

July 2012

# ADVENTIST WORLD



## *Two Hearts, One* Mission

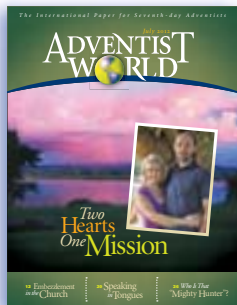
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# ADVENTIST WORLD

July 2012



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[www.adventistworld.org](http://www.adventistworld.org)  
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## Seventeen million missionaries . . .

The figure is so large that it makes the eyes widen in disbelief. “Who came up with that number?” we ask incredulously. “There cannot be so many. Perhaps it is a typographical mistake.”

But no, the number is not a mistake—unless the Savior makes mistakes. It’s a number larger than the population of the Netherlands, or of Israel and Sweden combined, or of Laos, El Salvador and Liberia taken together. More people than the urban sprawl of Buenos Aires, Moscow, Paris, or Los Angeles. And though startlingly large, it rightly represents the way that heaven views the world membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*Every member a missionary. Every believer a witness.* That’s the way the Savior counts. And in the end, only His reckoning matters at all. His mission is not only for paid church employees, or those blessed with eloquence or nerve. “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21, NKJV),\* Jesus continually reminds us.

This month our magazine brings you the story of two remarkable people who gladly count themselves among the 17 million. Like so many others, they serve in a challenging place under difficult circumstances. But they have found—as you will—that the grace of God travels to the places God may call you. As you read the quiet, practical faith of Hein and Melissa Myburgh, you will surely sense that there is something you can do for the kingdom within the orbit of your daily life.

I’m praying that you will see yourself as Jesus already sees you—a missionary for His kingdom. In that special identity you will know the continuing joy of being always in the center of His will.



*Bill Kautz*

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## WORLD REPORT

# Adventist Aviators Open Papua New Guinea Airstrip



**NEW AIRSTRIP:** File photo shows an Adventist Aviation Services aircraft on a remote airstrip in Papua New Guinea. Adventist aviators recently opened a new airstrip in the remote village of Sisimin.

■ The people of Sisimin in Oksapmin, Sandaun province, Papua New Guinea, welcomed the opening of a new airstrip in their village, and they asked Seventh-day Adventists to do the honors.

Captain Bennett Spencer, an Adventist Aviation Services (AAS) pilot originally from the United States, officially cut the ribbon to open the airstrip.

With Captain Spencer were Max Zaccias, Western Highlands Mission president; Luke Tanop, Sandaun district director; as well as other church leaders and people from villages around Oksapmin.

With no road infrastructure available, the people of Sisimin have been deprived of all basic services, such as schools and hospitals, for the past 40 years. The only way of getting in touch with the rest of the country was by walking 20 hours to the nearest airstrip in Oksapmin.

The Sisimin people, both church and community members, decided to build an airstrip in 2009 so AAS could extend its services to this very remote area.

*Continued on next page ▶*

## WORLD REPORT

The project took them three years to complete using both traditional and modern construction methods.

The guests arrived in an AAS aircraft and landed on the newly built airstrip to the delight of the local people who had gathered there to celebrate the official opening.

—Ronald Tanop and Sam Mollen, reporting from Sandaun, Papua New Guinea

### Online Adventist University for Inter-America Launches

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Inter-America officially launched its online educational institution May 7, 2012, in Miami, Florida. A colorful ceremony drew the attendance of top church leaders and educators from the 12 universities in the territory, all dressed in their academic regalia.

The newly inaugurated Herbert Fletcher University (HFU) will offer undergraduate and graduate degrees via the Internet. HFU began offering

courses last year, available in English and Spanish, in affiliation with Griggs University and Andrews University. The courses include master's degrees in church administration and leadership, and online instruction design, and certifications in church administration and leadership, online instructional design, educational technology, and Adventist studies.

During the special ceremony Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, spoke words honoring the late Herbert L. Fletcher, after whom HFU is named. Fletcher was instrumental in leading Adventist education in the Inter-American Division (IAD) territory.

“Herbert Fletcher was the embodiment of what Adventist education is all about,” said Leito. “His influence is still causing many men and women today to live up to the ideals of a true Christian.”

Fletcher's family members were in attendance, including his widow, Olive; and his son, daughter, and grandchildren.

“The world is better for so many because Herbert Fletcher walked this earth in fear of the Lord and did his best to help humanity,” added Leito.

Herbert Fletcher served the church for more than 44 years as a teacher, district pastor, youth director, and education director. He was also president of what was then known as West Indies College in Jamaica, and later held the position of education director for the IAD for more than 14 years before retiring in 1995. Fletcher passed to his rest in 2009.

Herbert Fletcher University is located in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and joins Inter-America's 12 Adventist universities and one junior college throughout the territory. For more

about Inter-America's Herbert Fletcher University, go to [www.hf.university.org/](http://www.hf.university.org/).

—Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division

### Adventist World Radio Opens Armenian Stations

■ Two new Adventist World Radio (AWR) FM stations in Armenia will connect with residents of the world's oldest official Christian country, church media officials say.

AWR recently began broadcasting programs in Armenian, the latest in a lineup of more than 100 languages offered by the radio arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A radio station in the capital city of Yerevan and another in Vanadzor will carry programming on spirituality, health, and family.

“Many young people are moving to the capital for jobs and education, and the nation is facing hard economic times, especially in the villages and small towns,” says Vigen Khachatryan, media center director for the church's Trans-Caucasus Union Mission, based in Tbilisi, Georgia.

“Radio programs can help the church's outreach efforts in Armenia,” Khachatryan says, adding that the historically Christian nation is more open to spiritual issues than many secular European countries.

Knarik Petrosyan, a student at Yerevan State University, is heading up a production team from a studio built by AWR. The team includes businessman Tigran Stepanyan, who serves as presenter and programmer, and the entire Mkhitarian family. Hovik is a journalist, and his wife, Gegecik, is a teacher. Their son, Joseph, is 10 years old. The family has broadcast experi-



UNIVERSITY LAUNCHED: Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, passes on the ceremonial mace to Herbert Fletcher University president David Siguelnitzky during the inaugural launch on May 7, 2012.

LIBNA STEVENS/IAD



**ARMENIAN BROADCASTING:** An Adventist World Radio media team is heading up new Armenian language programming in the country. The Mkhitarian family (right) has previous broadcast experience from their involvement with earlier radio work in Vanadzor.

PHOTO COURTESY AWR

ence from their involvement with earlier radio work in Vanadzor.

“The most challenging problems in Armenia are smoking, alcohol, decrease of family values, atheism, and poverty,” Khachatryan says. “Our programs will offer hope, help in overcoming secularism, [addressing] more complete family principles, [and offering] assistance with stopping smoking and drinking, and more.”

Within the next few months Armenian programming will also be available online—on demand at awr.org and as podcasts through awr.org and iTunes. AWR officials say online access is particularly valuable, as there are more than 4 million Armenians living outside of their home country.

Armenia is home to a population of some 2.5 million people, about 800 of whom are Adventist church members.

—*Shelley Nolan Freesland, AWR*

## In Philippines, Adventists Welcome 1,300 Members in Single Day

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Negros Occidental Conference (NOC) in the central Philippines recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of an Adventist

presence in its territory.

Since January, NOC headquarters administrators held a series of satellite meetings, resulting in more than 800 baptisms. Gary Gibbs, ministries development director in North America’s Chesapeake Conference, was the evangelism seminar’s featured speaker during the April 30–May 7 anniversary celebrations.

At the opening of the golden anniversary celebration, leaders of the church spoke. Among them were Agapito Catane, Jr., president of the church in central Philippines (CPUC), and Luisito Tomado, NOC president. Welcoming everyone was Alfredo Amada, Central Philippine Adventist College (CPAC) president. Other honored guests included 92-year-old Orlando Aguirre, Sr., the first treasurer of the then-Negros Mission, and other retirees. Also present was Chester Clarke III, organizer of Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries’ Youth for Jesus programs and the youth representative of the church to the General Conference Executive Committee, as well as local government officials and Congresswoman Cynthia A. Villar of the Las Piñas city congressional district.

During the week of evangelism, approximately 7,000 individuals registered for the event, on the CPAC campus. The dormitories and classrooms were packed with guests, tents sprawled the campus grounds, and all roads seemed to lead to the college. The nightly meetings were held in the college church while an extension monitor was installed in the gym to accommodate more viewers and listeners. On the final Sabbath more than 1,300 people accepted Christ as Savior and were baptized. The baptism was held in the college swimming

pool and lasted for two hours. Among the pastors who performed the baptism was Alberto Gulfan, Jr., president of the church in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD). An estimated 10,000 church members were present as well.

The church’s Negros Occidental territory comprises 280 churches, 116 companies, and more 33,000 members.

—*Teresa Costello/AND*



**WELCOME TO THE FAMILY:** Hundreds are baptized in a single day at the campus of Central Philippine Adventist College, where 1,300 joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

AND PHOTO

## Estonian Adventists Mark 115 Years of Service

■ The Estonian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated its 115th anniversary in southern Estonia’s largest concert hall at the end of April. The event

*Continued on next page ▶*

brought together Adventists and friends from different parts of Estonia and other countries.

“The 115th anniversary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Estonia will be remembered as a historical, special event,” said David Nõmmik, president of the Estonian Conference. “Our main theme was ‘In the Light of the Beginning,’ and the sermons and activities were focused on church growth and mission in the past, and on the hope that we have in Jesus Christ for the future,” Nõmmik explained. “We needed such an event in order to look back and see the progress of our Adventist Church in Estonia and maintain focus on church mission and unity. It was great to have guests from Finland, Scotland, England, Latvia, and Lithuania among us, and feel their support and encouragement,” Nõmmik said.

During the past 115 years Estonia has experienced many hardships. After World War I Estonia had 20 years of freedom, followed by World War II and 50 years of Soviet occupation. But as Eduard Vari, a longtime church member of the Tartu Seventh-day Adventist Church, put it, the Soviet era couldn’t ruin the spiritual health of the church. Churches were still growing, and despite harsh limitations to mission work, Adventists were active, using all means possible.

“Estonia is not occupied politically anymore, but the spiritual occupation—greed, manipulation, selfishness, pride, etc., threatens us all,” said Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division, who was the main speaker at this event. At the same time Wiklander encouraged people to share the light, not focus on cursing the darkness.

—Lauri Beekmann in Tartu, Estonia

## World Religious Freedom Conference Tackles Tough Issues

*Avoid secular society’s lead, speaker says.*

MARK A. KELLNER, news editor, and  
BETTINA KRAUSE, IRLA communication director,  
reporting from Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Addressing nearly 900 delegates and guests at the Seventh World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), Denton Lotz, a noted Baptist minister and IRLA president, summarized the purpose of this three-day event: “We’re here today because we believe that freedom of religion is basic to all human rights.”

That view, sadly, is not shared in many parts of the world, something Lotz said made holding the sessions even more important.

“It’s incumbent upon us to work together so that we live together in harmony and concord,” Lotz said to the audience of leaders from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and other communities. “We don’t need religious wars.”

That violence against believers remains a problem was evident from a session-opening video presentation noting the death sentences pronounced—but not yet carried out—on Christians in Pakistan and Iran on charges of “blasphemy,” and the assassinations of Pakistani officials Salman Taseer, governor of Punjab province, and Shahbaz Bhatti, minorities minister. Also cited was the extreme religious repression found in North Korea.

While the main congress theme, “Secularism and Religious Freedom—

Conflict or Partnership?” may seem far removed from lands where persecution is active, Lotz took a different view.

“Most people worldwide suffer from a lack of religious freedom. Seventy percent of the world lives in places of religious repression,” he said.

Speaking to an audience that included Seventh-day Adventists, Mennonites, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Mormons, and Scientologists, among others, IRLA secretary general John Graz noted that the world congress is a multifaceted event.

“This congress is about religious freedom, but it is not a religious event,” Graz said. “We are all here together. We represent different faiths,



**AVOID SECULARIZING RELIGION:** Denton Lotz, IRLA president, gave a keynote address on secularism and religious freedom. He said, “Religion will die when it no longer focuses on God, but only on autonomous man. Religion will thrive when it focuses on God.”

ANSEL OLIVER/ANN



**WITH LIBERTY FOR ALL:** Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, gave an impassioned plea for religious liberty at the Seventh World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association.

different religions, and different churches. We are different; but we are respectful of each other.”

During the congress speakers and delegates attempted to negotiate the challenges of a world that is increasingly hostile to a variety of religious expression in the public square. While standing for separation of church and state, Lotz issued a call for religion to avoid following a secular society’s lead.

“I believe that allowing secularism to define what a religion believes is the greatest challenge to religious freedom,” Lotz told delegates. “When we allow the secularization of our faith to transcend the transcendent, it loses its meaning,” he added.

According to Lotz, “religion will die when it no longer focuses on God, but only on autonomous man. Religion will thrive when it focuses on God.”

In a statement read to delegates, the country’s president, Leonel Fernández Reyna, offered “a most cordial welcome to the Dominican Republic, a land of freedom. The

Dominican Republic is a place of freedom for Christians, Muslims, Jews, and people of other faiths.”

In his April 27, 2012, keynote, Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, challenged believers to grasp the opportunities for open discourse that a secular state preserves.

Although acknowledging the inevitable conflict between the values of believers and that of secular culture, he said: “We have to accept this tension as part of a free society. We have to accept the challenges and find appropriate responses through God’s leading.”

Wilson drew a distinction between “radical” or “extreme” secularism, which seeks to exclude religion from the public sphere, and “secular governance,” which remains neutral between religions and protects the religious freedom rights of minorities.

“If intolerant and ideological secularism attacks our religious values, we have to stand up for them with conviction,” he said. Wilson cited examples in which secularism has been taken too far, including attempts to prohibit Muslims from wearing headscarves to public school, or to mandate the provision of abortions by institutions that reject the practice as a matter of conscience.

However, Wilson also said that people of faith should reject the temptation to see a “religious state” as an acceptable alternative to secular governance.

He said his lifelong passion for promoting religious liberty has its roots in memories of his father, Neal Wilson, a former world church leader who often spent hours with government officials explaining the value of freedom of conscience. ■



**HUMAN DIGNITY STRESSED:** “We are here because we believe in human dignity, and religious freedom is part of human dignity. Religious freedom is part of God’s gift of love for all people and everywhere,” said John Graz, secretary general of the International Religious Liberty Association, sponsored by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in opening the group’s Seventh World Congress.



**JAMAICAN DELEGATE:** Nigel Coke, an ILRA leader in Jamaica, was one of nearly 900 delegates at the IRLA’s Seventh World Congress in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, April 26, 2012.

ANSEL OLIVER/ANN

MARK A. KELLNER/ADVENTIST REVIEW

ANSEL OLIVER/ANN

We are now in the middle of the hot summer season where I live here in Maryland. It's a time when our minds naturally turn to thoughts of recreation, the outdoors, and doing something out of the regular, everyday routine.

Of course, regardless of what season it happens to be, recreation is an important part of my life, and I hope yours. It brings a sense of release from the heaviness, seriousness, and pressure that comes with work and assigned responsibility. Many times I've seen that a healthy diversion from routine activities can provide just the stimulus needed to refresh mind and body, and give renewed energy for tackling challenging and difficult situations. It reminds me of "rebooting" my computer when it becomes sluggish or stuck.

### The Time Challenge

But as you've probably also experienced, it can be a challenge to find time to do something recreationally or some kind of helpful diversion. When I'm in the office, my days are usually filled with what seem like countless individual consultations, meetings, and a variety of committees. Sandwiched between appointments and relegated to the evenings are the ever-present e-mails and letters that seem to fill my life.

When I travel, which is quite often, the pace of activity can be even more challenging. A typical trip is full of public functions, often including attending committees, visiting with public or civic authorities, and meeting with church members. Added to that is the challenge of jet lag. The supposed "glamour" of travel quickly disappears in the heavy load of being constantly ready for public activities, presentations, and the need to encourage people. Sometimes I find it very difficult to get appropri-

ate rest, sunlight, and adequate exercise while traveling.

### Finding Time

The time challenge that we all face in one way or another is nothing new. In 1867 Ellen White wrote, "I was shown that Sabbathkeepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change or periods of rest. Recreation is needful to those who engage in physical labor and is still more essential for those whose work is principally mental. It is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 514).

So in spite of the challenges, I enjoy making time for recreation. For me, some of the most renewing activities involve doing something useful while

relaxing. Believe it or not, I like to carry out the normal activities of maintaining a home. I've found that even changing a lightbulb or doing other types of home repair can be enjoyable!

Carpentry and home renovation are some of my favorite activities. In home renovation projects I often learn a lot. I've found that the creativity needed for these types of projects is useful in helping me find creative approaches for regular "work" activities as well.

### Outdoor Activities

Being outside is something I definitely find refreshing. I love working in our yard, doing general upkeep and landscaping. Nancy and I used to have a wonderful vegetable garden, which we thoroughly enjoyed, but we haven't had time for that in recent years.



By TED N. C. WILSON

# Recreation and Revival

*There is a link*



**OUTDOORS:** The Wilsons enjoy hiking with their children and grandchildren (from left to right): Catherine and Robert Renck, Jr. with daughter Charlotte Rose; Nancy and Ted Wilson; David and Elizabeth Wright with their children Matthew, Lauren, and Maryanne; Emilie and Kameron DeVasher with son Henry. **INDOORS:** Ted Wilson enjoys remodeling the family kitchen.



There's nothing like wandering to the garden with an empty basket and returning to the kitchen with a pile of yellow squash, zucchini, onions, tomatoes, and lots of cucumbers (one of my favorite foods). One summer we grew about 800 cucumbers, and gave away most of them!

For many years my family and I have enjoyed hiking and mountain climbing. It's a joy to hike together, especially with our children and grandchildren. We like to plan family vacations—which usually focus on hiking—well in advance. It's so rejuvenating to be out in God's nature, seeing His creative power and enjoying the fresh air and refreshing mountain vistas while being with family. Even the smallest of our grandchildren enjoy these outings.

At home Nancy and I like to walk.

Years ago we both used to jog, but we now prefer brisk walking for 30 to 45 minutes whenever we can. When we can find the time, we also like to bike along various beautiful bike trails in the metropolitan Washington area.

Many times at the office I find it energizing, as I walk through the building, just to greet and talk with fellow church employees before turning back to committees and other tasks. Many individuals at the General Conference use their two 15-minute breaks each day to enjoy walking outside (or inside when the weather is poor).

### God's Ideal for Us

It's wonderful how God has created us in such a way that we enjoy variety, and through His Word He urges us to live balanced, healthful lives that are filled with moderation. He wants us to live life abundantly, and indicates the completeness of His wish in 3 John 2: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul" (ESV).\*

If your life has become stressed, I encourage you to take time for positive Christian activities for yourself and your family. You might be pleasantly surprised at the opportunities you will gain to better serve others. I've found that the most enjoyable recreational activities for me are simple, involve something in nature, or provide a benefit to others.

God cares about every aspect of our lives, including our need for recreation. Regardless of where we are, if we ask God to guide us, He will lead us to recreational and service activities that will bring personal physical and emotional benefits as well as glorify Him. He will definitely answer that prayer! I've learned that while not all recreational activities will fully fit all those benefits, it's often possible to accomplish most of them. And of

course it's well-known that many spectator sports don't provide these types of physical and emotional benefits, and therefore are generally not as rewarding.

I love how Ellen White encouraged families to enjoy time together in beautiful, natural settings: "Parents and children should feel free from care, labor, and perplexity. Parents should become children with their children, making everything as pleasant for them as possible. Let the whole day be given to recreation" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 515).

### Revive and Recreate

True practical Christian recreational activity can become a real part of revival and reformation as we ask God to guide us in our work and recreational activities. We can begin our recreation, or rather re-creation, each day as we proactively and purposely carve out time to spend with our Creator. I generally do this at the beginning of the day. It's a special time for personal prayer, Bible study, and the study of the Spirit of Prophecy. I've found God's Written Word, as well as His second book of nature, rejuvenating.

Since the spiritual dimension in life is foundational to any positive accomplishment professionally and personally, it's so important that God be the foundation of all our regular and recreational activity. The same God who was powerful enough to create us (see Gen. 1:27) is able and willing to *re-create* us in His image. ■

\* Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



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

Whether it's sailing around the world solo, crossing Antarctica pulling a sled, or swimming across shark-infested oceans, men and women constantly try to break records and make headlines. About 2,900 years ago a woman from a small town in a state that doesn't even exist anymore joined a special group of people by taking the biggest leap a person can take—*she took the leap of faith.*

This was no easy leap. She was staring death in the eye. She had seen her husband die. And now she watched helplessly as everything around her died. Grass dried up, trees dropped their leaves, cows were gaunt skeletons, and goats bleated pitifully. Every day she scanned the cloudless sky, hoping against hope for a cloud—for rain. She had been rationing the flour and the oil in an attempt to make it stretch until the end of the drought.

The little round flat daily loaf was unevenly divided. Her son needed all the nourishment she could give him. It pained her to see the lad so thin and devoid of energy. But it was pointless—she knew the truth. They would both soon starve to death. There was enough for only one last meal. The widow left the dusty town of Zarephath to scrounge for firewood to cook their last meal. And here the unnamed woman steps into the biblical story. Here she comes face to face with one of the greatest figures of the Bible—the prophet Elijah.

Elijah probably looked less than impressive—he was dusty and travel worn. He had a long journey behind him. Unlike our widow, Elijah hadn't spent any time scanning the sky. This drought was no surprise to him. He had actually announced it. Under God's orders he had gone before king Ahab of Israel and had made a startling announcement: "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word" (1 Kings 17:1).<sup>1</sup>

### Behind the Scenes

Let's peek behind the scenes for a moment. What was motivating God to this showdown? Israel, God's people, had chosen a new god—Baal. Baal was an import from the land of Sidon that came along with King Ahab's new wife, the notorious Queen Jezebel. Baal was the supposed god of the weather. He is mostly depicted with a lightning bolt in hand. Generally you don't mess with a god that throws lightning bolts, but the true God is not intimidated.

After Elijah's surprise appearance and announcement to King Ahab God instructed

By  
CHANTAL J. KLINGBEIL

# The Leap of Faith



Elijah to go on a long solo camping trip to a remote mountainous area. There Elijah camped by a stream. His meals were miraculously flown in, mornings and evenings, by big black birds. Eventually the predicted drought reached even into this remote area, and the stream dried up. It was then that God sent Elijah on an even stranger journey. He was sent to the town of Zarephath—right into the heart of enemy territory. This was Queen Jezebel’s home country.

### It’s All or Nothing

In Zarephath Elijah meets up with our widow who is collecting firewood to cook a last meal. Elijah asks for a drink of water. The well obviously hadn’t yet dried up. As she turns to get the drink Elijah calls after her—almost as an afterthought, “and bring me, please, a piece of bread” (1 Kings 17:11). *Bread! He is asking for bread. He probably doesn’t understand my circumstances,* the widow may have thought. *I’ll explain—then he will surely understand that I really can’t help.* “As surely as the Lord your God lives, . . . I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die” (verse 12).

### What’s There to Lose?

Elijah’s eyes show no disappointment or even pity. They actually look hopeful. “Don’t be afraid,” he says. *Isn’t that what angels normally say when they meet people?* “Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son” (verse 13).

*Of all things—he wants to take my last meal. Literally take the food from my son’s mouth.*

“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land’” (verse 14). *The God of Israel—wait a moment, we aren’t in Israel we are in Baal’s land, Sidon. Can the God of Israel function here? His drought has extended to Baal’s land. God is asking for*

*an exchange. He is asking me for everything I have, and He is offering me life. What have we got to lose? We are doomed anyway! Shall I trust him? He is asking me to leap into the dark.*

The widow of Zarephath hesitates—and then she takes the leap. The giant leap is measured in a few drops of oil and a handful of flour. She takes her last loaf to Elijah.

And? The Bible narrative is unambiguous—there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her son. “For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah” (verse 16).

### Taking the Plunge

Most kids love playgrounds. Playgrounds were OK for me as a small child—except for the slide. I really hated the slide. It was just too scary. While my playmates would happily launch into the great unknown, squealing with delight, I got stuck there at the top of the slide frozen with fear. All the shouting and pushing from behind couldn’t motivate me to take that leap into the unknown on that slide. Looking back, I think I just hated the feeling of being out of control and feared hitting the ground at the end of the slide. There was only one way to get me down a slide. My dad would have to be at the bottom of the slide to catch me.

The widow of Zarephath’s story takes me back to my playground experience. I have graduated to experiences that are more challenging than my playground slide, but I’m sometimes just as scared as I feel life slipping out of my control. The widow of Zarephath encourages me to take the leap into the scary unknown knowing that as surely as my father’s arms were there to catch me then, my heavenly Father is here to catch me now. *Whatever the challenge, we can take that leap of faith knowing that we will land in God’s arms.* ■

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations in this article are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

*Of all things—he wants to take my last meal.*



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A recent news headline announced: “Woman Charged With Embezzling \$1 million From the [Roman Catholic] Archdiocese of New York.” Over the course of seven years the 67-year-old woman, working as a finance officer, quietly drained money from a fund established for providing education at Catholic schools. Each time the employee took amounts less than \$2,500, which would have required a supervisor’s signature. External auditors originally discovered \$350,000 missing, at

environment that allows honest people to work without fear of accusations of wrongdoing.

### Helping the Cause

The best intentions can sometimes lead to disaster. Imagine the excitement of a local church treasurer who received an e-mail explaining that he had been chosen to assist the sender with “freeing” millions of dollars from an account in another country. Could this be true? Was God



# Embezzlement

By ROBERT E. LEMON

# in the Church

*Even when they mean well, it's wrong.*

which time police were brought in to investigate. How could this happen without detection for seven years?

Easy access to church funds can create the opportunity for an individual to defraud the organization. Examples in the Seventh-day Adventist Church include the employee or volunteer who is responsible for accounts payable, including their personal utility bills along with those of the organization, then writing a payment for the total amount due. This type of activity can go undetected for long periods of time.

Are these just rare, unfortunate incidents? Unfortunately, they are not. Trends show embezzlement and theft increasing in nonprofit and religious organizations. It merits attention even in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Our church operates on a trust relationship with employees and volunteers. We thank the Lord that the vast majority of these people are doing exactly what is intended: faithfully working and volunteering to fulfill the mission of the church. Unfortunately, there are those few that, for whatever reasons, feel they can help themselves to the gifts of the faithful. Complicating this is a feeling by some that placing internal controls will send a message to our workers and volunteers that we do not trust them. In reality these safeguards help honest people too. They create an

leading him to do something special?

Certainly, if he had the kind of money described in the e-mail, he would be able to help the struggling church in many ways. He thought about it. He likely even prayed that this would be real. He responded to the message and soon found himself in the downward spiral of a scam requiring him to provide money to help fund the release of the fortune. Each step in the transaction seemed reasonable. To stop the process would require him to abandon the money he had already “invested.” He didn’t have the personal funds necessary to claim the king’s ransom that had been promised. Surely the good he could do would offset any issues or concerns if he “borrowed” some of the offerings from the local church. He would replace the church funds from the grand payoff and would donate an additional amount.

Regardless of intentions, this was embezzlement. The well-meaning church treasurer soon found himself facing a prison sentence for the theft of more than US\$1 million. The local church struggled to rebound from the financial loss. The outcome was bad all the way around, except for those operating the scheme who ended up with the church’s money.

Couldn’t happen to us? Think again. This scenario took place in a Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Protecting the Lord's Church

Do you know your local treasurer? Are monthly financial reports provided to the governing board? Are questions concerning local finances being properly answered in a timely manner?

In one case, failure to recognize certain warning signs (see top sidebar) led to the discovery that there was no treasurer at all! The pastor, without the church's knowledge, was keeping the books, and hundreds of thousands of dollars had been inappropriately used.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has faced a growing number of significant losses, some in excess of US\$1 million. Adventist Risk Management, the General Conference institution assigned the risk management and insurance programs for the church, places coverage for losses of this nature through outside insurers. Unfortunately, in the insurance industry increased losses means increased premiums.

In addition to the losses and the challenges of working through all the insurance issues, there are large deductibles that must be paid by the involved church organization. In some parts of the world the deductible is large enough to make insurance coverage not worth taking. In the United States the deductible is \$2,500.

It is important to remember that it's not just the financial consequences but also the impact that such thefts have on the life of the church, the sense of distrust that comes into the activities, and the distraction from mission. Additionally, as in the situation of the Catholic Church loss, the media coverage for such losses tarnishes our reputations and distracts from the mission we have in the community.

It is important to take the right steps to safeguard church resources and to provide employees and volunteers with an environment that allows them to do their work in a protected culture (see bottom sidebar). Remember, we have been entrusted with a great responsibility as stewards of God's assets. When caring for the Lord's church, we must ensure that we follow the highest standards. One day we will be held accountable for what we have done with the resources the King has placed in our care.

"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Prov. 19:21, NIV). ■



**Robert E. Lemon** is treasurer for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He serves as board chair for Adventist Risk Management, Inc.

## How You Can Prevent Embezzlement

- 1. Hire the right people.** Do a thorough background check on each employee and volunteer who will have access to the church's funds. Criminal background checks cost very little but can show any prior criminal convictions. Conduct reference checks.
- 2. Do not let volunteers handle money if they are new or unknown to the local congregation.**
- 3. Divide duties.** No one person should have access to all the steps in the handling of money or accounting for funds or the expenditure of funds.
- 4. Have a good recordkeeping system.** Insist on up-to-date accounting records. Never pay vendors without documented invoices. Have a third party review all suppliers being paid, to determine that they are legitimate companies who are providing actual goods and services for money.
- 5. Have clearly defined levels of approval for expenditures and for signing checks.**
- 6. Have an independent third party do audits.** At the local church level the conference treasury staff usually does this.
- 7. If you suspect a problem, do not wait.** Contact your local conference treasurer. The conference has access to resources, including the General Conference Auditing Service, to assist.

## Beware!

Things to watch for in your employees and volunteers who have access to money and accounting systems:

- 1. Financial need.** A bad economy or personal financial difficulties can cause individuals to make bad decisions. An employee frequently requesting advances may be the sign of a bigger problem.
- 2. Employee dissatisfaction.** Employees who feel underappreciated or overworked may feel justified in bad financial behavior.
- 3. Close relationships with vendors and service providers.**
- 4. Odd behavior.** Employees or volunteers who are reluctant to have someone review their work, or who are unwilling to take vacations or let someone else handle their financial activities even during a short absence.
- 5. Employees or volunteers who appear to live beyond their means.**

Short-term mission projects and stories abound in the world of Adventism. The church's focus on service to God and to others in need has spurred countless individuals to venture far from home to share God's love. Hein and Melissa Myburgh, however, who run an independent ministry called Mukuyu Outreach in a remote region of southern Zambia on the bank of the Zambezi River, call the place "home" and say they are there to stay.

The Myburghs relocated to Mukuyu (which means "wild sycamore fig tree" and is pronounced Mū-qūe-ū) in Zambia's Siavonga district in 2006 following the death of Hein's brother, Johann, who first established the ministry four years earlier. Tragically, Johann, at the age of 32, was attacked and killed by a bull elephant while out walking. Hein, a nature conservationist, felt called by God to continue his brother's dream to share the gospel message with the people in Zambia. Melissa had aspired to mission work since she was a child, and she too believed that God was leading them to Mukuyu.



# Two Hearts, One MISSION

*A young Adventist couple makes the gospel practical in rural Zambia.*

This outreach ministry in the heart of rural Africa is surrounded by a population plagued by severe poverty and superstition. Animism and witchcraft are prevalent. Most inhabitants have little or no education, and no reliable health-care system exists. In the six years since Hein and Melissa first committed to work there, they have served their way into the hearts and lives of the people. They've launched—or are in the process of establishing—outreach that includes an orphanage; open-air, short-term dental and medical clinics; a medical launch for tribal groups living along the banks of the Zambezi River; a women's training center; a Bible-worker evangelism program; a community center to help feed senior citizens; and an Adventist school for children in grades 1 through 4.

What could possibly entice a young married couple to leave a comfortable lifestyle in South Africa to live in a snake-infested region with no indoor plumbing, no electricity other than that provided by a generator, limited medical resources—and an hour's drive from the nearest town? Adventist World editor Bill Knott and assistant editor Sandra Blackmer talked with Hein and Melissa to find out.





MINISTRY FARM (top background): The Myburgs operate a small farm with some 700 sheep to help finance Mukuyu Outreach. REPAIRING THE BOAT (second from top): Hein fixes an old boat to use as a medical launch. READY TO GO (third from top): Trying out the newly repaired medical boat THANKFUL CHILDREN (bottom): The Myburgs have built a home that will house about 12 of the many orphans in the region.

**BILL KNOTT: You're a long way from the places you first called home, Hein and Melissa. Describe the setting where you live.**

**HEIN MYBURGH:** Our front porch is about 10 to 15 feet from the Zambezi River bank. You can almost step right from the porch into the river, so it's a beautiful setting.

**BK: And what does this home look like?**

**HM:** It's actually a thatched-roof bungalow with tan plaster walls and wooden support beams. There's no running water inside the house—the bathroom and shower are outside—and a generator supplies our electricity.

**BK: Do you use well water?**

**HM:** Well water in the area is undrinkable. The underlying rock is very soluble, so you end up with a lot of sulfur in the water. It's used only for washing. So our water comes mainly from the river. We buy bottled water for drinking.

**BK: It takes a lot of effort just to sustain a home in the conditions you've described, but you've also launched a variety of outreach and service ministries. Tell us about some of those.**

**HM:** Many children in this region are left parentless here because of the high incidence of HIV/AIDS, and the severe poverty leads to their neglect. So we've built a home that will house about 12 orphans. We don't have a regular income ourselves or enough finances right now to provide children with the basic necessities, but we have a home ready to house the kids pending available finances.

We have a roof structure up—no walls yet—just opposite the orphan home that will serve as a community center, where we'll provide a feeding program for senior citizens. Right now

Melissa teaches sewing classes each week to women outside the orphanage, but she'll be able to use the community center once it's completed. These are located, not on the Mukuyu property, but in the village about a kilometer [.62 miles] away.

**BK: Living on the banks of the Zambezi puts you on one of the only consistent transportation routes in the area, and I understand you've launched a boat ministry. Tell me about that.**

**HM:** When my brother was here, he got his hands on an old, rusty hull that he wanted to fix up and use as a medical boat on the Zambezi, but he didn't have the funds to repair it. Melissa and I obviously wanted to carry on with that idea, but we didn't have the money either. Then about a year ago we were in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, helping with a One-Day Church program, and we did a presentation for all the volunteers there about Mukuyu—and talked about our dreams for the boat. Later one of the medical doctors on the project approached me and offered to provide the funding to fix it up. He said his brother, who also was a medical doctor, had died about 18 months before, and so this man said, "Why don't we do the medical boat in remembrance of my brother and yours?" So we fixed up the boat and named it *Bakwesu*, which is Tonga for "brothers."

**SANDRA BLACKMER: How do you plan to use the boat?**

**HM:** Neither Melissa nor I have any formal training in medical care, so we would like to organize short-term medical mission trips on the boat down a 25-mile stretch of the Zambezi River between the ministry base and the border town of Chirundu, using medical volunteers—doctors, nurses,

and dentists. I've identified about five different sections along the river where there are sizable villages. We want to stop at these villages and spend a few hours or a whole day there, allowing the medical personnel to offer their services. Most river villages are located far from main roads, so it's difficult for the people to reach state-run clinics.

**BK: That sounds like it will be quite an adventure.**

**HM:** Yes, it will be. One of the extra perks of this kind of short-term medical trip is that participants on these projects will get to see all sorts of wildlife while traveling up and down the river. It's beautiful here in the middle of the African bush.

**BK: You mentioned plans for a school. That's certainly an ambitious project. Tell us about the school you're building.**

**HM:** The school that the children in the nearby village have to attend is located more than five kilometers [3.1 miles] away. Much of the year they're unable to go—especially the youngest children—because in the dry months there are elephants everywhere looking for food. Then when the rains come, there's mud everywhere. The community gave us a piece of land—one hectare [2.5 acres]—just opposite the orphan home, and we've begun construction of a school for the first four grades. We've worked with the local Adventist conference office on this, and it will be a standard Adventist elementary school. There will be four classrooms, an office, and teachers' houses. The roof structure of the first classroom is up, but not the walls and floor.

**SB: Melissa, it takes a remarkable woman to make the choices you've made. What has this experience**



**LEARNING A TRADE** (top and inset): Using donated sewing machines, Melissa teaches women in the area how to sew. **THE MYBURG HOME** (third from top): Hein and Melissa's home has no running water, and their electricity is supplied by a generator. **DOING LAUNDRY** (bottom): The women in the area wash their clothes in the nearby Zambezi River.





**been like for you? How well do you deal with life at Mukuyu?**

**MELISSA MYBURGH:** When I first came here to the bush, it was really hard. I thought a lot about all the wildlife and the elephants, and especially about what happened to Hein's brother. I was very scared, and my family was nervous about it as well. But we all believed that the Lord was leading. I'd been praying that the Lord would send me out to the mission field since I was a young girl, and I knew in my heart that this was the mission for me. So I just prayed about my fears, and every day it got better. Now I feel like I'm in the safest place ever, and that the Lord's protection is always with us.

**SB: I understand that you once had a close call with an asthma attack.**

**MM:** Yes, I had a severe allergic reaction, and while Hein was driving me to the hospital, which is an hour away, he had to continually stop and give me mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and then drive again. About 12 kilometers [7.2 miles] down the road he saw a neighbor approach down the road and called for his help. The neighbor jumped in and drove us to the hospital while Hein did mouth-to-mouth breathing. They saved my life. God definitely has been here with us.

**SB: What are the other most challenging aspects for you?**

**MM:** Probably the snakes, because most of the snakes here are poisonous—and they're all over the place. We've had a few in our house and a lot in our bathroom, because the bathroom is outside the house. The other challenge is the heat. It gets very, very hot here in Zambia.

**SB: Tell me about a typical day.**

**MM:** Among other things, I'm a housewife, so I do all the house things

that need to be done. Then every Tuesday I drive to the orphanage and meet with several women for sewing class. We have two sewing machines that were donated to us, so I'm teaching them how to make quilts, and they're also crocheting and knitting. The things I make I sell in the village and closest town; half of the money goes to the women, and the other half goes toward the orphanage.

I'm a trained hairdresser, so I cut and style hair for some of the local women and put the money I make toward our projects. It's a beautiful outreach tool since I get to visit with my clients as I serve them. I also visit people who are sick, and moms with babies, and do what I can to help them.

**SB: Where does the funding for all these projects come from?**

**HB:** We have depended heavily on donations in the past. We built the orphan home solely with donations. But we're striving to become self-supporting. We have a small farm now and 700 sheep. We're growing hay using a donated tractor and baler to feed the livestock and to sell to area farmers. We also have a mill grinder to grind maize flour for the villagers—which brings in a small amount of money—and we've started construction of fish ponds. So we're doing all sorts of things to augment our income.

**SB: I heard a story about a time when you had miscalculated the amount of money you had in the bank. Tell us about that.**

**HB:** It was the day before Christmas about three years ago. We'd gone to Lusaka, about three hours from home, to buy some food, and I was sure that we had enough money in my account to buy all the food we needed and the fuel to drive back home. Melissa went into the supermarket, and I headed to the bank to withdraw the money—but

my account was empty. I'm still not sure what had happened to the money. We not only couldn't buy groceries, but we couldn't buy fuel to get home, either. I didn't know what to do, and I was very discouraged.

We had walked literally 10 steps outside of the supermarket when my cell phone rang, and a man I had never met before asked, "Are you guys in town?" I said, "Yeah, we're in Lusaka." He then asked if we could come to his office, because he had some money for us. His office was about five minutes away. We were shocked! When we arrived, he explained that someone had told him about our ministry, and that we were one of more than 20 charities for whom he had raised money. Then he said, "You guys are lucky to get your money before the holidays." It seems that before the fund-raising event had even occurred, he had allocated percentages to each of the charities according to their size. When the money finally came in after the event, the amount of money that was allocated to us happened to be exactly the amount that he had with him on that day. It was the only sum that matched, so he phoned us up and said, "Come get your money." It was an amazing, amazing experience—and an affirmation that God is really alive and that He's loyal to us.

**BK: Your daily experiences seem bound up in an awareness of God's presence and the power of ongoing prayer.**

**HM:** Absolutely! Living this way definitely improves our prayer life! We're never very far removed from human need, and our own limitations make us so very aware of how much we must depend on God's power and resources. Sometimes, I'll admit, it's hard, but it's really such a great privilege to be doing what we're doing.

**BK:** Tell us about relationships with what sometimes is called the “organized church,” meaning the structures of the local Seventh-day Adventist conference or union.

**HM:** We’re an independent but fully supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We live accord-

**BK:** I understand that you also employ Bible workers. Tell us about that.

**HM:** When we first got here, Melissa and I did a few evangelistic meetings. She would do the health talks, and I would do the sermons using a small generator, a PA system, a projector, and some lights. Obviously, there’s no

**BK:** Have you seen baptisms resulting from those meetings?

**HM:** Yes, praise God—hundreds! Seed sown in faith always brings a harvest.

**BK:** What would you identify as your top current needs?

**HM:** If I had to name several, I’d say funding for more Bible workers, for completing the community center, and a trailer for construction and agricultural use. We also desperately need medical volunteers for short-term mission trips to provide health clinics for those living in remote areas on the riverbanks—and we certainly are looking for funding and volunteers to help complete the school.

**BK:** When you think about the millions of Adventist believers worldwide who will read this story, what would you most like to say to them?

**HM:** Most people want peace, and they try to achieve it in many ways. But there’s only one way to have real peace and happiness in this life, and that is by surrendering your life to the Holy Spirit, and to keep busy with what God calls you to do. Once you step in line with God’s will, that’s the end of restlessness. It’s certainly not the end of all problems, but when you’re walking with God you’re working with Someone who is all-powerful and knows what’s best for you. That’s the most important thing we’ve learned here—and it’s a lesson renewed every day that we serve. ■



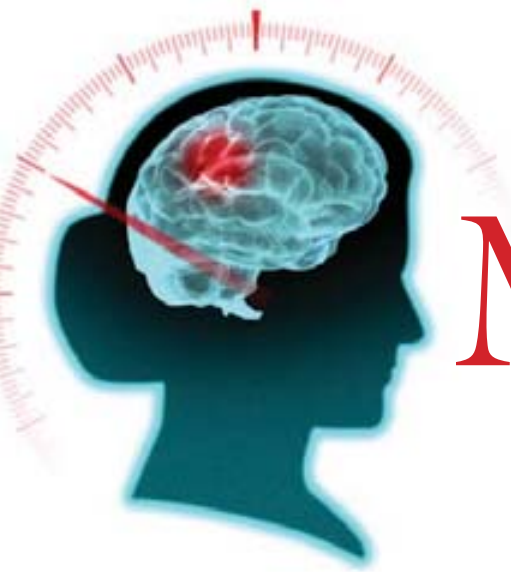
**BIBLE WORKERS:** Two of the local men Mukuyu Outreach has sponsored to receive Bible-worker training at Riverside Farm Institute in Kafue.

ing to the beliefs and the principles of the church, as well as the Spirit of Prophecy. So whatever we do, we do in conjunction and full harmony with the church. But structure-wise, the Adventist Church is not very well represented here. We have one pastor for the whole district, which is about 700 square miles in size. He does have a vehicle these days, but hardly ever the fuel he needs to visit his many churches. So as far as the organized church structure goes, in the area where we live, there isn’t much. But whenever we put up a church structure, we always talk first with the local pastor and the conference to be sure it fits with their plans.

electricity where we go, so we have to take everything with us. But when we do evangelistic meetings, we’re coming from a culture totally different from that of the people who live here, which is problematic. We also have to use an interpreter. So now we find local people interested in evangelism and send them to Riverside Farm Institute in Kafue for four months of training. They then return to their home village, where they already know the people, have influence with them, speak the same language, and know the local culture. When the time is right for an evangelistic series, Melissa and I go and facilitate it. Right now we have three Bible workers.



To find out more about Mukuyu Outreach, a member of Outposts Centers International, or to contact Hein and Melissa, go to [www.mukuyu.org](http://www.mukuyu.org) or e-mail [hein@mukuyu.org](mailto:hein@mukuyu.org).



# Ministrokes

*Every minute counts in strokes.*

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

**My 73-year-old wife has had a couple of ministrokes. Her doctor is concerned about the possibility of a major one. This has me worried, and I would like some advice. She has lost 30 pounds and now weighs 152 pounds.**

**Y**ou are quite right about a ministroke being worrisome. To have had more than one means there are definitely factors at work that require management. A ministroke is sometimes referred to as a transient ischemic attack (TIA), which means that there's a temporary blockage of blood vessels to the brain. This is cleared away by the body's mechanisms of repair. Usually a TIA will leave very slight residual damage, but accumulative incidents can result in serious impairment. The blockage is generally thought to be caused by a small blood clot, but a piece (or pieces) of atheromatous plaque that breaks off from an arterial wall could also be the culprit. Atheromatous plaque is associated with inflammation in the blood vessels. This tends to be widely distributed throughout the body. A person who has had an episode, or a TIA, should have an ultrasound of the carotid arteries to look for plaque.

Not only may TIAs be forerunners of a large stroke—they have been found to be associated with double the rate of heart attack (*Journal of the*

*American Heart Association*, March 2011). It is very important for you to recognize the signs of both TIAs and stroke. The acronym FAST emphasizes the major features of a stroke and the need for immediate attention.

**FAST** means:

**Face**—impaired ability to smile.

**Arms**—weakness or paralysis.

**Speech**—slurred speech or lack of comprehension and confusion.

**Time**—is of the essence!

Your wife has probably been screened and should be on treatment to prevent further TIAs and even a heart attack. The main features are:

**Exercise.** This should be some 40 minutes every day. Walking is an excellent exercise, done at between three and four miles per hour and causing a light sweat.

**Diet.** Eliminate flesh—both red and white meats—and consume a diet abundant in whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. Nuts should be eaten daily—about one small handful—and two cups of low-fat dairy or dairy equivalent. This latter means the soy “milk” has to be fortified with vitamin B12, calcium, and vitamin D to make it equivalent to the dairy. If yogurt or cottage cheese is selected instead of milk, quantity is again important. Remember, soy milks may be high in both carbohydrates and fats. Do not use large quantities of fat, and avoid butter. Some oil is necessary, and—if available to you—evidence supports the use of olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil, and corn oil, though it's probably wise to use them

alternatively and in moderation. Flaxseed oil is very rich in omega-3 fatty acids and is great on salads with lemon juice.

Your wife's cholesterol needs to be watched. I would definitely suggest avoiding egg yolks. Reduction of salt is a useful measure for all. Cholesterol-reducing medications can play a very beneficial role. A low-dose aspirin (81 milligrams) daily may help prevent further small clots from forming. Rely on your trusted health-care provider to advise you.

Every minute counts in strokes, so learn the warning signs, put a list of telephone numbers by the phone (such as those of your doctor and local hospital or other emergency medical facility), know the location of your closest emergency medical facility, and make a list of the medications your wife takes and any allergies she may have and take that list with you to the hospital.

Then live positively. Pray daily. Avoid stressful confrontations. And place your life in God's hands. He truly cares for us all. ■



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

On the night before His death, Jesus informed the disciples that He was about to leave them alone in the world and that in His absence, they were to carry on the work He had begun. Indeed, they were to perform the same mighty deeds He had performed, with even greater effect (John 14:12). They would furthermore carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, His own ministry being confined to the geographical area surrounding Palestine. It was not expected that the disciples should accomplish this task in their own strength. God would send them the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things; remind them of all that Jesus had taught them (verse 26); testify of Christ (John 15:26); guide them into all truth (John 16:13); show them things to come (verse 13); and empower them to witness (Acts 1:8).

Fulfillment of Christ's promise took place initially during Pentecost, when 120 believers (including the apostles) in Jerusalem were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and consequently filled with the Spirit (see Acts 2:1-4). Just as each body part has a necessary function to perform, it would appear that each person that is filled with the Holy Spirit receives one or more spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12) that are meant to be used for the "common good" or edification of the church (verse 7). Included in the list of gifts that Paul specifically identifies with this purpose is the gift of tongues (see verses 8-10). And yet, because Paul states that (1) no one but God can understand what is said by those who speak in tongues (1 Cor. 14:2) and that (2) speaking in tongues edifies the speaker rather than the hearer (verse 4), many claim that the term *tongues* refers to nonhuman speech and that it is a private rather than a public gift. This interpretation is based on the assumption that both statements are referring to the tongues phenomenon per se. However, they are more likely to be referring to the

Corinthian tongues speakers' quest for personal gratification rather than to the essential characteristics of tongues speaking itself.

### The Tongues in Corinth

We gather from what Paul says about the spiritual arrogance of the gifted ones in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 4:6-8) that some Corinthians had equated giftedness with spirituality and, because of their own giftedness, thought that they were not only very important people but had spiritually arrived and were in need of no further spiritual food. It would appear, how-

two things point to a clear identification. First, the gradual narrowing down of the gifts from the nine mentioned in verses 8-10 to the gift of tongues alone in chapter 14 strongly suggests that the tongues speakers were the special object of Paul's concern. Second, Paul's statement that "the one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up" (1 Cor. 14:5, ESV)<sup>1</sup> suggests that tongues speakers had an inflated ego.

In addition, the positioning of the gift of tongues last or next to last on all three lists of gifts in 1 Corinthians

NUMBER 17

By LYNN BURTON

# Speaking *in* Tongues

*A biblical take  
on a difficult subject*

ever, that this erroneous view was limited to the more spectacularly gifted members of the church. This is the impression we get from 1 Corinthians 12:21-25, where Paul implies that this group of believers felt that they were spiritually superior to their lesser-gifted brothers and sisters in the church, and acted as though the church could function just as well without those with lesser gifts. Even though the ringleaders are not identified in the passage itself,

12 (see verses 8-10, 28-30) seems to indicate an attempt by Paul to correct the way the Corinthians exalted the gift of tongues above all others, by now putting this one gift into perspective for them. Similarly, by also placing tongues speaking at the head of the list of gifts and Christian attributes deemed to be spiritually worthless unless accompanied by love (1 Cor. 13:1-3), Paul seemingly implies that the Corinthians were currently using

the gift of tongues in a loveless manner, perhaps even more so than the other gifts and attributes mentioned in these verses.

On the other hand, Paul claims that “self-seeking,” which he uses interchangeably with “self-edification” in 1 Corinthians 10:24, is the antithesis of love (1 Cor. 13:5). This would suggest that using tongues to pray out loud in church (1 Cor. 14:2) refers to the Corinthians’ loveless exercise of this gift, and not to the phenomenon itself. In addition, using tongues to edify self is contrary to the gift’s intent (1 Cor. 12:7); it flies in the face of Paul’s earlier admonition to seek to edify others instead of self (1 Cor. 10:23, 24); and it violates the principle set down in 1 Corinthians 10:31-33 of doing everything to the glory of God and for the salvation of souls, rather than for one’s own benefit or advantage.

### **Tongues and Mission**

By way of contrast, the God-given ability to speak in other human languages without having to learn them first not only sits well with the goal of edifying the church, but it was ideally suited to evangelizing the ancient world. In the Greco-Roman world of the first century A.D., Greek and Latin were universal languages that could have been used to take the gospel message to the ends of the earth. However,

because foreigners were generally frowned upon by indigenous populations, it was imperative that if Christ’s followers were to successfully share the gospel with other nationalities, they would need to converse with them in their native tongues or dialects, rather than in a common tongue, even if it were Greek or Latin. Pentecost is a case in point. The fact that lowly Galileans were suddenly and miraculously able to converse fluently in the native tongues of the foreigners present captured the latter’s attention and subsequently converted many to Christianity (see Acts 2:5-11).

It is clear from what Paul says about his practice of becoming one with the local communities with whom he labored (1 Cor. 9:19-23) that he likewise understood that if his evangelistic efforts were to be successful he, too, had to converse with them in their native tongues and dialects. This makes far more sense of his confession “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all” (1 Cor. 14:18) than if he was able to speak in more unintelligible tongues than anyone else. Accordingly, this was no idle boast on Paul’s part, but it was his way of expressing his gratitude for the blessings he gained from being able to use so many different languages to share the good news of salvation with others.

In addition, it can be argued that there are many indications in the Bible suggesting that the Corinthian gift of tongues refers to the God-given ability to speak in other human languages without having to learn them first, and that it was meant to be used for evangelism. Still, the vast majority of modern biblical scholars believe that Paul’s comments in 1 Corinthians 14 support the nonhuman languages point of view. However, it would appear from the foregoing that the latter is based, in part, on the misconception that the gift of tongues is a private gift that was meant to edify self. As has been argued, it is more likely that the local tongues speakers were using this gift in a loveless manner to glorify self instead of God, which was contrary to the forward thrust of evangelistic endeavor that it was meant to afford. ■

<sup>1</sup>Scripture quotations marked ESV are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



**Lynn Burton** is the pastor of the Armadale and Bickley Seventh-day Adventist Churches, in Perth, Western Australia. He recently finished his master’s degree in biblical theology focusing upon the biblical gift of tongues.

## Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God’s varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

From Friday, July 20, to Tuesday, July 24, 2012, a group of passionate young people from Europe will gather for a Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC)\* convention in Austria under the theme: “The Hour Has Come.”

For years European young adults have made the trip across the Atlantic to attend GYC’s annual December convention in the United States. And each year these young people have left with a desire to see a similar event take place on their own continent, making the inspiration and blessing they have received available to many more.

These young people want, in their own words, to help “inspire, equip, and mobilize this generation in Europe to be wholly committed to fulfilling the mission of the



By JOSHUA NEBBLETT

# “The Hour Has Come”

*GYC joins forces with European Adventist youth ministries to help re-ignite the reformation.*

Adventist Church by proclaiming the three angels’ messages.” They desire to see those messages spread across secular Europe like wildfire, as did the truth in the days of the Reformation.

## **This Year in Austria**

In consultation with TED and EUD youth directors, this desire will become a reality—GYC will hold this one-time event in Europe this summer!

GYC is working closely with the Austrian Union’s youth department in the planning of the event. Young people will pour into the little city of Linz, Austria (200 kilometers [125 miles] west of Vienna)—chosen partly because its central geographic location makes attendance possible for many.

Evangelism-minded youth groups are spread across Europe, already sharing the good news in their countries. However, because of the continent’s linguistic and cultural diversity, there are limited opportunities for these groups to extensively network, share ideas, and rub shoulders with each other. In providing a venue for these

groups to unite, GYC in Europe will provide another forum for youth from various European countries to share how God is working in powerful ways in their respective corners of the continent and to explore avenues of collaboration.

## **Training, Training, Training**

More evangelism training is needed in Europe. GYC in Europe will focus on many aspects of evangelism, and will help equip young adults to join hands with their local churches in sharing the gospel.

While the conference will be held in English, the language most common to European countries, messages will be translated into 10 other major languages for those who prefer to enjoy the conference in their native tongue.

The conference schedule will be similar to that of GYC’s annual convention in the United States. Attendees will gather in a general assembly every evening and morning, then select from a variety of workshops during which they can receive evangelistic training relevant to their specific areas of interest.



“GYC in Europe will enable **youth** from various European countries to **share** how God is working in **powerful** ways in their respective corners of the continent.”

**YOUTHFUL ENERGY:** (from left) Linz, Austria, will be the setting for the first GYC gathering in Europe. The meeting in Baltimore, Maryland (U.S.A.) in 2010 provided opportunities for networking and witnessing (center, right).

Speakers will include Mark Finley, Martin Ryszewski, David Asscherick, Alan Hush, Sebastien Braxton, and others of diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. These speakers will lead the listeners to a deeper understanding of the biblical foundations of the Adventist Church, and give guidance and practical training on how best to share those truths with others.

One of the highlights of GYC’s conferences in the United States has been evangelistic outreach, when thousands of young people step outside of the conference venue into the local area to knock on doors, pray with people, distribute literature and Bible study cards, and share the love of Jesus with those they encounter. These attendees return to the conference center changed by this powerful experience, and many people have been introduced to Jesus and the special Adventist message through the outreach effort.

The participants in Europe will conduct a similar evangelistic outreach effort, putting into practice what they will be learning in the workshops throughout the conference. GYC is collaborating with the church leadership in Linz to find the most effective means to reach the local population.

GYC is joining forces with the Adventist youth movement in Europe—Adventist young people are passionate about seeing the gospel work finished, for “the hour has come.” You are invited to join young adults for a time of training, networking, evangelism, and drawing closer to our Savior through His Word. ■

\*Established in 2002, GYC is a grassroots Adventist movement organized and led by young adults from North America.



*For more information on speaking, program, venue, and registration, visit*  
**[www.gyceurope.org](http://www.gyceurope.org)**.



**Joshua Nebblett** is a member of the GYC leadership team and is spearheading the logistical work of organizing the GYC Europe congress in Linz, Austria.

## THE GIFT OF

*Establishing Publishing, Health, and*

Put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed” (2 Chron. 20:20, NASB).<sup>1</sup> The Bible teaches that God leads His people through the prophetic gift, and Seventh-day Adventists believe that God led in the establishment of their first major ministries through the visions and dreams of Ellen G. White. Let’s take a brief look at how God guided through the prophetic gift in the publishing, health, and educational ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**Publishing Ministry**

The year 1848 had been an exciting time of gathering Advent believers through evangelistic Sabbath conferences. For the first time, Sabbathkeeping Adventists were coming together in an understanding of the end-time importance of the Sabbath in connection with the sealing of God’s people. They were struggling to understand this connection at a study conference at the home of Otis Nichols in Dorchester, Massachusetts, November 17 and 18, 1848. This conference was a follow-up to an October meeting that had been held in Topsham, Maine, where they had studied the sealing of Revelation 7 in the context of the

three angels of Revelation 14. They were trying to understand how God would have them share the Sabbath as part of the everlasting gospel. At this meeting Ellen White had a vision.

After coming out of vision, she turned to her husband, James, and said: “I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first.”

She then made a startling prediction: “From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.”<sup>2</sup>

This vision and subsequent visions led James White to begin publication of a periodical titled *Present Truth* in July 1849. This paper served to convince Adventists of the importance of the Sabbath in light of the soon coming of

Jesus. A few years later it was replaced by the Second *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, which continues to this day as the *Adventist Review*. The extensive publishing work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is owing in large part to the prophetic visions of Ellen White.

**Health Ministry**

During the 1850s and 1860s Seventh-day Adventists faced a particular challenge. Like North Americans in general, many were suffering from communicable diseases and lifestyle disorders. Tuberculosis, cholera, diphtheria, and pneumonia, among other diseases, were continuously claiming lives. Principles of hygiene and cleanliness were largely unknown. A limited diet consisting mostly of meat, fats, and strong spices led to strokes, heart disease, and nutritional deficiencies that debilitated North Americans in general, as well as Adventists.

Ellen White received four identifiable health-reform visions between 1848 and 1865. In 1848 she was shown the injurious effects of tobacco, tea, and coffee.<sup>3</sup> On February 12, 1854, she had a vision on the importance of cleanliness, temperance, and the danger of rich or refined foods. “I saw some who were sickly among the saints, made themselves [thus] by indulging the appetite. If we wish good health we must take special care of the health God has given us, deny the unhealthy appetite, eat more coarse [in natural state] food with little grease.”<sup>4</sup>

Ellen White’s June 6, 1863, vision at the Hilliard home in Otsego, Michigan, had the most extensive influence on Seventh-day Adventists. This vision expanded on what she had been shown previously, and promoted, among other things, vegetarianism, abstinence from pork, and the link between health and dependence upon divine power.

On December 25, 1865, she received a fourth vision in Rochester, New York, with instruction that Seventh-day Adventists should establish their own health institution.



The Review and Herald Publishing House, circa 1860.



The Health Reform Institute, 1868



# Guidance

## Education Ministries

By MERLIN D. BURT

While initially intended to serve Adventists, she saw it as a ministry of healing to the world. She wrote: “Such an institution, rightly conducted, would be the means of bringing our views before many whom it would be impossible for us to reach by the common course of advocating the truth. . . . By thus being placed under the influence of truth, some will not only obtain relief from bodily infirmities, but will find a healing balm for their sin-sick souls.”<sup>5</sup>

In response to these visions, Adventists began to shift toward a new way of living and a new way of sharing the three angels’ messages. The health message became the “right arm” of the gospel. It was God’s guidance through the visions and dreams given to Ellen White that brought this new emphasis.

### Educational Ministry

Before the 1870s most Seventh-day Adventists had received little formal schooling. They were, however, passionately oriented toward the Bible and understanding its message. This biblically based orientation gave a particular focus to reading and clear thinking. In 1872 Ellen White published *Testimony for the Church*, No. 22, which today is a part of her nine-volume *Testimonies for the Church*. She was shown in vision the importance of Christian education, and particularly, Adventist Christian education.

In a nearly 50-page article she presented various principles of proper education. This included such themes as the importance of teaching children and youth to think for themselves and make personal moral decisions; proper use of time in education; the need to cultivate the whole person—mental, physical, moral, and spiritual. It also linked health principles to education. She concluded the testimony with these words: “The great object of education is to enable us to bring into use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God. . . . We need a school where those who are just entering the ministry may be taught at least the common branches

of education, and where they may also learn the truths of God’s word for this time more perfectly.”<sup>6</sup>

This message led to the establishment of Battle Creek College in 1874, the first of a worldwide network of colleges and universities. During the 1890s elementary and secondary education became an emphasis, and today Seventh-day Adventists have a particular focus on education, operating the largest Protestant school system in the world. Like publishing and health, education has dramatically influenced the way Adventists share the gospel. This has happened through the prophetic guidance of God in the vision-guided writings of Ellen White.

### God’s Clear Guidance

Sometimes Seventh-day Adventists and those who are blessed by the publishing, health, and educational ministries of the church do not realize that it was God who has guided in the establishment and continued development of these ministries. God cares enough about people, and about effectively sharing a message of hope to a dying world, that He gave direct guidance through visions and dreams. It is no wonder that Seventh-day Adventists appreciate the writings of Ellen White. Perhaps the most helpful response would be to read her books *The Ministry of Healing*, and *Education*, which present the health and educational principles she was shown in vision. ■



Battle Creek College, 1874.

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> James White, “Western Tour,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 8, 1870, p. 165; Ellen G. White to “Brother and Sister Howland,” Nov. 12, 1851 (letter 8, 1851).

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, “Reproof for Adultery and Neglect of Children,” Feb. 12, 1854 (manuscript 1, 1854).

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, pp. 492, 493.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimony for the Church*, No. 22 (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1872), p. 48.



Merlin D. Burt is an associate professor of church history, director of the Center for Adventist Research, and director of the White Estate branch office at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

# Who Is That “Mighty Hunter”?

What can you tell us about **Nimrod**, spoken of in *Genesis 10:8-12*?

The person of Nimrod is intriguing, and we find a significant amount of speculation about him in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic writings. What makes him

intriguing is the fact that in the

Table of Nations (Gen. 10) he is the only person about whom we have a statement of achievements, although what is said about him is somewhat sketchy. We will say something about possible historical parallels, examine what the biblical text says, and briefly mention some of postbiblical speculation about him.

1. *Nimrod in History:* The biblical text describes Nimrod as a person who lived in the area of Mesopotamia. Scholars have tried unsuccessfully to find an ancient Near Eastern parallel that matches what the Bible says about him. He has been identified with Gilgamesh, the person who, according to Babylonian literature, survived the Flood, but that theory has been rejected. More popular is to find in him traces of the god Ninurta, a Mesopotamian fertility god. But again the parallels are not strong enough to prove the case. Besides, the biblical text in no way suggests that Nimrod was divine. What we know about him is what Scripture says.

2. *Nimrod in the Bible:* The first thing the text mentions about Nimrod is that he “became a mighty warrior on earth” (Gen. 10:8, NIV),<sup>1</sup> probably meaning that he was the first of such a type (cf. Gen. 9:20). The word “mighty” means, as the passage indicates, that he was politically and militarily powerful. With him began a new breed of leaders whose intention was to become more and more powerful. Second, he is described as a “mighty hunter” (verse 9), which means not only that he was a good hunter, but also that he was a powerful military conqueror.

The phrase “before the Lord” has proved difficult to interpret. The main difficulty is deciding whether it means that the Lord cared for Nimrod, or that Nimrod was acting in defiance of the Lord—“against Him” (Ps. 66:7, NIV). The fact that Nimrod is directly associated with Babylon and the land of Shinar implies a negative connection with the Lord. Besides, if we go by the Hebrew meaning of the name Nimrod (“we will rebel”), the implication is that he acted in rebellion against God.

If this interpretation is correct, the proverb cited in the text—“Therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord’”—would refer to a powerful person acting against the will of God.

Third, he is described as the first person who established a kingdom (“the first centers of his kingdom” [Gen. 10:10, NIV]; “the beginning of his kingdom” [verse 10]). It was based in the ancient cities of Babel (Babylon), Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the region called Shinar—Lower Mesopotamia. From there Nimrod went north to possess the land of Assyria (verse 11)—Upper Mesopotamia (see Micah 5:6).

3. *Nimrod and Postbiblical Speculations:* Jewish tradition argues that Nimrod was the first hunter, and therefore, the person who introduced meat to the human diet. Tradition says he was involved in the construction of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-4), and after the people were dispersed he stayed in Shinar to build his kingdom. Both Jewish and Islamic traditions indicate that there was a hostile relationship between Nimrod and Abraham. The main reason was that Nimrod was an idolater, while Abraham was called by the Lord to worship Him alone. Some versions of the tradition say that Nimrod placed Abraham in a furnace of fire so hot that its flames killed thousands, but Abraham emerged unharmed. In some traditions he is identified with Amraphel, one of the kings who attacked Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 14:1) and who were defeated by Abraham. The traditions and speculations, with rare exceptions, depict Nimrod as a symbol of evil.

I have summarized some of the postbiblical views about Nimrod in order to alert you to the danger of going beyond what is written. Those traditions should not be used to define personal convictions, or to speculate about the prophetic role of Babylon. We can only affirm what the biblical text says about Nimrod. ■

<sup>1</sup> Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



**Angel Manuel Rodríguez** served for many years as director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. He is now retired, living in Texas, United States.

By MARK A. FINLEY

# Making *Positive* Choices



The ability to choose is hardwired into our brains by a loving Creator. We are not mere machines programmed to function in a certain way. We are not robots controlled by a cosmic, celestial computer. We are human beings created in the image of God with the ability to think, to reason, and to choose. This lesson will focus on the critical importance of the choices we make.

**1** Read Genesis 2:8, 9, 16, 17. What two trees did God place in the midst of the Garden of Eden? What do those trees reveal about our ability to choose?

The tree of life represents the sum of all our positive, life-giving, and healthy choices. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the sum of all negative, life-destroying, and unhealthful choices. The two trees represent two pathways: life and death.

**2** Read the verses in Genesis 3:6-13, 16, 17. Summarize the four devastating consequences of Adam and Eve's choice to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**3** When Eve bore Cain, she declared, "I have acquired a man from the Lord" (Gen. 4:1). Although Cain was God's gift to Eve, and he was raised by godly parents, did these facts alone guarantee he would make positive choices? Read Genesis 4:3-8. What inner attitude led Cain, to make one of the worst choices possible?

**4** Read Genesis 4:9-16. What was the result of Cain's poor choice?

Cain's choice affected him the rest of his life. It also affected his future wife and children. Generations were influenced both by Adam and Eve's sin and Cain's rebellion. Although we "sow what we reap" *in kind*, we do not sow what we reap *in quality*. Indeed, no farmers would plant a single grain of corn if they expected only to get a single grain back in

return. We reap much more than we sow; this is true not only of the poor choices we make, but also of the good, positive choices we make.

**5** The prophet Daniel is well known for making wise choices. Read Daniel 1:8, 20; 2:19-22, 48; 6:1-3. What were the results of those choices?

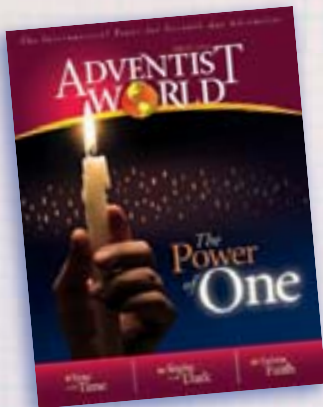
Daniel's steadfast purpose and unswerving obedience to God resulted in positive choices that prepared him to be especially used by God in influencing the entire Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires.

**6** Read Exodus 32:25, 26 and Joshua 24:15. When Israel faced a moral crisis in the days of Moses and later in the time of Joshua, what two powerful appeals were made by these courageous men of God?

Even when the Israelites were shackled in the bonds of idolatry, individuals could still make positive choices to be free from the slavery of sin. No matter how many poor choices we have made, it's never too late to begin making right choices.

**7** Read the following promises: John 15:5; Romans 8:11; Galatians 5:16, 17; Philippians 4:13. From where do we get the power to make right choices and ultimately put them into practice? Which of these promises means the most to you?

The same Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin and prompts us to make right choices does not leave us alone when we make them. Although we may desire to do right and choose to do right, without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit we cannot carry out our desires. The good news is that the Holy Spirit will empower our choices. When we choose to do right, the Holy Spirit translates our choices into action. ■



# Letters

## Learning and Living God's Will

I am responding to the emphasis on youth I've seen in *Adventist World* articles. As we encourage more youth to join the Seventh-day Adventist community, it's good to remind them not to "copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, NLT).<sup>1</sup>

We youth should conform to God's ways and shouldn't try to bend God's rules to suit our ways.

KEVIN OBELL  
via e-mail

I am 22 years old and happy to be an Adventist believer. I am also happy to read *Adventist World* magazine so I can learn from Adventist youth all around the world. Thank you!

MARVIN OTIENO  
Kenya



## Singing in the Dark

I enjoyed very much Gerald A. Klingbeil's article "Singing in the Dark" (April 2012). Thank you for printing it. Zephaniah 3:17 has been my favorite text for many years.

HEATHER KRICK  
Fresno, California

## The Vision Lives On

Regarding "The Vision Lives On," by Humberto Rasi (March 2012): The thought that there's someone out there helping us teach children to understand Ellen White is more than great. I teach children between the ages of 6 and 9, the Adventurer age group. This year I started introducing

Ellen White to our students. This article, accessed from your Web site, just hit home. Thank you very much.

On Sabbath I asked most of the children if they knew who White was. It turns out they know what she looked like, but nothing more. As her writings say, this is the right stage to start teaching them.

LORRAINE NTSIKANE  
Durban, South Africa

## The Power of Hope

Chaplain Ely Magtanong from Florida, United States, conducted a one-week evangelistic campaign this past March. It was really a blessing for us. At the meetings I was handed a copy of *Adventist World*. It is my favorite reading magazine!

I'm so thankful for the March 2012 issue. I read the article "The Power of Hope," by Mark A. Finley. I cried after reading it because I know God is always there for me!

My family and I receive so much inspiration from the articles we read every month in *Adventist World*.

GRACE DELOROSA PUREZA  
Lucena City, Philippines

## Good Magazine, Late Delivery

*Adventist World* has good updates in the news section. The only thing that

# Prayer & PRAISE

We are a four-member church and very faithful. I was told our church may be closed. Please pray for us. Jesus is in our midst; even where two or three are gathered in His name.

MAURITIUS, Chile

Please pray for Hassan and Kaizer, both in maximum-security prison in Zambia. They have become church members, and both have families they are concerned about.

A CONCERNED FRIEND,  
via e-mail

Please pray for my mother. She has a tumor that will be surgically removed.

GERSON, Brazil

Please pray for me so I may finish my university studies and pay my school fees.

SAMUEL, Malawi

Please pray for me: I have to improve my English and get a job. I'd also like a girlfriend.

AMANDIO,  
Wales, United Kingdom

isn't good is that the magazine comes late. For example, at our university we received the November 2011 issue in January 2012.

What can we do to resolve this problem?

NDUWAYO RUTEBUKA ENOS  
Kigali, Rwanda

Adventist World arrives late in some parts of the world. It is shipped via ocean freight to keep overall costs low, so that as many of our members as possible receive it monthly. Our production schedule is designed to accommodate the long shipping time lines. We are glad you receive and enjoy Adventist World, albeit a little late. —EDITORS.

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

**Letters Policy:** Please send to: [letters@adventistworld.org](mailto:letters@adventistworld.org). Letters must be clearly written, 100-word maximum. Include the name of the article and the date of publication 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.



I have a friend who is going through a lot and pushing away the people he loves. Please pray that he can find strength in God, not in worldly things.

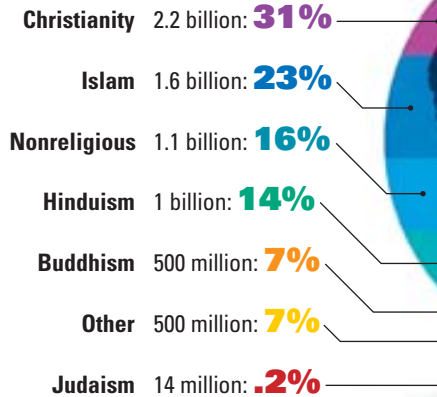
MUTINTA, Zambia

**The Place of Prayer:** Send prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer) to [prayer@adventistworld.org](mailto:prayer@adventistworld.org). Keep entries short and concise, 50-words or less. Items will be edited for space and clarity. Not all submissions will be printed. Please include your name and your country's name. 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.



# Religions Around the World

The world's population of 7 billion is divided into these categories of religious belief:



Source: *The World Fact Book*

## Meet Your Neighbors

The Younger Generation Church (YG) in Arlington, Texas, United States, wants to deepen their devotion to Jesus and inspire those around them with the hope of grace. YG has partnered with a variety of agencies throughout the area of Dallas-Fort Worth, including Unity Park. Located in downtown Fort Worth, the homeless population gathers here during the day while the local shelters are closed. YG has enjoyed building relationships with those in need of grace by offering picnics, pickup basketball/volleyball games, refreshments, and conversation. Regularly YG volunteers roll up their sleeves to volunteer at the North Texas Food Bank (NTFB). Partnering with the NTFB, they work up a sweat constructing thousands of meals: sorting, boxing, and preparing food kits—converting tens of thousands of pounds of food into meals for families in need.

# Our Father in...



About **1,000** letters addressed to God arrive in Jerusalem every year.

Source: *National Geographic*, April 2012

## For Your Health

For a healthy, balanced diet, think of a rainbow and include in your diet these colorful foods:

### Red cabbage

Vitamin A, fiber, and glucosinolates may prevent certain kinds of cancer.

### Black beans

Loaded with fiber and brain-boosting anthocyanins.

### Butternut squash

Lots of beta-carotene.

### Spinach

Packed with folate, a B vitamin shown to bolster cognitive function.

### Bananas

Potassium-rich, with prebiotic fiber for good colon health.

Source: *Men's Health*, January/February 2012

# 44 Years Ago

In July 1968 a team of Adventist archaeologists, under the direction of **Siegfried H. Horn**, began excavating at what they believed to be the site of the biblical city of Heshbon in Jordan, a region once home to the Amorites, Ammonites, and Moabites. Since then the excavations have expanded to three sites east of the Jordan River overlooking the Dead Sea: Hesban, Umayri, and Jalul, known collectively as the Madaba Plains Project. The project is still active. For more information, visit <http://www.madabaplains.org/>.

COURTESY OF THE SIEGFRIED H. HORN MUSEUM

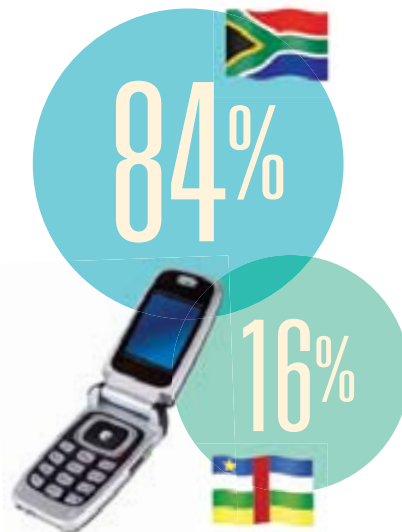


### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“When we have fame, never should we forget our frame: that we are but dust.”

—AKANBI JOSEPH, *Global Mission Pioneer, Lagos, Nigeria*

## Can You Hear Me Now?



A recent Gallup poll of 17 sub-Saharan countries found the largest percentage of cell phone users in South Africa at 84 percent. The lowest percentage was in the Central African Republic at 16 percent.

Source: *The Rotarian*, March 2012

*“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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## 50 WORDS OR LESS

# My Favorite... Bible Promise

■ I was verbally abused by many as I grew up. As an albino I was an outcast; this made me angry. Isaiah has so many wonderful promises that contributed to my emotional healing, including Isaiah 49:15, 16; 54:17. Praise God!

—SONIA, Toronto, Canada

■ Isaiah 40:31 gives me great hope and vision. If we wait upon God, we can be infused with strength; we can rise up from our inertness and weakness to expanding and elevating possibilities. Like the eagle, we can soar to limitless heights.

—LILLIAN, Massachusetts, United States

■ “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10). I remember the immense love of God for me. There are promises in the most difficult moments of life. He is wonderful.

—DIANA, via e-mail

■ “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:4, KJV). God is on call 24/7, 365 days a year.

—BHEKISISA, via e-mail

Next time, tell us in 50 words or less about your favorite Bible character. Send your response to: [letters@AdventistWorld.org](mailto:letters@AdventistWorld.org). Put in the subject line “50 Words or Less.” Be sure to include the city and country from which you are writing.

A photograph of Professor Sam K. Ongeru, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a grey suit and a blue tinsel garland. He is smiling and surrounded by a group of young children in red and white school uniforms. The background is filled with more children, some looking towards the camera and others looking at the professor.

\*Professor Ongeru was the minister of education for the Republic of Kenya at the time this picture was taken. Since then, he was promoted to be the minister of foreign affairs for his country.

## Every month Adventist World ends up in this teacher's hands

The Honorable Professor Ambassador **Sam K. Ongeru\*** reads *Adventist World* to stay in touch with his Seventh-day Adventist family around the world. You can stay connected with your church family in the same way. Contact your communication department if the free *Adventist World* is not regularly distributed in your church.

One Family.  
One World.  
*Adventist World.*