

May 2015

# ADVENTIST WORLD



FEEDING THE **5,000** TIMES

**500,000**



**20** *The Experience  
of Pain*

**24** *A Place of  
Worship for All*

**26** *The Truth  
About Hell*

# ADVENTIST WORLD

May 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 8:00 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



[www.adventistworld.org](http://www.adventistworld.org)  
Available in 10 languages online

## A Time to Do

All four Gospel writers record the story of Jesus feeding the thousands beside the lake. No other story before His crucifixion gets such thorough treatment.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John heard more in this story than the satisfied sighs of those whose stomachs were filled. To them, it opened up vistas into the identity and mission of Jesus that couldn't have been communicated any other way.

And if there's any one reason we have usually missed the significance of this story, it's that we've often thought of ourselves as members of that vast crowd waiting to be fed, rather than of that little band of disciples to whom Jesus said, "You give them something to eat."<sup>1</sup>

In our imaginations, as well as in our daily lives, we're looking for ways to lessen our responsibility. We see ourselves sitting on the grass, receiving the blessing of the miracle, rather than doing the hard, thankless work of putting bread and fish into the hands of hungry people.

It's a measure of our Lord's love for us that He doesn't bother to argue with our objections. He looks at us kindly, and with the gentlest reproach He asks, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus knows that we won't take even the first step down the road to discipleship while we're arguing with His directions, while we're raising objections and difficulties, while we're protesting the inadequacy of our resources or the immensity of the job. Instead He simply asks, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

There's no better cure for doubting, fainthearted, fearful disciples than to be put to work, and Jesus knows it. When the devil raises in front of us all the phantoms of dread impossibility, Jesus calls us to simply, radically, obey His word to us.

As you read this month's cover feature, "Feeding the 5,000 Times 500,000," pray to reimagine your role in bringing spiritual—and physical—food to the millions in need.

<sup>1</sup>Mark 6:37.  
<sup>2</sup>Verse 38.

*Bill Knott*



## WORLD REPORT

# Churches Open at Fastest Rate in History

*Church membership nears 18.5 million.*



An Adventist church being opened in November 2014 in Guatemala, where 144 new churches were built last year.

■ Seventh-day Adventist churches are springing up around the world at the fastest rate in the denomination's 152-year history. On average, a new building opens its doors to worshippers every 3.58 hours.

A record 2,446 new churches opened last year, helping fuel the largest single-year increase in membership and bringing total membership to nearly 18.5 million.

Gary Krause, director of Adventist Mission, whose missionaries play a key role in opening new churches, praised God for the growth and called for the Adventist Church to push ahead boldly in its mission to proclaim Jesus' soon coming. "These statistics suggest that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is heading in the right direction in its mission and must keep that focus," Krause said.

The 2,446 new churches that opened last year is 381 higher than 2013, and tops the previous record of 2,416 churches in 2002, said David Trim, director of the Adventist Church's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. The Adventist Church ended 2014—the

*Continued on next page ▶*



## WORLD REPORT



EASTERN SAHEL UNION MISSION

A Lomé prison inmate being baptized in the new baptistery.

tenth consecutive year in which more than 2,000 churches were organized—with a total of 78,810 churches, compared with 57,850 a decade earlier.

Trim said the growth in churches was, from all evidence, an important but often overlooked part of the explanation for the growth in overall church membership.

Newly compiled figures from his office indicate that a record 1,167,796 people joined the Adventist Church last year, surpassing the 1,091,222 people who joined in 2013 and the previous record of 1,139,000 in 2011. — *Andrew McChesney, Adventist World*

### Hope Channel in French

■ The Adventist Church will launch its first round-the-clock television channel for the French-speaking world thanks to an ambitious plan by its Inter-American Division to start three new satellite channels.

The three new channels—Hope Channel Français, Hope Channel

Américas, and Hope Channel Caribbean—are expected to launch later this year in the three major languages spoken in the Inter-American Division: French, Spanish, and English.

Hope Channel Français, however, will reach far beyond the French-speaking regions of the division because of collaboration between the Inter-European Division, the Adventist Church in Canada, and the French Antilles-Guiana Union.

— *Libna Stevens, IAD*

### 30 Togo Inmates Baptized

■ Thirty inmates were baptized at a Togo prison chapel built by the Adventist Church after prison officials asked for help replacing a previous chapel that had collapsed in bad weather.

The chapel, located in the main prison in Togo's capital, Lomé, cost \$13,000, of which nearly half was donated by the General Conference, the administrative body of the Adventist Church.

The baptisms were the result of an evangelistic series led by Bruno Amah, an Adventist member jailed in the prison, said Kwasi Sélom Sessou, executive secretary of the Adventist Church's Eastern Sahel Union Mission.

— *Andrew McChesney, Adventist World*

### 17 Families in Middle East

■ Seventeen South American families have arrived in the Middle East as part of an unprecedented effort to share Jesus in a region where Seventh-day Adventists have struggled to make headway.

The families underwent a three-week orientation course in Lebanon, which included the cultural shock of learning that the vast desert region also boasts snowy mountains, before scattering across the Middle East and North Africa to begin five-year terms.

The missionaries are funded by the South American Division.

— *Chanmin Chung, MENA*



A South American missionary building a snowman during an orientation trip in northern Lebanon.

CHANMIN CHUNG / MENA



**Left:** Hundreds of people being baptized in Lake Nicaragua.

**Below:** Watching the baptisms are Ted N.C. Wilson, second left; Granada Mayor Julia Mena, fourth left; and Mark Finley, sixth left.

## Tears and Hugs at Mass Baptism in Nicaragua

*More than 2,000 are baptized after a first major evangelistic series.*

By ANDREW MC CHESNEY, news editor, *Adventist World*

Thousands of people, many hugging each other and weeping with joy, thronged around a vast lake for a mass baptism that concluded the Adventist Church's first major evangelistic series in Nicaragua.

Dozens of pastors wearing white shirts and ties baptized 1,884 people in the rippling waters of Lake Nicaragua in mid-March. Another 200 people who could not make it to the lake were baptized in local churches, bringing the total number of nationwide baptisms since October to 12,000.

"May this baptism bless our waters," Julia Mena, mayor of the nearby city of Granada, told the crowd.

Adventist Church leader Ted N. C. Wilson, who stood beside the mayor, said it was a thrilling sight. "It was a privilege to be present at such an impressive scene," he said.

Dozens of weddings also took place on the shore. Many Nicaraguans live in common-law marriages and have children, but never legally tie the knot. So lawyers donated their

time to marry those people in civil ceremonies at the lake before they were baptized. Under Nicaraguan law, a couple cannot be legally married by a pastor.

Among the people baptized was a woman whose son, an Adventist pastor, had prayed for 15 years for her to accept Jesus, church leaders said. The mother, in her 50s, made her decision at the lake and frantically began to search the crowd for her son so she could seal her commitment that day. Her son began crying when he heard the news. The pair hugged tightly, not wanting to let the other go. The son later baptized his mother.

The baptisms capped a year-long evangelistic effort that began with the establishment of about 5,000 small groups that studied healthy lifestyles in Nicaragua and neighboring Costa Rica. The groups later studied the Bible, and participants were invited to attend local evangelistic meetings. Evangelist Mark Finley wrapped up the initiative with four days of meetings to nightly



TED N. C. WILSON

crowds of more than 3,000 people in Managua, Nicaragua's capital.

The Adventist Church had 203,698 members in Nicaragua and Costa Rica as of December 2014. Major baptisms are also taking place elsewhere in the region, with 1,500 in El Salvador in mid-March, and 2,530 in Panama between January and mid-March.

Back in Nicaragua, Finley said local administrators and church members were dedicated to the mission of the church, and their enthusiasm rubbed off on the people who attended his meetings.

"When public transportation did not run last Friday night, scores walked to the meetings," he said. "One of our elders rented six taxis at great personal expense to bring Bible study interests to the meetings. Others took buses all night to attend our baptism. What mattered to so many of these Adventist believers was the salvation of their family, friends, neighbors, and working associates, and they were willing to make personal sacrifices to accomplish that dream." ■



## WORLD REPORT

**F**rancis Wernick, a former vice president of the General Conference, spent much of his life proclaiming the Advent message of Jesus' soon coming.

These days Wernick, who is seriously ill, is encouraging his wife of 72 years, Mary Sue, to keep her eyes fixed on that hope as he prepares her for his death. Wernick, 95, has lung disease, likely brought on by old age, and has had several close calls, said the couple's eldest child, Brenda Flemmer, 64.

Wernick himself is ready to go, his children said. But he also wants to make sure that his college sweetheart, who turned 95 on February 3, 2015, and is 10 days younger than he is, is ready to say goodbye.

"My dad is ready to meet Jesus. He wants to go to sleep and rest," said his son, Robert Wernick, 57.

"When he talks to my mom about this, he reminds her that Jesus is coming soon and they will not be apart very long, to stay faithful, and there is a better life ahead," he said. "My mom believes this, but after 72 years of marriage it is hard to say goodbye, even for a little while."

Francis Wernick, a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist born in Lake City, Iowa, met Mary Sue at the library where she worked at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Within months the two final-year students were engaged, and they married on May 24, 1942, just hours after attending their graduation ceremony in the morning.

The wedding, held at the Union College church, was inexpensive, and the decorations were homemade. The officiating pastor was Jerry Pettis, who went on to serve as a California lawmaker in the United States House of Representatives.



**Above:** Francis and Mary Sue Wernick getting married on May 24, 1942, hours after their graduation from Union College. **Right:** The Wernicks in an undated photo taken for a church directory.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WERNICK FAMILY

# Church Leader Prepares Wife for His Death

By ANDREW MC CHESNEY, news editor, *Adventist World*

### Married, With Orange Crates

Two days after the wedding the couple headed to North Dakota so Francis Wernick could begin his ministry.

"I never got the feeling they spent a lot of time analyzing whether or not they were right for each other, but both were praying that they would find the right person and trusted God

to lead," said Robert Wernick, who retired in 2012 after 32 years in the energy industry and began caring for his parents at his home in Ooltewah, Tennessee, near Southern Adventist University.

Everything the Wernicks owned was packed into their car for the move to North Dakota, and they started life together with orange

crates as furniture. It took some time before they were able to acquire chairs, a table, and a bed. They also rented a room in someone's house for most of their four years in North Dakota and didn't own their own home until much later.

"Their thought processes were much different than we have today, in that they saw life as a set of responsibilities both to each other and to God, and they genuinely wanted to faithfully meet those," Robert Wernick said. "What the world had to offer never seemed very important to them."

After North Dakota, Francis Wernick led churches in Pennsylvania and Ohio and then accepted an invitation to become president of the Adventist Church's East Pennsylvania Conference in 1958.

Wernick later served as president of the Ohio and Oregon conferences and was president of the Lake Union Conference when he was asked to help lead the world church as a general vice president of the General Conference from 1975 until his retirement in 1985.

The life of church service sometimes presented challenges, but the couple developed a close relationship that no crisis could breach, Robert Wernick said.

"I never saw a major crisis in the marriage, although I know at times my mom would have liked to have Dad at home more rather than out in the field supporting the work," he said.

Mary Sue Wernick never worked outside the home, a decision that allowed her to raise three children, Brenda, Robert, and Carolyn Jimenez.

"My parents always believed God founded the marriage," he said.

"They trusted Him to help them keep it together and the home happy. They did their part and let God do the rest."

But 72 years of marriage is a rarity, especially in rich countries where the average length of marriage before divorce is 13.6 years, according to data published by *The Economist* last year.

### **Secret to 72 Years of Marriage**

A healthy Adventist lifestyle could certainly be seen as a contributor to the longevity of the Wernicks' lives—and by extension their marriage. But their son said the secret to their successful marriage is much more: selflessness and a combined commitment to their marriage vows and to the responsibilities that God gave them in this life.

"I don't think my parents ever felt that life was somehow about them or personal thoughts about what they deserved out of life," he said. "They never lived selfishly, but always worked for the welfare of each other. They did not always get along, but my mom had a meek and quiet spirit that was a nice complement to my dad's energy and drive to get things done and make things happen."

Family friends spoke highly of the Wernicks' commitment to God and each other.

"They were always together, he providing a strong arm of support for her when she was unsteady on her feet," said William A. Fagal, 68, associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate, where Francis Wernick serves as a life trustee. "She looked up to him with admiration and love. Their devotion to each other was palpable, as was their commitment to the Lord."

In an example of their companionship, Francis and Mary Sue Wernick welcomed Fagal and his wife of 43 years, Sylvia, to the Washington, D.C., area in September 2003 by showing up at their front door with a box of homegrown garden produce and an invitation to Sabbath lunch.

"When around the Wernicks, I would see her attentively watching him, listening to him as he talked, with an expression of interest, maybe a tiny touch of awe, certainly pride and total support," said Sylvia Fagal, 71, whose own relationship with the Wernicks stretches back to when her father, Frank L. Marsh, taught biology to young Francis Wernick at Union College.

"It's the solid, old-fashioned situation of the man being the head of the family and the wife in total support and very important in her role," Sylvia Fagal said. "They were such a team that even years later she would speak of how lonely she had been without him when he was traveling and she was home with the children."

Despite the heartbreak of watching her husband die, loneliness appears to be less of an issue these days for Mary Sue Wernick, who is in good health. The couple are together all the time in the same room. They often hold hands. Because they are both hard of hearing, they communicate more through touch. When he speaks, he offers words of hope about the resurrection.

"My mom always wanted him to go first," said their daughter Brenda Flemmer, administrative assistant at the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference. "She said she didn't think Dad would survive without her." ■

By TED N. C. WILSON



# To Wound or to Heal

*The power of words*

**S**ticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” goes the childhood nursery rhyme that many a child blurts out through tears at their tormenters. But as we all know, this little saying isn’t exactly true. Words can and do hurt, often for a long time.

Take a moment to think back to your childhood: how many times did you get hurt by something someone said to you? And how many times did you lash out, hurting others without really intending to because you just wanted to defend yourself?

As we grow older and become more mature, we learn that we need the Lord to defend us, and not we ourselves. “Do not take revenge,” we are told in Romans 12:19, “but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (NIV).

### Importance and Power of Words

Words are important for communication. Have you ever tried to go an entire day without speaking? It’s

hard. But either words can heal or they can hurt, if not controlled by the Holy Spirit.

One of my favorite books of the Bible is Proverbs because it’s so practical and true. For example, Proverbs 12 is filled with such gems as: “There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health” (verse 18); “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight” (verse 22); “A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims foolishness” (verse 23).

Not only are these words of wisdom, they are filled with promise, such as: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov. 15:1); “He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends” (Prov. 17:9); and “He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive” (verses 27, 28).

The book of Proverbs frequently links wisdom and compassion, encouraging us not to follow our natural inclinations, such as: “A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back” (Prov. 29:11); “He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly” (Prov. 14:29); “If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you” (Prov. 25:21, 22).

### Proverbs and the Sermon on the Mount

In the Beatitudes, Jesus shows us that if we follow heavenly wisdom, it will bring blessings, and encourage us to have a sweet relationship with people: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. . . . Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. . . . Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:5-9). Wisdom and compassion go hand in hand.



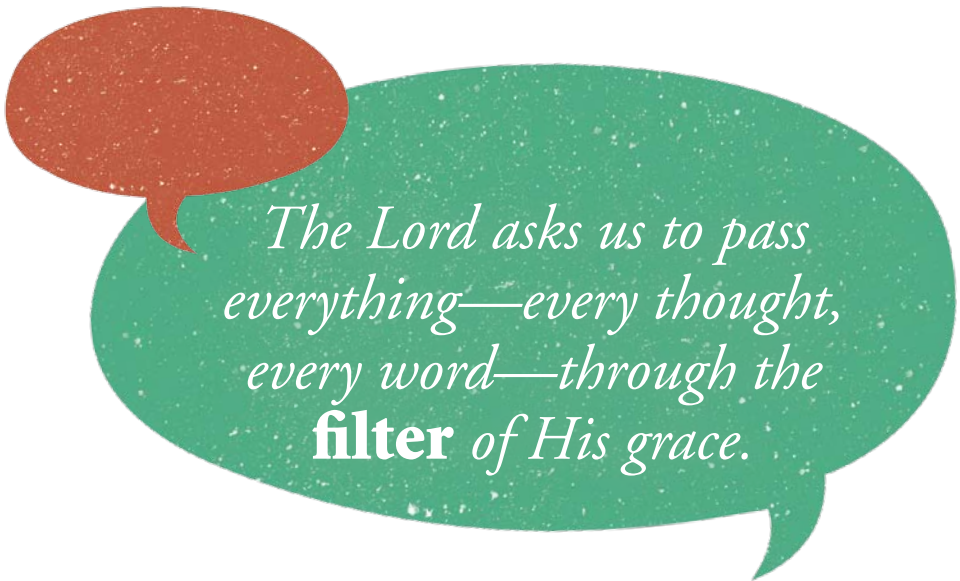
The story is told of a man dying alone in a Brooklyn, New York, hospital. He sent for his son, who was working in the state of North Carolina—more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) away. The young man came and sat the entire night, holding the hand of this dying man, talking to him and encouraging him. The old man died in peace, unaware that a mistake had been made with the contact. As soon as the young man walked into the room that night, he realized that the person lying in the bed was not his father. Nevertheless, rather than just turning away or saying something hurtful, he had compassion and encouraged the elderly man during his final hours.

As Christians we are called to be like Jesus. Everything we say and do has to be cushioned by the Lord's guidance. We are told, "The religion of Jesus softens whatever is hard and rough in the temper, and smooths whatever is rugged and sharp in the manners. It makes the words gentle and the demeanor winning. Let us learn from Christ how to combine a high sense of purity and integrity with sunniness of disposition. A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

### **Filter of God's Grace**

In today's culture social media is pervasive in many developed areas, and nearly instantaneous. It's so easy to respond immediately to something we find upsetting on Twitter, Facebook, a Web site, or blog, or in an e-mail we have received. We're insulated from the person: all we see are letters on a screen. But the Lord asks us to pass everything—every thought, every word in response—through the filter of His grace.

Living in an increasingly digital age makes actual person-to-person



conversations even more important, and it's vital that we ask God for guidance as we speak. At times I have to check myself when I respond about something. I could respond in what appears to me a calm way, but to others I might appear to overact. Even the inflection of the voice, or intonation, or how something is said, can hurt people or put them into a combative mode.<sup>2</sup>

### **Heavenly Peace and Christian Tact**

With the General Conference session approaching, this is an important time to consider the wise counsel given to us and to pray for the approximately 2,700 delegates who will have voice and vote. Those voices have to be used to bring glory to God, even in discussions in which there are differences of opinion. We are earnestly asking all church members to pray that God will grace our lips and our attitudes with heavenly peace and Christian tact and respect for each other, even though we may not agree.

In preparation for the 2014 Annual Council last October, our leaders made a fervent appeal that everyone speak in the most Christlike manner: "We General Conference and division officers appeal to all Annual Council attendees to accept each other as brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of some differences of opinion

that may be evident on certain subjects. We ask for Christlikeness and humble respect for each other in our words and activities during this Annual Council and beyond."<sup>3</sup>

We praise the Lord that we saw the Holy Spirit moving on the hearts of people in their speeches and responses at the Annual Council. We give God glory for His presence, even though we had strong differences of opinion.

The General Conference and division officers will be making a similar appeal to the General Conference session, asking the Lord for this same Christlike spirit. Regardless of the outcome, the process may be the greatest testimony to the world of the power of the Holy Spirit to control our lives, of how we can approach items of difference with a Christlike spirit.

### **Not Just Political Politeness**

Christian tact and grace, of course, aren't to be confined simply to public forums: they actually begin in the home. With what kind of tone do we address our spouses and our children? Are we hard-hearted and demanding, or are we sweet and forgiving? And in the workplace, do we allow the pressures to create responses that are terse and disconnected from the human recipient? On the telephone, do we use Christian tact, not just political politeness? Are we truly using Christian tact in the way we respond to e-mails and other forms of communication?

It's important to remind ourselves that once words leave our mouths, our fingertips, they're gone forever, and it's almost impossible to pull them back. It's helpful to pray and think three times before writing something that might hurt, or saying something that might cut.

So when you're ready to give that speech, submit your mind and tongue to the Lord and let Him filter what you were going to say, giving accurate and important responses, but in a Christlike manner. "Christ Himself did not suppress one word of truth, but He spoke it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact, and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul."<sup>4</sup>

As we see world events forming to create the last prophetic scenario, it's so important that each of us represent our Lord—publicly and privately—with the right demeanor and a sweet, humble spirit. This can come only as we are in daily communion with the Lord, asking His indwelling Spirit for revival and reformation. As we face the closing events of earth's history, may it be written in the books of heaven that each of us spoke in tones of conviction, but with Christian tact and grace, all through the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1991), p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> From the voted appeal of the General Conference and division officers, October 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 353.



**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 being printed in 45 languages.

Here are two short stories from Germany and South Africa that depict lives touched by GLOW:



**GERMANY:** While traveling by train from Germany to the Czech Republic, a young church member met and had an enjoyable conversation with his former Czech language teacher. He gave her a copy of *The Great Controversy* in Czech, and a "Steps to Health" GLOW tract in German and Czech. She thanked him especially for the GLOW tracts and said that since they were already printed in both languages, she would plan to use them as translational course material for her next class.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** A couple living in South Africa were out shopping when the husband handed a young man a GLOW tract titled "Talking to God." The young man looked at the tract and said, "I learned just this morning that my son has died."

After expressing sympathy for his loss, the husband handed him another tract—the only one he had left—titled "Is There Hope After Death?" Both tracts were written in Afrikaans, the young man's home language. The wife later called the encounter "a divine appointment."

*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](http://sdaglow.org). To watch video GLOW testimonies, go to [vimeo.com/user13970741](http://vimeo.com/user13970741).*

# Vitamin D

By PETER N. LANDLESS *and*  
ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES

**I try to read as much as I can about health. Much has been written about vitamin D, and at one point it seemed to be the “miracle” solution for every ailment. Is this so? I am seeing some conflicting reports in some recent articles.**

Vitamin D, also known as the “sunshine vitamin,” plays a key role in calcium metabolism and bone strength and formation. It’s actually a hormone produced in the body that depends on the exposure of our skin to the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun (hence the name “sunshine vitamin”).

Initially, vitamin D was thought to be mainly a nutrient that helps to prevent the childhood disease known as rickets. Rickets is a disease in which softening and weakness of the bones occurs because of vitamin D deficiency and the resultant abnormality in calcium metabolism. When this occurs in adults, bones become decalcified and less dense (or strong). This condition is known as osteomalacia, the condition that precedes osteoporosis.

Vitamin D increases the absorption of calcium in the small intestine. It also influences the bone cells to release calcium into the blood to maintain normal blood calcium levels and to stimulate growth. Bone is a dynamic tissue that undergoes change and strengthening all the time; this process is termed “remodeling,” and is especially important in the healing and repair of bone fractures. Research has shown that most of the cells in the human body have receptors for vitamin D, where vitamin D attaches and triggers certain processes in the cells.

Vitamin D has a very complex metabolism and numerous related compounds. The substance produced

in the skin (and also available in food and supplements) is converted in the liver to 25-hydroxyvitamin D, or calcidiol. This is converted in the kidneys to the active form of vitamin D, 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D<sub>3</sub>. Vitamin D is fat-soluble and requires fat for absorption. It can be stored for those times we do not have sun exposure (depending on climates, seasons, dress, sunscreen use).

We get vitamin D mainly from sunshine and metabolism in the skin. Only a few foods—oily fish, cod liver oil, egg yolks, and some forms of mushrooms (shitake)—naturally contain vitamin D. Our main dietary sources are fortified foods, such as milk, some soymilks, dairy or soy yogurt, cheese, orange juice, margarine, breakfast cereals, and infant formula.

If you are tested and found to be low in vitamin D after “loading” supplemental doses are given, a typical maintenance dose would be between 800–2000 IU (international units) daily. This must be done under medical supervision; each individual may respond differently to these doses. Follow-up tests are needed to ensure correct dosing.

Exposure to sunlight varies around the world and even within communities. There is also the risk of skin cancer related to excessive sunlight exposure.

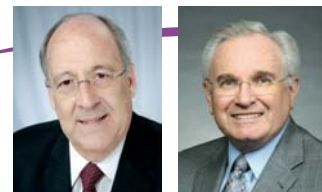
The following factors may contribute to low vitamin D levels:

- less sun exposure in some regions, especially in winter

- darker skin (reduces UV penetration)
- decreasing ability of the skin to produce vitamin D as one ages
- sunscreens (although important in preventing skin cancers, sunscreens can reduce vitamin D production by up to 99 percent)
- low intake of fortified foods
- obesity (vitamin D may become trapped in fatty tissue)
- bowel disorders or surgery
- certain medications
- impaired liver or kidney function

Along with bone health, numerous observational studies have connected other diseases and their outcomes to low vitamin D levels. These diseases include asthma, arthritis, various cancers, dementia, depression, coronary artery disease, hypertension, Parkinson’s, and infections. Several large, controlled clinical trials are under way, and the Institute of Medicine is predicting that we will have more definitive answers in 2017. In the meantime, discuss your personal situation and needs with your health advisor.

May God guide you in making wise health choices! ■



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

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



**T**op Ten Ways to Destroy the Earth,” shouts the headline. “Top Ten Weirdest Objects in Nature.” “Top Ten Ways to Save for Retirement.” Leaving the highest-ranked items for last, top-10 lists have grown increasingly popular in news and entertainment.

Why do you want to go to heaven? Here are my top 10 reasons.

**10. Animals:** On a recent visit to Africa my family and I had the privilege of observing—in the wild—lions, rhinos, elephants, hippos, a leopard, and a cheetah. In heaven these fabulous creatures will live freely, but with no blood-thirsty predation: “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain” (Isa. 65:25).

**9. Gardening:** My wife and I make valiant attempts at gardening, but unfortunately our thumbs are more brown than green. I’m looking forward to planting and actually eating some of the results (verse 21).

**8. Learning:** Academic pursuits with their constant inquiry and exploration stimulate my mind. Heaven will provide this in limitless quantities, and no hard, intellectual question will be off-limits.

**7. “Oh, I See”:** Heaven will offer all the understanding and clarity that have painfully eluded us. Those murky, difficult experiences which have confused us, which we have chosen to take by faith without seeing all the pieces, God will satisfyingly resolve for us. We will grin with expressions of amazement as we “get it”—seeing God’s wisdom and love toward us during our most challenging times.

**6. Evangelism:** Evangelism in heaven? Well, sort of. Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:10 that “the manifold wisdom of God” can be “made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.” Evidently there is something that we human beings can share with celestial beings; something they don’t know about God. “What did it feel like to be forgiven?” they will ask. “What was it like to face a pointed and embedded hereditary temptation, and overcome it?” I’m looking forward to sharing, with great fervor, what my Redeemer has done for me, and what it was like to be rescued from sin and from this planet.

**5. Fellowship:** We will enjoy the sweetest-ever companionship, especially with friends with whom we have walked through many a shared experience. We will know—together—what it means to have faced the devil’s end-time

*Top* **10** *Reasons*  
*I Want to Go to*  
**Heaven**

By BILL KRICK

“Evidently there is something that we human beings can share with **celestial beings.**”

persecution machine, walking right into his worst temptations, and to have overcome by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 14:3; 12:11).

#### 4. **The Destruction of Suffering/Injustice/Death:**

No more malignant biopsies, debilitation, or skinned knees. No more abuse of power or oppression, the strong taking advantage of the weak. No more divorce, abuse, trafficking. No more wars of national conquest. (And no more news reports about all of this.) In fact, John says he watched as “Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14). Death and the grave (all the pain associated with them as realities we experience or observe will cease operations—destroyed by the decree of the Almighty.

#### 3. **Meeting the People I Influenced to Choose God:**

The moment we lock eyes with these people will bring a rush of exhilaration. “The redeemed will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Savior. What blessed converse they will have with these souls! ‘I was a sinner,’ it will be said, ‘without God and without hope in the world; and you came to me, and drew my attention to the precious Savior as my only hope. And I believed in Him. I repented of my sins. . . . And now I see Him face to face. I am saved, eternally saved, ever to behold Him whom I love.’”<sup>1</sup>

When I was in academy, a fellow student was about to be baptized. My chemistry teacher approached me and said, “You realize that he chose to commit his life to God because of your influence.” I was shocked. I didn’t feel as if I had done anything at all. But it made me happy to think that I could impact someone else for God. In heaven, tracing the threads of the great web of influence will reveal how we influenced others for the kingdom. We will meet those people who will say to us, “You don’t remember what you did that day, but this is what happened . . . It was a turning point in my life, and here I am!”

2. **No More Snake:** There will be no snakes in trees pushing propaganda as to why we should eat forbidden fruit. Since Satan is “the direct instigator of all the sins that

caused the death of the Son of God,”<sup>2</sup> his absence will make a noticeable difference. I can’t wait to have him off my back. I often just want to enjoy my time here on earth without facing harassment; I sometimes say to him, “Just go away and leave me alone! Give me a break, Satan!” But he provides no such breaks. He specializes in attempts to annoy, bother, tempt, and threaten. But in heaven, *it’s over for him*. The battles we daily face will disappear. The great controversy will be *over*. He and his fellow rebels will be excluded from heaven.

Here on earth we do at times experience peace. Sometimes God doesn’t allow Satan access to us. But usually God grants Satan the freedom to tempt and harass us. In heaven we will finally be able to let down our guard, not fearing any tricks, traps, or ambushes from the enemy. Our days will be filled with pure and uninterrupted peace.

1. **Seeing God Face to Face!** The Bible presents its climax in Revelation 22:4: “They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.” The entire history of redemption reaches its apex as we meet our God and see His face. This is the moment for which we were created. It fulfills our very existence. Though “no one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18), and though He dwells “in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16), yet He will give us the privilege of living with Him and being with Him (Rev. 21:3).

Prayer ministries will cease to exist. No more prayer chains, no more fasting and prayer days, no more prayer weekends. As the poet wrote: “Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!” Instead, it will be “face to face with Christ my Savior.”

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12). Paul here did not have in mind today’s sparkling mirrors carefully wiped with glass cleaner, but rather the mirrors of first century A.D. Palestine: polished metal. The incomplete and sometimes distorted images that they provided the viewer make for a perfect illustration of how little we know, how little we see, of God. “But then,” he continues, we shall see “face to face.” The top of the charts—the top reason I want to go to heaven—is to see Jesus face to face.

*Why do you want to go to heaven?* ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 518.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), p. 358.



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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). This text is one of the most renowned and beloved texts in Scripture. It describes in cryptic clarity the essence of our faith. In fact, the entire first chapter of John is a deep Christological treatise that captivates readers again and again.

It describes the Word in His divine and eternal state. The divine Word functioned as Creator, expressed by the simply profound fact that “without Him nothing was made that was made” (verse 3).

But John 1 dives deeper into the description of the Word. It draws us not just to contemplate a majesty of incomprehensible magnitude; it further allows us to see that the Word is not only transcendent but also immanent. The Word is eternal; He’s not bound by nature; He’s beyond this world, but He breaks that dividing barrier and “pitches His tent” with us.<sup>1</sup> The Word comes to His creation and is invested in the life of His creatures in such a way that He lives among us. He doesn’t enjoy an isolated and safe utopia, donning a sterile hazmat suit in order to avoid contamination, but He empties Himself of all that He could rightfully cling on to, so that He can live among those who are in rebellion against Him and thus bring about God’s revelation. In short, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; the eternal is made temporal, and divinity empties itself into humanity.

### No Warm Welcome

The tragedy is that the Word’s mission was greeted by indifference or plain rejection. “He came to His own and His own did not receive Him” (verse 11). Happily, there were those who did see Him, for John exclaims, “We beheld His glory” (verse 14).

Those who saw the Word have given us, through word and time, the message that reveals what is the central component of our faith, the main reason we are called “Christians.” With our name we bear witness as to the *what* of our faith; better yet, *whom* we follow. Jesus is the central figure of Adventism. If not for Him, His resurrection, the apostle Paul asserts unequivocally, “our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Cor. 15:14, NIV).

Christ comes to the world with a purpose, a mission

By HAROLD ALOMÍA

# The Incomparable Christ

NUMBER 4

described by the apostle Paul as the ministry of reconciliation. The staggering fact is that God is the One who initiates reconciliation with humanity, when it was humanity that severed its ties with God in the first place.<sup>2</sup> Jesus is the central means by which reconciliation occurs; without Him life is just good intentions and vain imaginations. Without Jesus we have nothing.

### Our Approachable High Priest

Furthermore, Jesus is not just central as God, Creator, and Reconciler; He takes the redemption of humanity even further. Christ is not so removed from us that He sits on a lofty pedestal as an unreachable celebrity of sorts. In His plan He becomes the one who empowers us in our faith.

The book of Hebrews discloses the powerful truth that Christ didn’t live a perfect life just for bragging rights, but actually to aid us in living ours.<sup>3</sup> Christ is Creator, Redeemer,



# “From beginning to end, our **faith** is indeed all about Jesus.”

Reconciler, and Empowering Savior. It is no wonder then that the same author who sketches the picture of Christ as the empowering figure of our spiritual walk also describes Christ as the one who “finishes” our faith (Heb. 12:2).<sup>4</sup>

The idea of the Finisher, rather than pointing to a certain state of crossing a specific finish line, is a more dynamic growth concept. It highlights a maturing process in which Christ, the One who starts our faith, is the One who brings it to maturity. From beginning to end, our faith is all about Jesus.

The centrality of Christ in our message is affirmed by Ellen White’s brilliant explanation of how we should convey the message of truth to the world: “The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers.”<sup>5</sup>

What a stunning statement about the centrality of Jesus in our message and in our lives! From Genesis to Revelation, He is indeed all. And as we make this theological dictum a living, palpable reality that transcends the paper of our commentaries into the experiences of our lives, we do well to remember that Jesus is, indeed, all. ■

<sup>1</sup>The term *eskenosen* can be translated literally as the action of pitching a tent, a clear description of living among and journeying alongside the human race.

<sup>2</sup>“That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19).

<sup>3</sup>“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:18).

<sup>4</sup>*teleiōtēs*: One who makes possible a successful completion of something. The one who completes, a perfecter. Jesus the one that initiates our faith and incidentally the one that also brings it to maturity, to completion. Based on J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida’s Greek-English lexicon, *teleiōtēs*, 68.24, Accordance Bible Software.

<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 315.



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## Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God’s power and was attested as God’s promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

LET THEM COME: An educational tutoring program in Myanmar helps students to excel.



By JAMES H. PARK

# FEEDING THE 5,000 TIMES

*Serving the four largest  
unreached population groups*

# 500,000

Imagine the challenge of catering food for the largest convention center on earth. Within this vast building thousands of different groups are meeting, and they all need to be fed. The people are hungry, you have good food, but there is a huge problem. Despite doing your very best to feed that hungry throng, rarely do any of the multitudes show even the slightest interest in your best recipes!

So one day your tiny catering company<sup>1</sup> gets word from the world headquarters that special funds<sup>2</sup> will be made available to select and train 60 chefs over a five-year period.<sup>3</sup> The goal is to come up with tasty dishes for each of four major groups that are meeting in the convention center.<sup>4</sup>

### Creating Local Cuisine

By now you must have realized that this article is really not about a real

catering company or the training of chefs. Rather it chronicles a God-guided initiative to reach four major groups, Buddhists, Chinese, Muslims, and urban dwellers located in Asia. It is also the story of a small educational institution, the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), located in the Philippines, dreaming big and being blessed with special funds from the tithe blessings received at the General Conference in 2007.

By a miracle of God's grace, the first class begins on Monday, September 20, 2010, with exactly 60 pastors. The best chefs, professors, from all over the world are brought in to teach the students how to prepare tasty food for each of the groups. About a third of the students focus on spreading tasty treats for Buddhists, a third zero in on ringing the Chinese cuisine bell, and a third go to town trying to figure out what

would delight the appetite of Muslims.

While three of the years are spent together on the central campus, one of the annual gatherings found the Buddhist's chefs in Bangkok, Thailand, the Chinese cooks in Hong Kong, and the Muslim menu makers in Jakarta, Indonesia. They spent six weeks trying to catch the tastes of the urban dwellers and hone their cooking skills together. The pastor chefs were divided into small groups to create simple and easy-to-use recipes for the millions of member chefs that are trying their best to feed the group of more than 2.5 billion (5,000 times 500,000)<sup>5</sup> hungry, unreached people in the convention center.

Many missionaries from various denominations have spent more than 100 years trying to interest native Thai Buddhist people in Christian food with little or no success. Billions of



**HOPE ON WHEELS:** This van is used in health ministries to reach Chinese people living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

people in China have never even met one Christian in their entire life. Such high theological and sociological barriers have been erected between Christianity and Islam that providing loving service has become extremely challenging.

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On top of these challenges, the limits of a tiny Adventist presence in that vast constituency make our attempt to cater a meal in the 10/40 window like putting a small table of food out in the parking lot during the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl or the second half of the World Cup soccer final. Consider the figures from an abbreviated table noted in the General Conference's *2012 Annual Statistical Report*, which shows how small our footprint is in this vast and extremely diverse area:<sup>6</sup>

Until a few years ago, the only way to produce attractive, colorful brochures and materials (appropriate to interest the local population) was to engage a publisher with a big printing press that

needed to run many thousands of copies. With the advent of the laptop and the affordable inkjet printers now available in Asia, local pastors can create and print materials for the extremely low cost of 500 copies per US\$1.

Therefore, this print revolution has led to a dramatic decentralization of the production of materials. Local chef-pastors, many of them with master's degrees, should be encouraged to start making "dishes" for their own local communities. This creation of local, contextualized materials is exactly what Jesus did when He walked and taught in Israel. According to Ellen White, "the prince of teachers, [Jesus] sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations."<sup>7</sup>

**The Big 4 Student Projects**

As part of the creative process of focusing upon the challenges of the Big 4 communities within the 10/40 window, each student had to develop either an individual or a group project of contextualized materials for their particular ministry situation. In 2013 AIIAS professors visited all of the students in their field in order to ascer-

tain the challenges and help guide them in the selection and development of an appropriate project.

Each student or group had to write a concise academic paper that explained the principles they used to develop the materials. Professors evaluated each project (including the paper and the developed material) and signed an approval sheet. Following the completion of their projects, Big 4 students put on a successful ministry fair on the campus of AIIAS on March 6, 2014, that led to more discussion of creative ministry approaches and inspired other students to think creatively of contextualized mission.

Some of the best projects were later presented to Adventist world leaders during the Annual Council's focus on evangelism on October 11, 2014. Here is an overview of some of the projects, which were developed and are currently being used to reach out to the peoples of the 10/40 window.

**Reaching Buddhists**

**MONGOLIA: Rainbow Bible Study Guides:** These introductory Bible study guides were developed by a pastor from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. This is the first set of Bible study lessons developed for the newly emerging field of Mongolia, and is based on the

	Ordained Ministers	Churches	Church Membership	Population Estimate (2012)	Population Per Member Ratio
Inside the 10/40 Window	1,810	10,268	2,837,444	4,692,677,000	1,654
Outside the 10/40 Window	11,658	64,031	15,044,047	2,364,398,000	157



colors of the rainbow. The rainbow has deep cultural meaning in Mongolia, and each of the different colors illustrate a biblical truth.

**THAILAND: *Small Group Training Materials*:** These small group training materials were developed by three pastors from Thailand. Sensing the need of developing small groups in the urban centers of Thailand, these pastors created dynamic, contextualized materials to train pastors and members in starting and nurturing small groups.

### Reaching Chinese

**SHANGHAI: *The Year of the Horse Bible Studies*:** This is a bound book of Bible studies developed and printed by the wife of a principal of a Seventh-day Adventist music school in Shanghai, China. The studies are based on the year of the horse and are wonderfully illustrated and printed locally.

**INDONESIA: *Chinese Family Network Goal Device*:** The pastor of a Chinese church in Makassar City, Indonesia, built a device that attempts to capitalize on the extensive family networks within Chinese communities. Through this device his Chinese members are encouraged to list all their immediate and extended family members and pray and work for their conversion.

**MALAYSIA: *China the Wonderland*:** This engaging resource was developed by a student from Malaysia. It features a complete Vacation Bible School program in both Chinese and English based on famous landmarks of mainland China with a vibrant program, songs, crafts, and teacher guide.

**PHILIPPINES: *The Eight Big Blessings*:** These eight colorful brochures were developed by two college teachers and a staff worker for Philippine Frontier Mission. These brochures take the traditional Chinese blessings such as wealth, family, and prosperity and give them a more genuine spiritual and biblical basis.

### Reaching Muslims

**INDONESIA: *Bible Study Guides*:** Four pastors from Indonesia developed a highly contextualized series of Bible studies based on a folk hero of a minority people of central Java. They also filled an inexpensive MP3 player with local songs and materials to give lessons to people who are unable to read.

**INDONESIA: *Javanese Folk Puppet Show*:** A pastor developed a wonderful outreach based on traditional local puppets, which are still extremely popular in the open-air markets. Taking as his point of departure well-known traditional stories, he has transformed these stories in ways so

that people can begin to understand the basics of faith.

**MALAYSIA: *Famous Food Bible Studies*:** A worker from the Sarawak Mission created a colorful and creative study tool featuring famous foods from his region. A background of the food is given, as well as a picture and the recipe. Spiritual lessons are then drawn from the food, providing a unique avenue to engage the local population.

**PHILIPPINES: *Muslim Student Outreach*:** A Filipino pastor, together with a college administrator, created a series of lectures for students of a major Muslim university in the southern Philippines called *Ayat Allah* (“Verses of Allah”). Through these 12 lectures, which include a professional handout with a test, Muslim students are introduced to genuine spirituality through verses of the Koran.



**OLD AND NEW:** This very creative approach taken by a pastor in Indonesia uses well-known traditional Javanese folk puppets and traditional stories with a new twist that plants the seed of faith.

PHOTO: AIIAS





**DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY:** Four examples from Indonesia, Malasia, Mongolia, and the Philippines of using contextualized approaches for telling the “old, old story.”

### Looking Toward the Future

The original Big 4 funding provided a budget for the rollout of these projects. AIIAS has been working diligently with the students and various Adventist Church departments within the region to make sure the students and projects are properly supported. Through careful management of the original funding, US\$150,000 was left over to implement the rollout of the projects and add to the AIIAS library acquisitions in this area.

The 2014 Metro Manila outreach with General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson was strongly supported by providing training modules. Major research into understanding and ministering to Buddhists during their funeral services has already begun. Three years will be given to develop a specific curriculum for Buddhists, Chinese, and the work with Muslims in the 10/40 window. A cost-sharing plan has been developed between the Big 4 program, the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and the Center for East Asian Religions, located in Bangkok, Thai-

land, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the funds.

The project also envisions annual training programs for pastors in Myanmar, mainland China, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In Indonesia, pastors will be taught how to better understand Muslims and present God’s love in this particular context.

Many years ago, at the end of a very long day of ministry, Jesus asked His weary disciples to feed 5,000 men (plus women and children) in a remote place. With time fast running out, all they were able to muster was a boy’s half-stale lunch of five barley loaves and two small fish. But as their humble human hands placed that meager meal into the mighty miracle hands of Jesus, there was a brilliant flash of Genesis creative power, and the tiny pittance was multiplied until “they all ate and were filled” (Matt. 14:20).

The sun is about to set on the big convention center. There are billions to feed, and our resources are scant. Let’s bring with the same faith whatever we have and place it in the nail-pierced hands of Jesus, who can infinitely multiply the tiniest morsel

into warm, fresh loaves to feed the 5,000 times 500,000. ■

<sup>1</sup> The Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) is a General Conference institution located near Manila in the Philippines. It offers graduate degrees in business, education, health, and religion.

<sup>2</sup> AIIAS wrote a proposal in 2009 to receive specially designated tithe funds to educate 60 pastors and develop materials for Asia.

<sup>3</sup> This program, which involved AIIAS giving a master’s in ministry to 60 pastors, was called the Big 4 project because it gave practical instruction on how to reach Buddhists, Chinese, Muslims, and Urban dwellers within the 10/40 window.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent article citing the immense challenges facing the SDA Church in the 10/40 window, please read Mark A. Kellner, “Statistics Reveal Massive Adventist Missions Challenge, Leaders Say,” at <http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/6675/archives/issue-2013-1527/27-cn-statistics-reveal-massive-adventist-missions-challenge-leaders-say>.

<sup>5</sup> While there are currently almost 5 billion people living in the 10/40 window, half of these, or 2.5 billion (5,000 times 500,000), are considered “unreached.” See the Joshua Project for an excellent overview of the number of unreached peoples at <http://joshuaproject.net>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2014.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 23.



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*The*  
Experience  
*of* Pain  
*Lessons learned from  
life's hard knocks*

By MARIA LOMBART

Sometimes God allows us to go through painful experiences, not because He finds pleasure in our suffering, but because there are lessons He can teach us only in the center of the flames.

#### **Painful Lessons**

I find I am closer to my Father when I'm hurting. I know instinctively that even though I cannot run to Him and physically feel His arms around me, I can pour out my heart to Him through tears, unheard words, even angry questionings, and He is a safe place for me (see Ps. 62:8). To be closer to my heavenly Father is something for which I constantly strive. And while I do not relish the experiences of sorrow, pain, and grief, I recognize that He uses these to help me to develop a closer companionship with Him than before.

#### **Not Always What We Want**

God doesn't promise that He will grant our wishes once we've endured the hardship. At times, we have difficult lessons to learn, which include not always having the outcome we might hope for. I tend to be someone who looks for the reward after the testing. I can be patient and deal with hard

times as long as I know I'll receive what I want after everything is all over.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Or, perhaps, *fortunately*. God knows our hearts. Sometimes our desires line up with His plans for us; sometimes they don't. We may have to learn to live in a place of emptiness for a while until we're ready to accept the far more beautiful gift that God has waiting for us. We must walk by faith, believing that God wants the very best for us, and not try to run ahead and attempt to create our own destiny based on our feeble efforts to understand ourselves.

#### **Developing Empathy**

When I find myself facing pain, my instinctive reaction is to push it away until it has subsided. I am learning, however, that we should push *through* the pain, accepting it and holding it close instead of hiding from it.

Personal pain and suffering can soften our hearts to the pain of others: a mother who has lost her child; a young woman who has lost her husband; a grandmother who has lost her spouse of 50 years. Or perhaps the pain isn't caused by the death of a family member. Perhaps instead it comes from the loss of a beloved pet, a culture, an identity, a job, a





“There are lessons God can teach us only in the **center** of the flames.”

dream, a home, a love. Each of these losses creates pain that is unique in its experience. So while we can empathize with someone who has felt loss, we cannot truly walk with them emotionally unless we too have experienced the pain to the degree they have.

Not long ago a mother I know lost her daughter to death. I put my arms around her, said I was sorry, and expressed words of regret and comfort. I have suffered my own losses to death; some of the people were very dear to me. Yet I knew I could not feel one iota of the anguish this mother feels every time she imagines living without her daughter, every time she wonders whether she could have prevented her death from happening, every time she reaches out to connect and then realizes her daughter is no longer there. Only another mother who also has lost her child can truly identify with the pain she feels.

### **Pain as a Gift?**

I don't believe that pain is a gift in itself. But I do believe that God turns pain into a gift when we use our understanding born through suffering to comfort another person in their despair. My own experiences in suffering are preparing me for something I don't yet know. Everyone carries sorrow in their lives and is searching for understanding and comfort in the midst of pain. So I'm learning that pain turns my quick ability to judge into sympathy and concern.

On the other side of pain we can experience joy, peace, strength, and healing. As I look back on my own life, I realize that I have found myself to be a stronger person after trials of suffering. It may not have been perceptible growth, but each time my heart was glued back together with time, understanding, and comfort it became just a little stronger. The

experiences weren't easy, but we can either fall apart from the pain or hold on to God for strength. We make the choice.

### **Jesus the Pain Bearer**

Jesus experienced the worst kind of pain imaginable when He went to the cross. The physical pain was immense, but humans, too, have been exposed to that kind of torture. The pain that tore at His heart was that of complete separation from the One He loved the most: His heavenly Father. God the Father had to remove His presence, His beams of light, one by one, in order to fulfill the demands of the law that He had established even before the creation of the world.\* But praise God, Jesus was the victor over sin. He now identifies with us in our sorrows in a way that we can understand, because He has experienced our pain to an even greater degree than we ever will.

Pain and suffering are experiences foreign to our original natures. We were created for joy, peace, and wholeness. We were created to be in close communion with God and with one another. Pain steals those beautiful experiences and replaces them with brokenness. Because of His amazing grace, our heavenly Father, who foresaw the hurt we would have to go through, offered us His dearest One so we could have the hope of one day seeing pain forever eradicated.

God has promised to wipe every tear from our eyes (Rev. 21:4). And as He wipes away those tears, I believe He will also wipe away the memories of the pain, replacing them with unutterable love, for we will no longer need the experience of pain. ■

\* Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 693.



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LEGACY  
of LIGHT

1827  
1915

ELLEN  
GOULD  
WHITE

PART 3: 1869-1881

## The Camp Meeting Years



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY



CENTER FOR ADVENTIST RESEARCH

**HORNELLSVILLE, NEW YORK:** In 1880 Ellen (center, front) and James White (white beard to her left) pose with some of those who attended camp meeting.

Ellen White was recognized as God’s messenger for the Seventh-day Adventist Church since its founding in the early 1860s. How did this messenger’s life impact the church during its maturing years?

### Temporary Setback

During the May 1869 General Conference (GC) session in Battle Creek, Michigan, the assembly resolved to practice a “more careful reading of, and a more strict compliance with, the Testimonies to the church.”<sup>1</sup> This leading influence was sustained through Ellen White’s public speaking ministry, and the publication of her articles, pamphlets, and books by the church’s publishing enterprise.

But GC leaders’ emphasis on the significance assigned to Ellen White’s prophetic ministry caused a temporary setback. Early in 1871 the Seventh-day Adventist Church recorded a 12.8 percent decrease in membership, mainly because of the lingering attitude against the prophetic guidance of her ministry.

Yet God intervened. In a dream on April 30, 1871, the Lord described to Ellen White the relationship between the Bible and her testimonies. Reporting on this impressive dream, Ellen White wrote, “The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His Word. The written testimonies

are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed.”<sup>2</sup> Her vision on December 10, 1871, in Bordoville, Vermont, triggered a spiritual revival and led to increased confidence in Ellen White’s prophetic ministry.

The influence of Ellen White through her published works continued to flourish as James White, for health reasons, relinquished the office of GC president to G. I. Butler during the December 1871 GC session. With an opportunity to expand their ministry, and for Ellen to write more, the Whites moved west.

## GOD’S MESSENGER

# A Leading Influence

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

By REUEL U. ALMOCERA

### The “Guiding Hand” and Revival

While living in both California and Colorado in 1873, Ellen published more than 20 articles for *Review and Herald*, *Health Reformer*, and *Youth’s Instructor*. Most focused on the life of Christ.<sup>3</sup> By August she had published *Testimony 23*, in which she described the state of the Laodicean church. Attached to that pamphlet was James White’s “earnest appeal,” enumerating an agenda to be considered by the church for an assertive expansion program.

In response to its publication, G. I. Butler called for a second GC session in 1873. Encouraged by a “Guiding

Hand,”<sup>4</sup> James and Ellen White left Colorado to attend the session, in November. In Battle Creek during the Sabbath morning worship Ellen preached a sermon on the temptation of Christ. Many hearts were touched. The church experienced revival; and significant initiatives were launched for the growth and progress of the church.

Experiencing physical and emotional problems, James White felt that he should have more influence over the work of God’s messenger. Ellen White decided that it would be best for them to work independently.<sup>5</sup> So in the summer of 1874 Ellen left James, who was working on the first issue of *Signs of the Times*, in California and traveled east to participate in camp meeting tours and raise funds for the growing work on the West Coast of the United States.

James became GC president again in August 1874. This gave Ellen an opportunity to influence the church’s strategic progress.

Here are two examples: a January 3, 1875, vision charted some major strategies for the worldwide mission of the church (sending missionaries to foreign lands and establishing publishing houses in many countries); and a September 12, 1875, dream in Rome, New York, showed Ellen White the colporteur ministry, which birthed the literature evangelism ministry—one of the most successful worldwide missionary programs of the church.

### Times of Progress

The marital anxiety experienced in 1874 seemed to reappear. Ellen White, in California for the winter of 1876, did not travel back east with James. She was determined to finish writing a volume on the life of Christ. Later Ellen, however, did join James in the east, attending 14 camp meetings. The most memorable of these was in Groveland (near Haverhill), Massachusetts, with an estimated attendance of 20,000 people.

A report of that camp meeting states that “special trains were run from the cities of Lawrence, Newburyport, Haverhill, etc., and at 9:00 a.m. the auditorium was filled with intelligent people. . . . Still the people poured in from the towns about, and the trains came loaded with their living freight. . . . Mrs. White ascended the platform, amid the profound stillness of that vast multitude and addressed the people on the subject of Christian temperance. Her original and comprehensive manner of handling this subject elicited the highest commendation of all that heard.”<sup>6</sup>

Ellen White’s influence expanded with each passing year. From 1875 to 1878 she published more than 250 articles in the church papers. She even helped organize a local conference in Oregon, and actively participated in the organization of the Texas Conference. In Texas she met 21-year-old A. G. Daniells, who later became GC president and, to date, has served the longest (1901-1922).

During the fall of 1878 Ellen White received several visions, including the solemn judgment vision (October 23); and another on November 23. Major resolutions adopted by the GC session in response to these visions.

### Times of Distress

But the “rebuke” and “chastening” contained in the 1878 visions caused distress. Members reacted negatively. Some influential leaders defected.

Ellen White went to California in 1880 with S. N. Haskell and W. C. White to manage the crisis. She later reported, “The tangled condition of affairs here are distressing.”<sup>7</sup> She was in California when she penned a pointed testimony to James regarding his erratic judgment and autocratic leadership style.<sup>8</sup> She even hinted that it might now be time for him to retire.

During the 1880 GC session James White turned the GC presidency over to Butler. In December the Whites moved to their “retirement” home a mile from Battle Creek, near Gogua Lake. But the turmoil in Battle Creek did not subside. Ellen wrote, “I dare not give counsel, even to my brethren. It is a perilous time. There was never such a state of things as now in Battle Creek.”<sup>9</sup>

Just after 5:00 p.m. on Sabbath, August 6, 1881, James died in Battle Creek Sanitarium. During his funeral service on August 13, at the Dime Tabernacle, Ellen, after nearly 35 years of marriage, said, “I shall be alone, and yet not alone, for my Savior will be with me.”<sup>10</sup>

It was clear to Ellen White that she would continue to minister as God’s “leading influence” for the church in times of distress and progress. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 25, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 2, p. 605; the content of the dream is on pages 604-606.

<sup>3</sup> All of Ellen White’s articles in the *Youth’s Instructor*, and many in the *Review and Herald* and *Signs of the Times* (1872-1874), were on the life of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> James White mentioned this guiding hand that influenced the Whites’ decision to attend the twelfth GC session (see *Review and Herald*, Dec. 30, 1873). G. I. Butler also referred to this “Guiding Hand” as the influence behind the 1873 revival (see *Review and Herald*, Nov. 25, 1873).

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White letter 38, 1874. See also Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1986), vol. 2, pp. 432-434.

<sup>6</sup> *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 14, 1876. See also Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1984), vol. 3, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 7, 1880. See also A. L. White, vol. 3, p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White letter 49, 1880. See also A. L. White, vol. 3, pp. 136, 137.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White letter 3b, 1881. See also A. L. White, vol. 3, p. 156.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, in *In Memoriam: A Sketch of the Last Sickness and Death of Elder James White* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Press, 1881), p. 41.



**Reuel U. Almocera** is director of the Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines.



By DON W. MCFARLANE

# *A Place of* Worship *for* All

*Balancing cultural and ethnic congregational life*

Thirty years ago the word “diversity” was not used much within the Seventh-day Adventist Church community in the British Isles. The one cultural distinction, often highlighted, was the difference between those referred to as Anglos and those referred to as Caribbeans. Whenever that subject was discussed, various negative motives were often attributed to one group for not wanting to worship with another.

Much of the behavior that was blamed on prejudice and intolerance was largely the result of cultural preferences. Some underestimate the importance of culture, holding to the view that all people, if they are children of God, should worship together. If they choose not to, the conclusion is clear: They are not truly children of God. But the truth may be more complex.

## **Worship Matters**

Worship is most meaningful within the context of one’s own culture. And reluctance on the part of members of one population to fellowship with another may be nothing more than a desire to worship in circumstances with which they were familiar.

Several Adventist churches in the British Isles have been loosely described as Caribbean churches. However, in numerous cases, these churches are made up largely of members from a particular country, a particular parish, even a particular village. So that just as Caribbean people coalesce according to their particular mores and folkways, it is reasonable that people from other cultures may also wish to do the same, and worship with people who sing like them, eat like them, pray like them, preach like them, and understand their way of life.

## **The Ghanaian Example**

In 1992 a group of Ghanaians asked the South England Conference to recognize a Ghanaian fellowship, and organize the fellowship into a church for the purpose of nurturing Ghanaian Adventists and evangelizing the wider Ghanaian community. So was born the era of what are generally called “ethnic churches.”

Since the London Ghana Adventist Church was established in London in 1992, several other ethnic churches have been set up; among them are congregations that have services in Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Bulgarian, and Romanian, not to mention congregations from other African nations and the Philippines.

The conference recognized that if the church was to be even mildly effective in London, it would need to shift from being monocultural to multicultural. It needed to broaden its appeal and provide different congregations for different kinds of people.

It would have been ideal for existing churches to become multicultural churches, not merely in membership but in the manner in which things were done. But that was easier said than done. In nearly all the churches, a long pattern of worship and witness was already established. Changing that to accommodate the needs of multiple cultures was a tall order.



Further, forcing different cultural or ethnic groups to worship together, even regardless of color, could result in an approach to worship that would frustrate many. Many would cease attending church, as many had before the advent of the ethnic churches.

Some might say that having ethnic churches is religious apartheid, but the facts do not support it. In the British Union, people are free to worship where they wish. People worship where they prefer the style of worship they encounter, where they are treated with love and warmth. In fact, worshippers from all ethnic groups can be found in congregations of other cultural groups. Ethnic congregations provide a wider choice to worshippers and would-be worshippers. They provide a bigger platform for presenting the gospel in a diverse and sophisticated community. Ethnic churches are among the fastest-growing congregations in the British Union.

### Demographic Earthquake

Since the year 2000 thousands of Adventists have arrived from Southern Africa and Eastern Europe, seemingly overnight. The arrival of these new members, the greatest number being from Southern Africa, has brought several visible benefits to the British Union: small churches that were struggling have been revived; the musical ability of the new members has enhanced many a service, and their commitment to the mission of the church has been refreshing; their warm and friendly disposition is also a particular blessing.

When I first entered church administration, leaders were concerned primarily about nurturing members of the church's majority population. Today its concern is to minister to a wide spectrum of members, without being partial to any particular cultural group. The church will never be the same again. Nor should it be. We are still very much concerned with reaching the majority population with the gospel, in that they compose more than 90 percent of the people who live in the British Isles.

### General Observations

The church in the British Isles has become much more conservative, particularly with respect to other forms of diversity. One that comes easily to mind is gender diversity. What was once a growing acceptance of the equality of men and women in ministry has slowed down.

The task of reaching the majority population with the gospel has become more challenging. The British Union is

one of the few places in the world in which the composition of the church is in reverse proportion to the composition of the general population. In most other countries witnessing comes naturally, as people share their faith with others like themselves, while in Great Britain sharing faith involves more cultural bridging.

Additionally, the traditional evangelistic approaches emphasized do not appear to be the most ideal methods for reaching the majority population.

Managing growing diversity requires that:

- all newcomers be warmly welcomed, and everyone made to feel part of the family.
- ongoing diversity seminars provide opportunities for leaders of various culture groups to dialogue so as to understand one another.
- ministers be employed to meet the needs of different culture groups—most pastors taken on in the past 10 years are originally from Africa, Eastern Europe, India, and South America.

Local churches have been asked to involve new members in the life of the church to heighten their sense of belonging.

### Major Implications

The Adventist Church in the British Isles has become irreversibly multicultural. In this new context, all cultures represented in the church share the responsibility for caring for all other cultures. By way of example, no more than 20 percent of Seventh-day Adventists in the British Isles are British. In the same way that Portuguese, Russians, Bulgarians, and Ghanaians are now able to, the British also care about worshipping in a manner they find comfortable and appropriate to their culture.

For the church to have its most significant impact on its society, emphasis must be placed on cross-cultural evangelism and outreach. Pastors and members have to be trained and encouraged to witness outside their own cultures.

The church has to be sensitive in its appointment of leaders, and ensure that the broad cultural makeup of the church is considered, as well as the makeup of society.

As we celebrate the richness and variety that people from nearly every country in the world bring to our spiritual table, we may also explore and appreciate the complex interplay between people of different cultures and marvel at the wisdom of God that makes us all so different and yet all one in Him. ■



**Don W. McFarlane** is pastor of administration for Sligo church in Takoma Park, Maryland, United States. Before that, he was president of the British Union Conference.

# The Truth About Hell

In Isaiah 14:15 the word “grave” in the phrase “brought down to the grave” (NCV)<sup>1</sup> is also translated as “hell” (KJV) and “Sheol” (NKJV).

What is Sheol?

Recent Bible translations tend to use the Hebrew word *sheol* in many of the verses in which it is used in the Old Testament because there

is no exact English equivalent for it. “Hell” is no longer the preferred translation, because the Hebrew word, as well as the Greek *hades*, does not refer to an eternal burning place where the wicked burn forever after death. In general, both terms (*sheol* and *hades*) refer to the place of the dead and are used to convey different, interrelated ideas.

**1. The Grave:** As the place of the dead, *sheol* designates the grave, where a corpse is deposited. Some Bible translations render it as “grave” (e.g., Gen. 42:38; 44:29; 1 Kings 2:9; Ps. 49:14; 55:15, NLT).<sup>2</sup> Good and bad people descend to *sheol*/the grave or tomb (e.g., Gen. 44:31), although the main emphasis is on the descent of the wicked (e.g., Job 24:19; Ps. 9:17; 31:17). It is “the place [literally, “house”] appointed for all the living” (Job 30:23, NIV; cf. 17:13). In the New Testament Jesus Himself went to *hades* by being placed in a grave (Acts 2:31). The natural association between grave and death is indicated by using *sheol* as a synonym for “death” (Isa. 28:15, 18), and by phrases such as “to go down to *sheol*/the grave” (Gen. 37:35; Job 21:13) and “bring down to *sheol*/the grave” (1 Sam. 2:6) in the sense of “to die.” Usually a person dies and goes into *sheol*, but occasionally people “go down alive” into the grave, that is to say, they die in an unusual way (Num. 16:30, 33; Ps. 55:15).

**2. The Depth of Sheol:** Since the grave is underground, its depth is emphasized (Ps. 86:13; Prov. 9:18). *Sheol* is described as the “depths of the Pit” (Isa. 14:15) or simply as “the pit” (Ps. 16:10; 30:3, 9; Isa. 38:18), a land of dust (Job 17:16) and darkness (verse 13). In poetic language, the Bible describes *sheol* as a prison in the depths of the earth from which no one can escape. It has gates (Job 38:17; Isa. 38:10; Matt. 16:18) and is locked with a key (Rev. 1:18). Sometimes *sheol* is personified as an insatiable wild beast coming out from the pit and making its presence felt

through diseases that threaten human life (Ps. 18:4, 5; 116:3; Prov. 30:16; cf. Rev. 11:7). *Sheol* is the negation or end of life (Prov. 15:24; 23:14; Ps. 30:3). The references to *sheol* as a place deep beneath the earth is not about geography but about its distance from heaven as the place of life. It stresses death as total alienation from the living God; the farthest place from heaven in the cosmos (Ps. 139:8; 88:5, 11). Those who are in *sheol* cannot praise the Lord (Ps. 6:5), and their memory is gone; they are dead. Consequently, Israel had no cult of the dead, and consulting the dead (necromancy) was forbidden (Deut. 18:11).

**3. God and Sheol:** But not all is darkness. God has power over *sheol*/the grave/death. The Lord “brings down to the grave and brings up” (1 Sam. 2:6). The dead have no access to God, but God has access to the grave. He has power to ransom His people “from the power of the grave; . . . from death” (Hosea 13:14; cf. Ps. 49:15). He is sovereign Lord of both heaven and *sheol* (Amos 9:2). “Death [*sheol*] is naked before [God]” (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11).

*Sheol* is not the final or eternal residence of humans. It is a prison, but one from which we can escape through the power of God (cf. Isa. 25:8; Dan. 12:2). The key to this prison is now in the hands of Jesus, who was dead but is now alive, and has opened *sheol* to all who find refuge in Him (Rev. 1:18). He was in *sheol*, but He was not left to decay (Ps. 16:10). The resurrection will bring the power of *sheol* to its ultimate end. We could say that the term *sheol* points to the hope of victory over it. ■

<sup>1</sup> Scriptures credited to NCV are quoted from *The Holy Bible, New Century Version*, copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.



Angel Manuel Rodríguez is retired, after a career as a pastor, scholar, and theologian.



By MARK A. FINLEY

# Witnessing *in the Power* of the Holy Spirit



HANS BRAXMEIER

**H**ave you ever longed to share Jesus with a friend, but were at a loss to know what to say? You certainly did not want to offend them by misspeaking, but you felt guilty at not saying anything. Perhaps you have wanted to be a witness for God but felt powerless. Has your Christian experience become stagnant? You long for something more but just do not know how to find it. There is something missing in your spiritual life. There is a sense of emptiness. Maybe you have been thinking that there must be more to Christianity than what you are currently experiencing. Perhaps you have to become actively involved in sharing with others Jesus' love through your words and actions. Sharing our faith is a "spiritual vitamin" that gives new life to our souls. This month's lesson will examine the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering us to be effective witnesses for Christ.

## 1 What promise did Christ give to His New Testament followers? What impact did that promise have upon their lives? Read Acts 1:8.

Witnessing is not something we do by memorizing a canned speech or a mechanical formula. Witnessing is the result of Christ empowering us through the Holy Spirit. We witness in His strength, not ours; in His power, not ours; in His wisdom, not ours.

## 2 What does it mean to "witness" for Jesus? What did New Testament believers do? Compare the following Scripture passages: 1 John 1:1-3; Acts 4:20; 5:30-32.

The disciples shared how they had personally experienced Christ. Jesus had changed their lives, and they could not be silent. Witnesses tell what they know; they share what they have seen; they testify about what Christ has done in their lives.

## 3 Read the story of the Samaritan woman Jesus met at Jacob's well (John 4:5-42), and the man Jesus delivered from demons (Mark 5:2-20). After they were converted, what did they have in common? What was their first response to the gospel?

Ellen White observed, "No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace."\*

## 4 What did Andrew do when he found the Messiah? Read John 1:40-42.

When we come to Jesus, and our lives are changed by His grace, we cannot help sharing what Jesus has done for us. The Holy Spirit places within our hearts the desire to tell the story of Jesus to those with whom we come into contact.

## 5 When we are afraid we might say the wrong thing, stumble over our words, or misrepresent Christ because we have nothing meaningful to say, what assurance does the Holy Spirit give us? Read 1 Corinthians 2:12, 13; Luke 21:15; and Isaiah 51:16.

## 6 What word did Jesus use to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Read John 14:16; 15:26; and 16:7.

The Holy Spirit is our "helper." From our New Testament Greek we get the word *paraclete*, which means "one who comes along side for the purpose of helping." When we share our faith with others from a sincere heart, the Holy Spirit stands beside us, prompting our words, guiding our actions, and empowering our witness.

## 7 Read Matthew 28:18-20. What promise did Jesus give all believers to the end of time?

As we witness in Jesus' name, sharing with others what He has done for us and what He can do for them, He promises to be with us. Through His Holy Spirit He stands by our side. Christ, through His Holy Spirit, flows through us to bless the lives of others. There is no greater joy, no higher privilege, no greater calling, than to be transformed by His grace and witness to others the saving grace of our Lord. ■

\*Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 78.



# Letters

## Top Adventist Leaders Build a Church

I'm writing about Libna Stevens' article "Top Adventist Leaders Build a Church" (March 2015). I like teamwork, especially from church leaders! It shows a Nehemiah spirit.

ROBERT GICHANA NYAMORI  
*Nairobi, Kenya*

## Inspiring!

I've read nearly the entire February 2015 *Adventist World*, which rarely happens for me with other issues. I give it an "I" rating for inspiring. Thank you for the wonderful stories of how God is working in miraculous ways around the world. It makes me look forward to what He will do in my corner of the world.

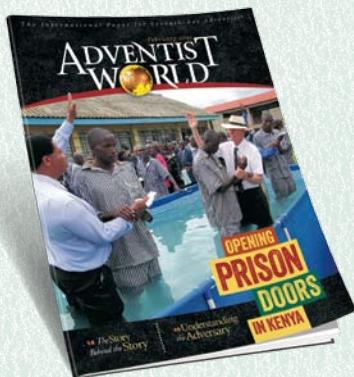
DONOVAN DAVIS  
*Kernersville, North Carolina,  
United States*

## Happenings in Iraq

I'm writing in regard to the news article "Many Wonderful Things' Happening in Iraq" (February 2015). Praise God, this message shall be preached in all the world as a witness, then shall the end come! The devil is like a roaring lion, seeking to devour the people of the

“I like **teamwork**, especially from church leaders! It shows a Nehemiah spirit.”

—ROBERT GICHANA NYAMORI, *Nairobi, Kenya*



Middle East. But God is in control and the three angels' messages cannot be stopped by the forces of evil.

I will continue to pray for my brothers and sisters in Iraq; that God will strengthen, protect, and provide for them. May God bless and provide for the Kurds.

JEANNETTE BEVERLY  
*via e-mail*

## Group Dynamics

I read Bill Knott's editorial "The Way of the Cross" (January 2014). Says Knott: "This crucial (cross-bearing) teaching of Jesus cannot be

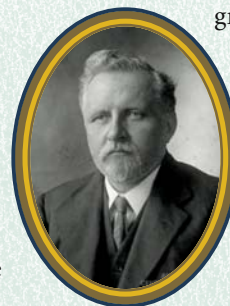
heard often enough among us as we near the decisive conflicts of earth's final days. Unless we regularly repeat these words to each other—study them, pray them, build this movement's processes upon them—we will inevitably mimic the painful power structures of this world that already wound and oppress too many."

Many thanks for this article!  
SAMPSON OPARE  
*Mamprobi, Accra, Ghana*

## 99 Years Ago

When I saw W. A. Spicer's picture in the December 2014 Idea Exchange (see "99 Years Ago"), poignant memories of his

kindness and Christian love for a teenage girl came rushing back. I was the Sabbath school superintendent of Takoma Academy and lived across the



## Prayer & PRAISE

Please pray for my grandparents; they are having serious health problems and need healing. And pray for me to find a job with an Adventist institution.

KATTY, *Peru*

Please pray for my wife, who is going to give birth soon. I need financial aid for her. Thank you!

WIN, *Myanmar*

Pray for me and my ministry.

SHIFUL, *Bangladesh*

I am having financial difficulty and am unable to meet the needs of my family. I am working on several projects to help alleviate the situation. Please pray that God gives me faith, courage, strength, and wisdom to get over this situation, and that I have tremendous success with the projects.

CLINT, *Trinidad and Tobago*



street from him. Spicer was so gracious and helpful in providing my program with mission stories. He walked everywhere he went—and he was then in his mid-70s. Spicer was the grandpa I never had growing up. He truly was a man of God, one of His saints!

JEAN S. MURPHY  
*Fletcher, North Carolina,  
United States*

### **One Team, One Mission**

Thank you for publishing Manuel A. Gómez's article "One Team, One Mission" (November 2014). It is a great article! As a football follower I was interested in the article. After reading it, I've gained understanding in regard to the topic of unity. The article contains a wonderful analogy; and it helps us appreciate our mission on this earth, playing for God's "team."

ROBERTO O. VILLARREAL  
*San Martín, Argentina*

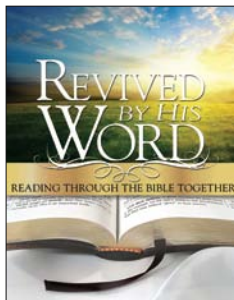
**Letters Policy:** Please send to: [letters@adventistworld.org](mailto:letters@adventistworld.org). Letters must be clearly written, 100-word maximum. Include the name of the article and the date of publication with your letter. Also include your name, the town/city, state, and country from which you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



This year's General Conference session will be held in San Antonio, Texas, United States, July 2-11. Of the first 34 General Conference sessions, 27 were held in Battle Creek, Michigan, United States. The session has been held outside the United States only three times: Austria (1975), the Netherlands (1995), and Canada (2000).

Adventists from around the world can attend the meetings in San Antonio, but only official delegates can comment and vote in the business sessions.

Source: *Southwestern Union Record*



## Revived *by* His Word

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

**JUNE 1, 2015 • Hebrews 8**

My faith is wavering, and I feel a gap between God and me. Please pray!

GEOFFREY, *Kenya*

Pray that our ministry has the means to achieve its goals of spreading God's unconditional love to all.

BANDAO, *Togo*

Please pray for permanent residence in Australia for my family. We also need prayers for Christian education.

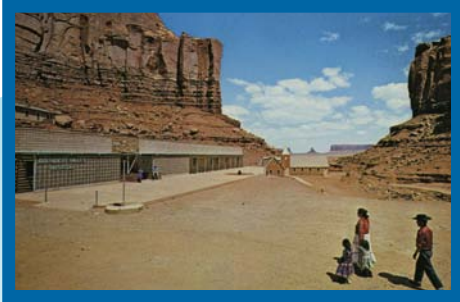
EKEVATI, *Australia*

I am studying theology but am finding it hard to fund my schooling. Pray that the Lord helps me.

ENOCK, *Zambia*

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





## 54 Years Ago

On May 4, 1961, Monument Valley Hospital in Utah was dedicated. Eleven years earlier, in 1950, the Pacific Union Conference asked Marvin Walter to travel throughout California to raise US\$9,000 with which to start a medical mission to the Navajos who lived in Monument Valley, the site of several movies.

In September 1950 Walter, his wife, Gwen, and their three children, arrived at Harry Gouling's Trading Post to begin the project. Gwen Walter, a registered nurse, opened a clinic. By 1952 a small stone clinic was finished, to which a larger frame building was added.

Over the years many Adventist doctors and dentists served the Navajo population. In 1961 a 20-bed hospital opened under the auspices of the Pacific Union Conference, owned and operated by the Nevada-Utah Conference, with support from the Loma Linda University Schools of Dentistry and Medicine.

The hospital had to close in 1996 when government funding for the Navajo population was no longer available. An Adventist church and elementary school still occupy seven acres that is leased from the Navajo Nation for mission use.



What does your desk say about you? According to a recent survey of human resources managers, respondents said messy desks are:

- 59% OK**
- 32% Not OK**
- 9% A sign of creativity**

Source: USA Today

## Heart Health



A healthy heart requires a healthy dose of potassium. This essential mineral helps regulate blood pressure and heart rhythm. The United States National Institutes of Health recommends 4,700 milligrams per day. Fortunately, lots of foods contain potassium. Here are a few:

<b>Avocados</b> 728 mg/237 ml (1 cup)	<b>Swiss Chard</b> 481 mg/118 ml (half cup)	<b>Pinto Beans</b> 373 mg/118 ml (half cup)
<b>Red Potatoes</b> 538 mg/118 ml (half cup)	<b>Yams/Sweet Potatoes</b> 460 mg/118 ml (half cup)	<b>Lentils</b> 365 mg/118 ml (half cup)
<b>Lima Beans</b> 485 mg/118 ml (half cup)	<b>Squash</b> 375 mg/118 ml (half cup)	

Source: National Institutes of Health



People touch their faces an average of 45 times each hour (that's more than 700 times a day). Eyes, mouths, and noses are all entry points for infection, so use a hand sanitizer or wash your hands often.

Source: University of New South Wales/Men's Health

*“Behold, I come quickly...”*

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

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**50** WORDS OR LESS

*My Favorite...*

## Bible Promise

■ “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you” (Acts 1:8). Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the first church, and He convicts us of sin today.

—JOHN, *Lilongwe, Malawi*

■ “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15).

—HEITOR, *Mogi das Cruzes, Brazil*

■ “The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open” (Isa. 22:22).

—JONATHAN, *London, England*

■ John 16:27 is a most astonishing promise. Jesus said that He doesn’t have to intercede with the Father, for the Father Himself loves us. That makes me think about John 14:7-9: If we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father. That’s the everlasting gospel.

—JIMMY, *Portugal*

Next time, tell us in 50 words or less about your favorite Adventist preacher or Bible teacher. Send it to: [letters@AdventistWorld.org](mailto:letters@AdventistWorld.org). Put in the subject line: 50 Words or Less.





**If you can't  
make it to  
San Antonio,  
raise your  
hand.**



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