

March 2015

ADVENTIST WORLD



Builders

for

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Zuki and Pali Mxoli risk it all.

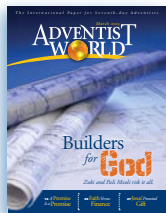
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ADVENTIST WORLD

March 2015



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2015 General Conference Session

Official notice is hereby given that the sixtieth session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held July 2-11, 2015, in the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. The first meeting will begin at 8 a.m., July 2, 2015. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time.

Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference President
G. T. Ng, General Conference Secretary



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Deeper Yet

“When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off” (Joshua 3:13, NRSV).

It’s one of the most familiar sermons in Adventism—the one about stepping out in faith with full expectation that God will fulfill His promises. A thousand church building projects have been launched from this text. Uncounted evangelistic campaigns have progressed—first haltingly, then with increasing confidence—as leaders and members recalled the necessity of obeying a Lord who commanded, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15, NKJV).*

But what happens when the riverbed doesn’t dry up at the moment you step in—when the water reaches your knee, your waist, or even your neck? What happens in those hours when the logic of a God-given mind seems in conflict with the calling of a God-given faith?

If every lost kitten suddenly appeared each time we prayed, or every lost soul made a dramatic U-turn because we asked the Lord to change a heart, we would soon regard the miracles of God as commonplace and something we deserve. God’s Word repeatedly reminds us that faith is never a vending-machine transaction in which a coin deposited requires a product to be delivered.

In the end, it is not things—not even miracles—that we most need, but the relationship with a miraculously gracious God. The goal of faith is always larger than the great things faith accomplishes—the buildings built, the sermons preached, the cups of water given. Faith is the experience of learning deeper trust, and arriving at an unshakable confidence that we are always and eternally safe because we are in His hands.

As you read this month’s cover feature about an Adventist couple who walked into the Jordan until the water reached their necks, pray for that deeper trust that remembers His promise: *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you” (Isa. 43:2, NKJV).*



Bill Knott

WORLD REPORT

3,052 Baptized in Dominican Republic

A historic Sabbath caps the Adventist Church’s Ten Days of Prayer.

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, news editor, Adventist World



Above: DEDICATED: Twenty-six pastors, center row, kneeling with church leaders, left, during an ordination service. The pastors’ wives are standing behind them. **Right:** FROM CHINA: Israel Leito, president of the Inter-American Division, baptizing Hiu Wan, the first Chinese believer to join the Adventist Church in the Dominican Republic, on Jan. 17, 2015.



■ Thousands of people packed a stadium in the Dominican Republic’s capital to celebrate 3,052 baptisms and the historic ordination of 110 pastors at the close of a worldwide Ten Days of Prayer initiative by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Adventist Church’s 29 top leaders, including General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson, attended the worship service on January 17, at Santo Domingo’s El Palacio de Los Deportes stadium.

“We leave with hearts filled with gratitude for the moving of God’s Spirit and overflowing with joy that the Holy Spirit has worked powerfully in this capital city,” said evangelist Mark Finley, who led a nightly program titled “New Year, New Life” in the stadium on January 7-11.

The 3,052 baptisms included more than 1,800 were baptized in the stadium on Sabbath, January 17, and hundreds baptized

Continued on next page ▶

elsewhere in the island on January 16 and 17, according to the Adventist Church's Dominican Union. Dozens more were baptized during Finley's evangelistic series the previous week.

"Jesus is the rock and you are asked to build His church on the rock—on Jesus Christ," Wilson told the baptismal candidates in the stadium. "Build God's church as you point people for Him, to His Holy Word, to His church, to His prophetic movement."

One baptism took center stage: Hiu Wang, who became the first Chinese believer to join the Adventist Church in the Dominican Republic.

"Wang represents a group of believers the church has been working with through an Adventist missions center in Santo Domingo for the past year and a half," said Luis Miguel Acevedo, the pastor who oversees the group.

The ordination service, held in the afternoon, marked an historic moment for the Adventist Church in terms of the number of ministers ordained and countries and top church leaders involved.

One hundred ten pastors were ordained, including 26 at the site in Santo Domingo. Leaders from all 13 divisions of the church attended the ordination service, together with General Conference vice presidents and other officers. Twenty-three church unions in 11 countries in the Inter-American Division took part in the service via satellite.

About 30 other pastors were ordained across the division earlier.

The Sabbath capped the Ten Days of Prayer, an annual initiative by the General Conference's Ministerial Association that saw Adventists gather daily worldwide to ask for an

outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church.

Finley said God was changing lives. "I leave Santo Domingo deeply impressed with the commitment of our Adventist Church members to mission, the extraordinary participation of young adults in the life and witness of the church, and the laser focus of church administration on evangelistic outreach," Finley said. "I leave sensing that God did something

incredibly unusual, because administrators, pastors, and lay members united in God's mission to the world with a sense of urgency. And I leave wondering what might happen if this unified focus on mission and commitment to winning lost people to Christ overshadowed all self-interest and was the priority of every church, every conference, union and division."

Libna Stevens, Inter-American Division, contributed to this report.

NEWS COMMENTARY

Herbert E. Douglass' *Greatest Contribution to Adventist Theology*

Douglass used Ellen G. White's writings to offer clarity during challenging times.

By JERRY MOON, *chair, Church History Department, Andrews University*

■ As a doctoral studies student in the early 1960s, Herbert E. Douglass was assigned coursework in which he and fellow students at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, were supposed to read and discuss modern theologians.

Several times the class pondered the seemingly intractable contradictions between leading theologians, and Douglass offered an insight that the whole class recognized as clarifying the difficulty.

At first classmates thought Douglass was just theologically gifted. But as the

pattern recurred, several came to him and said, "You must be getting these insights somewhere. What are you reading besides the class assignments?"

In response Douglass pointed them to the writings of Seventh-day Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White. One of his classmates, after reading White's book *The Desire of Ages*, said, "I see what you mean. This author has a self-authenticating quality."

Douglass, who shared this incident with me, put White at the center of a theological system that he built over his lifetime. He reasoned that if Adventism



ADVENTIST THINKER: Herbert E. Douglass posing in 1973 during his six-year stint as an associate editor at the *Review and Herald*, now the *Adventist Review*.

ADVENTIST ARCHIVES

is true, and if White was used by God to aid in the development of a genuinely biblical theology, then White's writings should contain the necessary insights to solve any problem.

To understand her writings at a deep level became a pursuit that ended only with his death after a long illness on December 15, 2014, at age 87.

Appreciating the passion that Douglass, a leading twentieth-century theologian of the Adventist Church, had for White requires an understanding of the turbulent world of Adventism that he entered as a young pastor in the 1950s.

Adventists Forgot to Reform

A core value that Adventists inherited from the Protestant Reformation was the idea that because of human complacency and backsliding, the only way for a church to stay reformed was to be always reforming. The flaw in every religious movement was to consider itself "reformed" and cease the ongoing process of "reforming." White repeatedly asserted, "We are reformers," and early Adventists saw their mission as completing the Protestant Reformation in preparation for the coming of Jesus.

Unfortunately, in the 1860s and 1870s several leading evangelists relied on doctrinal debate to the neglect of a

personal relationship with Christ, producing church members who, like themselves, were convinced of correct doctrine but not converted to an intimate daily relationship with Jesus.

At a church conference in 1888, two young ministers, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, tried to convince the church of its need for reform but, according to White, the majority rejected their message.

Thus many Adventists entered the twentieth century lacking a living experience of righteousness by faith in Jesus alone and unaware of the deficiency. They were regarded by most other Protestants as a legalistic sect if not an outright cult.

The 1950 General Conference session attempted to remedy this by a call to revival and reformation, but based on a merely legal view of justification, not the entirely "new creation" envisioned by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:15-17 and endorsed by White.

Two young Adventist missionaries to Africa protested this deviation, and church leadership felt under attack. An external pressure point for Adventist leadership emerged in 1955 when some evangelicals confronted Adventists as being less than orthodox Christians. This led to the release of a church-published book, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, in 1957.

Questions on Doctrine states upfront that its goal is "not to be a new statement of faith" but to explain Adventist "beliefs in terminology currently used in theological circles."

But the issues raised by the book soon polarized the denomination.

Into this volatile situation came Herbert E. Douglass. His ministry would span more than 60 of the most turbulent and controversial years in Adventist history.

In 1953 Douglass was 26 with six years' pastoral experience when Pacific Union College called him to teach and sponsored him to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

In those days the seminary, the General Conference headquarters, and the *Review and Herald* publishing house stood side by side in Takoma Park, Washington, D.C. As Douglass became recognized as an unusually gifted scholar, the *Review and Herald* invited him to join the editorial staff preparing volumes 6 and 7 of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*.

Answers From Ellen White

Thus Douglass had a ringside seat for observing the developing controversy, and he turned to Ellen White for solutions.

Douglass returned to Pacific Union College to teach theology in 1957 and subsequently became chair of the Theology Department at Atlantic Union College (AUC) in 1960; received his doctorate at Pacific School of Religion in 1964; and worked at AUC to work as academic dean and later president.

He was at the college in 1970 when Kenneth Wood, editor of the *Review and Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*), invited him to become an associate editor of the general church paper. This gave Douglass the time and opportunity to publish articles and books on concepts he had developed during his years of teaching. Besides hundreds of articles, he eventually produced more than 30 books. His book *Messenger of the Lord* (1998) was the most comprehensive volume on White prior to the *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (2013), for which he was also a major contributor.

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WORLD REPORT

Douglass found the starting point for his theology in the biblical narratives of the conflict between good and evil, and in White's comments on those narratives. The inception of sin, Satan's charges against the character of God, and the unfolding of God's plan of salvation as the comprehensive answer to all Satan's charges, exposed weaknesses in most modern theologies.

White's focus on God's character as the fundamental issue in the great controversy, became the foundation of Douglass' theological system.

The great controversy theme exposed and resolved the false dilemma between Christ's work on the cross and His work in the heavenly sanctuary. As the purpose of the atonement was to heal the estrangement that sin had created within the universe of God, it was clear that the cross was the center but not the end of the atonement. Christ's sacrifice on the cross was perfect, complete, sufficient, and once for all. But on the morning of Christ's resurrection there was still unfinished business in the universe that only He could accomplish.

The most comprehensive presentations of Douglass' theological system are found in three books published rather late in life: *God at Risk: The Cost of Freedom in the Great Controversy* (2004), *A Fork in the Road* (2007), and *The Heartbeat of Adventism: The Great Controversy Theme in the Writings of Ellen G. White* (2011).

Douglass was a giant, a legend in his own lifetime to thousands of Adventists who read his writings and applied his insights to their daily lives. Even those who disagree with him can scarcely dispute that through his writings he will remain one of the most influential Adventist theologians of the twentieth century.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: Church leaders raising a Sabbath school classroom near the Villa Caoba Adventist Church in La Romana, Dominican Republic.



LIBNA STEVENS / IAD

Top Adventist Leaders Build a Church

Wilson leads the group in taking a break from administrative duties to do something practical.

By LIBNA STEVENS, *Inter-American Division*

■ The Seventh-day Adventist Church's 29 top leaders traded laptops and cell phones for paintbrushes and shovels as they constructed a church building—some for the first time—in the Dominican Republic.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist Church's General Conference, led the group of division presidents, general vice presidents, and other senior church administrators in taking a break from a weeklong business meeting to assist in the project in the Caribbean island's town of La Romana.

"What a privilege it is to take a break from administrative duties to do something practical," Wilson said during morning worship at the hotel where the group was staying. "This is a work of multiplication—expanding the church."

Church leaders gather at the start of every year for a so-called PREXAD

(President's Executive Advisory) planning meeting, but Wilson encouraged the leaders this year to also build a church. Ahead of the meeting, the General Conference contacted Maranatha Volunteers International, an Adventist-affiliated organization known for its One-Day Church building projects, and ultimately settled on the Villa Caoba Adventist Church in La Romana.

The new church building will provide 40 local Adventist members with a place to worship and the first fresh-water well in the local community of 12,000 people. Church members previously worshipped in a humble building with zinc metal sheets on its roof and walls, eight run-down pews, and an uneven dirt floor that got muddy when it rained. Children met for Sabbath school under a tree.

On January 14, 2015, church leaders primed and painted the two restrooms

in the new church, laid brick walls, and placed the roof over the building's frame. They also raised a One-Day structure with metal frames and a roof that will serve as the Sabbath school classroom next to the church.

"It's wonderful to feel the international flavor with all of us here, to work together to expand the church," evangelist Mark Finley said as he painted bathroom walls with General Conference vice presidents Ella Simmons and Armando Miranda.

Finley said two things were going through his mind as he worked: painting correctly and praising God for the opportunity to serve Him.

Simmons, who is completing her second five-year term as the first and only female General Conference vice president, said this was her first time to participate in building a church. "I've wanted to do this for many years. It's so wonderful," she said.

Simmons spent some time painting, then announced that she had graduated to laying blocks.

Building a church with Maranatha was also a first for Israel Leito, president of the Inter-American Division, which includes the Dominican Republic.

"This is a very historic moment to have all the church leaders building a church for our members," he said. "We are so happy, because this assures our members that we are with them, not just sitting in our offices."

Esteban Paredes, pastor of the Villa Caoba Adventist Church, said that the new church was the smallest of the six congregations that he leads, but that the decision of the church leaders to work on the site had left a big impression.

"It is such a joy to see and have the leaders of the Adventist Church from around the world standing shoulder to shoulder to build this temple," he said.



LIBNA STEVENS / IAD

NEW SIGN:
President Ted N.C. Wilson unveiling the sign for Elena G. de White Street as General Conference vice president Amando Miranda, left, translates.

Street Named After **Ellen G. White**

Elena G. de White Street is the first street in the world to be named after the Adventist Church cofounder.

By LIBNA STEVENS, *Inter-American Division*

■ A city in the Dominican Republic has named a street after Seventh-day Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White in recognition of her contribution to the world through her writings.

The decision by La Romana, a city of 130,000 people, marks the first time that a street has been named after White anywhere in the world.

La Romana mayor Maritza Suero announced the renaming of 7th Street to Elena G. de White Street at a ceremony attended by Adventist world church president Ted N. C. Wilson and other church leaders.

"Words are not enough to greet such high personalities of the Christian world here today to this city of La Romana, which we have declared God's city," Suero said in a speech filled with praise for the Adventist Church and its leaders on January 15, 2015.

Wilson thanked the mayor for her kind words, the city's efforts to promote religious freedom, and the commemoration of White's legacy with the street.

As the ceremony was ending, a

senior city official made a surprise announcement that the city was donating a plot of land worth more than \$100,000 to the church so it could construct a new church building. The 500-square-meter property is located in an upper middle class district.

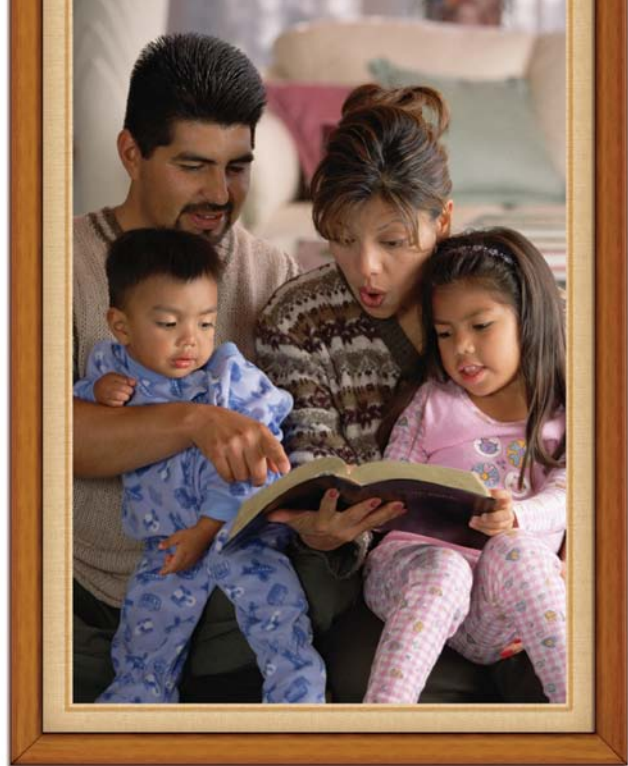
Elena G. de White Street is located in the Villa Alacrán neighborhood, one block from the 60-member La Fe de Villa Alacrán Adventist Church. Wilson and other church leaders later visited the street to unveil the sign and offer a prayer.

The idea to rename the street came from district council member Wanchy Medina, a lifelong Adventist. He said he wanted to recognize White's significant contribution to the world in health and other areas.

G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the Adventist world church and chair of the Ellen G. White Estate's board of trustees, said this was the first time that a street had been named after White and noted that 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of her death.

By TED N. C. WILSON

The Most Important Mission FIELD *Close to Home*



Of all the gifts God has given us, two of the most precious come from the Garden of Eden: the Sabbath and the family. These special gifts center on relationships—with God, and with the people closest to us.

It's interesting that Satan concentrates some of his most vicious attacks on these two special gifts. What God has meant for our greatest happiness, Satan attempts to turn into misery. Let's look specifically at the family.

Family Gift

When God created Adam and Eve, He didn't just create two individuals to coexist side by side. No! Instead, he created a beautiful blending of the two into one special unit—the world's first family!

"Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:23, 24).

What a beautiful, loving picture! How God longed for this closeness, this love, to exist in every family since the beginning. But as we are painfully aware, sin reared its ugly head, bring-

ing misery and sorrow.

But all is not lost. Our Creator is the almighty helper, restorer, and keeper of all things committed to Him (see 2 Tim. 1:12). God can still help families today experience the warmth, love, and closeness He intended. Inspiration promises, "The presence of Christ alone can make men and women happy. All the common waters of life Christ can turn into the wine of heaven. The home then becomes as an Eden of bliss; the family, a beautiful symbol of the family in heaven."¹

Practical Ways to Strengthen Families

What are some practical things we can do to strengthen families? Here are six recommendations:

1. *Take time each day for family worship.* Have a family worship that is not overbearing or long, but something short and uplifting. When our girls were young, we did a lot of reading. When they were very small, we used pocket-sized Bible stories called "Little Fish" books. At the age of 2 our eldest daughter memorized them. Later we read *My Bible Friends*, followed by *The Bible Story*, by Arthur S. Maxwell. The girls sometimes did Bible charades, and of course, we read from the Bible itself.

Then we prayed together—and the children would pray. Prayer was very much a central part of worship, and we wanted the children to feel comfortable with prayer. Now that they are grown, Nancy and I focus on various ways to provide for worships, including Bible reading, yearly devotional books, exchanging an impressive quotation from the Spirit of Prophecy, and always making prayer together a focal point in the morning and at night. For both of us, our daily personal devotional time reading the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy is an absolute. This ultimately reinforces the atmosphere in our expanding family of children and grandchildren.

Pray always with your children, in the morning and at night. Pray with your children and your spouse. Make sure they are placing their day in God's hands. Let the family be sent off in the morning with prayer, and at night conclude with prayer.

When I was a university student, my father took the time to send me a handwritten note with the following quotation:

"Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my

“*Let the family be sent off in the morning with prayer, and at night conclude with prayer.*”

plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee”²

I’ve never forgotten that act of kindness, and I try to consecrate myself every morning.

2. Talk with and pray for your children. Parents, it’s vital that you talk with your children. Ask them about school, their social lives, their spiritual development. Talk with them. Talk. Talk. Talk. Even as they grow older, you can still call or text them—or write them a letter. Don’t badger or annoy them, but make contact.

Engage them in conversation and bring in spiritual thoughts—but not in a demeaning or condemnatory way. Bring in words of encouragement. Tell them you’re praying for them. Pray with them on the phone or in person. Prayer helps your children know that you rely on God. And when you model prayer, it tells them that they too need to rely on God.

3. Affirm and value your children. Show your children that you appreciate them, and that they are individuals in their own right. Give them direction and encouragement toward something of eternal worth—both personally and for their lifework.

A huge factor in affirming and valuing our children is telling them that you believe in them. So many people have a lack of self-worth today. There are many reasons for this, including media messages telling us that if we’re not doing this or don’t have that, then we’re not worth anything.

So tell your children that you believe in them and that you’re proud of them. Take every opportunity to find a reason to affirm them. Don’t berate them, but point them to the Lord as the source of all good things and encourage them in this direction.

I can’t overstate the importance of affirming your children. Don’t stop

doing that once they become adults. It’s important to encourage and affirm them all the way through life.

4. Plan special times together. Plan far in advance for special family activities—whether it’s a picnic, a family night at home, or taking your spouse to dinner. If you’re not intentional about creating activities, you’ll go through life without much interaction with your family. Plan family vacations well in advance, and let everyone help plan a happy and joyous time, rather than stress-filled events with no time to enjoy each other.

Plan some spiritual outreach activities together—such as giving out literature or singing to those in nursing homes or hospitals. Doing something together for others is a great inoculation against the temptations of the devil.

5. Be the change you wish to see. Families were instituted by God Himself, and they are to be a protection against the inroads of cynicism, skepticism, and discouragement. Families were meant to encourage, not to discourage.

Think back on a recent family gathering. Were you annoyed by certain family members? Did you get disgruntled by comments made? Realize that in the family there is great love, but unfortunately there can be great animosity. Learn to forgive, embrace, and encourage your family, even if they are discouraging to you. Reach out to them in the spirit of Christ’s sermon on the mount (see Matt. 5).

In many parts of the world there are extended families, which involve multiple members of the family who live in close proximity and are part of the daily life experience. This can provide encouragement for family members who are in difficult straits. Unfortunately, in the twenty-first century more and more people live far from their families. They can become spiritually disconnected from their spiritual

roots and can fall into patterns of living that are far from what Christ has in mind. Family members, reach out to your loved ones, even if they are half-way across the country or world.

6. Be your brother’s keeper. Families are under enormous attack, and this often results in fractured homes with single parents. To those who find themselves in this situation, take courage from the Lord, for He will fill in the blank spots in your family. He promises, “I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in loving-kindness and mercy” (Hosea 2:19).

The question Cain asked—“Am I my brother’s keeper?”—is answered by Christ as He showed an interest in everyone. This extends also to the church family. We are part of a worldwide family of 18 million brothers and sisters—each with a responsibility of spiritual nurture within this wonderful family.

To Parents Whose Children Have Left the Lord

Never lose hope. Never stop praying for your children. Rethink your approach to them so that you don’t appear condemnatory. Instead, portray the loving-kindness of our heavenly Father, who, through the Holy Spirit, is always wooing us to Him. Recognize that through small efforts and a long-term, continuous demonstration of your interest and love in your children, there will be, by God’s grace, some changes in their attitudes. Pick up on every opportunity to make a positive comment. Take every opportunity to show them that you care.

For Families Facing Challenges

Don’t stop talking with each other, but talk in quiet tones. Too often we hear only what we are saying and not what the other person is saying. As the

Bible says: “Bear one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2). Put yourself in the other person’s shoes and try to be at peace, rather than having a fortress mentality of always sticking up for your opinion. Let the Holy Spirit melt your heart, and in doing so, He will melt the heart of your spouse and children. Let there be a sweet spirit in the home, claiming the promise “Every home should be a place of love, a place where the angels of God abide, working with softening, subduing influence upon the hearts of parents and children.”³

Let’s keep our eyes set on eternal realities. When we get to heaven, God won’t ask us about how much work we did in the church, or how many pamphlets we handed out. As good as those things are, that won’t be the primary focus. Instead He will ask, “What did you do with your family? Where is your little flock?”

A Great Resource

Each year the Family Ministries Department of the General Conference creates resources to help strengthen families. I invite you to visit their Web site at www.family.adventist.org and download their Revival and Reformation e-book, *Building Family Memories*, edited by Family Life directors Willie and Elaine Oliver. This book is a great resource for anyone interested in strengthening their own family, as well as families in the church and community. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 28.

² Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 70.

³ E. G. White, *The Adventist Home*, pp. 18, 19.



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



GLOW: Giving Light to Our World

Giving Light to Our World—GLOW—is an outreach initiative that originated in California, United States, but is now branching out to other world divisions. It’s based on the concept of church members distributing GLOW tracts—free of charge—at every opportunity. The tracts are currently printed in 45 languages.

Here is a short story from the United Kingdom that depicts lives touched by GLOW:

UNITED KINGDOM: James,* a church member in the United Kingdom, was traveling on a public bus when he felt impressed to share a tract with a young man sitting next to him. Plucking up the courage to speak, James explained that he was involved with a literature-distribution project to raise awareness of what the Bible says will happen in the last days of earth’s history. A discussion ensued, and when it was time for James to get off the bus, he pointed out the address of the local Adventist church printed on the back of the tract and invited the young man to attend.

One Sabbath about a year later James walked into church and was surprised but delighted to see the young man from the bus. He told James that he had come to learn more about the Adventist Church. A few months later, following Bible studies, the young man was baptized—an event he invited his entire family to attend.

“I was stunned that it was so simple,” James says. “Sometimes we are looking for big ways to share truths, but God just needed me to be on a bus with a GLOW tract at the right time.”

Stories are compiled by Pacific Union Conference, United States, GLOW director Nelson Ernst and International GLOW coordinator Kamil Metz. To learn more about GLOW, go to sdaglow.org. To watch video GLOW testimonies, go to vimeo.com/user13970741.

*pseudonym





By PETER N. LANDLESS
and ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES

ADHD

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Our grandson is fidgety and finds it hard to follow directions. His teacher and parents say that he has inattention and hyperactivity, and is very impulsive. They have labeled him with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. We think maybe all he needs is stricter discipline, but his parents have asked us to “stay out of it.” Do you have any advice?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a stressful situation for all. Blunt though it may seem, however, the advice to “stay out of it” may be a request for you to help diminish the parental distress and anxiety.

This disorder can have many repercussions and has been intensively studied. It is diagnosed on behavioral symptoms, many of which you describe. The disorder compromises learning to read and making friends, and features of it persist into adulthood. ADHD is associated with low rates of high school graduation, and can be a problem in job retention. Well-meaning though you are, non-critical, loving support and kindness will be much more appreciated than comments on the child’s behavior and advice about stricter discipline.

ADHD is not diagnosed in children and adolescents exhibiting age-compatible exuberance, but may be associated with long-term adverse effects. Consequently, diagnosis relies upon “validated parent and teacher rating scales that assess the child’s behavior in everyday situations in various environments.”*

Learning disorders and anxiety, as well as depression, are all factors that bring distress not only to the family but also to the child who experiences this disorder.

Professional assessments are necessary to be sure there is neither overdiagnosis nor inadequate responsiveness to the situation. Overdiagnosis is a distinct possibility, because there is a high prevalence in countries such as the United States. Boys are more at risk than girls. International rates suggest that about 5 percent of boys may have the condition, while in the U.S. an increase of 33 percent from 1997 to 1999 and 2006 to 2008 occurred.

The diagnostic criteria are delineated in the U.S. in the American Psychiatric Association Practice Guidelines: “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).” At least six to nine symptoms are required for diagnosis and must be present before the age of 12. The international classification uses the term *hyperkinetic disorder*.

Problems with many of these disorders are that the severity may range from mild to severe, and the outcomes may also be different. Some studies have shown a genetic component, with about 76 percent heritability being suggested.

Neuroimaging has shown delays in the maturing of the brain cortex, and many believe there is a dysfunction in the nerve electrical function of the brain.

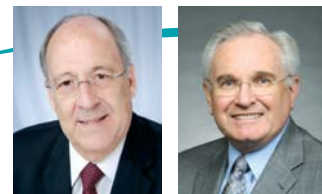
Management is complex, and it’s important to have an extremely experienced team involved in care that works with parents in the home.

Laypeople often ask about medication, and the use of stimulants has been shown to reduce symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Although symptomatic improvement may occur with medication, behavioral therapy is central to management. By the use of rewards and other consequences, as well as behavioral parent training, many children are helped. Many people recommend complementary therapies, such as dietary supplements, vitamins, changes in diet, removal of sugar from the diet, chelation therapy (removing metals from the body), etc. Some of these approaches are harmless, but some may cause adverse effects. There is insufficient evidence to recommend these therapies, and chelation and megavitamins can actually be harmful in this situation.

A quiet, peaceful home environment with structured routines, including devotional time, will contribute to the tranquility needed by such children—as it is by us all. Avoidance of exciting TV programs and too much electronic gaming are also things we strongly suggest.

As grandparents, continue to be reliable, trustworthy, loving, and supportive “oases” in what can be a very trying time for parents. Avoid giving advice; give love instead. ■

*Heidi M. Feldman and Michael I. Reiff, “Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 370 (Feb. 27, 2014): 838-846.



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A PROMISE

By DENNIS MEIER

Is a Promise

*“And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day” (Gen. 18:1).**

The fire that completely destroyed Malden Mills on December 11, 1995, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, was one of the biggest factory disasters in the history of the state of Massachusetts. Following the tragedy, affecting thousands of workers, Malden Mills CEO Aaron Feuerstein announced that he would keep his employees on payroll—and that he would rebuild. Most clothing factory insiders had expected Feuerstein to take the huge insurance check and rebuild the factory in Asia where most North American mills had relocated. Was he really serious or was this just a public relations stunt?

In Genesis 18, God shows His faithfulness by visiting Abraham’s camp and enjoying the blessings of a shared meal. God not only comes to eat delicious food. He has come to visit with his friend Abraham. In fact, there is a special reason for this meeting, since this is not the first time that God has come to Abraham.

In the course of the conversation the reason for this particular meeting becomes clear. If you look closely, you will find that only a few verses earlier (Gen. 17:21) a similar encounter had occurred. God had said to Abraham: “But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.”

The Reason for the Visit

God’s visit at the Oaks of Mamre has a backstory. God comes to repeat a promise that was either not taken seriously or not heard correctly. Somehow Abraham must have “heard” the promise without really “believing” it.

We can use our “sanctified imagination” to picture the scene. While all the others are talking and enjoying the sumptuous meal, God unobtrusively leans over to Abraham, and there ensues the following dialogue:

God: “Abraham?”

Abraham: “Yes, Sir?”

God: “About the talk three months ago—do you remember?”

Abraham: “Of course, Sir, the thing with the covenant and the great nation and the circumcision, right?”

God: “Yes, exactly. So Abraham, what do we need for a great nation?”

Abraham: “People! Many people!”

God: “Well, Abraham, where should they come from? Remember My words!”

Abraham: “Well, obviously from me—and Sarah.”

God: “That’s right, Abraham. Let’s be direct: I spoke to you three months ago and I said that in one year Sarah shall have a son. Do you remember?”

Abraham: “Yes, but I thought that . . .”

God: “Apart from thinking, what did you do, you and Sarah, along the lines of multiplication?”

Then God repeats conspicuously loud the words: “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son” (Gen. 18:10).

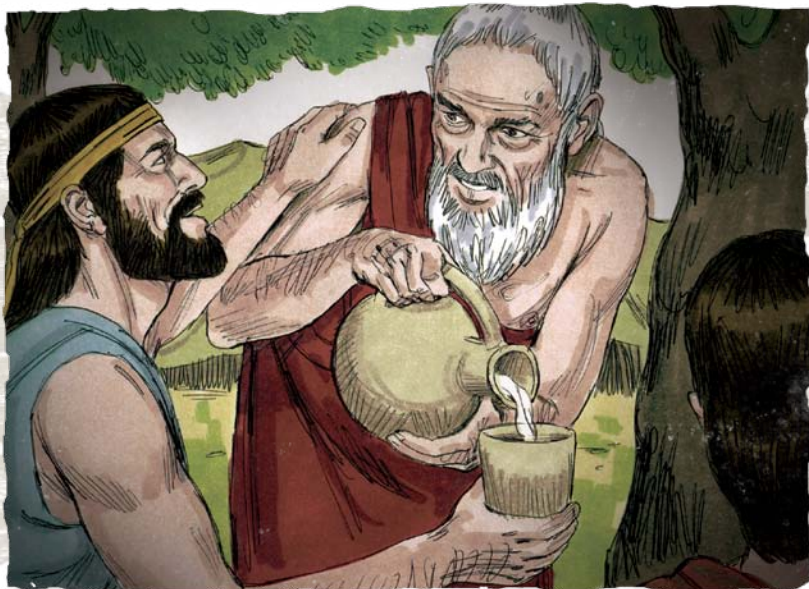
Now we know why God had to visit Abraham in Mamre. Three months had passed, and nothing had happened. God’s promise had been “heard” as an empty phrase. Perhaps the promise had been spiritualized. Perhaps Abraham reasoned, as theologians often do, that there was a hermeneutical problem, a problem of interpretation. In any case, action did not follow the promise.

A promise that is not applied, not lived out, remains an empty phrase or becomes an oracle.

God Visits Us

Followers of Christ have a whole bag full of promises in their luggage. God has given them to us. Sometimes they are applicable to everyone; others are very personal.

A promise that applies to all of us, and is meant as seriously as the announcement of the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, is the following sentence spoken by Jesus:



“The fulfillment of the promise comes through action; through action we express our confidence in God.”

“Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). We have to realize how radical this promise is. It is not dependent on whether we feel Jesus close to us. It is also not dependent on whether we always do the right thing. Dogmatic correctness is not a condition for its fulfillment. It applies unconditionally to all who are partakers of the kingdom of God (verses 18, 19).

There are times in our lives that we’re not sure if Jesus is with us. Serious illness, disappointment, or depression may cloud our sense of God’s nearness.

But there is another lesson: God’s second visit teaches us that it is not about religious words, but about the fact that promises may require action on our part. Abraham would have the promised child only by enjoying his conjugal obligations with Sarah. The fulfillment of the promise comes through action; through action we express our confidence in God.

After I had preached about this concept, a church member who had suffered greatly from an illness asked me a tough question. He wanted to know why his prayers for healing had not been answered. Others had prayed for him according to James 5, and he had read the promise of healing literally (James 5:15: “The Lord will raise [the patient] up”). How could he in a practical way claim this promise and live it?

The answer, however, does not lie in a mechanical do this and then that will happen. Promises are trustworthy pledges of a loving relationship. In Jesus’ promise found in Matthew 28:20, the Master says that He is there until the end. Then *He is there*—even if we do not notice it. Why? Because only One who loves me and wants to be near me can make such a pledge. This promise is also true for disease and illness. It could mean that healing is not always a visible improvement for us; it could come only later, and sometimes only in the resurrection. But even that is also a matter of trust.

The promise is lived in faith, and faith grows in a rela-

tionship; a relationship in turn grows when we invest in it. Relationships are the perpetual motion (*perpetuum mobile*) that scholars have sought after for centuries: they are driven by their own energy, which they themselves produce.

Strictly speaking, therefore, it is not about claiming a promise in order for it to be fulfilled (the so-called name-it-and-claim-it theology), but rather to act, because we know the One who has promised. Then we can move forward, because we know God is there. Through prayer we can take Him with us into our daily life. We can let go. The text simply says: With God, nothing is impossible (cf. Gen. 18:14).

A Fulfilled Promise

God’s promises were fulfilled. Sarah actually became pregnant and gave birth to a son. In the letter to the Hebrews Sarah is praised for her trust in God (Heb. 11:11).

By the way, my sick church member is much better. And CEO Aaron Feuerstein kept his promise. Keeping his employees on payroll during the reconstruction of the factory in Massachusetts cost him more than \$25 million and ultimately control over his company—but he did what he said he would do.

God keeps His promises. No matter what you’re going through, He does not leave you. The promise applies. Now get up and live it.

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



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Some time ago a friend of mine told me that this is a true story. A religious man was smoking a cigarette under a truck trailer. Someone asked him why he was smoking under the truck. He answered: “Because down here God cannot see me.”

Understanding God is the foundation of any spiritual life. Because I grew up in a nominally Catholic country, for me this vision had to do with grandeur, solemnity, and distance. It was a matter of place, time, and right behavior. I was taught that God lived in heaven but that we could meet Him three times a week, if faithfully attending church services, and that I should behave well in His presence. In my daily life I perceived

Much to my surprise, the Psalms showed me that the closer I got, the more I saw Him as the one who lives enveloped in the light of glory (Ps. 104:1, 2) and whose power and majesty is beyond human comprehension (Ps. 8; 139:6). I was surprised to realize that the holy God of the Psalms did not focus only upon my sins and shortcomings (Ps. 130:3, 4). The direction of a heart loyal to God seemed to be more important than the state of the heart (Ps. 106). The sacred poems and hymns invited me to come boldly and humbly to find security, peace, and rest under His shadow (Ps. 91:1, 2). In this intimate closeness I understood where lives are transformed and where

NUMBER 3

Visions

By PAULO CÂNDIDO
DE OLIVEIRA

Discovering a surprisingly colorful picture of God in the Psalms

OF God

Him more like a grouchy old neighbor, constantly snooping around to catch and punish me for doing something wrong. I would mostly avoid Him except in desperate situations.

Later I met a very different God in the book of Psalms. I found Him on the streets, in shops, on corners, and in homes—always involved in the lives of people. I was surprised to see a colorful picture as He reveals Himself amid life’s messiness.

The vision of God in the book of Psalms introduced me to three characteristics of God that changed my view of Him and paved the way to spiritual vitality.

Present, Not Distant

The first characteristic, and maybe the most striking reality in the Psalms, is that God is always close to us (Ps. 139). The distorted vision of a distant God seems to be a widely shared assumption. It is easier and safer to deal with a distant God. He is less intimidating, more mysterious, and, perhaps, holier.

we receive the strength to be faithful. Then it was just a matter of allowing Him to pull me toward Him. I suddenly realized that we could neither leave nor come into His presence. Rather, with no possibility of secrets, we exist in His presence (Ps. 139:7).

Active, Not Silent

A second characteristic is God’s active engagement in human history (Ps. 135:6, 7). The distant God I knew was also a silent one, rarely seen or heard. I was puzzled as to how He could be mostly absent and mute in the face of misery and vastly unconcerned with humanity’s chaos. In awe I watched the slow unveiling of the face of a God who doesn’t leave humanity to its own fate, or nature to its own laws. The Psalms revealed Him as exercising control over everything (Ps. 103:19), including nations and nature (Ps. 9:7, 8; 104:14, 15, 27, 28).

Today, social and natural upheavals create a sense of uncertainty and anxiety. But the assurance in the Psalms is

*“I was wrong.
God is not distant,
silent, or angry.”*

that God holds the future—our future—in His hands (Ps. 16:5). It was comforting to learn of His care for the one He knits together in a mother’s womb (Ps. 139:13), and I finally came face to face with His providence (Ps. 138:7, 8). He hears our prayers and responds with protection, freedom, and salvation (Ps. 18:5, 6, 16-19). His eyes follow us as beams of light in the darkest night. He hears those who are in desperate debt (Ps. 103:8) and is a refuge when we face danger (Ps. 57:1). He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry (Ps. 107:8), while faithfully standing on the side of the needy (Ps. 109:31).

Furthermore, He reminded me that He lovingly blesses the faithful *and* the unfaithful alike (Ps. 104:5-31). I smiled in surprise as I recognized how He makes Himself known, full of compassion and mercy (Ps. 111:4).

Loving, Not Angry

Finally, His third characteristic pointed me to the silhouette of a loving God. When I started out, I saw the picture of an angry, unhappy God. But the pictures hanging on the walls of the book of Psalms are not of a frowning face. It was a breath of fresh air to understand that He has a sense of humor (Ps. 2:4) and gives joy and happiness (Ps. 4:5-8). He specializes in turning darkness into light (Ps. 18:28) and even enjoys joyful noise (Ps. 100:1, 2). I wanted to run to Him when the Psalms revealed that He was not the grouchy God seated on a cloud with lightning

in His hand ready to strike those who disobey Him. Now I could enjoy Him as the source of contentment (Ps. 126).

I couldn’t get my eyes off Psalm 136, in which He insists on declaring Himself as the loyal loving one. The authors of the Psalms—David, Asaph, Korah, Moses, Heman, Ethan, Solomon, and Jeduthun—all trusted God (Ps. 130:5) and understood that to know Him is to trust Him (Ps. 9:10).

Israel’s history is full of terrible acts of infidelity toward God. They range from envying Moses and Aaron to sacrificing children to demons. Israel rejected the Promised Land and ate food in honor of Baal. Yet in spite of all the evil actions of Israel, He still responded with mercy and care (Ps. 106).

I was wrong. God is not distant, silent, or angry. He longs to give prosperity and blessings to our families (Ps. 128; 144:12-15).

Genuine Vision

If those who argue that God doesn’t exist are fools (Ps. 14:1), so are those who think God won’t see them under a truck trailer. Fortunately, God doesn’t leave us alone to construct a black-and-white god after our own image.

The real God, in the real world, walks on our dirty streets and listens to our most mundane and trivial conversations. He wets His hands wiping the tears of the poor and the scared. He smells tragedy and hears the agony of the lost. He smiles at children playing. He joins in joyful songs at our weddings and takes note of the vows of young couples. He whispers creative ideas into the ears of poets and gives new harmonies to musicians. He is the God of everything that is human: truly, a safe dwelling place (Ps. 90:1). ■



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God THE *Father*

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The

qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

Zuki and Pali, husband and wife, clasped hands as they stood together on a small grassy mound and gazed at the beginnings of a new Adventist church. What are we doing? they each silently asked themselves. How foolish can we be? Pali looked at her husband and spoke out loud the words they both were thinking: “Is God really leading in this project? Are we truly following His plan?”

Zuki didn’t answer at first. Instead, he drew her to him as he began walking around the two-story structure still in early construction, peeking inside windows. He envisioned children singing and praying in Sabbath school classrooms while adults sat together in comfortable pews, studying the Bible. The community room would easily hold a few hundred people, providing opportunity for fellowship, eating meals together, and planning outreach programs. It would be an impressive structure, a place that would honor God and welcome visitors. But it could cost him and Pali everything they had—everything! Does God truly expect that from us? he wondered. Maybe we should just explain and apologize to the people and move on. Surely they will understand.

Zuki’s inner turmoil threatened to overwhelm him, but he let his thoughts drift back to when the project first began.

Zukisani (“Zuki”) Mxoli, a successful architect and property developer living with his wife, Palesa (“Pali”), and five children in Johannesburg, South Africa, always made time to share his faith with others. Not only did he talk about God with friends and coworkers—Zuki was also a lay preacher and evangelist. Leading out in numerous Weeks of Prayer and evangelistic meetings, Zuki rejoiced whenever he saw people accept Jesus as their Savior.

“I’d always had a passion for evangelism,” Zuki says, “but sometimes I struggled between running my



Above: IN PROCESS: The Thembelihle Adventist church at an early stage of construction



Left: YOUNG HELPING HANDS: Even the children from the Thembelihle congregation helped to clean up around the church.

By SANDRA BLACKMER

Builders

for

God

Zuki and Pali Mxoli risk it all.





THE MXOLIS: Zuki and Pali

business and soul winning. On one hand, I had to rush about to try to make money, to make a living for my family and me; on the other hand, I needed to prepare sermons and preach. It was a big dilemma.”

Zuki and Pali began praying about the situation, asking God to resolve the conflict. The Lord impressed them with the Bible text: “Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). The Mxolis took this to mean that God wasn’t asking them to give up their business, but instead to use it as an evangelistic tool.

So the question was “How do we minister to others with a contracting business?”

The answer? “Build a church.”

“We found a congregation in Katilehong that had purchased a site and a basic steel structure but had no money to construct the church,” Zuki explains. “They had been struggling to raise funds for many years. They were worshipping in a very small classroom—a lot of people stuck in one small room—and trying to build a church. They invited us to come and preach, and while we were there, that’s when it hit us: *Ah! We can help these people! We have the skill, the means, and the money!*”

We were blessed with considerable profits from building projects, so we decided to use the profits from one

project to build a church for this group for free. We encouraged the members to continue raising funds, however, so they could pay for specific things they wanted for their church. The profits from the rest of our building projects would be used for our family’s living expenses. We would do this once a year: find a group that needed a church and build it for them for free, and the rest of the income would be for us.

“That’s what we *thought* would be good and fine and acceptable to the Lord,” he says.

Not Going as Planned

Zuki told the church members that God would provide the means, and that his company would build their church at little or no cost to them. The people were ecstatic! Things, however, didn’t go as planned.

Right after the builders had set the foundation and began building up the walls, the project from which Zuki planned to use the profits to build the church fell through. The local municipality leaders challenged the land agreement, and because of that the bank refused to fund the client any additional money. The church-building resources dried up almost overnight.

“We asked ourselves, ‘Now what?’” Zuki explains. “Do we tell the church folk, ‘Look, we’ve done this much, so you can now finish at your own pace?’ Or do we continue? We decided to continue.”

Zuki began using profits from other building projects, funds that were to cover his family’s living expenses, for the church project. But it wasn’t just a small church with four walls and a roof that Zuki had designed. It was an expansive, impressive, two-story facility estimated at US\$300,000.

“As recorded in Exodus, God was specific regarding the building of His sanctuary,” Zuki notes. “He required

fine linen, pure gold, the best wood. So we decided that we must do our best for this church to glorify God.”

At first Zuki and Pali were not overly concerned about losing the project money; the Lord had blessed their business, and they believed they still could provide the funding. New projects generally arrived quickly at their door. But now, for some reason, that wasn’t happening.

“We weren’t getting any work at all,” Zuki says. “I did everything that I’d been doing for the past 15 years, but it wasn’t working. So, basically, we dried up our savings in order to fund the church construction.”

The situation, unfortunately, went from bad to worse. With no new work coming in—in spite of all Zuki’s efforts to “put the company out there”—and with almost all their income being used to fund the church, the couple was barely scraping by financially. In time they no longer were able to make even their mortgage and car payments, and the bank eventually threatened to repossess everything.

Confronting the Challenge

“Repossession was the biggest challenge we were faced with,” Zuki says. “We weren’t sure what to do. So together we prayed to God. When we stood up from that home prayer corner, we looked at each other, and in unison we said, ‘We continue with the church.’”

In spite of the counsel of their lawyer and accountant, who told them to “stop being foolish,” Zuki and Pali pressed on, remembering 1 Corinthians 2, where it says that the things of God “are foolishness” to those who are unbelieving, but not to those who have “the mind of Christ.”

It wasn’t an easy decision, though. The financial stress was causing turmoil and stress at home, and the couple sometimes felt confused and discouraged. That’s when Zuki would say

to his wife, “Let’s just drive to the plot. Let’s just go to the site.”

“We would spend two hours there, just walking around as the people were working,” Zuki says. “Then so much peace would come, and we would feel assured that this was what we must do, no matter the cost to ourselves.”

He adds, “The church folk didn’t know about our situation. They were just praising God for the wonderful thing that was happening. And those smiles! They gave us the strength to continue. We just knew that God wanted us to build this church. And our personal focus began to change. Instead of praying for money to buy homes and cars, we were simply praying, ‘God, help us to finish the church.’”

Finally, after not making house and car payments for three months, the bank set the date to repossess everything of value belonging to the Mxolis. It was to happen in three days, at noon. Pressure of what people would think, particularly the church people, weighed on the couple’s hearts; even stronger, though, was their commitment to stay true to God and what He had called them to do. So they trusted in God’s care and moved forward in faith.

The Lord Steps In

Three days before the bank was to shut them down, Zuki received a phone call. It was from a businessman in Durban, about 550 kilometers (340 miles) from Johannesburg. He needed an experienced contractor to oversee a construction project for him in Johannesburg and asked whether Zuki would be interested in taking on the job. He had recently learned about Zuki, he said, when he drove by “a beautiful church building coming up” and stopped to take a look. The people there explained that the property developer was building the church for the congregation at his own cost. The

businessman, who was a Christian, thought, *Wow! If there is anybody I can trust, it’s someone who will give their money for a church.* He soon contacted Zuki and offered him the job. And it was no small project. “It was huge!” Zuki says.

The businessman flew to Johannesburg that same day, and by the next evening the paperwork was done and the contract signed—a process that usually takes months to complete for a project this large, Zuki notes. The man then asked for Zuki’s bank information so he could transfer funds for the deposit.

Early the next morning, the day the bank was to repossess Zuki and Pali’s home and other assets, Zuki checked his bank account, hoping that the usual 5 to 10 percent deposit was there. Instead, he saw that the businessman had advanced him 50 percent of the funding!

“I called him right away and said, ‘You made a mistake. You put in too much money.’ He responded that it was no mistake and said, ‘I trust you, because you have given your all to building God’s church.’”

The noon deadline arrived, and so did the people to repossess the family’s vehicles and other belongings. But Zuki stopped them and said, “We want to make arrangements to pay you.”

They responded, “No, we don’t want to talk to you about any arrangement, because you’ve been promising for so long. We’re just coming to pick up your stuff.”

“No, no, no, you don’t understand,” Zuki said to them. “We’re not wanting to negotiate. We want to pay you off! We just need to know: Do you want a check or cash?”

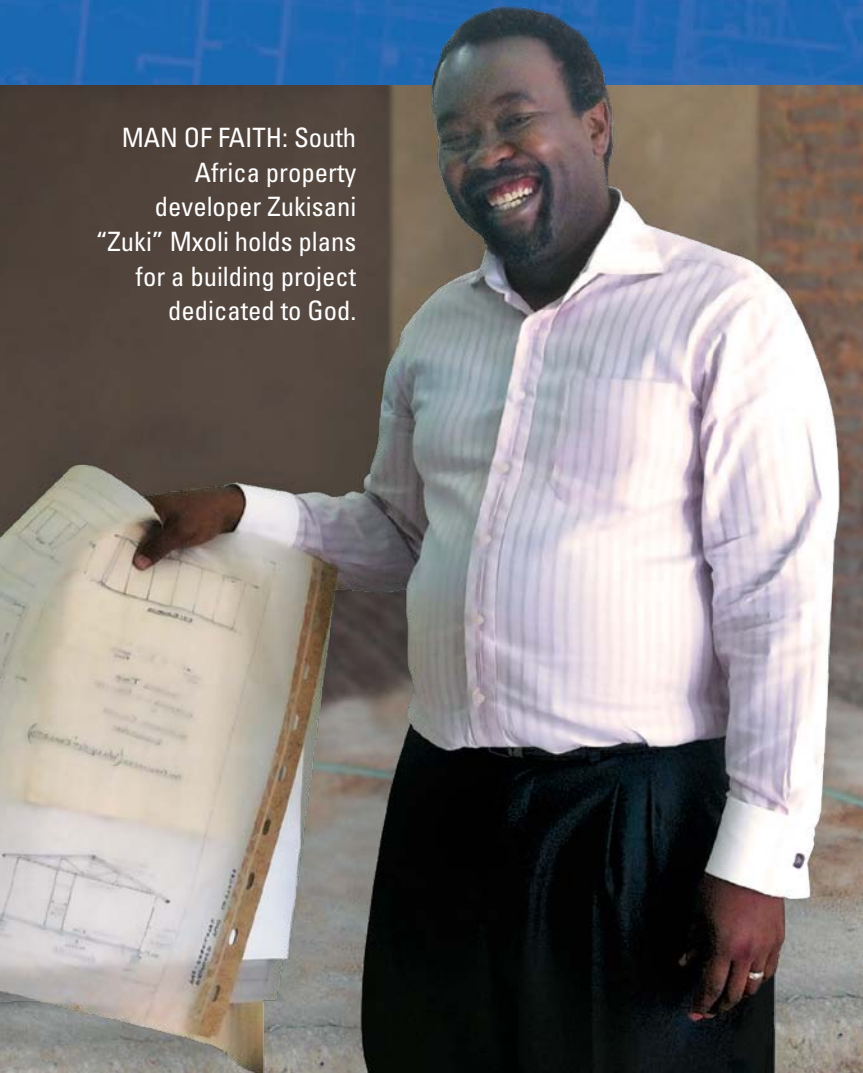
“It was the greatest moment of our lives,” he says.



COMPLETED PROJECT:
Zambia Union Conference
office in Lusaka, Zambia, after
construction was completed.



ZAMBIA UNION BEGINNINGS: Posing together at the construction site of the new Zambia Union Conference office (from left) are Zambia Union Conference president Harrington Akombwa; U.S. missionary Dennis Evans; General Conference vice president Pardon Mwansa; property developer Zuki Mxoli; and Francis Makuwa, Zambian associate to Dennis Evans.



MAN OF FAITH: South Africa property developer Zukisani “Zuki” Mxoli holds plans for a building project dedicated to God.

The Work Continues

The church in Katlehong, named the Thembelihle Seventh-day Adventist Church, has since been completed, and people are worshipping there. Zuki’s business is booming again, and the couple’s financial concerns are in the past.

So what are they doing now? Under the auspices of their newly developed ministry called “The Word Lives Ministry Co-mission,” they continue to donate and build not only churches for God, but many other facilities as well. These include, among others, an administration building and classrooms for the Maluti School of Nursing in Lesotho, a science building for Rusangu University in Zambia, a library and chapel for Kanye Adventist Hospital in Botswana, married housing quarters for Helderberg College in Cape Town, and office headquarters for the Zambia Union Conference in Lusaka. Sometimes Zuki pays the total cost of construction; other times he partners with the church members or organization and pays perhaps half the cost of the project. The requests for help are pouring in, and Zuki and Pali continue in faith to take on donation projects—which now extend into seven countries.

“Once we take on a project, we make the commitment and then we ask God to provide the money—and He does,” Zuki says. “Our faith in Him is growing every day.

“We tell people, ‘This is not just a Zuki thing; this is a God thing. What He’s done for us and what He is continuing to do in our lives He can do in anybody’s life. You just need to take that step of faith.’” ■



Sandra Blackmer is an assistant editor of *Adventist World*.

By
JULIAN ARCHER

Faith *Versus* Finance

Does affluence affect spirituality?



Seesaws, or teeter-totters, are common in playgrounds around the world. The name “seesaw” is a direct Anglicization of the French word *ci-ça*, meaning literally, “this-that.” The seesaw is an “either/or,” a “this or that,” mechanical device. You can have only one side at the top at any given time; never both.

Is that how it is with faith and finance? Can we have *only* faith or finance, never both? Or is it only *great* faith and *great* finance that tend to seesaw?

What I’ve Learned in the Playground “Down Under”

According to the latest reports, my home country of Australia is one of the most affluent nations on earth. The 2013 Credit Suisse *Global Wealth Report* shows that Australian adults have the second-highest wealth level of any country on the planet (second only to Switzerland), and that our median wealth level per adult is the highest on the planet, more than double Switzerland’s. This means that we’re not only extremely wealthy (even though we may not always feel it), but our wealth is also more evenly distrib-

uted than in many other nations.

As a Christian who spent many years trying to maintain a strong relationship with God while my income was high enough for me to live self-sufficiently. I must ask the question “What impact does affluence have on spirituality, including my own?” Does it lead us nearer to God, to a greater faith? Or does it turn our eyes from Him? Or perhaps finances are completely unrelated to faith?

Searching for the Answer

In 2009 a Gallup poll reported on their surveys conducted in 114 countries. One of the questions the Gallup organization asked was “Is religion an important part of your daily life?” Gallup also researched the per-capita income levels for each country and then made correlations between the two.

The data made it clear that the seesaw effect is in full swing. The *higher* the per-capita income of a nation, the *lower* the role of religion in daily life, and vice versa.

Let’s zoom in on some of the nations at the top and bottom of the “faith versus finance” seesaw. The accompanying table is based on data

from both the Gallup poll and the Credit Suisse *Global Wealth Report*.

The data clearly show a great divide—in both the importance of religion and levels of wealth—between the world’s richest (less religious) and poorest (more religious) nations.

It could be argued that the reason for the high wealth ranking of these “Top 10” wealthiest nations shown in the table is that they originally based their societies and business practices on Christian principles, and God blessed them. Times are changing, however. The seesaw has tilted, and affluence is toppling both religion and spirituality.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “The fact is, the moment that financial stability is assured, spiritual bankruptcy is also assured.”

Gandhi seems to be reflecting Jesus’ words: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25).

I know from my personal experience that when a person is financially blessed they’re in the most spiritually dangerous stage of their life. The higher my income went, the less I felt my need for God. My income taxed my spirituality.

Living the Dream?

As I run Faith Versus Finance seminars, I see that most affluent Christians, in their deepest hearts, really do want a vibrant, life-changing relationship with God. But they're frustrated. They feel as if they're being forced to live a life focused on earthly priorities when they know that true satisfaction and fulfillment come only from eternal things. I can hear their cries because I spent years "living the dream" but aching for a deeper relationship with God.

I finally realized that God's material blessings had become a curse in my spiritual life. It's not that God's blessings are curses, but we often use them in such a way that they become curses. When we allow God's material blessings to fill our hearts, we can't open our heart's door to Jesus. And that's a curse—an eternal curse.

The Bible is full of examples in which the mistreatment of God's blessings led to curses. In Deuteronomy 6, Moses tells the children of Israel that they're about to enter a "land flowing with milk and honey" (verse 3). But then he adds the clincher: "When you have eaten and are full—then beware, lest you forget the Lord" (verses 11, 12). It's a powerful reminder that a full stomach can make us very sleepy.

Seesaw Snapshot

So what does this seesaw look like in the day-to-day life of a comfortable Christian? Let's look at three areas:

Construction: When I "build bigger barns" and store up my treasures here on earth, it distracts me from eternal riches. I start to worry about them, and I invest increasing amounts of time and energy into protecting and multiplying

Country	Mean Adult Wealth (US\$,000)	"Is religion an important part of your daily life?" % Answered "NO"
Switzerland	513	57%
Australia	403	67%
Norway	380	78%
Luxembourg	315	64%
USA	301	36%
Sweden	299	88%
France	296	74%
Singapore	282	53%
Belgium	256	68%
Denmark	255	83%
THE GREAT DIVIDE		
Thailand	8	2%
India	5	9%
Haiti	4	8%
Pakistan	4	4%
Kenya	3	3%
Cambodia	3	3%
Nepal	2	5%

the blessings instead of trusting completely in Him. My finances rise, but my faith falls; and I often don't even realize it (see Rev. 3:17).

Time: The first indicator of spiritual apathy is the crippling and cropping of my time with God. This usually occurs during periods of increased time pressures because of financial, personal, entertainment, or other priorities. The problem could last just a few mornings, or perhaps even many years. When I neglect to spend quality time praying and studying the Scriptures, my relationship with Christ weakens.

Heart: Whenever I fill my heart with the gifts instead of the Giver, my faith falls. When Christ knocks on the door of my material-blessings-filled heart (verse 20), the sound of His knocking is muffled. And even when I do hear it, I struggle to climb over all my material blessings to reach out and open the door.

Ellen White referred to this crowded-heart syndrome when she wrote, "The heavenly Guest is standing at your door, while you are piling up obstructions to bar His entrance. Jesus is knocking through the prosperity He

gives you. He loads you with blessings to test your fidelity, that they may flow out from you to others. Will you permit your selfishness to triumph? Will you squander God's talents, and lose your soul through idolatrous love of the blessings He has given?"*

This is very challenging territory, but it begs the question Does our faith *always* need to decrease as our affluence rises? Is the faith-versus-finance seesaw an unchangeable, universal principle?

Breaking the Seesaw

God offers a cure for every person who realizes that their affluent lifestyle is damaging their spiritual life. It's a heart attack! Not a cardiac arrest, but a total *spiritual* heart transplant. In Ezekiel 36:26 God tells us that He wants to give us a new heart, a loving heart of flesh, to replace our materialistic heart of stone.

We must be converted again. We can be active church members and financial supporters of God's work but still contract spiritual heart disease. We need a total heart transplant.

Instead of faith *versus* finance, it can and should be faith *and* finance. Or even better, faith regardless of finance.

May we be true to God in all things, including our material blessings. ■

* Ellen G. White, in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 2, 1886.



Julian Archer is the author of *Help! I've Been Blessed!* He writes from Toowoomba in Queensland, Australia.



LEGACY
of LIGHT

1827
1915

ELLEN
GOULD
WHITE

PART 2: 1860-1868

The Years of Church Development

GOD'S MESSENGER

The Ministry Expands

*A look at Ellen White's
life and legacy*

By ANNA GALENIECE

The official history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church began in 1860 with the choosing of its name and the incorporation of a small publishing association in 1861. With this humble beginning, Adventist believers started to view themselves as an organization. They united into local conferences, and the Michigan Conference was established in October 1861.

Up to this time, Ellen White's messages had been directed mostly toward supporting the believers in their faithfulness to God and biblical doctrines, sustaining the publishing work, and pointing to the need of church organization. Now the time came to enlarge the vision of Adventists so they would start to see the expanding mission of the church. Thus, in May of 1863, 20 delegates from six of the seven state conferences¹ decided to get together and organize the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as the central governing body.

Health Highlighted

On June 5 (sometimes dated June 6 because it happened after sundown on Friday), 1863, just two weeks after the first official General Conference session, and several years after the consolidation of the church's main doctrines, the Whites were visiting the Hilliard family in Otsego, Michigan. While there, Ellen White was taken into a vision that lasted about 45 minutes. She was given a comprehensive health reform message² that God wanted her to deliver to the believers. This was not the first time she was shown the need for a healthier lifestyle. In 1848 the Lord revealed to her the danger of using tobacco, tea, and cof-



ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

FAMILY PORTRAIT: James and Ellen White pose with sons Willie (middle) and Edson (far right) for a family picture in 1865, two years after the death of Henry (inset, left).

fee,³ and in 1854 He revealed that houses of the saints should be kept tidy and their appetites must be controlled.⁴

The comprehensive vision at the Hilliard home not only included the benefits of having a healthy body and surrounding environment, but also presented the close connection between health and spirituality, which is not just a personal matter of the believer. Ellen White saw that this message "should wake up minds to the subject"⁵ because of its social and mission implications.

In addition to these new understandings, the year 1863 ended up with a missing page in the White family album. Their eldest son, Henry Nichols, became sick with pneumonia and died on December 8, at Topsham, Maine. It was a heavy blow to the parents, especially to his mother, to lose their 16-year-old son, a "sweet singer,"⁶ because of their ignorance of simple home remedies with which they became acquainted in the near future.

Just two months after the death of Henry, the family's third son, Willie,

became sick with the same disease. This time the mother applied hydrotherapy with fervent prayers that sustained and healed the boy.

However, the results of the great controversy battle—sickness, pain, and death—did visit the home of God’s messenger several times. Earlier, the White’s fourth child, John Herbert, had died at the age of just 3 months in 1860.

The Learning Continues

The year 1864 marked at least several important events in the ministry of Ellen White. First, she published the fourth volume of *Spiritual Gifts*, subtitled “Important Facts of Faith: Laws of Health, and Testimonies Nos. 1-10.” It included a 32-page chapter describing the comprehensive health message revealed to her on June 5, 1863. At the same time she finished the pamphlet *Appeal to Mothers*.

A visit to James C. Jackson’s medical institution, “Our Home on the Hillside,” in Dansville, New York, in early September of 1864 was another significant event that took place. On their trip to Boston, Massachusetts, the Whites stopped at this medical institution and became impressed with the natural treatment they observed there.

Ellen White, however, did not fully agree with Jackson’s approach to health reform. She had a better understanding on the subject from her health visions. Thus, she continued the writing on health-related topics and published six pamphlets entitled *Health: or How to Live* in 1865. Through the subjects of health, nutrition, and lifestyle Ellen White called people to faithful observance of God’s natural laws.

Extensive travel, preaching, writing, the publishing work, leadership responsibilities, and a number of other obligations, in addition to various family tasks and poverty, took a toll on James White.

On August 16, 1865, he collapsed from exhaustion and became stricken with paralysis, the first of a series of strokes that also affected his personality. Thus, in addition to her burden of being a prophet, writer, speaker, counselor, and mother, she had to also take care of her sick husband.

In December 1865 the Whites were able to travel to Rochester, New York, and stay at the home of friends. They assembled together on Christmas Day to pray for James’s deteriorating health. During that time she was taken into a vision in which she was instructed on how to aid her husband’s recovery. She was given important guidance on establishing a health-care institution in which the proper principles of health would be implemented and taught to the patients. This vision, integrating health reform with religion (Rev. 14:12), became instrumental in preparing the church for a wide mission and, consequently, for the second coming of Christ.⁷

Six months later, during the General Conference session in May 1866, Ellen White counseled church leaders on the need of establishing a health-care institution. They accepted the new challenge of health education and treatment. This decision led to the launching of a new journal, *The Health Reformer*, and the Western Health Reform Institute, the forerunner of Battle Creek Sanitarium, just months after the session.

Obedient Servants

To be a faithful instrument in God’s hands includes not only preaching and teaching others about something good, but also following the revealed will of the Lord all the way through. Thus, obeying God’s directions even during the cold winter weather and against the advice of their friends, Ellen took James for a preaching tour to northern Michigan as an

aid to his recovery. At the very end of 1866 this trip was crowned by James’s partial restoration of health, and their ministry expanded.

For a while the Whites engaged in farming and writing, but a 20-week itinerary in 1867 took both of them on another trip during which they held 140 meetings. It “drove Ellen into unabashed public speaking.”⁸ She presented messages to small and large crowds equally.

For example, in September 1867 Ellen White spoke at the “convocation” meeting in the Illinois-Wisconsin Conference. Then she spoke at a similar meeting in Iowa. The success of these two meetings encouraged the General Conference to sponsor the first official camp meeting in Michigan in September 1868, where she spoke to about 2,000 people.⁹

When God calls people to perform something for Him, He equips and gives them strength, courage, and power. This is clearly seen in the life and ministry of God’s messenger in advancing the mission and message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. ■

¹Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin; Vermont sent no delegate.

²Ellen G. White manuscript 1, 1863; Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1864), vol. 4a, p. 153; *Review and Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867; Apr. 2, 1914; Apr. 30, 1914.

³Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958, 1980), book 3, p. 273.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), vol. 6, p. 221.

⁵*Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 105, 106.

⁶Ellen G. White *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 103.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 485-494.

⁸Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years, 1862-1876* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1986), vol. 2, p. 185.

⁹Gary Land, “Camp Meetings,” *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2013), pp. 676, 677.



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By JOEL REYES

Love IN Action

One little girl gets another chance.



*Puedo confiar en el Señor,
El me va a ayudar
Puedo confiar en el Señor,
No me va a fallar.*

The sweet melody floats on the breeze, bringing with it a message of hope. It is a special song the children like to sing. They have all come from different places and for many reasons, none of them good. They are orphaned and abandoned, children who have lost the most basic of human rights, a family.

But here among the mountains and deserts of the Baja California wilderness they have found an oasis, a real home. Here Ines* found a new life. Like the rest of the children at the International Children's Care (ICC) El Oasis Children's Village, Ines has experienced indescribable pain and sorrow. She saw her family disintegrate, her siblings taken away, never to be seen again.

Steps Toward a New Life

A few years after arriving at the children's village, caregivers noticed a small curvature on Ines' spine. She had always been a happy, active child, and the condition didn't seem to

impair her. However, she was taken to a local doctor, who diagnosed her condition as scoliosis.

The deformity progressed rapidly. The doctor concluded that unless surgery was performed, the deformity would eventually cripple the child.

The children's village administrator, along with the doctor, began to look for providers who would be willing and capable of performing the surgery.

About the same time, a group of ICC sponsors from southern California were visiting the children's village. Among them were Malcolm Smith and his wife, Joyce. When they learned of Ines' condition, their hearts ached. Upon returning to California, they told friends and acquaintances about their little friend in Mexico who needed help.

They also contacted Loma Linda University Medical Center, and shared with them Ines' situation. After analyzing the situation, the Loma Linda University Medical Center International Benefit Committee approved a request to perform the surgery Ines needed.

But hurdles still had to be overcome. Ines would need a passport and a visa to enter the United States. As a dependent minor, she would need special dispensation from Mexican

DOCTOR AND PATIENT: One year later Ines poses with Dr. Nelson. She can look forward to a long and productive life.

authorities to travel abroad.

In October 2012 Ines was finally able to travel to Loma Linda. The surgical team, headed by one of medical center's best orthopedic surgeons, Dr. Scott Nelson, met to evaluate Ines' case and develop a plan. Nelson's caring words and gentle demeanor affected this little girl. She remembers his smile as he came into her room.

"He held my hand," she says quietly, "then he prayed for me. After he prayed, I knew everything would be OK, because Jesus would be helping him."

Because of the extent of the damage, Nelson scheduled the surgery in two segments. Altogether, the two surgeries took more than 12 hours. When they were over, Nelson's team was exhausted but satisfied to know they had changed the life of a lovely little girl.

"Considering the seriousness of her situation," Nelson said afterward, "it is a tremendous blessing for me as a surgeon, and for the team, to see her walk out of the hospital, standing tall and looking happy," he said.

If you saw Ines before her surgery, you would notice a remarkable difference now. She likes to talk, and if you ask, she will tell you about her new friend in Loma Linda, the kind doctor who held her hand and prayed for her. She will take you to a scratch on the wall that shows how tall she was before her surgery. Then she will stand tall so you can see how much taller she is now.

"Three more inches!" she says with a smile. ■

*Not her real name.



Joel Reyes was director of public affairs for International Children's Care when he wrote this article.



WHEN SPECIES *Change*

By L. JAMES GIBSON

The biblical description of the original condition of our world is one of peaceful harmony, without suffering or violence. God provided plants as food for all the land creatures. This is not the way our world appears today. Dramatic changes have occurred so that predation, suffering, and other forms of violence are so common that we often regard them as the normal state of nature. How do we explain the differences between the original creation and the world we see now?

According to Genesis 6, nature had greatly changed by the time of Noah. God gave Noah three reasons He was bringing a flood to destroy the world (Gen. 6:1-13). First, humans had become too wicked, as described in the phrase “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (verse 5). In addition, the land was “filled with violence” (verse 11), and “all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (verse 12). God found it necessary to destroy the effects of centuries of wickedness, violence, and corruption. We may draw some inferences about change in species from this story.

Creation Changes

The first inference is that fossils found in the rocks do not reflect the original state of creation. Although the Bible does not make explicit statements about fossils, it seems reasonable to interpret them as largely the result of the destructive global catastrophe described in Genesis. By the time the flood came and destroyed the world, the corruption of all flesh had already occurred. We cannot assume that the vicious-looking predators we find as fossils are similar to what we would have seen at the end of Creation week.

A second inference is that human and animal behavior has changed for the worse. In the newly created Eden there was no violence or suffering. Now these evils are so common that we have difficulty even imagining an environment without them. Several types of animals,

such as cats, spiders, and crocodiles, feed exclusively on other animals. The present state of nature is all we know, and it can be difficult to envision an ecological system without predation, disease, suffering, or death.

We also can infer that animals and plants have changed significantly in their form. Many animals have structures they would not need in a world without predation or other forms of violence. Certain kinds of snakes have complex structures for injecting venom into other creatures. The chemical composition of the venom varies in different snakes in order to match the vulnerabilities of the various types of prey. Crocodiles have features that seem unsuited to a vegetarian diet, such as the impressive array of sharp teeth, and powerful jaws to restrain struggling victims. Many other examples could be given of creatures that have specific structures, enhancing their ability to kill and eat other animals.

Changes in form reflect changes in genetic information. The Bible does not reveal exactly how this happens, but it does reveal the existence of an enemy of the Creator, an evil being who has the ability to act in nature (e.g., Job 1; 2; Luke 13:16). Scientific studies are discovering some means by which species may change, but many unanswered questions remain. Perhaps future studies will help us understand how dramatically nature has changed, and how the Creator has endowed living organisms with the ability to survive in a world that no longer accurately reflects His will.

However, despite all these changes, nature still testifies to the existence of a Master Designer whose creative skill and expertise are without equal. ■



L. James Gibson, Ph.D., serves as director of the Geoscience Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Gone but Not Forgotten

How should we interpret the statement that when one dies he or she is “gathered to his people” (Gen. 25:8)?

The phrase “to be gathered [’*asap*, “to gather, glean, take away,” etc.] to the forefathers” is not common in the Bible; it is mainly

found in the Pentateuch. Your question, I assume, is whether or not it supports the teaching of the survival of the spirit, or soul,

after death. I will review that position, examine the use of the phrase, and discuss its meaning.

1. Life After Death? Those who accept the Greek concept of an immortal soul argue that this phrase shows that the Old Testament supports such a concept. It is argued that the “forefathers” formed a community in the afterlife, and that those who die join this community. They argue that the phrase “gathered to his people” does not mean that the person was buried in the tomb of the ancestors, because Abraham was not buried with his ancestors (Gen. 25:8, 9). Neither does it mean to die, because in some passages it seems to be distinguished from dying. For them, the only logical interpretation is that after we die our spirit joins the community of those who are already dead.

2. Examining the Texts: A study of the use of the phrase shows several things. *First*, in some passages it is part of an emphatic reference to death. For instance, “Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age . . . and was gathered to his people. . . . His sons . . . buried him” (Gen. 25:8, 9; also Gen. 25:17; 35:29; cf. Gen. 49:33; Deut. 32:50). It emphasizes the finality of death, even for God’s people. The fact that death and burial are mentioned together with “to be gathered to” suggests that it is not always an exact synonym for death or burial.

Second, in some cases the phrase seems to be a synonym for “to die.” God said about Aaron, He will “be gathered to his people and die there” (Num. 20:26). The same usage is found in the cases of Moses (Num. 27:13; 31:2) and the generation that conquered the land (Judges 2:10).

Third, the phrase is almost a synonym for “to be buried/tomb.” The Lord said to King Josiah, “I will gather [lit. “I am the one who gathers”] you to your fathers, and you

shall be gathered to your grave in peace [lit. “you will be gathered to your tomb in peace”]” (2 Chron. 34:28; cf. 2 Kings 22:20). The second part of the verse clarifies the first: to be gathered to the fathers mean to be buried in the tomb of the fathers.

Fourth, sometimes instead of using the full phrase we find only the verb “to be gathered” in the sense of “to die” (Num. 27:13; Hosea 4:3; Isa. 57:1).

3. Significance of the Phrase: Concerning the meaning of this phrase we should notice: *First*, there is no contextual connection between the phrase and the survival of something after the person dies. *Second*, it is the dead person (the corpse) and not one of its components (e.g., the soul, the spirit) that is gathered to the forefathers. *Third*, our phrase basically means to die, but it emphasizes a particular aspect of death. The phrase “to breathe its last” establishes the arrival of death, and “to be buried” understands it as separation. “To be gathered to our forefathers” means that death is inescapable. Like our ancestors, we will die and join them in the tomb; our pilgrimage ends, and we rest, just as those who preceded us.

But for those who serve the Lord there is more. *Fourth*, the verb is always in the passive—the individual is gathered; she/he does not join the forefathers by herself/himself. Death happens to us. But the passive could suggest that God is the implied agent (2 Kings 22:20). In that case the phrase would indicate that God’s servants are not forgotten when they die. Even though they are dead, God still considers them part of His people. This is not about the condition of individuals after death, but about how God sees them. The phrase seems to contain within it the hope of the resurrection. ■



Prior to his retirement, **Angel Manuel Rodríguez** served as a pastor, professor, and theologian.

Jesus' Promised Gift

By MARK A. FINLEY



The promise of the Holy Spirit is one of Jesus' most precious promises. It is the gift of His presence to encourage, strengthen, revitalize, and empower each believer. This precious gift is often misunderstood and quite mysterious for too many Christians. In this month's Bible study we will explore the nature, function, and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1 What statement did Jesus make to His disciples about His departure? Read John 16:7 and meditate on the significance of Jesus' statement.

Jesus' disciples must have been perplexed when He told them that He was soon to leave. They were further amazed when He stated that it was to their advantage that He go away. What do you think He meant by that statement? Here is one possibility: The disciples would soon be scattered. They would witness of His love in villages, cities, and countries throughout the Mediterranean world. While He was there in the flesh, He could be present in only one location. But through the presence of His Holy Spirit, He could be present with each one of them in their various locations.

2 Is the Holy Spirit is an influence from God, or one of the members of the Godhead? Compare the following passages: Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18.

Notice the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Each is described as members of the Godhead, co-eternal and coexistent.

3 How does the Bible describe the functions of the Holy Spirit as a divine personality? Read Genesis 6:3; John 16:8, 12-14; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19. List the terms that describe the Holy Spirit's personality.

According to Scripture, the Holy Spirit strives, convicts, instructs, guides, and leads. He can be grieved and quenched. None of these traits are possible for a mere influence. Ellen White put it well when she wrote, "Evil had been accumulating for centuries and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power."*

4 What terms did Jesus use to describe the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead? Compare John 14:16, 17 with John 16:7.

Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as our helper or comforter. These words come from the Greek word *paraklete*, which means "one who comes alongside." The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of Christ who comes alongside each believer to supply our deepest needs. It is a legal term. In the Roman system of law a *paraklete* was an individual assigned to meet the physical, mental, emotional, and legal needs of one facing trial. The *paraklete's* responsibility was to be an advocate for individuals, representing them, standing by their side.

5 Read John 16:18. In discussing the ministry of the Holy Spirit with His disciples, how did Jesus encourage His believers with the reality that although He was leaving, He would still be present with them?

6 What is another function of the Holy Spirit revealed by Jesus, and what specific gift does He bring? Read John 14:25-27; 16:12, 13.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to teach believers the truths of eternity. He does this by impressing divine truths upon our minds as we study God's Word. The Holy Spirit also gives us peace in a troubled world, and brings calmness to our hearts by giving us a sense that God is in control of both this world and our lives.

7 How can we be filled with the Holy Spirit and receive the third person of the Godhead into our lives on a daily basis? Read John 14:13-16; Luke 11:13.

Our heavenly Father longs to give us the gift of His Spirit. He desires the regenerating, revitalizing influence of the Holy Spirit to flow into our lives. As we open our hearts to Christ and desire to please Him in all things, asking in faith for the gift of His Spirit, our lives will be filled with a sense of His abundance, His peace, and His power.

So let's ask. ■

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 392.

RON GRAYBILL



Letters

Photo Provides Glimpse into White's Life

I'm responding to Andrew McChesney's article on the newly discovered Ellen White photo (see "Ellen White as You've Never Seen Her," December 2014). This is a lovely photo—109 years have not diminished the apparent warmth. I look forward to meeting them on "that day," by the grace of God.

JANET WILLIAMS
via e-mail

I guess this picture of Ellen White was not taken in the summer, looking at the winterproof clothes. Her neat, hand-held folder tells me that Sister White was very organized, and a well-prepared public speaker.

In that same magazine is a news article titled "Church Leaders Urged

to Hire Pastors, Not Administrators." In a certain context what Robert E. Lemon said is right—increasing pastors at the frontline helps, but that doesn't mean that we do not need the support of the laypeople. In fact, I always appreciate their immense contribution in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

FRANCIS TUFFOUR
Dallas, Texas, United States

Ng Worries About "Serious Loss" of Members

I am responding to Andrew McChesney's article "Ng Worries About 'Serious Loss' of Members" (December 2014). This report proves that the end is near and that we are to be ready for the Lord's coming.

I am truly blessed to be a part of this great movement. I pray that I will help in this movement and not be a stumbling block. The harvest is plenty; we just need to go out and allow God to use us.

Our main problem is retention; we as a church need to work on this.

MISHLYN STEPHEN
Netherlands Antilles

The Privilege of an Open Bible

I guess in every child's life, and even in some adults' lives, there's a hero of some sort. I never had one—until now. I am a 69-year-old Vietnam veteran, and the hero I am speaking of is a 19-year-old. His name is William Hunter.

I never realized just how privileged we are here in North America when it comes to reading the Bible until I read the story about young William Hunter (see Ted N. C. Wilson's article "The Privilege of an Open Bible," November 2014). I have read that story a dozen times since I received my copy of *Adventist World*. I was so impressed with the short life of this young man, and his love of God's Holy Word, that he has inspired me to dig even deeper into the Word. I feel blessed to have learned of this impressive young man. His courage and humble nature is a lesson for us all.

PHILLIP WEBBER, SR.
Lisbon, Maine, United States

Go Walnuts!

Thank you for the subtle health message contained in the "Go Walnuts!"



“Increasing pastors at the frontline helps, but that doesn't mean that we do not need the **support** of the laypeople.”

—FRANCIS TUFFOUR, Dallas, Texas, United States

Prayer & PRAISE

Please pray for my business venture. I've managed to raise a reasonable amount of money, and I think I can find my way to grow a small business.

FRANCIS, Zambia

After several years of looking, I got a job with Sabbaths off. The work is challenging, however, so pray that I learn quickly—and am able to meet the demands.

ROB, United States

I would like prayer for healing and spiritual guidance. Thank you!

CHAMEL, via e-mail

Please pray that people are converted during evangelistic meetings at our local church.

ADRIEN, Burundi

item in *Adventist World's Idea Exchange* (October 2014). I'd be thrilled to see more entries like that!

CAROL LEE
via e-mail

Bible Study

Each month I eagerly await Mark A. Finley's Bible Study column. They are very useful not only for personal use, but also for Bible study students. I use them after completing a series of studies, during, and, more often, after baptism when topics such as choice, hope, peace, and security helps new members with everyday challenges that new Christians face. They are not theory in isolation; they are applicable to real life. I collect and use them. Please continue publishing them!

VIV BRADY-REID
Birmingham, England,
United Kingdom

Thank You

Thank you for your magazine and ministry! Remember me in prayer; and I will pray for you.

PROMISE SIPHUMA
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

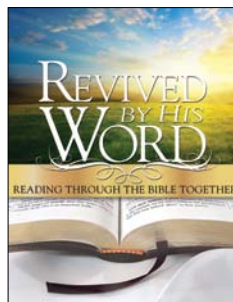
Letters Policy: Please send to: letters@adventistworld.org. Letters must be clearly written, 100-word maximum. Include the name of the article and the date of publication with your letter. Also include your name, the town/city, state, and country from which you are writing. Letters will be edited for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

Unappeeling

The **peel** is often the most nutritious part of fruits and vegetables. For maximum benefit, eat the following fruits and veggies unpeeled:

potatoes
apples kiwi
mangoes
eggplant cucumbers
carrots

Source: *Men's Health*



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APRIL 1, 2015 • 2 Corinthians 2

Pray that God will lead me in my vision of a multimedia ministry to the peace and social justice community.

VICTOR, *United States*

Pray for my wife and me—and our spiritual life. I have to be consistent!

FRANKLIN, *Kenya*

Please pray for the success of our mission trip to help the victims of Typhoon Haiyan. Also pray for the victims of Typhoon Ruby. Thank you!

RODEL, *Philippines*

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.

GENERAL CONFERENCE ARCHIVES



W.K. Ising and Bashir Hasso

92 YEARS AGO

The first Seventh-day Adventist church in Iraq was organized in Mosul on March 17, 1923.

Adventist beliefs were introduced in Iraq by Bashir Hasso, a native of Mosul. Hasso had been baptized in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1911 while he was a student at the American University there.

He read Uriah Smith's book *Daniel and the Revelation*, and received further instruction from W. K. Ising, an Adventist missionary serving in Beirut.

Although Hasso was isolated from contact with the church during World War I, he had seven persons ready for baptism when Ising visited Iraq (then called Mesopotamia) in 1923. The newly formed Mesopotamian Mission became part of the European Division.

5 Things you should know about pandas

AVERAGE HEIGHT:
.8 meters (2.5 feet) at the shoulder

AVERAGE LENGTH:
1.5 meters (5 feet)

AVERAGE WEIGHT:
males, 113 kilograms (250 pounds)
females, 100 kilograms (220 pounds)

AVERAGE LIFE SPAN IN CAPTIVITY:
20 to 30 years

TYPICAL DIET:
bamboo (99 percent)

Source: *Defenders.org*



STELLA BOGDANIC

800 MILLION



Almost 800 million people don't have access to safe drinking water. That's more than the combined populations of Canada, the United States, and Western Europe.

Source: *The Rotarian*



LIVE Longer AND Better

The healthiest people in the world share these things in common:

Be happy: Happy people tend to have lower blood pressure.

Go nuts: People who eat nuts significantly reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, etc.

Quit smoking: Be smart, don't start.

Stand up: People who sit more than six hours a day are 40 percent more likely to die from any cause than those who sit for fewer than three hours.

Keep moving: Exercise increases fitness, energy, and endorphins (the brain's "feel good" chemicals).

Source: *Women's Health*

PHOTO: MARCELO MOKREJS

“Behold, I come quickly...”

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

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50 WORDS OR LESS

My Favorite... Hymn

■ My favorite hymn is “Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming.” It reminds me of our privilege as workers in the Lord’s harvest.

—DANCAN, *Nairobi, Kenya*

■ My favorite song is “Praise to the Lord, My Soul.” The harmonies are so wonderful, and it can be sung as a canon.

—S. T. A., *Leisnig, Germany*

■ My favorite hymn is “To You, All the Glory.” It’s about God, Creator of the universe; how He fills us with confidence and is a constant source of blessing. It ends by extolling the goodness of God, who gave His Son to die, conquering sin and death and giving us access to the celestial city. Hallelujah!

—JORGE DE BRITO, *Brazil*

■ “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” tells me how faithful and tender Jesus is. He is our best friend.

—PATRICK, *Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire*

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



BE THE SERMON
MARCH 21 / 2015

24 HOUR LIVE COVERAGE
MOBILIZING & CONNECTING
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