

January 2015

ADVENTIST WORLD



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Unearthing the Future

Most controversies are, at the heart, really about the future.

This will seem strange to those who have spent their careers arguing about the facts and meaning of the past.

What were the economic causes of the violent French Revolution of the late eighteenth century? How did the cotton trade in the United States contribute to the moral disaster of African American slavery in the era of early Adventism? What political and social forces generated the arms race that found its horrible spark in Sarajevo in 1914?

At first glance, these all seem arguments—or at least discussions—of the past, as if the past were a single, fully describable sequence of linear events. Historians and even secondary students become wedded to one theory or another. They know, however, that they are really arguing the validity of their perspective for interpreting future events, providing meaning to situations that haven't yet unfolded.

Even the married couple who argue about whether the toothpaste tube should be squeezed deliberately from the bottom or casually from the middle are, in fact, negotiating the power equation between them for the future. Will one rule and the other submit? Will they find, in grace, the harmony for which the Lord created man and woman?

So it is that the controversies that lie beneath this month's cover story by associate editor and Old Testament scholar Gerald Klingbeil aren't simply arguments about what the fragments of ancient Lachish mean for what some unfortunately perceive as the dusty science of ancient Near East archaeology. They are, in fact, controversies about the future of faith, especially faith in the historical record available in the Bible. If, as archaeological events like the Lachish dig increasingly reveal, we have in Scripture a trustworthy, God-protected account of the painful past, then we may justly place our full weight on His promises to care for His remnant people in the soul-shaking times that Scripture tells us lie just ahead.

Read this edition of the *Adventist World* with a prayer for your own future:

"Lord, keep me trusting

You, and committed to Your Word."

Bill Kuntz

WORLD REPORT

Adventist Pastor and Elder Killed in Two Days

Gunmen slay the men in Guatemala and the Philippines.



FALLEN PASTOR: Hundreds of church members attending the funeral of slain pastor Noe Gonzalez in Jalapa, Guatemala.

GUATEMALA UNION

■ A pastor and an elder were killed in armed ambushes in Guatemala and the Philippines in the space of two days, highlighting the danger that some church workers face in restive regions of the world.

Masked assailants attacked pastor Noe Gonzalez, 54, and his wife as they rode home on a motorcycle following evangelistic meetings that he had led in the town of Hierbabuena in east Guatemala on October 23.

Gonzalez was shot four times and his wife, Oralia, was struck on the head and left for dead. Oralia was treated at a hospital and released hours later.

A day earlier, masked gunmen opened fire on six people preparing to board a vehicle in a village in the Philippine province of Zamboanga del Norte, killing church elder Ramil Ansong, 29, and his 50-year-old father, José.

The other four people in the group, including the Ansong's mother, escaped uninjured, according to local media reports.

Deadly attacks on Adventist pastors are rare but not unheard-of. "We are saddened by violent attacks on Adventist pastors," said Derek Morris, associate secretary of the Adventist world church's Ministerial Association, which trains and supports pastors. "In such difficult times we can find encouragement in the words of Jesus in

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WORLD REPORT



GUATEMALA UNION

STANDING FOR GOD: Noe Gonzalez standing on mountainous region in east Guatemala where he ministered for more than 10 years.

Matthew 5:10: ‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’”

Multiple media in the Philippines reported that Ansong was an Adventist pastor, but the Adventist Church’s Southern Asia-Pacific Division, which includes the Philippines, later clarified that he had served as an elder at his church.

In Guatemala, Gonzalez died amid an increase in violence that has worried local church leaders.

“We want you to live each day in the presence of Jesus so that you can be prepared for whatever incidents you may face each day,” Guenther Garcia, president of the Adventist Church in Guatemala, said in a statement to his country’s 117 pastors. “Do not be discouraged by the wickedness, injustice, and depravity that you are called to face as you proclaim the good news of salvation.”

Gonzalez, survived by his wife and four adult children, was the fourth Adventist pastor to be killed in Guatemala in the past 33 years.

— *Andrew McChesney, news editor, Adventist World*

New Zealand: Tribunal Upholds Sabbath

■ A New Zealand company has been ordered to pay lost wages to a Seventh-day Adventist who was fired for refusing to work on Sabbath.

Mark Meulenbroek was dismissed from his position at Vision Antenna in the city of Invercargill, in September 2012 after he declined to work on Saturdays. Meulenbroek, who had worked at Vision Antenna since 2004, asked for Sabbaths off after rejoining the Adventist Church, which he had left at age 16.

The Human Rights Review Tribunal, part of New Zealand’s Justice Ministry, found that Meulenbroek “was terminated for reason of his reli-

gious beliefs,” and awarded him 40,000 New Zealand dollars (US\$31,025) for lost wages, legal expenses, and emotional distress.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Zealand welcomed the tribunal’s ruling in late October.

This “represents a victory for all people who seek to actively live out their faith as a loyal employee,” said Damien Rice, president of the South New Zealand Conference.

— *Linden Chuang, South Pacific Adventist Record*

Curaçao: Big Graduation

■ Nearly 200,000 Adventist members in Central America and the Caribbean have been awarded certificates for undergoing hours of training in such areas as how to give Bible studies, how to conduct an evangelistic series, or how to share Jesus with children.

The yearlong initiative, organized by the church’s Inter-American Divi-



MAGDA SALINAS / IAD

FINISHED THE COURSE: A church member smiling after receiving a health education certificate from the Inter-American Division’s Health Ministries department in Willemstad, Curaçao.

sion under the banner “Year of Non-formal Education,” aims to maintain an rapid increase in church membership in the region, one of the fastest growing in the world.

“The preparation you have received will help you understand the expectations of the Lord, for He is ready for you to give everything of yourself,” division president Israel Leito told 500 graduates who attended an autumn ceremony in Willemstad, Curaçao.

Myriam Guerrero, 60, was among the 500 dressed in academic regalia to receive a nonformal education certificate. She completed two 40-hour courses on how to prepare an evangelistic campaign and how to lead a Sabbath school class. “This type of event motivates our church members to be more interested in serving the church,” she said.

—*Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division*

China: Reflections

■ China may not be identified in the Bible as a missionary destination, as some Adventists once believed, but the faith is flourishing there today in a fractured community that is largely homegrown and unknown to the outside world.

That is what a group of about 100 Adventist leaders and scholars heard at a first-of-its-kind conference in Hong Kong this autumn as they sought to gain a better understanding of the Chinese church, which is believed to have 500,000 members.

“The gospel commission is to go into all the world, which includes China,” said Bob Folkenberg, Jr., president of the Chinese Union Mission.

Edward Allen, a professor of religion at Union College, noted that the first serious article about China and



ON THE AIR: South American Division president Erton Köhler symbolically pressing the button of a remote control to launch Nuevo Tiempo TV on a cable channel in Lima, Peru, on Sabbath, November 1.

missions was written in 1874 by George W. Amadon, a printer at the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Amadon believed that the “land of Sinim” referenced in Isaiah 49:12 in the King James Version pointed to China, a notion reputed by biblical scholars today.

Regardless, Allen said, Adventists “were beginning to think outside of their box” of sharing the gospel only within the U.S.

—*Michael W. Campbell, AIIAS*

Peru: Adventist TV Grows

■ Raising a remote control over his head, the president of the South American Division kicked off the expansion of Adventist-operated Nuevo Tiempo television in Peru at a Lima stadium packed with 40,000 church members.

The president, Erton Köhler, symbolically pressed the button on a remote control to inaugurate the launch of Nuevo Tiempo on local cable channel 571 during a worship service at Monumental Stadium in Peru’s capital on November 1, 2014.

The launch marks the local expansion of the Brazil-based channel, which first started broadcasting over the open airwaves in this city of nearly 10 million people in December 2013, and whose programming is

already reaping results. A married couple was baptized in late October 2014 after being convicted that God wanted them to keep the Sabbath.

“The influence of the Adventist Church in Peru is increasing with the addition of this channel on cable television, and the growth of the Peruvian church is a source of inspiration for Adventists throughout South America,” Köhler said.

—*Felipe Lemos and Rosmery Sanchez, South American Division*

Bahamas: Health Center

■ Adventist Church leadership has been seeking to open community health centers around the world, but it’s not every day that a prime minister makes a personal appeal for a center in his country.

The prime minister of the Bahamas, Perry G. Christie, has asked the Adventist Church to open a health and wellness center in his Caribbean island nation after hearing a report on Adventist centers worldwide.

“You have an extraordinary history of commitment to best health practice. In this report, it speaks to the success of wellness programs that you have, but it also says we must move to create in the Bahamas a wellness center,” Christie told local church leaders

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WORLD REPORT



PREMIER PRESENTATION: Bahamian Prime Minister Perry G. Christie speaking at the quadrennial business meeting of the South Bahamas Conference at the Hillview Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nassau on November 2, 2014.

ATCU

in the Bahamian capital, Nassau.

Christie, speaking at a quadrennial business meeting of the church's South Bahamas Conference, pledged his government's support of an Adventist wellness center.

Leonard Johnson, president of the church's Atlantic Caribbean Union, said the church was considering the establishment of its own health outreach center.

—Atlantic Caribbean Union communication staff

Romania: New \$1M Clinic

■ The first Adventist-owned medical center has opened in Romania, marking a key expansion of the church's health-care system in underrepresented Europe and the fulfillment of a dream by church members who once rented a hall in the facility to worship on Sabbaths.

The 800,000 euro (\$1 million) Premed medical center Premed, located in a refurbished building recently acquired by the Adventist Church, is the first facility in the country's capi-

tal, Bucharest, to offer a broad range of health-care services from general medicine healthy cooking lessons.

Marius Munteanu, president of the church in Romania, likened the medical center's potential to Jesus' parable of the tiny mustard seed that grew into a large tree.

"From its earliest days, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has served the needs of the soul as well as the needs of the body," Munteanu said at the grand opening this fall.

In 2009, Adventist members rented a hall in the building for Sabbath services and began to dream and pray that the Seventh-day Adventist Church could own the building and operate a medical center there, said Adrian Bocaneanu, initiator of the project. "This is how everything started: with prayers and high hopes," he said.

—A. Horja and G. Isvan, *EUCNews*

India: Marking 100 Years

■ Church members in the Indian state of Kerala celebrated the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the

Adventist message in the arms of an Adventist bookseller.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, emphasized in a speech to 4,000 people at convention center in Kerala's capital, Thiruvananthapuram, in late October that Adventists wish to serve God by responding to needs of society.

John Rathinaraj, president of the church's Southern Asia Division, told how Adventism entered the region when a bookseller named Suvshesha Muthu visited from the present-day neighboring state of Tamil Nadu. Muthu sold several books, including *Present Truth, Who Changed the Sabbath?* and *Steps to Christ*, to a Salvation Army captain named M. Abel in October 1914.

Abel grew convinced that the seventh day was the Sabbath and, after several months of Bible study, was baptized. By 1915 he had left the Salvation Army and was preaching about the Sabbath and Jesus' soon return.

Today the church has 37,000 members, 27 schools, and a hospital with a nursing school in the region.

—Pothen Kurian, *Southern Asia Division*



SUD

ALL DRESSED UP: Adventist Church leader Ted N. C. Wilson, wearing traditional Indian garb, speaking at an anniversary gathering in Kerala's capital, Thiruvananthapuram.

By ANDREW MC CHESNEY, news editor, Adventist World

A New Bible Reading Plan for 2015

The new blog, Believe His Prophets, will include Bible chapters and passages from Ellen G. White.

Revived by His Word, an online blog that tens of thousands of Adventists are using daily to read though the Bible, will not end when it reaches the book of Revelation in July.

Instead, the blog will relaunch under a new name, Believe His Prophets, and expand to include the writings of church cofounder Ellen G. White. People who follow the five-year study plan covering the 66 books of the Bible will also read though seven of White's most popular books: *Steps to Christ*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, and the five-volume Conflict of the Ages series.

"It's going to be a wonderful blessing," said Derek Morris, editor of *Ministry* magazine and an organizer of the daily Bible reading plans.

Morris, who announced the new plan this autumn during the Annual Council, a major yearly church business meeting, said e-mailed requests were piling up for Revived by His Word to continue long before the blog reached the New Testament in November.

"We have people saying, 'Don't stop. Maybe we could read it through again and read some Spirit of Proph-

ecy,'" Morris said. "So I believe that God is leading ahead, and we are following His leading."

Revived by His Word, which was launched in 2012, couples each of the 1,189 chapters of the Bible with a reflective blog entry written by an Adventist Church leader or layperson. About 150 bloggers are expected to have contributed by the time the Bible reading wraps up at the General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas, in July.

Some blog entries from Revived by His Word will be republished under the new reading plan in a nod to readers who might have missed them the first time around. But White will become the primary "blogger" on days when her writings contain a nugget on the Bible chapter being read. In addition to the daily Bible chapter and blog entry, people will read one chapter a week from one of White's books.

"Our ultimate goal is to inspire as many Seventh-day Adventists as possible to have a daily Bible reading process, to read through the Conflict series, *Steps to Christ*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*," said evangelist and



NEW BIBLE STUDY: A screenshot of the homepage for Believe His Prophets, a Web site that will host a new daily Bible reading from July 2015.

project co-organizer Mark Finley.

Believe His Prophets got its name from 2 Chronicles 20:20: "Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

The current reading plan, Revived by His Word, also encourages Adventists to read the Bible daily, and it was started with an aim of creating a positive online community, Finley said. Readers can comment after each daily blog entry.

"You can read some blogs and . . . some of them are quite negative," Finley said. "But when you go on the Revived by His Word blog, positive, uplifting Adventists from all around the world are encouraging each other: somebody in Africa encouraging somebody in South America encouraging somebody in Europe. So there is this fraternity of family. We felt that this could not be just let go." ■

As the new year begins, we sometimes think about making New Year's resolutions. Resolutions have been around a long time. Thousands of years ago a resolution rang out from the Israelites as they trembled at the foot of Mount Sinai: "All that the Lord has said, we will do!" (see Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7). Unfortunately, like many resolutions, it didn't last long.

On the other hand, many people have found that focusing on mission, rather than on resolutions, can bring lasting, eternal results.

A Mission-driven Life

Jesus is our best example of a mission-driven life. By age 12 He had a clear understanding of His mission. When returning to Nazareth as an adult, He plainly articulated His mission to those of His hometown. While in the synagogue, Jesus was handed the scroll of Isaiah. He turned to the place where the Messiah's mission is described, beginning with the words "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" (see Isa. 61:1, 2). As Jesus explained this passage (a prophecy about Himself), "He spoke of the Messiah as a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth."¹ The hearts of the hearers were moved, and "they responded with fervent amens and praises to the Lord."²

The rejoicing, however, ended abruptly when Jesus announced, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). As the meaning of Christ's words began to sink in, the people of Nazareth were deeply offended. "They, Israelites, children of Abraham, had been represented as in bondage. They had been addressed as prisoners to be delivered from the power of evil; as in darkness, and needing the light of truth. Their pride was offended, and their fears were roused."³ Because their idea of the Messiah's mis-



KREIGH COLLINS/REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION

Passing the Torch of Truth

By TED N. C. WILSON

sion and the truth revealed by Jesus didn't agree, they tried to kill Him.

Mission-focused

Throughout His earthly life Christ's mission to seek and save the lost was the focus of everything He did. When His mission here was accomplished, His parting words to the disciples became known as the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20). Following Pentecost, Christ's early followers carried out the Great Commission and turned the world upside down! Unfortunately, it didn't take long for Satan to be about *his* mission, seeking to confuse, discourage, neutralize, and destroy the early Christian church. By the middle of the second century A.D. a false form of Christianity was in place, which no longer taught or observed the plain

truths of Christ. God's faithful followers, as predicted in Revelation 12:6, had to flee "into the wilderness" for 1,260 years. During those dark ages many were martyred for their faith as they stood firmly for Bible truth.

Mission of the Reformation

Toward the end of that time, Reformers such as Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Zwingli, Berquin, Tynedale, and others began drawing attention to biblical truths that had been distorted or hidden over the centuries. Christ's true teachings began to emerge as God's Word was brought to people in their own languages.

People of large and of little public prominence were part of God's great reforming movement that swept Christianity, returning it to God's

original purpose for His church based on righteousness by faith—God's package plan of grace that justifies us, sanctifies us through daily growth through the Holy Spirit, and ultimately will glorify us—all through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

A Prophetic Mission

Out of that great Protestant Reformation movement grew the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a prophetic mission based on Daniel 8:14, Revelation 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 19:10, and other dynamic texts. That mission continued the reformation by turning people back to the true worship of God by focusing on Christ and His truth found in the Bible and the Bible alone. Seventh-day Adventists have long understood that their very character and unique mission springs from the prophecies found in the books of Daniel and Revelation, specifically the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. A correct theological understanding of these prophecies will drive a correct approach to mission. Seventh-day Adventist theology and mission are inseparable—our Christ-centered mission is driven by our Christ-centered message.

Are Adventists Unique?

To deny the special message that God has given to us and claim that we aren't so different from other Christians is one of the fastest and most effective ways to neutralize the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Across the world today, 2.18 billion people identify themselves as Christian. Additionally, approximately 41,000 Christian denominations and organizations have been identified worldwide.⁴

Of course, these Christians of various denominations love Jesus and appreciate His sacrifice on the cross, as do Seventh-day Adventists. So what makes us different? Many people sincerely ask that question, and we should be prepared to answer them.

A Mission of Truth

Most first-generation Seventh-day Adventists will tell you that they chose to become Adventists because they “found the truth.” Jesus Himself knows the longings of the human heart, and much of His earthly mission involved healing and teaching. Another word for “teaching” is “doctrine,” and at the heart of every one of our 28 fundamental beliefs or doctrines is Jesus Christ. The Jews wondered how it was that Jesus was so knowledgeable, and He “answered them . . . , ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority’” (John 7:16, 17). In his letter to Timothy, Paul instructs the young minister to be “nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed,” and to “give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” He then admonishes Timothy to “take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:6, 13, 16).

Our God-given Mission

So what is our mission as Seventh-day Adventists? It is to “make disciples of all people, communicating the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and unite with His remnant church, discipling them to serve Him as Lord, and preparing them for His soon return.”⁵ “We pursue this mission under the guidance and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit through preaching, teaching, healing, and discipling.”⁶

Is this movement destined to become simply one of many religious denominations? The answer is a resounding “No!” This remnant church was called and formed by God

at a specific time in earth's history to proclaim the last warning message to the world. Some may say that in today's world of political sensitivities the messages of Revelation 14 are not appropriate to bring to the forefront of our mission. But the three angels' messages constitute the final appeal of God to this world to help everyone prepare to meet Jesus.

“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. . . . They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”⁷

Every Seventh-day Adventist—regardless of age, gender, race, or nationality—is called to share the truth as it is in Jesus with a dying world. The time has come when all must work as one. Everyone has a part to play in proclaiming God's final message. We will talk more about this in the future. As the theme of our upcoming 2015 General Conference session reminds us: “Arise! Shine! Jesus is coming!” This is your mission and mine! ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 237.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ “General Statistics and Facts of Christianity,” from: Christianity.about.com.

⁵ From the “Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” voted by the Executive Committee at the Annual Council session in Silver Spring, Maryland, on October 13, 2009. For the complete statement, visit adventist.org and search for “mission statement.”

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.



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

I started drinking caffeine about 20 years ago. It began “innocently” enough. Sure, I knew what Ellen White had written about it, but still . . . I did it rarely: for a long drive, after a hard night, or to compensate for jet lag. I did it once every two months, or maybe it was once a month . . . ? I don’t remember—only that it wasn’t much.

At least at first. Then it was once a week. A treat. To get a burst of energy. “Gourmet” coffee shops were taking off; they were part of the culture. *Who didn’t go to them?* A number of us, Adventists all, would trudge off together. We could talk, chill out, and get caffeinated, which definitely gave us a boost to go back to work.

I’m a pastor, ordained even. Many who drank with me were too. At times I would think, *I shouldn’t be doing this*, but I didn’t really want to stop. I didn’t see a real need to. After all, it was just a latte, a *soy* latte even.

Before I knew it I was drinking coffee every day. A cup in the morning. Maybe something in the afternoon, just to keep me buzzed during the day. It would help me a lot in the pulpit as well. This went on for years. I didn’t really think much about it anymore; drinking coffee was just what a lot of people did. After all, how bad could it be when so many Adventists were doing it?

I read medical reports about coffee, and though some did warn against excessive use, most made coffee sound pretty benign; some even touted the apparent health benefits: less chance of Alzheimer’s, that kind of thing. Just what I loved to hear. In cases in which laboratory rats given caffeine would get some horrific disease, I assuaged myself by thinking I’d have to imbibe three gallons intravenously per day to equal, proportionally, what they gave to those wired-out rodents.

I Can Quit When I Want

More years went by. I would tell myself, *You can quit whenever you want*. I just didn’t want to. I was told of the massive headaches you’d get, and how for a few days you’d feel terrible. I didn’t want to put myself through it. Why bother? It was, after all, just coffee.

After about 20 years, though, I realized I was drinking it much more than before. I needed a cup just to feel normal. I think that’s called “tolerance,” the idea that your body, getting so used to the drug, needs more and more each time to give you the effect it had before. I remember drinking a cup of coffee in the early days and getting utterly euphoric. I can’t remember the last time it did that to me. All coffee did now was help keep me awake, give me some energy, at least for a while.

One effect I did notice fairly early on was how it impacted my sleep. I used to be able to put my head down, hit the pillow, and in 10 minutes I would be out and not move until seven hours later. I hadn’t had a night’s sleep like that in 18 years.

The Nightmare Begins

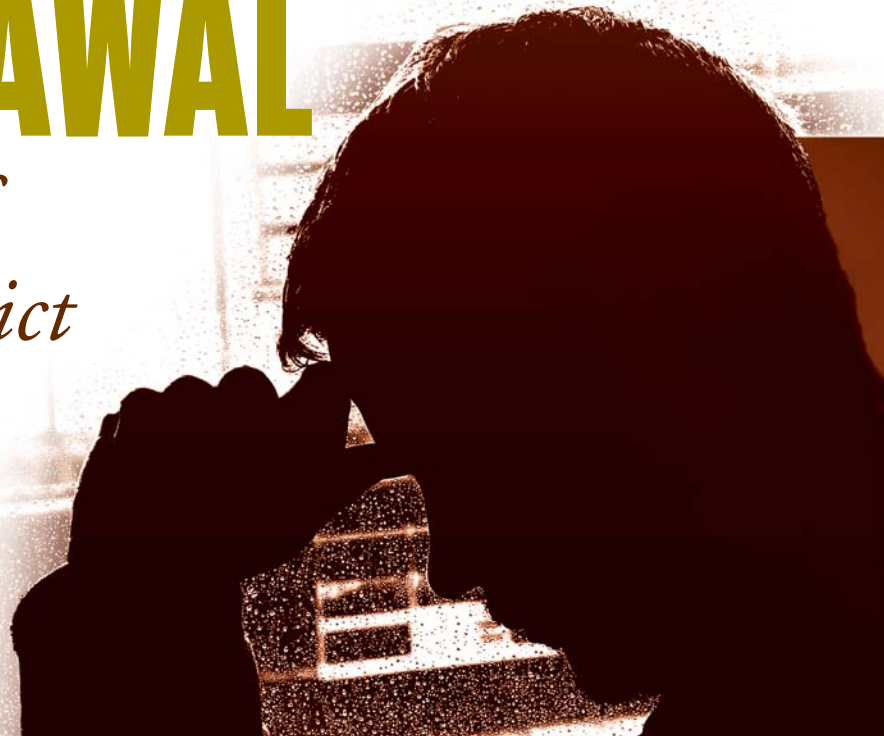
Then I decided to quit. *Twenty years is enough*, I thought. I wasn’t getting any younger. I was having some health issues; whether they were linked to the coffee or not, I didn’t know. I just could tell that I had been drinking too much coffee for too long. It was time. More than once I had wished I hadn’t started, but the recriminations weren’t enough to get me to seriously think about stopping. Again, I would ask, *What’s the big deal? It’s only coffee!*

Then, on a whim, on the spur of a moment, I said, “That’s it.” I was going to have some time off, wasn’t going to have my

WITHDRAWAL

Confessions of a caffeine addict

By WILLIAM HAYDEN



usual heavy load for about two weeks, and thought this would be the perfect time. I braced myself for the upcoming headaches and a few days of feeling a bit groggy, that's all.

Little did I know . . .

Not long after I stopped I started to feel a bit sick to my stomach. Because I was having a stomach issue already, I just assumed that's what it was. Eventually the stomach issue just got worse. I was nauseated, achy, exhausted; all things that I attributed to my ailment.

After about two days a headache came. *Ah*, I thought, *here it is. Just what I need while dealing with my stomach.* But I was determined to quit. Fortunately the headache soon went away. Though my stomach was hurting me, I didn't feel any of the expected withdrawal symptoms. *Man, this is easy. I don't even miss it.* By that time I was feeling so ill that nothing, not even coffee, appealed to me.

After about four days I was miserable. I had no appetite and was very nauseated. Plus, I couldn't sleep. I must have had two nights in a row when I didn't sleep a wink.

Then the real nightmare began. I was overwhelmed with anxiety. I had never had panic attacks before; now one after another would roll over me. I would think about a problem, any problem, and my chest would tighten, and I'd let out a deep sigh. Again and again waves of panic swept into me, where they firmly lodged in my head and chest. I had no idea what was happening. For almost 36 hours I'd have moments when I feared I was losing my mind. *What is going on?* I knew that unless something gave quickly, I was either going to kill myself or get myself committed.

The biggest stressor was not knowing what was happening. Why was I so sick? Why was I feeling this incredible anxiety? This couldn't be the caffeine withdrawal, could it? That had turned out to be a three-hour headache, no more.

I got out of bed, got online, and much to my amazement, after looking up "caffeine withdrawal symptoms," saw that this was exactly what I was going through. A headache is the most common symptom, but it's not the only one, and not everyone

gets it. I read about severe withdrawals and realized that was what was happening to me. What did I think—putting a drug for the past 18 years almost daily into my body, and I would quit cold turkey and get nothing but a little headache?

I am ashamed to say it, but I was going through an intense drug withdrawal. That was the horrid anguish my body and mind were experiencing.

I was relieved. At least now I knew what was happening. Looking back, I can thank the Lord that I didn't link my symptoms to caffeine withdrawal until I was through the worst, because had I known what was causing those symptoms, I would have gone back to drinking it, and with a vengeance. Once I realized what was happening, I was over the worst. And it was bad! Real bad.

Wicked Stuff

As of now, I've been off caffeine several months. I'm still not 100 percent myself, but every day gets better (thank the Lord!). I never knew what wicked stuff caffeine really was, not until this experience.

Learn from my mistake. If you haven't started drinking it—don't! Forget the fact that so many people are doing it. Many people drink alcohol; that doesn't make it right, or healthful for you. If you are doing it only a little—stop! The longer you drink it, the more likely you will drink more, and the harder it will be to quit. It's a drug, and like most drugs, it's addicting. Only coffee executives will deny the addictiveness of caffeine; everyone else knows better. If you are a heavy drinker—ease out of it. Wean yourself off (you can do cold turkey, but be prepared). Though everyone is different, and you might not have the symptoms I did, you might have worse. You might even want to get professional help.

It's not *just* coffee. It's caffeine, a powerfully addictive drug. God wants better for you. ■

William Hayden is a pseudonym.

A CLOSE CALL

By **BRUCE SOLMNER**

The popular and even the scientific media often tout the benefits of caffeine use. Some media have noted that the "whole world" seems to use caffeine to get up in the morning, to stay alert all day, and to work long into the night.

For many years, even as a professor and department director at an Adventist university, I was a part of this pattern. Then one evening

a few months ago, after a 16-hour day and lots of caffeine, my pulse dropped to 38 beats a minute and I ended up in an ambulance and in a cardiac emergency unit. After a series of tests, my cardiologist concluded that caffeine was the major cause of a series of premature ventricular contractions (PVCs), or extra abnormal heartbeats.

I immediately stopped caffeine use, and the PVCs have since disappeared.

Recently, though, I tried an experiment with drinking 12 ounces of a caffeinated beverage. Within 15 minutes the PVCs were back.

I have found better sleep, more stable alertness, and less aggressive emotions without caffeine. Perhaps the world might be better off knowing the risks of this apparently harmful stimulant.

Bruce Solmner is a pseudonym.

Farewell *to*

Fuzziness

By MYRON MADDEN



I used to think the world was fuzzy. I would spend hours staring at my hand, wondering why it looked like colored television static but felt smooth and solid. The omnipresent blurriness was one of life's great mysteries, but I never questioned it. It was a normal part of everyday life. The world was naturally blurry, just as it had always been and would continue to be until the day I died.

My first-grade report card changed all that. My grades were less than stellar, and my mother was making sure I knew just how disappointed she was by way of scolding.

"This is *so* unfair!" I pouted, crossing my little arms. "How do you expect me to pass the class when I can't even see the board?"

A look of confusion washed over my mother's face, and within minutes we were on our way to the doctor's office. After undergoing a series of tests, the doctor told me I was "as blind as a bat."

Blind? I remember thinking. *How is that possible? Doesn't everyone see the world the same way I do?* While I was pondering my views on life, the doctor slid a pair of glasses onto my face. I blinked a few times, then let out a loud gasp. In an instant my entire world changed forever.

"Whoa! It's so *shiny!*" I yelled as I burst through the door of our house. It felt as if I was seeing the world for the first time. Everything was crisp and clear. It was all exactly the same, yet somehow different. "Look at the sink! I didn't know it was so shiny! And—wow! Even the *garbage* is sparkling!"

In all my excitement I didn't notice my mother following behind, tears running down her cheeks. Her son had been "blind," but for the first time he could see.

Surrounded

"Elisha! Wake up!"

Elisha rolled over on his mat, vaguely aware of his servant's frantic whispers.

"Master! Please! Wake up!"

Elisha sat up and squinted at his servant. The man was drenched in sweat and trembling noticeably. "What's wrong?"

The servant grasped his master by the sleeve and helped him to his feet. Without a word he led Elisha outside so he could see for himself. Immediately Elisha saw the source of his servant's dread.

An army with horses and chariots surrounded the entire city. Elisha knew the army had come for him—and from Syria, no doubt. God had been giving him the battle plans of the king of Syria, and Elisha had been relaying them to the king of Israel. The enemy king must have discovered Elisha was causing the leak in information and sent his men to ensure that his secrets stayed secret.

Anyone could see that Elisha and his servant were trapped. There was no way out, and it was just a matter of time before the army attacked.

"Master, what should we do?"

"There's no reason to be afraid," Elisha smiled. "There are more of us than there are of them."

The servant gaped at his master, confused. They were only two men against hundreds. Had he counted wrong? Or had Elisha finally gone mad?

Elisha glanced at his servant's expression and chuckled. The man reminded him of himself when he was apprenticed to Elijah. Drawing closer to his servant, Elisha began to pray. "Father, please open his eyes so that he may see."

“*Sin has left our vision murky, and our view of God is blurred.*”

The servant opened his eyes and gasped. Another army had suddenly appeared, but this army was different. This new army rode on horses and chariots of fire, and it outnumbered the Syrian army by far.

The servant looked quickly from the left to the right, unable to believe his eyes. The angel army had been surrounding Elisha and himself the whole time. There had been no reason for fear. The servant breathed a sigh of relief. He had been blind, but for the first time, he could really see (see 2 Kings 6:8-17).

Spiritual Eyesight

Spiritual blindness and physical blindness are very much alike—you never realize just how bad your “eyesight” is until you can see.

While I was in college, I thought my spiritual eyesight was great. I understood an impressive amount of theology, was completely sure of my faith, and knew God was working in my life.

Everything changed after one of my professors challenged me to dig into the Bible. But he didn’t just want me to read it. He wanted me to study each chapter verse by verse, savoring each word as if it had dropped right out of the mouth of God.

I took on the task, thinking it to be nothing more than laborious, but then something extraordinary happened. The deeper I got into the Scriptures, and the more effort I put into truly understanding what I read, the closer I got to God. All of a sudden, reading the Bible wasn’t just another chore; it was a way for me to spend quality time with the Father. I quickly became more dependent on God in everyday life, and spent more time communicating with Him throughout the day. Then, after making God an integral part of my life, He opened my eyes.

I began to really see how God was working in my life. I saw how He was present during every decision, in every success, and through every heartbreak. Bible stories that had once been little more than inspirational words in a holy book came alive and provided real applications for my spiritual and personal life. My perception of grief, sorrow, joy, and love was altered because I could see His hand tug-

ging at the strings. Everything was exactly the same, yet somehow different.

Spiritual clarity is not about *knowing*; it’s about *seeing*. Sure, I knew that God was working in my life, but it meant nothing if I couldn’t actually see what He was doing.

Spiritual Glasses

We often attribute spiritual blindness to those who are unbelieving and unable to see God. But plenty of us are still blind. We hear about God’s love, yet we fail to see it—let alone feel it. We understand the concept of an omnipotent God and teach the concept to others, yet we haven’t met God for ourselves.

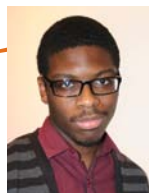
No matter how keen we think our spiritual eyesight is, we were all born blind. Sin has left our vision murky, and our view of God is blurred. While we will never regain full eyesight until the Master’s return, we can still enhance the failing vision we have now.

God is eager to open our eyes. He wants us to see the light shining in a dark world and longs for us to witness how He is working to transform the rocky path of life into a level road (Isa. 42:16). He is aching to reveal His plans for our lives and to give us a glimpse of His perfect character (Jer. 29:11-14).

All He asks in return for these spiritual glasses is that we earnestly seek Him (Deut. 4:29). In order to see God working in our lives, we must know what He looks like. By diligently searching the Scriptures, we can learn about the God we serve. Through His words we can obtain a crisper and clearer picture of who He is.

But we shouldn’t stop there. Yes, God promises to be there for us when we cry out in prayer, but He also wants to have conversations with us—conversations in which both parties speak (Ex. 33:11). It’s easy to ask for blessings and talk to God, but we are often less willing to wait and listen. Searching for God means meditating on His words, but it also includes taking the time to listen for the new ones He speaks to us each day (Jer. 33:3).

Don’t settle for fuzzy. God is waiting to open your eyes so you can see the world the way He originally intended for it to be seen. And once He has opened your eyes, like Elisha, you can open the eyes of others so that they too may see the full glory of the Most High. ■



Myron Madden was one of the 2014 summer interns at *Adventist World*.

My introduction to Ellen White (1827-1915) and her writings was certainly less than ideal when I was in my early teens I began attending church sporadically in Communist East Germany. While some people had strong objections to her prophetic ministry, others employed her writings to release tirades against the “sinners in the hands of an angry God.”¹ Maybe you can relate to my experience of getting to know her as an old woman who apparently enjoyed criticizing people with a wagging hand.

However, Ellen White herself felt uncomfortable transmitting messages of reproof that God had given her for specific people, because she thought these messages were too harsh.² When I began discovering her writings for myself, I saw that most of what she wrote does not belong in the category of rebuke and reproof but are aids for a better understanding of Scripture, growing closer to Jesus, making sense of the conflict between good and evil, living a healthy and fulfilled life in this world, and anticipating life on the new earth.

Even the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church* do not contain merely admonitions to specific people and churches with particular problems in distinct circumstances but also biographical material and helpful advice. However, even much of the rebuke in these volumes could be summarized as follows: Be more loving to your spouse, family, fellow believers, and neighbors.

Admittedly, we usually cannot stand reproof and rebuke. God’s prophets in biblical times frequently experienced persecution, even martyrdom (Luke 11:46-51; Acts 7:52; Rom.

Witness of God’s Love

By DENIS KAISER

11:3). Yet blaming His prophets for the messages misses the mark, as they only function as God’s instrument communicating messages that originate with God.

Nature and Purpose of Prophetic Ministry

When I became more acquainted with the stories of biblical prophets and the life and person of Ellen White, I began to appreciate them as individuals who were not free from mistakes but who wanted to submit themselves to the Holy Spirit’s guidance and sanctifying influence. I discovered that besides foretelling future events and thundering messages of warning, biblical prophets reminded God’s people of His mighty, miraculous, and glorious actions in history.

They also emphasized the need to remember God’s past sayings and

teachings, and pointed His people to the Word of God already known (cf. Isa. 8:20). Their recounting of victories and failures illustrates that spiritual victories can only grow out of a close and living connection to God. Their messages were to awaken trust and confidence in God’s guidance, to bring about a closer and more faithful relationship to God, and to point to Jesus Christ as the promised substitute and divine-human Messiah.

Reciprocal Love

Such appeals make sense only if the intended audience has some freedom of choice. Unless we were created with a free will, we would be mere robots, unable to love and experience satisfaction and fulfillment. Only freedom of choice and God’s prevenient and sanctifying grace make possible reciprocal love between Him and His people.

Scripture tells us that God is the ultimate source of love (1 John 4:7, 8). Biblical prophets frequently proclaimed God's steadfast love for His people (Isa. 54:10; 63:7; Jer. 31:3; Lam. 3:22; Dan. 9:4; Micah 7:20), and called His people to develop the same love for God—beyond sacrifices and offerings (Hosea 6:6; 10:12; 12:6; Micah 6:8; Zech. 7:9). Sometimes we forget that forced compliance is both contrary to God's character of love and will not produce love in us.

Because God loves us He tries everything legitimately possible to win us back and save us. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is obviously the greatest and most astounding expression of His love for us (John 3:16). Prophets were His instrument to reveal His character, His purposes, and His messages to us. Although at times these may be harsh, we must never forget that they originate with a loving God who longs for our salvation and our communion with Him. Even His fierce anger is an outflow of His holy love; He is concerned about the eternal well-being and destiny of His subjects (Isa. 54:8; Jer. 32:18; Lam. 3:32; Joel 2:13; Micah 7:18).

Prophets frequently described God's relationship to His people in terms of an

intimate love relationship, likening God to a husband who loves his wife (Jer. 3:20; 11:15; 31:32; Hosea 2:19) and a father who loves his children (Isa. 63:16; Jer. 3:19). Thus the messages of warning and reproof that God sends through His prophets are actually letters from a loving husband, from an affectionate parent who refuses to let us perish without trying every means to bring us back and save us, drawing us with His "bands of love" (Hosea 11:4).

A Passion for Jesus and Scripture

When I began to read Ellen White's writings, I realized that she was not drawing people to herself but was pointing them to Scripture. Early in her ministry she stated, "I recommend to you . . . the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice."³ Late in her life, lifting up the Bible, she exclaimed to the assembled delegates of the 1909 General Conference session, "Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this Book."⁴ Her writings focus upon Scripture and apply biblical principles to specific circumstances.

Further, I became fascinated with another key aspect of her writings—her description of "the matchless depths" and the "matchless charms" of

our Savior's love.⁵ The first chapter "God's Love for Man" of her book *Steps to Christ*, begins with "Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love."⁶ She introduced and concluded her greatest spiritual and literary masterpiece, the Conflict of the Ages Series, with the words "God is love."⁷ The central book of this series, *The Desire of Ages*, reveals the ultimate expression of God's love—Jesus Christ, our Savior and Friend, who is the fulfillment of all hopes, desires, and expectations.

The passion for Scripture and our loving Lord that I found in the writings of the biblical prophets were also clearly visible in Ellen White's writings. They have helped me to grow closer to Jesus and to become a witness to God's love. Somehow it's easier to accept counsel and reproof from someone who I know loves me and cares for me. ■

¹The phrase is taken from the title of Jonathan Edward's famous sermon. See *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1741).

²Ellen G. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.: James White, 1851), pp. 63, 64.

³*Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴Quoted in W. A. Spicer, *The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1937), p. 30.

⁵Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), vol. 1, p. 162; *idem*, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1858), vol. 1, pp. 210, 211; cf. Peter M. van Bemmelen, "The Matchless Charms of Christ: Theological Significance of This Phrase in Ellen White's Writings," in *Christ, Salvation, and the Eschaton: Essays in Honor of Hans K. LaRondelle*, ed. Daniel Heinz, Jiri Moskala, and Peter M. van Bemmelen (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Old Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2010), pp. 231-240.

⁶Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1956), p. 9.

⁷Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1890), p. 33; *idem*, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1911), p. 678.

The Gift of Prophecy

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)



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SANDBAGGING HISTORY: An overview of Area A of the Fourth Expedition to Lachish. The sandbags help to stabilize the excavation squares.



TAL RAGOVSKI/FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH

Digging LACHISH

By
GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

The morning was very silent. Clouds covered the tell¹ I had climbed earlier. Sunrays began to break through the mist. Just a half hour later the sun would transform a pleasant morning into a hot and sweaty day. Now, however, the air still felt fresh, and silence prevailed. In fact, staff and volunteers of the fourth expedition to Lachish from Southern Adventist University in Tennessee, U.S.A., listened intently to a worship talk before vigorous excavating, heavy lifting, careful sifting, and meticulous documenting would transform the morning's silence into another busy day on the tell.

Why Do They Dig?

Seventh-day Adventists have always been interested in archaeological research. In fact, most scholars working in ancient Near Eastern archaeology (including sites in Israel,

Recovering the past tells us about the God of the future.

Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, etc.) would recognize the leadership of Adventist archaeologists working in the field. Beginning with the excavation of Tell Hesban in Jordan by Andrews University under the leadership of Siegfried Horn in 1968, excavations led by Adventist archaeologists and institutions have always been at the cutting edge of archaeological research and technology. Early on, these excavators recognized the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach and began to look beyond architectural remains, artifacts, and pottery. This careful integration of all types of data (including bone remains, faunal and

floral remains, survey results, etc.) is still the trademark of Adventist archaeological projects.²

Why invest significant funds to discover more about the past, some may ask. First of all, biblical archaeology focuses upon the lands of the Bible during biblical times. While the denomination “biblical archaeology” may not be in vogue anymore (most scholars now use “ancient Near Eastern archaeology” or “Syro-Palestinian archaeology”), Yossi Garfinkel, one of the three codirectors of the expedition and professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, feels that “biblical archaeology connects better than any



Left: HISTORY IN HAND: Volunteer Kiersta Mackey holds a storage jar handle stamped with the seal of the king. **Above: POTTERY READING:** Excavation directors and others interpret the day's pottery finds in order to establish a site chronology.



other term.” “If you are a car manufacturer and your name is Mercedes, you are not going to change it just because somebody in Copenhagen thinks that biblical archaeology is not the right term,” he continues with a smile. The focus on the reality of biblical history and events narrated in Scripture anchors a discipline that is constantly seeking to illuminate the distant past. Daniella Hasel, high-school aged volunteer, puts it succinctly: “We see that biblical history is actually real.” Real people, real places, real encounters with a God who chose a group of people, living on a relatively small stretch of land connecting Asia and Africa, to tell the world about salvation and the answer to those deep questions that keep us awake at night.

Another volunteer, Malcolm Douglas, who pastors an Adventist

church in Arizona, summarizes this nicely: “Archaeology doesn’t prove the Bible, but it certainly helps to validate the things that we do believe about the Bible.” Or, put differently, archaeology is not just a scientific enterprise. It seeks to link to the mission of the church, “thus bringing to life God’s Word for His people,” Martin Klingbeil, a codirector of the expedition and associate director of Southern’s Institute of Archaeology, underlines.

Why Lachish?

Tell Lachish is one of the major sites in Israel and covers approximately 12.5 hectares (31 acres). In fact, archaeologists tell us that it was the second-largest city in Judah during the biblical period. Located in the southern Shephelah, a geographical region connecting the coastal plain of Palestine with the Judean highland surrounding Jerusalem, the town was

very important during Israel’s monarchic period. The site was identified in 1929 and has been the focus of three major excavation projects.

The fourth expedition to Lachish is particularly interested in the early period of Judah following the united monarchy of David and Solomon, a period that has been heatedly debated by historians and archaeologists during the past 20 years.³ Since it was the third expedition to Lachish by an archaeological team from Tel Aviv University, Israel, in the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in a revised chronology of Israel, the directors of the fourth expedition to Lachish felt that Lachish represents the key to clarify these important chronological issues.

“One of our reasons for coming back here,” says Michael Hasel, a codirector of the expedition and director of the Institute of Archaeology at Southern, “is to clarify the dating of

NEW MEETS ANCIENT: Young volunteers David and Matthias Klingbeil look on as Daniel Perez uses the GPS unit to map out the ancient site.

GERALD A. KLINGBEIL/ADVENTIST WORLD



EDDIE APPOLLIS/FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH



LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE: Excavation directors Yossi Garfinkel (left) and Michael Hasel (center) share some of the important finds with their former professor, William Dever, visiting the site.

the Iron Age, because the site was excavated during a time when we didn't have a lot of high-precision dating methods." While most excavators focused upon the upper levels, the lower levels dealing with Judah's earliest history have not been systematically exposed.

Lachish's most famous moment in biblical history is documented on reliefs that come from an Assyrian palace in Niniveh. In 701 B.C. Lachish was conquered by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, who took the highly fortified city by building an imposing siege ramp that can still be seen today. The story is told in a large series of reliefs on display at the British Museum in London and is also mentioned 2 Kings 18:14, 17; 19:8; and in Isaiah 36:2 and 37:8.

Nearly 130 years later the Babylonian forces destroyed the city again (Jer. 34:7), an event that is alluded to

by an ostrakon, a potsherd inscribed with ink, that was found during the first expedition to Lachish in the 1930s. The text mentions a series of watchtowers that apparently communicated by fire and reflects the anxiety that people living during the final Babylonian invasion must have felt. "Then it will be known that we are watching the (fire)-signals of Lachish according to the code which my lord gave us, for we cannot see Azeqah."⁴ The last biblical reference to Lachish can be found in Nehemiah 11:30, describing a Jewish settlement of those who had returned from Babylon following the exile.

Looking Beyond Borders

Lachish is a great reminder of God's engagement in history.

When Scripture tells us that God "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" (Ezra 1:1) so that His people could finally

return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and the city, it really speaks about God's sovereignty in human history.⁵ God is ultimately in control, and at times He even "gives" Jerusalem into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:2), making us wonder about His plan and purpose. He looks beyond borders and ethnic lines. When He needs action, he can commandeer a Nebuchadnezzar or a Cyrus. Digging Lachish also means digging into God's history. We suddenly see the reality of divine intervention manifested in potsherds, city walls, and artifacts. We begin to connect dots—historical, cultural, and religious—and begin to catch a glimpse of the big picture.

The fourth expedition to Lachish, however, is not only interested in ancient history and God's involvement in human affairs. It also wants to affirm international cooperation and

SHADES MATTER: The color of each layer of soil is carefully classified to established soil types and colors.



GERALD A. KLINGBEIL/ADVENTIST WORLD

seeks to empower Adventist scholars from institutions located in non-Western contexts to participate in archaeological research.

Martin Klingbeil remembers his first archaeological excavation with the Madaba Plains Project in 1998 while he was serving as a professor at the Adventist University in Bolivia. Earning an equivalent of US\$250 a month, normal volunteer rates would have been impossible. Yet one of the sponsoring Adventist institutions gave him a scholarship and invited him to work as a square supervisor. "It was an eye-opening experience that helped me improve my teaching," he remembers. Bringing back some objects that had been released by the excavation's registrar, he spent time building a small exhibit with his students. "Just the excitement of the community as they shared in those finds, touched the objects—it made a huge impact and

Seeing God *at* Work

By CHANTAL J. KLINGBEIL

I had heard the stories of the early-morning wake-up calls, dust, hard physical labor, and exciting discoveries, but I had never experienced a dig before. This was a first for me, and, yes, it was hard work and early mornings, and it was wonderful!

Biblical history took on a whole new dimension as I handled bits of pottery that someone thousands of years ago had used. Digging into a destruction level made all those prophetic warnings come alive and very real. I could see God's involvement in history. Unexpectedly, at the dig I also saw God still at work in our personal histories.

Take, for instance, the day a group of Israeli youth volunteers came to experience an archeological dig. Mary, an outgoing 16-year-old, was assigned to our square. I happened to be on bucket duty that morning, so I only caught bits of the conversation that went on in my square as I carried buckets of soil to sieve or dump. As everyone in our square trimmed the balk and scooped dirt into the buckets, Mary realized that we were a diverse group coming from Bolivia, Mexico, Germany, and the United States. She seemed very puzzled to find us all there and was trying to figure out the common denominator. One was a recent high school graduate; the others were at college, albeit studying different majors; I was the older woman of the group.

Puzzled, Mary tried to find out what had brought us to dig here. Finally, she made the connection that we were all Seventh-day Adventists. Then the questions began. She had never heard of Adventists. She discovered that we kept Sabbath. I held my breath. What would the volunteers in my square tell her? Although nominally Jewish, Mary made it clear that she found Sabbath observance far too restricting. In between bucketloads I overheard one student from Southern Adventist University telling Mary how much Sabbath meant to her and how she loved that time with God, her family, and friends. Others added their personal experience with God and what it meant to them. I was incredibly proud of the young adults in our group. On the way to watermelon break Mary walked with me and asked if we had some sort of meeting place in Jerusalem, as she said she would like to go and visit sometime.

I enjoyed my too-brief foray into biblical times and places. It was good to see God at work then, but I enjoy seeing God at work now. After the dig at Lachish, I look forward to seeing what God will do next.



GERALD A. KLINGBEIL/ADVENTIST WORLD

MAKING A FIND: Bolivian Adventist University professor Segundo Teofilo Correa excavates a Babylonian destruction level.



EDDIE APPOLLIS/FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH

EDDIE APPOLLIS/FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH



BIRD'S EYE VIEW: Aerial pictures taken by the drone provide a wonderful view of the excavation area.

had a powerful ripple effect.”

Considering this special objective, Southern intentionally did significant fund-raising to help Adventist institutions located in the two-world majority to become consortium members. “We provide them with a package that is financially viable,” Klingbeil says. In this sense, The fourth expedition to Lachish is also a teaching excavation, allowing volunteers to experience a wide variety of tasks associated with archaeological research. Additionally, a daily lecture schedule by professors and weekend trips to important sites in Israel and Jordan enhance the learning experience of staff and volunteers.

As a result, the 62 members of the 2014 Southern excavation team at

Lachish represented 14 different nationalities, including volunteers and staff from Bolivia, Canada, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, Korea, Mexico, South Africa, Argentina, Spain, Germany, Austria, England, and the United States.

Keldie Paroschi, a theology major at the Adventist university in Sao Paulo, Brazil, summarizes her experience: “It’s fun; it’s hard work. It’s just exciting to find out what’s underneath and what stories are buried in the soil that we uncover.” Melissa Farrow, a community member from Colleg-

edale, particularly liked the worships and tours that create connections—to God, to one another, and to Scripture.

Michael Sokupa, a lecturer in New Testament at Helderberg College in South Africa, appreciated the mix of experienced archaeologists working with volunteers. He can see the teaching function of the expedition transforming academic programs in South Africa. “We are hoping that in the future we will have some courses and eventually a program running in conjunction with Southern,” he said. “We hope that this will be the beginning for Africa, because at the moment, in the whole continent, there is no institution that has this kind of program.”

Pretty Amazing

Another hot day has come and gone. Silence has returned to Tell Lachish. A glorious sunset bathes the hill in golden and purple hues. Volun-



A One-Day Church

The Gratitude Church

teers and staff members of the fourth expedition to Lachish have finished their pottery washing. Tomorrow will be another day full of hard work, hot sun, and, possibly, exciting archaeological finds. Tomorrow, this and many other excavations around Israel and beyond will dig deep into history.

Tomorrow, like today, potsherds, architectural remains, and other artifacts will tell us something about real people, living in a real world. Cherie Lynn Olson, a recent graduate of Southern and one of the square supervisors at Lachish, got it right. “I believe in the Bible, and I’ve spent my whole life studying it. But coming here and getting to experience it at a whole new level, it’s pretty amazing. Now I’m talking about things that I’ve actually seen. You can’t give words to what that does for you.” ■

¹ A tell is an artificial mound that accumulated during many centuries of human habitation when periods of occupation followed abandonment and earlier periods of occupation.

² Currently these projects include the continuing Madaba Plains Project in Jordan (encompassing Tell Hesban, Tell ‘Umayri, and Tell Jalul and supported by Andrews University and La Sierra University together with other Adventist institutions), the excavation at Khirbet al-‘Balul in Moab by Friedensau Adventist University, Germany, as well as earlier work done by Southern Adventist University in cooperation with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem at Tel Hazor from 2003 to 2007 and Khirbet Qeiyafa, Israel, from 2007 to 2013.

³ You can read more about the controversy in Michael G. Hasel, “Another Battle Over David and Goliath,” *Adventist Review*, Feb. 25, 2010, pp. 18–21.

⁴ Dennis Pardee, “Lachish Ostraca,” in *Context of Scripture: Archival Documents From the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 2002), vol. 3, p. 82.

⁵ The motif of God “stirring” or “moving” people—including leaders—is an important staple of biblical theology. Isaiah 41:2, 25 and Jeremiah 51:1, 11 employ the same Hebrew term referring to the future conqueror of Babylon, Cyrus, who is even named in Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.



Gerald A. Klingbeil is passionate about digging up the past and, together with his wife, Chantal,

enjoyed a memorable week with the team of the fourth expedition to Lachish in July. When he is not digging, he serves as an associate editor of *Adventist World* magazine.



RICHARD DUERKSEN



Left: BETTER THAN NOTHING: Before Maranatha Volunteers, members in Kibeto, Angola, used the best available materials to build a house of worship. **Right: ROUGH ROAD:** Materials for the church building in Kibeto had to be transported slowly and carefully.

How many people does it take to make a church a church?

Ask church elder José Manuel. “It only takes two to make a congregation, but at least 30 or 40 would be much better. But if you do not have a proper building, it’s hard to keep the believers believing!”

Manuel’s church is just beyond a baobab forest in the hillside village of Kibeto, Angola. There’s been a congregation of believers in Kibeto for about 25 years. Sometimes the group is small, and at other times it has grown to a “more respectable” 30 or 40 members. That’s when they moved from under the giant baobab tree into their new church.

They built the church themselves: the walls, the roof, the pews, and the pulpit.

Then the winds came, blowing away the roof and much of the wall. After members reinforced the wall, the hot Angola sun made the worshippers feel like “baked potatoes” inside the steel walls. One by one they slipped away to the shade of the baobab tree.

Meanwhile, far away in Ecuador, Adventists were celebrating Maranatha’s successful completion of more than 220 church buildings. They came to two large Sabbath celebrations, one in Quito and the other in Guayaquil.

“We have received so much,” said the members, “that we want to give our best to God, and ask Him to use our gifts to build a church somewhere else in the world.”

The members in Ecuador sold crops, goats, and many possessions of great personal value. Those offerings were just enough to fund the cost of a One-Day Church with “nonbaking” cement-block walls, real wooden pews, and a “nonflying” roof for the congregation in Kibeto.

Kibeto’s new church will truly be the Gratitude Church. And it will fill rapidly!

ASI and Maranatha Volunteers International fund and facilitate One-Day Church and One-Day School projects. Since 2009, more than 1,600 One-Day buildings have been built around the world. These stories come from Maranatha storyteller Dick Duerksen.





LEGACY
of LIGHT

1827
1915

ELLEN
GOULD
WHITE

PART 1: 1827-1860 The Early Years

By JAMES R. NIX

GOD'S MESSENGER How It All Began

A look at Ellen White's life and legacy



FAMILY PORTRAIT: James and Ellen White pose with their son, William, in 1857. This is believed to be the earliest photograph of the young family.

Late in 1845, 18-year-old Ellen Harmon wrote to the editor of a former Millerite Adventist paper published in Cincinnati, Ohio. In her letter she shared highlights from the vision God had given her a year earlier, in December 1844, the first of hundreds of visions and prophetic dreams she received throughout her lifetime. Little could she have imagined that this letter would be the first of thousands of articles, books, and pamphlets she would author during the next 70 years until she died in 1915.

For almost all that time she was known as Ellen G. White, following her marriage to James White in 1846. Throughout 2015—the centennial of her death—the Seventh-day Adventist Church is recalling the impact of her remarkable life, including her spiritual legacy.

Early On

Ellen and her twin sister, Elizabeth (known as “Ella” and “Lizzie” in childhood), were the youngest of Robert and Eunice Harmon’s eight children. The family was living in Gorham, Maine, when the girls were born on November 26, 1827, but later moved to Portland, Maine. One day, when the girls were 9 years old, as they walked through a small park toward their home, an upset schoolmate threw a stone at them. It struck Ellen in the face. That accident impacted her for the rest of her life.

Initially Ellen was not expected to live. When finally she recovered sufficiently to try to return to school, her hand trembled so badly that she could not hold a pen. And

when she tried to read, the words all ran together on the page. Her formal education thus ended; from then on she was self-educated.

Ellen’s parents were Methodists, and at the age of 14 she joined their church. When William Miller, a farmer-turned-Baptist-preacher, shared in Portland his conclusions that Jesus would return to earth at the end of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 by 1844 at the latest, Ellen became excited at the thought! As a result of their new beliefs, the Harmon family was dropped from church membership.

Beyond Disappointment

When Jesus did not return as expected in 1844, Ellen and many others were terribly disappointed. It was then that God gave her that first vision, depicting God’s people walking on a narrow path toward the Holy City. Jesus was just ahead of them on the path, and if they kept their eyes fixed on Him, she was assured that they would reach their heavenly destination. The vision brought her and the others courage; uplifting Jesus would become one of the hallmarks of Ellen’s ministry.

After her first few visions God instructed Ellen to share what she had been shown, both orally and in writing. With her shy nature and with hands that still shook when she wrote, His assignment seemed impossible. But God promised her that if she accepted His call to be His messenger, He would be with her as she spoke and would steady her hand when she wrote. Reluctantly she accepted the invitation. In turn, God was faithful to His promise to her.

Ellen married James White, a young former Millerite minister. The couple had four sons: Henry Nichols, James Edson, William Clarence, and John Herbert, born between 1847 and 1860. Tragically, the youngest of the boys died at 3 months of age in 1860. Shortly after their marriage the newlywed couple accepted the seventh-day Sabbath that was introduced to them by Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain who also had been a Millerite preacher.

Beginning Ministry

In 1848 God instructed Ellen in vision that her husband should start a paper. Though it would be small at first, she was told that eventually it would become like streams of light encircling the world. That same year He also told her that Adventists would be healthier if they did not use tobacco, tea, or coffee. Health would become a major emphasis in her ministry.

Especially during 1848 and 1849, Ellen and her husband joined Joseph Bates and others in helping to share the pillar Bible doctrines for what would eventually become the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although Adventist doctrines all resulted from Bible study, God chose at times to guide them in their pursuit of truth through the visions that He gave Ellen White. But no core Adventist doctrines originated from her visions.

The first issue of *The Present Truth*, the paper that James White started, was published in 1849. Two years later Ellen White's first small book, now part of *Early Writings*, was printed. The 23-year-old author closed it by urging her readers to read their Bibles.

James and Ellen White traveled constantly. Times were difficult. With only a few Sabbathkeepers, no organized church structure, and even some critics of Ellen's visions, it seemed highly unlikely that the fledgling movement would survive. But James White continued to publish—papers, and then books, small at first, but increasing in size as time went on. He and others, including Ellen, also gave sermons and talks. Despite challenging conditions, during these years Ellen and James traveled to 13 states and to what is now the province of Quebec in Canada.¹ In addition, first through commercial printers and then on a printing press owned by Sabbathkeepers, 26 articles and letters appeared in print under her name,² and she authored either all or parts of 14 broadsides, pamphlets, and books.

Besides traveling for speaking appointments, James and Ellen also moved to various places in Maine and Connecticut, with longer times spent in Saratoga Springs and Rochester, New York. In 1855 they moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, where, for the first time, they owned their own home. Theirs was a busy life.

“God promised Ellen that if she accepted His call to be His MESSENGER, He would be with her as she spoke and would steady her hand when she wrote.”

Visions From God

At a general meeting held in Battle Creek in 1855, the assembled pioneers officially went on record acknowledging their belief that Ellen White's visions were from God, and, therefore, they were obligated to heed them. In 1858, while she and James were traveling in Ohio, Ellen was shown what has become known as the great controversy—the ongoing cosmic struggle between Christ and Satan. The vision was first printed later that year in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume one.

Although the believers erected a small publishing house building in Battle Creek in 1855, it could not be incorporated legally since they had no organization to hold the title, nor did they have a name. In late 1860 the first steps toward legally incorporating the publishing house were voted, and the name “Seventh-day Adventist” was chosen.

In vision God instructed a 17-year-old girl to share what she had been shown. Interestingly, in the last vision Ellen received in 1860, He again instructed her that she and her husband were to share their testimonies with others.³ For the remainder of her long life, the Lord's messenger continued sharing the guidance that God gave her for His church. ■

¹ Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Canada East (Quebec).

² Two letters printed in the *Day-Star*; six articles or letters in *The Present Truth*; three in the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald—1851 Extra*; and 15 in the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.

³ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, Steam Press, 1860), vol. 2, p. 299; Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, pp. 247, 248; Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), vol. 1, pp. 433, 434.



James R. Nix is director of the Ellen G. White Estate, located in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.



Tested and Approved

Learning to trust God in a foreign land

By MIKHAIL E. D. BYNG

I was born and raised on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. I was baptized at the age of 8 into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When I was a boy, my father introduced me to serving God through the spoken word. He was, and still is, a preacher.

A few years ago, seven months after my nineteenth birthday, I received a scholarship to study at the University of Belgrade in Serbia. After weeks of heartfelt prayer, I decided that it was God's will, and I accepted the opportunity.

I have been living in Belgrade, Serbia's capital city, for more than two years now. Although there are Seventh-day Adventist churches here, most people belong to the Orthodox tradition, and many find it difficult to engage in conversations about God and religion.

I have attempted to engage individuals in direct conversations about

God, but in most instances my attempts have been unsuccessful. However, one experience showed me one way God intends for His followers to witness, a way of ministry exemplified by God's followers throughout the Bible.

Will That Be on the Test?

One day we were to have an oral exam at the university. Most of the students were nervous, both Serbs and my colleagues from other countries. As we saw the other students being examined, we noticed that the professor's mood was not pleasant. Students who seemed to be giving the correct answers were failing, and I and the other foreign students were perplexed.

In addition to giving the right answers, we were required to do the exam in Serbian. So although we foreign students had studied Serbian for

only eight months, we were directed to answer the questions in Serbian.

As I sat there I thought of stories of great Bible characters I had learned about in Sabbath school. I thought of Moses in Pharaoh's court; Daniel and his three friends in Nebuchadnezzar's court; of Esther and Mordecai in the court of Ahasuerus; and how God worked out their challenges when they trusted in Him.

As I was thinking about these things, a text message came from a "sister" back home who had taught me in Sabbath school and had seen me grow up. The message on my mobile phone said, "May a live coal from heaven touch your mouth so you can spread God's message."

At that moment I excused myself from the classroom, went to the restroom, and locked the door. I knelt down and prayed. My simple prayer was to receive wisdom, as Solomon



COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



“I tried to keep my mind **focused** on the belief that God would bring me success.”

COMPANIONS IN TRIALS:
The author (right) poses with two other international students: Hoan from Vietnam, and Thulisani from South Africa.

did. “God,” I prayed, “whatever happens with my life here in Serbia, may it honor and glorify Your name. May my success or failure be used for Your glory.”

I was still nervous about the exam as I walked out of the restroom. I doubted that I would even have the confidence to attempt to answer the questions. But I tried to keep my mind focused on the belief that God would bring me success.

Did I Say That?

As students began to leave the classroom, some rejoicing in their success, and others sulking in their failure, the professor asked, “*Da li ima neki jos?*” (“Is there anyone else?”)

I stood up, along with a colleague from the African country of Gabon. We indicated our intention to answer the questions. The professor allowed us to select one card from a shuffled

stack of cards with questions on them. Then we were given 10 minutes to jot down some notes and compose our answers.

With a prayer in my heart I selected my card. It had four questions. After my colleague unsuccessfully attempted to answer the questions he had chosen, I approached the professor’s desk and began reading what I had written, attempting to explain the various concepts in Serbian.

As I spoke, I found it hard to believe that I was actually explaining the various theories and giving examples. The words I said actually made sense! At that moment I realized, even while speaking, that I was witnessing God’s activity in my life. The same hand that had led Moses in the wilderness, Joseph in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon as they witnessed for God, the Creator of the world, was present with me that very moment. By the time I finished, I knew I had witnessed God’s power.

The professor shook my hand and said, “Congratulations” (in English). He gave me a grade of 9 out of 10. I was shocked.

As my friends and I walked to the bus station, my colleagues asked me all kinds of questions.

Hoan, from Vietnam, asked, “Mikhail, how did you do it?”

“It was God,” I responded, “not me.”

Hoan paused a moment and said, “You mean, you are talking about religion?” He wasn’t interested in such talk. He explained that in Vietnam the largest religious influence is Buddhism. He felt that religion was full of meaningless rituals that did not interest him.

“Hoan,” I said, “the God I’m talking about is bigger than religion; He created the world.”

Hoan still wasn’t convinced. I invited him to visit the Adventist church in Belgrade with me, but he has yet to accept my invitation. However, we are still good friends, and I try to demonstrate a Christlike example to Hoan and others every chance I get, whether in academics or in simple daily interactions.

I soon realized the message God was sending. My academic success meant less to God than the ministry of my faith in Him. My Christian example and ministry for Hoan and others meant more to God than the 9 out of 10 I received on the exam. It was only a tool to show God’s power, just as education is only a tool to better equip us to do the work of our Master. ■

Mikhail E. D. Byng lives in Beograd, Serbia, and seeks to follow in the footsteps of his father, Dwight, who dedicates his life to spreading God’s Word.

How Many Is Too Many?

Why did the kings of Israel have so many wives?

I suppose your question is really about how God related to this practice, and what motivated the kings to have so many wives. Apart from the corrupt cravings of human passions, there were other social and political reasons for this practice. I will summarize God's will on this issue, examine the purpose of marrying so many Israelite women, and finally explore the reason for having no Israelite royal wives.

1. God's Will: It appears that it was always God's intention to appoint at some point in the history of His people a king over the nation. To that end, God provided legislation defining the appointment and role of the king (Deut. 17:14-20). To a certain extent, the king was to function as a model for the nation in the study of the law, in relying on the power of God, and in God's purpose for marriage. The law clearly established: "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself" (verse 17). In other words, he was not to have a royal harem. God expected from the king what He also expected from every male Israelite: to have one wife. In this respect kingship in Israel failed the Lord.

2. David's Many Wives: It is mainly through David that the royal practice of having many wives was introduced in Israel. He had at least nine wives, and no less than 10 concubines. The function of his concubines is not clear. They were at the service of the king to provide children for him (2 Sam. 20:3), and may have also been responsible for the upkeep of the palace (2 Sam. 15:16). In the ancient Near East the king's sexual prowess was part of his image as king, and having many wives conveyed this idea to the people. David was simply following the cultural practice of the time. He also took several Israelite women as wives. They may have been the daughters of influential and powerful Israelites whose support David thought would be useful in the consolidation of his kingdom. These were politically motivated marriages. Although most of his wives were Israelites, it appears that he took a foreign wife, "Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur" (2 Sam. 3:3), a princess. This marriage was politically motivated

and served to strengthen David's influence as king among the Canaanite nations.

3. Foreign Wives and Idolatry: What David initiated was practically institutionalized through Solomon: "He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines" (1 Kings 11:3). Many of his concubines, if not all of them, may have been Israelites, but the wives were probably foreign women, daughters of kings with whom Solomon entered into covenant relationships. This is the common understanding of ancient Near Eastern royal marriages. Such marriages consolidated the kingship of Solomon and contributed to peaceful relations between him and the surrounding nations (e.g., Sidon, Moab, Ammon). Any political marriage could have seriously damaged the integrity of the king, and, in the case of foreign women, would have led the king into idolatry (Deut. 17:17; 1 Kings 11:2).

When this type of marriage was arranged, the marital agreement included an understanding that the princess would continue to worship her god in the palace of the husband, in this case Solomon. It could be that some of them became Israelites; we do not know. Each of these wives were accompanied by her own maids, and often by a religious leader to assist her in the worship of her god. The husband was to provide a place of worship for her and her entourage. Following this pagan practice, "Solomon built a high place for Chemosh . . . , and for Molech. . . . And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods" (1 Kings 11:7, 8). These are typical ancient Near East political and religious practices. They directly contributed to the fall of God's people in the Old Testament.

It is always good to listen to the Word of God, particularly in the setting of cultural practices that tend to to turn us away from the Lord. ■



Angel Manuel Rodríguez is the husband of one wife, and they live in Texas.

Glow Stories

GLOW: Giving Light to Our World

Are you ready for an adventure? One of the most exciting things we Christians can do is to share the wonderful message that God has given us. And one of the simplest ways of doing this is by handing out a piece of literature!

Not long ago a man purchased several religious tracts. One of those tracts—which talked about what happens after death—ended up traveling to another country. There the tract was passed from hand to hand, until it ended up with a Baptist pastor who translated it into French and read it to 80 people at a funeral.

Another person, a young woman, simply laid one of the tracts on a table. A jail chaplain happened to pick it up and read it. He later ordered more than 2,000 pieces of literature for the 900 inmates in his jail.

Another woman timidly handed a tract to her seatmate on a bus one day. To her surprise, the man said, “I was just praying for God to send me a sign if He didn’t want me to commit suicide. I think this is it.”

“We know not what may be the results of giving away a leaflet containing present truth.”*

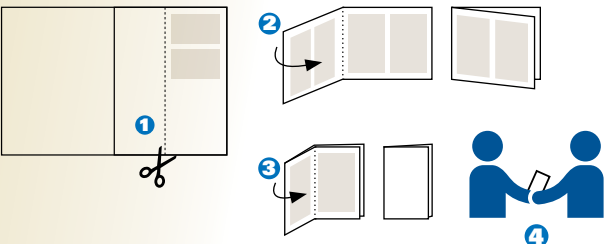
So, once again, are you ready for an adventure?

In this month’s magazine we’ve included a GLOW tract for you to cut out, fold up, and hand out. As you do this, you will be joining more than 1.5 million Adventists across the globe who are doing the same thing! Take time to pray that God will guide you to a divine appointment or give you a creative idea. Then simply give the tract away or leave it somewhere to be found.

Adventist World will print a cutout GLOW tract periodically throughout the year. Each time you give your tract away, send *Adventist World* the story of your divined appointment, and how you distributed the tract. E-mail your story to nelson@puonline.org.

Be as creative as you can, and your story might be featured in a future edition of *Adventist World*!

* Ellen G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1953), p. 5.



Reason Three—Experience. The third reason I keep the Sabbath is because I’ve responded to Jesus’ invitation to try it and see if His Word is true. God often invites us to test Him. One such occasion is in Malachi 3 where He challenges us to give Him one-tenth of our income. To those who accept, He promises to pour out a blessing.

The Sabbath also contains a challenge. God invites us to give Him one-seventh of our time. If we do, He promises to bless us. “If you...call the Sabbath a delight...then shall you delight yourself in the Lord” (Isaiah 58:1, 3, 14). Experience this Sabbath blessing every week.

Resting on the Sabbath restores me physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. It de-stresses me from the burdens of life. I enjoy uninterrupted time with family and friends that keeps our relationships alive. Worshiping with fellow believers energizes me. I gain insight and inspiration from Bible study and sermons on the Sabbath.

The Sabbath gives me a reason to stop all earthly pursuits every week. Since it is God’s command, it leaves no room to compromise for a pressing project at work, or any other thing

that might come up. This protects the Sabbath rest from simply becoming a good intention that I will get to one day. It is God’s command—no questions asked—so I happily do it and leave everything else to the other six days as God says.

I found Jesus’ words to be true—He made the Sabbath for man (Mark 2:28). That is, the Sabbath is not something that God does to us, but is something wonderful He does for us. In this busy age in which we live, I treasure all of the positive blessings that I get to experience because God has kindly given us the Sabbath.

I understand that my going to church on Saturday may appear strange. But now you know that I do it because I am committed to following the Bible. I love Jesus as my creator and savior, and I have discovered God’s Sabbath blessing. You can also enjoy this wonderful experience. If you’d like to know how, or you want more information, just contact GLOW and they can help you.



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Why I go to Church on **Saturday**

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14

Giving Light to Our World

Why I go to church on Saturday

To many, my Saturday church attendance appears to be out of step with the Sunday Christian tradition. They wonder how I can be so confused as to go on the “wrong day.” So, exactly why do I, and millions like me, choose Saturday over Sunday? Consider these three reasons that may surprise you.

Reason One—God’s Word. I go to church on Saturday because it is biblical and Sunday church attendance is not. While God welcomes worship every day of the week, He set aside the seventh day as a special day of rest. This day is called the Sabbath and corresponds with Saturday. It was given to humankind at creation, about 2,000 years before the Jewish people existed (Genesis 2:1-3). Jesus said the “Sabbath was made for man”—not just for Jews (Mark 2:27).

At creation, God performed three deliberate acts to make the seventh day uniquely different from the other six—he rested, blessed and sanctified the Sabbath (Genesis 2:2, 3). This is extremely significant.

First, we need rest from labor and time to reflect. God wired us this way. This is why He drew us aside that very first seventh day of creation for special time with Him. Second, God packed a spiritual blessing into the seventh day that He didn’t put into the other six. Lastly, God drew a boundary around this 24-hour period and designated it as a day to be wholly dedicated to pursuing a relationship with Him.

If one takes every verse in the Bible on the Sabbath they discover some amazing things: all the Old Testament people of God enjoyed its blessing—remember, that until Abraham they were not Jewish (Genesis 11:26). Jesus honored the Sabbath by keeping it every week (Luke 4:16), the disciples kept it (Acts 18:4, 11; 16:13), and it will be kept in heaven and the new earth (Isaiah 66:22, 23). The Bible presents an unbroken cycle of Sabbath observance from man’s creation to the earth made new.

So why do most Christian churches worship on Sunday? The answer—tradition. You see, the Bible never records God changing the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. The only change of God’s law mentioned in Scripture is attempted by a clever inside attack on the

church. (See Daniel 7:25.)

This change came in long after the disciples died. By the third and fourth centuries, history records some Christians kept the pagan worship day of Sunday in Rome and other places where the church was compromising to escape persecution. As the church at Rome grew in political power and developed into the Roman Catholic Church, it officially sanctioned Sunday keeping instead of the Sabbath. Today, it points to this fact of history as proof that its authority and tradition is superior to the plain teaching of Scripture. (See www.glowonline.org/dan7/)

Reason Two—Love. Sabbath keeping is not legalism. Jesus said, “if you love Me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Since the Sabbath is the Bible day for weekly worship, is the fourth commandment, has never been changed by God—only by man, and since Jesus kept it Himself, I observe the Sabbath out of love for Him.

There are many reasons why I love and obey Jesus. Two primary ones are that He is my creator and redeemer (John 1:1-3; Titus 2:14). Jesus created the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. The Sabbath is God’s official memorial or “sign between” Him and His people that He is our

Creator (Exodus 31:17). And just prior to Jesus’ return, a message from God calls everyone to “worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:6, 7). Every time I “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” I honor my Creator as the one who holds my life in His hand (Exodus 20:8-11).

Not only did Jesus create humans, He also redeems us from sin. The Sabbath is a special sign of this salvation—“a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them” (Ezekiel 20:12). Refraining once a week from secular employment to support ourselves reminds us that we can’t work to earn our eternal salvation—it is a gift of God and we are wholly dependent upon Him (Hebrews 4:4-10). For if I can’t trust God to care for my earthly livelihood one day a week, how can I truly say that I trust Him for my eternal life?

Every Sabbath reminds me of the love Jesus has given us through creation and redemption. Just as anniversaries are memorials designed to refresh our love for those closest to us, so the seventh day Sabbath reminds us of God’s love and our utter dependence on Him for life in this world and the next.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Prayer & PRAISE

Pray for some of the youth of Malawi, who are straying from God and indulging in alcohol and drugs. Pray that they come back to God.

MALYSON, *Malawi*

Please pray that I am given a marriage partner as soon as the Lord will provide. Also pray for my placement in specific courses I need for medicine, for these depend on cost and timing—plus entry requirements are changing.

STACIA, *United States*

I’m going through marriage, health, and financial crises. I ask God to guide me and perform a miracle in my life.

PATRICIO, *Chile*

Pray for my friend to accept Jesus as his Savior during evangelistic meetings that are coming up.

MARIA, *Indonesia*

I am requesting prayer for a friend’s teenager. The teen is hooked on computer games, and his family is very distressed about it.

ELIA, *Argentina*

I work for a ministry in which we have workers but no funds. Please pray for this matter.

SHIFUL, *Bangladesh*

Please pray that my instructor changes our class schedule from Saturday to any other day. Thank you!

HARBY, *Philippines*

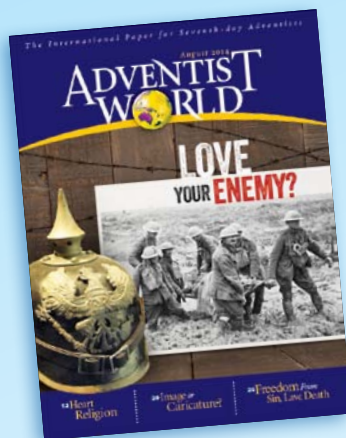
I am a pastor and am experiencing health complications. Please pray for me.

STEPHEN, *Uganda*

Please pray for my friend to open her mind and heart to accept the Sabbath truth. Thanks!

CHOI, *France*

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



Letters

Good Article, One Correction

I very much enjoyed reading Denis Kaiser's article "Love your Enemy?" (August 2014). It was an excellent, well-put-together piece of research and both very moving and timely.

One small correction to the photo caption on page 19 of the article: The photo seen there is of Adventists conscripted into the 3rd Eastern Non-combatant Corps and subsequently stationed in France. They mainly worked as stevedores in the docks, and for the first 18 months, in the main, were granted Sabbath privileges. In November 1917 things changed with a new commander. They were court-martialed, sentenced to six months hard labor, and thrown into prison. There they were beaten, some within an inch of their life, for refusal to work on Sabbath. It is a remarkable story of faithfulness under extreme circumstances. While they were in uniform in the picture, they never served in bomb disposal. (I think that is more a World War II option.) Their brave stance in World War I led to a greater understanding with the British military authorities in World War II, where our men were exempted from military service as long as they were involved in work of national importance (on the land, down the mines, or as a medic).

I hope this helps clear up the misunderstanding on what was otherwise an excellent article!

VICTOR HULBERT,
*Communication and Media
 Director, British Union Conference
 of Seventh-day Adventists
 Watford, Hertfordshire, England*

The Battle

Thanks go to *Adventist World* and Ted N. C. Wilson for the succinct and important history lesson regarding our church's peacemaking heritage (see "The Battle," August 2014). This article was a helpful reminder as to why we developed this fundamental value in the first place and how combatancy affects the global church.

Patriotism has too often trumped the bonds of communion. As a sister of three young men who have chosen to serve in the military and who have participated in recent wars, I also was moved by Denis Kaiser's analysis (in his article "Love Your Enemy?") of how we can practically love our enemies during wartime. In my own life as well as in my role as a citizen, I need reminders that all of my fellow humans are God's beloved children and that I am called to act out an ethic of love toward them, even if they are acting as my enemies.

Thank you so much for printing such thoughtful, Christlike, and historically rooted assessments of this call to our church to be peacemakers.

LISA CLARK DILLER
Chattanooga, Tennessee, United States



A Glimmer of Light

I enjoyed reading Curtis Rittenour's article "A Glimmer of Light" (December 2013). This article reminds me that God is a caring and loving Father who solves difficulties for His children when they have them.

GAIUS EMMANUEL
Lagos, Nigeria

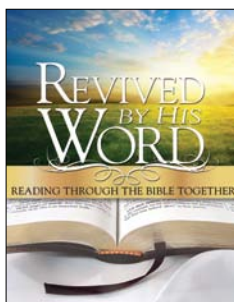
In Appreciation

I feel so much encouraged every time I go through your publication. Thank you for your prayers; I am praying for you. Thanks!

BECKY MORAA
Nairobi, Kenya

I am one of the readers of *Adventist World*. I like this magazine very much. I hope you continue to write extraordinary articles for the edification of souls. God bless you!

LUDOVIC EUGENE
Haiti



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FEBRUARY 1, 2015 • Acts 3

Three Essentials



UNICEF estimates that around the world 25 percent of children under the age of 5 are significantly shorter than the median height for their age. It recommends the following remedies:

- clean water**
- adequate nutrition**
- proper sanitation**

In the past two decades these factors have helped reduce infant mortality for children under the age of 5 by 50 percent.

Source: *The Rotarian*

1 IN 8



That's the number of deaths worldwide in 2012 caused by air pollution, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The city with the world's worst air pollution? **Delhi, India.**

Source: *National Geographic/newstatesman.com*

44 Years Ago

On January 26, 1971, the Empress Zauditu Memorial Adventist Hospital was officially opened in Addis Ababa by Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I. The Ethiopian Union Mission had operated a hospital in Addis Ababa since 1932.

On the occasion of Selassie's coronation on November 2, 1930, the Scandinavian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists sent him congratulations. In response he expressed a desire to present a gift to the Seventh-day Adventist mission. Realizing the needs of his people, and being well acquainted with Adventist medical work, he asked the church to operate the new hospital, which was named for his cousin and predecessor to the throne, Empress Zauditu. Dr. George Bergman was its first medical director.

After Selassie's death in 1975, the hospital was nationalized and is now operated by Ethiopia's Ministry of Health. It is the country's leading hospital in providing anti-retroviral therapy for the management of HIV/AIDS.



JUST WALK AWAY 

According to new research, walking, just walking, can reduce your risk of dying of brain cancer by **40 percent**. The minimum distance needed to reap the benefits: 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) a week.

Source: *Men's Health/Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory*

50 WORDS OR LESS

My Favorite... Bible Promise

■ God speaks deeply to my heart when He says He will wipe every tear from our eyes (Rev. 21:4). This fills me with hope. What a wonderful day that will be when for all eternity we will have joy, peace, love, and happiness with Jesus.

—KARLA, *Paraíba, Brazil*

■ Last year this text brought me through a time of hardship. It is a true and precious promise: “There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds” (Deut. 33:26).

—ELENARA

■ Why be afraid with a powerful promise like this: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10).

—ANTONIO, *Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*

■ This promise has encouraged me to keep trusting the Lord for victory: “For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith. . . . Those who believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:37-39).

—JOEL, *Villavicencio, Colombia*

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

“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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