

June 2015

ADVENTIST WORLD



or **Blessed?**

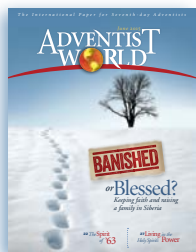
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ADVENTIST WORLD

June 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

Notice is hereby given that the next regular meeting of the members of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas, at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 7, 2015, for the purpose of electing the Board of Directors and for the transaction of any business that may come before the meeting.

Daisy Jane F. Orion, Corporate secretary

General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists

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“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you”
(1 Peter 4:12, RSV).*

There’s no way to pretend we didn’t know. We were advised and cautioned, even warned: The life of discipleship will at some point intersect the path of suffering.

Perhaps it’s our native optimism that makes us forget the reality about which Jesus and His closest friends reminded us. Perhaps it’s the distortions of biblical truth preached by those who advertise only a gospel of prosperity and peace that cause us to assume that suffering for the Name will be anomalous and unusual.

Our favorite hymns are filled with messages of peace and joy—and rightly so, for these are also mileposts on the pilgrim way. But where are the hymns that remind us that those who stay faithful to Jesus will almost invariably face persecution? These were the comfort—and the courage—of the church of the Reformation.

Five hundred years ago Martin Luther wisely wrote:

“For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;

His craft and pow’r are great; and armed with cruel hate,

On earth is not his equal.”

A generation ago Martin Luther King, Jr., forcefully recalled the painfully honest African-American spirituals decrying slavery and oppression. Who is teaching us such songs today?

Where are the Sabbath morning messages that teach us to expect as normal the anger and hostility of a world that doesn’t honor Jesus as Lord? The last of Jesus’ eight beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12)—the one about expecting persecution for being His disciple—is the longest and, with the commentary He added, amounts to more than 40 percent of His famous words.

As you read this month’s remarkable feature story of courage and resilience in Communist-era Russia, pray for the thousands of fellow believers around the globe who are even now bearing the cross in ways we will never fully know until we gather in the kingdom.

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Bill Knutson

WORLD REPORT

Surprises Emerge From San Antonio

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY



FULL COVERAGE: Evangelist Mark Finley prays with patient Marcus Daniel after Dr. Shaun Rusk (left) completed dental work at the free clinic in San Antonio.

■ Nearly 6,200 people received \$20 million in free Adventist health care at a Texas stadium, church leaders said, recounting behind-the-scenes stories about an overworked X-ray machine and an unexpected doctor’s referral.

Duane McKey, vice president for evangelism at the church’s Southwestern Union Conference, a cosponsor of the free clinic in San Antonio’s Alamodome stadium, said an X-ray machine typically makes 45 X-rays in two and a half days, but the machine donated by GE spat out a total of 338 X-rays during the event.

“The machine got so hot that it stopped working,” he told the Spring Meeting of church leaders at General Conference headquarters. “But the technician said, ‘I can fix it,’ and he cranked up the fan and got it working again.”

McKey said a patient who got an operation worth \$25,000 at a nearby Adventist hospital told how she had broken the news about

Continued on next page ▶



WHOSOEVER WILL: Thousands of people wait in line for free Adventist healthcare before the opening of the Alamodome stadium in San Antonio, April 8.

her plans to receive the free surgery to her doctor. The doctor had expressed disbelief that anyone would provide her with such an expensive operation at no cost, so she had presented him with a flyer about the event.

Sometime later the doctor found himself speaking with another patient who urgently required an operation but didn't have the insurance to cover the bill. "How am I going to come up with the \$25,000?" she asked. The doctor handed her the flyer for the free clinic.

Evangelist Mark Finley joined McKey at the front of the auditorium to share a montage of local television news reports about the free clinic. He reminded the audience that the event had aimed to introduce San Antonio to the Seventh-day Adventist Church before thousands of Adventist believers arrived in July for the General Conference session in the Alamodome.

"The major news in that city was 'Seventh-day Adventists ... helping people,'" Finley said. "When we go for the General Conference session in that city, people will know who Seventh-day Adventists are."

Records Broken as Young People "Are the Sermon"

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

■ Hundreds of thousands of Adventist young people shared Jesus' love in 132 countries for Global Youth Day, setting a new record that surpassed organizers' expectations.

Gilbert Cangy, Youth Ministries Department director for the Seventh-day Adventist world church, declared the third annual event a big success.

"I daresay today was a huge moment for the church and a huge moment for youth ministry," Cangy said by telephone on Saturday night, March 21. "It was a pivotal moment. It proved once again that if you create an environment where young people can be involved, they will always surpass your expectations."

Young people were challenged on Global Youth Day to "become Jesus' hands and feet" by finding ways to

show His love to others. Among other things, young people sang, visited hospitals, and swapped fruit for cigarettes. The motto for Global Youth Day was "Be the Sermon."

Activities were held in 132 of the world's 192 countries as recognized by the United Nations, and 73 percent of participants were young people between the ages of 13 and 34, said Cangy, the organizer of the event. He noted that this represented a critical age group that has disengaged from the church in large numbers in recent years.

"Global Youth Day goes against this trend," he said. "It shows that our youth are willing to engage in the mission of the church if we are willing to give them leadership. I am very proud of our young people."

It may never be known exactly



FOOD FOR ALL: Adventist young people share pizza with those who are homeless as part of Global Youth Day in Monterrey, Mexico.

how many people participated in Global Youth Day, but metrics from Google and on social media indicate that the number is up from the previous two years. Egypt, for example, was the only country in the Middle East and North Africa to host activities last year, but this year it was joined by Lebanon, Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, Cangy said.

In another first, footage from the event was live-streamed online and on the church's Hope Channel from 19 uplink sites over 24 hours.

Virgil R. Bakulu tweeted from Manado, Indonesia, that his group had successfully given away fruit in exchange for packs of cigarettes. At a police station in South Africa, young people expressed their gratitude to officers by singing "Amazing Grace."

Youth in India passed out food to homeless children, and a group in Botswana waved at passersby.

Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, encouraged youth to go beyond Global Youth Day and be a sermon every day until Jesus' return. Wilson, who has participated in every annual youth day, spoke from a gathering of 5,000 youth in Colombia.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has come a long way from the 60-minute *Let's Talk* television program in the 2000s, when the Adventist Church president took questions from young people. "Now we have a 24-hour program from 19 locations in the world, involving the youth not just in the discussion but in the planning and recording," said André Brink, associate communication director for the Adventist Church, who videotaped segments for *Let's Talk* and prepared a video feature on the 2015 event. "This is truly amazing."

Adventist Leader Meets U.N. Chief

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

■ United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed concerns about growing religious intolerance worldwide during a private meeting with Adventist Church leader Ted N. C. Wilson, and he invited the Seventh-day Adventist Church to work with the U.N. in helping people.

Wilson, the first Adventist Church president to meet with a U.N. chief, noted that the church has long supported religious liberty and said it was willing to team up on initiatives that followed Christ's ministry of helping people physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

Ban met with Wilson; John Graz, director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department; and Graz's associate Ganoune Diop on April 6 for a 45-minute meeting at United Nations headquarters in New York.

The meeting was arranged with the personal involvement of Ambassador Joseph Verner Reed, dean of the U.N. undersecretaries-general and a friend of Seventh-day Adventists, who regularly corresponded with Diop to make the meeting a reality.

"It was a real privilege to meet the secretary-general and to hear his appeal for assistance for humanity," Wilson told *Adventist World*.

"Seventh-day Adventists should be ready to witness for the Lord anywhere we go and to testify of God's blessing in our lives and what we can



EVAN SCHNEIDER / UN

COOPERATION WITHOUT COMPROMISE: UN chief Ban Ki-moon meets with Adventist Church leader Ted N. C. Wilson on April 6 at the United Nations in New York.

do in His name," he said. "The world is waiting for this type of heaven-inspired testimony with clear answers to today's problems."

Ban spoke about global issues such as poverty and a lack of education before voicing his concern about religious intolerance. He also expressed appreciation for the Adventist Church's work in promoting religious liberty as well as education, health, and humanitarian aid through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. ADRA has worked with the U.N. in assisting refugees in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Where 15 Percent of Baptisms Are Former Adventists

South America leads the way in reaching out to former members.

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

■ G. T. Ng, executive secretary of the Adventist world church, took a 10-day tour of three countries to find out why churches in the South American Division are so successful in baptizing and retaining members.

What he found surprised him.

The Adventist Church in South America does more than organize robust evangelistic meetings and community initiatives, like its counterparts in other parts of the world. It asks church clerks, whose responsibilities typically revolve around bookkeeping, to oversee a unique program that reaches out to former Adventists.

The results of the Reencounter program are stunning. Rebaptisms have grown to a staggering 12 to 15 percent of all baptisms in the past three years, a record in the Adventist world church.

“The DNA is that church clerks go beyond their traditional role of recordkeeping of membership,” Ng told *Adventist World*.

“To rectify the tragic loss of members, church clerks are trained to engage in local church membership care,” he said. “They take note of miss-

ing members. They organize visitation teams to reclaim lost members. It’s an innovative approach to redeem believers who have been lost twice.”

Ng has prioritized membership retention during his five years in office. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a worldwide membership of 18.5 million, the figure would be much higher if not for the fact that nearly a third of the members baptized during the past 40 years have dropped their membership or simply gone missing, according to statistics that his office released last fall. “As a church, the retention rate of new believers has been dismal,” Ng said.

Adventists leaders around the world have sought to reach out to former members over the years, but no region has been quite as successful as the South American Division, church leaders said.

Ng made his first trip to Chile, Peru, and Ecuador in March to study why rebaptisms accounted for an astounding 29,866 of the division’s 195,509 baptisms in 2014. Those figures represent a steady growth from 28,299 rebaptisms among 190,314

baptisms in 2013, and 24,732 baptisms among 174,767 baptisms in 2012. The division has 2,333,487 members.

“Not all of the rebaptisms were the result of the Reencounter program,” said Magdiel E. Pérez Schulz, executive secretary of the South American Division. “But we can surely state that the majority were, and every year the number of rebaptisms are increasing.”

“Welcome Back, Prodigal Son!”

Reencounter was born in 2012 when an annual meeting of secretaries from around the South American Division revealed that a significant number of members were leaving the church and that the secretaries lacked any plan to try to win them back.

When contacted, many former members expressed a desire to return, but the idea of attending church without someone visiting them first with a personal invitation to return left them feeling scared, ashamed, or alienated, Pérez said.

“We even heard stories about some of them coming back by themselves and being greeted by well-intentioned leaders with such words as: ‘Welcome back, prodigal son! Have you had enough of the world, or has the devil let go of you?’” Pérez said.

So conference secretaries decided to make the reclamation of former members a priority and delegate the responsibility to church clerks, their counterparts at local churches.

As a result, church clerks now prepare a special Sabbath program and sermon once or twice a year that former members are invited to attend. The division provides special materials for the initiative, including Bible studies and DVDs to hand out to former members. The DVD recording contains an invitation to return to church.



GRAND OPENING: General Conference secretary G. T. Ng opens a church clerk-funded church in Ecuador as Magdiel E. Pérez Schulz (with microphone) interprets.

“It has proven to bring back former members,” Pérez said. The efforts have also proven useful in retaining new members, who join the clerks in inviting family members and friends to church, he said.

Unity and Obedience Are Key

Ng, who spent some time examining the program, said he believed it was flourishing because the church clerks are backed by a church unified in its vision of mission and obedient to the Bible and the counsel of Adventist Church cofounder Ellen G. White.

“One of the first things that impressed me was a sense of corporate unity,” he said. “Be it union, conference, or institution, one pulse beats through the entire Adventist infrastructure.” He said Adventist believers embraced 2 Chronicles 20:20—“Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper”—and had strong confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy, especially the counsel that “the work of education and the work of redemption are one” (*Education*, p. 30).

“Hundreds of elementary schools, high schools, and universities testify to that commitment,” Ng said. “Peru, for example, has three university campuses with almost 10,000 students.

Where schools are established, evangelism flourishes.”

Local church leaders also have a clear vision about mission, sharing a common understanding that every church and institution exists solely for mission, Ng said. “Of the missions and conferences we visited, administrators took time to articulate what they believed to be the mission of the church and how resources were being directed toward evangelism,” he said. “It’s no wonder church planting is going great guns in the South American Division.”

The number of churches and companies in the division has increased from 21,345 in 2010 to 25,942 in 2014, an increase of 21.5 percent over four years.

In addition to reaching out to former members, church clerks are tasked with church planting and work together to raise funds to construct at least one church per year in unreached areas identified by the church’s Global Mission. Ng attended the dedication of two churches in two conferences in Ecuador. One church cost \$28,000 to build, while the other cost \$16,000.

“During the dedication services I couldn’t help noticing the sense of pride beaming from the faces of church clerks in attendance, having collectively accomplished something they had thought impossible individually,” said

Ng, who cut the opening ribbon. “The spirit of camaraderie was unmistakable.”

“Thank You for Not Giving Up”

Ten church clerks interviewed by *Adventist World* were united in their enthusiasm for their extra responsibility of reaching out to former members.

“Our responsibility is not just keeping the books of the church active and updated. We need to be cohelpers of Jesus in the mission of searching, keeping, and rescuing our members,” said Jacilane Maria da Silva Ibiapino, 31, church clerk at the Airport church in Rio Largo, Brazil.

Jacinta Marta de Azevedo Perpetuo, 46, a church clerk in Ipatinga, Brazil, said she had experienced no greater joy than seeing a former member approach her at the end of a special Sabbath program and, with tears in her eyes, say: “Thank you for not giving up on me. If it weren’t for your invitation, I never would have been here.”

“It’s completely worth the effort, the work, and the prayers—everything that we do in preparing this program,” she said.

The clerks appealed to their counterparts in other world regions to join them in reclaiming former members.

“To all the church clerks of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I would like to say that our work is not limited to keeping church books and the minutes of church committee meetings,” said Evelyn Katherine Lucio Luciano, 26, a church clerk in Chimbote, Peru. “Our main duty is to fulfill the mission.” ■

Watch the division’s 2012 “Missing You” video for former members at



goo.gl/uZF7d6

The hope of the second coming of Christ has burned in the hearts of His people ever since His disciples stood gazing upward, watching their Lord ascend in the clouds. Surely, they hoped, He would return in their lifetime.

Through the centuries, faithful believers clung to the promise given by Jesus: “I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

Charles Wesley, the great eighteenth-century hymn writer, put this long-held desire into words with his hymn “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus.”

During the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, “Jesus is coming soon!” was the cry on the lips of Baptist preacher William Miller and countless others as they delved into the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

When, after the Great Disappointment, a group of people came together to search the Scriptures, they reaffirmed the imminence of their soon-coming Savior, and in 1860 chose the name Seventh-day *Adventist* to reflect the centrality of this hope.

Today in 2015, does this hope of a soon-coming Christ still burn within

our hearts? After all, some may say, past generations have expected Jesus to come in *their* lifetimes but He didn’t, so why should I expect Him to come in *my* lifetime?

Where Is the Promise?

As human beings, we find it easy to succumb to the temptation of thinking that life is going to continue on just as it has in the past. We see these kinds of thoughts specifically mentioned in 2 Peter 3:4: “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”

From a purely secular standpoint, and even from a personal standpoint, we might be tempted to think this way at times. But even in my lifetime I’ve seen the transition from days when life seemed to just roll along and you could count on things—life was fairly predictable and dependable—to now, where life is filled with uncertainty and the norm is the unexpected.

Everywhere you look—if you are looking—you will see that from a political standpoint there are no more solutions. From a financial standpoint, we teeter between the edge of financial collapse and momentary prosperity,

and we don’t know from day to day which one is going to take control. From a social and moral standpoint we see morality crumbling throughout the earth. From an ecumenical standpoint, things are happening at lightning speed as the pope and other religious figures reach out to leaders of many faiths, seeking a “reconciliation.”

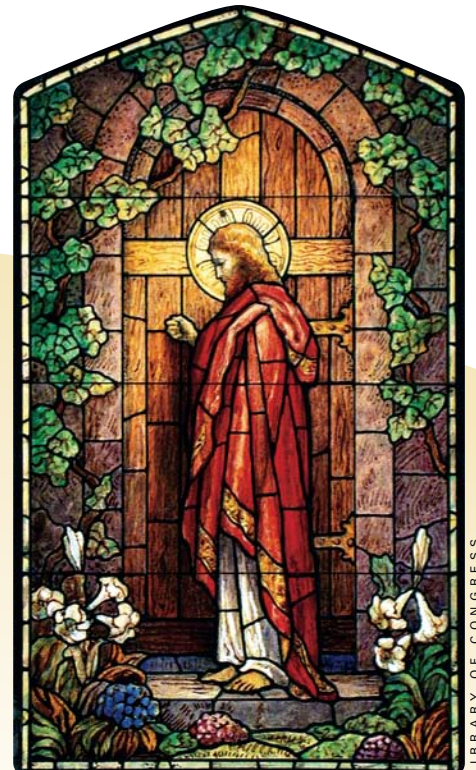
One of the Biggest Dangers

But if we aren’t awake—if we aren’t looking—we won’t recognize the world in which we’re living. And that is one of the biggest dangers of thinking that Jesus isn’t coming soon, it’s an invitation to be so fully engaged with the world that our minds will become numbed by its consuming business and pleasures. Everything will appear as if life is going on as it always has, when in fact enormous changes are taking place.

This is why Jesus indicates in Revelation 3:14-22 that we, in this end-time setting, are Laodicean and desperately need revival and reformation. Jesus says, “I counsel you to buy from

By TED N. C. WILSON

Arise, Shine, Jesus Is Coming! *A Call to Action*



Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (verse 18).

That is why the Lord patiently waits at the doors of our hearts and knocks, saying, “If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (verse 20). Jesus wants to return, but waits for us to humble ourselves before Him so that He can use us to share His last-day messages with the world in anticipation of His soon, second coming.

Satan’s Schemes

We are told that “Satan exults as he sees that he is successful in keeping minds from a consideration of the solemn, important matters that have to do with eternal life. He seeks to crowd the thought of God out of the mind, and to put worldliness and commercialism in its place. . . . It is his studied purpose to lead men to forget God and heaven. . . . And to this end he brings forward enterprises and inventions that will so occupy men’s attention that they will have no time to think of heavenly things.”¹

Describing the very time in which we are living, Ellen White emphasized this point in *The Great Controversy*: “Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. . . . He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth. . . . The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the world of truth”² Let’s be aware of the closeness of Jesus’ second coming, and plead for the outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit!

A Call to Action

The theme of the General Conference session in San Antonio this summer is a call to action: “Arise! Shine! Jesus Is Coming!”

In the very last chapter of the book of Revelation, Jesus proclaims three times that He is “coming quickly.” This means that in the cosmic timetable it is soon. As we know from Daniel and Revelation, there are no more prophetic pinpoints after 1844. We recognize that we are living in the tips of the toes of the image of Daniel 2, and that the next event will be that stone cut out without men’s hands—symbolizing the second coming of Christ.

So how do we “arise and shine” in preparation for Jesus’ return? Guidance is given to us in *Testimonies for the Church*: “In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”³

Seventh-day Adventists have long understood that their very character and unique mission springs from Revelation 14:6-12—the three angels’ messages—God’s Word for these last days of earth’s history. Some people may say these messages are politically incorrect and not advisable to make known. I want to tell you the three angels’ messages are the most important messages to share. They are our theology and mission and the reason for God’s wonderful remnant church.

The three angels’ messages are directly related to Christ’s second coming as the events they describe immediately precede His coming. This is why

sharing these messages now is so important—eternal destinies are at stake!

We Are All Called

This is a calling for *all* Seventh-day Adventists, not just for ministers and evangelists. No one is excluded from this very important work. We are all called to find creative, effective, loving, and Christlike ways to share the important, lifesaving messages of Revelation 14 with those around us. It may begin with a friendship, or in a healthful cooking class, at a center of influence, or in the workplace, wherever you may find yourself, spend time with God each day in His Word and in prayer, asking Him to show you how to reach those with whom you come into contact. Watch for divinely arranged encounters where you have opportunity to minister and share the truth as it is in Jesus.

One Day Soon

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is coming soon! What a day that will be when Jesus returns! Christ’s second coming will be the culmination of God’s finished work!

One day soon we will see in the eastern sky a small, dark cloud about half the size of a man’s fist. It will get larger and larger and brighter and brighter, all of heaven poured out for this climax of earth’s history. Everyone will see Him at the same time through a miracle of heaven. And there, seated in the middle of millions of angels, will be the One we have been waiting for—not the humble broken Lamb, not the High Priest, but the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ our Redeemer! We will look up and say, “This is the God we have waited for” (see Isa. 25:9). Christ will look down and say, “Well done, good and faithful [servants]. . . . Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matt. 25:21), and we will rise to meet the Lord in the air to go home to be with Him forever!



A One-Day Church

Blossoming Bricks

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Are You Ready?

Let’s dedicate our lives, energies, talents, resources, and time to finishing God’s work so we can go home! God has promised to give you His power to finish His work. He will pour out the latter rain to proclaim the three angels’ messages and finish His work as a united church.

Are you ready for Jesus to come? Are you ready for mission? Are you ready to do whatever it takes to proclaim God’s last-day message to the millions and millions of searching souls in the cities and rural areas in your part of the world? Are you ready to participate in comprehensive health ministry, helping people to live life to the fullest here and for eternity? Are you ready to plead with the Lord for revival, reformation, and the latter rain of the Holy Spirit as we proclaim Bible truth? Are you ready to march forward in God’s mission?

Let’s *all* arise! Shine! For Jesus is coming! ■

¹ Ellen G. White, “Let Your Light So Shine Before Men,” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 15, 1910. See also *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 219.

² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 488.

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 19.

MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL



Left: COMMUNITY CENTER: Edward Khatsalira, local elder of the church in Kaphentenga, rejoices in the effect the new building has on the evangelistic efforts of the congregation. **Right: NEW LIFE:** The Adventist church building in Kaphentenga is a center of evangelism.

Ever wonder what happens to a One-Day Church after the crew puts up the structure and leaves? When the crew *finishes* building the frame is actually the *beginning* of a new era. From that moment on, the congregation takes the wheel. They work together to paint their version of perfect onto the blank canvas provided.

We recently returned to Malawi, where just a few years ago Maranatha Volunteers International built more than 1,000 churches. We wanted to know: *What has happened since then?* The drive through Malawi is beautiful, and confusing. The rolling hills feature lots of cornfields, but not many street signs.

When we finally arrived at the Kaphentenga Adventist Church, what a beautiful surprise! Maranatha crews built this frame on May 25, 2011, and a lot has happened since then. Local elder Edward Khatsalira was there to give us an update. The believers worked together to build their church with handmade red bricks, baked in huge, hand-hewn, outdoor ovens.

After they completed the walls on their church, the congregation held an evangelistic effort and baptized 22 new members. Now this church is full of energy every Sabbath (and many weekdays), with 55 baptized members, plus 40 children.

Sometimes other members of the community ask to use the beautiful church. Khatsalira tells about a funeral held recently. Something about the Adventist service touched the hearts of one family who attended. They have attended every Sabbath since.

ASI and Maranatha Volunteers International collaborate to fund and facilitate the One-Day Church and One-Day School project. Since the project’s launch in August 2009, more than 4,500 One-Day Churches have been built around the world.



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

Potlucks

Fun or Fury?

By PETER N. LANDLESS and
ALLAN R. HANDYSIDES



I travel quite a lot, and it's a pleasure to visit Seventh-day Adventist churches in different places. I'm disturbed, however, that potluck lunches vary so widely—not so much culturally, but with vegetarian and nonvegetarian foods. Does the church have guidelines on this?

This is a common question. The church does not have a specific voted guideline or statement on food served at potlucks, or fellowship dinners. We are guided by established principles and recommendations rather than prescriptive guidelines. The General Conference Nutrition Council has a comprehensive position statement on planning fellowship meals, which many have found helpful, at: <http://healthministries.com/articles/gc-nutrition-council/planning-fellowship-meals>.

Regarding your query on vegetarian and nonvegetarian food, the church does indeed have a policy and recommendation regarding the most healthful diet in the General Conference *Working Policy*:

The church advocates that positive steps be taken to develop a healthful lifestyle, and encourages a balanced vegetarian diet. . . . The church encourages the avoidance of flesh foods. The use of coffee, tea, and other caffeinated beverages, and all harmful substances are discouraged. Physical well-being and clarity of mind are usually interdependent; clarity of mind is essential for discernment between right and wrong, between truth and error.—General Conference Working Policy (2013-2014), p. 331.

This working policy was voted by world church leaders in 2007. It summarizes the information revealed to

the Adventist Church through God's Word and the Spirit of Prophecy, and is strongly supported by robust evidence from peer-reviewed science.

A balanced vegetarian diet has been shown to have tremendous physical health advantages as well as many positive benefits to our mental health and overall well-being.

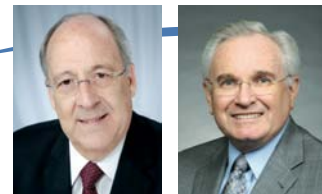
A balanced vegetarian diet is associated with less obesity, improved cardiovascular health, less high blood pressure, and a reduction in certain cancers. These findings are corroborated by the Adventist Health Studies and papers emanating from these large cohorts, as well as other independent and separate studies. Avoidance of meat leads to significant reduction of colon cancer, one of the leading cancers in men. Interestingly, as the consumption of legumes as a source of protein increases and the quantity of red meat decreases, protective benefits of the plant-based diet are clearly seen. In the planning of potluck meals, it's consonant with church policy and recommendations for general health that such meals consist of balanced vegetarian food.

It's sad but true that congregations have become divided on what constitutes a "balanced vegetarian diet." Such a diet could be an ovo-lacto vegetarian diet, where dairy products are used more as a "condiment" to provide vita-

mins B₁₂ and D as well as calcium. Total vegetarian diets, in order to ensure optimal nutrition, require supplementation of vitamin B₁₂, and often vitamin D and calcium. It's essential that our food plates do not become the artificially imposed standard of assessing one's relationship to God nor the church. We should not be angrily proclaiming the importance of one vegetarian diet over another. Our mealtimes, whether at home or at church, should be occasions of loving, attentive, cordial, and caring fellowship, made complete by the most healthful food available in the regions we find ourselves. Fortified foods and supplement availability vary from country to country, and even from district to district, so the application of the quoted guideline may vary accordingly.

In your travels you will see varieties of potlucks. Sadly, you may experience varieties of attitudes, too, which will make you wonder what our fellowship is all about. When we have followed the instruction that the Lord has given us and have done the best we can, we would do well to remember the cautioning and salutary words of our loving, grace-filled Savior, Jesus Christ: "Listen and understand. What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them" (Matt. 15:10, 11, NIV).

As we cater, care, and nurture, let us be channels of grace and mercy around the table. ■



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By GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

Crooked Wood— Upright Posture

*What does it take
to walk tall?*

Eighteen years is a long time. Eighteen marks full responsibility before the law in many countries. Eighteen-year-olds can drive cars, vote in general elections, or consent that their bodies be used in medical research.

Eighteen years is a *long* time. That's how long the woman had to wait to experience the miracle of healing. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. We should start at the beginning.

Sabbath in the Synagogue

It's another Sabbath in Judea. Like most God-fearing Jews, we find Jesus in the synagogue, teaching (Luke 13:10). In fact, the only earlier mention of Jesus teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath in the Gospel of Luke can be found in Luke 4:31-37 and describes another Sabbath healing. Clue one: *Pay attention to the day—it's Sabbath.*

Luke's description of the condition of the unnamed woman is ambiguous. She was "bent over" and "had a spirit of infirmity"—she "could in no way raise herself up" (Luke 13:11). While Jesus' healing miracle is not an exorcism, Dr. Luke establishes a clear link between disease and the destructive work of demonic forces.

As Jesus scans His audience, His



eyes fall on the woman—bent over by years of pain, without any hope on the horizon. He calls her forward. Then He speaks—words that must have shaken the very foundation of the woman's world. Clue two: *Jesus sees what we need—always and anywhere—and acts on it.*

The Miracle

Jesus' recognition of the woman must have caused some murmurings in the audience. A man publicly addressing a woman not related to him was something out of the extraordinary—a fact that also was not lost on the Samaritan woman in John 9:9.¹ "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity," says Jesus, or, as the New International Version trans-

lates: "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity" (Luke 13:12). Then Jesus commits the next cultural no-no. He "laid His hands on her" (verse 13).

"Immediately," Luke tells us, "she was made straight." *Immediately*—that's Luke's way of painting for us the picture of an omnipotent Creator-God whose power clearly surpassed Dr. Luke's more limited skills.² Similar to the life-giving words uttered by the One who spoke heaven and earth into existence (Gen. 1-2), Jesus' words have an immediate creative effect. Bone structures change, muscles flex, tendons stretch—and suddenly the impossible becomes a reality: the woman stands upright and praises God. Clue three: *Jesus calls us to stand tall and straight.*

“How can we, fragile human beings surrounded by an ever-increasing **crescendo** of injustice, destruction, distraction, and futility, ever hope to walk upright and with purpose?”

The Aftermath

The synagogue ruler's reaction to this incredible miracle is not a surprise—at least not to Luke's readers. The Gospel contains four Sabbath healings (4:31-41; 6:6-11; 14:1-6; and the present story in 13:10-17) and every miracle is accompanied by criticism and increasing tension between Jesus and the Jewish leadership. The synagogue leader's rebuke, while directed to the people, is really an affront to Jesus. In his mind, healing equals work; thus, considering the fourth commandment, healings should only occur during the week (13:14).

Luke's record of Jesus' reply is important. Before our very eyes we see the change from “Jesus” to “the Lord.” The tone is sharp (“Hypocrite!” [verse 15]); the reasoning is sound. The woman is described as a “daughter of Abraham” (verse 16)—a phrase that appears only this once in Scripture. Jews loved to point out their connection to Abraham (John 8:33, 39, 53), the “father of faith.” Jesus underlines the importance of the woman when He describes her as a “daughter of Abraham.” Clue four: *Our worth before God is not based on gender or race—God's grace levels the differences separating us.*

The Sabbath

Jesus' statement in Luke 13:16 highlights a key truth about the Sabbath. The day, separated by God at Creation, is really a day of liberation and re-creation (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). As evidenced by Jesus' miracles in the Gospels, God purposefully steps every Sabbath into this world and demonstrates His grace that is sufficient for us. In this way the Sabbath

healings of Jesus represent deliberate acts engaging His audience to think more biblically (and less traditionally) about the Sabbath. Furthermore, as was the case with the woman who had waited for 18 years to experience liberation, every Sabbath we are called to remember our own past bondage and crookedness and celebrate Jesus' victory on our behalf.³ Clue five: *God's Sabbath is our refuge.*

Crooked Wood

Helmut Gollwitzer (1908-1993) taught systematic theology in Germany for decades following his return from a Russian prisoner-of-war camp and a brief stint as the pastor of the Lutheran church of Berlin-Dahlem. A member of the Confessing Church during the Nazi-regime in Germany and opposed to Hitler's evil dreams of world dominion, he became an important voice in postwar German society.

In 1970 Gollwitzer published the volume *Krummes Holz—Aufrechter Gang* (“Crooked Wood—Upright Posture”). In it he considered one of the most existential of human questions about the meaning of life. His title was a silent nod to ideas expressed earlier by two German philosophers, Immanuel Kant and Ernst Bloch. Kant's “crooked wood” pointed to the senselessness and humility of human existence—nobody can make something straight out of crooked wood. “Upright posture” encapsulated Bloch's idea of human aspiration and dignity, based on ideology that hopes for a human utopia—even though it recognizes human limitations.

Gollwitzer's paradoxical title still challenges our hearts and our minds. How can we, fragile human beings,

surrounded by an ever-increasing crescendo of injustice, destruction, distraction, disease, and futility, ever hope to walk upright and with purpose? We can't—we are always and forever crooked wood, doubled over, hopeless, and unable to straighten up. Unless—*unless*—we allow the Master to touch our bent-over frame and speak us into life.

Which areas of your life are crooked and bent out of shape? Jesus' engagement with the synagogue leader in Luke 13:10-17 tells us that there is a worse crookedness than the physical pain experienced by the nameless woman immortalized in Dr. Luke's description of Jesus' Sabbath miracle. Crooked hearts and minds, bent attitudes—they all require Jesus' touch and His word of life. The good news of Luke 13:10-17 is that Jesus is ready to change crooked hearts, minds, and bodies into something straight and upright and beautiful. Final clue: *Allow the Master to help you walk and talk and dream upright.* ■

¹ Additionally, the woman at the well recognized the strangeness of a Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman.

² Luke describes other miracles using the same Greek term: 1:64; 4:39; 5:25; 8:44, 47, 55; 18:43; 19:11; 22:60.

³ See the helpful chapter “The Sabbath and the Healing Ministry of Jesus” in Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2009), pp. 181-203.



Gerald A. Klingbeil is an associate editor of *Adventist World* and anxiously anticipates the glorious moment of the Master's return when all crooked and bent-out-of-shape hearts and minds will be made straight forever.

In Awe of YOU

By
MARCOS PASEGGI

*True belief begins
with a Creator we can
look up to*

In religion—as in love—there is no enduring relationship without admiration. Just for a moment, put yourself in the shoes of a wife-to-be. You find your fiancé amusing, attractive, and talented. You are positive that sticking to him will substantially improve your prospects in life. People consider him “a good catch.”

Yet, imagine deep down that you despise him. Nobody knows it but you. It may be the condescending way he treats you. Or that he is conceited or snobbish. Or that he has all his priorities wrong. The cause is not important. But the fact is that you despise him. Even when you smile at him and call him “honey.” And there is nothing you can do about it.

Well, chances are your relationship is bound for failure.

Without admiration, love is a sham. You may go through the motions, do “the right thing,” but never reach that stage when love springs up naturally and forcefully.

In church terms, you are part of the faithful few who never miss a church service, or a meeting, or a program. But you are there out of fear, or a sheer sense of duty. You may not be better than a sizable chunk of Jesus’ contemporaries, who in their forced obedience misrepresented “the character of God,” and caused “the world to look upon Him as a tyrant.”¹

If we truly believe in a God whose utmost desire is “to make His children happy,”² there must be a better way of relating to Him. And while there are various avenues, one way would be when we learn to admire the fruits of His workmanship (see Rom. 1:20).³

Well-channeled Awe

Throughout history a sense of awe before what we cannot fully apprehend has often triggered great inventions, discoveries, and theories. Just think of Galileo or Newton. But without an overarching frame of reference, our best creative efforts, marred by our sin-tinted glasses, may very soon take us adrift from the Creator. We begin to worship pitiable “gods” of our own making.

Consider the ancient Greeks: In deep awe before phenomena they were not able to rationally explain, they cre-

ated the most intricate universe of revenge-thirsty, lust-driven incestuous gods, a pathetic lookalike of mere human beings who pursue their own twisted ways.

Our worship loyalties are often misdirected and contradictory. Indeed, there is no wisdom in praising “the wisdom of Mother Nature.” And certainly no kindness in celebrating “the kindness of Mother Earth.” Awe in itself is as pointless as trying to quench our thirst by memorizing the properties of water. Without an underlying “metanarrative”—which for Seventh-day Adventists is the great controversy theme—we are bound to eventually conclude that our best efforts are nothing but “utter futility” and “pursuit of wind” (Eccl. 1:2, 14, Tanakh).⁴ And once again, we may end up misplacing our awe in fleeting fruits of our own hands.

The Wonder of It All

We live in a time when devotion tends to be too narrow. Our hearts jump at the last technological gadget, while we blindly run past the wonders of the natural world, the amazing workings of our bodies, and the mind-boggling vastness of the universe. Constantly surrounded by miraculous wonders, we resign ourselves to secondhand, lackluster experiences instead.

Have you ever read Matthew 6:29—“Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of [the lilies of the field]”—and thought Jesus was exaggerating a little? Have you ever

“Without an overarching frame of reference, our best creative efforts, marred by our sin-tinted glasses, may very soon take us **adrift** from the Creator. We begin to worship pitiable “gods” of our own making.”

thought of King Solomon as a wise judge and a clever statesman, while ignoring his description of trees, birds, creeping things, and fish (1 Kings 4:33)? Have you ever considered Ellen G. White’s famous statement—“‘God is love’ is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass”⁵—just as a “nice” metaphor?

As “the Sea of Faith” steadily retreats to “the vast drear edges . . . of the world,”⁶ those who still dare to voice their trust in an Almighty Creator find themselves too often entangled in apologetics, to the detriment of a proactive approach to God’s workmanship. But as a joyous people who “look for new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13), we are called to reflect on the pristine state of the Creator’s creation and His ongoing care of the natural world as a way of announcing the restoration to come.

Worshipping the Creator

The last book of the Bible seems to zero in on the messages of the three angels (Rev. 14:6-12). Those messages are to be proclaimed by the Lord’s messengers, those “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor. 10:11). But even those solemn last warnings are driven by a clear-cut call to “worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea

and the springs of water” (Rev. 14:7).

This single injunction may be the most important in God’s final call. Because without a primal acknowledgment of a Creator, there is hardly any use in sharing the rest of the messages. Everything else—from the announcement of the judgment to the fall of Babylon to the command not to worship the beast—is mirrored in that first Creation week, when God made everything “very good” (Gen. 1:31). It is to this ideal we must often look back, and even more often point toward.

Reclaiming the Wonder

As we strive to reclaim our battered sense of awe, we may find that in God’s creation, big answers are often found in the simplest pleasures in life. God still draws us to Himself through “the sunshine and the rain,” “the hills and seas and plains.”⁷ He does talk to us through “lovely birds,” “delicately tinted flowers,” and “lofty trees.”⁸

So, I invite you to go for a walk in the park, caress your favorite pet, play with a chubby baby, or work in your garden. You could also take some scenic pictures, prepare your favorite natural recipe, or stare at the sunset. As you do it, do not forget to admire the infinite wisdom of the One “who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Tim. 6:17, NIV), and who, very soon, according to His promise, will “make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

Then our awe will be eternal. ■

Creation

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made “the heaven and the earth” and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3).

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 36.

² Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 10.

³ Unless otherwise noted, biblical references are taken from the New King James Version.

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⁴ Texts credited to Tanakh are from *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. Copyright © The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1985.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 10.

⁶ Matthew Arnold, “Dover Beach,” in *The 500 Top Poems*, ed. William Harmon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 707.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.



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BANISHED

or Blessed?

By BARBARA J. HUFF

Staying faithful to God and His Sabbath in Siberia

From the sparkle in her eyes and the energy she exudes, one would never know that Valentina Ivanova had lived most of her life in primitive conditions in Siberia. Many of those near the age of 60 are languid; years of inconvenience, discomfort, and disappointment are etched on their faces.

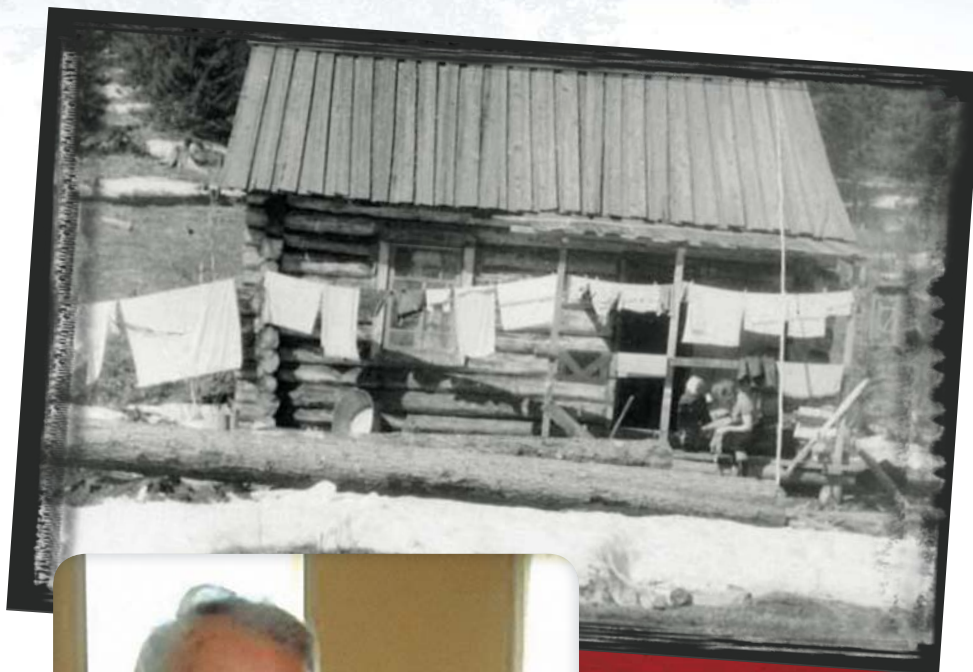
That's not the case with Valentina! She sprints instead of walks. She jumps instead of steps. Her smile brightens the darkest room; and the love of Jesus is reflected in her blue eyes.

In the Beginning

Alexander (Sasha) Ivanov finished medical school in Moscow in 1959. Medical school graduates were assigned a place to work for three years. After that they were free to work where they wanted. He was given the choice to stay and teach at the medical school or go to Osinniki, Siberia, to work.

Sasha knew that if he stayed in Moscow, he would have Sabbath problems. He thought that if he were far away in Siberia, he would be less likely to be harassed; so he chose Siberia. A year later he and Valentina were married.

Sasha had problems with Sabbath-keeping from the very start of his career. He did not have to work the first Sabbath he was in Osinniki. But early the next week he was fired because he



Above: AT HOME IN SIBERIA: Raising a family was part of the never-ending routine of survival and faithfulness. **Left:** A LIFETIME OF FAITHFULNESS: After 55 years together, Sasha and Valentina have much for which to be thankful.



Left: BEAUTIFUL AND FORBIDDING: Siberia, with its vast wilderness and harsh weather, made it an ideal place to banish those considered disloyal. **Inset:** READY FOR ADVENTURE: This photograph of Sasha and Valentina, taken in 1960, reveals the optimism and faithfulness with which they faced the future.

refused to work future Sabbaths for which he was scheduled. In the first two years after graduating from medical school, Sasha worked at various jobs in eight cities, including one job he held for an entire year. He was watched night and day for some infraction of the Communists' interpretation of the law.

After the KGB found Sasha at a home church, the local newspaper printed an entire page describing a man who chose the Bible over the scalpel. He feared that his medical license would be revoked. All this time Valentina stood by Sasha and cheerfully moved from one place to another. Eventually Nadia, the first of two daughters, was born.

In 1962 Sasha went to Anzherka to apply for work as a doctor who accompanied ambulances. He offered to work any time except Friday and Saturday, but he was scheduled for those days anyway. "I cannot do this," he told his supervisor. He was subsequently fired. For a couple weeks he had no work at all.

At the beginning of the following week, Sasha received notice to report to the KGB office and was told that if he didn't find work by the end of the week, he would be arrested. During that week he looked for any kind of work. He saw "Help Wanted" signs in various shops, but each time he inquired, he was turned away. Managers of the shops said, "Yes, we need help." But when Sasha presented his passport, they said, "Sorry, we do not need you."

It seemed that his arrest was inevitable.

One day Sasha saw a sign advertising for a painter. Eagerly he went

inside the building. The manager said, "Yes, we need a painter. Let me see your passport."

When the man opened it and saw the name "Ivanov," he said, "I shouldn't tell you this, but the KGB has told everyone in the region not to hire you. I'm sorry."

Defeated again, Sasha went home, knowing that he must report to the authorities the next day because the week was over and he did not have a job.

Arrested

The next morning, with reluctant footsteps, Sasha made his way to the KGB office. When he didn't return home, Valentina knew he had been arrested. After three days in jail and a mock trial, Sasha was sentenced to three years of exile and shipped to Mariinsk to work at a collective farm. It was a month before Valentina knew where he had been sent. Nadia was 13 months old; Valentina was 25.

Valentina eventually received a letter from Sasha's telling her that the collective farm near Mariinsk where he had been sent was called "Victory." With only this information, Valentina set off with a large bag and a backpack to find her husband. Leaving Nadia with a friend, and after a seven-hour train ride, Valentina arrived in Mariinsk.

It took awhile to find someone who knew where the farm was located. Eventually she was told about a man who was taking a truckload of supplies to Victory farm. She found the man, and he agreed to let her ride along.

Many types of people were sent to Siberia in those years: political prison-

ers; people like Sasha, who had been exiled because of some phony charges; and criminals serving sentences. Valentina was certain that this truck driver fell into the latter category. But she had no other way to get to the farm. She had to see Sasha, for she knew that his food would be inadequate and that he would need encouragement.

During a snowstorm the truck became stuck going up the final hill to the farm. It wasn't far, only about a kilometer (half mile). Valentina chose to carry her heavy load up the hill in the snow rather than stay in the truck. As she approached the farm, she saw a building that appeared to be barracks. When she got nearer, she saw a man coming from the building. "Is there a man here named Sasha Ivanov?" she asked. Joy rippled through her body when the stranger confirmed that her husband was there.

Sasha was speechless when he saw his brave, smiling wife. She spent the night at the farm, then went back to her home and prepared to move to Mariinsk. Spouses and families of those who were exiled were allowed to live with their family members.

When Valentina and Nadia arrived at Victory farm, they were assigned to live in a tiny house with a woman who, with her husband, had been exiled there in 1937. Although her husband was dead, the woman stayed on because she had no other place to go.

The space in the tiny house allocated to the Ivanov family was actually just a windy corridor. Happy to be together in spite of the accommodations, the Ivanovs enjoyed this arrangement for 10 days.

One evening Sasha did not return from his work of caring for farm animals. He had been transferred again. Later he told Valentina that party officials told him that the country was not rich enough to use doctors as laborers on a pig farm. Communists may have been blind to many things, but they were not blind to Sasha's unused talents, or to his integrity.

Again Valentina waited eagerly for word from anybody who might know the whereabouts of her husband. Eventually Sasha was able to get a letter to Pastor Zozulin, who made arrangements to move Valentina and Nadia by train. Thus began Valentina's second quest to find her husband.

Good and Faithful Servants

It was a joyful reunion when Sasha collected his little family from the train station. However, that was the easy part of the journey. The three of them went the next 50 kilometers (30 miles) by truck. With another 50 kilometers to go, Sasha found a little Mongolian pony that was "half dead" to take them the rest of the way. They put their little pile of belongings on the cart, placed baby Nadia on top, and she and Sasha walked behind.

"The scenery was breathtaking," says Valentina. They were in a quiet, peaceful river valley surrounded by mountains. Part of the time they traveled on the frozen river. However, the river had begun to thaw, so there was water on either side of their track. Night fell, but the travelers pushed on.

Suddenly the quietness was broken by the sounds of another horse and cart coming toward them on the frozen track. Soon the two horses were nearly



nose-to-nose on the narrow path, and there was not enough room for the two conveyances to pass. The man in the other cart, in a drunken stupor, was unaware of the dangerous situation.

Sasha's solution was to tilt the other sledge up and lift one runner off the ice and to carefully, oh, so carefully, lead the two horses past each other.

Exhausted from their ordeal, Sasha and Valentina had no choice but to keep walking. Their hope revived when they came to a little settlement where they found a home in which to spend the night. By now they had walked halfway to their destination, approximately 25 kilometers (15 miles).

The next day they found the cabin to which they had been assigned. Even though it had no windows, it was a most welcome sight to the weary travelers. Located on the side of the mountain, with a river flowing through the valley, the cabin's surroundings were magnificent and peaceful.

They arrived in March, which gave Valentina time to plant a garden and harvest the crops before Sasha was reassigned in September. During their three years of exile they lived in four places.

With Sasha's exile nearing an end, another daughter, Tanya, was born, leaving the family wondering where they might find work. While Adventists who lived in cities were often unemployed or working at menial, thankless tasks, Sasha was doing the work he loved and for which he had

been trained. Adventists in the cities were harassed; no one bothered the Ivanovs. The rich Siberian soil always produced a thriving, abundant garden; so the family had plenty of good food to eat. These were happy years for the little family.

The Ivanovs were surprised and relieved when the administrator of the regional Siberian prison system offered Sasha a job. While in exile he had had no choice where he would work. Now, however, he had a choice, as his status had changed from being an exile to being a free man.

"Dr. Ivanov," the man said, "you will have problems with your Sabbath wherever you go to find work. We value your work, and we want you to work for us in a different facility."

Prison officials sent a helicopter to move the family and their belongings to the new location. They bought furniture for the family and settled them into a new home. This last move was to Novokuznetsk, where they lived in the same apartment for 25 years. Nadia and Tanya went to the same school for 10 years. Even though their little second-floor apartment had no toilet, no sewer, and no running water, and they cooked on a woodstove, the Ivanovs felt richly blessed.

Children of God

Sasha never again had Sabbath work problems. Altogether he worked 30 years as a surgeon in Siberia. When

Left: HARD LABOR: With only wood for heating and cooking, Valentina was well-educated in how to use an ax.



FAR FROM SIBERIA: Nadia Ivanova, photographed in her Moscow garden, is Health Ministries director for the Euro-Asia Division. She is the oldest daughter of Sasha and Valentina. Her sister, Tanya, is deceased.

asked about the most difficult time in her life, Valentina brushed off the question. “Oh, everything was easy.”

Then she became serious and continued, “When Nadia started school, my real fears began. We would not send her to school on Sabbath, and the KGB threatened to take her away from us and put her in an orphanage.”

One Sabbath Nadia’s teacher came to the house and asked Nadia to go to school with her. “I will take you to an orphanage if you don’t go,” she told the first grader. Nadia politely told the woman that she would not go to school on Sabbath. The teacher went to town to speak to the director of education.

“What kind of student is this girl?” he asked. The teacher had to admit that Nadia received all A’s. “Let them keep her at home,” he said. “We have students who attend all the time and don’t do nearly as well.”

After the fifth grade, however, Sabbathkeeping became a bit more complicated. The school held classes in shifts, and students went to school either mornings or afternoons. Afternoon classes began at 2:00 p.m.

In December and January the sun went down at 3:00. That meant that all winter Nadia, and later Tanya, had to miss two days of school each week.

Nadia recalls spending every Sunday studying to do her lengthy homework assignments. When she missed class on Friday and Sabbath, she never knew exactly which material had been assigned for homework and what had been covered in class. When she called schoolmates to ask about her assignments, they feigned ignorance. They had been instructed not to tell her anything. To compensate, Nadia studied constantly, and ended up at the top of her class.

One might think that Valentina’s daughters had a lonely childhood. Nadia says that that was not the case. They did not feel alone. They accepted their situation as a way of life. Their teachers talked openly against the girls in front of the other students. Nadia says that no one talked to her at school. Their family was branded as crazy and dangerous. Most parents would not allow their children to visit the Ivanov home.

Finally there was a breakthrough when Nadia was in seventh grade. Some neighborhood children were

often home alone and frequently came to the Ivanov girls for help with their schoolwork. After that, other girls ventured into the home and discovered and spread the word that the Ivanovs were a normal, happy family, living in a comfortable home. They even had a radio and a piano!

Valentina’s fears about the children being taken from her were replaced by knowing that it’s possible to be true to God and also have community acceptance and friendship. Valentina cannot understand why anyone would feel sorry for the family being exiled to Siberia.

“We don’t know anyone who has only joy, happiness, and roses in their lives. Everyone has problems and difficulties,” says Valentina. “These difficulties make us stronger. We do not fear the future. We just try to find ways to overcome and survive. This keeps us closer to God because we need His guidance and wisdom in everyday living.”

Siberia is a cold place with untouched forests, wind, wolves, bears, and other wild things. But from all of this Valentina drew warmth, joy, peace, and happiness. Was Valentina really in exile? You decide. ■



Barbara J. Huff lives in Florida, United States, with her husband, Lee. Material for this

story was taken from an interview with Valentina when the author lived in Russia. Sasha, 80, and Valentina, 77, are retired and live in Belgorod.

By ELLEN G. WHITE

A great work is committed to those who present the truth in Europe. No branch of our work has a more important field than the Central European Mission. There are France and Germany, with their great cities and teeming population. There are Italy, Spain, and Portugal, after so many centuries of darkness, freed from Romish tyranny, and opened to the Word of God—opened to receive the last message of warning to the world. There are Holland, Austria, Romania, Turkey, Greece, and Russia, the home of millions upon millions, whose souls are as precious in the sight of God as our own, who know nothing of the special truths for this time. The population comprised within the limits of this mission alone is four times that of the United States.

A good work has already been done in these countries. There are those who have received the truth, scattered as light-bearers in almost every land. We have nearly three hundred Sabbathkeepers in Switzerland. There are little companies in France, Germany, and Italy, and two hundred souls in Russia, who are obeying God's law; and there is a church of forty members away in the far east, almost to the line of Asia. The foundation has been laid for a church in Holland. In Romania and Corsica there are a few who are seeking to keep God's commandments, and to wait for His Son from heaven. . . .

Obstacles to Overcome

There will be obstacles to retard this work. These we have had to meet wherever missions have been established. Lack of experience, imperfections, mistakes, unconsecrated influ-

Giving Our All

Counsel on early mission work in Europe can inspire us today.

PHOTO BY: A. WERDAN

“God is the **source** of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, blessings flow out from him to all the creatures he has made.”

ences, have had to be overcome. How often have those hindered the advancement of the cause in America! We do not expect to meet fewer difficulties in Europe.

Some connected with the work in these foreign fields, as in America, become disheartened, and, following the course of the unworthy spies, bring a discouraging report. Like the discontented weaver, they are looking at the wrong side of the web. They cannot trace the plan of the Designer; to them all is confusion, and instead of waiting till they can discern the purpose of God, they hastily communicate to others their spirit of doubt and darkness.

But we have no such report to bring. After a two years' stay in Europe we see no more reason for discouragement in the state of the cause there than at its rise in the different fields in America. There we saw the Lord testing the material to be used. Some would not bear the proving of God. They would not be hewed and squared.

Every stroke of the chisel, every blow of the hammer, aroused their anger and resistance. They were laid aside, and other material was brought in, to be tested in like manner. All this occasioned delay. Every fragment broken away was regretted and mourned over. Some thought that these losses would ruin the building; but, on the contrary, it was rendered stronger by the removal of these elements of weakness. The work went steadily forward. Every day made it plainer that the Lord's hand was guiding all, and that a grand purpose ran through the work from first to last. So we see the cause being established in Europe.

One of the great difficulties there is the poverty that meets us at every turn. This retards the progress of the truth, which, as in earlier ages, usually finds its first converts among the humbler classes. Yet we had a similar experience in our own country, both east and west of the Rocky Mountains. Those who first accepted this message were poor, but as they set to work in faith to accomplish what they could with their talents of ability and means, the Lord came in to help. In His providence He brought men and women into the truth who were willing-hearted; they had means, and they wanted to send the light to others. So it will be now. But the Lord would have us labor earnestly in faith till that time comes.

Going Forward

The word has gone forth to Europe, “Go forward.” The humblest toiler for the salvation of souls is a laborer together with God, a coworker with Christ. Angels minister unto him. As we advance in the opening path of His providence, God will continue to open the way before us. The greater the difficulties to be overcome, the greater will be the victory gained. . . .

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, blessings flow out from Him to all the creatures He has made. In His infinite love He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature, and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow-men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those are brought nearest to their Creator who thus become participants in labors of love. He who refuses to become a “laborer together with God”—the man who for the sake of selfish indulgence ignores the wants of his fellow-men, the miser who heaps up his treasures here—is withholding from himself the richest blessing that God can give him.

Brethren, “ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” As we recount the numberless mercies of our God, and meditate upon His matchless love; as we behold the wonderful sacrifice of the Redeemer, may gratitude awaken in our hearts, till it shall kindle a flame of sacred love that shall flow out to souls even in far-off Europe. ■

This is taken from the article “Our Missions in Europe,” published in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 6, 1887. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

The Spirit Of '63

By DAVID TRIM

The First General Conference Session

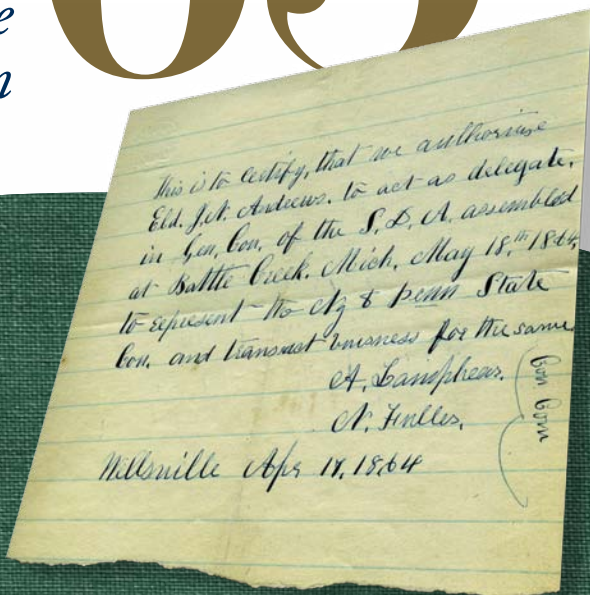
Seventh-day Adventists have long looked to our pioneers for inspiration. As we prepare for the sixtieth General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas, United States, in July 2015, there are lessons to learn and points of inspiration to take from the first, founding session 152 years ago, when Seventh-day Adventist leaders met in Battle Creek, Michigan, in May 1863.

That expression, “Seventh-day Adventist leaders met,” sounds so simple. But just 32 months earlier it could not have been said. For it was only as recently as October 1, 1860, at an earlier meeting in Battle Creek, that believers had agreed “that we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists.”¹ Before then, the term *Seventh-day Adventist* had been used as often by enemies, as a term of abuse, as by the few members of the yet-unorganized movement that had emerged after the Great Disappointment of 1844, based on belief in the seventh-day Sabbath, in conditional immortality, and in the high-priestly ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

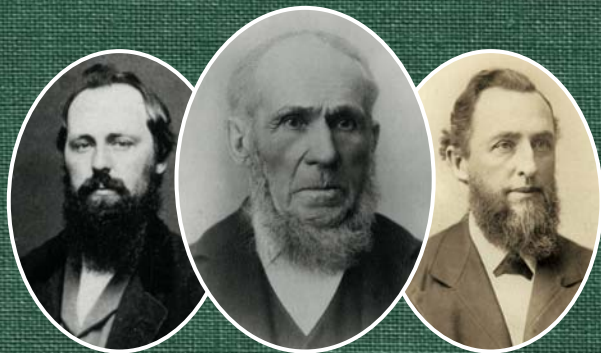
At that 1860 meeting it took four days of debate to reach a consensus that if God’s remnant people formally organized their local churches and adopted a common name for themselves, they would not be retreating into Babylon. But those few steps were as far as Adventists would go. The prospect of any organization above the local congregation was unacceptable.



Above, left: RELUCTANT LEADER: James White, a founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was elected president at the first General Conference in 1863, but turned it down.



Above, right: IT'S OFFICIAL: Handwritten credentials for J. N. Andrews from the 1864 General Conference session.



DULY ELECTED: The first three officers of the General Conference (from left): Eli Walker, treasurer; John Byington, president; Uriah Smith, secretary.

Conferences and General Conference

Yet, remarkably, within two and a half years Seventh-day Adventists in Michigan, Iowa, Vermont, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, and New York had organized seven separate associations of churches into what they called conferences—two in Iowa, one covering Illinois and Wisconsin, the others each covering one state; then the two in Iowa merged into one. But what was recognized by many Seventh-day Adventists was that, in effect, this meant there were six Seventh-day Adventist denominations—not one. So in March 1863 James White, the unofficial (but undisputed) leader of Seventh-day Adventists, published, in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, the journal that bound the widely scattered believers together (usually known then simply as the *Review and Herald* and today as the *Adventist Review*), a call for a “General Conference.”

The term *general conference* had been used by the Millerites in the early 1840s; indeed, Joseph Bates had been chair of one such conference. In the 1850s the seventh-day Sabbathkeeping Adventists used the term for meetings that were open to all adherents of the Sabbatharians’ distinctive doctrines—that is, a conference, or meeting, that was general rather than local. However, by 1860 several Protestant denominations in the United States were using the term *conference* for a permanent association of congregations, and it was this use that the state conferences had borrowed. Moreover, Mennonites, Baptists, and Methodists, used *general conference* for an association of such conferences. Seventh-day Adventists, many of them former Baptists and Methodists, would have been aware of this use.

Still, James White’s announcement in the March 10, 1863, issue of the *Review* probably seemed to some Sabbatharians to be calling just another

general meeting, though it did hint that important matters of common interest might be discussed. He wrote:

“We recommend that the General Conference be held in connection with the Michigan State Conference at Battle Creek, as early as such a gathering can be convened. . . . We suppose that it would be the pleasure of the brethren in other States, and the Canadas, to send to the General Conference either delegates or letters setting forth their opinion of the best course of action, and their requests of the Conference.”²

White suggested late May as the best time, and soon after a date was agreed upon.

The First Day of the First Session

So it was, on Wednesday, May 20, 1863, that 20 leaders of the embryonic Seventh-day Adventist movement gathered in Battle Creek. Some arrived only during the course of the day, so it was not until 6:00 p.m. that they assembled in the Second Seventh-day Adventist Meeting House in Battle Creek.

There were 18 delegates from five of the six existing state conferences: Michigan, New York, Illinois and Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. The Vermont Conference (which included churches from across the Canadian border in Quebec) dispatched no delegates to Battle Creek, but two delegates were sent from the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Ohio, which had yet to organize into a conference. Also present were a number of members of the Battle Creek church, who were not official delegates of the Michigan Conference but interested observers of the proceedings. All the official delegates were men, though at least one woman, Ellen White, was among the locals who attended as onlookers. Two official delegates were laypersons, holding no ministerial credentials—and constituted two-thirds of the General Conference’s very first

Nominating Committee!

The 20 delegates’ first action was to elect a temporary chair and secretary. The chair was Jotham M. Aldrich; the secretary, Uriah Smith. Aldrich was 35 and had only become a Sabbatarian Adventist in 1860; Smith was just 31 and, remarkably, was not a delegate, but one of the observers from Battle Creek. These two facts tell us something about the founders of our church. Many of them were young, and they were pragmatic. Where they saw talent, they would use it to spread the third angel’s message.

Having elected a chair and secretary, delegates and onlookers then joined in singing hymn number 233, “Long Upon the Mountains,” by Annie R. Smith, from the hymnbook James White had published in 1861 (itself a revision of a hymnal he had first printed in 1849). Then John N. Loughborough, of Michigan; Charles O. Taylor, of New York; and Isaac Sanborn, of Wisconsin, were chosen as a committee to inspect and verify the credentials of the delegates. This tells us something else about the men who founded the General Conference: they liked to sing hymns, and they valued proper procedure and committees. Some characteristics of our church go back to our very origins!

Delegates then duly presented their credentials for approval. None of the originals survive, though credentials for the 1864 session do survive, and one is pictured. Once the General Conference’s first committee had completed its business (which, with only 20 sets of credentials to review, could not have taken very long), the session adjourned until the following morning.

Founding the General Conference

The next day, Thursday, May 21, 1863, was the big day. The first step

was the selection of eight men to draft a constitution: Sanborn, of Wisconsin; Loughborough and Joseph H. Waggoner, of Michigan; John N. Andrews and Nathan Fuller, of New York; B. F. Snook, of Iowa; Washington Morse, of Minnesota; and H. F. Baker, of Ohio. They reported back so promptly that some preliminary work must have been done before the session and the constitution was then approved unanimously. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was thus formally founded. More than a periodic meeting, it was a permanent association that would have annual sessions, with a constitution, three officers (president, secretary, and treasurer), and an executive committee.

Elections were then held. John Byington was eventually elected president (and took the chair from Aldrich); Eli Walker (another Battle Creek local who was *not* a Michigan Conference delegate) was voted in as treasurer; and Uriah Smith was chosen as secretary. George Amadon, a Michigander, and John Andrews were elected to make up the executive committee with Byington. A committee was then formed (J. N. Loughborough, I. Sanborn, W. H. Brinkerhoff, J. M. Aldrich, and W. Morse) to draft a model constitution for all state conferences and the session then adjourned until Saturday night, May 23. Meeting after sunset, delegates approved the model constitution (which all conferences that wished to join the General Conference would have to adopt), and set up another committee (White, Andrews, and Smith) to report back to the 1864 session on rules for local churches to follow when organizing. Then the 1863 session concluded. Whereas the “general conference” late in 1860 had lasted four full days, the first GC session transacted its

business in one full day plus two short evening meetings.

Honesty, love and humility

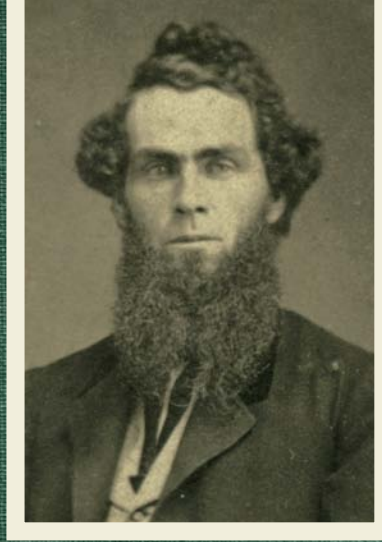
The fact that so much was achieved in such short time is striking, for our pioneers were capable of blunt, plain-spoken debate when they disagreed. When they differed, they said so straightforwardly. But our forefathers’ tendency to express themselves frankly shouldn’t be misunderstood.

On the first day of the 1860 conference James White began his first speech by addressing the chair, which was proper parliamentary procedure; but he did so in a unique way. For the chair was Joseph Bates, whom White had known for 20 years. These were his opening words: “Brother Chairman (you will permit me to call you brother chairman as Mr. is so exceedingly cold).”³ White’s use of “Brother Chairman” instead of the orthodox “Mr. Chairman” reflects that our founders had invested everything in the Great Second Advent movement. They were

bound together by bonds of deep affection. At times, they disagreed with each other vigorously, but they sang hymns and prayed together, too.

There was less debate in 1863 than in 1860, partly because a Christlike spirit prevailed, but partly because delegates had largely reached consensus on key points before they arrived. Reporting in the next issue of the *Review*, Uriah Smith wrote with satisfaction: “Perhaps no previous meeting that we have ever enjoyed was characterized by such unity of feeling and harmony of sentiment. In all the important steps taken at this Conference . . . there was not a dissenting voice, and we . . . doubt if there was even a dissenting thought.”⁴

This was one reason so much was accomplished in just over a day. Surely, too, as suggested earlier, some of the eight members of the constitution committee had done some drafting in advance. That was entirely proper, for all those who met at Battle Creek in 1863 knew that they needed



Left: PRESIDING: Jotham M. Aldrich and Uriah Smith were elected temporary chair, and secretary, respectively.

Below: CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE (from left): B. F. Snook, Isaac Sanborn, Joseph H. Waggoner, John Loughborough, J. N. Andrews, Nathan Fuller, and Washington Morse, and H. F. Baker (not pictured) prepared the first draft of the General Conference constitution.



to be more united and more organized, if, in words they voted on May 23, 1863, “the great work of disseminating light upon the commandments of God, the faith of Jesus, and the truths connected with the third angel’s message” was to be accomplished. As the preamble to the General Conference constitution stated, it was founded: “For the purpose of securing unity and efficiency in labor, and promoting the general interests of the cause of present truth.”⁵

From this we learn something else about our founders: Whatever the debates of the 1850s, by 1863 they were clear: they needed to be united if they were to fulfill their divinely assigned mission. This mission was truly uppermost in their minds, rather than personal factors. We can be confident of this because, Uriah Smith’s comments notwithstanding, there *was* one moment of disagreement in 1863.

James White was unanimously chosen president, but he declined to serve. After a considerable time spent in dis-

ussion, the believers urging reasons why he should accept the position, and he why he should not, his resignation was finally accepted, and John Byington elected as president in his stead.⁶

No reason was given why James White refused, but we can guess, I think. He had championed organization for several years and surely wanted it to be clear that he had done so because it was what the movement needed, not so that he could become president. With Ellen White as his wife, he almost certainly also wanted to avoid any comparison to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young of the Mormons, presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, but also self-proclaimed prophets. White’s personal qualities were never better displayed than in this moment, arguing at length with his brethren so that they would *not* make him their leader. He put the unity and mission of the new denomination above all personal factors.

Evangelistic Spirit

Between the session’s adjournment on Thursday evening and its resumption on Saturday night, Adventist leaders turned to their favorite activity: evangelism. On Friday, May 22, the Michigan Conference’s evangelistic tent (what later generations of Adventists would call a “big tent”) “was erected on the green” near the Review and Herald office, as Uriah Smith reported. Eight evangelistic meetings were held, with delegates participating, broken by a church service on Sabbath, May 23, also held in the Second Meeting House. The session’s proceedings finally concluded with a baptism of eight new believers on the morning of Sunday, May 24.⁷

Here is a last point about our founders. They valued committees, parliamentary procedure, and organization, but only as means to an end. The end they had in sight was the end

of time, and the second coming of Christ, and a reaping of the harvest.

The Spirit of '63

The spirit of '63 is still relevant for Seventh-day Adventists as we look forward to the sixtieth session in San Antonio, and to the future of the Great Second Advent movement. We need the same commitment to unity and to mission; we need to continue to follow proper, well-established procedures; and we need the same willingness to utilize all church members, finding ways to affirm all their talents and commitment.

We need, too, the same willingness to speak plainly to each other; but we also need the same love for each other, as brothers and sisters in Christ; and the same willingness to put the prophetic mission of this church above any considerations of self.

Without these characteristics, the General Conference would not have been founded in 1863; without them, our church would not have expanded around the world. And only if we have them, and have strong personal relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, will we be able to fulfill the prophetic mission God gave to Seventh-day Adventists, who united for mission at the first General Conference session in 1863. ■

¹ “Fifth Session,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 23, 1860.

² [James White], “General Conference,” *Review and Herald*, Mar. 10, 1863.

³ “Business Proceedings,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 9, 1860.

⁴ Uriah Smith, “The Conference,” *Review and Herald*, May 26, 1863.

⁵ “Report of General Conference,” *Review and Herald*, May 26, 1863.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Smith, “The Conference.”



David Trim is director of the General Conference Department of Archives, Statistics, and Research in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

The Difference Between Wealth and Desire

Why do some Bible versions translate Haggai 2:7, “And they will come with the **wealth** of all nations” (NASB),* instead of “And the **desire** of all nations shall come” (KJV)?

The answer to your question is somewhat technical because it involves issues of Hebrew syntax and grammar. For a long time this passage was considered a messianic prophecy, announcing the coming of the Messiah. But most

Bible commentators have given up this reading of the text, as reflected in more recent translations. I will try to explain some of the difficulties of the text, and offer arguments to support one of the translations.

1. The Problem: In Hebrew the verb translated “they will come” is in the third person, masculine/feminine, plural. The noun translated “wealth/desire” (*khemdat*) is feminine singular. There is no agreement between the number of the verb (plural) and the noun (singular). This means that “desire/wealth” could hardly be the subject of the verb. So the best translation may not be “and the desire . . . will come.”

There is a second problem: The noun *khemdat* could be translated as “desire” or as “valuable, precious.” How do we decide which one is correct for this passage? These problems open the door for different interpretations and translations.

2. Possible New Translations: To solve the problem of a singular noun versus a plural verb it has been suggested that the noun “desire/wealth” has a collective sense. In other words, it is singular in form but plural in meaning. This is a possible solution, but the translation “the desirable things/the wealth of the nations will come [to the temple]” is unclear. Others find the suggestion too weak and prefer to follow the Greek translation, in which the Hebrew noun was translated as plural. In this case the Hebrew *khemdat* is changed to *khamudot* (plural). Notice that only the vowels were changed. This is also a possible solution, but since it emends the Hebrew text, it is not “desirable.”

Such difficulties have led others to argue that the best translation should be “They [the nations] will come/bring the wealth of all the nations.” This is a little better. But the question is whether *khemdat* means “desire” or “wealth.”

They argue that “wealth” is supported contextually because it is specifically mentioned in the next verse (verse 8). So the Lord is promising His people that the nations will, as an act of homage to Him, provide financial resources needed for the construction of the temple (see Isa. 60:5; Zech. 14:14, 17).

3. The Desire of the Nations: I suggest that it is better to work with the Hebrew text as we have it, and render it as follows: “They [all the nations mentioned in Haggai 2:7] will come to the desire of all the nations, and I will fill this temple with glory [the glory of the Messiah].”

Let me explain. First, the noun *khemdat* designates what is of value, and therefore desirable. It not only applied to things but also to Israelite kings as the “desire” of the people, i.e., the king they want (1 Sam. 9:20; contrast 2 Chron. 21:20; cf. Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19). Second, contextually Haggai 2:7 is preceded by a description of a manifestation of God (a theophany) that shakes the cosmos, including, in a particular way, the nations of the earth. God is coming with power, and the result is that the nations will find in the Messiah the true desire of their hearts. Third, the reference to gold and silver in Haggai 2:8 indicates that for the Lord these things are not that important. What is important is that His glory, manifested in the Messiah, will fill the new temple and result in peace (verse 9). Fourth, the combination of a theophany and a messianic prophecy is also found in Haggai 2:21-23. The powerful presence of God that shakes the cosmos is used to introduce another messianic prophecy. Zerubbabel, who was of royal descent, was a prototype of the new David, the coming Messiah, who will become the “signet of God,” i.e., He will have royal authority as the chosen servant of God (Haggai 2:23).

May Christ continue to be the Desire of our hearts! ■

*Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.



Prior to his retirement, **Angel Manuel Rodriguez** was director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

Living in the Holy Spirit's Power

By MARK A. FINLEY



One of the great challenges facing Christians is not necessarily what they believe, but how they live. Beliefs are important, because what we believe shapes our understanding of life and leads to changes in our lifestyle. Biblical truths, rightly understood, change our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. If our beliefs make little difference in how we live, we have misunderstood their purpose. In this month's lesson we will discover how the Holy Spirit empowers us to live godly lives by applying the truths we believe to our daily lives.

1 Compare Isaiah 42:1-4 and Matthew 12:18-21. Describe the impact of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' life and ministry.

Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), ministered in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14), and faced the temptations of Satan in the wilderness in the strength of the Spirit (Matt. 4:1). Jesus lived a Spirit-filled life and invites us to do the same.

2 What effect does the Holy Spirit have on our daily lives? Read Romans 8:11-14.

A careful reading of these verses reveals that the Holy Spirit does three very practical things for each believer. First, the Spirit gives us spiritual life (verse 11). Second, the Holy Spirit enables us to triumph over the inclinations and desires of the flesh (verse 13). Third, the Holy Spirit leads us to the reality that even while living in this world we are children of God (verse 14).

3 Read Ephesians 3:14-21. What was Paul's great longing for the believers in Ephesus? What role did he see the Holy Spirit playing in their lives?

4 Read Galatians 3:1-5. What was the apostle's concern with the church at Galatia? What tragic mistake did some Galatian Christians make? How can we apply Paul's counsel to our own lives?

Evidently some Christians in Galatia were attempting to live their Christian lives in their own strength rather than in the power of the Holy Spirit. Any attempt to face the temptations of the evil one in our own strength is doomed to failure. Battling evil in the Holy Spirit's power ensures victory.

5 What do the following Bible writers tell us about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of each believer?

Read James 4:5; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:24.

6 What did Jesus say is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit? Read John 14:17; 16:13.

The Holy Spirit leads us to understand the truth about Jesus and His Word. The Spirit guides us into an understanding of the Bible and the truths it contains. The Spirit works within us to live in harmony with those eternal truths. We can praise God that His Spirit not only guides us into all truth, but strengthens us so we can apply these truths to our lives.

Our hearts can rejoice that the One who reveals truth changes our lives through the truth He reveals, so we can represent His love before our friends and neighbors. It is one thing to know truth; it is quite another to have our hearts broken by the Holy Spirit and our lives transformed through His power to live in us.

Invite the Holy Spirit into your life today. Ask Him to strengthen you to live the truth you believe. ■



“We will all carry **remorse** for the past, but we see only with poor vision. What will eternity reveal?”

—GORDON COCHRAN, *Australia*

Letters

Religious Freedom Group in Jamaica

Thank you for printing Rhoma Tomlinson’s article “Adventist Church Opens Religious Freedom Group in Jamaica” (April 2015). What a mighty God we serve!

I remembered the days when, as a young man in Jamaica, I accepted the Adventist message and the challenges that came with it. Some were almost unbearable. “Adventist” was a label for whoever they wanted you to be. Finding employment or any form of social help would be denied because of your religion. What a difference!

TREVOR BONNEY
New York, United States

Just a word of caution: Remember we are warned by Ellen White that Rome is doing everything in its power to restrict this religious freedom that we now seem to be celebrating.

DERRICK BAKER
Jamaica

Malawi Pastor, Turning 100, Regrets Boat Tragedy

I am writing in regard to Andrew McChesney’s article “Malawi Pastor, Turning 100, Regrets Boat Tragedy” (April 2015). I was born in Zambia and went to the Anderson boarding school in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in the 1960s and 1970s. I was 10, and often we children were found raiding neighboring orchards and camp meeting stores for something to eat—and we wanted it for nothing! We had pocket money and even got a weekly food parcel from town, or the odd cake from home.

Why did we do it? We were caught many times and got the cane and additional punishment. Yes, you guessed it, digging holes—and the ground was hard and full of stones.

I thank God, now, for teachers who cared enough to punish us. When sin is full-grown, it produces death, from which there is no returning. We do destruction to those living in disobe-

dience when emotion and debate are common practice, like stealing grain or just a piece of fruit. There are eternal consequences for tolerance of sin.

We will all carry remorse for the past, but we see only with poor vision. What will eternity reveal?

We live in tough times; let’s give thanks and move it up a notch or two and focus on being obedient in Christ and to God.

GORDON COCHRAN
Australia



When Species Change

Thanks for L. James Gibson’s article “When Species Change” (March 2015). How interesting and refreshing to see a

Prayer & PRAISE

Please pray that my wedding can be held this year; we are waiting for a certificate from an embassy. Please also pray for my father, grandmother, and friend, who needed financial help and/or healing.

MARGARET, *Indonesia*

I’m requesting prayer for my mom; and for me to find a job, and a suitable marriage partner.

VINCENT, *Kenya*

Please pray for us to obtain a church. We are many members, yet our church is very small.

SABATI, *Madagascar*

I ask for prayer that I will deliver a normal, healthy baby. The baby is large, and I will have to have a cesarean section.

SARAH, *United Kingdom*

Please pray that I will soon have enough money saved to buy a car so I can help my widowed mother, who gets lonely.

BETH, *United States*

church-employed scientist grapple with scientific issues seemingly at odds with the way the church has traditionally interpreted Scripture! To this nonscientist, however, the explanation of animal adaptation and change happening slowly over long periods of time is more reasonable than the idea that Satan with evil intent miraculously ordered changes in many animals' anatomy and function that would turn them into animals of prey.

MICHAEL WORTMAN
North Carolina, United States

Bible Study

I congratulate Mark A. Finley for the Bible studies he has been giving to readers of *Adventist World*. I especially appreciated the November 2014 study, which was on peace.

May Finley continue to be inspired by God to give more of such messages.

GLORIA AYIMWAA ADU
Kumasi, Ghana

Appreciation

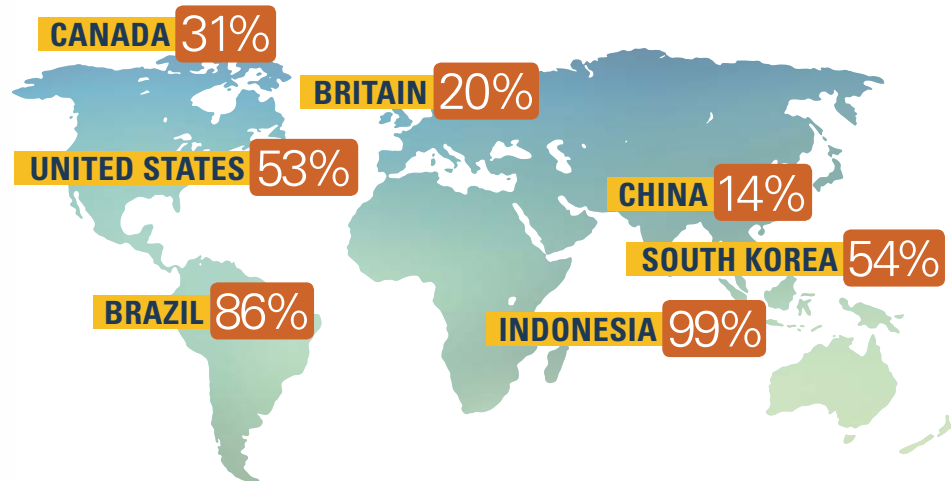
Thank you for the godly message you always provide to us through *Adventist World*.

IVAN KATEREGGA
Mityana, Uganda

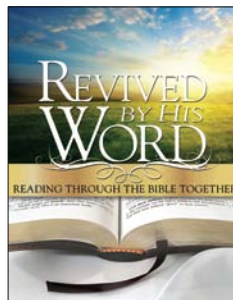
Letters Policy: Please send to: letters@adventistworld.org. Letters must be clearly written, 100-word maximum. Include the name of the article and the date of publication with your letter. Also include your name, the town/city, state, and country from which you are writing. Letters will be edited for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

Belief and Morality

Is it necessary to believe in God to be moral?
People in the following countries say yes.



Source: Pew Research/Global Attitudes



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JULY 1, 2015 • Revelation 4

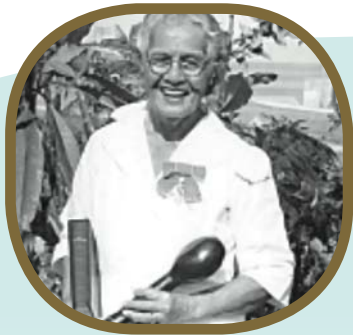
Please pray for my friend who is distraught and suicidal after not hearing from her adult children for four years (no calls, no letters). Also, pray that my pregnancy progresses well.

CÉCILIA, Martinique

I am hoping to finish my doctoral studies soon, but am having trouble with my advisor. Please pray for me as I go through this experience. Thank you!

ANDREA, United States

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



52 Years Ago

On June 13, 1963, Viola Kerisome Head died on the south Pacific island of Niue.

In March 1909 Australian Joseph E. Steed, then in Samoa, made contact with a Niue Islander, Viola Kerisome, who accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message. The following January she accompanied Steed to Australia, where she attended Avondale College.

In 1915, after assisting with the work among the Maori in New Zealand, she returned to Niue. Viola eventually married Allan Head, an English businessman on the island. Working alone and without remuneration, she served the church on the island by giving Bible studies, teaching school in her home three days a week, conducting a children's Sabbath school, translating *Patriarchs and Prophets* into the Niuean language, and nurturing baptized members.

Recognizing her educational talents, the New Zealand minister of island affairs, Sir Maui Pomare, encouraged her to take up teaching and begin an education program on the island. In later years she was known on Niue as the "mother of education."



Get a Pet

People who keep pets have lower anxiety, lower blood pressure, and better cardiovascular health.

In one study, women with dogs as pets experienced less cardiovascular stress when with their dogs than when with their human friends. Why? Dogs aren't judgmental.

Source: *The Rotarian*

PHOTO: MIGUEL SAAVEDRA



Countries with the highest annual **growth rate**, including immigration and migration, 2010-2014:

- OMAN 7.9%**
- QATAR 5.9%**
- SOUTH SUDAN 4%**
- NIGER 3.9%**
- KUWAIT 3.6%**

Source: United Nations State of World/USA Today



Adults have an average of 4.7 liters (10 pints) of blood in their bodies.

The idea of blood transfusions is about 350 years old. Some believed that transfusing the blood of docile animals into humans could calm those who were prone to angry outbursts.

Source: *The Rotarian*

“Hope is not magic. Hope is **hard-won**. Hope is not what you have. Hope is what you do.”

—FRANK BURES, *Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States*

“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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Vol. 11, No. 6

POWER Foods

These foods have been shown to improve strength, increase metabolism, burn fat, and ease soreness.



TO GAIN ENERGY

oatmeal for endurance
raisins for a natural energy boost
bananas to keep electrolytes balanced

TO SOOTHE PAIN

ginger to fight nausea and reduce muscle pain
tart cherries to neutralize free radicals
turmeric to relieve joint pain

TO BUILD MUSCLE

eggs to repair muscles
whey to build muscles

TO INCREASE METABOLISM

pistachios to curb hunger
beets to help endurance
edamame (soybeans) to burn fat

Source: *Women's Health*



top 5

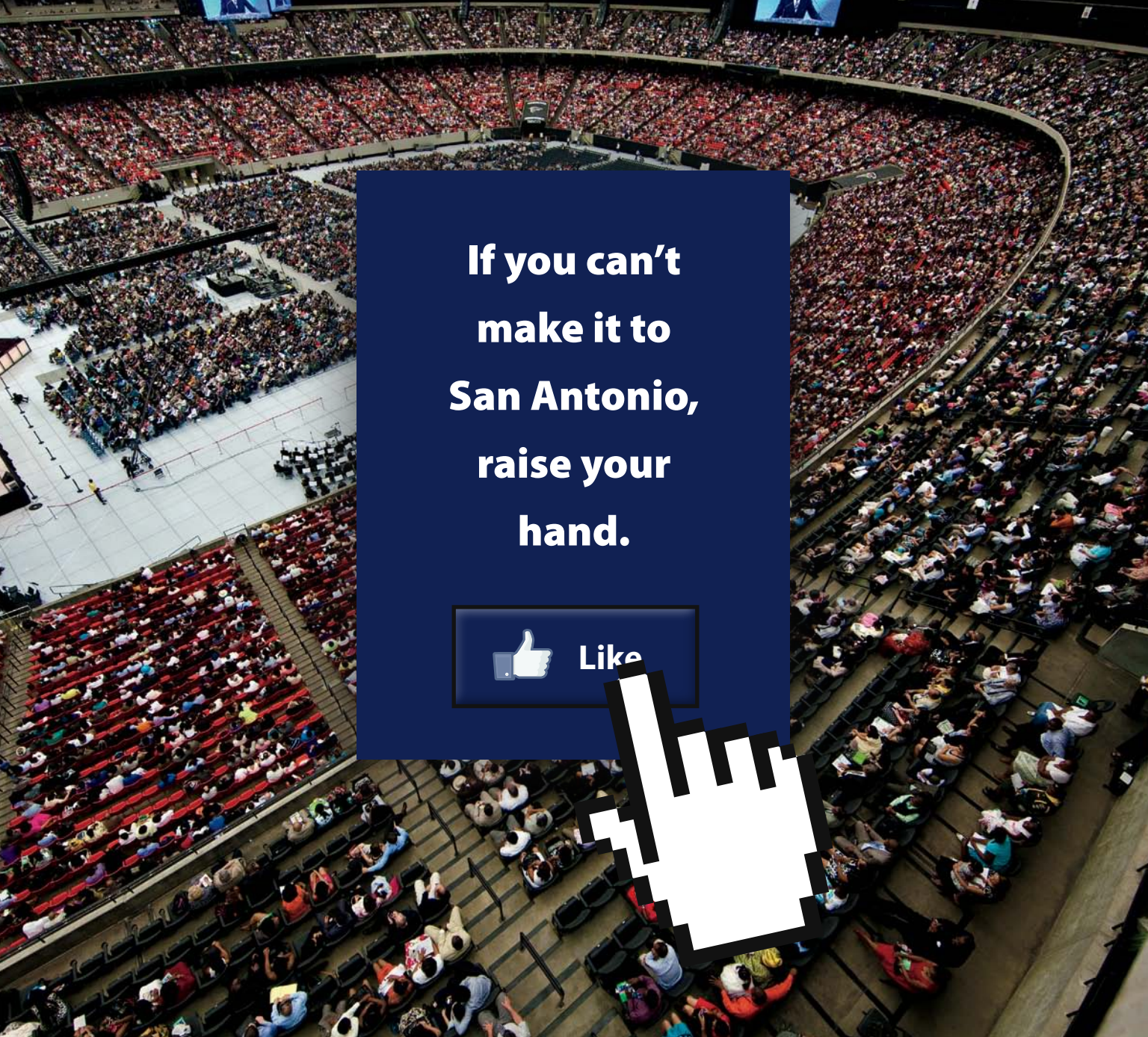
Wettest Places on Earth

AVERAGE RAINFALL (MILLIMETERS)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Mawsynram, Meghalaya State, India | 11,871 |
| 2. Cherrapunji, Meghalaya State, India | 11,777 |
| 3. Tutendo, Colombia , South America | 11,770 |
| 4. Cropp River, New Zealand | 11,516 |
| 5. San Antonio de Ureca, Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea | 10,450 |

Source: DailyTelegraph.com.au travel

PHOTO: MIGUEL SAAVEDRA



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



Don't miss a moment of the General Conference Session.

(July 2-11, 2015)

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