

February 2013

# ADVENTIST WORLD



## BUILDING A CHURCH *in* America

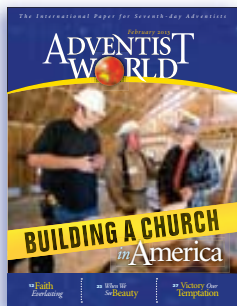
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February 2013



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**On the cover:** Volunteers at the Decatur-Hartselle project site discuss electrical details for the new church. More than 50 Maranatha volunteers helped with the project, along with dozens of church members.

PHOTO BY LEONEL MACIAS



## Why We Build

Let me admit it: I love the dark, brooding majesty of cathedrals, where everything human seems small and muted. But I don't want my church to ever build a cathedral.

As a tourist, I have visited dozens of the world's great cathedrals. Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopalian, Lutheran—even Crystal—these buildings share an immensity of scale that both impresses and distresses me. Even as I admire the “flying buttresses” and vaulted ceilings, my pastor's heart begins to count the cost of all my eyes take in.

For cathedrals—or similarly large church building projects—are statements about theology and mission as well as architecture. Church historians remind us that the age of building cathedrals coincided with the era of least missionary activity in Christian history. The building—massive, visually impressive—was supposed to attract the wayward and the lost, not seek them. And after taxing millions of laypersons to construct them, there was precious little money left to spread the gospel, and few willing to do so.

As one of the most rapidly growing Christian faiths on the planet, the Seventh-day Adventist Church builds churches—lots of them—each year. Through the genius of Maranatha International's “One-Day Church” program, and the dedicated labor of volunteers, hundreds of new church buildings go up each year. They give us shade in summer from the unrelenting Saharan sun. They give us shelter and warmth from the piercing winds of Alberta or Ukraine. They shield us from rain in dense tropical climates, and offer a place to worship God together when snow lies deep at the door.

But churches are chiefly places where believers gather to talk a common faith, to bear each other's burdens, to offer heartfelt adoration to Jesus, and to learn how to more effectively carry the good news—so that other churches will be built in other places, till He comes. It's all about worship and mission.

As you read this month's cover story, pray for the eyes to see your church building as the Lord sees it—a storehouse of faith, through faith, by faith, and for even more faith.



*Bill Kautz*

## WORLD REPORT

# Adventist Study Center Leadership Updated

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Office of Adventist Mission announced several new directors as part of a reorganization of study centers for various cultural groups.

Gerson Santos now serves as the director of the new Urban Ministry Study Center, based in New York City. Santos will also serve as executive secretary of the denomination's Greater New York Conference for the immediate future.

The Urban Ministry center was launched in response to the Adventist world church's initiative for comprehensive urban evangelism. The center was founded to assist ministry leaders worldwide as they make plans for outreach in major cities in their own territories. Next year the Adventist Church will begin the effort, starting with a major outreach push in New York City as part of the denomination's NY13 initiative.

Six Global Mission Study Centers now serve the church to equip leaders and members to build bridges of understanding to those from non-Christian religions and traditions. Study Centers director Rick McEdward said the goal of the centers is to create models of ministry, materials, and to mentor Adventists for sharing Christ in a way that is wholistic and culturally adapted.

“Adventists have usually been very good at sharing their faith with other Christians, but we have to offer a cordial witness for those who don't yet know Christ,” McEdward said.

McEdward said the World Jewish-Adventist Friendship Center has moved from Jerusalem to Paris. France has the third-largest Jewish population behind Israel and the United States, according to the World Jewish Population Study. Richard Elofer, former president of the denomination's Israel Field, will continue serving as director.

The announcement came during a study center directors meeting in Cambodia. The group meets twice a year to plan how the Adventist Church can build bridges to cultures and contexts outside of traditional ministry.

Also, the Hindu Study Center, formerly based in India, was recently restarted in the Caribbean nation of Trinidad, home to a large popula-



PHOTO COURTESY ADVENTIST MISSION

**STUDY CENTERS:**  
Gerson Santos is director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's new Urban Ministry Study Center.

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## WORLD REPORT

tion of Indian diaspora. Cliffmond Shameerudeen, a Guyanese of Indian descent, serves as coordinator.

Gregory Whitsett now heads the Center for East Asian Religions and Traditions, formerly the Buddhist Study Center. He began his new post in September. The center has been located in Thailand since its inception in 1992. Whitsett and his family have spent more than 10 years in Southeast Asia as missionaries. He replaces Scott Griswold, who served as director for 10 years.

The two other study centers are the Center for Secular and Postmodern Studies, based in São Paulo, Brazil, and the Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations, which has branches in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States; Nairobi, Kenya; and London, England.

For more information on the study centers, visit [www.AdventistMission.org](http://www.AdventistMission.org).  
—reported by *Adventist News Network*

### In Ivory Coast, Wilson Urges Reconciliation

■ Seventh-day Adventist Church president Ted N. C. Wilson met with government, community, and church leaders in West Africa during a November 2012 visit to the region.

In Ivory Coast, Wilson called for reconciliation following last year's civil unrest after a disputed election.

Wilson, who served as a regional executive for the Adventist Church in Ivory Coast from 1981 to 1990, said, "During this period of reconciliation here in Ivory Coast, we must have the spirit of the good Samaritan; the duty of Christians is to represent Christ."

He delivered his remarks in French during a keynote speech at the Palace of Culture in Abidjan.

Wilson also added, "We must treat our women with respect. We must



**ARRIVING IN ABIDJAN:** Adventist Church president Ted N. C. Wilson is greeted upon his arrival in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Wilson, who spent nine years in the country as a regional Seventh-day Adventist Church president, met with leaders in several West African nations.

OH MENG TAWIAH

have a respectful and a warm attitude toward our wives, our husbands, and our children. Reconciliation must first start in the home, the neighborhood, the church, and spread to the country."

Ediemou Jacob, president of the Religious National Forum of Ivory Coast, said Wilson was the first world religious leader to visit Ivory Coast with a message of reconciliation.

Wilson also met with Ivory Coast president Alassane Ouattara on November 7.

There are nearly 13,000 Adventist Church members in Ivory Coast, which is the headquarters for the denomination's West-Central Africa Division. Wilson visited several countries in the division.

In the city of Kumasi during his five-day visit to Ghana, Wilson met with Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, who is the Asantehene, a ceremonial leadership role of the Ashanti people. Wilson's father, Neal Wilson, who served as Adventist Church president from 1979 to 1990, visited the previous king 24 years ago.

Ted Wilson told the king and his officials of the gift his father received—a hand carving of a hand holding an egg. "The explanation of it

is that if you are too hard on your people, you will crush them. If you are too relaxed and uninterested and you relax your hand, the egg falls," Wilson told the delegation in the Manhyia Palace.

Tutu commended the Adventist Church in Ghana for its contribution in the areas of education and health care. "I have realized that there is a lot of [self-]discipline in the Adventist Church, and those in the church believe in its values and principles," he said through an interpreter.

Wilson also inaugurated a nearby multicultural center, which was sponsored by the Adventist Church headquarters and the church's South Central Ghana Conference. The center will offer skills training for church and community members in information technology, catering, and sewing. It



**PRESIDENTIAL GIFT:** Wilson is presented with a golden stool by a representative of the king of the Ashanti people in Ghana. The gift, which represents pillars and strong foundations, was presented during the Sabbath worship service at Baba Yara Stadium in Kumasi.

OH MENG TAWIAH

will also offer training for evangelism and outreach.

On November 10, 2012, Wilson joined some 30,000 worshippers at Baba Yara Stadium in Kumasi for a special Sabbath worship service.

The next day Wilson spoke at the graduation ceremony at church-run Valley View University. He challenged the more than 500-member graduating class to have the biblical viewpoint of success.

“In whatever work God leads you, you should realize that success is dependent on your connection to Christ, which results in humble service to Him and others,” he said.

Wilson also met with Alfred Oko Vanderpuije, the first Adventist mayor of Accra, Ghana’s capital.

There are some 375,000 members in the church’s Ghana Union Conference.

Wilson’s wife, Nancy, and officers of the division accompanied him on the trip. Earlier, at the division’s year-end meeting, the executive committee voted to grant self-supporting conference status to 14 administrative units in Nigeria and one unit in Liberia. The moves highlight development of the church in those regions in terms of its finances and leadership.

—reported by Gilbert Weeh, Solace Asafo Hlordzi, with ANN staff

## Mexico: Bible Transcribed in Record Time at Adventist University

■ The timer stopped at 59 minutes, 52 seconds, and a fraction of a second. It was a record that bolted more than 2,150 individuals out of their seats with a shout after transcribing the entire Bible. The activity took place at Montemorelos University—a Seventh-



**OFFICIAL RECORD:** Alejandro Zepeda, notary public of Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon, Mexico displays the total time of 59:52 minutes it took for the Bible to be transcribed by hundreds of Seventh-day Adventist leaders, students, and faculty at Montemorelos University, in Mexico, on November 24, 2012. The historic event is expected to be registered in *Guinness World Records*, and was one of many commemorative activities in celebration of the university’s 70 years of existence.

DANIEL GALLARDO

day Adventist-operated institution in Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon, Mexico—on November 24, 2012.

The historic event was part of the institution’s seventieth anniversary of offering an Adventist Christian education.

Dressed in commemorative T-shirts with the number 70 printed on them, students, faculty, alumni, and community members and visitors each copied 20 to 25 verses at the gymnasium, an event that is expected to be officially recorded in *Guinness World Records*, organizers said.

“The objective of the event was to emphasize the value of the Bible as a foundation of the Adventist educational system,” said Juan Jose Andrade, director of Mexico’s Ellen White Research Center and organizer of the event.

Alejandro Zepeda, a notary public, verified the time and performed the legal documentation to register the record-breaking time.

Montemorelos mayor Gerardo Alanis and his wife, Minerva, were present during the historic event. “I feel God is here,” said Mayor Alanis.

Israel Leito, president of the church in Inter-America, congratulated the university via telephone for the Bible-focused initiative.

Seventh-day Adventist ministers from throughout Mexico also participated in transcribing the Bible.

The comprehensive initiative was suggested by a student and grew to involve more than 20 coordinators for three months and some 85 assistants to guide the transcribers, organizers said.

Stacy Olmedo, a 20-year-old communication student, transcribed Genesis 23 and the first four verses of chapter 24. “I was so excited to be part of this,” she said. “It took a lot of concentration, and I liked it very much, even though I had only some 24 verses to write.”

“Personally speaking, it helped my spiritual life and made me more aware of the significance of God’s Word,” said Jency Cordova, a medical student.

“It was a great privilege,” said Jaime Blanco, school services director. “All of us who participated were able to enjoy reviewing a portion of the Word of God.”

Jorge Manrique, director of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, his wife, and two sons were delighted to be together to copy verses. “As a family, it was a gratifying experience that reaffirmed our commitment in communion with God

*Continued on next page* ▶



## WORLD REPORT

and reading of the Bible,” said Manrique. “We felt so excited to be part of this project and were able to identify with the ancient transcribers.” He added, “That encourages us and reaffirms for us that the Bible is the only true source, the Word of God.”

Once the transcriptions were complete and the timer was stopped, all transcribed pages were compiled and bound in the library and taken to the university church for a two-hour program to close the Sabbath. The transcription, called the Seventieth Anniversary Bible, will be exhibited in the Ellen G. White Research Center on campus.

“What’s important about this activity is not the fact that we transcribed the Bible,” said Ismael Castillo, Montemorelos University president, “but the precious moments we had together with our Sovereign God.

“Our greatest desire is for the Word of God to become the foundation of our daily devotional life.”

—reported by Benjamin Garcia/IAD Staff



**EXPORTING BOOKS:** João Vicente Pereyra is vice president of marketing and sales at Casa Publicadora Brasileira (Brazilian Publishing House) in Tatuí, São Paulo State, Brazil. The Adventist-owned publishing firm will export Portuguese literature to various nations in Africa.

ANSEL OLIVER/ANN

## Brazil: Adventist Publisher to Produce for African Markets

■ Casa Publicadora Brasileira (CPB), the Seventh-day Adventist publishing house in Tatuí, São Paulo State, Brazil, will soon distribute its products in Africa, executives said.

João Vicente Pereyra, sales and marketing vice president, said: “The CPB was designed to provide literature in Portuguese to various countries, such as South Africa, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Mozambique.”

There is, however, an exact timetable for when books, magazines, and other materials would be made available to the population living in these regions. The first deals are being concluded with leaders who manage the administrative headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the countries wishing to market the products.

For 2013 the publisher also expects to expand its operations into digital formats. The idea is that dozens of online titles may be available in mobile operating systems such as iOS and Android. CPB is first place in production volume and sales among the 63 Adventist-owned publishing houses in the world.

Beginning in 2013 traditional publications such as *Nosso Amiguinho* (Our Friend for children 5 to 9 years old), *Vida e Saúde* (Life and Health), and *Revista Adventista* (the South American Division’s edition of *Adventist Review*) will also have Web portals. One core system was established to provide all this content in support of already established print versions.

—reported by Felipe Lemos, ASN Staff



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC. JOSEPH JOYNT

**VALOR RECOGNIZED:** U. S. Army Col. Jeremy Martin, left, looks on after Army veteran and former Specialist 4 medic Charles Shyab was presented the Bronze Star Medal for valor by U.S. Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski during a formal ceremony Nov. 9, 2012. Roughly 250 family members, community leaders, Defense Information School staff and students attended the ceremony. Shyab, a Seventh-day Adventist, was a noncombatant medic in the Vietnam War.

Sometimes the most important heroes in wartime are those who choose not to defend themselves.

For some, full recognition of their heroism may take longer than it did for others.

Many Seventh-day Adventists are familiar with the story of Desmond T. Doss (<http://bit.ly/UpZrLu>), the conscientious objector who was awarded a United States Congressional Medal of Honor for his valor in saving lives during World War II. Doss, an Adventist, never carried a weapon, and was ridiculed by his peers. After his heroic act, however, Doss’ bravery was quickly recognized, with then-U.S. president Harry S. Truman presenting a medal months after the May 5, 1945, battle for which Doss was honored.

The principle of noncombatancy has a long tradition in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Members of the church from the United States, in particular, have often served as medics and other

# Adventist Noncombatant HONORED for Service Without Weapon

*Former U.S. Army medic Charles Shyab gets long-overdue Bronze Star*

By: TAASHI ROWE, *Columbia Union Visitor*,  
and *Adventist World* staff

nonfighting personnel when conscripted, often, like Doss, distinguishing themselves in difficult situations.

Charles Shyab, a Seventh-day Adventist from Silver Spring, Maryland, waited a bit longer for his recognition than Doss did. For Shyab, it happened on November 9, 2012, more than 44 years after a chaotic battle in which he was credited with saving dozens of lives. Shyab received his long-awaited Bronze Star Medal from United States senator Barbara A. Mikulski of Maryland, in a ceremony at the Defense Information School at Fort Meade.

According to online reference sources, the Bronze Star Medal is awarded by all branches of the United States armed forces, “for acts of heroism, acts of merit, or meritorious service in a combat zone. . . . The medal is sometimes referred to as the Bronze Star and is the fourth-highest combat decoration and the ninth-highest U.S. military award in order of precedence.”

Karnik Doukmetzian, general counsel for the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church and a friend of Shyab’s, said, “Recognition of his heroism as a medic [is] significant, especially as a reminder in this day and age

when war has been glorified and our young people choose to enlist for combat rather than choose to request conscientious objectors status. Charlie has, over the years since his military service, continued to serve his fellow man and countless students with the same commitment he showed during his service to his country.”

Shyab, 68, said he was in one of three companies ordered to ascend Chu Moor Mountain, where Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia meet. They faced a battalion of enemy forces.

“We were in [the enemy’s] backyard,” he said of the fight that April day in 1968. “Once they found out we were there, . . . that’s when I got wounded.”

Shyab’s Bronze Star for valor was authorized in 1968 after he saved many American soldiers’ lives and was wounded on Chu Moor Mountain in Vietnam near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Thirty men were killed in action during that firefight, Shyab said, and another 70 were wounded and 15 were evacuated off the mountain.

“About an hour before I was hit, I read from my Bible, and had [done] some meditation,” recalled Shyab, who served as a medic. “Then I prayed to

the Lord. I said, ‘I can’t save myself. I’m not going to live through this unless You protect me, Lord. If You see fit, I will turn my life over to You and become a teacher.’”

Shyab was wounded in both arms and legs, evacuated from the battle zone, and eventually taken to a hospi-

tal in Japan. When he got out, he had less than a year to serve, and worked in the emergency room at a military hospital at Fort Belvoir in Virginia, United States.

After he completed his degree in education from then Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, Md., Shyab made good on his promise to the Lord in that foxhole and in 1970 began his teaching career. He taught in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Virginia.

“Being in Vietnam helped me keep order in my classroom and taught me empathy,” he said. “I became a witness too. I still have that Bible that I had in Vietnam with my blood on it and a piece of shrapnel. I’ve brought it to the classroom and talked about God’s love and protection.

“Every day to me is a gift and [an opportunity] for me to do the Lord’s will and be a witness,” he says.

Alan DeSilva, pastor of the Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, said it was a privilege for him to be present at the ceremony. “I’ve known Charlie for 16 years. He’s a very outstanding Christian,” he said. “I was impressed by the speech he gave and how he testified about the Lord. He’s a prime example of the priesthood of all believers.”

—with reporting by *American Forces Press Service*

The following article is adapted from a sermon given during the Annual Council on Sabbath, October 13, 2012, and conveys the second portion of that message. The first article appeared in the January 2013 Adventist World. Elements of the oral style have been retained.—EDITORS.

Returning to the experience of Jesus recorded in Matthew 14, allow me to share with you the second great burden I feel for our church at this time: that we be unified in Christ as we finish His work

Jesus simply said, “Bring them here to Me.” Never forget what God can do with very little if we submit to His plans instead of our own willful ideas. He took that small lunch, looked up to heaven in recognition

an earthly king, His mission of salvation and humble submission on the cross would not be accomplished.

The disciples couldn’t believe it. Christ was frustrating their plans! He was changing their perception of power and eliminating their opportunity for advancement and status. Disgust and disunity grew in their hearts. They began to doubt that Jesus was the Son of God. They were filled with anger and suspicion.

These self-willed disciples had to be brought to the point of total dependence, humility, and submission to Christ. Only then could they truly be effective disciples for Him and experience spiritual unity.

Full of stormy, doubting thoughts, the disciples finally got into the boat. As they headed out onto the Sea of Galilee, dissension, disunity and selfish desires clouded their hearts. The tender work of soul winning needed in the early Christian church would never succeed with such a selfish spirit.

You and I are also subject to the temptation to think that our own plans are better than Christ’s plans. Only the Lord’s love, justifying righteousness, and sanctifying power can bring us into unity and fulfill Christ’s prayer of John 17.

### Power of Prayer

“And when He [Jesus] had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray” (Matt. 14:23). Jesus knew His real power did not come from people making Him king, but from the quiet time spent in prayer with His heavenly Father. It is the same place from which our power will come—quiet time with the Lord in Bible study, reading the Spirit of Prophecy, and in personal prayer.

From that mountain top, Christ could look on His disciples and the Sea of Galilee. The minds of the dis-

# Never Doubt: God Is in Control

By TED N. C. WILSON

## Part 2

on the earth.

Matthew 14:15 suggests that while thousands were being fed by Jesus spiritually, they had forgotten to eat anything physically. Evening came and the disciples urged Jesus to send the people away to buy food.

But Jesus had some important lessons to teach the disciples, and us today. He said, “You give them something to eat” (verse 16)—challenging the disciples to realize their constant dependence on God and not on themselves. Unfortunately, they missed the point. They had self-centered, personal agendas that kept them from fully realizing God’s power in their lives. They responded that all that was available were five loaves and two fish.

of where all blessings come from, blessed the food, and began the incredible miracle of multiplication—feeding some 20,000 people. God is the God of the impossible! He can accomplish everything with nothing if we have faith in Him to do so.

### Frustrated Plans

Following this miracle a movement developed in that large crowd, including the disciples, that this was the time to crown Jesus king—He could supply everything and conquer the hated Romans! But Jesus realized what was happening, and He told His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the lake (see verse 22). He realized that if He were proclaimed



ciples were full of spiritual darkness. Cynicism, skepticism, defiance, and selfish independence are intoxicating. If not checked, they can take people into false rationalization and self-deception. It happened with the disciples, and it can happen to us.

Christ in His compassion prepared a special storm to take the disciples' minds off themselves and put them into a humble setting in which Jesus could again speak to them with clarity. Many times God does this for us when we are headed in the wrong direction.

### A Compassionate Storm

In the terrible storm on Galilee the disciples tried everything to save themselves, but the storm was so strong they resigned themselves to dying. When they were finally humbled, realizing they could not save themselves, Jesus could go to them. Never think we can save ourselves by our own efforts; we are to be constantly dependent on Christ and His righteousness for our salvation and instruction. Our future work in the mission of this precious Advent movement is based on humility and recognition that we are to press together and not act unilaterally or independently, as the disciples had been attempting to do. In order to unify them, the Lord had to bring His disciples back to a quiet realization of His role as Savior.

He “went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear” (verses 25, 26). Can you imagine their surprise to hear the words “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid” (verse 27)?

Peter responded: “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (verse 28). Can you imagine Peter’s shock when he heard the word from Christ, “Come!”?

I suppose Peter thought he was going to die anyway, so why not try it? I can see him looking at the sea, hanging onto the side of the boat, and putting one foot out. It didn’t sink. He put the other foot out and let go of the boat. He was standing on the water—something humans don’t do! He looked at Christ and began walking on the water. Impossible! Amazing!

In self-satisfaction Peter turned to look back at his friends. He took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink. How often do we count on our own personal self-confidence instead of humbly keeping our eyes on Christ?

Sinking, Peter cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Jesus could have said, “Peter, you have a lot to learn. I think I’ll let you go down a couple times before helping.”

But, no, the Bible says that “immediately, Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him” (verse 31). We serve a Savior who never sleeps on the job, is never far from us, and is always ready to reach out to us *immediately*.

Jesus pulled Peter out of his self-centered predicament, and together they walked back to the boat. As they entered the boat, the wind ceased. The Creator God who commands the wind, the sea, and the universe was in control. The humbled disciples who recently doubted Christ’s divinity, bowed in complete submission, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God” (verse 33).

### God Is in Control

The God of the universe was in full control then, and He is in control of His church today. Is He in control of your heart, and mine? Ellen White wrote, “Only through realizing our own weakness and

looking steadfastly unto Jesus can we walk securely” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 382).

You and I are to be part of that victorious Advent movement that works in harmony with His instructions, as did those in the early Chris-

ART BY JAMES TISSOT



tian church. “The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another. . . . He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 95, 96).

As we look for unity in the church, we are provided with wonderful

counsel: “It is the word of the living God that is to decide all controversies. It is when men mingle their own human smartness with God’s words of truth in giving sharp thrusts to those who are in controversy with them, that they show that they have not a sacred reverence for God’s inspired word” (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 45).

At times we may act independently

strengthened, established, and settled. . . . Those who have the unction from on high will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God can cooperate with them. But never . . . will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon . . . disorganization and disorder. All these evils are the result of Satan’s efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy our courage, and prevent successful action. . . . It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven’s arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality. . . . I was shown that it is Satan’s special work to lead men to feel that it is God’s order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course, independent of their brethren. . . . If hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us” (pp. 27-30).

### Challenges Ahead

The Advent movement has many challenges ahead, far bigger than anything we may currently face. Humanly speaking, it seems impossible to predict victory for God’s church. But fortunately we are not dependent on human power. Jesus Christ will conquer evil and will victoriously bring His people through their unimaginable trials and challenges in His name and to His glory!

God’s spirit is powerfully moving this church toward its final loud cry to the world as a unique Advent movement. The personal testimonies of church members as to how God is leading in their lives and how they are able to share this message with others are extraordinary! People are excited, and the church is on the move—not through meager human efforts, but through the power of the Holy Spirit!

### Unite, Unite, Unite

I appeal to each of us to unite in lifting up Jesus and in proclaiming righteousness by faith; unite in pointing people to the mighty Word of God as it reads; unite in our biblical beliefs; unite in reading the Spirit of Prophecy; unite in earnest prayer; unite in sharing the sanctuary message; unite in proclaiming the three angels’ messages; unite in revival and reformation through God’s power; unite in pleading for the latter rain; unite in sharing *The Great Controversy*; unite in Mission to the Cities; unite in accepting heaven’s messages of comprehensive health ministry and health reform; unite in working together as we have collectively agreed to do under God’s guidance; unite in submission, humility, and respect before the Lord and each other; unite in daily living out the practical ministry of Jesus in loving service to others; unite in believing that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God’s remnant church; unite in the heavenly prophetic messages given in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy; unite in the love and grace of Christ; unite in the grand mission entrusted to Seventh-day Adventists to “tell the world” that the last days of earth’s history are unfolding before us; and unite in actively proclaiming the second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—He is coming soon!

Go on God’s mission united in His love, His Word, His righteousness, and His peace. ■

“God can accomplish everything with nothing if we have **faith** in Him to do so.”

and unilaterally, tempted to maintain our own way instead of working together. Christ calls for us to come together and focus on the mission of the church, even if we don’t agree with everything that the church votes. God’s church is bigger than our own personal opinions.

### Instructions for Unity

In *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* there is a beautiful section about unity and the resulting mission of the church. Listen to these counsels that speak to all of us as God’s people:

“Let none entertain the thought that we can dispense with organization. . . . In the name of the Lord I declare to you that it is to stand,



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

# Deep Vein Thrombosis

By ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES and PETER N. LANDLESS

**I fly a lot in the course of my work, and a few months ago I noticed a painful leg. My doctor diagnosed deep vein thrombosis. I have been on blood thinner pills, and get blood tests twice a week. Is this going to be an ongoing problem? I'm 42 years old.**

**O**ur blood has many functions. One of them is to ensure the integrity of its circulation so it can carry out some of its other functions: transporting oxygen and carbon dioxide, moving nutrients and their metabolic products around the body, and ensuring hormones can be carried to their sites of action.

Blood also repairs damaged blood vessels and prevents bleeding, while at the same time not being too “clot-table” and closing off major vessels. This would result in coronary thrombosis, or a clot in the heart vessels. Strokes, too, can result from clots.

A clot commonly forms in the large veins of the lower leg. When this happens the patient usually notices pain, sometimes in the calf, as well as swelling of the leg and dilation of the veins. The limb may also feel warmer than the other one.

Such an event is problematic, but it carries an even greater risk. Should the clot or pieces of it break off, they would be carried in the blood to the heart, then pumped into the arteries of the lungs. This blocks blood supply to segments of the lung and reduces the efficiency of respiration. A large clot could plug the whole lung and kill

the patient within a minute or two.

Clotting is much more likely to occur when the blood flow is sluggish or stagnant. This means constriction to flow and pressure to the veins. Bed-ridden, inactive patients are more at risk for clots.

There are other causes for sluggish blood flow in veins. You don't say whether you are male or female, but pregnancy, with the large uterus, may dam back the blood flow, and so might pelvic tumors. Birth control pills and cancers also can increase the ability of blood to clot. Women on hormones are at increased risk, as well.

Old sports injuries that left damaged veins, long airplane rides during which one does not move the legs much—all these must be considered. So, too, must recent childbirth or surgery.

Because you are only 42 years old, you may have more going on. People with recurrent thrombosis, a family history of thrombosis, or clots in unusual places such as hepatic, or portal, veins, may have genetic factors at work. You can be screened for these *inherited* conditions that could be making your blood clot more easily.

Ultrasound has proved very useful in diagnosing large vein problems; the

smaller veins are not as easily checked with ultrasound. The ultimate test for a blood clot is a venogram, during which dye is injected and pictures are taken to show the venous architecture.

Taking an anticoagulant, commonly called a “blood thinner,” is the usual treatment. This partially blocks the clotting mechanism, which has to be carefully checked to be sure one's blood can continue with some of its clotting capability. That is why you are having those blood tests: to ensure you get enough, but not too much, of an effect. After some six months your doctor may taper you off the anticoagulant.

At that point, some doctors will prescribe a daily aspirin to lower the platelet stickiness. You should drink lots of water to prevent your blood from becoming too concentrated. Activity is essential, because the muscles squeeze the vein and help push the blood along. If you must travel a lot, request an aisle seat and get up frequently to walk and stretch.

We suggest you discuss some of the issues we have just touched on with your doctor, as we have space to cover only the salient features here. ■



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# FAITH

By JORGE IUORNO

# Everlasting

*How to survive stressful times*

The story of Naomi is replete with stressful situations that are also faced by many modern families. Like so many of us, Naomi had to catch a clearer vision of a compassionate God who loves us immensely and cares for us in difficult times.

## A Stressful Life

Here are a number of the stressful situations experienced by Naomi of Bethlehem. You may identify with some—but I hope not all—of them.

1. *Hunger (Ruth 1:1)*: Many families live with unmet basic needs. Currently more than 800 million people suffer from hunger,<sup>1</sup> and the richest 1 percent of the world's population lives with the same amount of resources as the bottom 57 percent.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, a few have much, and many have too little. The paradox for Naomi's family is that they had to leave Bethlehem, which means "house of bread," to look for food elsewhere.

2. *Relocation (Ruth 1:1)*: It is estimated that about 214 million people migrated to other countries in 2010, which means that one of every 33 inhabitants on the planet in 2010 had to relocate.<sup>3</sup> Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are not exempt from this trend. Many leave their

homes in search of better opportunities. Naomi's family represents all those who have had to establish themselves in a different cultural and religious context without a support network. If they have had to face difficulties, they faced them alone.

3. *Widowhood (Ruth 1:3)*: Studies show that the loss of a spouse is one of the greatest stress factors in life. Naomi felt the loneliness of widowhood in a male-dominated society, in which husbands took care of home security. Following her husband's death, she had to educate their children, playing the role of both mother and father. Sadly, this is a common reality in our time that requires our attention. Like many families today, Naomi's family had to function as they had to, not as they would have liked.

4. *Experiencing the "empty nest" syndrome (Ruth 1:4)*: It is a law of life that our children come and go seemingly overnight. This is what we expect; it's part of growing up. However, that doesn't mean that we no longer suffer in their absence. A tidily cleaned bedroom may bring back memories of noise and disorder caused by the presence of our children. This situation is often a source of depression, especially for parents who

have invested all of themselves into children who are no longer present.

5. *Loss of children (Ruth 1:5)*: The loss of her two sons surely caused much distress to Naomi. If someone loses their parents, they become orphaned; if a woman loses her husband, she becomes widowed—yet the loss of a child has no name. Naomi suffered this nameless pain. We expect children to bury their parents, not the other way around. However, life is not always logical.

6. *Worries, loneliness, and old age (Ruth 1:12)*: Naomi must have been full of questions. She had to face the difficult experience of living with God's silence. Furthermore, Naomi was now old, and her life options were limited. It is not the same to face the difficulties of life when one has the strength of youth than when one is weighed down by the stresses of many years. It is at this point in the narrative that Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem—a risky journey for a single woman. Imagine her arrival in her home town as she repeats her sad story to family and friends.

What a contrast between what she had hoped for and what had taken place! Naomi left with a family and returned alone. She left Bethlehem

“In the midst of your **losses** and **tragedies** picture for one moment Naomi rocking Obed in her lap.”



hoping for a better life for her family and returned with a story of tragedy. She left as Naomi (which in Hebrew means “sweet”) and returned as Mara (which means “bitter” [Ruth 1:20, 21]).

### A Ray of Hope

Ruth, the Moabite daughter-in-law of Naomi, had suffered similar losses: she mourned the death of her husband and felt insecure regarding her future. Yet she decided not to leave her mother-in-law, declaring in this stunning profession of faith that “your people shall be my people, and your God, my God” (verse 16).

Somehow Ruth and Naomi represent those who, with God’s help, weather in the best possible ways the trials and difficulties of life. Instead of becoming cynical or bitter, they continue living, loving, and finding satisfaction and joy in their service for others. They demonstrate that faith is key to establishing emotional and spiritual resilience.

As Ruth cares for Naomi, gleaning in a field, she meets Boaz, who is impressed by the attitude of the young widow. Boaz provides water and protection for Ruth; he shares with her his food, encourages her, saves her from discomfort, and gives her the opportu-

nity to help herself (Ruth 2:9-17).

In the evening, when Ruth shares her blessings with her mother-in-law, Naomi characterizes Boaz as a *goel* (verse 20). The Hebrew term means “redeemer.”

Naomi’s and Ruth’s stories remind us that God understands the needs of our families. In His providence God provided a *goel* for Ruth and Naomi. And He will also provide a *goel* for our hurting families. Boaz, as *goel*, becomes a type of Christ, as has been noted by Ellen White: “The work of redeeming us and our inheritance, lost through sin, fell upon Him who is ‘near of kin’ unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our kinsman. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Savior.”<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Ruth asks Boaz to comply with his responsibility as a *goel* and redeem her. Boaz responds gladly and takes Ruth as his wife.

### Happy Endings

Next we find Naomi in charge of taking care of Obed, the son of Ruth.<sup>5</sup> In a great reversal, the one who had lost so much was given a child to watch over. Her face crossed by many wrinkles, her eyes accustomed to shed-

ding tears, now twinkled with hope. In Naomi’s lap was the seed of the future Redeemer, our Lord Jesus. Obed would be the grandfather of David, and from the lineage of David would come the Savior of all humanity.

In the midst of your losses and tragedies picture for one moment Naomi rocking Obed in her lap, trusting that their future was assured, thanks to a *goel*. Here we see that faith can stand in the face of trials and pain.

Jesus understands our suffering, for He too was “acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). He is willing and able to be our *goel*. He wants to restore our hearts, heal our wounds, and bring peace and hope to wounded hearts. ■

<sup>1</sup> Compare the United Nations report at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43235&Cr=food+security&Cr1>.

<sup>2</sup> See “From Left Business Observer,” at <http://www.marxmail.org/facts/inequality.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> *World Migration Report 2010* (International Organization for Migration); cited at <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/about-migration/facts-figures-1.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 327.

<sup>5</sup> Note that while the neighbors in Ruth 4:17 declare Obed to be a son of Naomi, strictly speaking he was not even her grandson.



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NUMBER 10



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## *When God runs*

By GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

I am always amazed by the power of stories.

We value most highly those teachers and professors who did not only know their subject, but were able to communicate effectively. In my case I remember those who were great storytellers. I may have forgotten most of the dates, formulas, or theories, but their stories linger on.

Jesus knew about the power of stories, often using parables to make a point. After all, He was not really interested in innovative sowing techniques or the best methods of crop care. Jesus wanted to communicate spiritual truths that often contained mind-boggling and surprising concepts, so He talked in spoken images. As Ellen White put it: “The unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar.”\*

**Context**

Three of the best-known parables of Jesus are found in Luke 15. In Luke 14:25-35 we find Jesus surrounded by large crowds. The Master talks about the cost of discipleship using different images. Family, even parents, have to take second place (verses 26, 27); a builder has to make a long-term financial plan (verse 28); a king should weigh the costs of waging war (verses 31-33); salt has to remain salty (verses 34, 35). At the end of this string of images Jesus cries out: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (verse 35).

The next scene is significant: Luke tells us that tax collectors and sinners (!) were pressing around Jesus to *hear* Him. They had understood the invita-

tion, while the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered disapprovingly (Luke 15:1, 2).

Knowing all this, Jesus tells a story—actually three stories, all dealing with the same topic. They all follow a similar pattern: somebody loses something, searches desperately, finds it, and celebrates—end of story.

**Of Sheep, Coins, and Prodigals**

First, there is the shepherd who, noticing that one sheep has wandered away during the heat of the day, leaves the remaining 99 sheep to look for the lost. Have you ever wondered about the viability of the shepherd’s decision to seemingly ignore the 99 and focus on the one that was lost? Friends with business sense tell me that losing only 1 percent in production actually represents a great batting average. Why

would the shepherd leave the 99 to find the one missing? Jesus’ explanation in verse 7 provides a hint: Heaven rejoices over every single sinner who repents, while the other 99 might not feel the need to turn around. Can you imagine the look on the faces of the Pharisees at that moment?

The lost coin story makes a different point. This time Jesus raises the loss factor to 10 percent. Counting her silver coin treasure—most likely part of her dowry—a woman discovers that one coin is missing. This was for a rainy day—the equivalent of 10 wages of a day laborer. The woman still had 90 percent, but begins to search frantically. In full daylight she lights a lamp in order to see into every nook and cranny of her home. When she finally finds the coin, she calls friends and neighbors to share the good news (verse 9). The woman



invests heavily (remember, with no electricity lamp oil was costly!) in order to reclaim her treasure; then she shares her joy with her community. Again Jesus reminds His audience that a sinner who repents causes joy in heavenly courts.

The last story is even more surprising. This time the audience must have gasped when they understood that a younger son of two (not the firstborn) went to his father to *demand* his inheritance. That was something that just was not done. It showed lack of respect and was shameful. You know the cadence of the story. The young man escapes from home, lives fast and furious, and finally finds himself broke and humiliated, looking after swine and yearning for their menu. At his wits' end he decides to return home—not as a son, but as a servant.

Meanwhile, the father had been on the lookout every day. One day he sees a run-down figure slowly making his way toward the house. The figure looks vaguely familiar—yes, *it is his son*. The next scene blows away everything. The father starts running toward his smelly, stinking son. The father's embrace seems to last for eternity—finally the lost has come home. A party is quickly organized, and the entire household celebrates—that is, nearly the entire household. The older brother, bitter and forlorn, is not ready to join the feast. Jesus dedicates eight verses to tell us about the dialogue between the father and his older son. Verses 31 and 32 provide the highlight: “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your

brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.”

### Salvation Paradox

Many lessons can be learned from these three stories. All three remind us graphically that salvation requires outside help. Whether it's a shepherd, a woman frantically searching for a coin, or a father waiting for his son: when we are lost, it is God who takes the initiative to save us (John 6:44). Once we recognize our helpless state we have to make the decision to “come home” and allow God's Spirit to transform us into a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). In God's math, 1 percent + 10 percent + 50 percent = 1—the one who is lost. God's saving grace looks beyond numbers and probabilities for individuals. The entire universe is observing the great struggle for humanity's destiny. Every found person causes another roar of celebration in the heavenly courts. Every decision against Christ causes tears and pain in the celestial family.

As Jesus looked around the crowd listening to these key stories of the kingdom, He looked for those who would *hear*—and *embrace* God's saving and transforming grace. He is still looking today. ■

\* Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 17.



**Gerald A. Klingbeil** is an associate editor of *Adventist World* who loves running into the arms of Jesus.

## The Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

The Decatur-Hartselle Spanish Adventist Church in Alabama was falling apart. The roof was rotting. The rear wall of the building was falling in, patched by sheets of corrugated metal. In the restroom a misstep would send a foot crashing through one of the holes in the floor. And in the main sanctuary a cable ran from the top of one wall to the other to keep the building from collapsing out.

The church structure had never been in good shape, but it was now becoming dangerous. A few winters ago a multipurpose building behind the main church had caved in during a snowstorm. A similar fate possibly awaited the sanctuary.



# BUILDING A CHURCH IN

So the congregation of 75 members began praying and saving for a new church. For several months the members put one week of their wages toward the project each month. But given that most of them worked blue-collar jobs, even the hefty sacrifice of one week's wages was small compared to the costs of construction.

Yet the group kept saving. They kept meeting. And most important, they kept praying.

"We were praying every morning, asking the Lord, 'Make a miracle. Make a miracle for us,'" remembers Hortensia Aguilar, a member of Decatur-Hartselle.

Little did they know that God had already set in motion an answer to their prayers.

## Mission to the United States

Several years ago Maranatha Volunteers International realized there was a problem. While they knew how to respond to international requests for churches—they had a system that had been honed over four decades—they had few solutions for a small, churchless congregation in North America. The organization regularly mobilized volunteers for renovation projects in the United States, but rarely did they build an entire church from scratch. And unlike overseas projects, in which Maranatha supplied a standard building plan, a parallel template did not exist in North America.

"North American congregations would come to us for help, but if they didn't already have a plan in place, we couldn't help them. This was especially the case for small congregations with a limited budget," says Kyle Fiess, vice president for marketing and projects at Maranatha.

What's more, smaller congregations had a tendency to

PHOTOS BY LEONEL MACIAS



**Top, left:** After less than a week, the new Decatur-Hartselle church is taking shape. The church is approximately 6,000 square feet and includes a fellowship hall, classrooms, and a sanctuary that can seat anywhere from 130-150 people. **Top, right:** Misael and Hortensia Aguilar stand proudly in front of their new church. Misael was one of the original members of the Decatur-Hartselle group. **Lower, left:** Mel Eisele (left), president of the Gulf States Conference, and Roger Hatch, Maranatha board member and project leader, go over the church building plans for Decatur-Hartselle. **Inset:** Pastor David Huringa stands in what will be the new sanctuary. He has been working each day alongside the volunteers, who he says are "an example of nobility [because] they have this firm desire to continue serving."





This national trend is mirrored in the growth of the North American Division Adventist Church. Ernest Castillo, a general vice president in the North American Division, says Hispanics make up 17 percent of total membership in the NAD today.

“[The membership is] growing to the tune of about 8 to 10 percent per year. The Hispanic work is mushrooming around the NAD,” says Castillo. He says in 2012 alone, there were 15,000 baptisms.

Castillo attributes the rapid growth to small-group ministries. He says often individual church members invite

By JULIE Z. LEE

# America

*A story about change, construction, & faith*

dive into the process of new construction and fall deep into a money pit. Projects stalled, held up by hefty architect fees. Groups were left holding an elaborate church design on paper and an empty lot in real life.

“We’ve seen it over and over: churches form committees, fund-raise, and end up spending all their time and money on an architect who designs a church that is inefficient and too expensive to build,” says Fliess. “That’s the reality that motivated the idea of a standardized plan for small churches in North America. We realized that we could fill the niche and provide a service for those who have little to no expertise about building.”

So Maranatha board members Ken Casper and Roger Hatch, both retired contractors, began to develop blueprints for a standard church. It would have to be a simple design, one that could be easily executed by volunteers, but did not sacrifice function. Most important, it had to be affordable.

In the meantime, another need was percolating in the North American Adventist Church. The Hispanic membership was ballooning, and the population needed places to worship.

The situation would dovetail perfectly with the idea of affordable Maranatha churches—evidence of God’s perfect timing.

## Growing Pains

A demographic shift is taking place in the United States. The Hispanic population has been growing rapidly; the 2010 U.S. Census reported the group growing at a rate of 43 percent between 2000 and 2010. Hispanics are 16.7 percent of the United States population, the largest ethnic group in the country.

neighbors to watch evangelism meetings or have Bible studies. There is also a cultural component that facilitates the process.

“Our Hispanic constituency is evangelistic by nature,” says Castillo. Large-scale outreach initiatives are common in Central and South America, and pastors and lay members alike have a zeal for evangelism. This expectation has carried over into Hispanic churches in North America.

However, the growth isn’t without its problems. The sudden swell has created a shortage of church buildings. And with the Hispanic culture of evangelism, there is much frustration from not having permanent space in which to share the gospel.

This dilemma has been especially pronounced in the Southern Union Conference, a region encompassing eight states. According to Jorge Mayer, director of Hispanic ministries for the Southern Union Conference, there are more than 200 Hispanic churches in the region, but no more than 20 percent own their buildings.

“One of the most constant requests that comes to my office is ‘How can we build a church? How can we raise the money? We need a place to worship. We want more activities. We want to minister to the communities,’” says Mayer. “The congregations have no place to store food and materials, and they have no space to provide seminars and training on a regular basis.”

Obviously the solution is for congregations to fund-raise for a building project. The problem is there is *no money* in these congregations. While fiscal challenges are common in churches across North America, this situation is unique in that the burgeoning Hispanic membership is



PHOTO BY TIMOTHY WOLFER



**Right:** Hundreds attend the dedication of the New Albany, Alabama, Spanish Church in August. Just a few weeks later, the church held an evangelism meeting, during which 16 people were baptized.

**Below:** The New Albany Spanish Church was the first North American standardized, small church Maranatha has constructed.

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY WOLFER



**“LORD, give us a church. Give us the church that YOU deserve.”**

largely among immigrants, many of who work low-paying jobs in manual labor. Yet their poverty doesn't stop them from giving generously to the church. It's just that in many cases it still isn't enough.

### Planning a Strategy

In 2010 the Maranatha board noticed the growing membership of Hispanics in North America and voted to create a plan to encourage participation on mission trips. Maranatha connected with Jorge Mayer and ended up at a Hispanic coordinator's conference in the Southern Union Conference.

“We were sitting around the table, talking about Maranatha's mission, and why we were interested in working with Hispanic populations. We talked about organizing a Hispanic convention when someone asked, ‘Do you help congregations build churches in the United States?’” says Fiess. “We were caught off guard because we weren't expecting that question. And we said, ‘Absolutely. What are your needs?’”

Maranatha's response launched the conversation into new territory. The Hispanic coordinators began talking animatedly about the need for churches. The coordinators ticked off all the groups in their conferences that could immediately use a church.

“As we talked, we realized these were all congregations that needed small, basic buildings. Many are located in rural parts of the country where you wouldn't need anything fancy or complicated,” says Fiess. “That refocused us to the whole concept of the standardized, affordable church.”

Roger Hatch, a longtime Maranatha board member,

then dusted off the first drafts of the template that had been drawn and pushed to the back burner. He was ready to attack the project with a new and more urgent purpose.

“We tried to see what in the world we could come up with for the small church and priced it out,” says Hatch, who was at the Hispanic coordinators' meeting. “So the first one we worked on seated about 250 to 300 people, and it came in around US\$400,000 to \$500,000. Right off we said this is too much; they can't afford it. So we got busy and started revising our plans.”

The goal, based on feedback from Hispanic leaders, was to build a church for approximately 125 to 150 people and keep the price tag under \$200,000. Hatch kept whittling away at the plans, researching other small churches that had been successfully and affordably built. Finally he and Maranatha's construction committee arrived at a solution, estimated to cost \$215,000 with the use of volunteer labor.

They also had a congregation ready to test it.

The New Albany Spanish congregation in Mississippi had been a vagabond group, moving from one rented location to the next. But they had finally saved enough money to build, and union conference leaders immediately put them in contact with Maranatha. In June 2012 volunteers arrived to break ground on the first Maranatha “affordable” church.

But while the New Albany project was under way, another church was praying. In Alabama, 150 miles away, about 70 members of the Decatur-Hartselle Spanish group were still praying about their dilapidated church. Another winter was approaching, and with a rotting roof and leaning walls, they felt anxious and unsafe in the building.

“In every prayer group we clamored to God, saying,

'Lord, give us a church. Give us the church that You deserve.'” says Aguilar.

When they heard about the New Albany project, members drove out to help their sister church. Being in New Albany offered something else: It gave them hope.

“Well, we said, ‘If they are going to build the church for New Albany, couldn’t they help us with our church too?’” says Aguilar.

It turns out that the pastor, David Huaringa, had the same idea. Huaringa was pastor of both churches—Decatur-Hartselle and New Albany—and while at the New Albany worksite, he pulled Hatch aside for a favor.

“The pastor asked me, ‘Roger, could you do another church this year?’” remembers Hatch. “When I went over and looked at the church, it was pretty self-explanatory why they needed a new church. That was the beginning of the project at Hartselle.”

### Construction Sounds

On a beautiful October day in the Alabama countryside the sky is blue, the grass is green, and birds are singing a sound track to this bucolic scene. The only detail out of place is the incessant hammering and the roar of large machinery. This is the Maranatha job site in Hartselle, where more than 50 volunteers have gathered to build a new church for the Decatur-Hartselle Spanish congregation. It’s been less than a week, but already the framework is done and crews are starting to put on the roof. After another week of work, the church will be nearly complete.

The speed at which the church is being built has more to do with the number of hands than with the design. Maranatha’s “affordable” church may be simple, but it has everything a congregation could need: a sanctuary, a foyer, a pastor’s office, restrooms, Sabbath school classrooms, a kitchen, and a fellowship hall. All of this is expertly designed into 6,000 square feet.

As buzz about the projects spreads, Maranatha is getting more requests for assistance. Even before the completion of the Decatur-Hartselle project, leaders in the Southern Union Conference have requested a third church for another Spanish congregation.

The situation is especially urgent in the Gulf States Conference, a region encompassing Alabama, Mississippi, and the panhandle of Florida. Both the Decatur-Hartselle and New Albany churches are in the Gulf States Conference, where 50 percent of the annual baptisms are among the immigrant Hispanics. Mel Eisele, conference president, has seen the Hispanic membership skyrocket—from 15 to 2,000—over the past 15 years, and he wants to provide adequate support. Eisele feels that the church construction projects, which have required some financial support from

the conference, are a way to show encouragement.

“We want to take seriously the admonition of Scripture of how to treat people who immigrate into your country,” says Eisele. “This project is reinforcement of our support—this just proves that it’s not just talk.”

Eisele’s statement might be considered bold in a national climate in which immigration is a hot-button topic. But he has watched the country and the Adventist Church develop into a multilingual, multihued family.

“Today, even here in the South—the Deep South—very, very, very few churches are all-White. We may have, out of 100 churches, one or two in our entire conference that are all-White. We have Asians, African-Americans, islanders, and Hispanics. We have just a big mix and a big blend. That’s how America is changing,” says Eisele. “As long as we have a significant immigrant population, we have to focus on reaching those populations.”

Putting his words into action, Eisele took a day off from the conference offices to work in Hartselle. He arrived on the scene dressed in jeans and a hard hat. “We are here to reach people, and to me, building a facility for them to come and bring people in and do evangelism—that’s as much a part of ministry as anything else we do. . . . It’s not building buildings. It’s reaching people,” he says.

This philosophy has certainly impacted the members of New Albany and Decatur-Hartselle. There is hope in knowing that they have a church home and a conference that supports them. There is also a renewed motivation to give back in service to God.

“This experience has encouraged us to be better in sharing the gospel with others, serving better in the church, and encouraging our children to be better with the Lord, to give everything, to give all to Him,” says Aguilar.

For Aguilar and her husband, Misael, seeing the new building rise up from the ground has been a dream—an American dream—ever since Misael arrived in the United States and started the church group more than 10 years ago. He sacrificed weeks of paying jobs to work with the volunteers.

“Sometimes my husband and I talk about how when we get old we will remember everything about this group—the experience of building the church, about everyone, about Maranatha,” says Aguilar, talking exuberantly in newly learned English. Behind her the new church is being built, faster than she could have ever imagined.

“This is a miracle.” ■



**Julie Z. Lee** oversees communication for Maranatha Volunteers International.



Longtime evangelist Mark A. Finley; General Conference (GC) Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department director Jonathan Kuntaraf; GC Health Ministries Department associate director Kathleen Kuntaraf, wife of Jonathan; vocalist Charles Haugabrooks; and other team members held a series of evangelistic meetings in Manado, Indonesia, August 31–September 7, 2012. This resulted in remarkable conversions, including that of a tribal chief from a remote Indonesian island. Hope Channel taped the nightly meetings and aired them throughout Indonesia on its newly established 24-hour network there. Here are three reports Finley wrote of the event while in Manado. The colloquial style of the reports has been retained. —EDITORS.

## Report 1 September 2

Warmest greetings from Manado, Indonesia! We began our evangelistic meetings with a packed audience of thousands in the Manado Convention Center. Manado is the capital of the province of North Sulawesi, one of Indonesia's hundreds of islands. More than 73,000 Seventh-day Adventists worship in some 450 churches in the province.

Adventism began here in 1921 when Samuel Rantung, who lived in this area, visited Jakarta. During his lengthy stay in Jakarta he came into contact with the Adventist message, received Bible studies, and was baptized into the Adventist Church. When he returned to his village community in North Sulawesi, the entire village wanted to know about the “iron beasts,” referring to the trains in Jakarta. There are no trains in this region of Indonesia, and the people here had never seen one before. So Rantung invited the townspeople to a special meeting to hear about his adventures, during which he told of another type of beast—the prophetic

*Tribe on  
remote island learns*

# INDONESIAN

# Journal



DONALD WELEY



PEGGY ISKANDAR WOWOR

**Top:** COMMITTING TO JESUS: Mark Finley and Jonathan Kuntaraf baptize two of the many hundreds of people who accepted Jesus as their Savior in Manado. **Bottom:** OVERFLOW CROWD: Some 15,000 people crammed into every available space and spilled outside the Manado Convention Center on Sabbath during the evangelistic series.



# of Jesus. AN

By  
MARK A. FINLEY



PEGGY ISKANDAR WOWOR

**SHARING THE MESSAGE:**  
With the aid of his translator, Jonathan Kuntaraf (right), evangelist Mark Finley shares the gospel message in Manado, Indonesia.

beasts of Daniel 7 and 8.

The villagers listened with great interest as they learned about the prophecies and the coming of Jesus. Rantung continued regular discussions with them about Bible prophecy, and by the end of the year 21 people had been baptized and the Adventist faith launched in the Manado area.

Our churches are now flourishing here, and the membership is growing. In Manado there is now an Adventist union office, a conference office, and a 90-bed Adventist medical center. There is also a thriving secular university. On Sabbath I preached at the university church to 4,000 students about the Christ who can meet each of our needs. Early that morning it was refreshing to see hundreds of students walking to Sabbath school carrying Bibles in their hands.

Before the series began, I conducted two days of training sessions for about 120 pastors. At the session I heard the story of the father of one of the pastors who more than 30 years ago met a tribal chief, who together with his people lives on the remote Indonesian island of Tanimbar. Although we have 230,000 Seventh-day Adventists in Indonesia, thousands of Indonesian islands have no Adventist presence at all; Tanimbar is one of them.

The chief and the pastor's father developed a friendship and studied the Bible together for several years. Although the chief came to believe the Adventist message, his leadership position hindered him from fully embracing it and being bap-

tized. He was reluctant to interrupt the status quo of his tribe. His son, however, accepted the Adventist message in 1995, and is now a university professor in Manado.

The chief is now 77 years old and has been reengaged in Bible studies for the past four years with the son of the pastor who studied the Bible with him so many years ago. He and his family traveled for a week by boat to come to Manado to attend our evangelistic meetings, and they have requested baptism. Please pray for the chief, his family, and his people.

Jonathan and Kathleen Kuntaraf, Charles Haughabrooks, and I sense the power of God working in our meetings every night. Jonathan serves as translator; Charles is presenting the music; and Kathleen the health talks.

The Indonesian people treat us with amazing hospitality. The churches spend hours every day preparing our noon meal. What a joy to be part of the worldwide Adventist family!

## Report 2 September 5

I have just returned from tonight's meeting, and our audience may have been the largest yet. Thousands of people crammed into nearly every available space in the convention center and spilled over into the foyer and hallways. We have accommodated the large crowds by placing screens throughout the overflow areas. It's exciting to see people so enthused about Jesus and this message that they are bringing their friends to the meetings. The East Indonesia Union Conference president, Noldy Sakul, sits in the front row of the meetings every night and reserves seats for his guests. The other night eight of the people he invited attended the meeting. Our members here are on fire for God.

PEGGY ISKANDAR WOWOR



A MOMENTOUS EVENT: Almost 2,000 people were baptized as a result of the evangelistic meetings in Manado.

The highlight of our day was the baptism of the island chief. Throughout the meetings the chief's faith has strengthened. He made his commitment to Jesus, and today he, his wife, two of his children, and two of his grandchildren were baptized. It was a glorious outdoor service. The chief sent a letter to his entire large village explaining that he is now a Seventh-day Adventist and inviting them to consider the truths he has accepted. While videotaping his baptism, the chief looked into the camera and committed himself to lead his people into an understanding of God's message of truth for these last days, and is encouraging the Seventh-day Adventist Church to send missionaries to help him.

Many hundreds of people who have been attending the Manado meetings have made their decision to follow Jesus in baptism and become a part of His remnant church. They are

preparing for baptism this Sabbath. During the prework leading up to this series, hundreds more also were baptized as the result of our small-group Bible study ministry.

The Holy Spirit is doing something special here in Manado, and it's a joy to be part of it—but this is just a foretaste of what God longs to do, and will do, through His people just before He returns.

### Report 3 September 8

This morning we said goodbye to Manado and left to begin our 48-hour journey home. Our evangelistic meetings in the Manado Convention Center ended yesterday. Fifteen thousand people crammed into every available space and spilled outside the building, where we had set up hundreds of additional chairs to accommodate the crowds. Cars were already beginning to pull into the convention center parking lot at 6:15 a.m.

By 8:00 the auditorium was full. When the mayor of Manado arrived at 10:00, there was a major traffic jam. Thousands of people brought their lunch and stayed all day until we closed the session at 6:00 in the evening.

We transported the baptismal candidates in two trips on 15 buses to our baptismal site. We praise God for each person who has accepted Jesus as their Savior and been baptized!

Following the baptismal service we returned to the convention center for an afternoon concert and my final sermon. More than 30 musical groups and about 1,000 people participated in the musical extravaganzas held each evening of the meetings.

In addition to our evening evangelistic meetings, our team has conducted an evangelistic/church growth workshop for pastors, participated in two church dedications, spoken to high school and university students, made numerous personal visits, and met with city government officials. The mayor of Manado is a friend to Adventists. He attended and spoke at both of our church dedications and for our closing Sabbath morning meeting, expressing his deep appreciation of Seventh-day Adventists.

It is my earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will be poured out in all His fullness so the work of God on earth can soon be finished and Jesus can come. It is to this end that we continue to share His message of love and truth. ■



**Mark A. Finley** has been a pastor, administrator, and evangelist for the Seventh-day Adventist

Church for 40 years. He currently is an assistant to the General Conference president.





Regardless of where you  
**FIND** yourself



**GOD'S** love is big enough...



Up, **CLOSE**, and personal



To give you **WINGS.**



One of the most meaningful themes of Scripture is the sanctuary. From a historical view, it flows from the early patriarchal altars through the Mosaic tabernacle and the Temple of Jerusalem, reaching its climax at Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. From a theological perspective, the sanctuary is the abiding place of God (Ex. 25:8; Isa. 6:1; Rev. 11:19), the depository of His law (Ex. 25:16; 31:18; Rev. 11:19), and the place where salvation is available to all human beings (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1, 2). No wonder early Seventh-day Adventists saw the sanctuary as a major integrating factor of their doctrinal system.<sup>1</sup>

Ellen White speaks of the earthly sanctuary and its rituals

### The Nature of the Sanctuary

Many Christians have difficulty conceiving of the existence of a heavenly sanctuary. For them, heaven is only a spiritual, immaterial dimension as portrayed by Greek philosophers. By contrast, the Bible speaks of a real heaven, with a real city in which God's glorious sanctuary-temple is located. The book of Hebrews refers to that entity as "the true tabernacle which the Lord erected" (Heb. 8:2) and "the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation" (Heb. 9:11).

Ellen White explains that God not only presented to Moses "a view of the heavenly sanctuary" itself, but also gave him a "plan," "a miniature representation of the heavenly temple" as a model for the earthly sanctuary

By ALBERTO R. TIMM

# Recognizing Heavenly Realities

*Ellen White's insights into the*

as "a compacted prophecy of the gospel,"<sup>2</sup> and of the heavenly sanctuary and its ministry as "the very center of Christ's work in behalf of [men and women]"<sup>3</sup> and "the foundation of our faith."<sup>4</sup> But Satan hates these great truths, and "invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted."<sup>5</sup> So nothing should take our eyes away from Christ, as "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), and His glorious priestly ministry on our behalf.

(Ex. 25:9, 40).<sup>6</sup> "Moses made the earthly sanctuary after a pattern which was shown him. Paul teaches that that pattern was the true sanctuary which is in heaven. And John testifies that he saw it in heaven."<sup>7</sup>

With a clear understanding of the heavenly sanctuary as "the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy," White could argue consistently that "as the sanctuary on earth had two apartments, the holy and the most holy, so there are two holy places in the sanctuary in heaven."<sup>8</sup>



### The Ministry of the Sanctuary

The book of Hebrews affirms that Christ began His priesthood offering Himself as an atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world (Heb. 8:1-5; 9:11-28). Having made a complete and perfect sacrifice, He ascended into heaven to become a High Priest “at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb. 8:1; cf. Zech. 6:13).

As our mediator and advocate, He intercedes on our behalf by the merits of His own blood. So meaningful is His priestly ministry that, in Ellen White’s words, “the intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.”<sup>9</sup> But with the end of the 2300 symbolic days/years of Daniel 8:14 in 1844, Christ began the pre-Advent investigative judgment (see Dan. 7:9-14; 8:9-14) announced in Revelation 14:7 as “the hour of His judgment has come.”

Describing the installment of that judgment, Daniel 7 mentions that “thrones were put in place” (verse 9); the movable throne of God had wheels like “burning fire” (verse 9); and the Son of Man [Christ] went to the Ancient of Days [God the Father] (verse 13). Ellen White describes that event as follows: “I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. . . . Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat.”<sup>10</sup> Daniel 7:21-27 explains that the judgment is at the same time against the “horn” that persecuted the saints and “in favor of the saints of the Most High.”

“A clear view of the heavenly sanctuary helps us to better understand Christ’s work for our salvation.”

which were to be developed through succeeding generations.”<sup>11</sup> So in the post-1844 Adventist experience, the study of the sanctuary “opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious.”<sup>12</sup>

A clear view of the heavenly sanctuary helps us to better understand Christ’s work for our salvation. It reveals not only that in the *past* He died for our sins and in the *future* He will come again to liberate us from this sinful world; but also that *presently* He is helping us to overcome sin. For this reason, Hebrews 4:16 appeals to us: “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” The psalmist adds: “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple” (Ps. 27:4).

All of us have to dwell by faith in God’s heavenly sanctuary/temple until the glorious day when we will worship Him “in His temple” (Rev. 7:15). ■

## heavenly sanctuary

### The Meaning of the Sanctuary

Some Christians fragment sacred history into several dispensations, each with a message distinct from the others. But instead of mentioning different gospels, the Bible speaks of one “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6) and warns against the acceptance of “any other gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9). The everlasting gospel flows through the sanctuary motif, integrating the plan of salvation into an unfolding whole.

Ellen White explained that “around the sanctuary and its solemn services mystically gathered the grand truths

<sup>1</sup> See Alberto R. Timm, *The Sanctuary and the Three Angels’ Messages: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 488.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), p. 343.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 415.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1884), vol. 4, p. 260.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 489.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882), p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423.



**Alberto R. Timm** is an associate director at the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

# Fulfilled Prophecy

*Why is a prophecy established on the basis of Daniel 8:14 and ending in 1844 important for all Christians?*

This is a question we are occasionally asked by other Christians. In an age of rationalism and scientific methodologies, it is considered

absurd to suggest that a biblical writer could predict events that would take place thousands of years after the prediction. But the Bible provides abundant examples of long- and short-term prophecies that were fulfilled within history.

**1. A God of the Future:** The 1844 date should remind Christians that the God of the Scriptures is still involved in their history. The historical critical approach to Bible interpretation excluded divine intervention from human affairs, leaving us in the hands of human and natural causality. Daniel 8:14 and its fulfillment in 1844 call Christians to return to the Bible and its apocalyptic prophecies to reaffirm that God is still active in fulfilling His prophetic word in human history. These prophecies provide a general outline of the experience of God's people during the Christian Era to help them locate themselves within the flow of history and to call them to align themselves with His divine plan.

God's speaking did not end at the close of the first century, and we can hear His voice to us in the fulfillment of His apocalyptic prophecies. The fulfillment of Daniel 8:14 in 1844 is a divine shout to the human race informing us that the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is directly related to His work within our history.

**2. Christ's Work of Mediation:** The year 1844, as a year when prophecy was fulfilled, calls the Christian world to return to the biblical teaching of the work of mediation of Christ in the heavenly temple. This biblical truth has been neglected by Christians in general. In Roman Catholic tradition the church became the heavenly temple and a human priesthood was established to distribute the grace of Christ. Consequently the work of the only Mediator between God and humans was clouded (1 Tim. 2:5). Protestants emphasized the cross so much that they have had

little to say about the mediation of Christ before the Father. Quite often His mediation is limited to His death on the cross. The typological significance of the Israelite sanctuary services has been partially ignored. But Christ's mediation in heaven is as important for us as the cross; not in the sense that it complements the cross, but in that it unfolds its saving power.

**3. Christ's Work of Judgment:** The fulfillment of prophecy in 1844 tells the Christian world that the typological meaning of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16)—His work of eschatological judgment—is being fulfilled in the mediation of Christ in the heavenly temple. This judgment—already in progress—will result in the vindication of God and His people and in the cleansing of the universe from the miasma of sin (Rev. 20:11-15). This judgment is not to inform God, but to reveal to all intelligent creatures that He dealt justly and lovingly with the cosmic problem of sin (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 16:5-7; 19:1, 2). While this judgment takes place in heaven the church is active on earth.

**4. The Urgency of the Message:** The fulfillment of prophecy in 1844 invites the Christian world to awake from its spiritual lethargy to proclaim a message that will prepare the world for Christ's coming. This eternal gospel should be proclaimed in the context of the hour of God's judgment and of a demonic deception that will significantly increase toward the end of the cosmic conflict (Rev. 14:6-12; 13:13, 14).

The Christian church should urgently proclaim the crucified and risen Savior who is in the heavenly sanctuary standing for us before the Father and directly involved on earth, through the Spirit, in opposing the last demonic attack against God and His kingdom. The year 1844 brought to light a system of biblical truth that fearlessly opposes the deceptions of the enemy, thus becoming a divine instrument in preparing the world for Jesus' return. ■



**Angel Manuel Rodríguez** was director of the General Conference's Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference prior to his retirement.



By MARK A. FINLEY

# Victory Over Temptation



The famous American writer Mark Twain is reported to have said, “I deal with temptation by yielding to it.” This statement seems to be the norm for many Christians. They have accepted Jesus, they believe He has saved them, but they still struggle with besetting sins and are regularly overcome by Satan’s temptations. Is the Christian life one of perpetual defeat? Is victory over temptation possible? If it is, how can we achieve it? In this lesson we will discover answers to these questions.

**1** Read Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21. What is the main theme in these passages of Scripture? What do they all have in common? What do they say about overcoming?

The book of Revelation is addressed to seven specific churches in Asia Minor, an area that comprises modern-day Turkey. These churches, in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, faced enormous temptations and challenges. Five of the seven received direct rebukes from God. They were afflicted with deadly spiritual diseases. Nevertheless, our loving and all-powerful Lord promised victory and the ability to overcome the wiles of the evil one to each member of these early Christian congregations.

**2** Read 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:19-22; 3:19, 20; Jude 24, 25. What promises does the Bible give us as we commit our lives to Jesus?

Each of these passages is incredibly encouraging. When we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, the Holy Spirit enters our lives. We have supernatural power to overcome the temptations of Satan. We are not left alone to struggle in frustrated defeat.

**3** Can we overcome Satan on our own? Read Job 14:4 and Jeremiah 13:23. Is it possible to defeat the enemy unaided by the power of Jesus?

**4** Read John 3:1-8. How did Jesus describe the change that takes place at conversion to respectable, God-fearing Nicodemus?

**5** Read Galatians 2:20. How does this miraculous change take place in our lives?

When we surrender our lives totally to Jesus, the Holy Spirit takes possession of our lives. The result is a mysterious, unexplainable union with Christ. We become a “new creation” in Christ. We are His possession, under new management, and He gives us a new nature (Rom. 6:6-11). By receiving Christ we become sons and daughters of God (Eph. 3:15). As we fellowship with Christ through prayer and the study of His Word, He writes the principles of His law in our hearts and minds (Heb. 8:10).

**6** Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What is the practical result of Christ’s amazing saving grace in our lives? What happens to the believer who is saved by grace?

Salvation by grace has practical consequences in our lives. Although we come to Jesus just as we are, we do not remain as we were after coming to Jesus. His grace changes us; we become “His workmanship.” In other words, Christ works divine changes in our lives so that day by day we become more like Him. This work of grace, or sanctification, in our lives does not take place in an instant. As we abide in Christ we are gradually changed into His image (John 15:1-8; 1 John 3:1-3).

**7** Read Galatians 5:16-25 and describe how our lives are different through the power of the Holy Spirit after we are converted. Contrast the works of the “flesh” and the works of the “Spirit.”

Conversion is difficult to comprehend, and even more difficult to explain. To be understood, it must be experienced. There is a miraculous, life-changing power in the gospel of Jesus. There is transforming power in His amazing grace. In Him we are not the same.

Why not open your heart fully to His transforming grace? If you’ve already committed your life to Him, why not do it again today, and ask Him to continue to work an ongoing change in your life so daily you can become more like Him? ■

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION



# Letters

## Man Made New

I am thankful for Tammy Zyderveldt's inspiring story "Australian Prison Inmate Evangelizes With Adventist Lessons" (November 2011) about inmate Matthew J. Baronet. His words "I do think that prison is God's training ground, and there is a lot of work to be done behind these walls of razor wire" have a strong message to all people, especially those who ignore prison ministries.

I have been in prison in Malawi for more than seven years, and I agree with Baronet: prison is God's training ground. I was not praying, or even associating with others, but I've been an Adventist Church elder in this prison

for two years. I am ready to work for Him in any ministry in His church.

BOXTEN T. KUDZIWE  
*Malawi*

## Science and Creation

Regarding "Creation Wonders" (August 2009): Science can observe and explain natural processes, but not the supernatural. If we assume that creation was a supernatural intervention of God in history—a miracle—then science cannot explain it.

Similarly, the incarnation of Christ and His return to this earth cannot be explained scientifically. It is futile to try to confirm these beliefs by scientific methods. We believe in a God who performs miracles that we simply cannot explain (Ps. 98:1, etc.)

As far as science is concerned, the six-day creation is a myth, as is also the incarnation of Christ and His second coming. Science believes in the "big bang" that occurred billions of years ago, and for that reason the world will continue for another 6 billion years, until the sun cools down and life on this planet becomes extinct.

“Don't **shun** this

Seventh-day Adventists cannot believe in evolutionary scientific theory and in the soon return of Christ. Since we believe in the return of Christ, we also believe in the six-day creation.

JÖRG KRAL  
*Zürich, Switzerland*

## The Exchange

I love reading *Adventist World*. A lot of topics edify me. I work at the center for ADRA Burkina. *Adventist World* takes me through a lot.

ALEXIS MUSABIMANA  
*Burkina Faso*

## In Appreciation

A client of the Adventist Book Center at the Quebec Conference in Canada comes to shop every month and asks if the *Adventist World* magazine has arrived. He loves it so much that he takes five copies for himself and his friends.

## Prayer & PRAISE

We would love to serve our Creator in a pleasant place, but poverty is in our way. Please ask the Lord to send us the means to complete our church construction.

METELLUS, *Haiti*

Please pray for the youth in the church, for my family, for my church, and for me as I work for God.

TESFAG, *Ethiopia*

Last month I experienced two disappointments in my life: My job order to work in Saudi Arabia was canceled. Days after this I realized that the guy I fell in love with was confused with what he felt for me. Please pray that God will show me His wonderful plan, and that He will give me strength to overcome this difficult moment of my life.

MARHLA, *via e-mail*

Please pray for my family that God may always give us health and patience;

that our tears will be replaced with the smile of God; and that those who oppress us be forgiven by God.

ANGELINE, *Indonesia*

Please pray for my daughters and my son.

SONIA, *Puerto Rico*

My mother has a problem with high blood pressure. She collapsed and was rushed to the hospital. May the good Lord extend His healing upon her.

EGLY, *Malawi*

# work of God.

—BOXTEN T. KUDZIWE, Malawi

And he is not even an Adventist.  
SERGENA OBAS  
Longueuil, Quebec, Canada

I came across a copy of *Adventist World* in a clinic in my hometown, and I am impressed by the articles and news about the Adventist world mission and commitment. I would love to receive this magazine if possible.  
STEVENSON KHONGSNGI  
Meghalaya, India

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

**Letters Policy:** Please send to: [letters@adventistworld.org](mailto:letters@adventistworld.org). Letters must be clearly written, 100-word maximum. Include the name of the article and the date of publication with your letter. Also include your name, the town/city, state, and country from which you are writing. Letters will be edited for space and clarity. Not all letters submitted will be published.

I have a speech and hearing defect that prevents me from pronouncing my words correctly. These defects have adversely affected my life. Please pray for me. I want to be able to communicate effectively.  
DWIGHT, Jamaica

**The Place of Prayer:** Send prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer) to [prayer@adventistworld.org](mailto:prayer@adventistworld.org). Keep entries short and concise, 50-words or less. Items will be edited for space and clarity. Not all submissions will be printed. Please include your name and your country's name. You may also fax requests to: 1-301-680-6638; or mail them to *Adventist World*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.



Don't let your New Year's resolutions to get more exercise get offtrack. Try these suggestions to stay consistent:

- Take time out.** Don't exercise every day. Remember the Sabbath and take at least one day off a week.
- Try new things.** Athletes call it cross-training: Walking/running one day, swimming/biking the next, gardening/weight training the next. Keep it fresh.
- Get back to it.** It's easy to get out of a routine because of travel, sickness, or schedule changes. Don't wait until next January to start again. Start now.

## Where in the World Is This?



**ANSWER:** This photo, submitted by Rodrigo Assi, director of Bethel Adventist School, was taken in Bissau on September 24, Independence Day in Guinea-Bissau. More than 100 Faithfinders used the day to share the gospel in their capital city. The uniforms were donated by Faithfinders in Brazil.



top

5

## The Search for Perfection

Countries with the highest plastic surgery procedures per capita (2010):

1. South Korea
2. Greece
3. Italy
4. Brazil
5. United States

Source: *National Geographic*



“What matters is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes—but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in” (1 Peter 3:3, 4, Message).\*

\* Texts credited to Message are from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.



## 231 Years Ago

**B**aptist preacher William Miller was born on February 15, 1782, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, United States. An avowed skeptic, he served in the

War of 1812, between the United States and England. After the war he lived in Low Hampton, New York, where he served at various times as deputy sheriff and justice of the peace.

Miller became a Christian in 1816 and began studying the Bible by beginning at Genesis and going no further until he could comprehend what he was reading. In 1818, after reading Daniel 8:14, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (KJV), he decided that “in about twenty-five years [1843] . . . all the affairs of our present state would be wound up” (James White, *Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller*, p. 57).

From August 1831 he was one of the foremost Christian preachers who predicted that Jesus would return in 1843 or 1844. The result was a great spiritual revival in North America and Europe. He died in December 1849 in the hope of Jesus’ imminent and literal return.

IMAGE COURTESY OF CENTER FOR ADVENTIST RESEARCH

## Stealth Health

A half cup of cooked lentils has only 115 calories, but has eight grams of fiber. Added bonus: Lentils are rich in iron, phosphorus, and manganese.

Source: *Men's Health*



*“Behold, I come quickly...”*

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

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**50** WORDS OR LESS

## My Favorite... Bible Promise

■ My favorite Bible promise is Isaiah 65:24. I am assured that God in His infinite wisdom knows my needs before I call on Him. Therefore, when I pray, I spend more time thanking and praising God for His majestic power, loving kindness, and compassion.

—MARLOW, *Huntsville, Alabama, United States*

■ Hepatitis had zapped my strength. Then I read Isaiah 40:31. Realizing that “every promise in the Book is mine,” I claimed the promise. Acting on that belief, I started climbing our home’s 40 steps. My energy returned for a month; then I had to reclaim the promise. My energy has returned permanently.

—HEATHER, *Dhaka, Bangladesh*

■ I love Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” I thank God that Paul wrote this. It’s my personal reminder when I go through the darkest phases of my life.

—CHRISTY, *Jakarta, Indonesia*

■ My favorite Bible promise is 1 Peter 5:7: “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Over the years I have learned to leave my cares at the foot of the cross, walking away with the assurance that His will is being done.

—TESSA, *Brooklyn, New York, United States*

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



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