in Singapore. “It was the best year of my college experience,” he says. Now a sales representative for Medtronic Neuro-modulation, Wright describes being fluent in Spanish as a “tremendous asset” for his career. “The cultural immersion and international travel provided a fresh perspective of myself and the world we live in,” he says.

Eliel Cruz-López (AU) spent the 2010-2011 school year at **the Adventist University of France in Collonges**. He describes the location as “wonderful. When you wake up in the morning and see Lake Geneva out your window—it’s just gorgeous.” He does miss some of the comforts and conveniences of home, though, including his car and cell phone.

For André Murray (AU), of Orlando, Florida, Collonges’ biggest plus is the diversity among teachers. “One is Polish, one is French, and another is German,” Murray says. “They all have different outlooks and teaching styles, which help when you incorporate that into learning a different language, because you’re not just learning it from a textbook.”

Collonges ACA director Daniela Gelbrich says another perk of ACA is that students live in an Adventist environment with others who share the

NATAN VIGNA/LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY



**Above:** GRADUATION HONOR: La Sierra University provides ACA student graduates with a sash embroidered with the flag of the country in which they studied.



REBECCA WIDMER



NATAN VIGNA

**Left to right:** River Plate Adventist University; Spanish Adventist Seminary (Sagunto).

same beliefs and values. She adds that Collonges is “a beautiful campus in the heart of Europe. We are at the feet of the Alps. Students can ski and snowboard in the winter and hike and go rock climbing in the summer. It’s a wonderful opportunity.”

With a total enrollment of some 3,000 students, **River Plate in Argentina** is the largest of the ACA schools. Between 50 to 80 ACA students attend there each year. The program has been part of its curriculum since 1995, and the school’s ACA director, Haroldo Brouchy, has been intricately involved for most of that time.

“The skill of speaking Spanish fluently as a second language opens up a broad range of career opportunities,” Brouchy says. “There is a great need of Spanish translators and interpreters, especially in the U.S., and it can provide more opportunities to serve the church in various parts of the world.” Brouchy also emphasizes the advantages of being part of a globalized, multicultural soci-

ety: greater divergent thinking, and an increased understanding of, and compassion for, other cultures.

Jeena Foronda (SAU), of North Potomac, Maryland, spent last school year at River Plate. She describes each day she spent there as a new adventure.

“There was so much to learn and discover,” she says. “Letting myself open up and soak in a new and different culture was an opportunity I will never regret or forget.”

### Unexpected Benefits

Ferreira concurs with Brouchy that the benefits of study abroad are not exclusive to those who want to be language teachers. Having a year of foreign study on a résumé can open unexpected doors, as well. One former ACA student—now a lawyer—who attended Bogenhofen for two years told Ferreira that he initially was accepted into Yale University because of his study abroad. Administration, he said, cited his years in Austria as

the entry that grabbed their attention.

Ferreira’s own son, she says, obtained a high-ranking position at the United Nations because of his ability to speak more than one language.

“Language is very important nowadays,” Ferreira says. “We have to think in terms of jobs and not just academics. Many of today’s church leaders are former ACA students, so knowing more than one language is useful in all fields of life—including service to a global church.” ■

To learn more about Adventist Colleges Abroad, go to [www.aca-noborders.org](http://www.aca-noborders.org), or call the ACA office at the North American Division headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, at 301-680-6444.



**Sandra Blackmer** is an assistant editor of *Adventist World* and lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

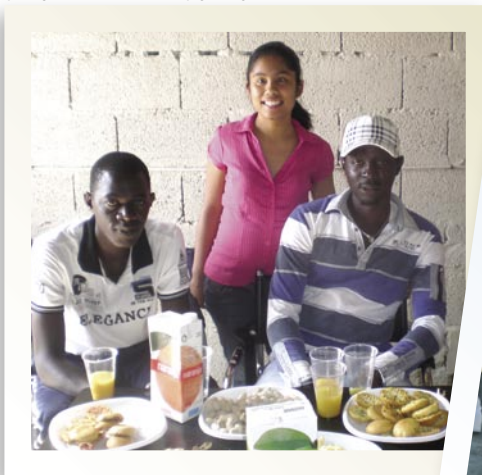
# ACA Outreach

Because of visa restrictions, students are not able to work during their year abroad. Some internships, though, such as teaching English at local elementary and high schools, are available to them. At Spanish Adventist Seminary, ACA student Anne Leah D. Guía taught Spanish to African refugees living in a shelter named La Casa Nueva, which is supported by the Catholic Church, Spain’s Department of Health, and ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency). Spanish Adventist Seminary alumnus Cristian Pancorbo helps to run the community of 69 men who call the place home.

“We have showers, water, electricity, and washing machines for them at the shelter,” Pancorbo says. “Trucks bring in the water. We give them food such as flour, tomatoes, and rice twice a month.”

Teaching supplies for the refugees are also limited. “I don’t have a whiteboard or anything,” Guía says. “It’s really primitive. But in reality, all you need is a room and the enthusiasm to learn a different language.”

CRISTIAN R. PANCORBO



**Top: A UNIQUE CLASS:** ACA student Anne Leah D. Guía with two of her students at La Casa Nueva

LARRY D. BLACKMER



**Right: DIRECTOR:** Spanish Adventist Seminary alumnus Cristian R. Pancorbo is director of the refugee shelter.

# NUMBER 13 Looking Back *Into the* Future By RICHARD W. MEDINA and RUBIA B. MEDINA GOD'S REMNANT

Every year Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druzes visit a cave, traditionally identified as Elijah's, nestled on Mount Carmel, to pray for special favors and make vows to God. Nowadays many have reduced religious life to prayers and vows in a shrine or chapel, being indifferent to living the message found in God's Word. In contrast, the Bible tells of a remnant, that is, a minority of believers who keep God's instructions, including the Ten Commandments, and trust in the prophetic word or Spirit of Prophecy (Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 2 Peter 1:19), which, Adventists believe, has been manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White.

As a way of looking *back* into the future, the Old Testament narratives of King Ahab, Obadiah, and the widow of Zarephath help us, through contrast and comparison, to get a glimpse of the character of the end-time remnant of God.

## **Transgression of the Indivisible Truth**

The admonition "Trust in the Lord your God and you will be upheld, and

trust in His prophets and succeed" suggests that the Word of God and the prophetic word constitute one indivisible truth (2 Chron. 20:5-20).<sup>1</sup> In the case of Ahab and his people, this truth somehow was ignored. Scripture says that the people (including the king) transgressed the "commandments of the Lord,"<sup>2</sup> and rejected Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 19:10, 14; 16:30; 18:18; 21:20, 22, 25). They worshipped Baal, even going to the extreme of building a temple for him in Samaria and making standing (wooden/stone) images of him (1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:22, 24; 2 Kings 10:26, 27). Most likely they profaned the Sabbath as well. When trying to gain control of Naboth's vineyard, the king, the elders, and the townsmen took God's name in vain, embraced covetousness, and engaged in false witness, murder, and theft (1 Kings 21:8-16, 19). Even more troublesome, Ahab considered Elijah a troublemaker and personal enemy, often opposing his mission (1 Kings 19:1; 18:17; cf. 21:20; 22:17, 29). In our everyday interpersonal relationships, how often do we become victims of our own ideas and ambitions

and resist living the commandments? How do we relate to the counsel of God's prophet(s)?

## **Veneration of the Complacency Cult**

One may wonder why the Baal cult was so attractive for Ahab and his people. In the ancient world Baal was the Canaanite storm god and the lord of the sky, who provided rain and fertility. He was also the warrior who fought against Yam (the sea god) and Mot (the god of death). That he was worshipped in lieu of the Lord in Israel demonstrates that people believed that he possessed similar power to that of God or even more. The Baal cult demanded vows of libations and animal sacrifices as well as prayers. In turn it offered the worshipper "moral freedom," a licentious life. This explains why Ahab served Baal and thus did evil before the Lord (1 Kings 21:20, 25). The outcome of this apostasy was severe drought and famine that reached even to Zarephath (1 Kings 17:1, 7; 18:2, 18). It seems that Baal is still around today, though dressed in new garments and bearing

the name of science, technology, or the entertainment industry. If it meets my needs, if it provides a sense of belonging and security, it must work—and God’s commandments and His prophetic message may sound awkward or old-fashioned! Have you also experienced the superficiality and emptiness of modernity’s cult?

**Living of the Indivisible Truth**

When the majority had opted for a self-centered living after Baal, the Lord preserved a faithful remnant. He “caused to remain in Israel 7,000, all whose knees did not bow to Baal and all whose mouths did not kiss him” (1 Kings 19:18). Among them was Obadiah, the steward of Ahab’s palace. He revered the Lord greatly from his youth and trusted in his prophet (1 Kings 18:3, 7, 8, 12, 16). Even risking his own life, “when Jezebel was killing the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and provided them with food and water” (1 Kings 18:4; see also verse 13). In the same way, a non-Israelite widow along with her household, including a number of relatives and servants, worshipped the Lord (1 Kings 17:15, 17). They lived in the Phoenician city-state of Zarephath, close to Sidon (in modern Lebanon), under the government of

Jezebel’s father, King Ethbaal (1 Kings 16:31; 17:9).<sup>3</sup> Consistent with the meaning of the king’s name, Baal was the national god of Zarephath. In spite of the religious status quo, the widow courageously chose to serve the Lord (verse 9). Accordingly, her household’s needs of food and water, safety, love, and esteem were amply met when elsewhere there was only despair (verses 15, 16). The Zarephathian woman was not a neophyte. She long believed in God and was familiar with the view of divine retributive justice. Before Elijah she confessed: “The Lord is living” (1 Kings 17:1, 12); and faced with the sudden death of her child, she said: “You have come to me to recall my iniquity” (1 Kings 17:18; cf. Ps. 109:14; Isa. 64:8; Jer. 14:10; Hosea 8:13; 9:9).

Whereas Ahab and his people transgressed the Ten Commandments, this remnant lived faithfully serving others. The stories of the Zarephathian woman and Obadiah in particular are sandwiched within the Ahab narrative (1 Kings 16:28-22:40) to contrast the true character of living faith with the emptiness of pagan religiosity in a time of theological polarization, natural catastrophes, and political unrest—somehow this list sounds very familiar! In a word, they prefigure the individuals who

characterize the end-time remnant.

By living the commandments of God and having confidence in the prophetic word, we too find security, comfort, and guidance in life. The worship of “Baal,” disguised in whatever form of idolatry, may be alluring, but soon becomes a self-destructive choice. Our mission is to live and proclaim divine truth. “At all times and in all places” “God’s denominated people are to take a firm stand under the banner of truth.”<sup>4</sup> This is a call to a faithful remnant! ■

<sup>1</sup> All translations from Scripture in this article are the authors’ own.

<sup>2</sup> The compound “the commandments of the Lord” appears six times as the object of obedience for the possession of the land (1 Chron. 28:8), as transgressed (1 Sam. 13:13; 2 Kings 17:19; 2 Chron. 24:20) or abandoned (1 Kings 18:18; 2 Kings 17:16) by the kings and the people.

<sup>3</sup> Ironically, Ethbaal’s name means “with Baal.”

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 246.



**Richard W. Medina** and his wife, **Rubia**, are graduate students at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel. Richard studies Semitic languages, and Rubia pursues Islamic and Middle Eastern studies.

# The Remnant. and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the

approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)



**QUESTION:** *What were seraphim?*

The meaning of the Hebrew term *śārāph* (plural, *śērāphīm*) is uncertain. Most suggest that it is derived from the verb *śārāph*, which means “to burn completely.” The noun *śārāph* would then mean “the burning/fiery one.” Many believe that the term designates a serpent-like creature, but this is far from certain. We have to examine the biblical evidence and the different uses of the term.

**1. Śērāphīm and Serpents:** A number of passages associate *śērāphīm* with serpents. As a result of the Israelites’ rebellion in the wilderness the Lord sent “venomous [*śērāphīm*] snakes among them” (Num. 21:6).<sup>\*</sup> After the people confessed their sin, the Lord ordered Moses “to make a snake [*śārāph*] and put it up on a pole” (verse 8). In this last verse the term *śārāph* refers back to the full phrase “venomous [*śērāphīm*] snakes.” In Deuteronomy 8:15 the wilderness is described as a “thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes [*nāchāš śārāph*, literally, “seraph snake”] and scorpions.”

The question is, what is the meaning of the term *seraph* in these passages? It is used as an adjective designating a specific type of serpent. Based on the meaning of the verbal form, *śārāph* would designate a snake whose bite causes a burning sensation, a severe inflammation of the skin that kills a person, i.e., a venomous serpent.

**2. Śērāphīm as Heavenly Beings:** In Isaiah 6 the term *śārāph* is applied to heavenly beings. We should keep some details in mind. First, the term *snake* is not used in this chapter. Second, the term is used as a noun. Third, the form of this being is fundamentally human. The two seraphim had faces, hands, and feet, and were able to sing and communicate through language, i.e., they were rational beings (verses 2, 6, 7). They had six wings and could fly; they were angelic beings. Fourth, they had a specific function. They were “above” the throne of God; perhaps hovering over it, or standing around it as royal guards ready to serve the Lord. More specifically, it was their role to proclaim the holiness of the Lord and to minister on behalf of sinners in the heavenly temple (verses 3, 7). Their deport-

ment expresses a spirit of humility and reverence in the presence of the Lord.

Why are they called *śērāphīm*? The verb “to burn” (*śārāph*) could express the idea of brightness, suggesting that the seraphim were angelic beings of extraordinary brightness or fiery appearance. Perhaps their brightness, their six wings, and their position with respect to the throne of God distinguish them from cherubim, who are often associated with the throne of God.

**3. Śērāphīm and Demonic Beings:** Two passages in Isaiah associate seraphim with evil. This may go back to the experience of Israel in the wilderness. The wilderness in the Bible is a symbol of death and a residence for demons. The Israelites, who during the time of Isaiah were asking Egypt for support, are described as going through the desert, “a land of hardship and distress, of adders and darting snakes [*śārāph m<sup>c</sup>ōphēph*, literally, “flying serpents”]” (Isa. 30:6).

Animals could be used as symbols of the demonic (e.g., Ps. 7:2; 1 Peter 5:8), and the prophet could be suggesting that the road to

Egypt is one where demonic powers reside. In this case “the flying seraph” would represent evil angelic powers (see Isa. 30:7, where Egypt is identified with Rahab, a demonic monster defeated by the Lord [Ps. 89:10]). In Isaiah 14:29 the Philistines should not rejoice, because a king worse than the others will come; he will be like a “flying seraph.” Neither in Isaiah 30:6 nor in 14:29 is the seraph identified with a serpent. In both cases it flies and is a symbol of evil that could stand for demonic powers operating within history. This may suggest that Lucifer was supported by seraphim.

On the positive side, think about the reverence and humility displayed by seraphim, who, glorious in appearance, choose to cover their bodies in order to proclaim that only the One sitting on the throne deserves all glory. ■

<sup>\*</sup> All Bible texts referred to in this article are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Of Serpents and Seraphim

By  
ANGEL MANUEL  
RODRÍGUEZ



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

# Dichoto

By  
MAIKE STEPANEK

Here is a question: have you ever had the proverbial carpet pulled out from under your feet? If not, and you feel like you need or would like this experience, have a baby.

It is Tuesday midmorning and I am not as late as usual for Lukas's appointment with his wonderful pediatrician. As we hunch over my child, examining his recently worsened atopic dermatitis, Dr. Hwang presents me with two options for my 4-month-old son. She tells me I can (a) see a skin specialist who will prescribe a cortisone cream, or (b) cut all forms of dairy from my diet. I cringe. Don't get me wrong, I would die for my son, but dying to self for the benefit of my son, now that seems like an entirely different kettle of fish.

Vaguely aware of the rest of the conversation about inoculations, my mind turns to the steaming hot buttered toast; crunchy granola with thick, creamy yogurt; gooey, cheesy homemade pizza and tall glasses of cold milk, all of which I will apparently not be partaking of in the near future. I briefly contemplate smearing the cream on my son's arms and being done with it—haven't other kids survived cortisone? I feel guilty and sorry for myself, at the same time.

Thirty minutes, three immunizations, and a lot of money later, I lament my plight to my dear husband as we fold the stroller and heave it into the back of the car. His response leaves me internally rolling my eyes at him as he reminds me that he had already

suggested this a few weeks ago. I remember how much I hate it when he is right. He is right often, about a lot of things. I sigh.

## I Get It, Lord

As we go about our business for the rest of the afternoon, all I can think about are the things I will *not* be eating. Now mind you, there really are not that many things to exclude: butter—OK—lots of butter, plain yogurt, cheese, cream, and milk. I have not forgotten chocolate, ice cream, cookies, cake, and such likes. The truth is I stopped eating all those things a long time ago.

Twenty-four hours later, while Lukas is happily enjoying his new dairy-free breast milk for lunch, I stumble, clearly not by accident, across 1 Corinthians 2:9: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him." It presents one of those moments of clarity in which you are afforded glimpses of yourself and you plainly discern the hand of God is in control. In a flash the Lord presents me with the past decade of my life, and it feels like I hear Him ask, *Do you see now, My child?* I have come this far by His grace, and suddenly the dairy-devoid future seems a little less daunting. *Lord, I have come so far. Through Your help and guidance, I have grown so much. Thank You.*

I think back to a little more than 12 years ago when I was an opinionated, chain-smoking vegan. The irony

of the latter combination never struck me until someone pointed it out. Now the thought brings to mind the saying that there are none so blind as those who will not see. But thankfully the Lord gives us light and is always ready to lead us and guide us.

A few years and an amazing series of transforming circumstances later, I was now an Adventist, opinionated, self-righteous, rather overweight vegan thanks to inordinate amounts of vegan chocolate, ice cream, cookies, and cakes. But at least I was vegan, I told myself. I had turned into quite a fanatic. Thankfully, the Lord is gracious and the people He brought into my life were kind, merciful, and obviously very longsuffering as I explained the benefits of the dairy-free life, expounded on the evils of the state of affairs in modern-day animal husbandry, and pontificated on the theological implications of cream-slated dessert choices, among other things.

## Living a Congruent—and Grateful—Life

Despite being the prime example of what not to do (as a vegan and Christian), the incongruity of my lifestyle did not strike me until a rather chubby vegetarian with well-rounded jowls expli-



# my Divine Devotion

cated on the health benefits of meat-free living. On his recent trip to Singapore, he had explained, in no uncertain terms, to a meat-eating poster child for well-being, how he was the healthier of the two because of his abstinence from anything with a mother. I was stunned and mortified, not at his ignorance but at mine. After I cringed in horror, I praised the Lord for this eye-opener and tried hard at reformation.

Then two and a half years ago, the morning after a night of sugar-filled indiscretion, I finally began to see what my husband had been trying to explain to me for quite some time. As anger boiled over inside me for no apparent reason one moment and hot, inexplicable tears ran down my cheeks the next, I realized that what Brian had been telling me was true. Sugar seemed to have an adverse effect on me. After every sugar-laced, sickly sweet indulgence I turned into either a roaring monster or a blubbering, whining nui-

sance—my words, not his—I am married to a wise man. I turned to my trusted friend, the Internet, and googled “sugar-sensitive,” and there in all its inglorious splendor was spelled out the story of my life—an entire community of individuals, like me, with naturally low beta-endorphins, low serotonin levels, and volatile blood sugar. I’ll spare you the drama of the next five days of withdrawal symptoms, nausea, and rage. A mere week later I was a different person, and my husband had a new wife. Again, I thanked God for His help, and those who had the privilege, or terror, of living through the experience alongside me can testify to the change that one food item can bring to a whole group of people. Trips to the ice-cream parlor with friends turned into walks around the park and other interesting activities, with the added benefit of shed pounds and memories to feast on for years to come.

Indeed, “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him.*” I am so thankful that Jesus was not only willing to die for me, but also died to self for my benefit. That thought alone fills me with joy and encouragement. God truly has our best interests at heart, and all things do work out for the good of those called according to His purpose. It never ceases to amaze me how the Lord has changed my heart. My boy’s skin should hopefully clear up none too soon, and he will hear of my journey somewhere along the line. I long to tell him about his God, the one who has loved him since his conception and wants what is best for him and changes hearts and minds to get that done. And for me, instead of thinking with trepidation about the future, I am quite excited. I wonder what the Lord has up His sleeve next. Honestly—I think it may have something to do with exercise. ■



**Maïke Stepanek**, her husband Brian, and little Lukas lived in Ilsan, Korea, at the time of writing

this article. They just moved to Thailand, where Brian is continuing his studies and Maïke enjoys being a full-time mom on the campus of Asia-Pacific International University.



# Discovering the Joy of Thanksgiving

By  
MARK A. FINLEY

Two of the most positive emotions in our human experience are thanksgiving and joy. They promote health and bring vitality to our entire system. The late world renowned scientist, Hans Selye of Montreal, once said that of all the emotions gratitude is the most powerful in reducing stress and promoting longevity. We don't meet many healthy people in the latter years of their lives who have a sour disposition. Have you ever noticed that you are naturally attracted to people who live a life of thanksgiving? You may never have met them before, but you're naturally drawn to them. In this month's study we will discover what the Bible says about living with a grateful heart and a thankful spirit.

**1** Read Psalm 95:2, 3. Describe David's source of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Compare this with Psalm 26:6, 7.

**2** What did David believe at a very existential level that kept him in a spirit of gratitude and praise? Read Psalm 71:6.

**3** Describe the link Paul made between grace and thankfulness in 2 Corinthians 9:14; 15? Is grace always enough to be thankful for—even in difficult and trying times?

**4** How all-encompassing was this spirit of praise and thanksgiving for Paul? What was Paul's attitude, even when facing unusual trials?

*"Giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20).*

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4).*

**5** Besides praising God for His goodness, what other trait did Paul cultivate as a source of praise?

*"For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God?" (1 Thess. 3:9).*

*"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8).*

Paul looked for the good in the people around him, and developed an attitude of thanksgiving for their friendship. In the passages above he expresses his thanksgiving that the churches at Rome and Thessalonica were faithful to the cause of Christ. What a positive trait to cultivate!

**6** What additional concept led David to be thankful? Is this still relevant in the twenty-first century?

*"That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of Your wondrous works" (Ps. 26:7).*

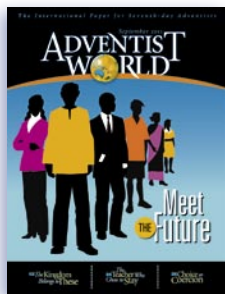
*"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1).*

*"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Ps. 139:14).*

In this month's lesson we have studied the attitudes of two significant Bible characters, David and Paul. Their hearts were filled with thanksgiving because they knew that in spite of whatever happened to them, God was still in control. They looked away from the challenges of this life to God's works and His Word. They praised Him for His goodness revealed in creation and for the friendships He brought into their lives. They praised God not because they didn't have any trials, but in spite of their trials. They cultivated thankful hearts and joyous attitudes.

Their lives were a tribute to God's amazing grace. We, too, can live lives of joyous thanksgiving and praise to the One who created us and everything in this world; the One who has given us redemption through Jesus Christ, brought wonderful friends into our lives and is planning an eternal home in heaven for us. These are powerful reasons to, "rejoice in the Lord always." ■

## LETTERS



### Meet the Future Now

I enjoyed all the articles in the September 2011 *Adventist World* very much, but would like to comment on “Meet the Future,”

an interview by Kimberly Luste Maran. I have never been to a General Conference session, so maybe I misunderstand the situation. However, it seems to me that if these 10 young people were delegates to the session, then they are not future leaders—they are *current* leaders. Were they not entrusted to attend the meetings and vote on the issues? Rather than relegating them to the future, it seems to me that they are up-and-coming leaders of our church now.

BARBARA BAILEY  
*Baltimore, Maryland,  
United States*

### The Ministry of Reminding

I liked Bill Knott’s August 2011 editorial “The Ministry of Reminding.” Being simple in a tech world and church is a challenge. Jesus had that similar challenge when living here, of course, in the corresponding proportion. Being simple is what we both, Seventh-day Adventist organizational leaders and lay members, need to learn.

I am a psychiatrist who has written for more than 20 years for the Portuguese edition of *Life and Health* magazine in Brazil (average 80,000 copies/month), published by the Brazil Publishing House, a Seventh-day Adventist institution. . . . Writing is life for me.

CESAR VASCONCELLOS DE SOUZA  
*Brazil*

“Being simple is what we both, Seventh-day Adventist organizational leaders and lay members, need to learn.”

—CESAR VASCONCELLOS DE SOUZA  
*Brazil*



### Call to Christ’s Righteousness

General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson hit the nail on the head when he stated that “the voices of Seventh-day Adventists

should be the foremost in proclaiming that salvation is through Christ and Christ alone!” (see “Wilson Opens Spring Meeting With Call to Christ’s Righteousness,” by Mark A. Kellner, June 2011). Wilson also stated that we should not think of ourselves as “better than anyone else” or accuse others of “not being holy or perfect,” because we are “all sinners at the foot of the cross in need of a Savior.”

The answer, Wilson declared, “is [that] only Christ’s all-encompassing righteousness of justification and sanctification . . . will save you, change you, and nurture you into a true disciple of Christ. It is something that Jesus does both for you and in you.”

JOHN A. DURBIN, JR.  
*Jamestown, Kentucky,  
United States*

### Searching for Truth

Thank you so much for a wonderful magazine. I love reading each issue from

cover to cover. All the interesting mission stories give me more reason to pray.

I was interested in your special feature in the June 2011 issue, entitled “The Great Controversy,” by Gina Wahlen, especially the “Searching for Truth” section about Wendy Luhabe, South Africa.

My family and I have been attending Johannesburg North church for quite a while now, but don’t know many of the members yet. We were enjoying our Sabbath school lesson last week when someone mentioned that our teacher had been an Anglican, and I looked at her again and I wondered if she was the lady mentioned in your article—she certainly looked familiar. I could hardly wait to ask her at the end of the lesson. Sure enough, she affirmed that she was Wendy. I was especially interested, as my dad and grandmother were converted to the Adventist faith from being Anglicans in 1926.

Wendy told me that she is very happy in the church.

JENNY HILLIER  
*Krugersdorp, South Africa*

### More Testimonies, Please!

Thanks for the good work you are doing at *Adventist World*. I liked the article “After the Water: Stories of Believers Who Really Connected With Jesus After Baptism” (April 2011). It

## LETTERS

shows that God still cares for His own. Testimonies of such people help build faith in God in people whose faith is being tried. It also helps those who are in the valley of decision to decide for God and join the Adventist Church.

Please feature such testimonies in every edition of *Adventist World*. You can request for such entries from members if you do not have enough.

SUNDAY OKANGBA  
*Lagos, Nigeria*

### **Revival and Reformation: More Than a Slogan**

I thank God for all the articles on revival and reformation that are published every month in this magazine. My worry though is the reluctance of most pastors to help drive home the point. In my conference, revival and reformation is mentioned only during big gatherings, as a slogan to draw people's attention to a speaker. Surely something can be done to drive home the point about revival and reformation

to every member! It seems that after a couple of months or so we will soon forget all about this emphasis and wait for another slogan. It seems as though we are moving in circles. My plea is that conferences should move from slogans and come up with programs for church members to embrace this concept—otherwise, we are doing nothing.

FRANCIS T. MADONDO  
*Zimbabwe*

### **Keep It Up!**

You and your staff deserve the highest commendation for the excellent quality of *Adventist World*. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit you have crafted a superb Christian journal whose excellence is reflected in its format, content, and reader friendliness. The Adventist Church worldwide is signally blessed to have a church paper with such an impressive circulation and global appeal. I believe this paper will continue to unite our world church family even more than it has been, and I truly

believe it is ordained of God. It is wonderful to see this happening.

Keep up the good work!  
ASA OLUOCH ABAGA  
*Kisumu, Kenya*

I was given a copy of the magazine *Adventist World* as a gift. All the articles are very interesting. I would like to receive it monthly. Thank you!

JOSE LUIS VERA  
*Montevideo, Uruguay*

*Our advice to this reader and others with similar concerns is to contact the Seventh-day Adventist Church union conference or division office in your region of the world. We are gratified that the magazine is filling this need.*

—EDITORS.

**Letters Policy:** Please send your letters to the editor to: [letters@adventistworld.org](mailto: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

Pray for me so that I may find an Adventist church here in Marrakesh in Morocco. I just arrived here from Burundi.

JIPY, *Morocco*

Please pray for my son, who is an alcoholic and drug user.

ISOLDE, *Germany*

Pray for me—I have concerns at work and with family. Thanks for your help.

MARTHA, *Mauritius*

Please pray for us. I am one of the youth in our local church who are active. I have been given the responsibility of helping with Pathfinders and the communication department. We are facing challenges in getting uniforms and running a fair.

I also need prayer for my family, school exams I am preparing for, and for employment.

LEBANG, *Botswana*

My friend lost her husband because of a motorcycle accident. He was 26, and they have a 1-year-old and a 3-year-old. Please keep them in prayer.

ANGELA, *United States*

I want to study theology, but the problem is finances for study at the Adventist university in Mudende. May the Lord help me and respond in His mercy.

MILLIAM,  
*Democratic Republic of Congo*

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

## EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

*“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.12

# A One-Day Church

Malpasos, Chiapas, Mexico

The neighbors didn't want a Seventh-day Adventist church anywhere near their steep mountainside community. No way!

One of them filed a lawsuit to keep the church away. Another began a "talking" campaign, hoping to convince everyone that a new church on the vacant lot was a very bad idea.

But nothing worked. The court ruled in favor of the Adventists, and one of the closest neighbors, Señor Orlando, changed the conversation to "Well, someone could be building a bar on that lot; I'd much rather hear hymns and sermons than drunken carousing next door."

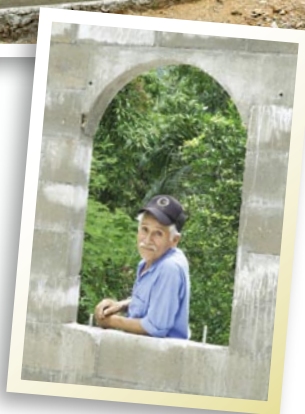
One day 26 teenagers—Maranatha Ultimate Workout volunteers—showed up to raise a church building on the vacant lot. Most of the neighbors frowned and slammed their doors. One even threatened to move away.

Señor Orlando came to watch, to check out the construction quality, and to see if kids could really accomplish anything meaningful. "I thought the building would be crooked," he said, "but they've put it up perfectly!"

Not content with just building a One-Day steel-and-concrete church, the volunteers invited all the neighborhood children to an afternoon Vacation Bible School. Scores came, played soccer, sang Jesus songs, learned new Bible stories, made "forever" friends, gave their hearts to God, and brought their parents to the evening evangelistic series.

Two weeks later neighbors were inviting the volunteers to their homes and leaving their doors open so they could hear the church music.

"I like having an Adventist church next door," said Señor Orlando.



*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 to you each month from Maranatha's assistant to the president and official storyteller, Dick Duerksen.*

# The PEOPLE'S PLACE

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THIS?



SUBMITTED BY CHHUANTEA KHAWLHRING

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*“Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ.”*

—Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 509

## INBOX

I wanted to send you a paragraph from Ellen White’s *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, page 147, which is *Aus der Schatzkammer der Zeugnisse II Seite 30* in German:

“Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law should be the motto of every Christian.”

—Daniel Wendling, Germany

## ADVENTIST LIFE

Manuel worked for the railroad. He had a good position and was remunerated well. He came to know Christ and was baptized. Manuel met with his superiors to inform them that he needed Saturday off from work, offering to work extra hours on other days. His request was refused, and Manuel was left without a way to support his family in difficult times.

Deciding to work as a colporteur even though he had no experience in the field, Manuel ended up being the top salesperson. In fact, he earned more than he had at the railroad, enough so that he was transferred to the city and given a house to live in. Eventually Manuel received a telegram from the railroad. They agreed to pay him for every year worked, including wages, gifts, and all the benefits. God is great!

—The Canos Family, Argentina

The pastor’s message for Communion Sabbath on October 1, 2011, included mention of the rooster’s crowing after the three denials by Peter of his Master. The children’s story was coordinated to tell of a young lad’s experience with an old, mean rooster while crossing through the forbidden neighbor’s farmland on his way to school.

During the offering prior to the children’s story, an unexpected crowing of a rooster was heard—three times. While the church is in the country, it is not near any farms. This was seen as providential to the message for the day.

It was only during the foot washing, and after the story and sermon, that the pastor was told that the rooster crowing was the ring tone for a mobile phone in the audience!

—Terry Tracy, Centerville, Tennessee, United States



ZEESHAN QURESHI

**ANSWER:** In the Mizoram state in India, the choir members of the Aizawl Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, on Hermon Street, in Electric Veng, Aizawl, pose with elders and the choir director on October 3, 2010, the occasion of releasing the second edition of *The Adventist Hymnal* in the Mizo language.