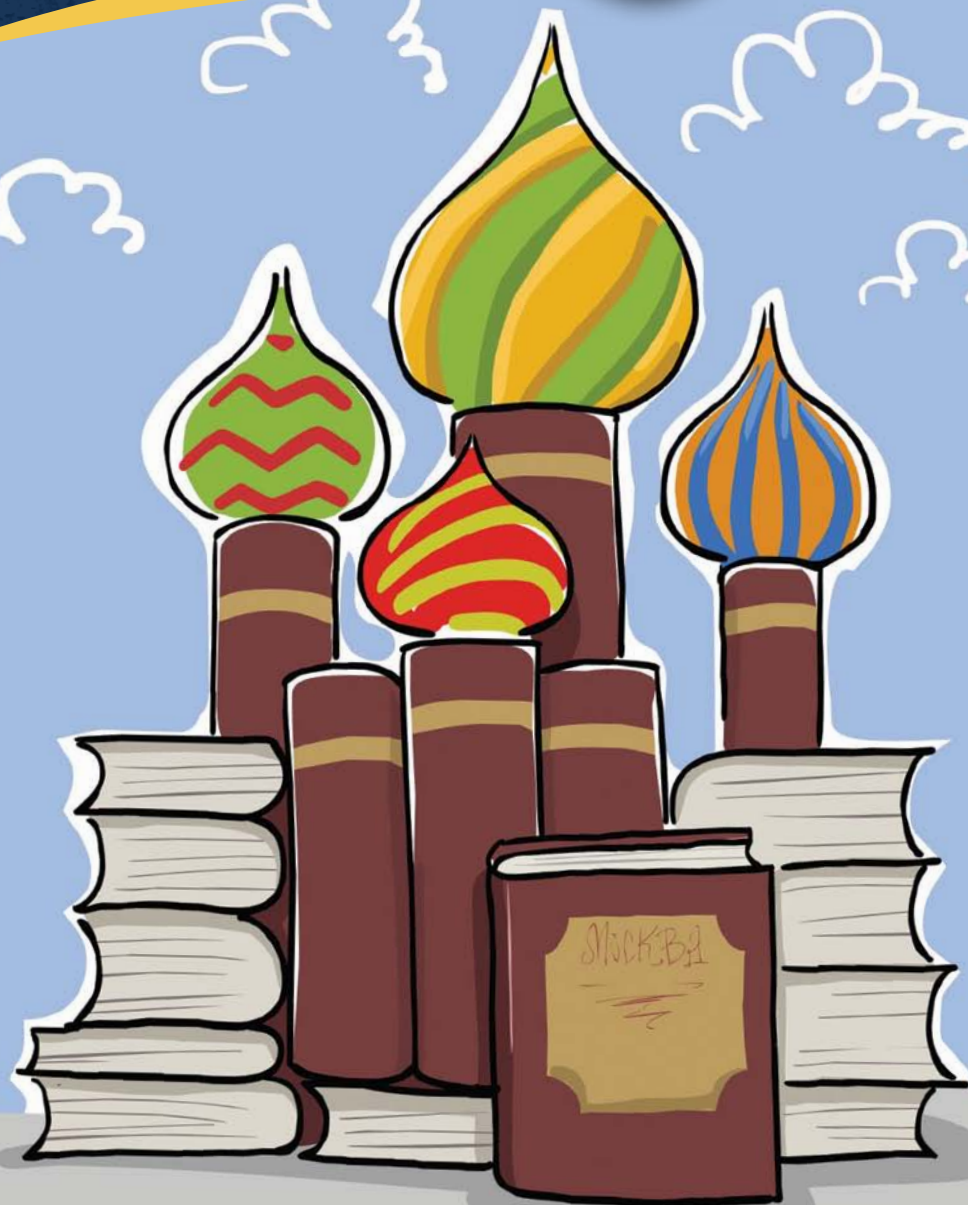


December 2014

# ADVENTIST WORLD



**MADE IN  
RUSSIA**

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Leprosy*

26 *Our Creator  
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27 *Facing  
Our Fears*

# ADVENTIST WORLD

December 2014



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## Grace Over Time

The park guide waited until the gaggle of city-bred hikers caught up with him on the canyon path. But instead of directing our attention to the dramatic cliffs towering over our heads or the river cutting its way through the valley, he pointed only to a cluster of ferns protruding from the rock wall some 30 feet above us.

“You may be wondering,” he said with a smile, “how those ferns get the water they need to survive here on the sheer face of this desert cliff. Does anyone have any ideas?”

We were at least wise enough to not attempt an answer about something none of us could have known.

“Hydrologists tell us that the only water source for that luxuriant burst of ferns on the cliffside—the water that keeps them alive—fell on the mountain plateau hundreds of meters above them more than 20 years ago. It takes two decades for the water to seep 700 meters through the sandstone and bring the nourishment that causes these ferns to grow.”

And now it was my turn to smile, for, in a way, I already knew this story. I, too, have been blessed to watch the ways in which God nourishes and refreshes one part of His worldwide cause by grace originally given years and or even decades ago. In His mercy, blessings never lose their value, even when the person or the ministry receiving them has moved off the scene.

As you read this month’s cover story about how one of Adventism’s most historic publishing ministries became the wellspring for another to flourish, thank the Father yet again that nothing in His economy is ever wasted. The rain with which He blesses you will yet bless others as you allow Him to keep the stream of goodness flowing.

*Bill Knott*



## WORLD REPORT

# Fundamental Beliefs Get an Update

*The revisions are a milestone in the history of the fundamental beliefs, which have been left mostly untouched since 1980.*

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, news editor, Adventist World



DISCUSSING BELIEFS: Artur A. Stele, chair of the revision committee, discussing revisions to the 28 Fundamental Beliefs at the Annual Council on Oct. 12, 2014.

■ Adventist leaders tentatively approved proposed revisions of the church’s core statements of its fundamental beliefs after two days of discussions that Artur A. Stele, chair of the revision committee, said had helped create a better product.

Delegates at the Annual Council, a major church business meeting, easily endorsed the last of the proposed revisions to the 28 fundamental beliefs in a 202-2 vote, with three abstentions, in the late afternoon of October 13. They forwarded the document to the General Conference session for a final discussion and vote in July.

None of the revisions change any of the fundamental beliefs, and many simply update and tighten the text, Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, assured delegates when the talks started on October 12. “I don’t want anyone here in the room to think we are changing our beliefs,” he said. “We are simply adjusting wording to make it clearer and more helpful.”

*Continued on next page ▶*

## WORLD REPORT

The 2014 Annual Council had scheduled a discussion and vote for October 12, but more than 20 comments from delegates sent the revision committee back to work. The discussion reconvened October 13, and all but one proposed revision was approved by a 179-15 vote, with five abstentions, before noon.

“I believe that the process was very helpful,” Stele, director of the church’s Biblical Research Institute, said in an interview. “Quite a number of suggestions were made after we presented the draft. . . . I think that the product is better than it was Sunday,” October 12.

The revisions are a milestone in the history of the fundamental beliefs, which numbered 27 when they were first drafted in 1980. With the exception of the addition of a twenty-eighth belief (“Growing in Christ,” No. 11) in 2005, they have remained untouched until now. Among other core beliefs are “The Sabbath” (No. 20), “Baptism” (No. 15), and “The Nature of Man,” which is now set to become “The Nature of Humanity” (No. 7).

The revisions introduce gender-inclusive language to the text in places where the biblical teaching being referred to clearly intends to include both men and women.

The biggest discussion centered on objections to the replacement of the words “holy men of God” with “holy persons of God” in Fundamental Belief No. 1, titled “The Holy Scriptures.” The revision committee later changed the phrase to “the inspired authors” at the suggestion of evangelist Mark Finley, and the delegates approved the final item.

Stele said he had no problem making the change, because the delegates’ objections might have been a matter of conscience. The original phrase “holy



**LISTENING DELEGATES:** People attending a 2014 Annual Council meeting in the main auditorium of the General Conference headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

ANSEL OLIVER / ANN

men of God” comes from 2 Peter 1:20, 21, in which the original Greek text uses gender-inclusive language.

“They grew up with wording that they felt was a direct quote from Scripture, so they felt as if we were changing Scripture,” he said. “To be sensitive to this, we decided, ‘Well, why not find different wording?’”

Bill Knott, a member of the revision committee, praised the final outcome. “The creative solution offered by Elder Mark Finley illustrates the value of God’s people thinking together about how to best express their belief in the importance and authority of Scripture,” said Knott, editor of the *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines.

### How the Revisions Unfolded

The revision process started with an action voted at the 2010 General Conference session to harmonize Fundamental Belief No. 6, “Creation,” with a creation statement approved by the 2004 Annual Council. The council statement emphasizes that the earth was created in six literal days several thousand years ago—two issues that have come under scrutiny by evolutionists and are not mentioned in the current statement of belief 6.

But it’s no simple matter to change a fundamental belief. When the twenty-eighth belief was added in 2005, General Conference session delegates passed a protocol that requires at least two years of work at all levels

of the Adventist Church before any changes can be considered at a General Conference session.

Keeping this in mind, the General Conference, which oversees the world church, appointed a four-member revision committee to tackle “Creation,” and asked it at the same time to review the other beliefs for possible adjustments. The other members of the committee are Angel Rodriguez, retired director of the Biblical Research Institute, and Gerhard Pfandl, retired associate director of the Biblical Research Institute.

The committee’s first act was to invite church members from around the world to submit suggestions for a year—a step that is not part of the protocol but that Stele said proved valuable.

“Of course, we could not incorporate all the new suggestions because some were contradictory,” Stele added. “What one group suggested, another group asked us not to do.”

Stele said the committee used a set of five criteria to determine which suggestions to include:

- We will include suggestions that deepen the statement, but not too much.
- We can’t include every thought in every section; we have to look at the document as a whole.
- We will accept ideas that are not present in the draft but should be incorporated.
- We will accept good suggestions that shorten the draft.
- We will screen out suggestions that

seem to promote a personal agenda.

The committee then incorporated the suggestions that it found useful—Stele said it received about 200 letters—into a draft that it sent to church divisions, unions, conferences, and institutions for feedback.

The Annual Council approved the first draft in 2013. After clearing a number of General Conference bodies, the second draft came to the Annual Council in October.

### **A Look at Some Revisions**

One notable revision to No. 18, “The Gift of Prophecy,” clarifies that the Bible and the writings of church cofounder Ellen G. White should not be considered equal.

The new wording voted by the Annual Council reads: “The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.”

An addition to No. 23, “Marriage and Family,” for the first time identifies single people as members of the family.

“I think the outcome was very good,” said Pfandl, a revision committee member. “The delegates recognized that we fulfilled the stipulation that was given to us to amend and not rewrite the passages.”

*A marked-up draft of the 28 fundamental beliefs can be viewed at: [adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/FUNDAMENTAL\\_BELIEFS\\_STATEMENT-last\\_version.pdf](http://adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/FUNDAMENTAL_BELIEFS_STATEMENT-last_version.pdf).*

## *Ng Worries About* “Serious Loss” of Members

*The General Conference executive secretary says church loss is as important as church growth.*

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, news editor, Adventist World

■ Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has topped 18 million for the first time, but G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the Adventist world church, isn’t celebrating.

Ng expressed dismay about large losses. “It’s easy to baptize them, but it’s much harder to retain them,” Ng said in an interview.

“Retention and nurture should be on the same side of the coin, but apparently baptism brings more glamour: ‘Look at how many I have baptized!’” he said. “Nurture? Who cares? There’s no glory for me.’ So we have an inherent problem: losses, serious losses. But not many people talk about it.”

Ng, however, made a point about talking about it on October 12 when he delivered a yearly membership report to the Annual Council.

Church membership has swelled by 1.5 percent to reach 18,143,745 million from 17,881,491 a year earlier, according to data he presented. For the tenth year in a row, more than 1 million people joined the church—1,091,222, to be exact—but at the same time a decade-high 828,968 people were removed from the books after dying, leaving the church, or disappearing.

Some of the losses reflect an ongoing drive by local churches to audit their books to remove the names of unreachable members who have not attended

worship services for some time, said David Trim, the world church’s chief archivist, who compiles the data.

Without the audit, church membership would stand at 25 million today, Ng said.

Offering another difficult statistic, Ng said 31.8 million people have been baptized over the past 40 years, while 11.4 million have dropped their membership or gone missing. The figure does not include those who died. Many of those people left because the church didn’t nurture them properly, Ng said.

In a recent example, the last Adventists who were baptized after an evangelistic series in a small village in northern India in 2005 reconverted to Hinduism in late August. The incident, which made headlines in the Indian media, raised fears among Christians that the reconversions were forced, which is illegal in the country.

But an Adventist task force sent to the village, Asroi, found that the 33 former Adventists had received little support from church leadership since their baptisms in 2005 and had been courted eagerly by Hindu activists.

Leaders with the church’s Southern Asia Division, which includes India, have engaged in soul-searching after the loss. “We have to carefully nurture the newcomers and help them to be

*Continued on next page ▶*

## WORLD REPORT

rooted in the word,” said T. P. Kurian, communication director for the Southern Asia Division.

At the Annual Council, Ng defended the practice of counting members and said it could not be compared to an Old Testament census by King David that resulted in punishment from God. Ng said David’s actions were a display of pride.

“When we count in the church, we have to count with humility,” he said. The tally, he said, is simply “a report on what the Master has done.”

Ng elaborated in the interview by pointing to three of Jesus’ parables in Luke 15. “There’s nothing wrong with counting itself,” he said. “After all, Jesus counted in the three parables, right? The woman counted her 10 coins and found one was lost. The shepherd counted only 99 sheep. The father lost a son. So there’s nothing wrong.”

Also, Ng said mission stories usually end on a high note that leaves the impression that the work was successful. But he said statistics present another side of the picture: Much of the world hasn’t had a chance to hear about the first coming of Jesus, let alone the Second Coming.

He said the church has a presence in about 230 countries, but another 22 countries recognized by the United Nations remain unentered. Furthermore, a country might have a large population of Adventists but still contain major people groups without a single Adventist. In Kenya many of the 800,000 church members come from primarily two language groups, while the other 40 language groups are largely unreached. The same is true of Thailand, where most members come from minority groups.

“So it does not mean that once you have entered a country the work is done,” Ng said. “Far from it!”



**MONEY TALK:** Robert E. Lemon, treasurer of the General Conference, giving an annual report on Monday, October 13, 2014.

ANSEL OLIVER / ANN

# *Church Leaders Urged to* **Hire Pastors,** *Not Administrators*

*Treasurer points to the General Conference’s strict financial policy as a model to emulate.*

By **ANDREW MCCHESENEY**, news editor, Adventist World

■ The General Conference, the top administrative body of the Adventist Church, had 282 employees in 1995.

Today it has 287, an increase of only five employees.

But the Seventh-day Adventist world church has not remained the same size. Membership soared from 8.8 million to 18.1 million over those 18 years, while the number of world divisions increased from 11 to 13, the number of unions grew from 94 to 132, and the number of conferences and missions grew from 459 to 626.

General Conference treasurer Robert E. Lemon said the tight reins on the hiring of new administrators is a model for all levels of church administration, and he urged church leaders to follow the lead of the General Conference.

“The message that I have for church leaders is if they are going to be successful in having money to do work in the

field, they must control the number of people they have at their conference, union, and division offices,” Lemon said in an interview on the sidelines of the Annual Council, a major church business meeting. “Adding pastors and frontline employees is what we encourage, and not just adding to administrative levels,” he said.

Lemon made the appeal to church leaders as he presented his annual treasurer’s report at the Annual Council on October 13. He also provided a snapshot of the financial state of the world church, showing that it received US\$2.39 billion in tithe last year, a 3.5 percent increase from US\$2.31 billion in 2012. Of that amount, the General Conference received nearly \$150 million last year, roughly the same amount that it has gotten since 2011.

Lemon reminded the Annual Council how tight finances were for the General Conference during the early 1990s, and how they had had to adjust appropriations and reduce the number of employees.

He said the General Conference has hired people as needed since then, including the director of a new Children's Ministries Department, but every addition comes at a cost to another part of the budget. If a department wants to add a staff member or a service, it has to find something to cut. To optimize costs, nearly all General Conference leaders now share administrative assistants rather than have their own.

Lemon said the main goal of the General Conference is to only maintain enough working capital to have a healthy financial operation and cover day-to-day expenses, and to allocate all excess funds at the end of the year to special projects. Those practices have allowed the General Conference to absorb the shock waves of the 2008-2009 global financial crisis and are helping it withstand the constant fluctuations of foreign currencies today, he said.

It also has meant that the General Conference has been able to provide substantial sums of money for special projects, including ongoing initiatives to share Jesus in the 10/40 window, a territory covering North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Lemon said spending in the 10/40 window is now comparable to the size of a division's budget.

He called on church leaders from around the world to become more effective by practicing financial discipline. "If you want your organizations to have the ability to respond immediately, as we do with special projects, you can't just add employees," he said.

## Question on Women's Ordination Sent to GC Session

*Delegates vote after six hours of discussion in a "gracious" atmosphere.*

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, news editor, Adventist World

■ Annual Council delegates agreed to ask the General Conference session next year to decide whether each division may decide for itself whether to ordain women. Many expressed hope that a final decision on the matter will allow the church to focus more fully on its mission of proclaiming Jesus' soon coming.

After six hours of presentations and discussion on October 14, the delegates of the Annual Council, a major church business meeting, overwhelmingly approved a request to put a question on the matter before the 2015 General Conference session. If approved, the action would authorize each of the 13 divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to ordain women in its territory if it desired.

The question that will be posed to delegates at the General Conference session next July is: "After your prayerful study on ordination from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the reports of the study commissions; and after your careful consideration of what is best for the church and the fulfillment of its mission, is it

acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? Yes or No."

The delegates endorsed the request and an accompanying three-page statement—both drafted by General Conference and division leaders—in a 243-44 vote, with three abstentions.

"I want to thank you for the gracious spirit with which you have conducted this meeting," Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, said moments after the results of the electronic secret ballot flashed up on the screen. "We hope for this at the General Conference session."

Wilson also asked church leaders to adhere to whatever decision the General Conference session made on women's ordination. "I pledge to you I will follow what the General Conference session votes," he said. "I ask you to do the same."

*Read the statement that delegates approved on October 14 at [www.adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/statement.pdf](http://www.adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/statement.pdf).*

# *Koh Tells How to* **Make Children Excited About Church**

*The Children's Ministries Department director says the secret is to engage children in the sermon.*

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, news editor, Adventist World

■ Linda Mei Lin Koh is on a drive to train Adventist pastors to preach child-friendly sermons.

Koh, director of the Children's Ministries Department for the Adventist world church, said it might take a little extra work, but the end result is children who are excited about God and the church.

"Pastors are not trained specifically to preach child-friendly sermons, and most of us are used to just preaching to adults," she said in an interview. "So a few skills, like being aware and involving children in thinking about what you are preaching, can go far."

Koh identified four ways that pastors can engage young listeners:

- Assign Bible verses to children in advance and call on them by name to read the passages from their seats with their parents.
- Raise simple Bible questions from the pulpit and ask children to raise their hands with answers.
- Begin the sermon by identifying a Bible verse as important and asking children to count how many times it is mentioned in the sermon.
- Prepare a one-page sermon outline with fill-in-the-blank spaces that

the children mark with a pen as they listen. In the sermon the pastor might announce when an answer is reached, "OK, this is the answer."

"This way the kids are all participating in the sermon," Koh said. "But preaching a child-friendly sermon is a skill that we have to learn."

Koh is compiling a practical guide on how to preach child-friendly sermons. A Singaporean native and grandmother of five, Koh has served as children's ministries director for 19

years and might be best known to Adventist readers for writing a series of children's devotionals in the *Adventist Review's* print and online Week of Prayer editions this fall.

Koh said preschoolers are usually too young to be engaged in the sermon but should be included in the church service with a children's story.

Elementary school children and teens, however, are considered old enough to put aside their toys and reading materials to listen to the sermon—and to get involved in song service, special music, Scripture reading, offering collection, and church-led community service projects.

"It's a lifestyle and not so much, 'You're old enough to do it when you reach a certain age,'" Koh said.

Children who engage in the sermon and other church activities from a young age grow up to become compassionate adults with missionary-minded hearts, she said.

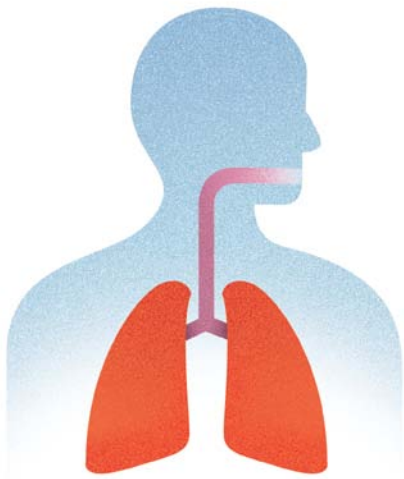
"Tomorrow's missionaries, tomorrow's leaders, begin with today's children," she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA MEI LIN KOH

**CELEBRATING CHILDREN:** Linda Mei Lin Koh, director of Children's Ministries, posing with children at the Adventist University of Lukanga in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.





# Breathe *Free*

By PETER N. LANDLESS and ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES

**I have heard reports that the Breathe-Free program has been revised. Are people still smoking as much as they used to? Also, I was shocked to hear that there may be a plan to provide smoking areas within church buildings. Please clarify.**

**D**espite the fact that the number of people smoking tobacco has decreased in many countries, the overall number of smokers worldwide continues to increase. It's frightening and sobering to note that at the end of 2010 almost 6 million people were dying annually as a direct result of tobacco smoking, and that it remains one of the leading causes of preventable death worldwide.

A two-pronged approach to the reduction of this frightening statistic is needed. First, there must be a strong emphasis on preventing people from using tobacco to begin with; second, effective initiatives that assist people in breaking the habit of smoking tobacco must be developed and utilized.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been active in stop-smoking programs since the late 1950s. Dr. J. Wayne McFarland and Chaplain Elman Folkenberg, who together developed the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, pioneered one of the earliest initiatives in systematic group therapy in smoking cessation. The first of these plans was conducted in the early 1960s, shortly before Surgeon General Luther L. Terry's report that firmly concluded that cigarette smoking is causally related to lung cancer in men. In 1984 the Breathe-Free program was launched as a total rewrite of the Five-Day Plan, with significant changes and improvements. The Breathe-Free pro-

gram has now been revised and is being presented in a Web site format. It's known as Breathe-Free 2.

The previous version ran for 30 years and proved to be effective internationally. Many of its basic principles have been retained, and much has been added. The new version, like its predecessor, has been carefully researched and is an evidence-based approach to assisting people to stop smoking. It also makes use of the motivational interrogation approach in helping individuals see the need to quit and remain free from the tobacco habit. The use of pharmacological intervention and assistance has been included for those situations in which the addicted individual's health-care provider may deem it necessary.

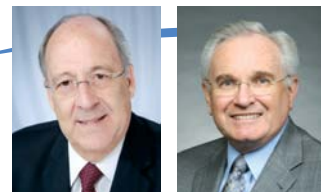
One of the current program's main aims is to promote positive relationships with those who are struggling with addiction to nicotine. These relationships are key to successful outcomes. There is an important emphasis on lifestyle, including exercise; healthful nutrition; and positive support systems with family, friends, and individuals of significance to those quitting tobacco.

Almost all smokers are aware that smoking is harmful and causes many diseases. In fact, it's incredible that tobacco is even allowed to be sold, since it's the only commodity freely available that kills 50 percent of the people who use it!

You've also asked an important question as to whether there's a recommendation to establish smoking areas inside our churches. This has never been suggested! What has been recommended is that churches designate a specific area outside the building for smokers. This would protect others from secondhand smoke. Members would encourage those who are trying to quit smoking but are still not free of their addiction to come to church and tap into the power that Christ has promised to help overcome entrenched habits. It's important for us as a church to have a gracious and welcoming approach to all people who are seeking wholeness of body, mind, and spirit.

We have a wonderful opportunity to reach out to our communities with comprehensive health ministry and help those who are shackled by the chains of nicotine addiction. As we use Christ's method and mingle, sympathize, and meet people's needs, we can pray that they will embrace His grace and salvation, which He offers freely to all.

We have the tools—let's use them. ■



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

**Allan R. Handysides**, a board-certified gynecologist, is a former director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department.

The following is adapted from the sermon that Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, gave at the 2014 Annual Council, in Silver Spring, Maryland. For the complete sermon, visit: [www.adventistreview.org/church-news/god's-prophetic-movement,-message,-and-mission-and-their-attempted-neutralization-by-the-devil](http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/god's-prophetic-movement,-message,-and-mission-and-their-attempted-neutralization-by-the-devil). —Editors.

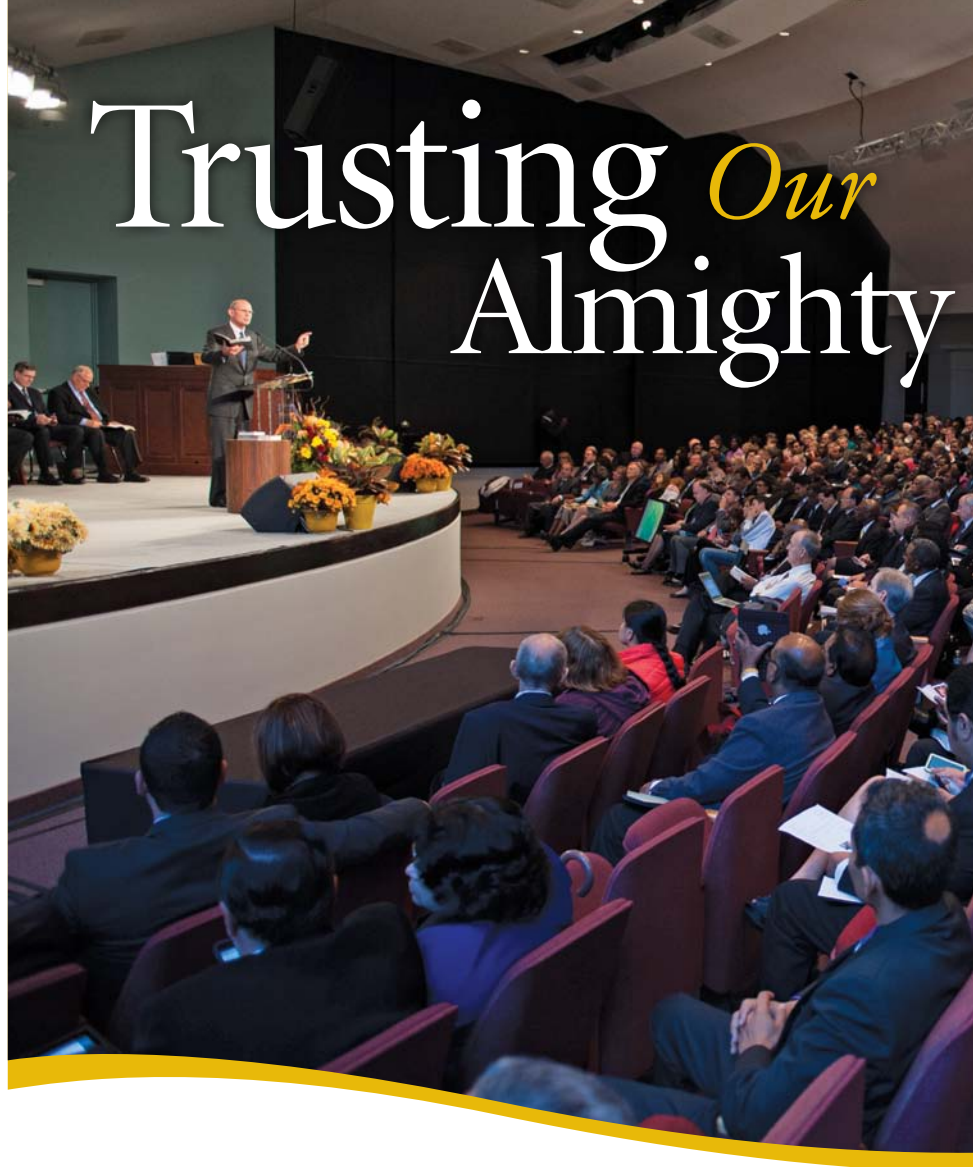
**B**e sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8, 9).

We [Seventh-day Adventists] affirm without hesitation that God has given us a special mission for these closing hours of earth’s history, and the devil is furious. We see this vividly portrayed in Revelation 13, which outlines Satan’s twofold war plan to destroy God’s last-day people. Revelation 14 reveals the Lord’s counteroffensive: His remnant people demonstrating His character and proclaiming His final appeal to the world—the three angels’ messages.

### Satan Seeks to Divide

The powerful truth of these unique messages would break completely the deceptions of Satan, if proclaimed as God intends. It is little wonder, then, that Satan is doing everything he can to attack the Seventh-day Adventist movement in an attempt to neutralize our influence in the territory he claims as his own.

Though large-scale persecution will certainly come, currently Satan is trying to work from the inside; to weaken the church through dissension, discord, and conformity to the world. “Satan is ever seeking to divide the faith and hearts of God’s people. He well knows that union is their strength, and division their weakness.



# Trusting *Our* Almighty

It is . . . essential that all of Christ’s followers understand Satan’s devices and with a united front meet his attacks and vanquish him. They need to make continual efforts to press together even if it be at some sacrifice to themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Satan also tries to neutralize our efforts by secular diversions. He uses poor health habits. He uses skepticism about the veracity of the scriptural record. He tries to bring in controversy over Bible doctrine to sidetrack our evangelistic witness by getting us to distrust and fight each other.

We are even warned that at the end of time Satan will inspire individuals who will preach that reformation within the church consists in giving up our unique doctrines in order to make it easier for others to join us.

### Our Only Hope

Our only hope is an abiding faith in the Word of God, trust in inspired counsel, fervent prayer, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Without these heavenly compass points, we would most certainly fall to Satan’s misdirection. As we seek to know God’s will through a study of His Word, we must not place strange interpretations and employ interpretive gymnastics to draw out conclusions that are not evident from a plain reading of the Word. “The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.”<sup>2</sup>

Time on this earth is short. Probation is closing soon. Preparation to see God face to face by repentance and forsaking of sin needs to be done now.

By TED N. C. WILSON

# God



It is only in total reliance on Christ, His righteousness and power, that we will see victory. In this spiritual war, victory is in Christ and nothing else.

## The War Is Real

And the war is very real. The attacks of the devil are not just theory, and we cannot withstand them without God's continued strength.

Let me share with you some recent experiences in my own family. We have three wonderful daughters and sons-in-law with eight marvelous grandchildren. Many of you know of Edward, our little 2-year-old grandson, son of our first daughter, Emilie, and her husband, Kameron. You may have heard of Edward's battle with cancer and its results during the past eight months. While we praise God

that he is now cancer-free, he still suffers from a host of neurological problems because he developed antibodies to the cancer that are now attacking his brain. We thank God that Edward is showing some improvement with treatment, but the extent of his future recovery remains uncertain.

Most of you do not know that the 15-month-old son of our second daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, David, has been diagnosed with a rare genetic mutation; so rare, in fact, that as far as we know, only two other people in the world have had it. Little James is so precious and our hearts ache when we recognize the gravity of his situation and the danger it poses to his future well-being.

And most recently our third daughter, Catherine, and her husband, Bob, were expecting their third child until three weeks ago, when they lost the baby. After the premature delivery at four months, she held the perfectly-formed little boy in her hand. When the Lord returns, Catherine's little son will be placed in her arms and he will grow up in heaven.

In the last year or so, the devil has attempted to neutralize every one of our three precious daughters, their families, and us as their parents. But he will not succeed. God is in control. He will be victorious.

Brothers and sisters, none of us is exempt from the attacks of the devil as he seeks to neutralize our work for the Lord. We are all in this together. There are many who are dealing with things far worse than our family has had to deal with. We can only be strong as we rely completely on God's power to sustain us and help us to become more like Him.

## Do Not Delay

We cannot run the risk of delay. We must maintain our connection with Christ at all times to combat the trickery of the devil. Our God is almighty and will overcome all the

obstacles thrown at us by Satan and his evil host. If we fall at the feet of Christ, forsaking our sins, seeking forgiveness, asking for His power to resist the neutralizing schemes of the enemy, God will provide us with unlimited power from heaven to live a new life.

As the devil seeks to neutralize Seventh-day Adventists, don't just stand by, but, through the power of the Holy Spirit, stand up for God's truth! Bear God's message boldly. The Lord wants the distinctive truths of the Seventh-day Adventist message to be proclaimed. Stay away from anything that will undermine our message or cloud our distinctive beliefs. Don't be tempted by the devil to blend in with the crowd or be "politically correct." Don't proclaim a "generic" Christianity or a "cheap-grace Christ" that does not point to the distinctive biblical truths to be declared worldwide—the very reason for which the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized.<sup>3</sup>

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is coming soon! As we near that wonderful day of Jesus' return, the devil's attempts to neutralize God's Word will be completely defeated by God's power and His everlasting biblical message of love and truth. The devil loses; God wins! This is the ultimate message of the great controversy theme, and it is our great privilege to allow God to use us in this last great spiritual effort to bring the truth of Jesus to every human being on the planet—to "reach the world" through God's incredible power. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1998), vol. 3, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 599.

<sup>3</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), pp. 470, 471.



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

**B**ere Adventist Hospital in Chad, Africa, can be a crazy place. One day we're saving five or six lives, and the next I'm firing someone for embezzling money.

Most weeks we count dozens of people who are alive because we're here—delivering C-section babies, treating children for malaria, helping mend a broken femur so a woman can have a useful life. We do some fabulous work in some very primitive circumstances with little modern medical equipment. (We don't own an X-ray machine; don't even think about MRI and CT scans.) Chalk it up to skilled people—and an even more skilled God blessing our feeble efforts.

But then we find an employee who won't give medicine or run a test unless the family bribes them. Chalk it up to the devil!

We are on the front lines of the great controversy.

...

I'm supposed to be the CEO of this 70-bed outfit, plus the adviser to another five hospitals managed by Adventist Health International. I am the all-time reluctant administrator. I don't like politics. I'm no good at interpersonal relationships when I'm the boss. I'm not organized enough. I'm not motivated enough.

Oh, and I'm overworked. Every day I see pediatric and medical patients, handle radiology questions, see private consults—oh, and then I get to the stuff I'm trained for: emergency medicine.

But I'm the boss. So I govern meetings, raise funds, settle disputes between staff, try to create relationships with government officials, find volunteers—you'd be welcome!

And did I mention there are five other hospitals too?

This month we had a lot of money missing, and two chief administrators to fire, and two other

new administrators—no experience in hospital work—to show the ropes. Because of the money missing, I sign off on every expense and every receipt, create payroll—and meet with twice as many people.

■■■

I need a place to spend several hours a day responding to e-mails and working on the computer. I need a place to think, to listen for God's voice, to study and grow in my job and in my spiritual life. When I work

at the hospital, patients and staff constantly come to find me. When I work from home—on the big kitchen table—my children want to play.

I need an office.

My loving wife cannibalized a guest bedroom in our house, and our great maintenance volunteer Jamie made me a desk—well, actually found an old desk frame in usable shape and put a nice piece of American plywood on top, with the edges sanded to perfection. All it needed was paint.

By OLEN NETTEBURG

# The Desk



“I enjoyed spending time with him. I enjoyed watching him learn to do something.”

So Lyol and I painted it. Sort of. Lyol grabbed a medium-sized paintbrush and gave me a pencil-sized paintbrush. He then proceeded to slop paint out of the bucket onto the desktop. Occasionally he would push the paint around a bit, not unlike what you might see an octogenarian do on the shuffleboard circuit.

Handicapped though I was by the size of my brush and my desire not to merely use the brush to dip-and-drench, I still managed to keep pace with him on my side of the table. I helped paint the edges. As the desktop was nearing completion, I picked up the paint bucket so we could paint the last remaining corner of plywood. Each time he dipped into the paint bucket, Lyol managed to scrape half of his paint off on my hand. Lyol decided it might also be wise to paint the base supporting that new sheet of plywood, so he slashed a stroke across it.

Then tired of his labors.

He stepped back from his handiwork. I too stepped back from the desk and sized up my 5-year-old son, trying to determine which had more paint, the desk or his skin. He pronounced his work good and moved on to play in the yard, but not before getting cleaned up with gasoline to wash off the paint.

As he played in the yard 40 feet away from me, I tried to clean up his workmanship just a tad. I tried to move the paint from places that seemed a quarter inch thick to places still barren. I painted the edges. I finished the base.

I knew the entire time that I could have done a better job, and done it faster, on my own. But I enjoyed doing it with him. I enjoyed spending time with him. I enjoyed watching him learn to do something.



That was yesterday, and I moved my desk into my office today. It now has the handprints of all three of my children on it. Is it composed of the greatest, highest-quality parts? No. Is it the craftsmanship that makes it valuable? By no means.

But it's my favorite desk in the world. It's the perfect desk. Why? Because my son and I spent time together painting it. The two of us. Our project.

So now I sit down at my desk and work. I think of my mountains of assignments. I think of my stress. I think of what a shoddy job I'm doing.

And I realize something.

I'm taking my medium-sized paintbrush to this hospital and to the church hospitals in the region. And I'm slopping paint all over the place, willy-nilly. Some places are way too thick. Other places I miss altogether. I forget. I don't pay attention to detail. I'm painting things that shouldn't be painted. I've started painting some things, and I'm running out of steam to finish them. I'm getting myself very dirty. And I'm even slopping paint all over the Guy holding the bucket.

He's standing by, observing, content to watch me do my miserable best. He's patiently letting me cover Him with my lousy efforts. He's

watching me get myself dirty. He's seeing all the places I've overlooked. He sees how uneven I am, how I make neck-deep pools of trouble. He watches me paint things that were just fine without paint, then tire out. Then He patiently does His best to douse me with gasoline and scrub me clean.

Then He ever so patiently takes the piddling pencil-sized brush I've left Him with and starts going over the places I've missed. Finishing what I couldn't. Smoothing over the irregularities. Without ever groaning, He bears the paint I've smeared on His hands by my clumsiness and shortcomings and inattention to detail. And He stands back and smiles.

Yes, the job could have been done better—and faster—without me. But you know what? He chose to do this with somebody. And you know what's more? He chose me!

And when He sits down at His desk to work, He thinks back on spending time with me. He thinks about my silly little efforts, tongue hanging out in concentration and everything. He sees the imperfections in my work, which are not hard to find. He runs His fingers over the places where He remembers me particularly messing up or where He remembers working hard to erase my mistakes.

And He smiles, saying to Himself, "This is my favorite desk. I made this with My son." ■



**Olen Netteburg** is a missionary physician—and reluctant administrator—at Bere Adventist

Hospital. This article is adapted from a post on the blog site he shares with his physician wife, Danae. *Under the Mango Trees* can be found at [www.missionarydoctors.blogspot.com](http://www.missionarydoctors.blogspot.com).

By CALLIE WILLIAMS

# Together

*Church was never meant to be a weekend check-in*

Growing up as a Seventh-day Adventist, Sabbath has always replaced “Saturday.” Sabbath came with closed schoolbooks, dinner together, warm fellowship, and church. Aside from the occasional prayer meeting, to my 10-year-old mind, church was a weekend check-in. The pastor was the one who “fed” us spiritually, and listening to the service opportunities attentively was my part to play. I dutifully greeted the occasional visitor, but the rest was routine.

After I graduated from high school, I saw friend after friend leave the church. I stayed close, but I too grappled with the church’s implications. If I’m just one of 18 million, does it really matter if I attend? I’m grateful I stayed to learn the answer. Through involvement in my local church and various churches all over the world, experiential truth drove home the biblical significance of the church.

## 1 Made Up of Individuals

Some believe that the church is a building, a complexity of politics and leadership, or even an entity in itself. On the contrary, the church is you. It’s me. We as individuals make up the church. Just as a body of water is made up of drops, the body of Christ is made up of you and me. Without drops, there is no ocean; without people, there is no church.

A church often entails a building for worship services, but that is not church. When we believe it is an inanimate structure, we confine church to a weekend activity instead of an identity. Furthermore, when we objectify it into an entity of itself (e.g. the church said this, the church made that mistake, the church is responsible for this), we shift responsibility away from ourselves and thereby forget that we, the church, are Christ’s bride.

It is true that we rise no higher than our leaders, but it is equally true that the church’s temperature is determined by its members. Ellen White wrote that “no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure.”<sup>1</sup> She doesn’t say the pastor, the board, or the lay leaders; she says *members*. Our church itself cannot move forward until we, personally, move forward with Christ.

## 2 Called for Service

When Jesus left this earth, He gave the greatest of all commissions: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19). The disciples sought to fulfill this with all their might. They preached, healed people, even distributed food to meet physical needs (Acts 3:11-13; 3:7; 6:1-7). Their example teaches us that it is not up to the pastor or leadership team to do evangelism and win souls to Christ; reaching out involves all disciples.

How should one serve? Ellen White wrote: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”<sup>2</sup> Meeting people’s needs, whatever they may be, is what Jesus did.

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul discusses the unity in diversity that the body of Christ has, and should have. If we were all preachers, who would greet? If we were all sound technicians, who would run the homeless ministries and provide food for potluck? “If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?” (verse 17). As we serve together, we must use God’s diverse gifts to serve and draw others to Him.

“Instead of being a hospital for the sick, we’ve somehow become a **showcase** for pseudo-saints.”

### 3 Designed for Fellowship

We are cautioned not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves” (Heb. 10:25). Human nature has a propensity to avoid vulnerability, to put on a facade. Because of this, many complain of hypocrisy within our walls. Instead of being a hospital for the sick, we’ve somehow become a showcase for pseudo-saints.

In Acts 2:42 Luke chooses a particular word for the early church’s fellowship: *koinōnia*. This is not a casual “hanging out,” but an intimate companionship, one that includes healthy vulnerability and mutual kindness and love. There’s no record of these church members being flawless,<sup>3</sup> that means they loved each other *anyways*. They intimately knew and still loved. This creates both safety and a heavenly satisfaction.

## Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God’s family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18.)

Christian author Timothy Keller expresses beautifully our need of this true Christian fellowship: “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.”<sup>4</sup>

### 4 A Place of Growth

A particular Native American tribe had only one rule when speaking up during general meetings: if you critique something, you must also supply an idea for improvement. Many of us have done a fine job critiquing the church—everything from what the General Conference president is doing to “terrible” outreach practices to what the pastor *should have* preached about last Sabbath. But when we point out errors, do we offer our hands and hearts to meet the need?

Why did God choose Israel as His people? Why has He called you and me to be part of His church? When God spoke to Moses about His plans for the Israelites, He said, “I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8). God didn’t stop with delivering them from bondage, but He brought them to an exceedingly wonderful new home.

So with us: God desires to take us from our sinful condition to the full measure of Christ’s character, and He wants us to do it *together*. As iron sharpens iron, as one ember warms another, the church is a place for us to grow up in Jesus together. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Darkness Before Dawn* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1997), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> The Epistles to the Corinthians should dispense with this myth.

<sup>4</sup> Timothy Keller with Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2011), p. 101.



**Callie Williams** serves as mission director for R3 Missions. She lives with her family in Maryland, United States, where she is also studying to become an English teacher.

A team of sharpshooters and bomb-sniffing dogs guarded the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Dozens of employees waited, expectantly, in the front lobby.

Then the chartered helicopter swooped down onto the grassy lawn with the Soviet Union's top religious affairs official, Konstantin Kharchev, and his host, General Conference president Neal C. Wilson.

Moments later Kharchev entered the building to applause from employees. He smiled broadly and clasped his hands together in gratitude, as seen in rare video footage from the Review and Herald's archive.

Harold "Bud" Otis, Jr., president of the Review and Herald at the time of the October 1986 visit, choked up with emotion when he recalled Kharchev's reaction to the roaring printing presses.

"We were printing the *Adventist Review*, 30,000 an hour, just clicking them off," Otis said in a videotaped interview in 2013. "And he tapped me on the shoulder, and he said, 'You must come to Russia and build a publishing house like this.'"

And the Adventist Church did.

It is stories like this that cement the legacy of the Review and Herald Publishing Association as a leading force in the Seventh-day Adventist Church—even as it enters a new era as a publisher without its own printing facilities for the first time since the 1850s.

The General Conference, which owns the Review and Herald, along with the publishing house's elected constituency, decided in June to close the Hagerstown plant after years of financial losses. The General Conference will retain ownership of the Review and Herald's intellectual property and publish many of its books and other literature, including *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*, under the Review and Herald imprint at Pacific Press, the church's other major publishing house in the United States.



# MADE IN RUSSIA

*Review and Herald's remarkable story*

By ANDREW MC CHESNEY, news editor, Adventist World

"The Review and Herald has had a long history of proclaiming the Advent truth, and we are extremely grateful for that heritage — which will not end," said current General Conference president Ted N.C. Wilson, whose father took the Soviet official on the tour of Review and Herald.

"We are very grateful for the dedicated service of Review and Herald employees through the years," Wilson said. "Many souls will be in heaven because of this."

The Hagerstown closure deeply disappointed Review and Herald employees, many of whom had worked there for decades. About a dozen current and former employees, speaking in interviews at the plant, by phone, and by e-mail, spoke passionately about their longing for the plant to remain open.

But not one spoke of disaffection with the Adventist Church. Instead, their faces lit up as they put personal sadness aside to share stories about the role that the Review and Herald has played in proclaiming Jesus' soon return.

"The power of the press is humbling," said Mark B. Thomas, the Review and Herald's president from 2010 to 2014 and a longtime employee. "Working for the Review and Herald kind of felt like being from the Mercedes factory of publishing."

## "God Planned It That Way"

Thomas witnessed the visit by Kharchev, chairman of the Soviet Council of Religious Affairs. Kharchev stopped by the Review and Herald during a 12-day visit to the U.S. that also included meetings with leaders from other religious denominations in New York and Atlanta. It was the first such visit in U.S.-Soviet history.

"It was cool because there was Secret Service everywhere," Thomas said in an interview in his office. "There were sharpshooters on the building, there were sniffer dogs. We have a helicopter pad, but they wouldn't let him land there because of 70."

Interstate 70 is a major highway a short distance from the Review and





Herald building.

On the helicopter ride back to Washington, D.C., Kharchev reminded Otis, who was seated beside him, about his desire for a publishing house.

“All of the way back to Washington he outlined the plan for how it was going to happen,” Otis said in a telephone interview.

“He and I hit it off from the very beginning,” he said. “God planned it that way, of course.”

Otis decided to go to the Soviet Union after the cold winter months. But Kharchev pressed him to come sooner, so Otis and his wife, Rose, caught a flight to Moscow in January 1987. Otis said Kharchev immediately began returning the kindness that he had been shown at the *Review and Herald*—and multiplied it.

“He met us at the airport and took us through the diplomatic entrance into the country,” Otis said. “He treated us royally. He gave me a two-week opportunity to go around the country, preaching in our churches in areas that hadn’t seen an Adventist pastor from the General Conference since 1917.”

### Origins of the *Review and Herald*

The *Review and Herald*’s roots go back to 1849, when Adventist Church cofounder James White started a journal called *The Present Truth*, the forerunner of the *Adventist Review*, in the U.S. A year later he launched a second journal called *The Advent Review*, and soon combined

the two into the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, which became *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* a year later. White moved to print the journal himself on a small printing press that he acquired in 1852.

No laws recognized nonprofit

organizations in those days, so White owned the whole operation. Early Adventists felt wary about organizing a formal church, but they also realized that if something happened to White, they could lose everything. So they agreed to form a publishing house, but which they named the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, which became commonly known as the *Review and Herald*.

The early publishing house and the journal were essentially the same entity, and the journal was credited with holding together and coalescing the Adventist movement before it officially organized as a church in 1863.

“For almost our entire history the church paper was indissolubly tied to the publishing house and the church,” said William G. Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review* from 1982 to 2006. “For the church, the *Review* was the leading edge, binding the Adventist people together in hope, doctrine, and mission.”

Gerald Wheeler, a *Review and Herald* history buff and longtime book editor at the publishing house, said the journal held a community-building role similar to social media today.

“It was the Facebook of the time,” Wheeler said in an interview with his wife, prolific Adventist author Penny Estes Wheeler. “The church consisted of isolated members who were different from the rest of the people. The *Review* provided a way of communicating with each other. They could express their disappointments, fears, frustrations, and loneliness.”

“As you read the letters to the editor, some of this comes through,” said Penny Estes Wheeler.

The *Adventist Review* began to separate from *Review and Herald* in 1982, when the publishing house moved to Hagerstown from a complex that it shared with the General Conference in Takoma Park, Maryland. The journal’s editorial offices stayed at the General Conference’s headquarters, which are now in Silver Spring, Maryland.



SOVIET VISITOR: Konstantin Kharchev, in gray suit, touring the *Review and Herald* facility in Hagerstown, Maryland, with Neal C. Wilson, right in center photo, and Harold “Bud” Otis, left, in October 1986.

In recent years the *Adventist Review* and its younger sister journal, *Adventist World*, have accounted for a significant 25 percent of the Review and Herald's gross annual sales. Pacific Press will start printing both journals in 2015.

"The mission of the *Adventist Review* goes forward unchanged even as the Review and Herald ceases printing," said Bill Knott, editor of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*.

### Library of Beloved Books

The publishing house later emerged from the shadow of the journal and may be best known today for commissioning one of the most expensive and complex projects in Adventist publishing history: the popular 10-volume *Bible Story* children's books by Arthur S. Maxwell.

Released from 1953 to 1957, the books retell more than 400 stories that span the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. What made the project so remarkable was the Review and Herald's decision to place color pictures on nearly every page of the book. The initiative required hundreds of paintings, produced mostly by artists Harry Anderson and Russell Harlan, and many, many hours of prepress preparation in the predigital age.

The investment was huge for its time, with Thomas putting the cost in the tens of thousands of dollars, and would have threatened to bankrupt similar enterprises. Even today, many Adventist publishers would be hard pressed to initiate such an undertaking, said Kim Peckham, head of corporate communications for the Review and Herald.

"The Philippine publishing house, for example, could never afford to do this, so we gave them rights to publish. We gave Pacific Press rights to publish, too," Peckham said.

The Pacific Press Publishing Association, also founded by James White, is only slightly younger than the Review and Herald. It began in Oakland, California, in 1874 and

remained in the area for more than a century before moving to Nampa, Idaho, in 1984.

"This was the motherhouse," Peckham said. "This is where it started."

In its heyday the Review and Herald published 30,000 sets of *The Bible Story* a year, and Pacific Press produced a similar number, he said. Another 15,000 sets a year were printed by the Southern Publishing Association, a church-owned publishing house that merged with the Review and Herald in 1980.

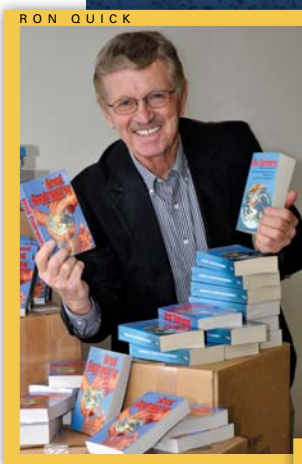
The Review and Herald also initiated other major projects, including the seven-volume *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* released from 1953 to 1957, edited by longtime church editor F. D. Nichol and incorporating the scholarly work of dozens of Adventist theologians. Magabooks, a line of books published in a magazine format that students sell to earn tuition money, began in 1986 with an abridged version of Ellen G. White's *Christ's Object Lessons* titled *He Taught Love*. It had an initial print run of 300,000.

The Review and Herald helped reenergize the distribution of sharing books in 2009 when it released an inexpensive edition of Ellen G. White's *The Great Controversy*, a project spearheaded by Adventist layman Jack Henderson. The book cost a then-unheard-of 60 cents each to produce, and the Review and Herald offered to mail a copy anywhere in the U.S. for \$1.10. It has shipped more than 2 million copies.

The Great Controversy Project also sparked the interest of Ted N. C. Wilson, the current General Conference



**Top:** The Review and Herald in Battle Creek, Michigan, in the late 1800s. **Above:** The art department at work circa 1940s.



**GLOBAL INITIATIVE:** Jack Henderson, a layman from North Carolina, envisioned sharing *The Great Controversy* with every home in the U.S. He sparked a global initiative in which the church distributed 142 million copies in 2012 and 2013.

**A NEW IMAGE:** Artur A. Stele holding copies of *Vzaimponi-maniye*, a journal that he said revolutionized the image of Adventists in the Soviet Union.



president, who challenged the Review and Herald and other Adventist publishing houses around the world to distribute 100 million copies of the book. A total of 142 million full and abridged editions of *The Great Controversy* ended up being distributed, including 20 million electronic downloads.

### Back to the U.S.S.R.

During his first visit to Moscow, Otis told Kharchev how local Adventist pastors sorely lacked books and training. In just a few months, Otis said, Soviet authorities offered the Adventist Church a burned-out school building for a seminary on the land where Zaoksky Adventist University now stands.

Otis spoke highly of Kharchev, saying, “He had the highest respect for the church and treated us as if we were world-class diplomats.”

The Adventist publishing house, Source of Life, opened on Zaoksky’s premises in 1992, churning out books on a printing press that Otis helped to supply.

Otis said he acquired the \$3 million printing press from a man in Sweden who had hoped to publish Russian Bibles but had gone bankrupt.

“I called him and said, ‘Look, I don’t even have \$1 million, but let’s talk,’” Otis said. “So we talked. Then I said, ‘I don’t even have a half million, but let’s talk.’ Finally the third time I said, ‘Look, if you will box it up and ship it to Zaoksky, I’ll give you \$300,000 in cash.’ And he took it.

“That press is still working today,” said Otis, who served as Review and Herald president from 1978 to 1988 and later advised the General Conference on Soviet and Russian affairs.

Otis, now 76, still travels to Russia and gets together with Kharchev, who is 81. Last year they met at Zaoksky, located a two-hour drive south of Moscow, and recounted stories to university students on a Sabbath afternoon.

The Review and Herald’s contribution went far beyond the launch of

Adventist publishing in Russia, said Artur A. Stele, a General Conference vice president who lived for many years in the former Soviet Union. How? It published a Russian-language journal shortly after Kharchev’s visit and, with his blessing, distributed it in the Soviet Union in 1987. The high-quality, colorful journal was called *Vzaimoponimaniye* (Mutual Understanding): *A Look at Adventists in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.*, and it introduced Adventism to the Soviet public. In 1988 the Review and Herald released a second issue of the journal, this time dedicated to families and children.

“The Review and Herald created a desire for high-quality publications already in 1987,” said Stele, who has worked closely with Adventist publishing in Russia for years, including as a former president of Zaoksky Theological Seminary and a former president of the Euro-Asia Division. “These two journals revolutionized the image of Adventists in the Soviet Union, paving the way for permission to be granted to open the publishing house at Zaoksky.”

### A Legacy of Confidence

While the Soviet visit might have generated headlines, that wasn’t the only time that Secret Service agents staked out the Review and Herald. The sharpshooters stood by again in the early 1990s during a visit by Ugandan vice president Samson Kisekka, an Adventist.

“I was down there in advertising at the time,” Thomas said. “There were Secret Service guys behind me and the sniffer dogs again.”

Kisekka, a physician by training, made several trips to the U.S. in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and they resulted in the Review and Herald sending to Africa huge shipments of special issues of *Message* magazine themed around AIDS and drugs.

“At the time, these special issues had the highest print runs of any special issues in Review and Herald’s his-

tory and were targeted to address the AIDS crisis in the U.S. and on the continent of Africa,” said Delbert Baker, a General Conference vice president and former *Message* editor.

The Review and Herald also contributed its expertise in other countries, donating equipment and dispatching staff to start local operations. In one example, bindery foreman Keith Alexander flew to South America in 1989 to help install a book line for the Adventist publishing house in Guyana.

Howard Scoggins, who was the Euro-Asia Division publishing director from 1996 to 2000, said the Review and Herald proved a godsend during his time there.

“I needed manuscripts, I needed permissions, and I didn’t have any money,” Scoggins said. “I appealed to the Review and Herald, and I said, ‘Guys, I need these books. I’ll pay you a royalty, but please don’t charge me.’”

The Review and Herald waived numerous fees and helped in other ways, allowing Scoggins to move forward quickly.

Scoggins, who previously had worked in Adventist publishing in Africa and the Middle East, later joined the Review and Herald in Hagerstown, where he retired as vice president of marketing in early 2014.

He said his Russian experience taught him that the Review and Herald offers something special to the many Adventist publishing houses around the world that are short on manuscripts: confidence that they are holding high-quality content worth translating and republishing.

“When they see the logo, the little R, they know they can open the book and read with confidence,” he said. ■



**Andrew McChesney** is news editor for *Adventist World*.



**Above:** HELPING THOSE IN NEED: Grace Lee poses with a leper colony resident.



By GRACE LEE **My**  
**Leprosy**  
*Lessons from a Chinese leper colony*

I didn't know I was infected. In fact, I thought I was in better condition than most people and didn't need treatment at all. God then brought me to serve people with leprosy in order to show me that *I* was actually the one who needed to be healed from my leprosy of selfishness.

In February 2013 God gave me the awesome opportunity to serve as a volunteer in one of the 600 leper colonies in China. The country has a total of about 240,000 abandoned, mainly elderly, people with leprosy, who need not only physical but also spiritual help—hearing the good news of Jesus.

An elderly Korean man named Kim Jin To, now 81 years old, initiated the leprosy ministry in 2006. He came alone to China after serving lepers in Korea for 17 years and blind people in Japan for five years before that. Approximately 90 volunteers from various countries are currently united

in this work. The volunteers live in nine different leper colonies in order to meet the physical needs of the people there. As their physical needs are met, the people's hearts naturally open up to hearing about the volunteers' Savior, Jesus.

#### **"Can You Get It?"**

The question I'm asked most often is "Aren't you afraid you're going to get leprosy yourself?" Thankfully, the answer is no. Because of modern medicine leprosy is an easily curable disease, and all the people in the colonies have been treated and are no longer contagious. Unfortunately, however, because they were infected many years before receiving proper treatment, a large number of them live with the aftermath of the disease. This means they struggle with various wounds and physical handicaps. Many are blind, crippled, disfigured, and

missing fingers, hands, and legs.

The most detrimental characteristic of leprosy, though, is the inability to feel. For example, while cooking, some of the people do not realize that their hand is being burned from the scalding water. When we're dressing their wounds, they say it doesn't hurt, even though the wound may be large and deep.

#### **Spiritual Leprosy**

Soon after I began my volunteer assignment in China, I read a quote from Ellen White: "The leprosy of selfishness has taken hold of the church. The Lord Jesus Christ will heal the church of this terrible disease if she will be healed. The remedy is found in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah."<sup>1</sup>

Then it hit me. *I* was the real leper! On the outside I looked "normal," but my heart was numb and I was decaying spiritually because of my selfish-

**Left: HEARTFELT COMPASSION:** Volunteer Grace Lee holds hands with an elderly woman living in one of China's colonies for those afflicted with leprosy.



**HAPPY IN JESUS:**  
A joyful Bible student



**Above: BIBLE STUDY:** More than 600 leper colony residents have learned about Jesus and accepted Him as their Savior.



**PRAYING TOGETHER:** Leper colony volunteer Grace Lee bows and prays with a colony resident.

ness and sin. I had not truly realized my condition and had been living without Christ's love in my heart. I had been ignoring the suffering and afflicted who were dying without knowing Jesus.

God showed me that I was like the priest and the Levite in the parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25-37). They thought they were spiritually healthy because they were attending church every Sabbath, eating clean foods, and had a lot of Bible knowledge. But in reality, as Jesus pointed out, they were breaking the very principles of God's law—love to God and love to others (see Matt. 22:37-40).

### Now Is the Time

Now is the time for us to repent and put away our selfishness and sins so we can be changed to reflect Jesus' character. As Luke wrote in the book of Acts, we need to "repent . . . and be

converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before" (Acts 3:19, 20).

"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

I am so thankful that God brought me to China to show me that I had the leprosy of selfishness and needed to be healed by Him. Truly the Holy Spirit is working in the leper colonies here. So far, 677 people have accepted Jesus as their Savior and have been baptized—and

many others are preparing for baptism, asking Jesus to cleanse them from their sins and empower them to live a new life in Him.

Our brothers and sisters here cannot wait until Jesus comes again—but what about us? My great desire is that when He comes, we, along with those in China's leper colonies, will be joyously praising Him for healing not only our physical leprosy but our spiritual maladies as well. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), p. 71.



**Grace Lee**, a graduate of Southern Adventist University in Tennessee, United States, has been a volunteer for the Adventist lay leprosy ministry in China since 2013.

The 25th of December has long been commemorated as the day of Jesus' birth, and in this article it is not my purpose to affirm or question the propriety of celebrating this event on this day, but to dwell upon the childhood and life of our Savior. It is my purpose to call the attention of the children to the humble manner in which the Redeemer came to the world.

All heaven was interested in the great event of Christ's advent to earth. Heavenly messengers came to make known the birth of the long-promised, long-expected Savior to the humble shepherds who were watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem. The first manifestation that attracted the notice of the shepherds at the birth of the Savior, was a radiant light in the starry heavens, which filled them with wonder and admiration. . . .

The astonished shepherds could scarcely comprehend the precious message borne to them by the angels, and when the radiant light had passed away, they said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."

They were filled with joy; they could not keep to themselves the precious knowledge of the advent of the Redeemer, but with glad enthusiasm they told to all whom they met the wonderful things they had seen and heard; and all who heard them related the wonderful experience of the shepherds to the others, and many wondered and rejoiced, for they believed the words that had been spoken by the heavenly messengers. Glorifying and praising God, the shepherds returned to their flocks on the plains of Bethlehem. . . .

#### **Special Interest Group**

Those who love God should feel deeply interested in the children and youth. To them God can reveal His truth and salvation. Jesus calls the little ones that believe on Him the lambs of His flock. He has a special love for and interest in the children. Jesus has said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me [let no one place any obstruction in the way of the children's coming to Me]; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus has passed

# Christmas Address to the Young

By ELLEN G. WHITE



through the trials and griefs to which childhood is subject. He knows the sorrows of the young. By His Holy Spirit, He is drawing the hearts of the children to Himself, while Satan is working to keep them away from Him.

The most precious offering that the children can give to Jesus is the freshness of their childhood. When children seek the Lord with the whole heart, He will be found of them. It is in these early years that the affections are the most ardent, the heart most susceptible of improvement. Everything that is seen and heard makes an impression on the youthful mind. The countenances looked upon, the words uttered, the actions performed, are not the least of

*“If angels sung because the Saviour was born in Bethlehem, shall not our hearts echo the glad strain, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men?”*

the books the young read; for they have a decided influence upon the mind, heart, and character.

Then how important it is that the children come to Jesus in their earliest years, and become lambs of His flock! How important it is that the older members of the church, by precept and example, lead them to Jesus, who taketh away the sin of the world, and who can keep them by His divine grace from the ruin it works. The better acquainted they become with Jesus, the more they will love Him, and be able to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. God has sanctified childhood in that He gave His only begotten Son to become a child on earth.

What matchless love Jesus has manifested for a fallen world! If angels sung because the Savior was born in Bethlehem, shall not our hearts echo the glad strain, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men? Although we do not know the exact day of Christ's birth, we would honor the sacred event. May the Lord forbid that anyone should be so narrow-minded as to overlook the event because there is an uncertainty in regard to the exact time.

Let us do what we can to fasten the minds of the children upon those things which are precious to everyone who loves Jesus. Let us teach them how Jesus came into the world to bring hope, comfort, peace, and happiness to all. The angels explained the reason of their great joy, saying, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Then, children and youth, as you celebrate the coming Christmas, will you not count up the many things for which you are to be grateful, and will you not present a gratitude offering to Christ, and so reveal that you do appreciate the heavenly Gift?

### **Let the Hearts of All Respond**

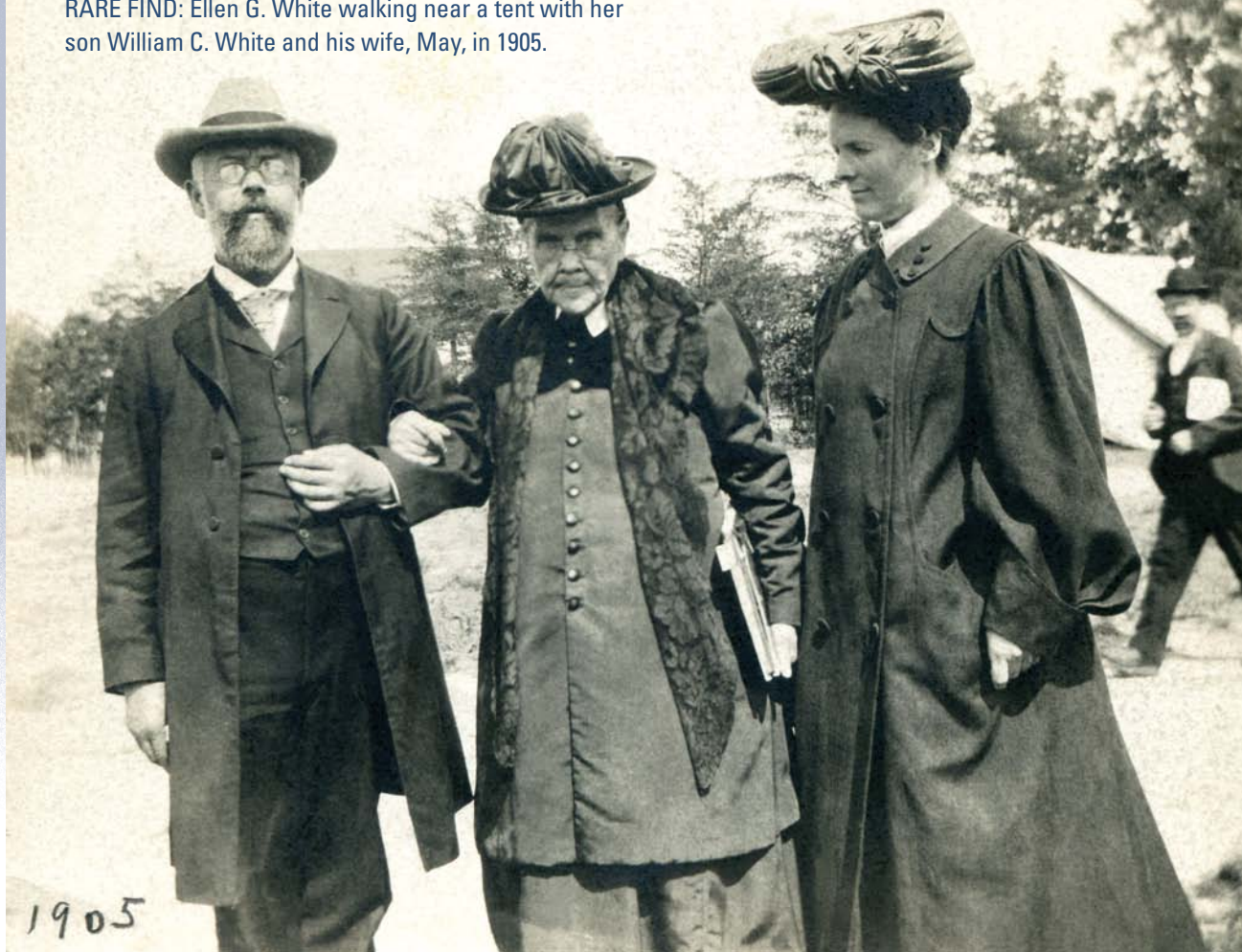
The angels were amazed at the great love of Christ that led Him to suffer and die on Calvary to rescue man from the power of Satan. The work of redemption is a marvel to the angels of heaven. Why, then, are we, for whom so great a salvation has been provided, so indifferent, so cold and unloving?

Children, you can do errands for Jesus which will be wholly acceptable to Him. You can bring your little gifts and offerings to Christ. The wise men, who were guided by the star to the place where the young child was, brought offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh. When they found the Promised One, they worshiped Him. Children, you may ask, “What gifts can we bring to Jesus?” You can give Him your hearts. What offering is so sacred as the soul temple cleansed from its defilement of sin? Jesus stands knocking at the door of your hearts; will you let Him in? He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Will you let Jesus into your hearts? Will you clear away the rubbish, and throw open the door, and willingly, gladly welcome in your heavenly guest? I shall not need to plead with you to bring you thank-offerings to God if you will but let the Savior in. You will be so grateful, that you cannot be restrained from laying your gifts at the feet of Jesus. Let the hearts of all respond with exceeding joy for the priceless gift of the Son of God. ■

This is taken from the article “Christmas Address to the Young,” published in the *Review and Herald*, December 17, 1889. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

RARE FIND: Ellen G. White walking near a tent with her son William C. White and his wife, May, in 1905.



# ELLEN WHITE as You've Never Seen Her

By ANDREW MCCHESNEY

A previously unknown photograph of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White has surfaced among the aging documents of an Adventist physician who died in California in 1966.

The 1905 photo, which shows White walking outdoors with her son William and his wife, May, is the first new picture of White to turn up in decades, and its discovery is especially thrilling for White scholars because it provides a rare glimpse into her everyday life.

"I've never seen her in this way before," said James R. Nix, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, a church

*A previously unknown photo of the Adventist pioneer provides a rare glimpse into her everyday life.*

institution that oversees White's writings. "This particular photo is significant because it is candid," Nix said. "You feel like you could step up to her and say, 'It's nice to see you.'"

Only about 50 photos of White are known to exist, and most of them were taken in a studio or other formal setting.

In the 1905 photo White, 77, is seen walking near a pitched tent as she

apparently attends the General Conference session in Takoma Park, Maryland, in May 1905.

White, wearing an Edwardian hat and floral scarf, clasps the arm of her son William ("Willie") C. White, her chief editorial assistant and publishing manager. Clutched in her other hand is a large journal, the kind that she used to hand-write letters and sermons and that



the White Estate now carefully stores in a fireproof vault. A slip of white paper can be seen sticking out of the corner of the journal. “In my imagination, she is heading to speak at a meeting, and this journal contains her notes,” Nix said.

Supporting the idea that White might have been walking to a speaking engagement is the pince-nez perched on her nose. White was known to wear eyeglasses for reading, so perhaps she put them on her nose on that chilly May day to read a speech. This is only the second known photo of White wearing glasses.

### Why a Tent Stands Behind White

Tim L. Poirier, archivist at the White Estate who has researched the photo, initially thought that the other woman in the picture might be White’s nurse, Sara McEnterfer, who often accompanied White on travels away from California, where she lived at the time. But a comparison with other photos showed that the woman was White’s daughter-in-law May. Poirier also learned that the nurse had fallen ill before the General Conference session and that May White had made arrangements to leave her and William’s children with family members in California so the couple could journey east with Ellen White.

Poirier added: “The tents and grounds in the photo match what we know of the location of the session at the present location of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland.”

The General Conference session was held in a large tent at the newly founded Washington Training College (now Washington Adventist University). The General Conference, the administrative body that oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church, had only moved to the area from Battle Creek, Michigan, in late 1903. It was renting premises in nearby Washington, D.C., together with the Review and Herald Publishing Association,

said Ronald D. Graybill, a retired Adventist historian.

Delegates lived in tents. Ellen White stayed in a bedroom and study in the newly built men’s dormitory, while her son and daughter-in-law shared a third room, Graybill said.

Years have passed since the previous discovery of an unknown White photo. Nix estimated that the last photo might have been found 50 to 60 years ago, saying the 1905 photo is the first new image in the 42 years that he has worked at the White Estate.

### Origins of the Unknown Photo

The author of the 1905 photo is unclear. But a likely candidate is its original owner, Harriet “Hattie” Allee Trott, a 27-year-old widow who was working as a secretary at Review and Herald in 1905.

Trott, an avid photographer, later moved to California to work as registrar at the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University), and she married graduate and physician Leslie Trott in 1921. It was among Leslie Trott’s papers that the lost photo was found.

Harriet Allee Trott died in 1958, eight years before her husband, who worked at the Adventist-operated White Memorial Medical Center, named in honor of Ellen White, in Los Angeles. The Trotts’ great-granddaughter, Jacqueline Leslie Trott-Bally of Los Angeles, stumbled across the White photo in a folder marked “Harriet Family Photos” while sorting through old papers, said Graybill, whom Trott-Bally contacted about the photo. She had already been working with Graybill to donate some of her great-grandfather’s papers to his alma mater, Loma Linda University.

Graybill, whose own research includes a slide presentation of all the known photos of White, immediately recognized White in the photo and realized the rarity of the find. “It

is amazing to find an unknown photo at this late date,” he said.

The old photo measures only 3.5 inches by 3.5 inches (8.9 centimeters by 8.9 centimeters), but is remarkably sharp, Graybill said. “I was amazed at the clarity, I was amazed at the detail, and I was charmed by the hat,” he said. He said White wore a bonnet in the one other photo that shows her head covered.

Graybill alerted the White Estate about the new photo on October 1.

### “My Favorite Picture of Ellen White”

The find raises hopes that other photos of White might surface. Nix, director of the White Estate, said people with long connections to the Adventist Church should check old family albums and boxes of pictures to see whether they might contain photos of White or other Adventist pioneers.

He said it is interesting to read stories about Adventist pioneers, but also seeing them, particularly in candid photos, helps people to better identify with them as real people. “Until I saw this picture, I mentally pictured Ellen White wearing only dark maroon or black in public following the death of her husband in 1881,” Nix said.

“Seeing her wearing a colored scarf around her neck, with reading glasses perched on her nose and notes in her hand for a talk she gave, has brought her to life for me in ways that no other picture of her ever has,” he said. “I have only been aware of this picture for a little more than a week, but it has already become my favorite picture of Ellen White.” ■



**Andrew McChesney** is news editor for *Adventist World*.

# Our Creator God

Why did God create?

This is a simple question for which there is no simple answer. You are asking for a divine reason or motivation for creating. My impression is that the Bible does not provide an explicit answer to your question. So the only thing left is for us to examine what the Bible says about God, and to try to extrapolate from that a possible answer to your question. I will discuss here God as love, as Creator, and His creativity.

**1. God Is Love:** The most common answer given to your question is that God created because He is love (1 John 4:8, 16). But that plain statement does not fully answer the question. It simply says that the love of God moved Him to create, without informing us why love wanted to express itself in the act of creation. In fact, it could suggest that since love does not provide a reason, there is no reason for creation. This answer could even imply that creation is irrational and purposeless. To avoid this problem, it has been argued that God's love urged or moved Him to create, perhaps because He wanted to enlarge the objects of His love outside the inter-Trinitarian relationships. This answers the "why" of creation, but raises new questions. Why did God want to enlarge the circle of love? Did it satisfy a divine longing within the Godhead? You may think that there is no fundamental problem with this answer, but there is.

This answer suggests that the love that characterized the members of the Godhead throughout eternity lacked fullness of expression. This need had to be satisfied through the creation of other creatures to which They could manifest the fullness of Their love. But the real problem with this solution is that God's love is never directed toward itself; divine love always seeks the benefit or good of the other. If in creating God was satisfying a personal need, then creation was an expression of selfishness, not of love. Obviously we are not suggesting that creation is to be detached from divine love. The question is how to relate the two in a constructive way.

**2. God Is Creator:** The first thing the Bible tells us about God is that He is the Creator (Gen. 1:1). This title is commonly understood as a divine function: Creation is seen as an expression of His power. And this is true. But by itself this suggests that God did something He had not done before, He *became* the Creator. The obvious question would be, who was He before creating? All of this is very speculative, I know. It is better to stay with the biblical witness. The Bible interprets the title "Creator" not simply as what God has done but as who He is (Jer. 10:12; Prov. 3:19; Rev. 4:11). Before He began to create, divine wisdom was with Him (Prov. 8:22-31). Therefore the divine capacity to create is inseparable from His divine attributes, from what God really is in Himself. Divine creativity is part of the essence of God.

**3. God's Creativity:** The One who imbued us with creativity when He created us in His image is creativity Himself. If I am right, then there has never been a time that creativity was absent from God. His role as Creator is firmly grounded in His creativity. Through it divine wisdom finds expression. It is indeed in the nature of God to create and to love. He created because it is part of His very being to express Himself in acts of creation, not because He had some particular need that had to be satisfied. Creation is meaningful and purposeful because it is part of God's nature to create as an expression of His freedom and of His creative, loving, and powerful nature.

Since divine creativity is an expression of love, what God creates is good (Gen. 1:31). This means that His creativity is embedded in His exclusive concern for the goodness and exclusive benefit of His creation. Creation does not add anything to God (Acts 17:25), but reveals to His intelligent creatures throughout the cosmos the glories of the divine character. ■



**Angel Manuel Rodríguez** was director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. He now lives in Texas, United States.

By MARK A. FINLEY

# Facing Our Fears



**G**reetings from Ireland. I am typing this *Adventist World* Bible lesson from the beautiful city of Dublin. Last evening, during the question-and-answer period at our evangelistic meeting, someone asked, “Pastor, although I am a Christian, I am desperately afraid when I think about the coming of Jesus. I really do not understand why. Can you please help me?”

There may be a few reasons individuals might be fearful when they think about the return of our Lord. They may feel that although they are Christians, they are unprepared for the coming of Jesus. They may feel too spiritually weak to pass through the coming crisis to which this world is headed. They are possibly concerned about some specific sin in their lives. The fundamental question is: How can I look forward to the coming of Jesus with joy and confidence? This month’s lesson will provide some answers.

**1** **What counsel did Jesus give to the church at Smyrna when it faced its time of trouble and violent persecution? What promise did our Lord give them? Read Revelation 2:10.**

Historically the church at Smyrna was the second of the seven churches of Revelation. The believers in this church experienced terrible persecution from the pagan Roman emperor Diocletian, which lasted for 10 years, from A.D. 303 to 313. Jesus promised His people that it would not go on forever. As they looked forward in faith beyond their time of trial to an eternal “crown of life,” fear would give way to hope. Looking beyond what is to what will be encourages our hearts.

**2** **Although we are all fearful at times, how can we be free from the crippling fear that dominates our lives? Read 1 John 4:18, 19 for the hopeful answer.**

Experiencing God’s love personally delivers us from the devastating fear that sometimes controls our lives. Believing

God loves us and wants only our best makes all the difference. When we focus on our inadequacies and weaknesses, our hearts will be filled with fear. But when our focus is on Jesus and His love, our hearts will be filled with hope.

**3** **Why will some people be fearful when they consider the coming of Jesus? What is the alternative? Notice the contrast in these two texts: Luke 21:25-28 and Hebrews 12:1, 2.**

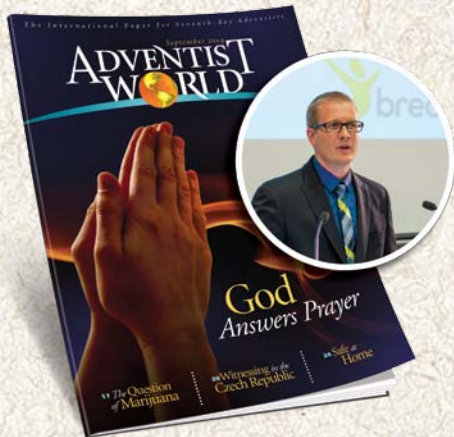
**4** **What is Christ’s message of encouragement to each person who experiences fear in the light of Christ’s return? Read Isaiah 35:3, 4.**

The reason we need not be filled with fear regarding Christ’s return is that He is coming to save us. The great longing of Jesus’ heart is to take us home so we can live with Him forever (John 14:1-3).

**5** **What alternative to worry and fear does Jesus give us? Read Matthew 6:33, 34 carefully and notice two things: First, what our Lord counsels us to do; and second, what Christ counsels us not to do.**

**6** **Is there a healthy fear? Read the following texts and identify three things that a healthy “fear” accomplishes: Psalm 19:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Revelation 14:7.**

To “fear God” is to take God seriously, to respect and honor Him. Fearing or respecting God is the beginning of all wisdom; it gives direction in our lives. This deep respect for God leads us to honor Him by taking His commands seriously and glorifying Him in our lives. Focusing our minds upon eternal realities, looking to Jesus, and resting in His love enables us to overcome crippling fear and rejoice in His grace. ■



“God still uses those of us who feel a burning desire in our hearts to be **instruments** of God, to carry the message to others who do not know it.”

—MARCELO SAPIA, Misiones, Argentina

# Letters

## Smoking Sections

I am writing in response to Andrew McChesney’s news article “Adventist Church Launches Breathe-Free 2, a New Stop-Smoking Program” (September 2014). In the article Daniel Handysides states that it is his “goal that every one of our churches will reach a point where they will have smoking sections outside the church.” He goes on to say that this is to ensure that smokers feel comfortable coming to church as a smoker.

I was shocked to read this, but I thought I would ask my sister, who has never been an Adventist, for her opinion, as she regularly goes to church with me when she visits.

My sister describes herself as a “full-on nicotine addict,” and this is her opinion on the matter: “It’s [the Adventist Church] all about mind/body/spirit con-

nection. I can’t believe that they would even contemplate it. I would never smoke or drink alcohol at a church function. They don’t need to go to that level to entice people into the church.”

For the record, my sister feels very comfortable in the church, and the members have always been absolutely lovely to her, very supportive, and they pray regularly for her. We don’t need a nonsmoking area in our churches. We need to just love and support the smokers that visit.

ANYA MCLARTY  
Mildura, Victoria, Australia

*Thanks for your letter! Later in the article Handysides explains that he is “talking more about an attitude shift in which we allow smokers to come into church facilities without judgment.” It sounds as though your sister has been blessed by a congregation fitting that description. —Editors.*

## More to the Story

A story about Dr. Riley Russell is featured in the September 2014 *Adventist World* (see “106 Years Ago”). He was the first Adventist missionary to Korea.



His mother and my grandfather were brother and sister. Russell grew up near the farm where my mother grew up.

After Russell returned from Korea, he practiced medicine in the United States. He brought my mother west to help take care of his own children. My parents met at camp meeting and were married by Russell. Twenty-seven years later he married my husband and me in the same little church.

He was in his 80s by that time, and we were the last of the many couples he married. While waiting to enter the church, Russell told my husband about a couple he had married in his car as he was taking them to the hospital to deliver their baby. He always had a story to tell of his adventures.

# Prayer & PRAISE

I know God is in the field of working wonders. My 3-month-old granddaughter cannot see, and doctors say there’s nothing they can do. Please pray!

SIMONE, Jamaica

Please pray for the Ebola situation, and for our church in the countries affected.

REMSEE, Liberia

Please pray for the Holy Spirit to work in my life. Pray for my family as well.

LEONARDO, Brazil

Pray for my family; we need the Spirit of God to control us.

MWAMBA, Malawi

Please pray for my brother who has diabetes. He is very depressed and needs physical healing too.

SHEILA, United States

Russell had a big booming voice, and every time he saw me at the hospital where I was taking nurse's training, he would say, "There's one of my babes!" I wanted to crawl under the carpet. He called the children he delivered his babes.

Russell also brought my Aunt Nada west to go to school. She became a registered nurse and was inspiration for me to also become an R.N.

An interesting book written about him is called *It Came in Handy*, by Stella Parker Peterson. Russell would be pleased to know my granddaughter is now teaching school in Korea.

Laura Ann Matthews  
Independence, Oregon,  
United States

### **A Traffic Jam and The Great Controversy**

Thank you, Waldburga Müller, for sharing your experience in the article "A Traffic Jam and *The Great Controversy*" (May 2014). God used you as a tool to reach people with the book *The Great Controversy*.

Through *Adventist World* God still uses people like me, those of us who feel a burning desire in our hearts to be instruments of God, to carry the message to others who do not know it.

Thank you very much!  
Marcelo Sapia  
Misiones, Argentina

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

I had been successful in literature ministry since 2008, but for the past two years I've experienced a serious decline in sales. I am not able to provide for my children as a single parent. Please pray for me. Also pray for our church members who are ill.

Boitumelo, South Africa

Please pray for my family to come back to Jesus. Also, please pray for my daughter who has ALS.

Sara, United States

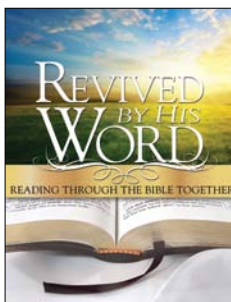
**The Place of Prayer:** Send prayer requests and praise (thanks for answered prayer) to [prayer@adventistworld.org](mailto:prayer@adventistworld.org). Keep entries short and concise, 50-words or less. Items will be edited for space and clarity. Not all submissions will be printed. Please include your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

# *It's All About* Christ

Christians have been commemorating Christ's birth for nearly 1,700 years. The following traditions have been part of that celebration:

- Bolivians celebrate the Mass of the Rooster on Christmas Eve, symbolizing the tradition that a rooster was the first to announce the birth of Jesus.
- Spiders are common Christmas decorations in Poland because of the legend that a spider wove a blanket for Baby Jesus.
- Santa Claus is based on a real person, Nikolas of Myra, born in Patara (modern-day Turkey) in the fourth century.
- Some say the first person to decorate a tree in honor of Christ's birth was Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, who was moved by the beauty of stars shining between the branches of a fir tree.
- Apples are the earliest known Christmas tree decorations. Medieval actors used apples in "Paradise plays," depicting Adam and Eve's creation and fall.

Source: [facts.randomhistory.com/Christmas-facts.html](http://facts.randomhistory.com/Christmas-facts.html)



## Revived *by* His Word

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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](http://RevivedbyHisWord.org), or sign up to receive the daily Bible chapter by e-mail. To join this initiative, start here:

**JANUARY 1, 2015** • Luke 17



# 99 Years Ago

William Ambrose Spicer was born in Freeborn, Minnesota, on December 19, 1865, to parents who were Seventh Day Baptists. After becoming a Seventh-day Adventist, he worked at the Battle Creek Sanitarium as a messenger boy. He later worked as a secretary to the sanitarium's medical superintendent, John Harvey Kellogg.

In his early 20s Spicer went to England with Stephen Nelson Haskell, and served for a time on the editorial staff of *The Present Truth*. In 1893 he helped establish Solusi Mission in Matabeleland on 4,900 hectares (12,000 acres) obtained from Cecil Rhodes, then prime minister of Cape Colony.

In 1898 Spicer went to India. A year later he was named editor of the *Oriental Watchman*, and for a time was the only ordained Adventist minister in India. Spicer Adventist University is named in his honor.

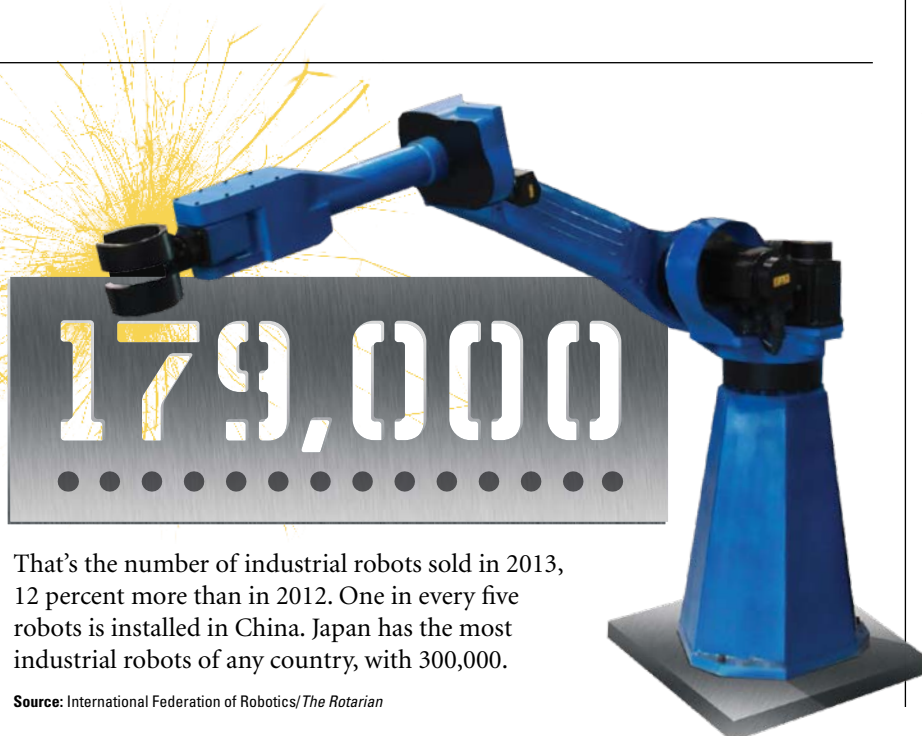
Spicer served as secretary of the General Conference during the presidency of Arthur Grosvenor Daniells (1903-1922). Daniells served as General Conference secretary for the first four years that Spicer was General Conference president (1922-1930). Spicer wrote several books and inspired confidence among Adventists by his simple habits and remarkable mission reports.



## More Sunshine, More Sleep

A recent study finds that people who work in offices with no direct sunlight sleep an average of 47 minutes less than those who work in offices with windows. Exposure to natural light may help to synchronize our circadian clocks, enhancing the production of the sleep hormone melatonin. Counteract the cave effect by spending a half hour outdoors on your lunch break.

Source: Northwestern University/*Men's Health*



That's the number of industrial robots sold in 2013, 12 percent more than in 2012. One in every five robots is installed in China. Japan has the most industrial robots of any country, with 300,000.

Source: International Federation of Robotics/*The Rotarian*

## Just a Thought

Faith believes the incredible,  
Sees the invisible,  
Receives the impossible.

—MARCELA RODRÍGUEZ,  
Mendoza, Argentina

*“Behold, I come quickly...”*

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

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# Where in the World Is This?



**ANSWER:** Mzuzu, Malawi, where Pathfinders visit the Rafiki Girls Secondary School to share Adventist literature with the students.



## 3 MORE TO GO

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria are the only countries in the world in which polio still exists. Warfare and ethnic and religious intolerance seem to be the greatest obstacles to complete eradication.

Source: *The Rotarian*

# Let's give them the KEYS!

## Imagine young Seventh-day Adventists

**turning** the world upside down for Jesus

**planning** mission (at least 75 percent of regional GC offering planning committees will be between ages 5 and 25!).

**choosing, owning and implementing** life-changing outreach projects

Your General Conference Session 2015 Offering can fund thousands of youth-driven mission projects around the globe.

**Creativity. Energy. Vision.**



Empowering  
Young Adventists  
for Mission

### OFFERING DATES\*

**December 13, 2014**

**April 11, 2015**

**July 4, 2015**

(collected only at General  
Conference session in San Antonio)

**July 11, 2015**

\*Please check your local  
offering schedule