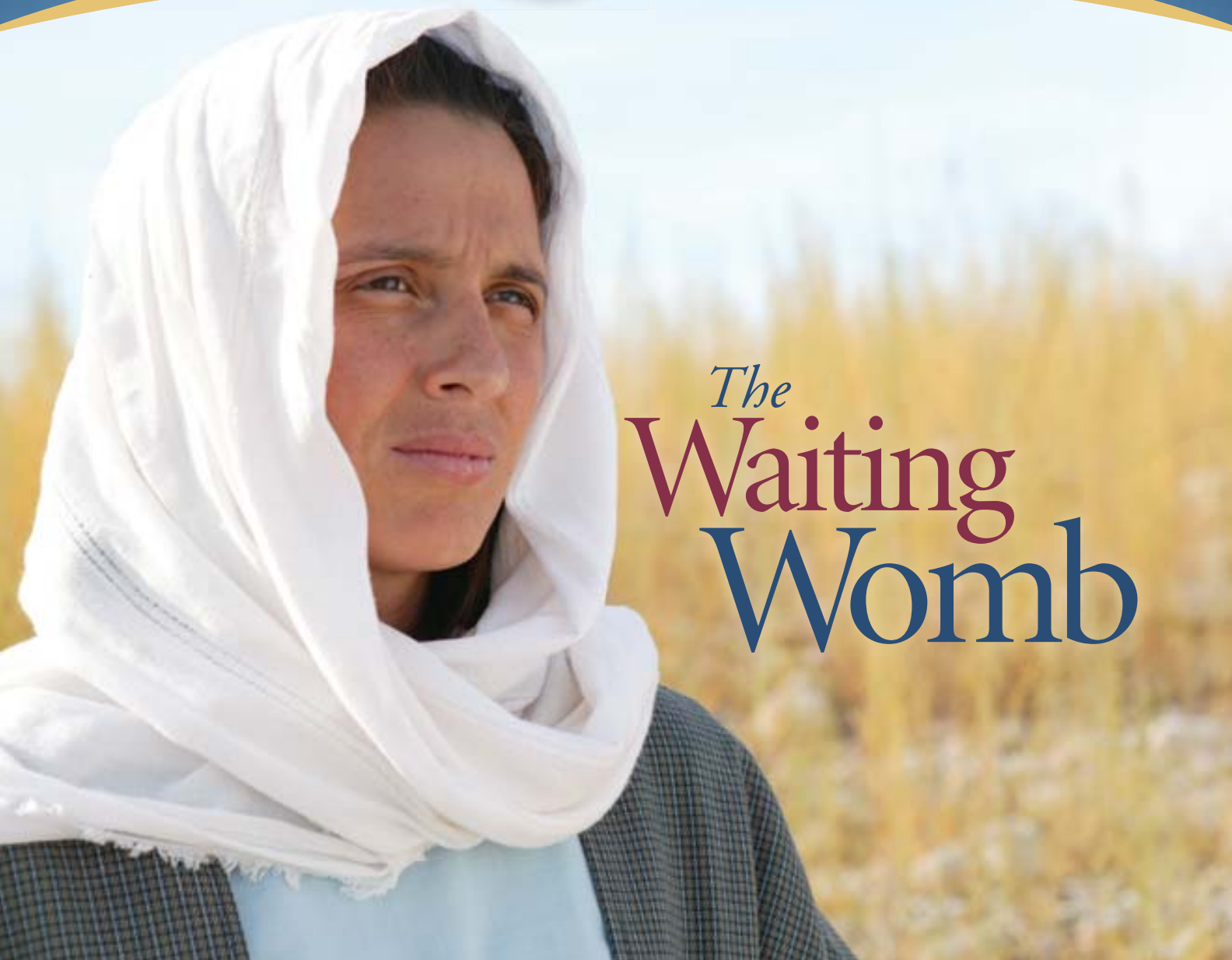


The International Paper for Seventh-day Adventists

December 2013

ADVENTIST WORLD



The Waiting Womb

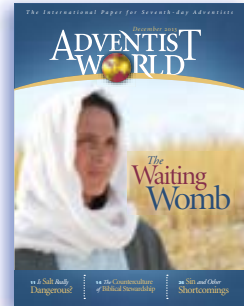
11 *Is Salt Really
Dangerous?*

14 *The Counterculture
of Biblical Stewardship*

26 *Sin and Other
Shortcomings*

ADVENTIST WORLD

December 2013



COVER STORY

16 The Waiting Womb

By Faminu Imabong
"Lord, give me a child" is a prayer that crosses all ages and cultures.

8 WORLD VISTA "As Was His Custom"

By Ted N. C. Wilson
Spiritual habits determine our direction.

12 DEVOTIONAL A Glimmer of Light

By Curtis Rittenour
No matter how dark it is, light is always nearby.

14 FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS The Counterculture of Biblical Stewardship

By Oliver Glanz
To a culture that says, "Get," Christianity says, "Give."

20 THE ADVENTIST STORY Grace Enough for Every Challenge

By Ferdinand O. Regalado
Adventists in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division are among the most active in the world.

22 SPECIAL FEATURE Missionary Impulse Stirs NSD Adventists

By Mark A. Kellner
The recent International Mission Congress in Korea highlighted the challenges and opportunities for global outreach.

DEPARTMENTS

3 WORLD REPORT

- 3 News Briefs
- 6 News Feature

25 SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

The Glory and Mystery of Christ

27 BIBLE STUDY

The Perilous Pitfalls of Compromise

11 WORLD HEALTH

Is Salt Really Dangerous?

26 BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Sin and Other Shortcomings

28 IDEA EXCHANGE



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COVER PHOTO © ERIK STENBAKKEN / LICENSED FROM GOODSALT.COM

My Italian grandmother was part of a very large family. With 17 brothers and sisters, she never lacked for conversation or company. None of the children had their own bed, she remembered, and mealtimes were often more competitive than companionable.

Through it all, even when times were tough, the bond that kept the Leonardo family together was the enduring reality of their blood relationship to each other. Arguments might erupt; one sibling might refuse to talk with another for a week or even a year. But over time they learned a loyalty to each other that survived the bluster and the bruised feelings. United at first only by their common parentage, they grew to respect each other, cherish each other, and seek each other's company.

I have fond memories of early-summer evenings at birthday celebrations and anniversaries, watching them on the front porch, alight with laughter, wit, and song. And I was proud to be a part of them—I still am proud to be a part of them—because we share an indelible set of memories and hopes.

You are also part of a very large family. With more than 17 million brothers and sisters all around the globe, you have been born again into a set of relationships intended to offer you both conversation and company on your way to the Father's home.

Some family members live near you; and yes, sometimes those nearby relationships get strained by arguments, silence, or bruised feelings. Most of your family is spread all around the world, however. They worship in so many different ways; they sing in hundreds of different languages. But the most enduring family trait is that each one has been bought with the precious blood of our Elder Brother, Jesus. In His name we gather to celebrate the family's history, bear the family's sufferings, retell the family's stories, and anticipate the joy to come.

Scripture says of Jesus that He was "not ashamed to call [us] brothers and sisters" (Heb. 2:11, NRSV).^{*} He is proud to call us family—His own. Now would be a good time to reaffirm your own commitment to the wonderful, worldwide family of this great Advent movement.

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Bill Knott

WORLD REPORT

Generosity of Members Crucial to Church's Mission, Treasurer Says



BRANDAN ROBERTS/ANN

BRING IN YOUTH: Adventist world church treasurer Robert E. Lemon calls for more inclusion of young adults in more financial decision-making in the denomination during his report to Annual Council on October 14.

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church members returned to the Lord US\$2.33 billion in tithe worldwide last year, treasurer Robert E. Lemon told 2013 Annual Council delegates on October 14.

Tithe from divisions outside of North America increased 4.4 percent, for a total of close to \$1.4 billion. Tithe returned in the North American Division for 2012 was up about 1 percent from 2011 and totaled \$933 million. In the church's South American Division alone, members returned nearly \$530 million in tithe.

Mission offerings from outside North America similarly rose, reaching about \$60 million, a 6 percent increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, mission offerings from North America dipped 2.6 percent, but still totaled nearly \$23 million.

Commenting on the results, Lemon said the generosity of church members led by God's spirit, not appropriations, will finish the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And young laypeople, more often than senior administrators, will ignite that work.

He acknowledged that his prediction might seem out of character—even "meddlesome"—in the context of a financial report to Annual Council delegates, but the Adventist world church treasurer is convinced that it's time for a sea change in how the church is funded and directed.

First, he wants to see more grassroots financial support for projects. "Our church has a history of thinking that if a project is worthwhile, it must have millions and millions of dollars of funding behind it, but the work isn't going to be finished by the money in the [church's] bank account," Lemon said.

Continued on next page ▶

WORLD REPORT

One case in point is the Great Controversy Project, he said. The book distribution project received less funding from the General Conference budget than Adventist world church headquarters spent on travel expenses for delegates to attend Annual Council. But members worldwide who supported the project shared more than 140 million copies of the book, which was authored by church cofounder Ellen G. White.

Going forward, Lemon said he and other church financial leaders would like to see more projects that empower laypeople to take similar initiatives.

“When God’s children get excited about something, they take money out of their pockets,” Lemon said.

Meanwhile, church financial leaders will continue to concentrate funding in areas with little or no Adventist presence. In Pakistan \$300,000 will fund a shelter for at-risk girls. In Myanmar \$400,000 will pay to reopen the Yangon Adventist International School. Another \$500,000 will go toward building a center of influence and a vegetarian restaurant in Brunei, where an Adventist presence is not yet established.

Delegates also approved a proposal to send \$570,000 to the MORE Project, which publishes books and pamphlets contextualized for other religious audiences. Another \$4 million will step up production at the media center in the church’s Middle East and North Africa Union. Currently the media center produces programming in Arabic, but local leaders are eager to expand to other languages.

It was no coincidence, then, when he asked delegates to approve a proposal to use the 2015 General Conference session offering collected at the

2015 General Conference session as well by the world church on three Sabbaths in 2014 and 2015 to fund outreach and evangelism projects overseen by Adventist young people ages 25 and under. Projects would receive approval from committees on which 75 percent of the members will be young adults.

“It’s time that we tell our young people that we not only trust them to do the work, but also trust them to make decisions as to how to spend the money of the church,” Lemon said.

“It’s interesting how our perception of youth has changed,” Lemon said, noting that a study of early church history reveals that most of the church’s founders were teenagers or 20-somethings. “Young people” when the church was established 150 years ago were not the late-30- and 40-somethings who are labeled “young” administrators today, Lemon said.

He urged delegates to take advantage of upcoming opportunities to “leave young people a seat at the table of decision-making.” In early 2014 each of the church’s 13 divisions will select delegates to the 2015 General Conference session.

“We have the young people. We have the women, who constitute a majority of our church. We have the funds, although most of it is still in our own pockets. And we have the blessings of the Lord. This work is going to be finished. The question is Are we going to be a part of it? Or are we just going to have to move out of the way?” Lemon asked delegates.

“We are one church, one family, and we have a work to finish,” he said. —reported by Elizabeth Lechleitner, *Adventist News Network*



MARK A. KELLNER/ADVENTIST WORLD

YOUNG DELEGATE: Stefan Giuliani, a 22-year-old university student from Graz, Austria, listens to proceedings of the 2013 Annual Council at the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, on October 15, 2013.

Young Austrian Seventh-day Adventist Finds Council “Interesting”

■ He’s a 22-year-old university student from Graz, Austria, the country’s second-largest city and a 120-mile drive south and west of Vienna. And he’s a delegate to the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s 2013 Annual Council, his third time at the world headquarters.

But Stefan Giuliani is not a worker for the church, nor is he even a member of the Austrian Union’s executive committee. Instead, he’s a “lay delegate,” and, specifically, one of the younger delegates participating in the church’s annual business sessions.

For Giuliani, however, the impact of these meetings is more personal: the sessions, he said, are “very interesting. After all, coming here always is really motivating. It gives you the feeling that Adventists all over the world are accomplishing a lot. At home I tend to see difficulties rather than opportunities, problems rather than successes.”

And not without reason: Austria, like the rest of Western Europe, is struggling to find faith after decades of secularism. While the Roman Catholic Church is the “traditional” religion in Austria, Giuliani—who said he’s unaware of any family relationship to the former New York City mayor of the same last name—says his peers view religious activity as something alien to their daily lives.

“They don’t know what to do with religion,” he explained. “It’s meaningless to them; they have no point of reference” from which they can discuss it.

At an age when most young adults contemplate their future and the hope of rising through executive ranks in a commercial enterprise, Giuliani said that the corner office isn’t his goal. Though he hopes to complete his dual degrees in business administration and political economics and have a career as an accountant or company comptroller, he doesn’t dream of corporate success.

Professionally, “it would be great to be able to serve the [Adventist] Church, but there are few opportunities to do that,” he said. He is active in the 160-member Graz Seventh-day Adventist Church and leads its youth group, where 20 to 25 young adults attend weekly. He also helps the union’s youth department.

“I wouldn’t care for working in top management,” he added, since that

would require “60 to 70 hours a week, with no time left for family, let alone church. I want time to be active to serve people.”

—reported by Mark A. Kellner, news editor

Academics, Pastors Unite in Chile for Theological Symposium

■ More than 400 participants spent five days in August at Chile Adventist University in Chillán, in intense Bible study and discussion about the book of Revelation, which presents the gospel message for the end times.

The meeting marked the tenth edition of an academic symposium uniting university professors, administrators, pastors, and theology students in South America. During the inaugural session, Joel Leiva, Chile Adventist University professor and event organizing-committee secretary, reminded participants that South America’s contributions to global Adventism not only included explosive growth and innovative evangelism, but also profound biblical and theological reflection.

In 20 plenary sessions, presented by specialists and invited speakers from different regions of the world church, participants were reminded that the book of Revelation is not only a book of prophetic symbols and eschatological perspective, but is truly the gospel, given for a decisive moment in history. More than 70 parallel sessions showcased current research into the apocalypse in South America and stimulated hearty discussions. Gluder Quispe, professor at the Peruvian Union University in Lima, Peru, provided in his plenary presen-

tation a panoramic view about how Adventists have interpreted this crucial biblical book throughout the history of the movement. Quispe noted the transition from a mostly historical perspective to a more theological and exegetical approach.

Other plenary sessions focused upon the structure of the book of Revelation, by Ranko Stevanovic, professor of New Testament, Andrews University; the historicist approach to the interpretation of the apocalypse, by Richard Sabuin, dean of the Theological Seminary of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Philippines; the important hermeneutic principle of recapitulation by Ekkehardt Müller, deputy director, Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference; Ellen White’s significant contribution to the study of the apocalypse, by Alberto Timm, associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate and former rector of Seminário Adventista Latino-Americano de Teologia (SALT); and the use of Old Testament texts, particularly of the book of Numbers, in the apocalypse by Gerald A. Klingbeil, Adventist World associate editor.

During the Sabbath worship service Erton Köhler, South American Division president, preached a sermon highlighting the need for Adventist universities to prepare pastors who are profound thinkers with a pastoral vision. Noting the close links between Genesis 1 and 2 and Revelation 21 and 22, Köhler asserted that re-creation and a new Jerusalem without belief in God’s original creation would not make any sense. He encouraged those present to “use the book of Revelation to bring hope” to a world that is increasingly more hopeless. Besides an

Continued on next page ▶

WORLD REPORT

intense program of quality research presentations and challenging devotionals, participants enjoyed moments of fellowship throughout the days, helped by the hospitable environment provided by Chile Adventist University.

On Sabbath evening four former rectors of SALT received plaques recognizing their contribution to Adventist education in South America. Amid heartfelt applause Mario Veloso, Enrique Becerra, Wilson Endruveit, and Alberto Timm were honored for their leadership in developing the theological program of the South American Division. Following that, Chile Adventist University gave honorary doctorates to

Mario Veloso and Sergio Olivares for their theological contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South America.

Prior to the final plenary session focusing upon the eternal gospel contained in the apocalypse, the participants voted a consensus statement, affirming 10 crucial elements related to the interpretation and proclamation of the book of Revelation. Reinaldo Siqueira, current rector of SALT, announced the next symposium to be held in Brazil at Brazil Adventist University (Centro Universitário Adventista de São Paulo) in 2015 that will focus upon the life, work, and mission of Ellen G. White.

Miguel Ángel Núñez, a pastor in northern Chile, enjoyed the spirit of the symposium. “As always, it was a wonderful opportunity to renew old friendships and get up-to-date on Adventist scholarship about Revelation.”

Segundo Correa, dean of the theology faculty of Bolivia Adventist University, felt that the symposia awakened and promoted stronger biblical-theological research in South America. Carlos Steger, dean of the theology faculty of River Plate Adventist University in Argentina, appreciated the quality and the sheer breadth of the presentations. “I am returning home intellectually enriched and spiritually inspired,” he said. Participants left Chillán not only enriched and inspired—they also departed ready to share the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Web site containing the papers presented at the seminar will be available online before the end of 2013.

—Gerald A. Klingbeil, associate editor, Adventist World



STRUCTURAL PRESENTATION: Ranko Stevanovic, professor of New Testament at Andrews University spoke on the structure of the Book of Revelation during the Tenth South American Theological Symposium at the Adventist University of Chile.

AUC PHOTO

Annual Council Suggested 28 Funda

Anual Council delegates approved on October 16, 2013, the next step in a five-year process to better articulate the church’s core beliefs, using clearer—and frequently more inclusive—language.

Adventist theologians led delegates through an edited draft of all 28 fundamental beliefs, as prepared by the church’s Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee. The group was appointed in 2011 to follow up on a decision during the 2010 General Conference session to strengthen the church’s interpretation of origins.

It came as no surprise, then, that fundamental belief number 6 received the most attention. One recommended change to the church’s belief on Creation replaces “In six days, the Lord made” with “In a recent, six-day creation, the Lord made.” Another suggested change specifies that the Creation took place within the span of “six literal days.”

The word “literal” closes what some Adventists have claimed is an interpretive loophole that could allow theistic evolution to explain the Genesis origins account.

The edited draft also replaces the document’s citation of the first verse of Genesis, which states, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” with a passage from Exodus 20, which says God created “the heavens and the earth, the sea,

Delegates Review Wording Changes to Fundamental Beliefs

By ELIZABETH LECHLEITNER, *Adventist News Network*

and all that is in them” (verse 11).

The change allows for differing understandings of whether the creation of the universe was coincident with the six-day creation of life on earth. Some creationist Adventist theologians believe Genesis 1:1 may refer to creation in a broader sense (see Job 38:7), whereas Exodus 20:11 “seems to restrict the creative act to what took place during the six days of creation,” said Angel Rodríguez, one of the members of the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee.

Overall, “the suggested version doesn’t bring anything new to the belief. It just states with a firmer voice, or a more clear voice, what we have always believed,” said Artur Stele, an Adventist world church vice president and cochair of the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee.

In sum, the draft proposes changes—most of which are minor and editorial in nature—to 18 of the church’s 28 fundamental beliefs.

Stele provided additional background on the new gender-neutral language that shows up consistently throughout the draft document. “Man and “mankind” now read “human” and “humanity.”

“We wanted to determine whether the suggestion was biblical or just reflecting the spirit of the day,” Stele said. After a close study of Hebrew use

in the Old Testament, “you cannot conclude words such as ‘man’ only refer to the masculine gender.”

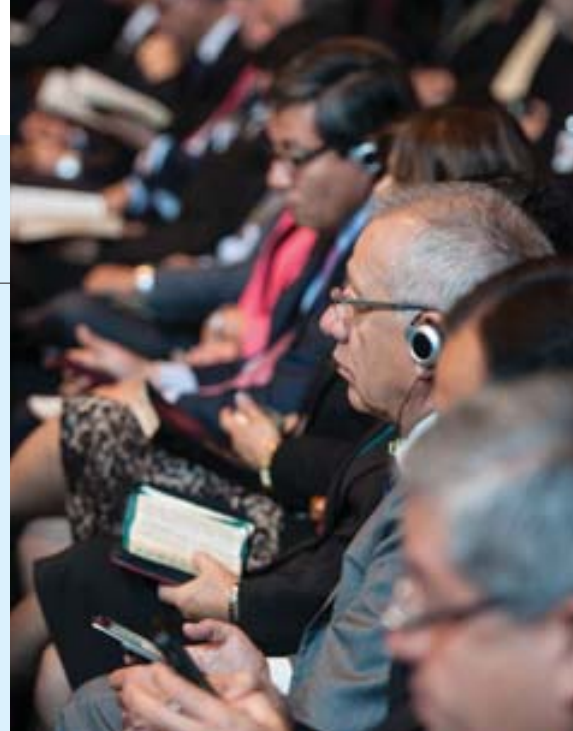
Even in the New Testament, Stele said, inclusivity is the clear biblical intent. The original Greek word “man” was always gender-neutral until the modern era. “It means human being,” he said.

The draft also underlines the church’s historic belief on marriage and family, suggesting that the phrase “a man and a woman” replace the current word “partners” to ensure that the church’s definition of marriage cannot apply to same-sex unions.

Changes to fundamental belief number 23 also include removing the word “disciplinarian” when urging parents to emulate Christ’s relationship with humanity when raising their children.

The draft also does away with outdated English vocabulary and usage. “Which” frequently becomes “that,” and “gracious” is now used to describe God, instead of “beneficent.” Another change replaces the archaic word “fruitage” with “fruit.”

Stele assured delegates that the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee included only proposed changes that met several criteria. The only suggestions that survived editorial scrutiny were ones that “deepen” the statement, refrain from “elaborations of ideas already present” or present key ideas currently missing. The commit-



EDWIN MANUEL GARCIA/JANN

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? More than a third of the 350 delegates attending Annual Council listened to the proceedings using a translation device. This allowed each delegate to hear the speakers in their own language, providing a fuller understanding of the information and inspirational messages presented.

tee also welcomed editorial suggestions meant to clarify or condense the beliefs. Members rejected any suggestions that they felt “primarily promoted a personal agenda,” he said.

Adventist world church general vice president Ben Schoun, who chaired the presentation, reminded delegates that the draft is “not the final copy” and urged them not to spend the afternoon debating semantics. He then invited delegates to lead discussions in their respective church divisions and submit further edits to the fundamental beliefs by June 1, 2014.

The Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee will prepare a second draft of the document for the 2014 Annual Council, Schoun said. Ultimately, delegates will vote whether to add the second draft to the agenda of the 2015 General Conference session, where a final vote would occur. ■

“As Was His Custom”

By TED N. C. WILSON

Following the habits of Jesus

For unto us a Child is born,” Isaiah prophetically penned more than 700 years *before* the birth of Christ (Isa. 9:6). More than 1,700 years *after* Christ’s birth, the great composer, George F. Handel, set those prophetic words to music in the mighty oratorio *Messiah*. During the month of December this masterful work is performed in countless concert halls, auditoriums, and churches as people around the world celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we remember the wonderful event of Christ’s birth, and that He is indeed “Emmanuel . . . God with us” (Matt. 1:23, KJV), let’s take the opportunity not only to remember His birth, but also to consider the ways that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).



The Habits of Jesus

Studying the life of Christ during His public ministry, we notice certain customs, or habits, that He no doubt developed during His childhood.

In Mark 1:35 we see Jesus in the morning, “having risen a long while before daylight, He went out . . . to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Later, in Mark 10:1, we see multitudes gathering around Him, “and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.” Luke 4:16 shows Jesus returning to Nazareth, “where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.”

These habits were so much a part His life that we see them recorded several times in the Gospel writings.

Habits Are Powerful

Habits—the things that we do over and over again almost automatically—are so powerful that in many ways they make us who we are.

The end of another year offers us

an opportunity to take inventory of our customs, of the habits that guide our lives—especially our spiritual habits. Are we in the habit of talking with God every day through the life-line of prayer? Is it our habit to spend thoughtful time in God’s Word every day? Do we habitually fellowship with other believers, studying and worshipping together, and reaching out to a world in need?

One way that I have found to encourage these habits in my own life is by attending Sabbath school each week. Sabbath school, I believe, is the most interesting and exciting part of Sabbath worship and interaction. This is not to discount the church service, but those who miss out on Sabbath school are missing out on the most practical aspect of Sabbath church involvement—a dynamic opportunity to have your personal spiritual life grow and mature through small group fellowship, mission opportunities, interactive Bible study, and prayer.

Connecting With Our World Family

A strong Sabbath school program devotes time for emphasis on the mission of the church, and provides opportunities to actively participate in that mission, both locally and globally. It provides an important link with the world family. If we focus only on our own congregation and miss Sabbath school with its mission-oriented setting, we lose the connection between the local church and our 18 million brothers and sisters around the world. But when the local churches are involved with world mission—giving time, attention, and offerings to support that mission—they will find that God will abundantly bless their local work as well.

“Our brethren have not discerned that in helping to advance the work in foreign fields they would be helping the work at home,” wrote Ellen White, “for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the

reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off. It is in working actively to supply the necessities of the cause of God that we bring our souls in touch with the Source of all power.”¹

I have seen this happen many times in our local church—as we give generously in mission offerings, offerings for local church budget and local outreach activities also increase.

A number of helpful resources are available to promote mission in your Sabbath school at every age level, provided free by Adventist Mission at www.adventistmission.org.

Fellowship and Bible Study

The small group setting of Sabbath school classes is ideal for fellowship and prayer. Often members grow closer as they share concerns and praise and pray together at the beginning of class. This is also a good time to notice who might be missing and make a point of giving the person an encouraging call or visit during the upcoming week.

The Sabbath school class is a place for significant Bible study and discussion, where sharing together from our personal study during the week deepens our own understanding of Bible texts.

Following the example of the Bereans, who “received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11), we will be better prepared in these last days to avoid Satan’s numerous deceptions.

As we approach the Bible, it is so important that we understand it as the authentic Word of God, written by “holy men of God [who] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). The Bible transcends time and culture, speaking truth throughout the ages, but unfortunately, that truth is being severely tested today.

“In our day, as of old, the vital

truths of God’s word are set aside for human theories and speculations,” wrote Ellen White. “Many professed ministers of the gospel do not accept the whole Bible as the inspired word. One wise man rejects one portion; another questions another part. They set up their judgment as superior to the word; and the Scripture which they do teach rests upon their own authority. Its divine authenticity is destroyed. Thus the seeds of infidelity are sown broadcast; for the people become confused and know not what to believe.”²

As Seventh-day Adventists we are strong believers in the historical-biblical approach of biblical interpretation, rather than the historical-critical method, which places human beings in the position of deciding which portions of the Bible (if any) are inspired, and which are not.

The Rule of Faith

The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* (ABSG), prepared quarterly by the General Conference for use worldwide, provides a wonderful way to study the Bible every day in preparation for sharing together during the Sabbath school class. Two quarters of study are on books of the Bible, while the other two present various topical studies. In addition to printed standard and teachers’ guides, the ABSG is offered free online at www.absg.adventist.org/Standard.htm.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to sit in a variety of Sabbath school classes, and have seen teachers who take the time to encourage each person to share how that week’s lesson has related to what was going on in their lives. After class members have shared from their personal experiences, the teacher leads the class in a Bible-oriented discussion, in which members read from the Bible and discuss the lesson in the

context of the Bible. Once in a while, when the discussion wandered into unrelated topics or opinions, the teacher redirected the class back into examining the biblical passages.

On the other hand, I’ve attended some classes in which the teacher provides more of a sermon rather than a vibrant, interactive study, and in these cases perhaps the counsel of Ellen White would be especially helpful: “Do not make the Sabbath school lessons dry and spiritless. Leave the impression upon the mind that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is our rule of faith, and that the sayings and doings of men are not to be a criterion for our doctrines or actions.”³

A Great Light

Of the many beautiful scriptural passages Handel chose to use in his work *Messiah*, a very poignant emphasis and theme comes from Isaiah 9:2: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

As we seek to grow in our own Christian experience in the coming year, let’s take every opportunity to walk in the light provided by God’s Word (see Ps. 119:105), and by studying and sharing together with brothers and sisters in Christ as we make it our “custom” to make Sabbath school a nonnegotiable part of our Sabbath experience! ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 27.

² Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 39.

³ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1938), p. 84.



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

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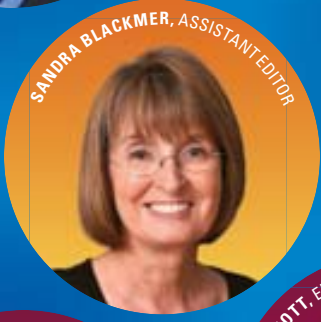
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By
ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES
and PETER N. LANDLESS

Is Salt Really DANGEROUS?

My doctor keeps reminding me of the dangers of excessive sodium (salt) intake. Recent reports say that dietary salt is not so harmful. What do you advise?

We understand your dilemma! It's difficult to know what to believe sometimes, and it's important to look at the big picture.

Sodium is a vital electrolyte in the normal physiological functioning of the body. Together with potassium and calcium, sodium is essential for the normal function of the nerves and muscles, as well as for the maintenance of a healthy internal environment. Sodium is also important in the control of blood pressure and maintenance of fluid balance in the body. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made," and the delicate mechanisms in place for keeping the body's acidity, alkalinity (pH), and hydration just right are a miracle of design and rely on—among other substances—sodium.

There's a strong relationship, however, between excessive salt intake and the development of high blood pressure (hypertension). Some people groups are particularly affected by salt, especially on the continent of Africa and in African-American populations. This relationship is referred to as "salt-sensitive" hypertension, which is often more difficult to treat. As with all cases of high blood pressure, lifestyle changes are extremely important. The lifestyle interventions required in the management of high blood pressure include achieving ideal body weight; cessation of smoking and tobacco use; avoidance of alcohol; daily exercise

(10,000 steps per day or at least 30 minutes of physical exercise seven days a week); and reduction of salt intake.

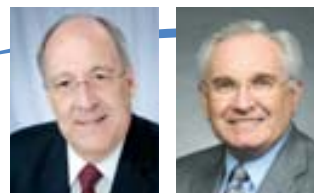
Salt is present in many foods. Sometimes people add it to their prepared food even before it's been tasted! Salt is added to snack foods (chips, peanuts, nuts); is present in large amounts in canned, pickled, and preserved foods; and even added to juice preparations. Some years ago we noticed the sodium content of canned tomato juice, one of our favorite beverages. Water now tops the list of our preferred drinks! Not only does water reduce the amount of sodium, which even sugar-free drinks contain, but it also decreases the excess calories consumed with even the purest fruit juices. Pure water is the king of health drinks!

So how much salt is enough? There has been some confusion about this recently, partly because a group of patients with heart failure who had very restricted sodium intake had worse outcomes than those with less-severe restrictions. We need to remember, though, that this is a special population, and general recommendations are not based on such specific groups. It's commonly accepted that daily intake of sodium (salt) should not exceed 2,300 milligrams; and 1,500 milligrams for those who have higher cardiovascular risk, which includes those over 50 years of age, Africans and African-Americans, and anyone who

has high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. To get the visual picture, 2,300 milligrams represents the amount of salt in a flat teaspoon, and 1,500 milligrams would be just over half this amount! How are you doing with this number?

There's no doubt that we consume too much salt; less is more healthful. The research is clear that diets with restricted salt (below 2,300 milligrams or 1,500 milligrams) and rich in fruits, nuts, and vegetables, as well as low-fat foods (low-fat dairy, dairy equivalents, and proteins), reduce blood pressure, hypertension, cancer, diabetes, and respiratory diseases.

We need to embrace healthful choices in our lifestyle and diet. Included in this would be the reduction of salt intake. This will help us to be fitter, healthier, and better able to be of optimal service to our God and local communities. In that way, we may indeed be the "salt of the earth," adding flavor and savor and making a difference—a healthier one! ■



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In January 1980 I was studying at Walla Walla University in Washington State, U.S.A. Christmas break was over. I had visited family back in Minnesota and wanted to save money on the return trip. So I hitched an airplane ride with another college student who owned an old single-engine two-seater plane.

It was an icy cold morning, and the air was calm as we climbed into his plane. I didn't know anything about flying, but my friend confidently revved the engine and shot down the runway. Soon we were soaring over snow-covered fields. Our route was pretty simple. We would follow Interstate 90 all the way across Montana until we reached the city of Butte, then we'd fly over the mountains and into Walla Walla.


We occasionally stopped for fuel, and my friend always checked the weather ahead. In Butte I waited as he called on a pay phone and listened to the weather report. After hanging up the receiver he told me we faced a stronger head wind. "We'll fly over the Bitterroot Range, and then go over the Blue Mountains and into Walla Walla before nightfall. We should be fine." He sounded a little unsure.

My friend was a new pilot. He was not rated to fly at night or in clouds. If we got caught in either of these, we'd be in big trouble. But we were young and anxious to get back to college, so we decided to "go for it."

As we soared out of Butte and began flying over the Rocky Mountains, we no longer followed the little gray ribbon of freeway. The Interstate turned northwest, and we needed to go west. With no GPS unit, my friend pulled out a paper map and began charting our course by identifying mountain peaks and watching his compass. After a while he handed me the map, and we ate sandwiches and talked about college.

Unfortunately, when we next looked at the map to check our location, the mountain peaks did not match up. My friend then tried to direct the plane toward what he thought was a radio signal reporting Walla Walla weather. Turning the plane toward the signal, he explained, would increase its strength and was a means of direction. I noticed the fear in my friend's face. He was quiet and kept studying the map and the terrain. The further we flew, the quieter he became.

It was getting dark, and my friend quietly announced, "We are lost." He said the mountains below us were much higher and sharper than the Blue Mountains. We had no night flying equipment on the plane. Due to the cold, ice could form on the wings that would impede flying. Finally,



Glimmer OF Light

By CURTIS RITTENOUR

*He will guide you through
your darkest storms.*

he said our gas was getting low!


At this point I began to pray like I had never prayed in all my life. I was afraid we would crash and die. As the plane droned through the sky I cried out to the Lord, asking Him to save us!

Have you ever been in a life-or-death situation like this? It is in these very crises that we are open to learn just how close God is.

Darkness Falls

Jesus' disciples were in a predicament too. Jesus had just fed a multitude of people with only five loaves and a couple of fish (Matt. 14:17-21). Thousands had witnessed the miracle. They were ready to crown Christ as king. The disciples were caught up in the moment. But Jesus sent the multitudes away and told His disciples to take a boat to the other side of the lake (Matt. 14:22).

I imagine the disciples didn't jump into the boat and start rowing. They probably stayed around, hoping their Master would join them. But finally, as it was getting late,



they launched into the night. They were unhappy with Christ. They grumbled among themselves that they should have crowned Him king. As darkness fell, their complaining led them into troubled waters.

The Storm

A violent thunderstorm swept down on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples weren't ready for it. Their perfect day suddenly turned into a nightmare. The trip across the lake should have taken only a couple hours, but the storm drove them further from land (verse 24). They worked hard for hours. Crashing waves, blinding lightning, and deafening thunder pounded these experienced fishermen. Finally they gave up. They were lost—and helpless. They needed a Savior.

A Glimmer of Light

Jesus' watchful eye never lost sight of His disciples. He could see them battling the storm. While they cried out for fear, the Master was on His way (verses 25, 26). A strange figure walked toward them on the water. They didn't know it was Jesus, the very person they wished for. A flash of lightning revealed His familiar features. They suddenly moved from the back of the boat forward toward Him, crying out, "Please help us!"

Jesus was ready. "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid" (verse 27).

Getting Out of the Boat

Peter volunteered to come to Jesus—on the water (verse 28). Overjoyed with seeing His Lord, he took a tremendous step of faith. With eyes fixed on the Master, Peter walked toward Jesus. Then he made a near-fatal mistake. In self-satisfaction he turned to look back at the other disciples, as if to say, "Wow! Look at me! I'm walking on water!" But when he turned to look back at the disciples, he turned away from the Light.*

Suddenly he lost sight of Jesus and began to sink. In a moment, the proud disciple called out, "Lord, save me!" (verse 30). Instantly Christ reached out and grasped Peter's outstretched hands. Jesus knew that Peter was blind to his own weaknesses. In the very area of life in which Peter thought he was the strongest, Christ revealed how weak he really was. Peter trusted himself too much. He needed to learn that he could go through storms only by completely distrusting himself and leaning only on Christ.

As Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat the storm died down. In the solitude following the storm the disciples bowed down and worshipped Jesus—"Truly You are the Son of God" (verse 33).

Another Glimmer of Light

As we flew over the Bitterroot Range one dark night 32 years ago I was going through my own personal storm. My friend and I flew through the night in silence. Both of us were deep in thought. I continued to pray and wonder when the plane engine would start to sputter, cough, and die.

Darkness surrounded us. As I stared out the window I saw stars twinkling everywhere. Down below we rarely saw any lights, only a few small homes spread far apart in what seemed like a remote wilderness area. There was no place we could land in these mountains.

Suddenly we both saw a glimmer of light in the distance. It was faint and far away. As we peered into the darkness ahead, it looked like a thin finger of light pointing up and circling around and around. I could hear my friend smile in the dark as he spoke two words: "An airport."

He flew the plane directly to the light. After briefly circling the airport, we landed on a snowy runway. I was elated to climb out of the plane and wanted to kiss the ground! As my pilot friend looked at a small buildup of ice on the wings, I asked him, "Where are we?"

It was about 10:00 p.m., and the little building at the end of the runway was dark. A wooden sign hanging on its side answered our question: "Welcome to McCall, Idaho!" We were several hours south of our destination. Evidently my friend had turned the plane toward a wrong signal, taking us off course. Without realizing it, we had just flown over some of the most remote wilderness area in the United States. But we were alive! We stayed with the local pastor and his family for a couple days, and after the weather finally cleared, we made it back to college.

Look for the Light

When you pass through storms in life, a glimmer of light can give you hope and direction. If your marriage is crumbling or your finances are in shambles, look for *the* Light. We may not, like the disciples, immediately recognize Christ in the storm. But Jesus is there to guide us safely home. As we face the uncertainties of life, there is hope. I can see a glimmer of light on the horizon. Can you? ■

*See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 381.



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The By OLIVER GLANZ COUNTERCULTURE of Biblical Stewardship

NUMBER 21

Moving from “property” to “partnerships”

For some years now the world has struggled with a severe economic and financial crisis. Unemployment levels are high. Families are forced to leave their homes, as they can no longer pay their mortgages, and children have to discontinue their college education. The situation makes us wonder what a biblical perspective on human economy looks like.

The word “economy” comes from the Greek *oikonomia*, a term which we can also find in the Bible (1 Tim. 1:4). It is a compound word consisting of *oikos* (“house”) and *nómos* (“law”), meaning “house law.” The “economist” (Luke 12:42), or steward, therefore, carries out the laws of the house.

But what are the laws of a house? This depends on what house we are talking about. Is it a hospital, a school, or a bank? Each of these houses focuses upon distinct values and therefore requires specific laws that will protect key values and help them flourish. The most fundamental value of a school lies in its students. Therefore laws governing a school are of pedagogical nature and involve methods for improving learning. Hospitals serve patients; the laws governing them are of medical nature, focusing

upon ways for improving health. Banks follow monetary laws of saving and multiplying finances. *Values trigger specific laws.*

Biblical Counterculture

The question for any of us is what value characterizes the “house” we are living in. Modern, contemporary culture answers this question in a specific way: the most basic value is the material wealth surrounding us. The laws that derive from this key value are of an economic nature and guide us in growing our material worth. Life is good when we earn good money, when we can buy a big car, when we own a nice house or have the latest iPhone. Therefore, society pushes us to become good consumers. *We are humans because we are consumers.*

The Bible offers a very different answer to the question about the basic value that we find in the house in which we live. In the Creation account, we learn that the house in which God placed humanity was huge—it covered the entire earth (Gen. 1:28). We were placed in a house made of rivers, plants, and animals. But what was the ultimate value of this house? Scripture tells us that the

ultimate “capital” of our house is not measured in monetary value of noble metals or vegetable harvests, but focuses upon the creation covenant—a relationship between all living beings: (a) between man and woman, and more generally between people; (b) the relationship between humanity and the animals; and (c) the relationship between humanity and God. The only time God said “very good” was after the day in which He constituted the relationships between man and woman and between humans and animals (verses 28-31). Humanity was asked to take care of the animals as a good ruler takes care of citizens. God was serious when he stressed that animals are to be protected and not to be reduced to food. In fact, both humanity and animals shared the same type of food (namely fruits and vegetables) in God’s original plan.

Sabbath and Stewardship

The introduction of marriage and the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3, 24, 25) further underlined the threefold partnership as the key value of Creation. The Sabbath is not governed by an economic agenda; work and other obligations are no longer hindering intimacy,

separating people from one another. Sabbath is the moment in time and space where we can fully engage the people surrounding us—be they a family member, a neighbor or a foreigner—and, ultimately, God Himself. This is a radical thought for our times. During the week we don't work to "make money" or worship the idol of material progress, but we want to arrive in and improve meaningful relationships with all living beings. *We are humans because we are partners.*

The Sabbath idea is not to have a day of rest in order to recover from work. God did not need to recover from His work, either. The idea is to get priorities right and work no more during the week than necessary, so that no exhaustion, no work frustration, no material dreams, are going to compromise the core value of our God-given human house: intimacy, care, understanding, and recognition.

The Bible is serious on this matter as it shows that the Sabbath is not only the pinnacle of the week; it is also the focal point of each phase of our lives. Every seventh year the Israelites were to be free from labor (Ex. 23:10-13). Parents were supposed to spend time with their children, to enjoy marriage, and to deepen their spiritual walk with God.

But the Sabbath is not only the pin-

“We are HUMANS because we are partners.”

nacle of each week or the focal point of our lives—it also has a generational purpose. No person in Israel was to ultimately suffer from the economic choices of his or her parents. Every fiftieth year each person was guaranteed to have enough material property, to be released from debt, and to build a life that focused on relationships, protected the animals and God's creation, and had God as the central guide for one's life (Lev. 25:8-13). One could say that the Sabbath is a synonym for "Creation covenant." The Sabbath is the basic value of our "house."

Humanity is asked to be an "economist" (or steward) of the Sabbath. This is the basic idea of biblical stewardship. The laws that depend on this value are manifold. God had Moses write many laws that show what Sabbath life looks like, how relationships can flourish and be protected.

Unfortunately, the idea of a biblical economy was challenged and corrupted again and again in human history. People started to kill one another (Gen. 4:8, 23). They started to kill their animal partners (starting with

Nimrod, a mighty hunter and the founder of Babel; cf. Gen. 10:9). They tried to usurp the role of their ultimate partner, God (see the Tower of Babel story in Genesis 11:1-9), and built cities as centers of production in order to improve the productivity of material progress. The idea of the Sabbath as the ultimate value of life was ignored and replaced.

In the last days of this world God initiated the Adventist movement. Like the three angels of Revelation 14, we are asked to proclaim God's end-time message to this world and remind its inhabitants, both the victims and the originators of our enormous financial and economic crisis, about the Creator, the house in which we are living, and the ultimate meaning of human life.

The third angel calls us to be courageous, to dare to invest more time, money, gifts and talents into our families, fellow man, nature, and the church than into the acquisition of things and goods that help us improve our social ranking in a Babylonian world (cf. Rev. 13:15-17; 14:9-12).

The second angel's cry that "Babylon is fallen" (Rev. 14:8) reminds us that the end is in sight. God's economy is soon to be restored! ■

STEWARDSHIP

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Rom. 15:26, 27.)



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The Waiting Womb

By FAMINU IMABONG

Thirsting for God from an empty well

Lord, give me a child.” This five-word prayer is as ageless as it is timeless. It cuts across cultures, continents, ethnic groups, races, creeds, tribes, and tongues. There are no boundaries. In many a village, town, country, and region of our world, once a man and woman have been joined in matrimony, it is expected that the next thing will be children. Families eagerly await children—mothers and fathers do. So do grandparents and even extended family members. At marriage ceremonies in most parts of the world, right after the prayers for a long and happy married life comes the prayer for children. And though instant pregnancy, or any pregnancy at all, is no more a universal expectation, it is still true that a child born into a home is a thing of joy in all cultures the world over.

Most people believe that it is God who gives children. They are of course perfectly in the right. God made the human anatomy and instructed men



*My neighbor's well is full
The water is fresh and clear
She draws with joy and singing
Her household too
Her children play with glee as their
mother's bucket spills
Soon the jars are full and she rests
under the shade*

*I look on in envy
My well is dry
The water brackish
I cannot draw as the water is no good
I wait for the day when my well will be full
When I too can draw with joy and singing
I know that day will come. So I wait and wait*

and women through the institution of marriage to go forth and multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28). God declares blessed the one who has children (Ps. 127:5). Children are described as a heritage of the Lord, a source of pride, and a showing of strength (verses 3, 4). They are also considered a blessing of obedience and a reward for integrity (Deut. 28:4, 11; Prov. 20:7).

God is neither biased nor reticent on this subject. The Scriptures record His expressed promise that there would be none childless among His people (Deut. 7:14). And in line with the Scriptures practically all cultures consider children a blessing and enthusiastically welcome them.

Childless and Ashamed

Unfortunately, many women who do not conceive at all or do not conceive early in marriage are ostracized, persecuted, maligned, and often unloved. Some cultures consider such women cursed. The inevitable stigma

is an onerous burden they and their families are forced to bear.

But before and beyond this public contempt, there is the unbearable pressure and heartache a woman as wife must bear for not conceiving. The curse always seems to begin and end with her. Medical science has shown that stress, worry, and emotional pressure are a hindrance even to a normally fertile woman. This being so, imagine how much more debilitating such distress would be to one who lives with the sense of guilt on account of her childlessness.

Stories abound of men seeking for offspring outside of monogamy through polygamy, child theft or sale, and other such unsavory practices, all in a bid to get children.

God's Will

What does God have to do with such anguish? What does He care about it? The Bible shows that there are times when the Lord in His wisdom withholds this blessing for a

season and for remarkable purposes. We may look at several such instances, beginning with Sarah, wife of Abraham. Though Abraham was a rich man and Sarah beautiful, they had no child. Abraham received God's covenant promises regarding his being the father of many nations. God was very specific that the child of promise would be from Abraham and Sarah, giving them names that betokened this fact (Gen. 17).

And there was Hannah, wife of Elkanah. Hannah was Elkanah's first wife. Peninnah, his second wife, bore him the children that Hannah had not. God had shut up her womb (1 Sam. 1:5). Peninnah provoked her till Hannah wept. One year when, with heavy heart, she journeyed with her family to the house of the Lord. She was so unhappy that she refused to eat. Her husband tried to comfort her. At the tabernacle she poured out her bitterness and burden of spirit before God so much so that Eli the priest thought she was drunk (1 Sam. 1:13, 14).

“The pain may have an explainable cause.”

There was also Michal, daughter of Saul, Israel’s failing king who gave his daughter in marriage to David. A different case of barrenness, perhaps, with malice and spite involved (2 Sam. 6:14-23), but no less a burden. Sarah’s shame and Hannah’s humiliation were Michal’s misery too.

And Elizabeth’s as well. She and her husband, Zacharias, the Temple priest, had no child. Like Sarah and Abraham, they were both advanced in years (Luke 1:7). Beyond Sarah and Abraham, they had probably given up hope.

Crying in the Dark

Why does heaven stay silent sometimes at the point of the deepest despair? when it seems so unbearable, and you can’t take it anymore? when you don’t know what to do or where to turn? when it seems that only God could understand, and He shows no great care?

This despair is not uniquely the province of barren women. They are surely not life’s only brokenhearted sufferers. Consider David’s cry: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?” (Ps. 42:5, 11, KJV). David knew about pain that was not only physical. There is a physical, psychological, and emotional turmoil that we can go through that no physical remedy can cure or relieve.

The pain may have an explainable cause, but the road to healing, relief, and peace can be long and painful. Those who understand such pain might have suffered the loss of a loved one, been deeply hurt, suffered rejection, suffered depression, been betrayed, been unjustly treated, or been otherwise beaten down by life and circumstances. Sometimes there is no cure but waiting. Sometimes you must go through the pain.

The grief of the Old Testament patriarch Job, if weighed, would have been heavier than the sand of the sea (Job 6:2, 3). “The arrows of the Almighty are within me,” he cried, their toxicity poisoning his spirit; “the terrors of God do set themselves against me” (verse 4, KJV). And later: “When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day” (Job 7:4, KJV). It is more than he can bear in silence: “I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul” (verse 11, KJV). To Job, it seemed that God was purposely standing afar off from him (Job 23:3, 8, 9). Cherished friends of old had now either forgotten him or were avoiding him (Job 19:13-15, 19).

Jesus and Pain

In Gethsemane there was no cure for Jesus’ pain. Imagine praying till

sweat drops fall. Hannah prayed so passionately that Eli thought she was drunk (1 Sam. 1:13, 14). Some have called it “groaning in spirit” or “a wilderness experience”—the name matters little. Only God’s grace offers any help, peace, or healing at these times.

As David answers himself for all the barren and broken and silent weepers through the nights of pain: “Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance” (Ps. 42:5, KJV). God is with us in our brokenness, David understands. He is with us in our barrenness. “Countenance” is another word for “face.” The help of God’s countenance is the sight of His loving face, the personal blessing of His very presence, whatever the cause of our loneliness.

Jesus and the Waiting Womb

God, in Jesus, has given the assurance of His presence with us in all our grief. But God, in Jesus, has also given specific answer to the lonely curse of barrenness.

When Elizabeth and Zacharias seemed to have surrendered hope and accepted their blight, He could still see their hearts. He still knew their long-silenced longings. And when they had no schemes left, no other plans to try, nothing but a brave face and a bleeding heart, God Himself still had plans for them. Plans of such



moment that they must be announced in the Holy of Holies. This aged and barren couple would have a child. He would forerun the road of the ultimate child of humanity, the Son of Man, the transcendent birth that would answer the anguish, end the shame, and relieve all the misery of all the burdened hearts, broken souls, and barren wombs of all the ages.

Almost two millennia before Elizabeth, Sarah had laughed when God declared His sovereignty over the waiting womb (Gen. 18:9-12). “Why did Sarah laugh?” the Lord asked Abraham (verse 13). “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (verse 14). The Lord of life is also Lord of barrenness and secret longing.

Now Gabriel brought holy amusement to Elizabeth. For five months she

wouldn’t let anybody see her in public, saying, “Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among people” (Luke 1:24, 25).

Elizabeth would prove that when medical science, culture, age, and nature considered new life impossible and deemed her incapable of conceiving, she could still, by order of the One who holds the keys of hell and heaven, who is Lord of the beginning and of the end, by order of Him who is the Lord of all life, she could still bear John, the forerunner of God’s anointed. He would undo all the blight of the world by becoming the curse Himself (Gal. 3:13). And because of Him the barren womb will sing, and claim the joy of bearing seven (1 Sam. 2:5).

Conclusion

The Lord through Isaiah encourages His longing daughters and languishing sons: “The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). “God with us,” Matthew explains (Matt. 1:23): Jesus, in fulfillment of Isaiah (verse 22). And the virgin has conceived; and Jesus has come.

And because He has come and saved His people from their sins, because He has mended all our brokenness, and healed all our diseases, and slain all our barrenness, the dark no longer weeps, and the night is no more silent. No, the day has come, and the womb no longer waits: “Sing, O barren, you *who* have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you *who* have not labored with child! For more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman” (Isa. 54:1). ■



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An aspiring writer, she draws her inspiration from her faith and life’s experiences.



The wonderful diversity of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) embraces some 18 countries from Bangladesh to Vietnam,¹ with an Adventist membership of more than 1 million.² Its different cultures and languages feature predominantly Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and animist peoples, with only the Philippines including a majority of Christians. Many different dialects augment the 10 languages officially recognized in the division.³ The Philippines itself uses about 170 of these dialects,⁴ making evangelism to different ethnic groups an even greater challenge. In spite of this, membership shows significant growth in some areas. The following experiences illustrate God’s presence and power in our work.

Reclaiming Lost Sheep

When I served as a pastor in the Philippines I visited all my church members, especially the inactive ones. I listened to their concerns, read scripture, and prayed for them. Sometimes, when invited, I ate with them. For them it was

an honor that their pastor, would grace their home and join their meal.

Some said to me, “Because you visited me in my home and prayed for me, I decided to attend church and become actively involved in church again.” By God’s grace, faithful pastors in the SSD are making a difference.

Winning With Adventist Education

She always sat at the front of my religion class, more than a dozen years ago, keen to hear every topic I discussed. I could see that she was older than her classmates, but I knew little about her until the last exam she took.

In that exam I asked students which topic discussed in the class interested them most and why. She wrote that the topic that interested her most was the topic “Unpardonable Sin.” Then she candidly exposed her long-hurting soul. She wrote, “Honestly, I am not married, yet I have two kids. On the first day of the class when I received the syllabus and saw that topic, I waited for you to discuss it.”

She continued: “Since 1994 when that man came into my life, feelings of guilt have burdened me.” She wrote: “Should I ask God for forgiveness after living with and having children with this married man?”

To atone for her sins, she gave offerings to the Lord. As a faithful Roman Catholic she did a novena several times,⁵ asking God to forgive her sins. “When troubles came into

By FERDINAND O. REGALADO

Grace Enough for Every Challenge

Southern Asia-Pacific Division



“Through this class
I really experienced
the love of God.”

our life, I asked God if it was punishment for what I had done. I knelt and cried out loud for forgiveness until you discussed this topic,” she indicated. “Somehow in your explanation and with the help of the Bible, my burdens were lessened. Through this class I really experienced the love of God.”

This former student also wrote, “When I enrolled in this campus, I often heard from non-Adventists, ‘Is that where you enrolled? It’s boring there; they always use the Bible.’ Now I can tell them that they are wrong, that through this class I was enlightened that even though I am a sinner, God loves me.”

Her words “even though I am a sinner, God loves me” are my testament that Adventist education makes an impact. Inside and outside the classroom I tell my students, “Your religion teacher is not a saint; he is just forgiven.” Every day I try to live and share that good news of God’s grace.

Charlie

I was expecting Charlie that night. It was his follow-up call on whether I would speak at the commitment service for their weekend spiritual retreat. I invited him in. He had dark circles under his eyes, his hair was unkempt. I saw relief on his face when I said I would speak. He had been desperate about getting a speaker.

Charlie wore faded denim shorts that revealed his knees and legs powdered with cement. “I’m sorry, Pastor, for being dressed like this; I just came from work.” Charlie was interested in more than my appointment. He wanted to talk. As we did, the story of his life began to unfold.

Charlie started working when he was in fourth grade. His father had shot and killed a troublemaker in their *barangay* (village). Accused of a crime, he pleaded guilty and was put in jail. The eldest among his siblings, Charlie became the man of the house. He worked hard to help his mother, who earned 200 Philippine pesos (US\$4.59) per month for her three children, making baby clothes. At 500

Philippine pesos (US\$11.50) per month, Charlie’s wage, for a child, was not bad.

But his work making *uling* (hard coal for cooking, made from tree bark) gave him tuberculosis. He was told he should rest to regain his health. He rested, recovered, and pressed on, working and struggling until he finished grade school and high school.

Any college education would be expensive. But in 1996 Charlie enrolled at the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) as a working student. When the tuberculosis came back, he stopped for four years. Then Charlie was back again. He wanted to study theology, to become a pastor and work for the Lord. It would take him several years, earning 15 Philippine pesos (US\$.35) per hour to pay living and school expenses. He found a narrow room, a rectangular boxlike structure with a small window. It looked like a prison cell, but it was free.

My wife prepared a meal for Charlie, and I prayed for him. He thanked us and left with a pensive face, perhaps still contemplating his duties for the coming retreat. Charlie may have been hungry and living in a box, but he was faithful in his duties as president of his religion club.

There are many theology graduates in the Philippines, but few pastoral positions available. Charlie surrendered his childhood dream of becoming a pastor, and graduated from college in 2006 as a secondary education major. God blessed faithful Charlie with a good wife, an elementary school teacher whom he met at the university; and with two children as well. Finding a decent job continues to be a struggle. But in spite of it, he is actively involved in his local church and a faithful Adventist Christian.

The SSD has many Charlies grappling with life challenges and following their God-inspired visions. In the midst of their challenges, God’s grace and love are always present. In the SSD we affirm every day the promise of Jesus: “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). His grace is enough for every challenge. ■

¹ www.ssd.org/territories/countries.html.

² www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=D_SSD&Year=2013&submit=Change#main.

³ www.ssd.org/territories/countries.html.

⁴ www.ethnicgroupsphilippines.com/people/languages-in-the-philippines/.

⁵ A novena is a nine-day prayer ritual often dedicated to an angel or saint, or member of the Trinity.



Ferdinand O. Regalado, professor of Biblical Studies at Walla Walla University, Washington, U.S.A., is a native of the Philippines, who has also taught at the Adventist University of the Philippines and Montemorelos University in Mexico.

MISSIONARY IMPULSE STIRS

By MARK A. KELLNER

NSD Adventists

Hundreds commit, saying, “Here am I, send me!” during Jeju Island event.

Lots of Christians talk about missions and the imperative to reach a lost and dying world. Then there are those who actually *do* something about it, and the Seventh-day Adventists of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) are firmly in that category. I discovered this recently at an event entirely focused on mission.

It’s impossible to conclude otherwise, frankly, after witnessing the enthusiastic participation of approximately 4,300 Adventists in a four-day International Mission Congress held August 28-31, 2013, in one of the most picturesque spots in the world, the Republic of Korea’s Jeju Island. The people who came weren’t there for sightseeing, however; they came to share their experiences of mission, and to become motivated in the process.

Countries in the NSD contain 1.6 billion people, with the People’s Republic of China, at more than 1 billion, the most populous. An estimated 800 Seventh-day Adventists from China attended the event, at their own expense. Given that the average per capita income in China in 2012 was US\$6,091*, the hundreds of dollars such a trip cost represented a deep commitment by these participants.

At the same time, Jairyong Lee, NSD president, said the Chinese Adventists with whom he spoke—many for the first time meeting other Seventh-day Adventists from outside their nation—were anxious to come again should the meeting be reprised.

“For many decades they have been isolated in their own country setting. Now they have come out of their country, [and] they see thousands of people from different parts of the world, worshipping together, talking about the mission together, and this is the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” Lee said in an interview with *Adventist World*. “I think that is an eye-opening experience to many of them. They shed a lot of tears. This is God’s church. In China they thought it was a

small church. They see that this is God’s church and that God is working through this church all around the world.”

He added, “When they went back to China, I’m sure they shared this story with hundreds of church members. [Those] 800 will multiply, and many people will share the same excitement.”

Every aspect of the congress was attuned to outreach: Fifty-three exhibition booths representing educational institutions, gospel missionary work, publishing ministries, health-care institutions, and food factories displayed various mission resources. Colorful banners formed a “Welcome Arch” at the entrance to the Jeju International Convention Center venue, and hundreds of beautifully decorated banners on light posts greeted guests on the streets of the surrounding area.

In his opening remarks Siyoung Kim, the International Mission Congress’ chief director, declared, “We are here to renew our vision of mission to accomplish the great commission.” Kim’s work in organizing the event was widely praised for its symmetry and success.

Against a backdrop of 600 LCD video screens merged to form a giant display, a virtual “choir” comprised of videos of individual Seventh-day Adventists in the region singing “My Lord Is Coming Soon” blended to offer a hymn of commitment. Besides this music, the division’s heavenly sounding choir, the Golden Angels, were frequent participants in the event, backed by a mass choir of Adventists from throughout the NSD.

In a region encompassing “one quarter of the world’s population, we have a responsibility to spread the gospel,” a slide at the beginning of the two-and-a-half-hour opening ceremony read. Subsequent slides, in English, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese, then noted the countries under the division’s aegis, reflecting that “the tears of North Koreans,

◀ **SEND ME!** Seventh-day Adventists attending the 2013 International Mission Congress in Jeju Island, Rep. of Korea, hold aloft scarves proclaiming: “Here Am I. Send Me!”

PHOTO BY MYRON A. ISEMINGER



▶ **VOICE OF AN ANGEL:** A member of the “Golden Angels” singing group participates during International Mission Congress in Jeju Island, Rep. of Korea.



▶ **NSD PRESIDENT:** Jaiyong Lee, president of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, at left, welcomes delegates to the International Mission Congress.



▶ **HAIR SALON WITNESS:** Bokyung Kang, a Seventh-day Adventist in the Republic of Korea, uses her hair salon as a place to witness for the Lord.

God remembers,” as that country’s images were shown. Korean Adventists, and thousands of additional participants, were captivated by women wearing traditional Korean costumes and waving fans in a traditional folk display, the first of the evening’s cultural elements.

For China, that nation’s prosperity was noted, along with the comment that Christians have a “heavier” burden of “carrying the cross” in a nation of booming economic prosperity. Chinese Adventists performed a song, which included use of a traditional flute, as their cultural contribution.

Japan, whose Adventists enthusiastically participated in the opening ceremonies, was dubbed “the land of the god of money—Mammon,” where “secular men have closed their hearts.” Notwithstanding, leaders from the Japan Union Mission wore T-shirts emblazoned with “Jesus@ Tokyo” as emblematic of their October 2013 effort to reach one of the world’s largest cities. Members of a male singing ensemble sang an arrangement of “Amazing Grace” as part of Japan’s cultural element.

Participants from Taiwan and Mongolia were heartily welcomed, particularly by the hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists from the People’s Republic of China who were seated right in front of the convention center’s main stage. The NSD presentation noted the “wilderness” nature of much of Mongolia, while in Taiwan the need for growing “the root of faith and Christian culture” was emphasized.

G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the world church, was the opening evening’s principal speaker, and he reflected on the program as he took the platform: he noted Luke 15 presents “three experiences of lostness”—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost, or prodigal, son—because “Jesus wanted to emphasize the lostness of humanity.” He spoke of the need to reach those without the gospel: “It’s no fun to be lost,” he declared.

“Mission Live” programs featured video reports and testimonies of the Mission to North Korea, Pioneer Mission Movement, and the 1,000 Missionary Movement—all unique outreaches of the NSD. Missionaries BaekTo Jung and Grace Lee shared their mission stories from the lepers’ villages in China where they have cared for 2,500 lepers in 49 leper villages, resulting in 677 baptisms.

Jong Suk Han, a member of the 1,000 Missionary Movement, shared his mission vision along with his testimony of having baptized more than 1,000 people during a year of service in the Philippines.

During daily “Mission Talk Show” segments, several missionaries shared their ongoing evangelistic activities. These included stories of young adults devoting their talents for Internet ministry in China; of pastor Abe serving those who were once in cult movements in Japan, and Yong Sun Lee—a former prison inmate, now a Seventh-day Adventist pastor—working full-time in prison ministries in Korea.

In other parts of the division, service to others took different forms. Jane Lin is executive officer of the Taiwan Adventist Foundation, a registered charity operating on the island and reaching its most-underserved peoples, these include indigenous farmers who are often badly served by larger agricultural firms buying their produce, students in elementary schools of fewer than 28 pupils, and Taiwan’s poor, whose homes are sometimes in great disrepair.

“Our vision is to motivate and empower people in Taiwan society to live a healthier life,” Lin said, reciting the group’s credo. This is done through sponsoring projects aimed at helping those in need. “God has blessed us very much,” Lin said, recalling her first year at the foundation.

For the farmers it means helping them reach consumers directly at outdoor markets, and encouraging them to grow organic produce. This “creates another market” for the



▶ **HELPING HANDS:**
Jane Lin of the Taiwan Adventist Foundation holds a wool craft kit distributed to schools where budgets are tight.

◀ **CONFERENCE ORGANIZER:**
SiYoung Kim was in charge of preparations for the 2013 International Missions Congress.



farmers, who she says are often “exploited” when selling to larger concerns, she said.

“If the farmers get better pay” for their crops, she said, “it means a better standard of living.” She said the group is also helping the farmers to post pictures of their crops on Pinterest, the Internet-based social network, to help create demand for those goods.

Although Taiwan’s educational system is highly regarded, some students there—as in other parts of the world, including the United States—have fewer resources than their counterparts in larger schools. To help these students, Taiwan Adventist Foundation supplies a “Happy Craft Kit” of various pieces of colored wool. These are then made into small coasters, giving the students a different kind of craft, and a sense of having made something with their own hands. “If the children like to use their hands to make something,” Lin explained, “they will use their hands to take care of others later in life.”

Throughout the International Mission Congress, seminars were presented by missionaries and church leaders serving in various parts of the world. More than 15 mission-related seminars such as “Missionary Family Life,” “Radical Prayers,” “World Mission,” and “Church Growth” were offered.

On the evenings of the second and third days, union conference and mission presidents of the NSD territory, including China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Mongolia, each presented mission reports from their areas.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was a central participant in the proceedings, attending all plenary events as well as meeting privately with NSD pastors. On Sabbath, August 31, Wilson issued a clarion call to mission. “All of this is pointing to God’s call to you and to me, people who accept God’s commandments and the faith of Jesus, to go forward into the harvest field, all through the power of the Holy Spirit,” Wilson said.

“We have had quite a display of human activity and creativity during this congress, and we thank God for the skills

and the creativity,” he noted, adding, “but I want to tell you brothers and sisters, none of this is possible without the power of the Holy Spirit.”

In an impassioned address, Wilson discussed the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 and their link to today’s world. He implored his hearers to lovingly and cheerfully share these messages with others to help “call out” those attentive to God’s Word at the end of time.

On Sabbath afternoon a “Mission Dedication” service took place. NSD president Lee focused on the life of Adventist pioneer Abram LaRue, who came to Hong Kong as a self-supporting missionary, dressed in local garb, and died while in service. He told participants, “We must be filled with the Holy Spirit, [in order] to go with the three angels’ messages to the ends of the earth.”

The mission dedication service was filled by a sense of God’s grace, His words, and the praise and prayers of His people. For those present there was a renewed sense of their calling to active mission service. Leaders of the Adventist Church from the General Conference, world church divisions, and NSD unions and conferences were invited to the stage to reaffirm their responses by holding individual red scarves high, each emblazoned with the words of the ancient Hebrew prophet: “Here am I! send me” (Isa. 6:8).

Their actions were mirrored by the congregation, which also held aloft red scarves. As the dedication service drew to a close, each participant lit a candle to express their willingness to share the light of truth around the world.

Lee told me that this appeal was intentional and that he told participants that “we are living in the last days and God has chosen us for a special mission. We are special people because of the mission that He has given us, and that is to finish the gospel work in the world.”

He added, “As our pioneers went out, as missionaries in difficult parts of the world, they really sacrificed their lives. And, now, it is our turn. God is expecting that we take their place. . . . I appealed to them that when they go back to their respective places, we would do the work with the same spirit that our pioneers had.”

Asked if he had a message for other world church divisions, Lee said: “We emphasized the mission of the church—that’s the very reason for the existence of the church. If you lose mission, you lose everything. Mission is an action. Every individual in our church should have a part in the mission of the church. I hope other parts of the world will emphasize mission.” ■

*according to the World Bank



Mark A. Kellner is news editor for *Adventist World*. The article has additional reporting from the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. Some elements of this article appeared in *Adventist Review* news reports.



The Glory and Mystery By ELLEN G. WHITE *of Christ* *Seeing Jesus as He Is*

In order to understand the mission of Jesus, it is necessary that His divine light shall illuminate the mind; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; nor can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. Jesus is constantly drawing us to behold him as our only hope and refuge. “Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath

comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”

The marks of the crucifixion in the hands and feet of our Lord are evidences that Christ has not forgotten his people. He has bought them, and the ransom has been paid. Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, knows all His children by name, and on those who believe shall come the glory of God.

The Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in His wings.

Through faith in Christ the child of earth is made an heir of God, joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Those who behold Jesus become changed to his image, become assimilated to his nature; and the glory of God that shines in the face of Jesus, is reflected in the lives of His followers. More and more the Christian is changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, and he becomes the light of the world. The more he looks on Christ, the more he loves and longs to look again; and the more light and love and glory he sees in Christ, the more his light increases unto the perfect day. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

It is by faith that the spiritual eye beholds the glory of Jesus. This glory is hidden until the Lord imparts the light of Spiritual truth; for the eye of reason cannot see it. The glory and mystery of Christ remains incomprehensible, clouded by its excessive brightness, until the Lord flashes its meaning before the soul.

John exclaims, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” ■

This is taken from the article “The High Calling of God in Christ Jesus,” published in *Review and Herald*, October 7, 1890. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

What is an
unintentional
sin (Lev. 4:2)?

Sin and Other Shortcomings

The main biblical terms for unintentional sin in the Old Testament are the noun *shagahah* (“mistake, error”) and the verb *shagah/shagah* (“to err, to lead astray, to do wrong”). The meaning of these terms is to some extent a matter of debate. Let’s examine the use of both the noun and the verb, and I’ll comment about the phrase “high-handed sin.” This may help clarify the meaning of an unintentional sin.

1. The Noun *Shagahah*: Phrases involving this noun has been translated in different ways: “through ignorance” (KJV), “inadvertently” (NAB),¹ “unintentionally” (NIV, NASB),² “unwittingly” (RSV),³ “straying unintentionally” (NET).⁴ The tendency is to understand it as expressing the idea of ignorance or lack of intent. This view finds support in some of the parallel expressions used in conjunction with the word. In some cases we are told that the person did not know (Lev. 5:17) or was without knowledge (Joshua 20:3), or was unaware of the sin committed (Lev. 5:2), or that he or she afterwards learns of it (verse 3).

But the noun *shagahah* is also used in the context of conscious sinning; as when a person is aware of the fact that he or she has sinned (e.g. Lev. 4:22, 23). The element of intentionality may have been present in this particular case but not in others (Num. 35:11; Deut. 19:4, 5). This suggests that the noun designates an involuntary sin or one committed in ignorance of the law, an unwitting or even inadvertent sin. It does not necessarily exclude awareness and intentionality.

2. The Verb *Shagah/Shagah*: This verb refers to unconscious sinning (Job 6:24; 19:4; Eze. 45:20). But it more often designates sin as an error that, although avoidable, was not avoided. Isaiah uses it in parallel with the verb “to stagger,” describing the staggering of a person who is drunk (Isa. 28:7, NIV). This is an involuntary conduct because, as a result of the alcohol, the person is unable to walk straight. In another case, the absence of shepherds or leaders causes the sheep to go astray, to wander (Eze. 34:5). They lack inner self-control and orientation. Proverbs states that the lack of discipline results in the person being *led astray* (Prov. 5:23; cf. 19:27). This also happens when one is indifferent to God (Ps. 119:67; cf. verse 21). These texts seem to describe a common human condition that

can be improved only through self-discipline. In a sense this kind of behavior is unintentional; on our own we simply go astray, err, and do what is wrong. This type of sin is not only a sin of ignorance. Saul, after realizing that David spared his life, tried to make peace with him and confessed: “I have sinned . . . I will no more do thee harm . . . [I] have erred [*shagah*] exceedingly” (1 Sam. 26:21, KJV). He called his attempt to kill David an *error*, although he intentionally sought to take his life. It was his lack of self-control that led Saul to attack David.

3. High-handed Sin: “Unintentional” sin is contrasted with high-handed sin (Num. 15:30, 31), which represents a defiant and rebellious attitude against God manifested in total disregard for Him and His will. For this type of sin there is no atonement, and the person is permanently disconnected from God’s people. It may have been intentional or unintentional, but the primary concern of the verb is the fact that the person erred and is in need of atonement.

“Unintentional” sin seems to designate sins committed as a result of a human nature that is weak and unable to control itself. The person was not breaking with the Lord because the sin was the result of human frailty. In that condition they sinned unknowingly, unwittingly, unaware of what they were doing. Perhaps we can refer to them as inadvertent sins. Lack of self-control or intentionality or even ignorance does not excuse this sin, but forgiveness is always available for it (cf. 1 John 2:1, 2). The Lord can give us victory over our fallen nature: “I seek you from all my heart; do not let me stray [*shagah*] from your commands” (Ps. 119:10, NIV). ■

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Angel Manuel Rodríguez lives in Texas, United States, after serving many years as director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

The Perilous Pitfalls of Compromise

By MARK A. FINLEY



We are on a journey of discovery to the seven churches of Revelation. As we examine the spiritual condition of each of these churches, we will uncover principles that apply to our lives. Although the messages to the seven churches span Christian history from the first century to the end of time, the message to each church contains life-changing lessons for Christian believers in every generation. This month's Bible study focuses on the church at Pergamos.

The word "Pergamos" means "exalted." Pergamos was a provincial Roman capital for a time. Temples to Roman gods were erected there. The city was characterized by its wealth, its love of pleasure, its sophisticated populace, and its educated elite. It had a famous library second only to the one in Alexandria, Egypt. Evidently a small Christian church in Pergamos struggled because of compromise with godless, materialistic influences.

After the deaths of the disciples and the persecution of Christians in the early centuries, Satan shifted his strategy. In the fourth and fifth centuries the Roman state and Roman church united. Many Bible students have identified this period as the Pergamum period of church history. Compromises flooded into the Christian church. Let's explore a few of these compromises and discover how to stand for Jesus and His truth when we face compromise.

1 What was in the hand of the Being who gave the angel His message to the church at Pergamos? What does a two-edged sword represent? Read Revelation 2:12 and Hebrews 4:12.

Shaped by the culture around it and immersed in compromise, the church at Pergamos certainly needed the corrective influence of God's Word. Like a two-edged sword, the Word pierces our hearts. It still speaks to us today, leading us from the folly of our own ways to the bastion of divine truth.

2 Did God have faithful followers in Pergamos who did not deny His name? Read Revelation 2:13.

The fact that there were those in Pergamos who "did not deny My [Jesus'] faith" reveals this powerful truth: through the power of Christ you and I can be faithful anywhere we find ourselves. Faithfulness to God is not based on our surroundings; it is based on our trust in Him.

3 Notice the two false doctrines mentioned in Revelation 2:14, 15.

Balaam was a false prophet who led Israel astray by uniting with the heathen King Balak, contrary to God's instruction. The Balaam/Balak alliance represents an ungodly union to the spiritual detriment of God's people. The Nicolaitans evidently introduced the false idea that spirituality allowed them to disregard God's law and cast off the so-called restraints of obedience. Grace does not lead to disobedience; it guides us to a greater desire to obey God.

4 What did the apostle John teach in his Gospel and elsewhere in Revelation about the necessity of obedience? Read John 14:15, Revelation 14:12; 12:17; etc.

5 Each message to the seven churches carries a common refrain. What is it? See the first part of Revelation 2:17.

Each of the messages to the seven churches contains a promise to overcomers. The angel assures believers that in whatever situation they find themselves in, it is possible to overcome.

6 Read Revelation 2:17. List each promise the angel gives to those who overcome, and reflect on the significance of each promise.

The hidden manna represents Jesus, the Bread of Life. He satisfies the deepest longings of our hearts and nourishes the hidden hunger of our inner spiritual lives. The white stone represents acquittal or freedom from the slavery and bondage of sin. The new name represents an intimate relationship with God known only to the believer and Christ.

7 As you have studied the message to the church at Pergamos, what lessons speak to your heart?

Compromise with sin is incredibly dangerous. The church at Pergamos had some believers who were drawn into a creeping compromise and lost their souls. Others remained faithful to Christ and were overcomers. Echoing down the centuries is our Lord's appeal to be faithful in the face of any circumstances we face. The grace of God is still "sufficient" for us. ■



Letters

Eye-Opening Issue

I enjoyed reading the September 2013 *Adventist World*. What eye-opening realities from this edition, which I accessed online. To me, this edition is a nice, real, and full sermon.

TITUS BRANDA
Nairobi, Kenya

Where's the Balance?

I am writing about Merlin Burt's article "Ellen G. White and Adventist Fundamental Beliefs" (September 2013). Burt was right—most of our beliefs were established by Bible study, not "originated" by Mrs. White. But in some cases our pioneers, in their Bible study, failed. Then Mrs. White was given a vision. She writes that the believers "knew that, when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from Heaven the revelations given me. The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren

came into harmony" (*This Day With God*, p. 317).

It wasn't Bible study only, Ellen White wrote: "The foundation that was laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 207).

EKO WAHJUDI
Gold Beach, Oregon

Life Maps

Thank you for printing Gerald A. Klingbeil's story "Life Maps: Remembering the Reality of God's Call" (July 2013). As a Christian young person who is growing in church, I need to follow the footsteps of Klingbeil since God cares for my future too. This article is a challenge to young adults to listen to God's tender call and do according to what He expects of us. It was such a blessing. Thanks again!

BECKY MORAA
Nairobi, Kenya

Firstborn

Thank you for the May 2013 *Adventist World*. I especially appreciated Angel Manuel Rodríguez's "First? Or Firstborn?" as it helped me to better understand what "firstborns" are.

I was also very much pleased to see my fellow youths march in the streets of South Africa for Global Youth Day (see the news report "Global Youth

Please pray for me to be a success in life.
NTHATI, Lesotho

I need a laptop computer for my job but cannot afford to buy one. Please pray for me.

TUAN, Myanmar

“God cares for my **future** too.”

—BECKY MORAA, Nairobi, Kenya

Day, Church's Largest Social Media Event"). God bless you!

WYCLIFFE MARASI
Kisii, Kenya

Daniel Lisulo

I read Andrew McChesney's cover story of Daniel Lisulo, "I Choose the Sabbath" (February 2009), and I confess: I face the same problems here in Brazil. I feel motivated to remain firm in my purpose to never transgress the Sabbath.

I'll be praying for other Adventist university students who face the same problem. Thank you for sharing Lisulo's experience.

MARLEIZE DA SILVA FERREIRA
Brazil

Tell Me More

I recently read the October 2008 *Adventist World*. This edition inspired me through the spiritual articles, Bible study, and devotional articles that clearly explained the Bible and Adventist Church beliefs.

I am a Christian by faith, but not an Adventist. I'd like to know more about *Adventist World*.

SHYBU JUGA MANGOCHI,
Malawi

Adventist World is produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and distributed to members free of charge. We are also on the Internet at

Prayer & PRAISE

I'm in my final year at university. Pray for me—my family is out of the faith, and I can't spend much time with them because of school.

TUMUSIIME, Uganda

I'm writing about my job. I got an offer letter, but I can't start until my background verification is finished. Please pray that the verification is cleared quickly and that I can settle into the job, as I am the only income source in my family.

SAMUEL, India

www.adventistworld.org. We are gratified that the magazine is filling this need.
—Editors

Adventist World

Here in south Chile we always read *Adventist World*. We also have beautiful testimonies from faithful pastors. I hope we can someday share news or articles with the magazine.

I'm sending a big hug and thank you for the wonderful work you do for the hope that binds us so tightly—the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God bless the entire team.

ABEL ENRIQUE NÚÑEZ BUSTOS
Los Angeles, Chile

Keep the Faith

Thank you for publishing *Adventist World*. It is such a blessing to be a part of this great Advent mission. I always pray for the day when we will all meet in heaven to be with our Lord. Keep the faith!

ELICIA REID
via e-mail



Correction

We mistakenly used a photo of R. F. Andrews with the September 2013 article “Ellen G. White and Adventist Fundamental Beliefs,” by Merlin Burt.

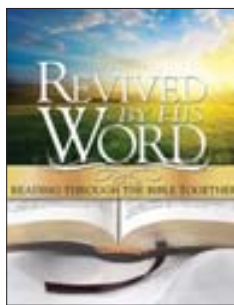
Here is a photo John Nevins Andrews, who was mentioned in the story.

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

Where in the World Is This?



ANSWER: ADRA Spain has been involved in service activities in Ethiopia for 25 years. This woman is one of many for whom ADRA has been working to improve their social and economic conditions.
To learn more about ADRA Spain, visit ADRA-ES.org.



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God speaks to us through His Word. Join with other believers in more than 180 countries who are reading a chapter of the Bible each day. To download the daily Bible Reading Guide, visit RevivedbyHisWord.org, or sign up to receive the daily Bible chapter by e-mail. To join this initiative, start here:

JANUARY 1, 2014 • Psalm 147

Thank you for your prayers. God is indeed answering them. I wrote to you about my fruitless job hunting. I am happy to report that God has just given me a job. May He be exalted all the time.

PETER, Malawi

Kindly pray for my family, especially our firstborn, who seems to always make wrong choices in life.

MRS. MWALE, Zambia

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



25 Years Ago

The grand opening and dedication of Zaoksky Theological Seminary (Zaokskaya Seminariya Advetistov) was held on December 2, 1988.

In the 1980s, the early days of perestroika in the Soviet Union, Adventist Church leaders in Russia approached the Council on Religious Affairs requesting permission to build a correspondence school. Their requests were turned down more than 75 times, as was a request to build on property owned by the church in Tula.

After property was found in Zaoksky, then General Conference president Neal C. Wilson met with Konstantin Kharchev, then chair of the Council on Religious Affairs. Over the protests of regional government officials, and with the assistance of Adventist pastor Mikhail M. Kulakov, permission to build a school was finally granted on January 27, 1987.

Volunteers from throughout Russia and the Ukraine put up the seminary building in record time. The first group of students from the former Soviet Union graduated in 1990. In 1991 the college was registered by the Russian government as the first Christian institution of higher learning opened since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Source: Robert E. Costa



DISCOVERED

Biologists in western India have identified 12 new frog species and rediscovered three species not seen in 75 years.

Source: National Geographic

Did You Know?



David Livingstone, the nineteenth-century explorer, missionary, and antislavery activist, is buried in London's Westminster Abbey. But where is his heart?

ANSWER: Zambia. Livingstone died in May 1873. Before shipping his body back to England, his friends attached a note to the corpse: "You can have his body, but his heart belongs to Africa." The Livingstone Memorial in Ilala marks the spot where his heart is buried.

top 5

Divisions with the most Pathfinders (2012):

- 1 **Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division**
606,901
- 2 **South American Division**
186,026
- 3 **East-Central Africa Division**
169,547
- 4 **Inter-American Division**
99,625
- 5 **South Pacific Division**
67,481

Source: General Conference Youth Department

SLEEP MORE, EAT LESS

300

On average, men who are sleep-deprived eat 300 more calories

per day, when compared to those who get nine hours of sleep.

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.

50 WORDS OR LESS

My Favorite... Bible Character

■ My favorite Bible character is Moses. His story reminds me to keep studying and learning from my mistakes. God will never give up on me. Should I give up on God?

—FANNY, *Semarang, Indonesia*

■ Joseph is my favorite Bible character. His life reflects the life of Christ. He was envied and sold by his brothers. He was falsely accused and imprisoned. He forgave his brothers and became a savior of his father’s family.

—MANUEL, *Cebu City, Philippines*

■ King Manasseh, Hezekiah’s son, infamous butcher, the reason Judah went into Babylonian captivity. He was captured as an unbeliever, converted, and restored to his throne by the mercy of God to rule the longest of Judah’s kings (55 years). It shows me how deep is God’s love and forgiveness.

—PAT, *West Virginia, United States*

■ Job is my favorite Bible character. His story opened my eyes to God’s protection for all His creatures, whether good or bad. He encourages me to be a friend of God every day.

—RESTITUTA, *Canada*

Next time, tell us in 50 words or less about your favorite Bible promise. Send it to letters@AdventistWorld.org. Put in the subject line “50 Words or Less.”

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It's what refreshes our spirit.



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