

November 2012

ADVENTIST WORLD



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The Unfinished Mission Story

“But Sergio did not improve.”

It's the only line I can still remember of the first mission story I ever had to tell at church. When I was 10, my fourth-grade teacher somehow cajoled me into memorizing and then telling the mission story from the *Mission Quarterly*, and—terrors!—presenting it to the Sabbath school members in the large congregation she attended.

As best I can recall, Sergio was a small and very ill boy from Brazil, who desperately needed medical help from a church-run clinic. And try as I may, I still can't recall how the mission story turned out. All I have left of it is that rather ominous-sounding fragment: *“But Sergio did not improve.”*

Needless to say, I've thought a great deal about Sergio over the years. Each time I meet a Sergio in my travels around the world—and there are many—I ask myself, “Could this be him? Is this the boy from the mission story 40 years ago whose health was heading the wrong direction?”

I'm not the only one for whom the mission stories of this worldwide movement have been greatly influential. As you'll learn from this month's cover feature, “100 Years of Mission Giving,” millions of Seventh-day Adventists around the globe have for 100 years been finding inspiration, motivation, and worthy projects to support in the mission stories told with such color and skill. The thirteenth Sabbath offering—long a treasured opportunity to push forward the mission of the church—has built schools and churches and seminaries and publishing houses—and hospitals, maybe even the one where Sergio sought help.

Pray as you read this month's edition of *Adventist World*. Pray for a heart that still seeks to know how the mission story will finally come out, and for a heart made generous by grace. By the grace of God, and because you continue to care, Sergio will yet improve.



Bill Knott

WORLD REPORT

SOUTH AMERICA: *Adventist Outreach Seeks Greater Member Engagement*

■ Lay evangelism was the focus of a 200-person gathering of South American Division leaders recently, held at the Seventh-day Adventist Church's headquarters in Brasília, capital city of Brazil.

Luis Gonçalves, who coordinated the meetings, said one of the main discussion topics for the group was the development of training for lay evangelists in all countries and regions. The initial goal is to empower more than 1,400 laypeople, who then would perform more than 2,000 outreach programs.

“Members will engage in evangelism in a practical way,” said Gonçalves.

Evangelism is not limited only to prophecy seminars and other topics during a set time period. It has much to do with building permanent relationships, even after baptism, within the context of discipleship.

Discipleship is what motivates Marcos Alexandre Martins, 25, who gave his testimony at the conference's opening session on August 28, 2012. Along with his mother, Iolanda, Marcos was responsible for contact with a psychologist who was recently baptized into the Adventist Church. In the words of Erton Köhler, South American Division president: “Evangelism is not the mission of a department—it is the mission of a church.”

In the Brazilian states of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and Espírito Santo the results of evangelism training are already being seen, leaders report. Raimundo Gonçalves, who coordinates outreach strategies in this region of Brazil, explains that more than 8,000 people were trained in person or via satellite in an 18-month period.

“I see greater mobilization in churches, and consequently baptisms occur with people better prepared for the spiritual challenges,” Gonçalves says. Two of the most challenging goals the Adventist Church has in these states are to confirm the official Adventist presence in 389 cities and increase its evangelism efforts in urban con-



PHOTO COURTESY ASN

HOMEWORK: Marcos Alexandre Martins (right) tells about evangelizing his neighborhood.

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FIT FOR A KING: King Tupou VI of Tonga receives a set of DVDs produced by Australia's Adventist Media Network.

PHOTO COURTESY SPD

glomerates such as the Rio Grande (the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro), with more than 6 million inhabitants.

In Buenos Aires, Argentina, the challenge is huge too, as evidenced by David Del Valle, coordinator of evangelism. One strategy is to recruit 3,000 young volunteers (Calebs) who will give Bible studies, maintain friendships, and contribute to strengthening small groups. Del Valle and his team are working in advance of a citywide outreach in 2013, featuring up to an aggregate of 187 weeks of messages.

"We also planted four new churches in Buenos Aires, as well as a school for lay evangelists and district pastors," he adds.

—reported by Felipe Lemos, ASN staff

Tonga: King Receives Adventist DVD

■ The king of Tonga was the grateful recipient of one of the first *Beyond: The Search* DVD sets to go to the Pacific islands.

King Tupou VI, a member of the Free Wesleyan Church, was given a *Beyond* box set during official celebrations to mark his birthday.

Tonga native Paula Moimoi Latu, who works for Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing at Tuggerah, Australia, presented the gift.

The presentation received great interest in the local press and community. More than 400 orders for the DVDs have already come from Tonga, according to the Adventist Media Network (AMN).

Beyond: The Search is a 14-part documentary series featuring stories from around the world that promote the Christian worldview as relevant, attractive, and reasonable. Produced by AMN, the series has already received a number of mainstream film awards, including two prestigious Cine Gold Eagles.

For more information, visit www.beyond.info.

—reported by Jared Madden and Kent Kingston, South Pacific Division

South Pacific: Conference Teaches Women to Share Their Faith

■ Hundreds of Adventist women leaders from across the South Pacific have been empowered to spread the gospel through a world-first conference held in Brisbane, Australia.

Every nation in the church's South Pacific Division (SPD) was represented at the Adventist Women's Conference, themed "Touch a Heart, Tell the World." The 630 attendees included 230 women from Papua New Guinea, the largest group represented.



CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT: Sarah Aratia, director of women's ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Cook Islands, was among those participating in the women's ministries event.

PHOTO COURTESY SPD

Hosted by the SPD Women's Ministries Department, the conference was the first of its kind, according to department director Erna Johnson. "It's a first for women's ministries the world over," she said. "They have done retreats before, but never a conference to show women how to do outreach.

"The whole reason for the conference was to teach women first of all to have a relationship [with God] and study the Bible for themselves; then to be able to share that with others."

Guest speakers included General Conference Women's Ministries Department director Heather-Dawn Small; La Sierra University (California) associate professor of New Testament studies Kendra Haloviak Valentine; and SPD president Barry Oliver. A series of workshops was held throughout the weekend on such topics as discipling children, friendship evangelism, spiritual gifts, and leadership.

The Sabbath offering collected more than A\$9,000, which will support such ministries for teenage girls and young women as *Gigi* magazine. The Saturday night closing program included a challenge for women to go out and share the gospel once they returned to their communities.

Johnson said the sad fact was that many women across the South Pacific think they have nothing to contribute to church life. "They are capable women; they have gifts and talents that would enhance the ministry of the church," she said.

"My goal has always been to help women realize their potential. I will be encouraging them to do outreach, and I will be supporting them as much as I can."

—reported by Tracey Bridcutt, South Pacific Division

Jamaica: Adventist University Honors Prime Minister With Honorary Degree

■ Portia Simpson Miller, Jamaica's prime minister, received an honorary degree from Northern Caribbean University (NCU) during its 2012 commencement exercises at its main campus in Mandeville, Jamaica.

The prime minister received an honorary doctorate of public service during the first commencement exercise, at which she was the main speaker.

"I thank you for conferring upon me the honorary Doctor of Public Service degree, which I accept with humility and dedicate to the people of Jamaica, to whom I have dedicated most of my life."

She added, "The Bible says that a city set upon a hill cannot be hidden, and NCU, formerly West Indies College, has been lit in a bright, shiny educational beacon that has more than 100 years of contribution in education."

The prime minister also used the opportunity to praise the Adventist Church for its contribution to nation building.

"I extend the appreciation of a grateful nation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church with its more than a quarter million members in Jamaica for your sterling contribution to the spiritual, educational, economic, and social development of our people and our nation."

As she addressed the more than 500 graduates assembled, the prime minister challenged them not to forget their parents as they climb the ladder of success. "I commend those mothers and fathers who would forgo the church hat or a new dress or new fur-



HONORED: The Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Most Honorable Portia Simpson Miller, receives an Honorary Doctor of Public Service degree from Trevor Gardner, President of Adventist Church-operated Northern Caribbean University, during commencement exercises on August 12. The university is located in Mandeville.

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nishing to ensure your education. You must never forget their contribution in ensuring that you are here today," said Simpson Miller.

Her Excellency Audrey Marks, former ambassador of Jamaica to the United States of America, was the second commencement speaker and was also given an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree.

—reported by Nigel Coke, Inter-American Division

Philippines: Adventist Nurses Gain Top Honors

■ The Manila Adventist Medical Center (MAMC) was named grand winner of the second Rachell Allen Nursing Quiz Show 2012, an invitational event sponsored by the nursing test review company.

Registered nurses Jamill Prieto, Weanne Estrada, and Cherianne Cosejo bested other teams to win the competition at the University of the Philippines Film Institute in Quezon City.

Continued on next page ▶

WORLD REPORT

The invitational event tests medical institution representatives in a variety of nursing specializations. In addition to the grand winner trophy in the registered nurse category, the contestants earned scholarships to the Rachell Allen Nursing Review Center, a cash prize, and products from sponsors.

The Manila Adventist Medical Center and Colleges, formerly Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, is a tertiary level IV academic medical center located in Pasay City, Metro Manila. The hospital is the primary teaching affiliate for Manila Adventist College.

MAMC has also served as a training hospital for specialist physicians in surgery, anesthesia, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, and gynecology.

Rachell Allen Reviewers, U.S.A., is an international review center designed to assist nurses in their preparation for licensing exams such as the Commission on Graduates in Foreign Nursing Schools and the National Council Licensure Examination.

—reported by Gay Deles, via Adventist News Network



VICTORY CELEBRATION: The winning team and supporters from Manila Adventist Medical Center.

IAN KENNETH

By CORRADO COZZI, *Euro-Africa Division*

EURO-AFRICA DIVISION: *Adventists Meet At* **Waldensian Temple** *Lay ministries convention*

The end of summer—August 30 to September 2, 2012—was the beginning of a season of inspiration for nearly 400 Seventh-day Adventists from across the Euro-Africa Division (EUD), as participants in the region’s first-ever lay ministries convention gathered at a Waldensian church in Bobbio Pellice, Italy. Adventists and others regard the Waldensians as early Christians who kept the seventh-day Sabbath.

Attendees came from Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, and Switzerland, as well as Italy. Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference president; his wife, Nancy; Adventist Mission director Gary Krause; and division leaders were guests at the event, but center stage was reserved for lay members themselves.

“The main goal of this event is to share testimonies on evangelism experienced by lay people in their local country,” said Paolo Benini, personal ministries director for the Euro-Africa Division and an organizer of the event.

Three-minute presentations were allotted to each lay project. Each country was introduced by a report that presented the major programs and projects supported by the church members in that nation. The presentations centered on innovative means of outreach to a Europe that is largely “postmodern” in its philosophical outlook.

Said one delegate, “I will go home with a lot of ideas, and with God’s help I will be able to put some of them to use.”

Youth delegate Gabriele Taddei added, “The laypeople’s testimonies have been uplifting and inspiring; it’s encour-



Top left: WALDENSIAN CHURCH: Exterior of Waldensian church in Bobbio Pellice, Italy, where hundreds of Adventists from the Euro-Africa Division gathered for the lay ministries conference. **Bottom left:** PRAYER PAUSE: Division president Bruno Vertallier (right) prays alongside General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson and Nancy Wilson. **Right:** MORNING WORSHIP: Participants answer a call to service during lay ministries conference.

honors early sabbatarians

aging to see how God is working through His people all around Europe. Sharing our experiences gave us the opportunity not only to know what is happening in other countries but also to get new ideas for evangelism.”

Krause shared a church planting report and a Global Mission overview. In one of his presentations, Taddei noted, “he showed a clip about a couple from Atlanta with three children who moved to a dangerous neighborhood of the city. They used Jesus’ method of reaching the people, mingling with them, and ministering to their needs; the missionary’s words really moved me.” (To read the report that appeared in *Adventist Review*, go to: <http://www.adventistreview.org/issue.php?issue=2011-1528&page=16>.)

Christian Altin, another youth participant, attended a workshop entitled “Creation and Evangelism.” He said, “Can we believe in evolution without our faith being affected? Do people have an interest in creationism? Is there something going on to present these issues to the public in a captivating way? This workshop caught the attention of those attending because the speakers shared exciting experiences of how each one of them is bringing creationism to the public.”

The health message presentations were well received in the towns of Torre Pellice and Bobbio Pellice. The Romanian Union presented an interesting “health bus,” made just for health expos, reminding us that indeed the right hand of Adventist outreach is the health message.

“I knew the program, I knew the guests, but when I set

my eyes over the beautiful mountains and the little stony roads of Bobbio Pellice, it made me think back to the days when these rocks protected the religious freedom here in Italy,” said Salvatore Cutrona. “I’ve found it very appropriate to have these meetings right here in the Waldensian valleys, especially after the message that Pastor Wilson shared with us on revival and reformation.”

These kinds of meetings give the opportunity of communication between the church and the lay members who are involved in personal ministries. As Wilson said: “Church leaders cannot do it all by themselves.”

“The Lord has been good to us in Bobbio Pellice, sending more than 400 witnesses from different European countries to this special Waldensian valley, the scene of so many memories of their faithfulness to carry the truths of the Bible,” said Bruno Vertallier, EUD president.

Along with the hundreds of participants, the event drew the attention of at least one significant media outlet: *L’Osservatore Romano*, the official daily newspaper of the Holy See in Rome, published a report of nearly 1,000 words noting the Adventist event and commenting on the discipline and evangelistic fervor of the participants. It’s not the first time the newspaper has spoken well of Seventh-day Adventists: Following the 2011 earthquake in Japan, *L’Osservatore Romano* noted the reaction of Adventists there and Pastor Wilson’s comments of support for victims.

—with additional reporting by Adventist World staff

PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA

HILA SHAKED



MOUNT CARMEL STANDOFF: A recent forest fire on Mount Carmel (inset) sent billows of smoke that were visible from outer space; reflecting not only the majesty of God's answer to Elijah's prayer, but also the divine perspective of Elijah's faithfulness.

By TED N. C. WILSON

It's Time

To Be About Our Father's Business

The following article is adapted from a sermon given on August 11, 2012, at the Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) International Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Elements of the oral style have been retained. —Editors

Do you believe it is time to be about our Father's business? We are a people of promise, bidden to share the straight message of Christ's precious love and His soon coming to the world. We know that this is God's Advent movement; this is His remnant church; these are His three angels' messages; the sanctuary message is His truth; and His final warnings to the world are the messages we are to proclaim. But do we really believe these things? Our only safety is in God's Word.

Do *you* believe? You know it is time; it is time to stand up and speak

the truth—in love—but to speak the truth! Jesus is coming soon!

Let's briefly look at the familiar story of Elijah the Tishbite—the very humble individual, the reformer, the simple man, the straightforward person who had a burden for Israel. Elijah prayed to God to change the course of Israel, and God answered his prayer.

Prayer and the Elijah Message

Elijah knew the essential truth for his time and all time: Prayer is powerful. God can do incredible things as you invite Him to change the course of whatever is facing you or the church.

Never minimize the power of prayer. No matter what we are going through, or what we may face; no matter where we have to stand for truth, God will see this church through! Prayer is a powerful protection against the devil's insidious plans.

After Elijah prayed, he was ready to give a special message to the king. Although Ahab “did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him” [1 Kings 16:33], Elijah was not afraid. The prophet walked straight into the palace. Passing by the guards, he gave no defense of his entrance or apology for arriving unannounced, because he knew he was on God's mission.

Striding straight into the king's presence, Elijah proclaimed: “As the

Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word” [1 Kings 17:1]. Then he disappeared.

People both in and outside of the royal courts soon heard about the prophecy, and they made fun of God’s prophet. “Ahh, what does Elijah know? It has always rained; it is going to rain,” they ridiculed. Just as today, there were many skeptics and many cynical people.

So begin with this understanding, brothers and sisters: As you preach the Elijah message today, you will be ridiculed—be prepared for it. Thank God and claim Matthew 5:11, 12: “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Blaming the Messenger

As the results of Elijah’s prophecy began to become evident, Ahab’s wicked wife, Jezebel, denounced Elijah as the source of the problem. Here again is a lesson for God’s last-day people. Many times when you are standing for truth, those who hear the truth you are sharing will denounce *you* as the problem. And so the Israelites said, “If we put Elijah out of the way, all of our troubles will be over.”

When Elijah could not be found, Jezebel was furious and killed all of God’s prophets she could find. When God dried up the rain in the land because of the sins of His people, Jezebel watered the ground with the blood of His servants. But in the third year of the drought, God gave another message to Elijah: “Go, present yourself to Ahab and I will send rain on the earth” [1 Kings 18:1].

At last, the two were face to face—Ahab, the proud king, and Elijah, God’s humble but fearless servant.

Notice how this dramatic confrontation unfolds: Ahab asks a most interesting question: “*Is that you, O troubler of Israel?*” [verse 17]. It was a remarkably strange question. God had tried to turn Israel around, to reform the nation, to turn His people back to Him. Ahab knew—as all wicked men ultimately know—that what he was doing was wrong, but he tried to justify himself. In the book *Prophets and Kings* we read: “It is natural for the wrongdoer to hold the messengers of God responsible for the calamities that come as the sure result of a departure from the way of righteousness. Those who place themselves in Satan’s power are unable to see things as God sees them. When the mirror of truth is held before them, they become indignant at the thought of receiving reproof” [pp. 139, 140].

Great Courage Needed

How is it with you and with me? Are we ready to receive God’s reproof in our own lives? Are we willing to humble ourselves and accept the changes that a loving God urges us to make?

Elijah showed great courage at this tense moment, and we may courageously follow his example. He was known as a person who routinely declared, “Thus saith the Lord.” He spoke truth distinctly and bravely. Three thousand years later God still needs strong men and women to speak His truth clearly, in love, and with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Responding to Ahab’s accusation, Elijah offered a powerful defense: “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals” [verse 18]. Then he launched his appeal: “Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Car-

mel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table” [verse 19].

Standing Firm

Under divine direction, Elijah chose Mount Carmel because it was a most conspicuous place to display God’s power. The text tells us that it was early in the morning when thousands gathered near the top of that great mountain rising up from the coastal range. Jezebel’s prophets marched to the site in all their gorgeous array; the king in his regal robes arrived; and Elijah stood alone.

Pointing to the impossibility of genuine faith coexisting with evil practices, Elijah demanded that his listeners make a choice. “How long will you falter between two opinions?” the prophet asked the people. “If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word” [verse 21].

I had the great privilege a few weeks ago to be in Israel for the first time and to see Mount Carmel from a distance. Unfortunately, time did not allow us to visit that incredible place where this magnificent event took place. I’ve imagined myself at Mount Carmel many times: have you put yourself in that picture, too? Would you be willing to stand firm for God? God’s Word tells us that the Israelites were afraid to reveal anything about their commitments. “The Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work,” wrote Ellen White in *Prophets and Kings*. “The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest in the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil” [p. 148]. Friends, whether we appreciate the fact or not, the whole universe *is* watching us right now to see what we will do, how we will choose. This is no moment for equiv-

ocation or double-mindedness. Let us stand loyally for God's truth.

Pointing to the 850 prophets, Elijah made the proposal that they prepare an altar and sacrifice, and he would do the same. "Then you call on the name of your gods," he instructed them, "and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God" [1 Kings 18:24]. The terms of this contest were clear, simple—and dramatic. Everyone, prophets of Baal included, agreed with the plan.

What followed next was one of the strangest—and saddest—scenes in sacred history. Hundreds of men, supposedly worshippers of a powerful pagan deity, flailed and cut themselves, trying to get their god to send fire. Sharpening the crisis, at noon, Elijah began to taunt them: "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened" [verse 27].

Brothers and sisters, the God of the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not sleep. He is wide awake, "for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" [2 Chron. 16:9]. We have a God who will hear us and will see us through to the very end.

Rebuilding the Altar

At the end of the day Elijah rebuilt God's altar and asked that something unusual be done. Raising the drama yet another notch, Elijah commanded that a trench be dug around the altar, and that water be brought and poured on the sacrifice. Three times the sacrifice was inundated—until water filled the trenches. Then at the time of the long-forgotten evening sacrifice of the sanctuary service, Elijah prayed a simple prayer of faith: "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may

know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.' Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice" [1 Kings 18:37, 38].

The amazing display of the truth of God's Word burned up more than the evening sacrifice: it also burned itself into the imaginations of God's people for centuries to come. Like me, I know you wish you could have been there. As with the pillar of fire that protected and separated the children of Israel from the pursuing Egyptian army, God was again demonstrating that He alone is both true and powerful. That same God will go with you as you go about your Father's business.

Stunned by the power of Elijah's God, the people bowed in submission to God. "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God," they repeated [verse 39]. A great opportunity for revival and reformation was suddenly at hand. Months—years—of physical and spiritual drought were succeeded by a powerful storm of heaven-sent rain. From the hour of decision flowed the streams of living water that began to renew a sin-sick, spiritually impoverished nation. All because one man—and so far as he then knew, only one man—found courage in his faith, and decided that being on God's side was worth more than public approval or wealth or fame ever could be.

Later, when Elijah became discouraged and felt alone, God reminded him of 7,000 people "who have never bowed down before Baal and whose mouths have never kissed his idol" [1 Kings 19:18, NCV].¹ Brothers and sisters, don't ever feel that you are alone. God is there, and you have many faithful brothers and sisters around you.

Now Is the Time

Each time we revisit the Mount Carmel story, we must ask ourselves,

"How long will we halt between two opinions?" It is time to be about our Father's business. I challenge you: Don't let yourself be distracted by anything that will undermine or diminish the significance of the mission God has given to His end-time people. In an era when controversy is painfully common and divisiveness abounds, we must not allow disunity to come into the church and take our eyes off of the great Elijah message that God has entrusted to each of us.

Hear again the challenge Paul gave in Romans 12:2: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mould" [Phillips].² Don't allow the devil to diminish your faith in the authority of the Bible, in the truth of God's seventh-day Sabbath, in the historicity of the Creation account given us in Genesis, in the urgency of the sanctuary truth, or in the beauty of the message of righteousness by faith.

A shaking is coming—we know that. God is asking us to stand firm for Him. Now is the time for revival and reformation, for mission to the cities. Now is the time to be "revived by His Word"; now is the time for medical missionary work. It is time to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity and conviction so that the world may know in the cities and the country that the Lord, He is God.

Now is the time. Are you willing to go about your Father's business? ■

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² Bible texts credited to Phillips are from J. B. Phillips: *The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition. © J. B. Phillips 1958, 1960, 1972. Used by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co.



Ted N. C. Wilson

is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



Cardiovascular Disease

A leading killer

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

I read about the problem of coronary heart disease in industrialized countries. I live in Sub-Saharan Africa and am saddened by our significant problem with HIV and AIDS, but wonder whether this part of the world is at risk for the heart disease that seems so prominent in affluent countries. Do we who live in low- to middle-income countries need to be concerned about the problem of coronary heart disease?

Your question probes into the whole process of the changing face of heart disease in the world at large and in low- to middle-income countries in general. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) became the single largest cause of death worldwide in 2004, when it was estimated that it caused 17 million deaths. This figure continues to grow.

Low- and middle-income countries are seeing an alarming and accelerating increase in rates of cardiovascular disease. CVD now causes the most deaths in all developing regions, with the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa; in this part of the world CVD is the leading cause of death in those over 45 years of age. Infectious diseases such as HIV and AIDS, malaria, and lower respiratory tract infections continue to be the leading cause of death in the young in Sub-Saharan Africa.

There has been a change in the pattern of diseases over the past 150 years. Before 1900, infectious diseases and malnutrition were the leading causes of death in almost every part of the world. If one added to this the high infant and child mortality rates, the mean life expectancy was approximately 30 years. Heart diseases accounted for less than 10 percent of

deaths, and these were mainly related to rheumatic heart disease (rheumatic fever) caused by streptococcal infections, and heart muscle damage (cardiomyopathies) related to other infections and malnutrition.

As nutritional knowledge increased, as public health measures improved sanitation, and as water cleanliness and immunization became common practices, there was a decrease in infectious diseases. Life expectancy increased dramatically, and in a number of countries the child and infant mortality rate declined. During this time cardiovascular diseases accounted for between 10 to 35 percent of deaths and included rheumatic valvular heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), coronary heart disease, and stroke.

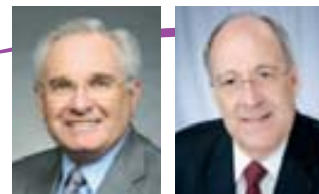
It is sadly ironic that nutritional practices caused the pattern of diseases to change even further. In technical terms an epidemiologic transition took place: degenerative and human-made conditions (noncommunicable diseases) have come to the fore, and cardiovascular diseases now account for between 35 and 65 percent of deaths, mainly from coronary heart disease and stroke. The factors that are largely responsible for this change in disease pattern include the increased intake of

saturated fats and calorie-dense foods (commonly known as junk foods), as well as decreased physical activity. These have fueled the emergence of high blood pressure and degenerative arterial disease (atherosclerosis). In many parts of the world, physical activity is declining, there is an epidemic of overweight and obesity, and the rates of high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and abnormal blood fat levels (cholesterol) are increasing—even in children.

Sub-Saharan Africa has not been left unscathed by this mega challenge of cardiovascular disease. Increased urbanization has led to changes in nutritional patterns, physical activity has decreased, and obesity is a growing problem. It is currently estimated that 40 percent of women in South Africa are overweight. Tobacco use also continues to increase in low- to middle-income countries, further increasing the risks for coronary heart disease.

Population risk-factor profiles of developing countries are mimicking the developed countries more and more. Regular exercise, a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, avoidance of saturated fats, and the avoidance of tobacco in all its forms are essential if you wish to avoid heart disease.

In short, practice the healthy Adventist lifestyle. Make wise choices—your heart will know the difference! ■



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Standing seems to be harder than sitting. Standing seems to be harder than falling. Even walking seems to be easier than standing. Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to walk around in circles, going nowhere, or to pace the floor back and forth inside a room—going toward the wall, then back toward the other wall, then back toward the first wall again—instead of just standing? You know you aren't going anywhere. But it's easier to walk up and down going nowhere than it is just to stand.

They don't know what to do. But they know they can't just stand there. They have to do something.

So they start up a chant about going back home: "The sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened. . . . They said to Moses, ' . . . It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness'" (Ex. 14:10-12).^{*} This is, of course, untrue, but is one consequence of the feeling that we can't just stand there—we must do something. It is a feeling that inspires triple confusion.

By LAEL CAESAR

Standing

Up

*You don't always
have to do something.*

Have you ever heard the command: "Don't just stand there! Do something!" Do what? Nobody can necessarily tell, but it's better than just standing there. Just standing is problematic. Something, it seems, is wrong with standing, even when you don't know what else you can do besides stand.

The Urge to Act

You and I both have a question about that: We want to know the origins of, and basis for, that desperate human urge—the urge to do something even when we have no idea what. Old Testament history points us to one momentous occasion when desperate humans responded to that urge. It is a point in Israel's story during which God is rescuing Abram's children from trouble. He wants to take them to a place where they can live well and free. They have to cross the sea, and they don't have any boats.



“Life is not first a physical matter.
It is first and last a **spiritual** matter.”

Three Times Wrong

First, we forget who and whose we are. As the psalmist reminds us, it is God who made us (Ps. 100:3). It was not a lottery prize that got Israel to the Red Sea; it was God’s personal guidance (Ex. 6:6). At the edge of the sea, as ever before, they were in God’s hands. But they had simply lost focus on who and whose they were, and how they had got to where they were.

How did any of us get here? Genesis tells us. “In the beginning God . . .” (Gen. 1:1). We need to remember our beginnings. But this is not the only area in which we blunder by insisting that we must do something. We’re also yielding to a major and very attractive and popular self-deception: We see ourselves as in charge of things that will collapse if we do not act. Listening to Israel when we think those thoughts, we may hear the folly of our own words. For Israel’s request is to return to slavery.

A historic answer to such thinking comes from the Negro spirituals of America’s South. Some are quite famous: “Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home.” “River Jordan is chilly and cold, chills the body but not the soul; river Jordan is deep and wide, milk and honey on the other side.” Though they sound like heaven, those songs were very earthly signals, too. People who toiled in slavery sang them to give hope to themselves and their brothers and sisters. Those who heard the singing got a message: the freedom runners were coming to smuggle more slaves out of their hellhole. Neither physical nor spiritual slavery is anything to want to go back to. One of those songs says, ‘Before I’d be a slave I’ll be buried in my grave!’ Wanting to go back to slavery makes no sense. But it’s the kind of folly that is expressed when I think I have to do something.

A third and most tragic implication of this flawed thinking is that we’re mostly denying God the chance to be God: Listen to Moses tell us what God wants us to do: “Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent’” (Ex. 14:13, 14).

What to Do, Then

So what are we supposed to do when we don’t know what to do? According to Moses, the answer is stand up! But you are frightened. You’ve seen the Egyptians. Your legs are melting!

You want to sit down before you faint. You are scared, and you don’t know what to do anyway! So what? What does God want you to do? Well, two things that are just one thing: He wants us to do nothing; and He wants us to stand.

The Septuagint [Greek] translation of “stand” in Exodus 14:13 uses the same term that appears in Ephesians 6:11. The word is *histemi*—“stand” in its intransitive sense. “Stand,” you see, can mean “set up,” which means that I am in charge, as in “I stood the chairs up in a row.” And we would love to have that authority. But humans are not in charge of the universe. We are in trouble. Everybody since Adam’s sad misdirection has been in trouble. And we will not get out of trouble by pretending to be in charge, or by turning and running.

What would happen to amputees if running away were the answer? Besides, running is a cowardly answer. But when Paul talks to his Ephesian saints, he offers the answer of standing that Moses recommends in Exodus. When he says to stand, he’s talking specifically about seeing Egyptians bearing down on you, or feeling the force of evil bearing down to crush you, and standing up. Having the powers of darkness threaten and launch their fiercest charge, and standing up. Standing is the message of Ephesians 6:11, for able-bodied souls, and for quadriplegics. That’s because standing up depends on more than legs.

I thank God for an answer that does not discriminate against the physically less endowed. For life is not first a physical matter. It is first and last a spiritual matter. And God who gives us life, regardless of whether we have legs or not, has made it possible for every one of us to stand up. He provides the armor in which we may “stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but . . . against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” As we “take up the full armor of God, [we shall] be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (Eph. 6:11-13). ■

* Scripture quotations 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.



Lael Caesar is glad he can stand with Jesus. Footraces are not his forte. He is an associate editor of *Adventist World*.

By CELESTE RYAN BLYDEN

Translator of the Word

Translating the Bible into modern Russian is a fearsome yet rewarding responsibility

On the third floor of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church office building in Takoma Park, Maryland, in a tiny white-walled attic with three windows, Mikhail Kulakov, Jr., is waxing poetic about merging the past with the future.

“The task of a translator could be compared to a musician transposing a piece written for violin and readying it for guitar,” he says. One end of his desk is completely covered with open books and Bibles, a lamp, a smattering of office supplies, an open laptop computer, and a black encased iPad 2. The professor of philosophy on a five-year leave from Washington Adventist University (WAU) rehearses the Russian translation of the Bible he hopes will be useful for public worship and personal devotional study.

“As we work on each phrase and passage, we read it aloud to see if it retains the melody and rhythm of the original,” he notes. “This morning I reviewed Jeremiah 51:15 in the King James Version.” He peers at the text and, with arms in full accompaniment, conducts an orchestra of words that stream forth melodiously. “He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his under-

standing,” he reads in full crescendo.

The goal, he says, is to find the best words and idioms to render the meaning of the original Hebrew and match them with words typical for today’s Russian culture. “Scripture was written over a period of 1,000 years, and over that time language changed,” says Kulakov, who matriculated from Newbold College in England, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Michigan, and the Oxford University’s Christ Church College, where he earned a Doctor of Philosophy in theology. “It’s important to keep the linguistic nuances in mind.”

That’s why he and a dozen other translators, some of whom live eight

time zones away in Russia, painstakingly research, write, review, and rewrite each text. “We go back and find the original Hebrew, study the definitions of each term, consult the Russian literature database to see how the best writers through the centuries used the verbiage in the most appropriate, fitting and closest context,” he shares. “We choose a variant, sleep on it, review it prayerfully and critically, and send it to philologists—specialists in language studies of syntax, style, and usage—who can tell us if it sounds like perfect, natural, good Russian that is the best equivalent for the original phrase.”

And so it goes—phrase by phrase, text by text, passage by passage, chapter by chapter, book by book, and year by



GOD’S WORD IN RUSSIAN: From his office in Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A., Mikhail Kulakov, Jr., oversees a team that is translating the Bible into modern Russian.

year. The process has taken more than two decades, and so far the team has completed and published the Psalms and the New Testament (2002); the five books of Moses, known as the Pentateuch (2009); and Daniel and the 12 minor prophets (2011), all projects led by the fourteenth and founding member of the translation team, Kulakov's father, role model, and namesake, the late Mikhail Petrovich Kulakov, Sr. Talking about his father's death in 2010 and carrying on his dream to translate the Bible is a "fearsome responsibility" that his son finds moving and, at this moment, nearly overwhelming.

Strong Heritage

According to Guillermo Biaggi, president of the Euro-Asia Division (ESD), it was 22 years ago that Mikhail Kulakov, Sr., had the dream. "As the first president of the Euro-Asia Division, he wanted to translate the full Bible into modern language, because the current Russian translation of the Holy Scriptures is 130 years old," he says.

Biaggi, now president of Kulakov's home division, sits in his office on the first floor of the four-story division headquarters in Moscow. Biaggi, executive secretary Volodymyr Krupskiy, and treasurer Brent Burdick shepherd the Adventist Church's work in 13 countries including Russia, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. They have the largest land territory of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's 13 world divisions. "Russia alone has nine time zones," Biaggi says, pointing to a large framed map on his office wall. The ESD has a membership of 137,000 out of 315 million inhabitants.

Although the church Biaggi leads exemplifies resilience and growth, they now face a new crisis: postmodernism. "We used to share literature, but now people spend more time on the Internet," he explains. He talks of riding the

extensive underground subway system in Moscow, a metro area of 15 million, many of whom struggle with alcoholism, domestic abuse, tobacco, addictions, or emptiness. "They are looking for something, and we have the answer," he posits. "We are committed to bringing this gospel of hope to them."

At the division's Zaoksky Adventist Seminary and Institute 70 miles south of Moscow some of the translators are working with Mikhail Kulakov, Jr. In May Biaggi, nine union presidents, the publishing house president, and other leaders of the vast ESD convened their Bible Translation Institute board. Kulakov, Jr., who helped found Zaoksky in the 1990s, attended with fellow board members Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University (WAU); and Zack Plantak, chair of WAU's Department of Religion.

During his report Kulakov shared how the meticulous work of the translation team is drawing encouraging reviews from leading Russian philologists touting the beauty of the language. He also shared how specialists in biblical languages have noted its "accuracy and high literary and scholarly" work, and that leading Russian Orthodox scholars have given positive evaluations for its literary and scholarly quality. Adventist leaders, readers, and donors underwriting this project are also pleased and anticipate the completion of the translation by 2015, in time for it to be distributed at the General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas. "People who have read the finished portions say, 'Now I can understand the Word of God,'" says Biaggi, who chairs the board.

All of this spurs Kulakov and his translation team forward and keeps them going around the clock between Maryland, United States, and Zaoksky, Russia. "When I go to bed at night here, it's morning there, and they start work," he explains. "And when they

finish their day, it's morning here, and I review their latest version." Now that they've finished Jeremiah and the other major prophets, they Skype, live-chat, telephone, and e-mail about drafts of their current work on the poetic and wisdom literature of Job, Proverbs, and Song of Songs.

Back in his office at Sligo church, Kulakov is trying to articulate why his father's legacy has become his life's work. "I started working with my father in 2006, and I don't know if in my lifetime I will participate in anything as important, rewarding, joyous, or humbling as this project.

"I remember when he was working on Genesis 5:22, which reads in King James, 'Enoch walked *with* God,'" he said. "Out of their desire to be reverent, nineteenth-century Russian scholars instead chose 'Enoch walked *before* God.' But having suffered through humiliation and loss of dignity in Joseph Stalin's labor camps, my father wanted new generations of Russians to experience a God who stands at the doors of human hearts, respectfully knocks, and waits to see if we will invite Him to enter," he says, pausing to gather himself. Then comes the crescendo: "He *so* wanted them to understand that you *can* have such a *personal* experience of love, acceptance, and affirmation with God, that on this rare occasion, properly footnoted, he departed from the original and chose to say 'Enoch *lived in intimate relationship* with God.'"

Like father, like son. ■



Celeste Ryan Blyden

serves as communication director for the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. See a video about this project at www.columbiaunion.org/videos.



100 YEARS

of Mission Giving

Making a World of

What would you do with more than US\$2 Billion? In the United States the U.S. presidential candidates are estimated to have spent a total of \$2.5 billion on their campaigns this year.¹ The cost of NASA's *Curiosity* space rover mission to Mars was more than \$2 billion.² Two and a half billion dollars represents a small stake in Facebook,³ and also represents the loss of Microsoft's Online Services Division in 2011.⁴

But \$2 billion can do much more than this. Seventh-day Adventists have learned that it can build a worldwide system of spreading the gospel and ministering to millions, meeting the spiritual, physical, mental, and social needs of countless individuals and communities around the world.

Over the past 100 years Seventh-day Adventists have sacrificially given US\$2.2 billion in mission offerings,⁵

making an enormous impact on the world in which we live. That's rounded to \$13.3 billion in today's U.S. dollars.⁶

First Mission Project

In 1885 the first Sabbath school mission offering was collected by the Upper Columbia Conference, a territory covering a portion of the northwestern United States. The offering was used to send missionaries to Australia.

The following year the General Conference promoted the first churchwide Sabbath school mission project—building a mission boat named the *Pitcairn* to sail to the tiny island in the South Pacific where the

dreds of popcorn balls to raise \$15 for the *Pitcairn* fund—that is \$365.85 in today's dollars! Working together, young and old raised \$12,000 for this first Sabbath school mission project.⁸

A New Plan

Following the *Pitcairn* project, Sabbath school mission offerings continued to increase. On Sabbath, January 6, 1912, Sabbath school members were introduced to “a new plan” through a small eight-page pamphlet that would later become known as the Sabbath school *Missions Quarterly*, published by the Sabbath School Department of the General Conference.

“Our Sabbath-school offerings have increased so splendidly that it is thought we may now have a special object for which we may set apart the gifts of one Sabbath in each quarter,” announced the cover page. “The General Conference Committee has voted to allow us to select the last Sabbath in each quarter as a day when we may donate to a special object.”

Thus, the special Thirteenth Sabbath Offering program was begun, along with the mission quarterly, helping to focus the attention of the church on the specific regions and projects that would benefit from the quarterly Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. This, of course, was in addition to the regular mission offerings that were collected each Sabbath and sent to missions around the world.

Members were encouraged to mingle prayer with their gifts. “By intelligent, prayerful, cheerful giving, our gifts may be multiplied as were the five loaves and two fishes, and a multitude blessed thereby,” urged the first *Missions Quarterly*. “Pray as you give. In every Sabbath-school on that day [Thirteenth Sabbath], let there be a season of prayer in behalf of the cities of India.”⁹

Early Projects

The cities of India were selected to be the recipients of the first Thir-

teenth Sabbath mission offering. For nearly a year J. L. Shaw, “superintendent” of the India Union Mission, had been writing letters to the Mission Board: “At the last General Conference we pled for a minister for that great metropolis of Calcutta. The board made an effort to answer the call; but as you know, no help has yet been sent. Many prayers, letters, and appeals for the work in Calcutta have since been written, and still no help has come. I am hoping, praying, and believing that help will soon be sent to India.”¹⁰ In another letter Shaw wrote: “The great Lord of the harvest surely somewhere has men and means to pioneer the way.”¹¹

Shaw's prayers were answered when more than \$7,500 was given for evangelistic work in the large cities of India in the first Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, and George W. Pettit and J. M. Comer, along with their families, were sent from the North Pacific Union Conference to work in India. Today approximately 900 ordained and licensed Seventh-day Adventist ministers work in nearly 4,000 churches throughout India.¹²

Other special mission offering projects in 1912 included a new mission station on the Selukwe Reserve in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), homes for missionaries in China, India, Korea, and Africa, a school in Argentina, known then as River Plate Academy, and the Púa Training School in Chile.

Limping Along

Writing to the secretary of the General Conference, W. A. Spicer, the president of the South American Union Conference, J. W. Westphal, explained the dire situation at River Plate Academy: “We are limping along as best we can. . . . In the large schoolroom [the chapel] three classes have to recite at the same time, because the classrooms above are used as living-rooms for the students. One teacher has his classroom in the vestibule [by the stairway], and

By GINA WAHLEN

ving Difference

islanders were waiting to be baptized and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁷ After its mission to *Pitcairn*, the boat sailed on to Tonga, the Cook Islands, Samoa, and Fiji, continuing its missionary work for several years.

Children were some of the most enthusiastic supporters of this special mission project. One boy helped his mother pop popcorn over the family's wood-burning stove to make hun-

the others have to help themselves as best they can; and the whole equipment is far from desirable.”¹³

Through the special Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, River Plate Academy was able to repair and expand its buildings. Today River Plate Adventist University in Argentina enrolls more

More than
1,200
mission projects
completed in
last 100 years.

than 2,500 students per year and offers more than 30 university degrees through its Schools of Business Administration, Education, Health Sciences, and Theology.¹⁴

Medical Mission in Depressed Times

In the 1930s much of the world experienced difficult financial hardships during what became known as the Great Depression. Unemployment was high and income low, and yet Sabbath school mission offering boxes were overflowing as members faithfully followed the “60 cents per week” mission offering plan, providing the means to help millions of people in need.

In 1931 Dr. A. Arzoo, who was serving in Sultanabad, Pakistan, told of one such need, which was published in the *Missions Quarterly*: “Some time ago a young girl was brought to me for treatment. Her throat was in a very bad condition. A dreadful disease was eating its way into the flesh. A prescription was given to her people, and they were told to buy the ampule and come back to the dispensary. They all went to get the medicine, but they never returned. I suppose they could not pay for the medicine, and were too

embarrassed to come back. It would have cleared up her condition, and thus she would have been cured and would not have been a source of infection to others. . . . Many are sick who come to us for treatment, but we do not have the necessary equipment and supplies, and we are obliged to turn many away because we cannot go beyond our budget.”¹⁵

Sabbath school members responded with a mission offering that year of \$2.5 million to help with this and many other needs in the Middle East region, as well as in Africa, India, Burma, and Inter-America.

Telling the Stories

In 2012 the Sabbath school *Missions Quarterly*, now known as *Adventist Mission*, turned 100. For the past century this small publication has faithfully chronicled the needs of missions around the world and has inspired young and old to give to the special Thirteenth Sabbath Offering projects.

Schools and universities, hospitals, clinics, and orphanages, printing presses and Better Living centers, churches and chapels, dormitories and evangelistic

training centers, libraries and media centers, youth campgrounds, and Bible lesson materials in local languages came into existence through the generosity of those who gave to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

These offerings have helped to send thousands of missionaries and interdivision workers, Global Mission pioneers and lay evangelists, doctors, dentists, nurses, teachers, and pastors to serve in every part of the globe.

Special mission offerings have helped to provide materials for evangelistic outreach, radio and television programming, broadcast equipment, satellite broadcast time, literature, books, and video and online Bible studies. More than 1,200 mission projects around the world have been completed because of generous gifts to mission, and many more are still being completed.

Charlotte Ishkanian, who has served as editor of *Adventist Mission* since 1993, spends much of her time in the field gathering stories and conducting interviews that will be featured in upcoming issues of the magazine, available in editions for children and



*The amounts above reflect the average yearly gift to missions per member and are not adjusted for inflation.

for youth and adults. In addition, the Adventist Mission Department offers a companion DVD each quarter, featuring short video segments suitable for viewing during Sabbath school. These and many more resources are available online at www.AdventistMission.org.

Trends in Mission Giving

While the amount given to world missions during the past century is impressive, one aspect that might be overlooked is the ratio of mission giving compared with tithe dollars. In 1912, the average per member tithe income was \$14.48. Mission offerings that year were an average of \$4.47 per member. In 1932 during the Great Depression, the average per member tithe had decreased to \$13.08 but mission offerings increased with an average of \$5.83 per member. By 2010, the average per member tithe had risen to \$127.20, but mission offerings were very close to the 1912 figure, with an average of \$4.81 per member. The 2010 level of mission giving was \$1.02 *lower* than in 1932.¹⁶

The good news is that in 2011 mission giving was up from the previous year, with an average of \$5.01 per member. During the fourth quarter of 2011 the second-highest Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on record was given—a total of \$763,660 to help support work among refugees and Native Americans in the North American Division.

Mission Needs Today

Mission needs today are even greater than they were back in 1912, according to Gary Krause, Adventist Mission director at the world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

“There are more people on earth today who are not Adventists than there were a hundred years ago,” says Krause. “Thousands will die in the next 24 hours who have never even heard the name of Jesus. Some 300 million kids will go to bed hungry tonight. So if our mission work is established, it certainly isn’t finished.”

POCKET-SIZED:
The first mission quarterly from 1912 fits easily into a shirt pocket. Today’s quarterlies are packed with thrilling stories in a colorful magazine format.



Acknowledging that per-capita mission giving has dropped during the past few decades while the percentage of funds being given to the local church has increased during that time, Krause doesn’t think it has to be a case of “either/or.”

“I know it takes a huge amount of money to run a successful local church program in places such as North America,” he admits. “We must faithfully support our local church, but we can’t forget our needy brothers and sisters around the world.

“If it weren’t for mission offerings, we would have to close down much of the church’s mission program—its medical, educational, humanitarian, and spiritual outreach to the world. Our wholistic mission perspective encompasses the globe, not just our corner. We care about people—irrespective of where they live, their skin color, or the language that they speak.

“Mission is the lifeblood of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Take away the Great Commission, and we become an inward-looking club focused on our own needs and interests. We lose our fire. We forget about the needs of a world that Jesus died to save.” ■

² Casey Dreier, “Curiosity Comes Cheap,” available online at www.planetary.org/blogs/casey-dreier/20120809-curiosity-comes-cheap.html.

³ Sam Gustin, “Social Windfall,” available online at <http://business.time.com/2012/02/02/social-windfall-facebook-ipos-billion-dollar-winners/slide/peter-thiel/#peter-thiel>.

⁴ James Woodfin, “Microsoft’s Black Hole Sucks \$2.5 Billion for the Year,” available at www.neowin.net/news/microsofts-black-hole-sucks-25-billion-dollars-for-the-year.

⁵ Statistics gathered by the author from the *Annual Statistical Reports* (1912–2011) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

⁶ Conversion into current U.S. dollars was calculated on August 28, 2012, by using a GDP-per-capita index generated by “Measuring Worth” (www.measuringworth.com). The editors wish to thank David Trim, director, Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, for his assistance.

⁷ See “The Bounty and the Bible,” *Adventist World*, January 2009, pp. 16–19.

⁸ “The First Mission Project,” *Adventist Mission—Children*, Second Quarter 2012, pp. 4, 5.

⁹ “Pray as You Give,” *Missions Quarterly*, January 1912, pp. 2, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² “World Church Statistics,” available online at www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=D_SUD.

¹³ *Missions Quarterly*, Fourth Quarter 1912, p. 4.

¹⁴ See “Education Without Borders,” *Adventist World*, December 2011, pp. 18–22.

¹⁵ *Missions Quarterly*, Fourth Quarter 1931, pp. 28, 29.

¹⁶ *Annual Statistical Reports* (1912, 1932, 2010) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



Gina Wahlen is the assistant to the editor/publisher of *Adventist World*. She and her husband, Clinton, served as missionaries at the Zaosky Theological Seminary in Russia (1992–1998), and at the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies in the Philippines (2003–2008). They and their children, Daniel and Heather, have a lifelong love for mission.

¹ The Center for Responsive Politics, “2012 Will Be Costless Election Yet, With Outside Spending a Wild Card,” available online at www.opensecrets.org/news/2012/08/2012-election-will-be-costliest-yet.html.

I remember the long summer days when growing up in Australia. These were the days when a day at the beach seemed to stretch out into a blissful eternity of sand and surf. The days never seemed to end. But the reality was that they always did end. I remember feeling disappointed when eventually we had to jump in the car and go home. I learned that as we grow, and see favorite toys break, friendships end, and even loved ones die, we painfully learn the apparent truth that all good things come to an end.

Just Wait a Minute

But it is a lie! Don't believe it! God assures us that ultimately He will make what is good last forever; and those things that bring harm and sadness will cease to exist. The day will come when His promise will be fulfilled, and God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).¹ God's people will live with "everlasting joy" (Isa. 35:10). This seems so contrary to the natural order of things as we experience them today that the natural question to ask is "How will God bring this about? How will He put an end to sin and ensure that joy reigns throughout the universe forever?"

Here Is How

God tells us that at the Second Coming the faithful saints of God who sleep in death will be resurrected (1 Thess. 4:16). God calls this the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:6; cf. John 5:29), and He calls those who take part in this resurrection "blessed and holy" (Rev. 20:6). We can all be part of this resurrection by remaining faithful to Jesus and to His Word (verse 4). Also at the second coming of Jesus, sinners and all the works of sin will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 19:20, 21). The resurrected saints will reign with Jesus in heaven for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4, 6). During this time Jesus will allow the saved to review His work of love in the lives of all of humanity, and all their questions will be answered (verse 4).

At the end of the 1,000 years the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, comes down from heaven to earth with all of the redeemed (Rev. 21:1, 2). At this time the unrepentant dead are raised. This is the second resurrection, and the number of the sinners raised "is like the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:8). Now Satan, having been "released from his prison" (verse 7), gathers the resurrected wicked for his final attack against God and His people (verse 8). I used to ask myself why Satan would even bother. As I have become older and seen more of evil, I've come to realize that it is because when God is not present in the life, evil does what evil has always done, which is to attack what is good.

By ELIEZER GONZALEZ

NUMBER 27

He Can and He Will

*How God
will make all
things new*

It is at this time that the final phase of the judgment will take place, before the great throne of God (verses 11, 12). Before the universe the love and sacrifice of Jesus are again displayed, and the lives of all those who have rejected salvation are reviewed. As the entire universe sees the love and righteousness of Jesus, it is then that “at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10, 11). Jesus already receives the worship of the rest of the universe, but now, one by one, sinners too will bow, until, at last, Satan himself will bend the knee in Jesus’ presence.

After this great universal acknowledgment of the love and justice of Jesus, sin and sinners will be destroyed forever (Rev. 20:9, 10). This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection; it is an eternal death. Sin and sinners will cease to exist.

A New Creation

Now that the “former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4), God declares, “Behold, I am making all things new” (verse 5). God gives us His personal guarantee that He will do it, saying to the apostle John, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true” (verse 5). It is of this new earth, of this new creation, that the apostle Paul wrote, “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

The ways in which the apostle John described the new earth were only his feeble attempts to portray with human words things that are ultimately indescribable in our language. However, we can be confident that the wonderful descriptions of Revelation 21 and 22 will be finally fulfilled. This earth will host the capital city of the universal dominion of Jesus Christ, and it will be the final and true home of the redeemed. Perhaps the most exhilarating promise of all is the simple statement that we “will see his face” (Rev. 22:4). No more images; no more metaphors; no more symbols—only Jesus.

For me, the closing words of *The Great Controversy* say it best: “The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”² ■

¹ All Scripture quotations have been taken from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 678.

Millennium *and the* End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)



Eliezer Gonzalez lives on the Gold Coast in Australia with his wife, Ana, and their two children. He has an M.A. in theology and an M.A. in early Christian history, and is currently completing a Ph.D. Eliezer has a passion for evangelism and for the growth of the kingdom of Christ.

Every Sabbath a growing number of Seventh-day Adventist congregations are taking on a distinctive appearance: men wearing skullcaps and prayer shawls, alongside women, recite prayers in the Hebrew language of their forebears. In many places the Torah, a parchment scroll of the first five books of the Bible—authored by Moses—is read from the platform. A Jewish flavor permeates the proceedings, even the potluck suppers.

And while the congregations are thoroughly Adventist—using the same Sabbath school quarterly (edited by Clifford Goldstein, a Jewish Adventist) and holding the same doctrines as other congregations around the globe—there’s something different here. Worshipping one God and His Son, the Messiah, dozens of Jewish Adventist congregations are demonstrating the connection between the Sabbathkeepers of ancient Israel and many of God’s followers today.

Still Chosen

From the bustling metropolis of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the American Jewish neighborhoods of Los Angeles, Miami, and New York City, to Israel’s teeming streets and beyond—Seventh-day Adventists are reaching and receiving Jewish believers in both Jesus and the three angels’ messages. Richard Elofer, a longtime worker in the field of Jewish Adventist outreach who heads the church’s World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center, based in France, estimates there are between 4,000 and 5,000 Jewish Adventists active in the church today.

That may not seem like many, but it’s far more than have ever been recorded before, Elofer said. The difference, which he has seen during 23 years of working to reach Jews, is a ministry approach that understands the Jewish mind-set and adapts the Adventist mes-

sage to be understood by those who may be unfamiliar with any Christian beliefs.

“The change I have seen is tremendous,” Elofer told *Adventist World*. “In the 1990s we had no Jewish Adventist congregations in the world; today we have about 40 of them, 25 just in the United States. Each of these congregations is doing a great job of witnessing to Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. Before starting this contextualized ministry, Jews were coming to the church, but they did not stay; after three to five years they left the church. Today our ministry is so great that Jews have found their place in the church and stay and remain Adventist.”

In Florida, Jeff Zaremsky, a Jewish Seventh-day Adventist pastor, focuses on reaching out to Jewish people in a manner they easily understand. He also works with the church’s North American Division to spearhead Jewish evangelism efforts, which will in 2013 include Shalom Adventure, a Web site introducing people to the

By MARK A. KELLNER

The Jews of Adventism

Growing in number, ancient and modern sabbatarian faiths connect.

common beliefs between Jewish and Adventist faiths.

“We have unique literature,” Zaremsky told attendees at the 2012 Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) convention. “We have congregations that look like Jewish temples [synagogues], and the services that are conducted in a way that is very Jewish-friendly.”

He added, “The Jewish culture is still so much different, especially when we get into religious circles. The terminology is different, and so much about it is different it’s like a totally different foreign language.”

Rooted in History

There’s ample reason for this: After 2,000 years of what many Jews call the Common Era, i.e., the time after Jesus’ life and ministry (often referred to as the Christian Era in Christian circles), many Jews have become wary of, indifferent to, or even hostile to the gospel message. It’s not difficult to understand why: centuries of anti-Semitism,



SEDER: Passover seder (dinner) at Jewish Adventist congregation in Florida, USA.

SPEAKER: *Adult Bible Study Guide* editor Clifford Goldstein, himself a Jewish believer, addresses a Jewish Adventist congregation in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

JEWISH HERITAGE CENTER



which culminated in the *Shoah*, or “catastrophe,” the Nazi-led Holocaust that killed more than 6 million Jewish men, women, and children, have hardened many hearts. To many Jews, especially those of an observant bent, the name “Christian” is a label of hatred against their people.

Because of anti-Semitism and persecution, many Jewish communities have become somewhat insular and protective: doing business with Christians is fine, but don’t venture into religious matters. Even more, many Jews firmly believe that if one is born a Jew, one should remain one all their life, and die as a member of the Jewish faith.

The post-Holocaust bursts of ecumenism and understanding between Jewish and Christian leaders have done a lot to lessen that tension, however. At the same time, the existential pressures of modern life have led many Jewish people into spiritual searching: many avowedly “secular” Jews are open to spiritual concepts

and discussions, and thus are potentially open to the Adventist message.

Elofer’s life is an illustration of this: an Orthodox Jewish boy from Morocco, he was a teenager living in France when he met an Adventist family, who befriended him. They shared their mutual belief in the Sabbath and eating food the Bible permitted, and read Bible passages that Elofer imagined had to be different from the “Jewish” Bible he’d received when he was confirmed as an adult member of the Jewish faith, a ceremony called bar mitzvah, literally, “son of the commandments.”

Elofer was surprised. “When I got home, I opened my Jewish Bible to check if what [they had] read was the same, and to my surprise it was. Progressively, I accepted [these] teachings and four or five years later agreed to be baptized.”

His conversion changed his life, but not without cost: “For Orthodox Jews to become Christian, it is like dying; that is why my father mourned

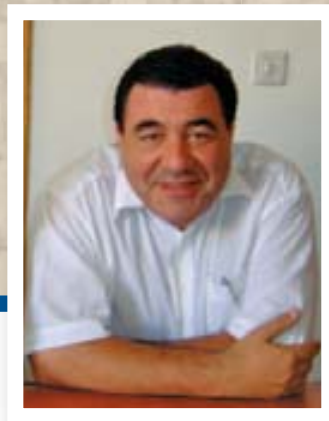
for me, and I did not see my father for about eight years. Today my parents live in Israel, and my father is still as strong a Jew as he was 30 years ago: he goes to synagogue every day for his prayers. We can speak together, but not about religion,” Elofer said.

Elofer, who has served as president of the Adventist Church in Israel for 15 years, says the situation there is far different from earlier years: “After about 100 years of presence in Palestine/Israel we had only 50 members. Today there are more than 1,000 members, shared in 25 congregations, and the majority of our members are Israelis.”

The Adventist Connection

Many of those members turned out in Jerusalem on Sabbath, June 16, 2012, to hear from Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The Sabbath morning worship followed the pattern of many Adventist services around the world, with the added flavor of songs in Hebrew and



Richard Elofer

BELIEVERS: The Adventist Church in Israel is home to many Jewish believers.

announcements and preaching translated into Russian, a language spoken by many in the congregation. Both Wilson and Julio Mendez, secretary-treasurer of the Israel Field, relied on Oleg Elkin to render their English into Russian, although Wilson, who spent two years as president of the Euro-Asia Division, offered more than a few sentences in Russian as well.

In his message, Wilson commented on what happened there some 2,000 years ago, and its relevance for today.

“In this very special place in the world, Jesus told Nicodemus that unless one is born again, one cannot see the kingdom of God,” he explained. “This is what we need, and what every person in Israel needs.”

In the United States, Jewish Adventist congregations can be found in many places, which is not surprising given the American Jewish population of nearly 6 million people. Jeff Zaremsky said his Florida congregations are small but growing, because of the effort to put a Jewish accent on the Adventist message. “I believe this has been the most effective way of sharing God’s love with the Jewish people,” he said in an interview.

“We’ve seen Jewish people actually attending and for the long term, growing in their spiritual walk, staying with it. Some are accepting Messiah for the first time, and some are becoming members,” he added.

Argentina’s Jewish Adventist community is one of the most advanced, in many respects. The congregation has cordial relationships with many Jewish community leaders, and has produced its own Jewish Adventist prayer book and order of worship that mirrors the traditional Jewish liturgy. The idea, again, is to make the Adventist faith comfortable for those whose tradition includes little or no exposure to Christian beliefs.

“Over 10 years traditional Jews that do not believe in Jesus, atheistic Jews, and Adventist Jews are part of our community,” said David Barzola, the Jewish Adventist pastor who has led the Buenos Aires congregation for 10 years. “Some people choose to become Adventists, other people have no interest in becoming an Adventist, but many think that to be an Adventist and Jewish is not inconsistent.”

Reaching out to Argentina’s Jewish

community is also essential, he said. “Our community seeks good relations with the Jewish communities of Argentina. We do not want to be separate, we want to build bridges. Therefore, [Jewish] community authorities, rabbis, and Adventist authorities visit us and participate in our activities.”

Future Outreach

What of the future? Continued outreach is assured, especially to the 1.6 million Jews in and around New York City, where the General Conference is spearheading a major evangelistic effort in 2013. Zaremsky told the ASI audience he will participate there in Jewish outreach in establishing health centers and other efforts.

Elofer said that it’s important for the Adventist Church to welcome Jewish believers. “We don’t have to be suspicious about Jews who become Seventh-day Adventists—we have to trust them,” Elofer said. “They are faithful Adventists and faithful to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to [its] history and heritage. Yet they have their own way of being Seventh-day Adventists and their own way to worship God according to their culture.” ■



Mark A. Kellner, a Jewish believer in Jesus, serves as news editor for *Adventist World* and *Adventist Review* magazines.

By ELLEN G. WHITE

TO THE Jew First

And Also to the Greek

At the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple laid in ruins, many thousands of the Jews were sold to serve as bondmen in heathen lands. Like wrecks on a desert shore, they were scattered among the nations. . . . Maligned, hated, persecuted, from century to century theirs has been a heritage of suffering.

Notwithstanding the awful doom pronounced upon the Jews as a nation at the time of their rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, there have lived from age to age many noble, God-fearing Jewish men and women who have suffered in silence. God has comforted their hearts in affliction, and has beheld with pity their terrible situation. He has heard the agonizing prayers of those who have sought Him with all the heart for a right understanding of His word. Some have learned to see in the lowly Nazarene . . . the true Messiah of Israel. As their minds have grasped the significance of the familiar prophecies so long obscured by tradition and misinterpretation, their hearts have been filled with gratitude to God for the unspeakable gift He bestows upon every human being who chooses to accept Christ as a personal Saviour. . . .

From Paul's day to the present time, God by His Holy Spirit has been calling after the Jew as well as the Gentile. "There is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11), declared Paul. . . .

"The gospel," he declared, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16, 17). It is of this gospel of Christ, equally efficacious for Jew and Gentile, that Paul in his epistle to the Romans declared he was not ashamed.

When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Christ as the Messiah. Among Christian ministers there are only a few who feel called upon to labor for the Jewish people; but to those who have

been often passed by, as well as to all others, the message of mercy and hope in Christ is to come.

In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth. As the Old Testament Scriptures are blended with the New in an explanation of Jehovah's eternal purpose, this will be to many of the Jews as the dawn of a new creation, the resurrection of the soul. As they see the Christ of the gospel dispensation portrayed in the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, and perceive how clearly the New Testament explains the Old, their slumbering faculties will be aroused, and they will recognize Christ as the Savior of the world. Many will by faith receive Him as their Redeemer. . . .

Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save. As His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed.

"Thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed. . . . But when he seeth his children, the work of Mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify My name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine" (Isa. 29:22-24). ■

This article is a selection taken from *Gospel Workers* (pp. 397-399), by Ellen G. White. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

Marked

Does the Bible say anything about tattoos?

It doesn't say much. In cultures around the world tattooing has been a common practice for ages. So your question is about an ancient practice that continues to be part of the human experience in many places. Tattoos are usually understood to refer to designs or symbols or art on the body by inserting, through the use of certain instruments, ink or colorants under the epidermis. Human skin is used as a natural canvas. There is also what some call scar tattooing, the result of intentionally searing or scratching the body to create some type of mark or pattern.

I will first discuss the role of tattooing in biblical times, then the biblical text, and finally make some comments on the issue.

1. Tattooing in Biblical Times and Today: In the world of the Bible tattoos indicated social status; e.g., a slave would be inscribed with the name of his owner or of the owner's god. They could also have religious significance. The name or symbol of the god was tattooed on the person. They could be made for protection, e.g., to shield the person from the attacks of evil powers. These three uses are found almost everywhere in the ancient world, and in many places today. In the Western world tattoos have traditionally been associated with sailors, gangs, and bikers, but this has changed. In the case of gangs, tattoos are basically expressions of rebellion and solidarity among members of the gang. A growing number of evangelicals in North America are using tattoos to express their commitment to Christ. Tattooing is no longer restricted to certain marginalized social groups; it is estimated that at least 24 percent of Americans have a tattoo. It is now perceived to be an act of self-expression, often commemorating an important event in the life of the person, or to have some other symbolic meaning (e.g., talismanic power). The fact that celebrities in sports and movies have tattoos makes the practice popular. Nevertheless, about 25 percent of those who have tattoos will remove them from their bodies.

2. Tattoos in the Bible: The Bible says very little about tattoos. The main text is Leviticus 19:28, which is part of a

collection of laws in which pagan practices related to the dead are forbidden. The meaning of the Hebrew word *qa'afa* ("tattoo") is uncertain, but based on postbiblical Hebrew, it is traditionally rendered "tattoo." This is confirmed by the second noun, *ketobet* ("mark"), which is based on the verb "to write." This is about writing something on the body. The phrase is taken as an idiom meaning "a tattoo" ("Do not put a tattoo on yourselves"). Often the tattooing mentioned is interpreted as referring to a pagan expression of mourning. But this is not clearly indicated in the text. And as far as I can tell, ancient mourning rituals did not include tattooing. The prohibition may refer to religious tattooing.

3. Word of Advice: The passage discussed above does not support tattooing. No specific reason is given for the prohibition, except that Leviticus 19 is a call to holiness. Therefore, the law aims at instructing God's people on the way of holiness. Holiness expresses itself not only in the spiritual realm but in and through our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit. We are called to glorify God with our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19). We can also add that humans, created in the image of God, are to reveal that image through their bodies and the way they treat them. Mutilations and tattoos may fall into this category, and could be seen as damaging God's creation. We should also keep in mind that the body is not something we own, but who we are. It is a gift from the Lord; it belongs to the Lord. Therefore it would be better for Christians to abstain from tattooing.

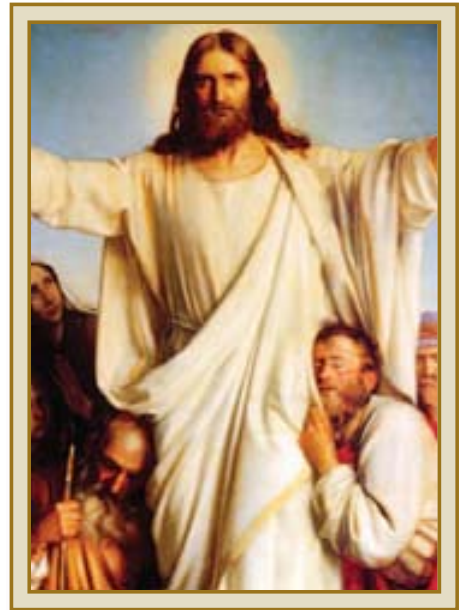
But let me end with a word of caution: We should not sit in judgment against those who, for some reason, have decided to have a tattoo. Our churches should be open, willing, and ready to welcome any person who wants to worship with us. What we need is Christian understanding, not condemnation. ■



Now retired, **Angel Manuel Rodríguez** has served the church for several decades, most recently as director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

Jesus' *Life-changing* Power

By MARK A. FINLEY



CARL HEINRICH BLOCH

Is it possible to change deeply ingrained habits? What about inherited tendencies toward evil passed down from generation to generation? Have you ever felt as if you were being pulled down by forces beyond your control? Have you ever felt powerless to change your behavior? There is hope. The One who died for us lives for us. Jesus is both our Savior and our Lord. In this lesson we will explore the mighty, life-changing power of our living Lord, and discover a power greater than heredity, environment, or cultivated tendencies toward sin.

1 Read 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ezekiel 36:26, 27, and Jeremiah 24:7. What marvelous promise is made to those who choose to follow God totally and surrender to His will?

2 Read Jeremiah 13:23. Is it possible to accomplish this change in our own strength?

Just as it is impossible for anyone to change his or her skin color, much less for a leopard to change its spots, it is impossible for us to make changes in our lives alone, unaided by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's power that transforms us. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit in all His fullness to empower us to live godly lives.

3 Read 2 Corinthians 13:4, 5. How does this life-transforming change take place within us?

As we surrender our lives to Christ, He works His miracle of divine grace in our lives. His power is ours. The Holy Spirit transforms us. Just as when we do the confessing, God does the forgiving, when we do the surrendering, God does the changing.

4 Read Hebrews 4:2 and Romans 5:1-5. What role does faith play in this divine transformation?

Faith trusts God both to save us and to change us. It is the channel through which the rivers of His divine grace flow into our lives. Faith accepts the salvation Jesus so freely offers and the life-changing power He promises.

5 Read Romans 8:8-11. As Jesus enters our lives through the Holy Spirit, what does He give us?

In Romans 8 Paul discusses living "in the flesh" and living "in the Spirit." If we are alive in the Spirit, Christ's righteousness fills our lives and flows out of our lives. The Spirit that raised Christ from the dead transforms us.

6 Read Galatians 5:24, 25. What is the greatest evidence that Jesus dwells in our hearts?

The greatest evidence that the Holy Spirit dwells in us is not talking about the Holy Spirit but the change that comes in our lives with the genuine presence of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we are simply different people.

7 Read John 5:30; 8:29. What was the one principle that guided Jesus' decisions and actions?

Jesus was guided by the all-consuming principle of pleasing His heavenly Father; nothing was more important to Him than doing the Father's will. As we are convicted by the Holy Spirit of the areas in our lives that are not in harmony with our heavenly Father's will, and surrender those areas, we will be filled with the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and transformed through the Holy Spirit. ■



“God-given marriage is one of the precious **gems** of genuine Christianity.”

—JANE STACKELROTH, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Letters

Tundra Trek

“Tundra Trek,” by Carolyn Stuyvesant (August 2012), is the best article I’ve read in a long time. I loved the descriptions of the tundra. I am a geography major. Surely God knows us all, even in the “desert storm.”

I saw His hand in the desert of a country I cannot mention. I walked and thought so very much of Abraham. . . . I was serving his descendants. . . . As I gazed into the night sky I thought of God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and us. What a wonderful Lord we serve!

NAME WITHHELD
Alberta, Canada

The article “Tundra Trek” was a real pick-me-up. My wife died in June 2012, and we both shared our love for Alaska by visiting several areas of the state on four different occasions.

DON FAHRBACH
Munising, Michigan,
United States

Marriage in Heaven

In “Marriage in Heaven” (August 2012) Angel Manuel Rodríguez raised some interesting points. When the Lord said that in heaven “they neither marry nor are given in marriage,” He was speaking the truth. Taken in context, however, the passage does not tell what heaven is like, but what it is not like, namely, that in heaven they do not arrange weddings in the same way people do on earth.

Perhaps we should take the saying “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage” to mean “in heaven there is no buying and selling of women and legal contracting such as you are used to.”

The Greek words used in this passage are not talking about the state of *being* married, but about the act of *getting* married. The things God does are not temporary, but eternal (Eccl. 3:14). So if God created male and female, and joined them together as one, then marriage is not merely a temporary joining that lasts for our lifetime on earth only, but an eternal union that lasts forever in heaven; assuming that a marriage is a relationship truly made by God, not a mismatch made by human beings. As taught throughout the Scriptures, the whole atmosphere of heaven is an atmosphere of marriage! God-given marriage is one of the precious gems of genuine Christianity.

JANE STACKELROTH
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

I’m writing to thank Angel Manuel Rodríguez for his response to the question, “Will people be married in heaven?” I have had discussions about this topic with Adventists, even pastors, and the diversity of opinion is surprising.

Jesus’ statement in Mark 12 affirming there will be no marriages in heaven is a strong and binding proof. Ellen White also communicates the same position in *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 172, 173.

STEVE RIEHLE
Santa Maria, California,
United States

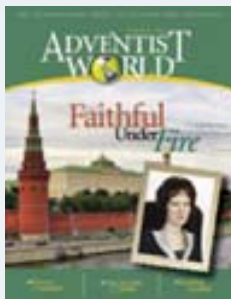
On Solid Ground

I am an avid reader and collector of *Adventist World*, and its numerous articles amaze me. However, I have to highlight Frank M. Hasel’s article, “Establishing the Church on Solid Ground” (May 2012). I was impressed with the results of the research in which it was possible to see clearly how our prosperity is associated with our obedience to His prophets. There is no doubting this wonderful Father!

JÉRSICA LINS DE OLIVEIRA
MONTEIRO
Vitoria da Conquista,
Bahia, Brazil



ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE



Faithful Under Fire

I was touched and my spirit was lifted up when I read the story of Oksana Sergiyenko, a Russian Adventist alone in the government (see Andrew McChesney, “Faithful Under Fire,” January 2012). Sergiyenko did not fail to perform her faithful duty to God and to her fellow countrymen. I hope and pray this will be a foundation stone for us believers.

MIN SUNG
via E-mail

Delighted!

I’m really delighted with *Adventist World*. I pray that God helps you continue your work, because it gives those of us reading it wonderful explanations of the different issues a person wonders about. An example is the material in 2011 that spoke of the origins of the church. This strengthened me and helped me to prove the errors committed by those who disassociate themselves from the church without good cause.

MBONI
Burundi

Letters Policy: Please send to: 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.

Health Notes



Source: Adventist Health Study—2

When compared to nonvegetarians, vegans/vegetarians:

- Watch less television
- Sleep more hours per night
- Consume more fruits and vegetables
- Consume less saturated fat
- Typically eat foods with a low glycemic index, such as beans, legumes, and nuts.

Where in the World Is This?

SUBMITTED BY THABANI MOYO



Answer: In Bulawayo, West Zimbabwe Conference, more than 800 people were invited as Pathfinder Master Guides. Pictured are some of the conference and division leaders who participated in the investiture.



BIBLE ECHO/GC ARCHIVES

127 YEARS AGO

Trial issues of *The Bible Echo* and *Signs of the Times* were published in Australia on November 2, 1885.

The publishing work in Australia began some six months after the arrival in Melbourne on June 16, 1885, of the first Seventh-day Adventist missionaries: S. N. Haskell; J. O. Corliss and M. C. Israel and their families; Henry L. Scott, a printer; and William Arnold, a colporteur. Regular publishing of the periodicals began in January 1886.

The Bible Echo Publishing House was housed in a leased two-story building on the corner of Rae and Scotchmer streets, North Fitzroy, Melbourne. Equipment consisted of one large and one small press, a stitching machine, a guillotine, and some hand type.

The periodical, a monthly at first, became a semimonthly in 1889, a weekly in 1894, then a monthly again in 1959. In 1903 the name of the periodical was changed to *Australasian Signs of the Times*. In harmony with Ellen White's counsel that as far as possible the church's business interests should be removed from cities, the Echo Publishing House, as the firm was known, was moved in February 1906 to Warburton. The name was then changed to Signs of the Times Publishing Association, later shortened to Signs Publishing Company.

Prayer & PRAISE

My family is going through hard times; kindly pray for our financial situation.

OKELOH, Kenya

Please pray for my ministry. Sometimes we do not have rice and food.

DAVID, Myanmar

My prayer request is for my family to stand firm for our faith, and for my health.

YOGI, South Africa

Please pray for my son who is in the hospital with stage four cancer.

CAROL, United States

Please pray for a young woman who is struggling over when and where to go to college, and what track to pursue. Also, one of our churches is deciding whether to rent their church to a Muslim group.

NAME WITHHELD, Australia

There are 10 orphans in our church. I request that you please pray for them.

SABBATHI, India

Please pray for our deliverance. We are struggling to get our lives back together as a family.

WAYNE, Jamaica

The Place of Prayer: Send prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer) to 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.

HEARD IN SABBATH SCHOOL

“Humility is not thinking **less** of yourself; it is thinking of yourself **less**.”

—submitted by HOMER TRECARTIN,
president, Greater Middle East
Union Mission



The five most poisonous spiders (and where they live):

1. Redback Spider (Australia)
2. Funnel-web Spider (Australia)
3. Brazilian Wandering Spider (South America)
4. Brown Recluse (North America)
5. Black Widow Spider (North America)

Source: Environmentalgraffitti.com

50

WORDS OR LESS

My Favorite... Book of the Bible

■ For me, Isaiah is the dearest book of all. It had good counsel and sweet comfort to my soul during one of the hardest times of my life.

—HELEN, *Morganton, North Carolina, United States*

■ I like John's Gospel, especially his famous introduction in chapter 1. He understood the depth of the incarnation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

—ADAM, *Porto, Alegre, Brazil*

■ I like the book of Hebrews. It is packed with spiritual advice and full of counsels that lead us closer to God. "Let your conduct be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5).

—REGGIE, *Via E-mail*

■ I like the book of Numbers because it shows us the strengths and weaknesses of Israel. It allows us to choose the right path to receive the blessings of God and avoid disbelief.

—ABOUA, *Via E-mail*

■ My favorite book is Jeremiah. The day I left my old crew behind I found a piece of paper with Jeremiah 29:13 written on it: "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." I thought it was a poem.

—RUTH, *Via E-mail*

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

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